



Evaluation of UNICEFs Sida-funded child protection/ trafficking program in West Africa

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADJM	Youth and Development Association of Mali
AMSOPT	Association Malienne pour le Suivi et l’Orientation des Pratiques Traditionnelles
BIT	International Labor Organization
CEDAW	Convention to Eliminate of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CNDIFE	National Centre for Documentation and Information on Women and Children
CPR	Country Program Recommendation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSS	Community Surveillance Structures
DNSI	National Bureau of Statistics and Informatics
DRPFEF	District Level MPFEF office
DNPEF	National Direction for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and Family
ECCAS	Economic Community Organisation for Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community Organisation for West African States
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GHAIN	Global HIV/AIDS Initiative in Nigeria
GoBF	Government of Burkina Faso
GoM	Government of Mali
ICP	Integrated Communications Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
LAPO	Lift Above Poverty
MPFEF	Ministry for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and the Family
MSANS	Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity
MTSP	UNICEFs Medium Term Strategic Plan
MYRLC	Model Youth Resource Learning Centers
NAEMA	Nomenclature of Activities of African States
NAPTIP	National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons

NYSC	National Youth Service Corps
PNLE	National Program to Combat Excision
PnP	Protection and Participation
RPS	Regional Protection Strategy
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Processes
RC	Relay Committees
RBM	Results-Based Management
RWOGAT	Regional Working Group Against Trafficking
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SISO	Social Information System
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TAHAK	Top Light Action for HIV/AIDS
TAMPEP	European Network for HIV/STI Prevention and Health Promotion
TOT	Training of Trainers Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VSC	Vigilance and Surveillance Committee
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WCARO	Western and Central Africa Regional Office

Executive summary

The Sida-funded child protection/trafficking program in West Africa has supported efforts at the regional and national levels throughout the region, and separate child protection programs in Nigeria, Burkina Faso and Mali.

This evaluation found the role of UNICEFs Western and Central Africa Regional Office, WCARO, to be indispensable. Some of the most important conditions for child protection involve complex macro-policy issues, and it would not make sense to expect country offices to develop their own hubs of expertise in such fields. In addition to leading regional initiatives on core child protection issues, WCARO supports vital processes like (i) the promotion of a rights-based framework for child protection, (ii) the translation of that normative framework into national laws and legal practice, (iii) the securing of predictable, stable funding through lobbying vis-à-vis national PRSP processes, and (iv) technical support to relevant policy and program design.

The report points out that while the program's guidance on trafficking may not have been as clear and constructive as one could have hoped at the outset, during the course of the program (2004-2007), a number of important corrective measures was gradually introduced (including amongst others the Guidelines on Dealing with Child Victims of Trafficking). Laws and law enforcement have certainly been improved, as for instance expressed by the many arrests and convictions of traffickers in Burkina Faso. Also in Burkina, child protection issues are effectively integrated throughout the 2006 PRSP report, signaling success in ensuring child protection issues are on the agenda in national budgeting processes. Stakeholders throughout the region assured the evaluators that the technical training and supervision from WCARO had also indeed been well received and appreciated.

The three country programs supported by the Sida grant were different in design and scope. The program in Nigeria was mainly preventive, while in some cases also supporting the reintegration of previous trafficking victims. The Burkina Faso program approached the trafficking challenge from many angles: laws and legal practice, public awareness, knowledge management, capacity building as well as interception, return and reintegration of children. The Mali program did not have an integration component, but was generally similar to the Burkina Faso program. A main difference was a stronger focus also on several other groups of vulnerable children in need of special protection.

The concluding chapter of this evaluation report lists the main comments and recommendations that emerged from this study. Program design requires making economic priorities, and many dilemmas arise when choices have to be made. The Burkina Faso and Mali programs may have been reluctant to make some of those choices, and have, in the opinion of this evaluation, ended up spreading scarce resources in too many areas. While the Nigeria program is congratulated for choosing a generally preventive approach, the Mali and Burkina Faso programs have spent resources on costly, but not very efficient, return and reintegration components. The Nigeria program has chosen to train vulnerable youths through a center based model instead of collaborating with the informal apprenticeship structures of the local skills markets. In addition to being costly, this approach has prevented the integration of the participants in the local labor markets, and limited their opportunities

to build valuable social networks needed to obtain employment or create a future client base.

UNICEF's vision of promoting children's rights and creating a protective environment for all children is in fact a multifaceted program strategy with many practical implications for implementation – be it for the normative and legislative environment, for service delivery or at the community level. All the country programs (to a lesser degree the Nigerian one) have encountered challenges in implementing their activities with a rights based perspective and with the best interest of each child as a core concern. Despite these challenges, the evaluation finds the current UNICEF program strategy to be an important and necessary requirement for efficient child protection in the region, and encourages the organization to strengthen capacity building and training related to the regional protection strategy with all stakeholders.

Finally, the evaluation suggests that a number of studies would help improve current programs and provide essential learning for future child protection activities. The most important ones include (i) a study of the markets for non-traditional skills and services that can help inform future vocational training and micro-credit/grant components, (ii) a study into the determinants for child relocation in order to better target children at risk and define more appropriate reinsertion/retention components, (iii) an assessment of where collected data could most effectively come to strengthen child protection efforts in order to prevent massive data collection efforts being wasted, (iv) a tracing study of children and youth who have participated in the program to determine its effectiveness in preventing trafficking, re-trafficking, exposure to violence and HIV/AIDS infection, and (v) a study into the unintended side effects of the program, with particular focus on the 'criminalization', interception and return of children the way it was practiced in Mali and Burkina Faso. The last study may be painful reading, but would nevertheless provide valuable information that could help prevent future programs from unintentionally harming the children they were set to help.

Introduction

Context and justification of the evaluation

The Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency (Sida) supported a child protection/child trafficking program in West Africa between 2003 and 2006. The program was executed by the UNICEF Regional Office for West and Central Africa and UNICEFs Country Offices in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. UNICEF and Sida committed to undertake an external evaluation by the end of the program period (2007), with a particular thematic focus on the issues of community-based prevention and reintegration of child victims. In addition to an evaluation of the three country programs, the evaluation assesses the added value of the regional approach.

Since 2000, children's need for and right to protection is increasingly recognized and given priority in the West and Central African region as evidenced by the signing of bilateral and multilateral agreements, the drafting of action plans and the establishment of government contact points. This is in line with UNICEFs Mid-Term Strategic Paper (MTSP) for the period of 2002-2005, which focuses on building the capacity of the organisation to consistently respond to child protection issues. In 2004, UNICEF developed its first Regional Protection Strategy (RPS) for Child Protection. UNICEFs regional protection program is structured by the Regional Child Protection Strategy, while the Sida-funded activities focus on promoting that strategy, building capacity on poverty reduction processes, prevention of child trafficking and sexual abuse of children with particular emphasis on Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria and Togo.

The following programs are evaluated in this paper:

In Nigeria the overall objectives of the program were to '*reduce the underlying causes of child trafficking, exploitation and abuse, youth violence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS among youth*'. This was done through the establishment of two '*Model Youth Resource Learning Centres*' that provided health services, vocational training and life skills training for young people in the community.

In Burkina Faso the objectives of the program were to contribute to the legal and socio-economic protection of the most vulnerable children and women. The main focus was on children who were victims of trafficking and those involved in the worst forms of child labor. The means for reaching the target group was advocacy, capacity building, service delivery and communication related to behavioural change.

In Mali the general objectives of the program were "protection against all forms of violence, abuse and exploitation". The aim was to ensure an adequate legal framework for and to reduce the number of children victims of abuse, violence and exploitation through the promotion of a legal environment and an implementing mechanism, as well as prevention through a social mechanism.

The Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies (Fafo AIS) was chosen to perform this evaluation.¹ Fafo AIS conducts policy-relevant research at the international level, concentrating primarily on countries undergoing substantial structural changes through development, transition and/or conflict. Fafo AIS has gained international recognition for its expertise in three areas of particular relevance to this proposal, namely: on West and Central African society; child labor and child vulnerability; and trafficking and migration.

The fieldwork for this evaluation was conducted by different researchers from Fafo over a two-week period between November and December 2007, with support from the Regional Office in Dakar and from the Country Offices in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria.

The evaluation goals and objectives are presented in the following section, followed by those of the program before presenting each of the country reports and the regional initiatives section. Because of the somewhat differing nature of the various country programs each chapter is based on the logic of the specific program rather than following an overall outline.

Evaluation goals, objectives and methodology

The evaluation objectives in the original Terms of Reference (ToR) were regrouped and rephrased as follows:

- *To identify and evaluate actual outcomes and outputs against those planned, as well as whether they correspond with the stated program objectives (using stated indicators as much as possible and using the five key evaluation criteria).*
- *To analyze the strategies and actions implemented and make recommendations for improving the strategies and activities (in terms of child protection, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other key human rights conventions but also in terms of coherence and consistency where appropriate, as well as the links between the local, district, provincial, national and regional levels).*
- *To analyze the preparation, planning and implementation process of the program and activities, including the level of synergetic actions among all the components.*
- *To evaluate the potential added value of UNICEF's regional engagement and of UNICEF's partnerships in the fight against child trafficking and worst forms of child labor.*

This study uses both UNICEF's evaluation standards and evaluation criteria which are the OECD DAC key criteria for evaluating development assistance, namely: relevance; impact; effectiveness; sustainability; and efficiency. However, the efficiency criteria will only be

¹ In June 2007, Fafo was awarded the contract to conduct this evaluation of UNICEF's Sida-funded *Child Protection and Child Trafficking Program in West and Central Africa (2003-2006)*.

examined anecdotally as efficiency analyses such as cost-benefit, cost-effectiveness and cost-minimization are not part of the scope of this evaluation. The evaluation criteria underpin the study but are not always explicitly referred to in the document.

Each country study involved an initial desk study to review the literature and familiarize the researchers with each individual program. The UNICEF offices were to provide the evaluators with access to various documents before the field mission and to key informants, other partners, agencies and staff during these visits. The UNICEF country offices generally took on the role of arranging a program which was very helpful, as well as organizing the field visits.

On the basis of the document review, evaluation questions were developed to guide and structure data collection in each country. With the regional initiatives component, the researchers in the three countries also probed key informants about the roles and contributions of the Regional Office. This data collection strategy was complemented by conducting telephone interviews with key informants.

The evaluation sought as much as possible to locate and understand the protection program activities within UNICEFs Regional Strategy for Child Protection and/or within the specific protection program framework for each country. The following section locates the Sida-funded program within this broader protection context in UNICEF.

The child protection and anti-child trafficking program: its purpose, goals, objectives and links to other UNICEF frameworks

The Sida-funded Child Protection and Anti-Child Trafficking Program is best understood within the context of *UNICEFs Regional Protection Program Strategy for West and Central Africa*. In UNICEFs strategic and operational planning processes, the Country Programs and Country Program Recommendations are linked to the Regional Protection Program Strategy and to UNICEFs Mid-Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2002-2005.

At the regional level, UNICEFs work in West and Central Africa has been undergoing important shifts in direction and emphasis – away from projects and programs which focus on different categories and definitions of vulnerability and admissibility criteria towards a more holistic and inclusive focus on creating a protective environment for children. The Regional Protection Program Strategy aims to create such an environment by focusing on eight key components:

- Attitudes, customs, behaviours and practices: in societies where attitudes (discrimination against girls for example) or traditions favour some abuses (early marriages, excision, etc.) the environment will not protect children.
- Capacities: social workers, teachers, health workers, police officers and other adults who interact with children should be able to identify and react to situations of abuse and exploitation against children.
- The knowledge and know-how of children: children must have access to information to better protect themselves.

- Services to be provided to the victims of abuse: children victims of abuse and exploitation should have access to caring services.
- Surveillance: a protective environment for children should be based on efficient surveillance system, systematically document the incidence and nature of violations in order to identify strategic interventions.
- Government attitude: recognition of problems, expressed interest in these issues and the desire showed by the government to correct the situation are basic elements for fostering a protective environment.
- Legislation and implementation: an appropriate legislative framework and its strict implementation would go along way to promote a protective environment.
- The attention of the media: Creating conditions for national and international debates on a number of protection issues could compel governments and civil society to support the strengthening of the protective environment.

The purpose of the Sida-funded program was “to reinforce UNICEF country programs of child protection in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria in line with strategies and approaches outlined in the MTSP and as reflected in their Country Program Recommendation (CPR).” The overall program objective was stated as “To fight against child trafficking through prevention and interception, followed by measures to accompany, rehabilitate and reintegration child victims”, with three stated program goals:

- *to fight against child trafficking and worst forms of child labor;*
- *to fight against sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as prevent HIV/AIDS among children and youth; and*
- *to improve youth development and participation.*

Since the program objectives are loosely defined, their achievement cannot easily be gauged in an evaluation such as this. Moreover, a number of other programs, as well as government policies, also seek to effect similar kinds of change or influence in these areas. Thus, even if measurable indicators of impact could be found, it would be very difficult to attribute any impact specifically to the UNICEF program. Nevertheless, outcomes of the specific activities under the program often can and will be discussed in this report

Nigeria

Facts on the Sida-funded Nigeria Program (2003-2006)*

Total allocated budget (for the three years):	\$ 1,000,292.18
2003 expenditures:	\$ 193,499.44
2004 expenditures:	\$ 563,356.77
2005 expenditures:	\$ 243,435.97
Grand Total of funds allotted for the project:	\$ 1,0150,029.84
Total funds still available, 2006:	\$ 15,637.66

*Reference: UNICEF: Final Report Submitted to the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), 2006

The Sida-funded trafficking/child protection program in Nigeria has a different format than the programs in Burkina Faso and Mali. Rather than being broad, quite inclusive programs the Nigeria program involves two quite specific activities. Therefore this part of the evaluation also has a slightly different approach from the treatment of the two other country programs. It starts with a general review of the centers and their main activities: life skills training, vocational training, job placement schemes, health clinics, and micro credit schemes. The review continues with a brief assessment of staffing, partnership and performance monitoring. Then observations are more comprehensively discussed.

In Nigeria, the program supported project implementation, technical assistance, supplies and equipment for two *Model Youth Resource Learning Centers* (MYRLC) set up in two southern cities of Nigeria: Benin City in Edo and Sapele in Delta State. The evaluation was conducted over a two week period in October and November 2007. The time spent in the field was divided between the UNICEF National Office in Abuja, the UNICEF B Field Office in Lagos and the two States where the MYRLC are located. The evaluation reflects the situation of the centers at the time of the study, seen in the context of the original plans and objectives. It seeks to understand some of the outcomes and impacts the centers have had on the youth and the surrounding community in Edo and Delta, and provides future recommendations for the sustainability and replicability in other Nigerian states.

In 1998 UNICEF conducted a pilot study in the southern Nigerian border towns, addressing the situation of child labor and trafficking. The findings indicated that a high number of street children were trafficked locally and internationally, and that prevalence of HIV/AIDS had increased. In continuation, UNICEF carried out a participatory appraisal of six possible project communities in Edo and Delta in 2003/2004, and this appraisal functioned both as a baseline study and a community diagnostic. Beyond having a participatory design, the appraisal was in fact led by 24 adolescents/youths from the community (UNICEF 2003). The two Sida financed MYRLCs in Edo and Delta were developed based on the recommendations from these studies.

While there are many approaches to trafficking and child protection, the Nigeria program chose a generally preventive model over for example more high-profile rescue operations. The general operative assumption of the program is that child and youth vulnerability can be reduced prior to exposure to trafficking or re-trafficking, HIV/AIDS-infection and violence. The objectives of the centers were therefore to address the underlying causes of child trafficking, youth violence and HIV/AIDS among young people (13-24 years) through the development of leadership skills, accountability, creativity, patriotism and the provision of services. In addition to this, the program aims to strengthen the capacity of youth to challenge discrimination, abuse, exploitation and exclusion from decision making. The experiences gained from the two centers were to be evaluated and used to inspire replication of the Youth Resource Centers in an additional ten states.

The project's stated objectives were to:

- increase general awareness on child trafficking, sexual exploitation, peace building and HIV/AIDS prevention among children and young people in selected project communities in states with youth resource centers;
- promote life skills among 1,000 children and youth annually, and that way produce behavioral change vis-à-vis trafficking, sexual exploitation, violence and HIV/AIDS;
- provide vocational training and micro-credit facilities for victims and vulnerable children and their families; and
- build the capacity of NGOs/CBOs and Government and that way enable them to provide adolescent and youth friendly Health Services.

Global human rights constitute the stated normative framework for the program, and it is placed within the context of UNICEF Nigeria's country program on Protection and Participation (PnP). The overall goal of the PnP is to protect children from all forms of violence and exploitation through advocacy, capacity building and service delivery. The normative standard to aim for is a caring and protective environment which can shield children from abuse, violence and exploitation.

General program aspects

The structuring of the youth centers in Edo and Delta

The operative assumption constituting the rationale for the two MYRLCs is that providing children and youth with local opportunities will effectively reduce their vulnerability to trafficking and other exposure. Alongside providing opportunities to reduce the incentives for leaving, the services delivered will empower children and youth to recognize and avoid situations that can put them at risk for trafficking, violence and HIV/AIDS transmission.

The centers were established by the Federal Government and UNICEF, Nigeria. The main implementing partner in Edo State was the NGO *Idia Renaissance*, which had for long been engaged in anti-trafficking programs. In Delta State, the MYRLC was set up with the Ministry of Economic Planning as the main implementing partner. At the inception it was foreseen that the center in Delta would be more sustainable due to public commitments and financial

input. On the other hand, the centre in Edo was anticipated to be more youth-friendly in its service delivery since *Idia Renaissance* had long-term experience working with young people.

The '*Guidelines for Setting Up and Management of Youth Resource Centers*' (in this report referred as 'the guide') was developed by the PnP in collaboration with the Integrated Growth and Development Program and the Program Communication Section of UNICEF Nigeria. The guide recommends two different Youth Centre structures, referred to as model A and B. In the first model the different components of the centers are located within one structure. This required a building with adequate room facilities to conduct life skills training and vocational training, as well as space for recreation and a health centre. In model B, the center collaborates with existing structures, vocational skills programs and health facilities in the project community. In this model, the centre itself provides life skills training in addition to facilitation for coordination and collaboration between the youth and the community.

Both centers in Edo and Delta utilized model A in their service delivery, with adequate buildings to serve youth. The components of the centers included life skills training, vocational training, health services and space for recreation. In addition, the centers were staffed with an administration that coordinated job placement, outreach programs and (in the case of Delta) micro-credit schemes.

All students in both centers had to pay a registration fee. The rationale behind this was that the costs would cover the expenses for the student identification card, and that way ensures student commitment. In addition, the students were expected to cover costs related to vocational training. This was on an average US\$4 per week. The students shared with the evaluators that this could cause worries because they would use their lunch money to cover costs or not attend the school for a week if they did not have the means to pay for the necessary expenses. However, the majority of the students were supported by their parents or legal guardians for the costs involved in the Youth Centers.

Staffing

The UNICEF guidelines state that 'staff and volunteers should be drawn from relevant ministries, NGOs and agencies that are involved in youth development activities in the state for sustainability of the project'. Experience from field show that both centers have a representation of staff from these categories, and there was no evidence of lack of competent staff.

The Edo Youth Center had a total of 15 staff made up of one administrator, one accountant, four teachers, one receptionist, one secretary, one counselor, one laboratory technician, one nurse, one gardener, one doctor, one cleaner and one security guard. In addition, they had two peer educators (youth corpers) and four volunteers. In theory all staff was to be drawn from the ministries, but in Edo only one turned out to be seconded. The reason was that ministry seconded staff was not assumed to have the particular skills needed at the centers.

The situation at the government-run center in Delta was different. At the time of the fieldwork, the center had 16 permanent staff drawn from different government ministries and 16 ad hoc staff specialists on vocational training. Their technical expertise complemented the theory sessions given by the permanent staff. The center also had 11 volunteers and 2 youth corpers who had undergone UNICEF's peer education training.

The administration at both centers suggested that it would pose some challenges to have all permanent staff recruited from the ministries. For instance, the majority of the seconded staff did not have the specific vocational skills required by the center. Implicitly, the centre had to pay the staff salary from their budget. The administrator in Delta stated that “- as it is, we are not given a free hand to recruit our teachers, rather we depend on seconded staff from the government. We need a free hand to choose the best teachers”.

Partnerships

State steering committees were formed prior to the opening of the centers in Edo and Delta. The members represent ministries, agencies and NGOs involved in the development of young people. The role of the steering committees was to provide coordination for the project at the state level and to facilitate information sharing with other states.

In Edo, the impact of the state steering committee seemed to have weakened over time, and it has not met since June 2006, for unclear reasons. There seemed to be little collaboration between the State Government in Edo and *Idia Renaissance*. In Delta, the situation was different. As previously stated, the centre is supervised mainly by the Ministry of Economic Planning in collaboration with the state steering committee. The committee was drawn from various Ministries (Ministry of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Woman Affairs and Ministry of Economic Planning) and funding to the centre came from the various Ministries.

The two centers have also benefitted from collaboration with various stakeholders and NGOs such as: The National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP); Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), who referred people living with HIV to the center, Top Light Action for HIV/AIDS (TAHAK); Shell Petroleum, who donated equipment to the center; Niger Delta Professionals for Development, who introduced the center to the outside world and donated a cyber mast; and Lift Above Poverty (LAPO), the NGO administering and monitoring the micro credit scheme.

Core program components

Life skills training

Life skills training was one of the key elements in the youth program in both centers. The training is based on participatory learning methods and involved subjects such as self-esteem, critical thinking, communication, refusal skills, relationship, HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support. UNICEF Nigeria provided two life skills training manuals for the facilitator’s and for the participants at the youth centers. They were developed with technical support from the life skills based education unit of UNICEF’s Regional Office, and UNICEF headquarters. The manuals were actively used by the centers, and each participant was provided with his/her own copy to assist with the life skills training.

The life skills course was integrated differently within the two centers. In Edo, it is delivered in conjunction with the vocational skills training through one-hour training sessions three times a week over a three month period. Both teachers and students revealed high enthusiasm for the course. One of the teachers in Edo said that she never had to remind her students about life skills class, because of the student’s own enthusiasm to participate in the

course. In discussions with the students, they felt that the enhanced knowledge in combination with personal empowerment has made a great impact in their lives.

In Delta, the life skills course was separate from the vocational training and was implemented over a two-week period. Depending on the time of enrolment to the center, students could be in vocational training classes for longer periods before beginning the Life Skills Course. The focus group discussion with the participants at the centre indicated that none of the students had yet been through the Skills Course despite three months of participation at the center. In addition to the life skills course, the nurse at the youth clinic integrated awareness lectures on HIV/AIDS in the various vocational departments as a part of their work, and provided continuous information throughout the program

The life skill training sessions were conducted by volunteer peer educators who had been through a UNICEF training of trainers program (TOT). *The National Youth Service Corps* (NYSC), which is a compulsory service for every Nigerian graduate under the age of 30, are trained as trainers by UNICEF to conduct life skills training, with particular focus on HIV/AIDS prevention. Their training is voluntary and consists of 'peer education training of trainers' for young graduates.²

Lack of teaching aids was a constraint in the delivery of life skills training. In spite of these difficulties, the management of the two centers stated that the trainers were eager to conduct the course both at the centre and in their communities. The trainers appeared to highly value the *Life Skills Training Manual*, and used it actively in their training sessions. Both centers provided outreach activities on irregular basis with the aim of reaching the people who were unable to participate at the centre with life skills training.

UNICEF guidelines proposed a minimum of five days of life skills training, while both centers have chosen to raise the profile and scope of the course. Many of the young people aspire to create their own business in the future. In conjunction with the vocational training, it could therefore be beneficial to include education on basic accounting, book keeping and business management. This was proposed in the guide under the heading "*Entrepreneurial Skills Development Training*", but was to date not implemented in Edo and Delta, with the exception of those who received micro credit schemes in Delta.

The life skills training seemed to have a great impact on the participants, although the lack of baseline data makes it difficult to document this perception of the evaluators. The youth revealed great enthusiasm about the curriculum and shared stories of how they felt it had empowered them in their everyday lives. HIV/AIDS training was highly emphasized in the training session, with emphasis on '*it is not the person that is high risk, it is the behavior*'. A female focus group confirmed a good knowledge base relating to trafficking, HIV/AIDS infection, testing and care of victims.

² In 2002, the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in collaboration with UNICEF introduced a peer education program entitled, 'Empowering Youth through Young People.' The objective of this program was to reach new graduates of university programs serving the one-year compulsory NYSC program with reproductive health and HIV/AIDS messages, train some to be trainers themselves, and for all to act as 'peer educators' in and out of school (Terhemba Nom Ambe-Uva 2007).

Vocational training

The vocational training component is the fundament for the future income generation of the participants. In the guide, the target audience was identified as children with physical evidence of deprivation and neglect aged 15 and 18, child victims of trafficking, vulnerable children with evidence of poor formal educational attainment and children with interest in income-generating skills. In practice, however, the training is open to all youth, regardless of one's age or degree of deprivation.

The Edo center has vocational training departments for fashion and design, catering and hotel management, hair dressing and computer science³. The duration of a course is six months, with exception of the computer department which is limited to four months due to the high demand among the students and the limited number of computers available. The training was followed by one month job placement after which the students return to the center for the examination and graduation. The Delta center has departments for welding and electricity in addition to the four above. Job placement was for a period of six months except for the computer classes. The majority of the students in the computer department plans to go back to school or university, and they participate in the youth centre classes in order to develop their computer skills.

Job placement schemes

The aim of the job placement scheme was to provide practical work experience, but also to create networks that could facilitate for future employment. In addition it was recommended that beneficiaries should organize into associations and cooperatives. The center should help identify vacancies and job opportunities in the community and state by liaising with other agencies. Master craftsmen in the community should be involved in the training, and that way linkages could be established with existing training facilities in the community and state.

While facilitating employment placements was generally understood as key element of the center, it appeared to be the responsibility of the students in practice. The students were encouraged to seek job placements and given a letter of recommendation from the centers to share with potential employers. Students shared that they had heard many stories from previous students who had experienced difficulties in finding placements. They expressed concerns regarding offloading the main responsibility for finding placements on to themselves. This was especially the case in Delta where job placements last for six months. For instance, most employers, especially large hair dressing salons, asked for apprenticeship fees from students before they could offer them a place.⁴ This was confirmed by the administrator of the center who stated that potential employers expect payment in return for job placements.

³ Word, Excel, PowerPoint and drawing are on the curriculum.

⁴ This practice is not unusual, since it is commonplace to pay a fee for apprenticeships throughout West Africa.

None of the centers record systematically or monitor the number of students that succeed with employment. In Edo, the centre recorded the students' further activities when they attended graduation ceremonies, but apart from that, close follow-up was missing.

Health clinics within the youth centers

One of UNICEF's core objectives was to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission among children and youth in the program areas, and HIV/AIDS awareness was therefore an integrated part of the life skills courses provided. In this area, partnerships and collaboration were strong factors at both centers.

In Edo, the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative in Nigeria (GHAIN) supplies funding to conduct free HIV testing and counseling in the clinic. The clinic is staffed with two counselors, including one lab technician and one nurse. The doctor had visited the clinic occasionally, but was about to end his contract with the center. The counselors give youth the chance to talk to an outsider about personal issues, also beyond health related topics. The majority of the students underscored that a main achievement had been to learn not to discriminate against people who were HIV/AIDS positive, and this was confirmed by the counselors in the clinic.

A capillary blood test was conducted in two stages with one initial test and a second confirmatory test. When the tests were negative, clients were encouraged to come back after three months for a retest. However, in cases where one of the tests proved positive and the other negative, or both were positive, they were referred to the state hospital for more confirmatory blood tests. The process in the clinic seemed to function well. Since the Clinic opened, 18 cases have been detected and closely followed up by the nurse, and referred for free treatment by the State.

Once a month, patients who had tested positive with HIV/AIDS were invited to participate in a support group at the centre. The meetings were well attended and offered a space where they can meet other people who are HIV positive and/or suffering from AIDS. During the meetings, group members exchange experiences, provide mental support and learn about how to relate to the community and their families while living with the diagnosis.

In Delta the situation is similar, and the clinic was supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). HIV-testing and counseling was offered by a nurse to both students at the centre and to the community members. The nurse was supported by a staff of seven peer educators and voluntary health workers, and the entire team has participated in a UNICEF/GHAIN training program on HIV/AIDS.

Since opening the clinic in January 2007, 315 people have been tested. Eight of them tested positive. The HIV positive patients were followed up with the State Hospital for treatment. There was no specific support group for people living with HIV/AIDS at the Delta center; however, they were referred to other similar support groups in the community known as 'Comforters'. In this sense, the center is making use of existing resources within the community and interacts with other institutions.

The counselors at the health stations in the two centers reported a fair general knowledge on the mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS among the students even before participating in the life skills training. In various discussions and interviews conducted in Benin City, it seemed that knowledge about HIV/AIDS related issues is relatively good in the population. "Be faithful to your partner" and "use condoms" were common answers when asked how to

prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS. Information campaigns about HIV/AIDS were generally widespread. Several billboards were on display in the city, and there were frequent TV commercials. The life skills course at the centers, however, brought the subject of HIV/AIDS further than the national campaigns: for example, it elaborated on how to deal with subjects such as stigma, life quality for people who living with HIV/AIDS, human rights for those transmitted and how to improve risky behavior.

Micro-credit schemes

In the Youth Center in Edo, micro-credit was not part of the program and was considered as controversial by the management. The arguments ranged from fear that the youth might be too young to manage funds to the lack administrative capacity. In 2005 NAPTIP and UNICEF Nigeria conducted a pilot project in Edo where micro credit was given to four victims of trafficking, and follow up was provided. However, none of the beneficiaries were able to sustain a business and the micro-credit component was removed.

The Delta center established micro-credit schemes in January 2007, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Planning. Micro-credit was seen as a core element in the center's work, and students who graduated and were interested in a micro-credit loan could gain access through a group-guaranteed loan scheme. An NGO based in Benin City – Lift above Poverty (LAPO) – was commissioned to administer the credit arrangement. The beneficiaries were trained in basic entrepreneurship and life skills to prepare them for starting their own small business. The center has a very high turnover of students. However, it was noticed that only few apply for micro credits, probably due to concerns of not being able to repay the loans.

Overall comments and recommendations for replication

In the Nigeria Protection and Participation Programme - Child Protection Services Project, UNICEF has adapted a comprehensive, generally preventive approach to child vulnerability. The project does not focus on the more high-profile rescue and rehabilitation type operations often practiced under the child trafficking heading. Instead, it seeks to prevent harm from happening in the first place. Such an approach is likely to be less costly, not only in dollars, but certainly also in terms of human suffering. Unfortunately, donors have been reluctant to support this type of preventive program due to their lower profile: no traumatized victims can be put on display, there is no drama. It is therefore encouraging that UNICEF Nigeria has resisted the temptation to please potential donors, and argued for an approach that is likely to be more sustainable than most rescue-and-rehabilitation programs have turned out to be. It is also encouraging that Sida has chosen to support this program.

The program aims to prevent trafficking by empowering youth at risk, and giving them opportunities to learn and work in their home districts and states. Empowering youth and providing them with such opportunities simultaneously works to reduce vulnerability to much more than trafficking: HIV/AIDS and violence are only two of these. The program therefore also benefits from the many synergies that result from not focusing too narrowly on one target group at the time. In short, the program appears to be very much in line with UNICEF's vision for child protection: to create an enabling and protective environment for children.

The following discussion of the program will bring up some of the critical perspectives that were shared with the evaluators, as well as suggest points to be debated when considering the possible replication of the centers in other Nigerian states. This section briefly discusses issues related to the target audience of the activities, the skills training, the vocational training and its links to the labor market, micro-credit, the health component, and finally some more general and cross-cutting issues.

The target group

The overriding principle in setting up the centers was that if any child is faced with the threat of trafficking, irrespective of social background and educational attainment, that child should be helped. The target audience for the vocational training program was originally “children with physical evidence of deprivation and neglect 15 to 18 years old, child victims of trafficking, vulnerable children with evidence of poor formal educational attainment and children with interest in income-generating skills”. Life skills training targeted 13 to 24-year-olds with a demonstrated interest/commitment to community or youth development activities, and young people who are vulnerable and are at risk of exploitation, violence and abuse.⁵

During the evaluation, the administrators told us that their current policy is to welcome all youth to centers. They integrate victims referred to them by NAPTIP or the NGO Tampep, but they only constitute a small group of youth at the centers. It is evident that the majority of the students have attended or even completed secondary school. (Secondary enrollment rates in the two states are almost 60 percent, and the completion rate around 30 percent.⁶) To some students, the participation at the center was perceived as a ‘gap year’ while they were hoping to be accepted at the university or find the means. This was acknowledged by the center staff, and the MYRLC was accepted as a means to stay focused and to prevent the youth from restiveness while waiting to go back to school. Also, generally the same youth participated in vocational and life skills training, erasing the foreseen differences between the target groups.

The integration of trafficking victims and HIV positive students was a new feature in Delta, but seemed to have worked well at the center in Edo.⁷ The other students were aware of the special status of certain students at the centers, but details about their background were kept confidential. Referred students were sponsored by NAPTIP and Tampep, and did not have to pay fees for classes and training material.

⁵ *Guidelines for setting up and management of Youth Resource Centers.*

⁶ *The Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics (2006).*

⁷ *Edo integrated four victims in 2005, 30 in 2006 and 50 in 2007, while Delta had 50 referred students in 2007.*

Given the relative resourcefulness of most students at the center, a natural question becomes whether less deprived students may crowd out youth from the originally intended target groups. The computer departments were overcrowded. Apart from this, the centers appear to have good capacity to receive students, so no imminent concern seemed pressing. However, certain obstacles to participation may conceal the real demand. Five of these are:

- the need to pay for registration and vocational training materials,
- distance to the centers from communities at risk,
- limited literacy (since classes are based on written material and exams),
- limited parental/guardian goodwill, and
- low self confidence and ambition.

It is likely that some or all of these obstacles will effectively exclude some of the most deprived youth from the activities in the centers. This does not, however, mean that the youth reached is not also those at the highest risk of trafficking, violence and contracting HIV/AIDS. In fact, there is no clear evidence that neither the poorest of the poor, children and youth from remote places, nor the illiterate are more at risk than their peers – to the contrary. It is equally likely that ambitious children with some capacity to earn basic cash for fees, living in more central areas and having some education are more exposed to risky situations simply because they get more around and are more willing to take chances. If the latter is the case, the program should be well on target.

To find out whether or not the program targets those most at risk, a study of the determinants of becoming a victim of trafficking, violence or HIV should be conducted. A less complex approach would be to compare socio-demographic background factors of students referred by NAPTIP and Tampep to those of a random selection of the other students. Such a study could be administered by the counseling units at the centers, guaranteeing all students the confidentiality of personal information. The results would provide useful guidance to the development of new centers in other states: should they lower fees/open for more waivers, provide more vocational opportunities for youth with poor literacy skills, place more emphasis on community outreach activities, or work more actively towards reducing the skepticism of reluctant parents and less courageous at-risk-youth?

Skills training

The life skills training was a much appreciated part of the centers' activities. Beyond empowering the students, it is a highly relevant and sustainable approach to discourage high-risk behavior among youth. The curriculum included lectures about basic human rights, citizen rights, political rights and duties of the citizens. The training did not explicitly include lectures about child rights, the CRC and awareness of gender issues. Increasing attention to such themes would be in line with the objectives of the PnP, even though most of the students themselves are about to enter into adulthood.

Written material was central in the life skills course. This would represent an obstacle to students with poor literacy skills. The administrators at the centers said that there was little or no structured approach to handling this problem, and the issue was handled case-by-case. The center in Delta had invited students to a basic reading and writing course, but none of the students were interested in participating. This could be due to fear of stigma, but

suggests that most students in fact read and write well. If future focus is decided to be directed towards a less educated audience, basic literacy classes must be offered. More visual training materials could also be developed, for instance for use in outreach activities in remote and destitute areas.

The life skills trainers were mainly university graduates doing their one year duty contract for the National Youth Service Corps. To the center, these trainers represented low-priced, good quality trainers. On the other hand, the high turnover in a large share of the staff also reduces stability, institutional memory, and prevents a systematic compilation of experiences that could be used to continuously improve pedagogical approaches and curriculum. Many trainers were interested in a contract extension. The fact that this was not very likely, combined with worries about future employment, may have reduced their motivation and enthusiasm. It could be beneficial to the center to retain some peer educators as permanent staff to ensure continuity.

Both centers conducted outreach activities in the communities, making life skills training available to people outside the project center. This constantly depended on available funding and therefore conducted on an irregular basis. With reference to the study proposed in the previous section, new centers should carefully evaluate the relevance of outreach activities relative to the added value they provide in reaching the most vulnerable. If indeed children and youth in more remote communities are found to be more vulnerable, outreach activities should be sufficiently funded and regularized.

Vocational training and job placement

The program aims to meet the challenges youth face in breaking into the labor market by building vocational skills, supporting job placements and strengthening the students' networks by forming cooperatives and associations. Finding job placements, however, was reported to have been difficult. Moreover, there seemed to be little or no overall data on the success rate of the vocational training with respect to post-graduation employment. The centers generally had little capacity to follow up with former students.

The difficulties encountered raise two fundamental questions related to the vocational training scheme: first, what trades are taught, and second, what type of integration is there between the center and the outside labor market.

First, a thorough labor market assessment seemed to be missing before deciding on the types of trades to teach. Tailoring, hair dressing, welding and electricity are among the most typical trades for young apprentices, and the competition in the businesses is harsh. A main problem of setting up a business in such competitive fields is that most of one's client base tends to be constituted by social networks. Vulnerable youth typically have poor social networks – in fact, this is one of the most important reasons why they are vulnerable in the first place. When competition hardens, the youth in the target group of this program is likely to lose out. Moreover, training in these professions traditionally happen through apprenticeships with local craftsmen and women, and paying for such apprenticeships is common. In looking for job placement, the students will have met the competition of unskilled youth who were willing to pay that price. The prospective employers are likely to value such apprenticeship fees over already acquired skills, and they may in fact perceive the center as a competitor to their function as paid trainers.

A proper and creative market assessment is a critically important investment in order to prevent a massive waste of resources on unmarketable skills. Furthermore, in poor areas with a generally high unemployment rate, special efforts should be made in identifying possible markets outside the communities. When educating youth into overpopulated markets, they do not only face a high likelihood of un- or underemployment, they also contribute to further reduce the meager returns of other (poor) already in the business. This is avoided by producing for outside market – which, if successful, can also bring fresh capital into the local community.

Second, what level of integration is there between the center and the local labor market? Projects choosing to provide vocational training through specially created parallel structures in low-infrastructure societies have been criticized throughout the evaluation literature. Not only do centers tend to be very costly per graduate produced. The fact that they compete with informal training may create hostility in these traditional institutions while simultaneously preventing the much needed networking benefits of being trained in a community business. Successful business have two aspects; one social and one technical. While taking care of the technical part, the social part was in this program intended met by networking between students and job placement schemes. This has neither been sufficient nor successful. This evaluation therefore concludes like many evaluations before, by stressing the importance of working with communities within their premises, in particular when working on traditional trades. In continuation and replication of the project, the initial model B should therefore be further explored.

Centers could be more useful in providing training in innovative and non-traditional trades and production targeting markets outside the local community. First, because there is no existing alternative training in the local community market, there is thus much less potential for conflict. Secondly, when producing for an outside market the social value of an everyday contact with clients and trade is less available and not undermined by being located in a centre. However, the costs of center-based training remain an issue that will be discussed in the concluding section.

Micro-credit

According to the program plan, youth who graduated from vocational training courses were to be eligible for a micro-credit loan. The credit would help them set up a business and assist in making them self reliant. In practice, very few have applied for such credit. Although the majority of students seemed to support the idea of micro credit, many were intimidated by the prospects of having to pay back. In our discussions in Delta, students indicated that they found it difficult to understand why they had to take a loan to establish a business, while Shell and BP gave out grants to certain youth in the same state.

Micro credit is a popular feature of many development programs, although very few micro credit schemes have turned out to be self-sustaining. To be sustainable, the users must first be helped to develop profitable projects ideas in the frame of a feasible business plan. Second, they need administrative ability and discipline to run their business project in practice and pay back the loan. Both these requirements are challenging to poor and vulnerable populations. A successful micro-credit project therefore requires support for good project development, professional screening of which project proposals are likely to succeed and therefore should be supported (and the courage to say no to those who are not), training in business management, and, perhaps most importantly: training in financial

discipline and saving. A good micro credit project is therefore often incorporated in a good micro finance program, where learning to save is the first and most important lesson for the potential beneficiaries. Failing to appreciate the importance of these issues does not only lead to unsustainable micro credit funds, and continued donor dependency. It also increases the chance that the intended beneficiaries end up indebted and disillusioned rather than empowered.

How can youth graduates from the vocational training courses then best be helped to establish their own businesses? From the above, it should be clear that administering a successful micro credit arrangement is both costly and requires professional and dedicated staff. To be self sustaining, the fund must therefore accept a relatively high interest rate. The alternative is – like Shell and BP does – to offer the students a graduation grant. A grant does not have the same benefits in training savings and pay back discipline, and will not be channeled back into a fund that can later help support other youth. However, it is much to be preferred to a poorly run micro credit scheme that is expensive to administer, finances poorly planned projects implemented by inexperienced young entrepreneurs who risk ending up discouraged and in debt. The program, and possible replicas in other states, therefore carefully need to decide whether they want to put resources into developing professional micro finance initiatives. If not – small graduation grants are recommended instead.

Health services

The evaluation team had good overall impressions of the health centers in both Edo and Delta. The health centers were well structured, with qualified staff and resources to offer students free testing and counseling. The clinics were open to the people in the community and not restricted by age or registration at the centre. Posters outside welcomed everyone to free counseling and testing. Despite other venues for HIV testing in the communities, both students and other community members seemed to show a preference for the health services at the MYLRCs. The fact that the majority of the students had been tested for HIV/AIDS can be interpreted as a positive program impact and could possibly even be partly attributed to the skills training course. This is particularly so since previous evaluations⁸ had indicated that the youth did not go to VCTs⁹ elsewhere. Moreover, the students did not seem to stigmatize participation at the clinic and acknowledged the necessity of ‘knowing your status’. Given the success of the health clinics, one recommendation could be to expand their services into also testing for other sexually-transmitted infections (STIs). This would, however, require additional funding and more advanced testing equipment and staff.

⁸ Nigeria Youth and Aid Program, Lagos, *One Year Evaluation of UNICEF Youth Resource and Learning Centers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria*, (2006)

⁹ Voluntary Counseling and Testing.

Cross cutting issues

As far as a rapid evaluation like this was able to establish, the program has been relatively successful in obtaining its original output objectives (as listed in the first section of this chapter). The notable exception was the establishment of functional micro credit facilities (the Delta micro-credit program just started in 2007). It is more difficult to determine the outcome of these achievements, but the main impressions of the evaluation team was that the skills training had positively affected youth behavior, the youth centeredness of the health services had indeed attracted youth to HIV/AIDS testing, but that those receiving vocational training were less empowered than expected due to the trouble of finding jobs. No reliable information can document reduced trafficking, HIV infection or violence that can be attributed to the center's activities (impact), but such information would inarguable also be very difficult to produce.

The next question becomes: what key lessons should be derived from the experiences made so far? To be more practical: how can experiences help the current centers and the new replica centers become even more efficient in preventing children and youth from becoming victims of trafficking, HIV/AIDS and violence? Three issues are discussed in this final section:

- First, an economic issue: how can future work improve the output/outcome/impact relative to the resources invested?
- Second, a technical issue: what new studies would help make the program more efficient?
- Finally, an issue of program ideology: how can new developments in the field of child rights, rights-based and participatory approaches improve the child-and youth friendliness – and thereby the appropriateness and quality of the program?

Project model A, a center based approach that was selected in Edo and Delta, has the indisputable quality of providing a space and a meeting ground for young people. However, other youth clubs were available, and this function of the centers were therefore not indispensable. The originally proposed model B presupposed a smaller administrative unit, while vocational training took place in workshops and businesses in the community. Not only would model B help better integrate the students in the local community and labor markets, and in a natural way help developing their networks, while employing local craftsmen and women as project staff: the price difference between the two models is likely to be large.¹⁰

Programs in poor countries always need to take into account that the number of vulnerable children is immense, and that funding is always sadly limited if one should try to help them all. To legitimize public spending, a fair and transparent targeting in the vulnerable population becomes important. The more resources spent in each case, the narrower the targeting must be with any given budget available.

¹⁰ From the community point of view, the program makes use of large local resources: like buildings and qualified people who could alternatively have been used to support other vulnerable groups; like disabled, orphans, malnourished children, to only mention a few. These alternative uses of the resources represent an opportunity cost to the local community and to other poor inhabitants.

Currently the program targets youth who live near by the centers or have the means to relocate to get there, can pay registration fees and training materials, have fair literacy skills, have supportive parents or guardians, and enough time, courage and ambition to come. Both in a state and country perspective, the geographical targeting seems to be the most critical priority made, but both economic and personality issues would reduce the eligibility of many vulnerable children and youth. Outreach activities extend the current target group.

Although perhaps as many of 18,000 young people may until now have benefited from one or more activities offered by the centers¹¹, they still constitute only the tip of the iceberg of child and youth vulnerability in Nigeria. To grant the entire population of equally vulnerable children and youth the same value of benefits as the participants in these centers would be an economic impossibility.¹² For a government to give such benefits to just a few would most certainly trigger accusations of unfairness. To legitimize public spending, the target group should be as large as possible, and the costs as low as possible relative to the preventive impact obtained.

As always; finding the best balance between costs and impact becomes a core challenge in taking a pilot to scale. Vocational training and employment appeared to be the greatest challenge of the program, and at the same time the program feature that requires the most of the center space. Not only would it lower cost to apply variations of model B in future replicas, but, as the section on vocational training argues, it could simultaneously improve work opportunities for the participants. When this is said, a certain administrative core should be maintained, with at least one classroom module, i.e. where local tutors (craftsmen) could be trained in pedagogy and child rights. The evaluation also strongly suggests investigating the local and outside market demand for nontraditional production and skills and add these to the curriculum.

To extend the number of beneficiaries, more outreach activities are recommended. These outreach activities should be based on a vulnerability study identifying the determinants of risk related to trafficking, STI-infection and violence (ref recommendations in the section on targeting). That way the right audience is more properly identified. The study would also help indicate the factors that make particular groups more vulnerable, and therefore to fine tune messages and tools to become as accurate as possible. Physical presence in local communities requires vehicles, and to justify the high costs of transport, targeting should be good and the tools as adequate as possible. In addition, more low-cost, but high-outreach approaches like radio emissions could be considered – for instance, based on life skills training modules developed for the centers.

In this section, we have referred to the need for a market assessment, first with regards to the opportunities for and challenges related to job placement, but in particular to future

¹¹ Concrete numbers were hard to estimate, but including the recreational activities quite many had been using the centers.

¹² We have no exact way to determine the total costs of the program within the scope of this evaluation, but Sida's contribution clearly only constitutes a part of it (see Annex 3). Other contributions include: public contributions, contributions from local charities and other NGOs; the time of volunteers and pro-bono services; donations; the use of building space, etc.

market demand for jobs in different sectors. We have also reiterated the need for a systematized study of the determinants of vulnerability that could help improve targeting and also fine tune the tools and messages provided. This study in addition suggests doing a tracing study of the youth who have received vocational and skills training through the program. The objective of this last research is to study under what conditions the program has contributed to the success of certain students, but failed to help others. The results should be invaluable in supervising improvements in future programming.

In general, the Nigeria program has gone a long way in including children and youth in both planning and running of the youth centers. Yet, the program is primarily practical and strategic in its' efforts to support the students. When asking staff and students what the concept "*rights-based approach*" meant to them, no comprehensive understanding was revealed. True empowerment is reached when children and youth not only learn, but also *internalize* the lesson that their most basic needs correspond to *rights*: Children and youth should not be begging to have their needs covered – they should claim their rights.

Burkina Faso

Facts on the Sida-funded Burkina Faso Protection Program (2003-2006)*

Total allocated budget (for the three years): \$ 1,671,222 USD

Total funds requisitioned: \$ 1,713,720 USD

2004 expenditures: \$ 487,380 USD

2005 expenditures: \$ 878,887 USD

Geographic coverage: 10 provinces with 42 Surveillance and Vigilance Committees (CVS); sensitization activities conducted in 1088 villages.

Number of children intercepted: in 2004, 191 of whom 99 were girls and 82 were boys; in 2005, 747 children were intercepted; between July 2006 and May 2007, 1043 of whom 892 were boys and 151 girls.

Number of children who received reintegration support (2004-2005): 306 of whom 36 were boys and 270 were girls in the provinces of Sanmatenga, Namentega and Bam.

Number of girls and mothers who received livelihood support (2004-2005): 114 girls and 114 mothers in Sourou Province.

Number of parents who received livelihood support (2004): 33 of whom 18 women and 15 men in the only province of Sahel.

Estimated number of trafficking cases reported (based on 2004 interceptions): 258 internal cases; and 659 external cases.

Estimated number of people targeted by local sensitization activities (2004): 75,000.

**Note: the above facts were not checked during the evaluation but are presented based on different progress reports to give an indication of the scale and scope of the program.*

The first part of the Burkina Faso report lays out the program and its logic – that is, how the program is supposed to work. The second part presents a discussion on how the program has developed in practice, first providing some overall comments, then commenting on each component in particular.

The program: the logic, the cycle and the theories of change

The six key thematic areas have been slightly modified and reordered to reflect a chronological ordering within the anti-child trafficking program in Burkina Faso. They are presented below as headings followed by the relevant program objective or statement of intent. The logic of each will be treated in this section.

- Information Dissemination, Awareness-Raising and Sensitization;
- Legal Frameworks and the Normative Environment for Child Protection and Child Rights:
 - *Fostering a rights-based environment / culture linked to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter of Rights and of Child Welfare, and the Convention to Eliminate of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).*
 - *Establishing and Applying Legal and Normative Frameworks to protect children (and vulnerable groups).*
- Protection: Responding to Violations of Children’s Rights:
 - *To intercept, accompany child victims of trafficking by “Ensuring special protection measures are put into place for the most vulnerable Burkinabe children and women” and*
 - *“To rehabilitate and reintegrate child victims of trafficking”.*
- Promoting Child Protection and Prevention:
 - *To prevent child trafficking by “Gradually strengthening socio-economic measures”*
 - *“Establishing and Applying Legal and Normative Frameworks to protect children (and vulnerable groups).*
- Data Collection, Monitoring and Information Management Systems:
 - *“Establish and Maintain a Data Collection, Information and Monitoring System on Children and Women”.*
- Reinforcing National Capacities.

Information dissemination and awareness-raising

Activities related to information and awareness raising account for 29 percent of the Sida allocated budget, or 480,000 USD. The media and public awareness campaigns aim at educating the public as to the risks of child trafficking and to some extent mobilizing the public to report on situations where children may be being trafficked. The operative assumption is that the general public is unaware of child trafficking and of the dangers of urban migration for children and youth. By educating (and to some extent mobilizing) this public, families, households and citizens will stop children from migrating and keep them at home – largely ending the phenomenon.

Three principal communications strategies are used in the communications activities, namely: advocacy to affect authorities, politicians, bureaucrats, leaders and local decision makers; social mobilization to affect NGOs, associations and other networks; and communications aimed at changing behavior for individuals, families, communities and the population at large.

Media and public awareness activities are implemented through local organizations. These include community radio and other popular education groups which are experienced and employ a number of different outreach approaches (ranging from community theatre and games to competitions and outdoor cinema). These groups are coordinated through UNICEF Burkina Faso's Information and Communication Department's annual Integrated Communications Plan (ICP) which, as mentioned earlier, was largely funded by Sida. While the surveillance, vigilance and local sensitization activities are conducted in 'sending' communities (areas deemed as sources of potential child victims), there is some overlap between these sensitization activities and the media and public awareness activities.

Surveillance, vigilance and local sensitization activities

The surveillance and vigilance activities involve establishing two local structures to monitor, alert and/or act on suspicious incidents where child trafficking may be occurring. A Vigilance and Surveillance Committee (VSC) is established in select regional centers and is made up of essentially government officials and agencies, including: a local law enforcement officer, a local child protection worker, and regional and district social services representatives. Local Relay Committees (*Noyaux relais*) are also set up and form the key 'community' structures at the village level – thereby extending the 'eye and arm' of the program beyond the district centers into select distant communities. The members of these structures are sensitized to the phenomenon through basic training on child trafficking and child rights.

The Relay Committees are made up of formal and informal community leaders, namely: the village delegate; a women's representative; a youth representative; and local religious leaders. The role of the Relay Committees (RCs) involves going door to door to inform local residents of a number of social problems, including: the hazards of child trafficking and allowing one's children to leave to work in cities; female excision, and the importance of registering the birth of children. The RCs also are charged with the responsibility of promptly informing the VSC of suspicious situations where children may be being trafficked *en route* in and/or around their respective villages.

The RCs perform a local sensitization role at the village level which is viewed as one form of preventing child trafficking. However, they were also established to create a link between select villages and the district centre. Given the lack of village telephones and regular transportation between the villages and the district centre, RC members were given bicycles to assist them with these tasks. The VSCs were each given a motorcycle to the Chief of the Regional District. Both the RCs and VSCs also received some training on child trafficking from local NGOs and/or associations. However, given that two of the government agencies on the VSC already have a mandate to intervene and do in fact intervene, namely the police and the child welfare agency there is a need to clarify the role of the VSC. The discussion and findings section will discuss this issue in more depth.

Establishing legal and normative frameworks towards the creation of a protective environment

The operating principle is that in order to create a protective environment for children, governments in particular need to integrate the concept of human trafficking and child trafficking into their respective codes of law nationally, as well as harmonize existing laws. The various levels of the judiciary and law enforcement therefore need to be trained and

equipped to be able to investigate the phenomenon, pursue suspected traffickers and prosecute. These are medium-term processes which cannot be implemented over night; however, without these arms of the law, traffickers risk escaping with impunity.

As child trafficking is also often a transnational issue, bilateral and multilateral agreements to combat the phenomenon, to repatriate child victims (when it is in their interest) and to coordinate these efforts are supported by the project. As an internal and transnational phenomenon, child trafficking requires the adoption of national, bilateral and multilateral legal frameworks, as well as well-equipped and informed law enforcement agencies, something that this program has aimed to support.

In terms of reducing structural poverty, UNICEF Burkina Faso's involvement in poverty-reduction processes is intended to ensure that strategic budget processes maintain resources for vulnerable children and women.

Special protection and sensitization

Two key program components deal directly with special protection, namely: interception and return to the parental home; and reintegration. The overall operating assumption is that children and youth are better off if they remain in their villages, and that the parental home in the village is the safest and best place for children¹³.

Interception *en route* and return of children to their families

At the village and district level, the program assumption is that children and youth who are in transit and unaccompanied by a parent or older sibling are at high risk of trafficking. The operating principle is thus that they should be systematically intercepted and returned to their parental homes. The vast majority of these interceptions happen *en route*. However, there are also instances where children and youth¹⁴ in 'sending communities' with the intent to travel are confronted and dissuaded from leaving. Children and youth in transit or with the intent to leave may be intercepted by authorities, members of the VSCs, RCs and/or other vigilante citizens.

In terms of the program's procedures, the evaluation team would recommend that clear guidelines and materials be developed as to how children in transit should be approached, by whom or the types of questions which should be posed to determine whether a child is or is not a victim of trafficking.

Once intercepted, children are to be taken into custody or referred to local child welfare agencies. When they are intercepted far away from their home communities, they may be lodged in district transit centers where they are to receive food, shelter and basic medical and psycho-emotional care until an arrangement can be made to send them to their home district. These transit centers are operated by the district offices of the Ministry of Social

¹³ The safe parental home in the village is described in sharp contrast to the urban areas which are associated with vice, danger, exploitation and disease.

¹⁴ In addition to the term children, I also use the term 'youth' to refer particularly to young people aged 14 to 17 who are minors by law but who are more mature than the term 'children' usually suggests.

Action and National Solidarity (MSANS) and are often located in the centre of town right next to the district offices. The transit centers are also clearly marked as such.

Upon arrival in their home district, intercepted children and youth are interviewed by a child welfare worker, and an initial in-take interview is conducted. The initial in-take interview asks a series of basic questions (i.e., related to the child's name, age, village, parents and level of schooling). The in-take interview questionnaire however does not ask about the child's physical, psychological and/or emotional health, nor does it deal with trauma (whether from being trafficked or abused) or previous experiences with violence in the parental home.

Upon returning the child to his/her original home, the welfare worker proceeds to have a talk with the parents and household members about the dangers related to children leaving to work in cities. The child welfare worker also conducts a needs assessment with the family which focuses on the socio-economic opportunities which exist for the child in the village to prevent him/her from leaving again.

Reintegration of intercepted children upon their return

Regarding reintegration, the operative principle of the program is that intercepted, returned children should live in their parental homes and participate in a reintegration process where they benefit either from schooling, vocational training and/or a small grant to establish themselves and a livelihood. Depending on their age and level of educational attainment, younger returned children will be encouraged to return to school, while in principle, older children and those who have completed their schooling will have access to vocational training or an apprenticeship and a small grant to start up their own business or livelihood.

The program presumes that there are non-formal vocational training organizations in the district centers which offer relevant and adequate training programs geared to vulnerable children and youth. Social services staff in the district centers are supposed to encourage returned children to participate in these programs. By having children reside in their home communities or in nearby towns, the program offers children and youth the opportunity to readjust to their native environment while learning a trade or marketable skills.

Data collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the child trafficking phenomenon

One of the largest challenges in the anti-child trafficking campaign has been acquiring solid, reliable and timely data on the phenomenon. To address this information gap and reinforce the capacity of UNICEF Burkina Faso's most important child protection partner, the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity, it was decided that a database should be set up which would provide decision-makers with necessary information on the phenomenon. However, the database's *raison-d'être* does not appear to have been sufficiently conceptualized and articulated, nor was the question of where it might be best located institutionally. The database coordinator stepped down several months prior to this evaluation and was unavailable for an interview. This position had not yet been filled at the time of this evaluation. In an effort to deal with these information gaps, key project documents combined with a handful of interviews with other individuals involved with the database were used to examine the database in the overall program. There may as a result be some gaps in the presentation of the database based on this individual's central role.

In terms of the purpose of the database, certain documents and sources suggest that the database will gather information on child victims of trafficking by collecting data on a case-by-case basis periodically through active agencies. Other sources, however, suggest that the database will also be used more as a project management tool to track which agencies are working where and what their activities and investments are. These two purposes in fact suggest rather different kinds of databases: the first being more akin to a case management tool to be used by case workers to follow individual victims (with no access to unauthorized individuals or agencies so as to protect the victims' identities); the second a project management tool for the Ministry to coordinate and oversee anti-child trafficking and child protection efforts; and/or the third scenario is more of a statistical tool on child trafficking and child protection issues.

Throughout the development process, the issue of leadership and expertise for the database is unclear. Different agencies appear to have been involved in the development phase including UNICEF Burkina Faso database staff and staff from the Permanent Secretariat for Childhood (SP-PAN-Enfance). In essence, the MSANS appears to want an information management system which not only collects relevant statistical information through a community data collection mechanism but also generates timely relevant reports. Such an information system requires IT or database expertise along with social research expertise, namely: technical, IT expertise in structuring, establishing and populating a database; a data collection mechanism and tools (along with the associated expertise in organizing data collection); a data processing and quality control function; and a report generating function which can interpret the information and produce timely, relevant reports. It appears through the staffing, however, that only the IT function and skills were present – that of the database technical expertise. The other research-oriented functions of the system appear to have been underappreciated.

In setting up and populating the database for the MSANS, the program needed to establish a data collection mechanism and structure (since one did not exist beforehand). To do so, the program choice was to use a community data collection process where locally-active agencies were expected to participate on an on-going basis (on top of their other activities). The case data gathered comes exclusively from those agencies (as opposed to from conducting a broader survey of households or children) where they are operative. This data collection mechanism requires that local agencies identify legitimate cases of trafficking and practice a degree of quality control of the data. By definition, however, cases which go undetected by community agencies escape the system, while other cases of interception may be wrongly labeled and enumerated as child trafficking cases.

The data collection tools were designed and piloted and subsequently, revised accordingly. Indicators were also derived from the data collected, revised and validated. However, the database has never been fully populated or functional despite three years of experimentation with data collection and indicators.

Capacity building amongst key staff, government and partners

Both the Country Office and Regional Office in Dakar have supported developing institutional capacity internally and with governmental, non-governmental and community-based organizations by providing training, material and logistical support and technical expertise. The operating assumption of this aspect of the program is that organizations working with trafficked and vulnerable or at-risk children need a variety of supports to these ends. This

support includes: providing necessary equipment; developing relevant, appropriate training; drafting and disseminating guidelines and standards; serving as a resource and reference on child protection issues; and organizing seminars, conferences and working meetings, as well as enabling the participation of key actors at such events. The Regional Office has played a lead role in this program component particularly at the intergovernmental level with the express aim of generating a regional platform for combating the phenomenon. Given the synergies between these efforts, it can be difficult to separate clearly the roles of the different offices.

Observations and findings

The previous section laid out the program and its logic as it was intended to operate, and to some extent addressed the strengths, weaknesses and gaps at the structural level of the program and how it was conceptualized. This section examines what happens as the program unfolds and is implemented at the various levels. It starts off by examining some of the general issues which arise, followed by a discussion of each of the six main program elements (as used earlier).

The critical perspectives raised in this section should not be allowed to conceal the tremendous effort that has been put into all the components planned for the program, in particular in the areas of community awareness raising and social mobilization. However, the anti-child trafficking and child protection program in Burkina Faso has faced definitional and analytical problems. Most importantly, while a normative, international definition of human and child trafficking exists through the Palermo Protocol, this much-debated definition which is based on elusive, often invisible characteristics can be very challenging to apply in regions where child labor, exploitation and migration abound. It can be even more difficult to distinguish child trafficking from other types of exploitation or more benign forms of child relocation than it has proven to be in the theoretical debate. A handful of respondents pointed out that a wider, national debate is needed in Burkina Faso to build a consensus about which situations constitute child trafficking.

The interviews revealed a tremendous variation in people's conception and views on what child trafficking involves or means in Burkina Faso. Staff in key agencies who work on this issue frequently struggled to explain the concept. The point here is not to be fussy or split hairs about the wording of a definition; rather, if agency staff working on this issue struggle to differentiate and distinguish child trafficking from other practices, then, how can we be certain that we're all talking about the same phenomenon and that we're all actually working to counter the same phenomenon? The lack of a common understanding makes it difficult to have a conversation and to build up a knowledge base, much less construct a common platform to deal with the phenomenon (which undermines and challenges the 'relevance' of these interventions).

The work would be enhanced if common definitions could be arrived at. This would also strengthen the credibility of data, and also its ease of interpretation. The evaluators observed that some actors approached the child trafficking phenomenon very carefully and actively attempted to examine and distinguish between child trafficking, child labour migration, exploitive child labour situations and child fostering practices. Such developments appear to suggest more careful reflection and a better understanding of the different phenomena.

So, does it matter if other exploited or vulnerable children ended up benefitting from the program? In principle, no. While it is likely that children in general become more vulnerable once removed from the safety nets of family and community, this is not always the case. When all the home community can offer is poverty, unemployment and despair, child relocation may be risky – but staying may be even more so. Moreover, when a child’s departure is triggered by domestic exploitation, abuse or threats of forced marriage, interception and return may be even more critical. In these cases, preventing children from leaving and intercepting child relocation may indeed not be in the best interest of the child. Even if circumstances are not as dramatic, in particular older children and youth may have their reasons for wanting to leave and work elsewhere.¹⁵

The program has attempted to systematically intercept and return all child migrants. Interception and return became the focus rather than identifying and supporting true child victims. Intentions and interventions designed to protect children and youth have to some become barriers to their mobility and to improve own prospects.

Although certainly an unintended consequence, victims and potential victims of child trafficking have ended up being controlled and regulated, rather than the perpetrators. Victims do not seem to have been asked about their opinions and experiences, and nor have their opinions and perspectives been integrated into proposed solutions.

Based on the interviews conducted a recommendation is that staff and partners should receive training on lessons learned regarding the relation between regulation of child relocation and vulnerability for children. For instance, such interventions may create new market opportunities for smugglers and traffickers, and alienate children from seeking help from authorities in the future when they really need it, since they know they will simply be sent home without being consulted. In this sense, the program may have damaging ‘impacts’ on some children and needs careful monitoring.

Child and youth participation in the program was largely absent. Agencies largely failed to encourage or foster meaningful child participation throughout the program cycle¹⁶ or even through formalized consultation processes at the outset of the program or annually. Such participation of children is recognized as generally improving the quality and relevance of anti-child trafficking programs.¹⁷

¹⁵ A recent IREWOK report explains how cultural attitudes make it undesirable for children to work in their Burkinabe home communities even when work is available: first, because it will be expected that their earnings are given to their families; and second, because it could be perceived as shameful for the family if their child works for others rather than them.

¹⁶ Throughout the ‘program cycle’ entails the design, planning, monitoring and implementation stages of the program.

¹⁷ To quote Mike Dottridge: “Undoubtedly when schemes to repatriate and reintegrate trafficked children have failed in the past, it has frequently been because of a failure to involve the children concerned adequately and the attitude of bureaucrats (both governmental and non-governmental) who assumed they knew what was best for a child.” (p. 83)

As already mentioned, sound research on the child trafficking phenomenon, migration mechanisms, triggers for child relocation and migration routes is limited. It was also unclear whether many of the agency staff had access to key studies on human and child trafficking in which they might frame, understand and reorganize their work.

Media and public awareness activities regarding the child trafficking phenomenon

The media and awareness-raising activities appear to have been of a high quality while also having a large geographic reach. In fact, the media and public awareness activities are one of the stronger elements in the Burkina Faso program. This program component was well organized and integrated, and shared important synergies with broader regional UNICEF protection initiatives. The Info-Comm Department who ran this component was able to mobilize, coordinate and incorporate both key community media organizations and their diverse approaches. In this sense, this aspect of the program is quite effective and appears to have the potential of having a long-term or more-sustainable impact - since these actors are likely to continue their media work long after the program ends. Presumably, they have been affected by the work and the messages on trafficking and child rights and will hopefully integrate some of this work in the future.

One area in which this program component can be strengthened lies in conducting a more formal analysis of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) of the targeted communities, combined with disaggregating key groups in the specific communities. For evaluation purposes, a KAP analysis can also serve as a baseline study – providing a snapshot of local attitudes, practices and beliefs before a potential continuation of the program. In its partnerships with community media, Info-Comm built upon the pre-existing work of these agencies; however, interviews with these agencies revealed that these groups themselves do not examine or study the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the communities they broadcast to. So, the information campaigns become constructed on the impressions of local journalists and community media staff rather than on a more-informed examination of people's thoughts, experiences and perspectives.

Effective public awareness campaigns are more likely to result when what different groups in the community already know, think, imagine or have experienced is taken into consideration. Many adults in these villages have experiences as child labor migrants, for instance, and one respondent pointed out that when messages are sensational and go against local experience, local people simply do not believe such messages.¹⁸ A KAP analysis can be used to underpin and guide the key media messages, better engage with the local discourses, provide relevant information, build on certain messages, acknowledge people's migration experiences and counter myths where they exist.

¹⁸ Examples cited included telling villagers that by subjecting their daughters to female excision that their daughters would die which actually went against people's lived experiences. Similarly with labor migration, telling villagers that allowing their children to migrate to the city to work will end in child trafficking and possibly death – again are extreme cases which aren't supported by most local people's lived experience and undermine the program's credibility and other key messages.

As stated earlier, a great deal of investment was made into public awareness campaigns, and one important government source indicated that the media activities came at the expense of other important activities – such as service delivery to child victims. This strategic question regarding where and the degree of investments merits discussion and consideration. The level of services and support to child victims was found to be low and little. Certainly, some of these funds could be rechanneled and used for properly-identified child victims.

In terms of demonstrating some type of program impact, without a baseline study or KAP analyses, it is difficult to know what local adults and children knew or thought before the program started – making it hard to attribute changed attitudes or practices to the program.

Surveillance, vigilance and local sensitization activities

UNICEF and her partners have been undertaking a huge social mobilization campaign, and surveillance activities have occurred with Swedish funds. UNICEF has also made sizable investments in terms of training and the provision of bicycles to Relay Committee members and a motorcycle to each VSC. However, the Vigilance and Surveillance Committees are comprised of key government officials who should be collaborating and working on trafficking cases regardless of whether a committee structure exists or not. Also, the evidence that these committees remain active and operative today wasn't compelling. So, one question relates to the VSC structure, namely are VSCs needed?

Interviews with Relay Committee members also confirmed that when potential trafficking situations are identified, they contact either the local law enforcement agents or the provincial Social Action office both of whom have a mandate to intervene – rather than the VSC. So, the creation of the VSC structure does not appear necessary since there are clear mandates for two different government departments for dealing with such situations. In fact, those Relay Committee members interviewed never even mentioned the VSC. Should a large trafficking ring be identified in a particular area, in such instances, an ad hoc interdepartmental committee of relevant agencies (akin to the VSCs) can be struck on an as-needed basis.

Regarding the vigilance and surveillance elements, as already mentioned, these efforts as they are currently practiced are quite problematic - since child labor migrants are being systematically intercepted and sent home without consultation. There is a choice between a program focusing on vigilance and surveillance of children and youth versus the traffickers and the environment in the destination communities where children will end up working (which is an issue of the 'relevance' of the program). This evaluation recommends that the various options here should be discussed and reconsidered.

It was unclear how operational the Relay Committees are in the selected villages. In the village visited during the three-day fieldwork trip, the Relay Committees didn't appear to have been functional at all. We found no evidence of any house-to-house sensitization work in the village we visited on any of the main topics. However, interviewed villagers did notice that a handful of people had been riding around on new bicycles - although they weren't sure why or where the bikes came from.

It is hard to generalize about how active and relevant Relay Committees and their work is based on a short field visit and mission. Perhaps these bodies are largely dormant in some communities while active in others. However, in terms of the approaches used, rather than

protecting youth who need to leave to earn a living, the RCs together with the VSCs participate in curtailing the child's mobility. Child migrants should not be punished or have their mobility restricted if they need to leave their communities to improve their livelihoods or because trafficking and traffickers exist. In terms of social regulation, the government and civil society are recommended to shift their regulatory focus away from the victims towards the trafficker and towards the creation of a safe, protective environment for children.

The program through the RCs and VSCs, appear to assume that families and children have many choices before them in terms of earning a livelihood; however, such approaches fail to take into consideration the frequently-difficult material realities of these households.

Finally, the involved organizations need to reflect on and consider changing their approach to and engagement with children and youth in the direction of increased child participation.

Special protection

Interception *en route* and return of children to their families

While considerable investments were made in communications activities, sensitization campaigns and equipment, services provided to child victims received significantly less funding and were found to be weak and even lacking. Relative to this, the large investments in communications and media activities were a key criticism of the head of the GoBFs Sectoral Planning Unit. Despite claims in progress reports that child victims' medical and psycho-social health needs are attended to, in one of the centers, we were unable to find a single case of a child being referred for medical attention or counseling in five years of functioning. The lack of referrals appears to be a reflection of the lack of investment of adequate resources in these services but also is a reflection of the staff's inability to identify and assess children's needs and subsequently, refer those victim's who need additional care. Children who have been seriously abused and traumatized may not always be able to articulate their needs and rely on such staff to provide care and timely referrals. Traumatized children should also arguably not be left alone in the transit centers.

With respect to child protection, the failure of the program to distinguish between the need to identify child victims and the need to intercept child victims of trafficking is at its most critical. As a result, children and youth who are not victims of trafficking are systematically stopped and returned to their parents' homes.

Guidelines or procedures for interviewing, investigating, and identifying children victims of trafficking while *en route* should be strengthened - although local structures have had some training, and there has been social mobilization with the public.

During the in-take interview, children and youth are not systematically consulted, nor are their best interests or child welfare issues discussed with them: for example, the in-take interview questionnaire fails to ask why a child or youth decided to leave in the first place. Children and youth are also not asked where they would like to go: for instance, to live with an aunt in town rather than with their parents. The in-take interview also neglects to examine or explore with the child which, if any, opportunities exist in the home community (ie, access to school, income-generating opportunities, productive assets, etc.). There are also no follow-up visits to see how the returned children and their households are managing.

The facilities in the two transit centers were inadequate, and in fact, we saw no clear evidence to suggest that these centers are actually used¹⁹. The transit centre in Kadiogo – much to their credit - appears to lodge girl children in a nearby residence for single mothers and their babies rather than use the transit centre facility itself.

The transit centers house both girls and boys; however, there are no staff present either during the day or at night, nor are there guards or night watchmen outside the centers. While separate rooms are available for girls and boys, in one centre, there wasn't a door which could be closed and locked to separate the girls' quarters from the boys'.

Also, the transit centers tend to be located centrally in the district centers – near the provincial MSANS office. Signage also clearly indicates that the building is a transit centre. The policy of clearly marking the transit centers should be revisited by UNICEF in light of the security of child victims of trafficking – particularly, to protect child victims who may be sought by their traffickers. While children also reportedly sometimes run away, the staff interviewed was unable to explain when and why this happens. Provincial and district MSANS staff did not appear to appreciate the dangers inherent in the transit centers as they are currently organized. Neither centre was able to provide us with a basic monthly register of the number of children who had spent the night over the last few months, nor were they able to offer many figures.

Some interviews with key agency staff in Ouagadougou indicated that children who are not successfully reintegrated may well leave again and may be (re-)trafficked. This is undoubtedly a correct observation. However, at the district and local levels, there was no mention of the notion of re-trafficking– including as a phenomenon against which they could monitor the success of their reintegration programs. It appears that at these levels, there is a conceptual gap in their understanding of how the program is supposed to operate for returned children. Such staff and agencies failed to understand the role of successful reintegration programs to precisely reduce the need for a child to leave again and risk being (re-)trafficked. We tried to meet with returned, child victims of trafficking to learn of their experiences of being intercepted and returned to their families but the local authorities were unable to identify any for us - although these authorities claim to keep a list of vulnerable children and presumably, there is a register of returned, intercepted children.

Reintegration of intercepted children upon their return

Based on the three-day field trip to Tougan in Sourou province, reintegration efforts with child victims and returned intercepted children appear to be failing as according to social services personnel “most returned children leave within a few days or weeks.” Statements such as these point to a number of problems with the program, namely: its relevance to those it intends to assist; to the lack of a constructive impact it is having on returned children; and to its effectiveness.

¹⁹ While one centre had a few dusty mats for children to sleep on, it didn't have a single light bulb, nor bedding, glasses, bowls or even cooking utensils. The other centre appeared to be used as a warehouse rather than as a shelter for child victims; we were only able to enter one of the rooms which housed some 20 bicycles, a motorcycle and some 50-60 chairs.

Sourou province has a long history of girls and young women migrating to the urban centers in search of work as domestic laborers. Due to the gendered nature of this migration, only girls were eligible to participate in vocational training and to apply for a start-up grant upon completing the program. The team was unable to ascertain how many girls and young women had been able to receive vocational training or return to school. Seven start-up grants were awarded in the province; however, it was not clear what the criteria for issuing these start-up grants was, nor whether in fact any returned child victims of trafficking received any of them.

With the assistance of local MSANS staff, the evaluation team attempted to interview returned child victims currently participating in the vocational training program; however, no child victim is currently enrolled (out of some 40 participants). The team then asked to meet with reintegrated child victims who had been in the program, and three interviews were convened. However, in the course of these interviews, it became apparent that none of these youth were child victims. Discussions subsequently with local MSANS staff revealed that as the one vocational training program available starts once a year in October, most child victims don't wait around for educational or vocational training activities to begin, nor did local social services staff actively seek to invite or encourage child victims to apply and participate in the program. The evaluation team found that the program does not actively seek to reach out or to reintegrate returned child trafficking victims. While it is positive that trafficking victims are integrated into programs for vulnerable children, it is unclear that child victims are getting much assistance after being returned home. In fact, child victims appear to be lost amongst the many other types of vulnerable children despite the program's anti-child trafficking aims, objectives, activities and title.

Local social service staff spoke highly of recent efforts to diversify the type of livelihood creation initiatives – citing in particular a successful livestock grant to children in more remote villages who are unable to participate in vocational training but who have access to pastures. The Tougan Training and Resource Centre is a government-run centre; however, a women's literacy organization runs literacy courses for girls in the centre. The funds for the training and resource centre are channeled through the women's NGO, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), as the government channels are viewed as too slow and cumbersome. Vocational training is provided in soap-making, batik, sewing/tailoring, weaving, and solar drying of fruits and vegetables.

While vocational training can be useful and empowering, organizers need to carefully study the ability of the small local market to absorb the 40 graduates of the two-year program. Typically, programs focusing on vulnerable youth provide training in types of businesses that are common among poor and uneducated people in the local community. The profits and returns to such businesses are often marginal. As projects add new vendors to these markets, competition increases and prices depreciate also for the poor population who were already in the business. Some will not make it, and the ones most likely to go bankrupt are the most vulnerable ones. This is particularly so because sales in rural Africa mainly happen through social networks, and vulnerable youth typically have very poor networks. The project therefore risks not only wasting its resources by training youth into unemployment, but may simultaneously lead to harming other poor populations. The viable alternative is to do some market research into types of production that can be sold outside the community. Not only would such an approach be less likely to distort local markets, but it would also bring fresh resources into the local community and thus have a broader development impact.

An interview with one of the young women who has opened a small tailor workshop about two years ago revealed that her average monthly earnings after paying the rent and bills for her business are only 1,750CFA (\$4USD). When she worked in Ouagadougou, seven to eight years before coming into the program, she earned 1,500CFA (\$3.50USD) per month. Fortunately, she lives with her aunt in Tougan as her monthly income does not allow her to rent accommodation on her own. These figures are important to note since many agencies cite monthly salaries of 3,000 to 4,000CFA (\$7 - \$ 9USD) in Ouagadougou as being too low. In this case, after three years of training and a year of mentoring and business training, this young woman still earns about what she did before entering the program several years ago.

As has already been mentioned, there is no analysis of a returned child's psycho-social or physical health needs, nor of issues of violence in the household – only a basic socio-economic assessment of what the child might do in the village. Children are neither consulted, nor does any follow-up or monitoring take place. They are returned to their parental home and may receive some support but the program stops there for them.

From a community development perspective, local rehabilitation programs offer children in principle the possibility of living at home and/or near their families and family networks, while developing marketable and other life skills and readjusting to their home communities. However, at the district level, there is often only a single community organization providing such training.

Unfortunately, children and youth in remote communities have little or no access to these programs - unless they are able to board in the district town – although some efforts are being made to diversify the establishment of other livelihoods appropriate for children in more remote communities.

There is no plan for a systematic follow-up with any of the returned children or youth.

Data collection, analysis and dissemination of information on the child trafficking phenomenon

The program set out to establish a 'database' on child trafficking and child protection with the aim of providing timely and relevant information to decision makers. However, a database requires data to populate it and the value of the database is only as useful and accurate as the data it contains. The MSANS does not have regular data collection processes which might be fed into such a system, nor the capacity to create them. The program therefore had to create both a data collection tool and a collection mechanism. In reality, the program wanted to establish an information management system more than simply a database or data bank – that is, a system in which data can be gathered, controlled, entered, treated and analyzed with the ultimate aim of producing relevant reports. UNICEF could consider changing the name of the database to an information management system – as the database term suggests a passive bank of data where data gathering is viewed as the central activity as opposed to analyzing and generating relevant information. Such a shift in terminology could change how people approach and think about this system.

Since this program component began a few years back, the bulk of the effort has been invested in designing, testing and revising the data collection tool. A pilot data collection was conducted. On the basis of the data gathered, relevant social indicators – over one hundred – were developed. At a later stage, this list of indicators was revised and reduced to make

the system more manageable. A second data collection effort was undertaken in some districts. Today, however, the database remains relatively unpopulated, unknown and unused.

Due to the definitional issues related to child trafficking, one cannot rely on the quality of the existing data. At the local level, those working in active agencies – and who also conducted the data collection – found it difficult to differentiate between a case of child trafficking and a non-trafficked child migrant.

Since the database coordinator is no longer employed on the project some of the institutional memory has been lost with him. In his absence, the evaluation team has not been able to get a better understanding of the historic processes which led to the creation of the database, nor about the leadership within the systems' creation. To establish such an information management system requires both IT expertise specifically related to databases and social science research expertise related to data collection processes and tools, the development of indicators, and the analysis and generation of information using techniques such as regression analysis. It would appear that the database was staffed with the database development skills but that the other skill set related to the social sciences was missing or not readily available.

The database project has spent nearly three years trying to perfect a data collection tool and establish indicators. As a result, the project became so bogged down with data collection that this in the end appeared to be the ultimate goal. Little, if anything in the way of reports has been published, much less disseminated. Apart from UNICEF and the Ministry, few other agencies knew anything of the database.

Currently, the data management system does not have a dedicated coordinator and is housed in the Children's Secretariat (SP-PAN Enfance). This information management system needs careful consideration if it is to be used in the future. A recent interview with a staff member from SP-PAN Enfance revealed that there are plans and dreams to expand the system to include all aspects of social action in Burkina Faso. As it is today, the database is not operational, suffers from a lack of leadership and has already absorbed considerable resources without producing practical results. The evaluation team suggests that UNICEF discuss with its main Government partners to move the system to the national bureau of statistics which should both have the required database skills combined with the social science research expertise. Such a move would likely also be more sustainable and effective and may lead to greater awareness of child protection issues in an important government agency. Before the tool is expanded with dozens of new indicators, the tool should ideally be operationalized, and a plan for its development should be elaborated and presented for approval by key partners.

Capacity Building amongst key staff, government and partners

In Burkina Faso, as in the West African region, UNICEF was consistently viewed as the expert on child trafficking. When agencies were confronted with a challenging question related to child trafficking, they consistently would approach UNICEF for expertise and advice.

Both UNICEFs partners and agencies working in the anti-trafficking field consistently expressed a high degree of appreciation and satisfaction with the training and trainers provided by the UNICEF Country and Regional Offices. Similarly, respondents also indicated

that working meetings, seminars and conferences were of a high quality. Within UNICEF, the annual meetings of WCARO protection officers provided important staff development and learning opportunities which were also very much appreciated. From the perspective of the Country Office, the UNICEF Regional Office identified and provided timely consultants and expertise to support in-country efforts.

UNICEF has played an important role in disseminating information on child trafficking. In 2006, the UNICEF Regional Office published *Guidelines for the Protection of Child Victims of Trafficking* in English and French. In 2002, the Country Office issued a popularized booklet in French on the Convention on the Rights of the Child jointly with the Ministry, and this booklet includes information on the worst forms of child labor and to some extent on child trafficking. Efforts are also reportedly underway to translate it into some of the local languages of Burkina Faso.

However, the UNICEF Country Office needs to better monitor how the messages and information it disseminates is being taken up and practiced at the local level. Take for example the notion of 'identifying child victims' versus intercepting all child migrants – or the confusion between exploitive or hazardous forms of work and trafficking. The Country Office needs to proactively monitor and intervene in these situations and take actions to correct messages and misunderstandings.

In terms of strategic partnerships, UNICEF's partnership with the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity is a very important one. The MSANS is however one of the less-well-resourced ministries having only a small budget and limited equipment and staff resources. Operating with inadequate and insufficient resources on a complex issue like child trafficking can be challenging and frustrating at times. Fortunately, the political will in the Ministry is strong and supportive, and the staff appears to be committed. UNICEF has invested considerably in computers, photocopiers, motorcycles and other basic equipment for the MSANS, as well as in purchasing bicycles at the local level of the Relay Committees to better connect local actors. While these investments are important, it can sometimes be difficult to see their direct impact on child victims of trafficking or on vulnerable or at-risk children.

Sustainable capacity building interventions with under-resourced ministries like the MSANS are long-term processes. However, this is not to suggest that funds should simply be invested year after year without examining the effects and consequences of such investments. UNICEF's work in Burkina Faso could benefit from developing a capacity-building plan or program with the Ministry. An institutional capacity-building plan identifies critical areas (related e.g. to gaps in material, informational, analytical/knowledge-related, staffing, policies), as well as goals, SMART objectives, etcetera. Such a plan can also assist partners to better assess their own institutional needs and priorities, identify and better argue for strategic resource investments, as well as see how these investments make a difference in children's lives.

In terms of the MSANS capacity, UNICEF has invested in the Ministry's physical-material resources. However, the investments in ministry staff need more attention, particularly at the local level where services to child victims and vulnerable children are delivered.

Relatively little training and development with local, provincial and district-level ministry staff has occurred in the last three to four years. While a number of staff had received some initial training in 2003-2004, few reported to have had any training since then. As mentioned

earlier, during one of the fieldwork visits, it was disconcerting to learn after probing that in one transit centre, not a single child in five years since the opening had ever been referred for any medical attention or emotional counseling. These observations suggest that staffing issues and staff competence in assessing children's needs is lacking or low. UNICEFs work on and expertise related to violence against children should also be drawn on and integrated into such staff development. The local staff and agencies appeared oblivious to domestic violence and violence against children – much less the different types of violence practiced on children.

Establishing the legal and normative frameworks (including taking steps towards creating a protective environment)

At the political and decision-making levels of government, UNICEF has invested considerable time and effort conveying the value and importance of establishing legal and normative frameworks. UNICEF is both uniquely positioned and has the expert credibility enabling it to work closely with and influence governments on such issues, as well as on poverty reduction strategy processes. Arguably, one of the most important contributions which UNICEF can make is to sensitize, create awareness and impetus on the part of governments in West and Central Africa to take these steps.

Significant and impressive gains have been achieved by the UNICEF Country Office and particularly the Regional Office in terms of establishing legal and normative frameworks to protect children from human trafficking. Since the early 2000s when the phenomenon of child trafficking was virtually unknown in the region, UNICEF worked to sensitize and inform decision-makers of the phenomenon and the need to act. Not only were human trafficking and child trafficking poorly understood but there were no provisions in the national laws in the region to deal with and prosecute child traffickers. Today, UNICEFs work of educating politicians, bureaucrats and decision-makers to name only a few – has led to impressive achievements at both the country and regional levels. Virtually all countries in West and Central Africa are signatories of the CRC, CEDAW and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These gains have been possible because of UNICEFs ability to effectively influence government policy-makers and legislators.

To maintain the impetus and momentum of these gains, law enforcement, investigations and prosecuting traffickers will need to become a central focus in this thematic area. Some important developments are already visible. For instance, Burkina Faso's 2006 PRSP indicated that in 2004, 41 traffickers had been arrested of whom: 16 had been tried and convicted; 10 were remanded; 6 were being tried; and 9 were awaiting trial. Evidence of the pursuit and prosecution of child traffickers can largely be attributed to UNICEFs unique efforts in this domain.

At a regional level, UNICEFs work has been even more impressive – particularly, the Abuja Process and the bilateral agreements. These developments are treated in the section on the Regional Protection Program.

Other issues

There are some matters concerning the program in Burkina Faso which do not easily fit into the above categories, notably: reporting and communicating about the program.

The UNICEF Country Office annual progress reports on the program did not always reflect the actual developments, achievements, challenges and solutions. The progress reports varied considerably, and it was frequently difficult to obtain figures on the number of people assisted in a given year. As a result, it was challenging to get a clear picture of the overall program and how it actually operated before visiting the country. One such example involves the services provided to child victims once they are intercepted and sent home. Despite the reports stating that medical and psycho-social needs of victims were assessed and met, for instance, the field visits indicated that this wasn't the case. All programs meet challenges during implementation which should be discussed in reports, along with solutions or alternatives. Multi-year programs in particular develop and change over time in dynamic ways, and the progress reports should reflect those changes and the learning over time.

Similarly, the reports also speak of efforts to counter female excision; however, it was rather difficult to unearth what specifically the Country Office had supported in this area with the Sida funding. Improved reporting will be beneficial both for UNICEF Burkina Faso's own learning and documentation but also for donor relations.

Finally, it was challenging in examining the financial reports to understand where significant investments of funds had been made the way that some of the financial statements were presented. This difficulty was compounded because the narrative reports did not connect with or provide any interpretation of the financial reports.

Mali

The program: The logic, the cycle and the theories of change

The Mali anti-child trafficking and child protection program very much resembles the program in Burkina Faso although the Sida funds in Mali were used for a greater variety of special protection situations. Sida has been UNICEF Mali's largest donor for child protection work which partially explains why so many different types of protection activities were undertaken using this funding. Given the scope of this rapid evaluation, this report cannot provide feedback on all of these activities and will focus instead on the principal ones. UNICEF Mali's education activities, for instance, to prevent child trafficking were not examined during the course of this evaluation; even though the Sida funds were not used to cover these activities, it is important to acknowledge that in terms of the programme's synergies, education activities serve as a primary prevention strategy. The introduction section to this chapter describes the main features and logic of the program. The second part describes the way the program was observed to work in practice and discusses some opportunities for improvement.

Since the underlying program logic in Mali and Burkina Faso has so much in common, rather than repeat much of the program logic, this section provides a concise overview. Readers who are interested in delving in more detail to the program theory are encouraged to refer to the Burkina Faso section.

The Mali program objectives are listed below under six headings²⁰ (as used in the Burkina Faso section to facilitate comparison). In a few instances, objectives which fall under more than one category have been doubly listed.

Media and Public Awareness Activities regarding the Child Trafficking Phenomenon

- *To inform decision-makers about the situation of the vulnerable children/women and their rights.*
- *To ensure that responsible intervening agents (governmental, non-governmental) are informed about the protective legislation and apply it.*
- *To inform decision-makers about the situation of the vulnerable children/women and their rights.*

Surveillance, Vigilance and Local Sensitization Activities

- *To organise and train community and village committees to protect children from being trafficked.*
- *To establish village committees and community monitoring.*

²⁰ In the original proposal to Sida, the four main program areas are listed as: promoting a legal environment for child protection; special protection, prevention and children in care/custody; the strategic and political framework; social demand and partnership.

Special Protection

- *To enumerate, register and take vulnerable children and victims of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect into care in the respective intervention areas.*
- *To offer children taken into care different services according to each child's need.*
- *To ensure that responsible intervening agents (governmental, non-governmental) are informed about the protective legislation and apply it.*
- *To mobilize resources in favor of the rights of children, especially the most vulnerable.*
- *To train collaborating partners in prevention, repatriation and reintegration activities.*
- *To strengthen the structures for social and legal support of children in difficult circumstances.*

Data Collection, Analysis and Dissemination of Information on the Child

Trafficking Phenomenon

- *To create a national database on child commercial sexual exploitation.*
- *To develop measures to integrate information about the situation of vulnerable children/women into the strategic planning and poverty reduction processes.*

Capacity Building amongst Key Staff, Government and Partners

- *To offer training on the fight against sexual exploitation (to technical services of the government and NGOs).*
- *To strengthen the structures responsible for law enforcement.*
- *To train collaborating partners in prevention, repatriation and reintegration activities.*
- *To strengthen the structures for social and legal support of children in difficult circumstances.*

Establishing the Legal and Normative Frameworks towards the Creation of a Protective Environment

- *To ensure that responsible intervening agents (governmental, non-governmental) are informed about the protective legislation and apply it.*
- *To inform decision-makers about the situation of the vulnerable children/women and their rights.*
- *To develop measures to integrate information about the situation of vulnerable children/women into the strategic planning and poverty reduction processes.*
- *To implement the National Emergency Plan of action against child trafficking.*
- *To strengthen the structures responsible for law enforcement.*

UNICEF's Mali protection program is multifaceted mirroring the complex protection issues in the large West African country. The program is delivered in partnership with several governmental and non-governmental partners as the belief is that to create a protective environment for all children requires actors and advocates at various levels and locations. At the strategic political level, UNICEF Mali engages with national-level decision makers by advocating for the establishment of legal and normative frameworks to protect children and

women (including national legislation, plans of action, and bilateral and multilateral agreements). UNICEF Mali has also been developing its own capacity to engage in poverty reduction strategy processes with the aim of ensuring that the needs of vulnerable children and women are not lost.

A central tenet of the program involves reinforcing the capacities of UNICEF and its key child protection partner, the Ministry for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and the Family (MPFEF). The capacity strengthening will enable them to better promote and protect children's rights and strengthen the child protection system. The UNICEF Mali protection team also works with three other government agencies: the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Support Mission to Consolidate the Civil Registry. Part of the Sida funds has supported the national annual action plans of the Ministry for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and the Family (MPFEF). UNICEF also participates in the elaboration of the Government of Mali's (GoM) national action plan on child protection which is organized by MPFEF.

UNICEF's strategic partnerships with the GoM are complemented and bolstered by the participation of international organizations and local and international NGOs, such as BIT/Lutrena, Mali Enjeu, Apaf Muso Danbe, AMSOPT, IOM, Enda Mali, Save the Children Canada and Save the Children (US). Partnership cooperation is formalized through cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding.

UNICEF, MPFEF and their partners focus on identified protection priorities, in this case on: promoting birth registration; countering female excision; preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS through public education and sensitization on the rights of people living with HIV; preventing early marriage; eliminating violence against children; and working on child migration in selected zones. Given the sensitive nature of certain aspects of child protection, such work depends upon local partners who are well placed to intervene in appropriate, yet innovative ways and who can negotiate the interstices between certain harmful traditional practices and promoting and protecting the rights of children and women. The program approach in Mali supports the development of a culture and environment which promotes and protects children's and women's rights from within, while simultaneously mobilizing key actors. This approach reinforces families, extended families and local communities to protect children and women.

UNICEF committed significant support to the Government of Mali's birth registration campaign – pledging support with logistics, training, staff participation, equipment and an evaluation of the civil registry with a particular focus on the region of Kaye. The birth registration campaign provides an important opportunity for protecting and promoting children's right to an identity by means of securing this important document. From the GoM's perspective, the civil registry and the registration of births allow for the government to generate information on the population important for planning services, child protection and other key functions. Birth registration is also generally viewed as an important tool to prevent trafficking.

To encourage the abandonment of harmful practices like female excision, UNICEF supports the National Program to Combat Excision (PNLE) by way of a follow-up and evaluation role, supporting the establishment of committee structures (at the local, village and regional level), as well as by providing logistic and technical support and equipment. UNICEF also funds support services for excision victims who need further medical help.

At the district level, UNICEF works with the district-level MPFEF office (DRPF EF) and local community associations, national and international NGOs to raise local awareness of child protection and child rights issues. These partners joined forces to create Community Surveillance Structures (CSS) which are essentially village-level bodies with two main responsibilities: the sensitization of local residents to key child protection and child rights issues; and the surveillance, reporting and sometimes intervention related to potential child-trafficking incidents. These structures and their roles are very similar to the local Relay Committees in Burkina Faso. The CSS are trained to sensitize local residents on such themes as birth registration, schooling, and the dangers of child migration. The CSS are not however tasked with addressing more complex social issues like female excision as such subjects are viewed as particularly complex and require specialist skills and knowledge.

The interception of child migrants involves a discreet conversation with a child in transit to determine whether the child is a victim of trafficking and should be sent home. A three-month travel document (*titre de voyage*) serves as the basis on which legitimate, cross-border child migration is premised up and until the legal age of 18. During the interview, suspicion or failure to produce a travel document results in interception and return.

Upon interception, the child may be referred through different channels to the DRPF EF and to the transit centre. In some instances, a CSS member may return children directly to their villages without the DRPF EF. As mentioned above, different referral mechanisms are being tested through the program with the aim of developing a more standardized referral system for intercepted children. Children may spend a few days in the transit centre before returning to their native villages and those needing more care may stay longer. However, once children leave the transit centre for home, there is little in the way of reintegration program.

In terms of other forms of special protection, UNICEF also supports two projects providing child domestic workers with evening literacy classes, information on HIV/AIDS and STI transmission, health services and shelter. One project has a residence/dormitory to accommodate girl domestic workers (and their children) should they need to leave an abusive work environment or should they become pregnant and be unable to return home.

UNICEF supports the development of communications and media activities and materials. Rather than investing in large or nation-wide information campaigns with universal messages which might not be appropriate across the country, these communications investments are linked to the specific partnerships and interventions – to ensure the appropriateness of the materials for the local community. These investments appear to be more linked to the specific partner(s) and their particular intervention – to ensure the appropriateness of the materials for the local community.

UNICEF has provided logistical and financial support to develop a large GoM database on socio-economic activities in all sectors, known as MaliKunafoni²¹. The system was developed using the United Nations' Development Group's DevInfo²² system and uses data gathered

²¹ http://www.devinfo.org/factsheets/mli/devinfo_country_fact_sheet_mli.htm?IDX=3

²² For more information on DevInfo, see: <http://www.devinfo.org/faqs.htm?IDX=5>

through 17 governmental contact points in various ministries and departments. In the course of this project, UNICEF learned that the data on children and women's rights and status were somewhat dispersed – that is, the data were located in different places and not structured or organized in ways amenable to generating timely information and reports. So, there was a decision to also sponsor the development of a smaller database on children's and women's protection issues (based on UNICEF's ChildInfo data system and the DevInfo systems). This child and women protection database will eventually be integrated in the larger MaliKunafoni system.

Observations and findings

This section assesses how the program appears to be operating based on the observations and findings of the fieldwork. First, there is a discussion of some cross-cutting issues related to the child trafficking definition, staffing and institutional capacity and partnerships. Second, each key program component is addressed.

As with the Burkina Faso program, the anti-trafficking program in Mali experiences definitional problems related to what constitutes child trafficking. During the interviews, respondents regularly associated child trafficking with different phenomena: with children being removed from their communities; with children who had left their communities; and/or with the worst forms of child labor. While the Palermo Protocol is an important normative international legal tool, the lack of a shared understanding in Mali of what child trafficking is creates important challenges - particularly in a region where it is difficult to distinguish child trafficking from other types of exploitation or more benign forms of child relocation.²³ As discussed earlier, these different understandings make it difficult to ensure that the discourse and interventions are centred on the same phenomenon. The fact that UNICEF is reorienting its work towards the more general goal of creating a protective environment for all children will hopefully help to resolve this definitional matter, or at least reduce the problems related to the current confusion.

The UNICEF Mali protection team has been faced with a number of staffing challenges and capacity issues over the last few years. Despite a complete staff turnover a few years ago, the new UNICEF Mali Protection leadership and team have worked hard to rebuild their capacity, while also reinforcing the capacity of their key government protection partners.

The main partner agency, the Ministry for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and the Family, is currently a small ministry with a political mandate but without a presence at the district or provincial level. For district-level implementation, UNICEF therefore works with the Ministry of Social Services (MDSS) and its corresponding district-level authority, the National Direction for the Promotion of Woman, the Child and Family (DNPEF). The MDSS is responsible for promoting and reintegrating children. Both MPFEF and MDSS are under-resourced and heavily dependent on UNICEF funding; virtually every activity they execute is done with UNICEF funds. The protection unit also works with the Ministry of Justice on issues

²³ In regions where child labor and migration are a part of socialization and culture, it can be even more difficult to distinguish child trafficking from child labor migration, fostering arrangements and exploitative forms of work for children. When children are in transit it can be particularly difficult to differentiate between those who are migrating or being trafficked.

related to children in conflict with the law. On the Sida-funded program, the protection team also worked with a temporary government agency to bolster the civil registry (discussed in the next section).

In short, the UNICEF Mali protection unit relates to a number of different ministries and government offices to implement the protection program. To some extent this complicates their work and requires more time for coordination efforts. Given that the key agencies are under-resourced in terms of staff, equipment and funding, UNICEF Mali has had to make significant investments in their institutional capacities in order to make them functional partners. The section on institutional capacity building delves further into these matters.

Media and public awareness activities

UNICEF Mali has taken different media approaches to the various protection issues it supports. On more sensitive protection issues like excision and early marriage, UNICEF encourages its local partners to develop culturally-sensitive and appropriate materials and/or awareness-raising techniques.

The lack of birth registers represents a fundamental challenge in the fight against human trafficking. UNICEF has worked with the Support Mission to Consolidate the Civil Registry²⁴ to promote the Government's birth registration campaigns. As part of this support, UNICEF funded an assessment of the existing civil registry to better understand the specific challenges facing it and why local citizens are not registering.²⁵ The findings from this study were integrated into the plan of action for developing the civil registry through the campaign (2003-2008).

A main obstacle to registering was, not surprisingly, poor access. Village residents frequently complained that the nearest civil registry offices were far away, and culturally, by travelling so far, they are expected to also buy gifts for their neighbors for when they return – adding to their travel expenses and the administrative fees of registering a birth. In an effort to address these barriers, the GoM has been setting up civil registration service centers where a single representative is present and can perform the registry task without a fee. These representatives are usually teachers, nurses or other individuals who have at least six years of schooling. The aim has been to set up one such service centre in every second village in Mali – starting in the Kaye region and expanding into the seven remaining regions.

UNICEF Mali has played a central role in this campaign and its support has been greatly appreciated. UNICEFs participation in elaborating the action plan for the Mission was particularly appreciated given the shortage of results-based management (RBM) skills. The efforts were also coordinated to feed into the upcoming March 2008 census in Mali, and overall, UNICEFs efforts and engagement appear to have been well invested.

²⁴ Mission d'Appui à la Consolidation de l'Etat Civil (MACEC). The MACEC is a special governmental mission which was set up to function between 2003 and 2008 to bolster the civil registry and give every Malian a social security number by 2008.

²⁵ The GoM estimates that 70% of Malians are not registered.

In addition to the birth registration campaign, UNICEF Mali also developed a simplified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) document in French, Bambara and in a few other Malian languages. Through UNICEF's partnerships, awareness-raising activities, discussions and training were also supported on child trafficking or child protection. In a few cases, however, when the evaluation team probed the implementing partner for training materials or specifics, some partners were not able to clarify the nature or key messages of the training. To ensure training quality, it might be useful to encourage implementing partners to formalise training activities in the future e.g. by developing training plans.

In terms of program improvement, given the extent of training sessions delivered, UNICEF might consider contributing to raising training standards by issuing a short check-list of best practices in developing training programs for their implementing partners and include elements such as: establishing baseline information beforehand and analysing the knowledge, attitudes and practices of communities before developing training materials (KAP analysis); disaggregating key social groups in target communities; monitoring the intended messages; and how to measure the outcomes and impact of such activities. As it is, UNICEF's approach is to encourage its implementing partners to develop sensitive, locally appropriate materials.

Surveillance, vigilance and local sensitization activities

The media and public awareness-raising campaigns are reinforced by sensitization activities in rural areas. These local sensitization activities are conducted by volunteer Community Surveillance Structures (CSSs) established by UNICEF and the DNPEF in partnership with villages, community associations and NGOs. UNICEF provided bicycles to CSS members to assist and motivate them with their communication and linkage role. Experiences during the field visits indicated that CSSs continue to function despite the fact that they are volunteers and not remunerated for their contributions.

Interviews with villagers confirm that village-level sensitization activities have been conducted on the specified themes of schooling, birth registration, the worst forms of child labor and child migration. Outreach materials do not appear to have been provided – neither text- nor image-based. Some CSS members expressed an interest in engaging their communities on excision and underscored that some special skills and expertise were required to help them to do so.

Local NGOs appear to have provided most of the training of the CSSs. It was unclear whether training was reinforced at several occasions or if post-training follow-up was carried out systematically by the training partners. Repeated training would normally be a requirement to ensure that a complex message is well understood and properly communicated. Follow-up visits would moreover allow the CSSs to bring up particular issues and challenges encountered after their first period of training. If the CSSs are to function over the long term, UNICEF, DNPEF and their NGO partners also need to consider how to keep motivating and appreciating the program volunteers in the long-run.

One of the program strategies for promoting a protective environment for children was to create cultural change from within communities and intensify the role of families, extended families and entire communities. While training leading to awareness raising and cultural change in rural communities is important, the program should consider shifting its emphasis

on the role of CSS members away from child surveillance toward more of a child advocate role.

The CSSs are encouraged to monitor child relocation from the communities. Somewhat similar to the Burkina Faso anti-child trafficking program, UNICEF and partners need to refocus their surveillance and vigilance activities away from the victims (relocating children) and onto the perpetrators (traffickers and possibly other opportunists). This focus on the child rather than on possible exploiters is essential as it is ideologically at odds with the strategic goal of creating a protective environment for all children. A further recommendation in line with this point is to put more consideration into establishing CSSs in destination communities, where they should play the role as child advocates promoting child rights and child friendly communities.

Special protection

Sida-funded special protection activities include the interception of child migrants, support to transit centers, returning migrant children, support to child laborers and discouragement of female excision. Each activity will be treated separately in this section.

Interception

Regarding the interception and return of child migrants, the program appears to be operating as planned. Youth under 18 who are not accompanied by a significant adult family member and who do not possess the travel document are routinely intercepted in the border zones and sent home.

It is the impression of the evaluators that children and youth are rarely asked their opinions during the process of interception and return. It is also unlikely that being intercepted and returned is always in the best interest of the child. The evaluators were concerned with the perceived absence of such concerns among the adults involved in intercepting children's movement.

Since all relocating children are viewed as potential victims of child trafficking, interception and return of child migrants has become the local focus of the program, rather than identifying and supporting real child trafficking victims. As with the Burkina Faso program, intentions and interventions designed to protect children and youth have become barriers to their mobility and to their ability to relocate to improve their livelihoods. Potential victims rather than the perpetrators end up being controlled and regulated, and victims' opinions and experiences are not solicited or integrated into proposed solutions.

Despite the good intentions, such interventions push child migrants into more vulnerable situations. Prohibition creates market opportunities for traffickers and smugglers, and scares off people who used to be the good helpers along the way for travelling children. Moreover, knowing that contacting authorities for help will mean being sent home without being consulted further reduces the chance that children will seek support when they need it the most. In this sense, the impact the program may have on children is to reduce their protection.

Interviews with key informants in Sikasso suggested that there are fewer interceptions today than a few years ago. A few years ago, the transit centre in Sikasso received 20-30 children each month whereas today it receives five children on average. It is difficult to know whether child migration has diminished and/or become more clandestine and hidden. It is also likely

that the instability in Côte d'Ivoire has served as a disincentive for traditional trans-border movements, probably contributing to changing relocation patterns.

The travel document (*titre de voyage*) for children and youth under 18 years of age was introduced without conducting a base line study. It is therefore hard to know the exact impact the travel document has had on the trans-border movements of children. In the literature on human trafficking there are however many examples showing how attempts to control victims' movement actually have the opposite effect, that is: they create market conditions favorable to intermediaries (who may later traffic children) and traffickers since children will need the help of adults to pass through checkpoints. Children who do not use or rely on intermediaries, guides and traffickers must buy false papers, persuade officials and/or bribe corrupt officials or attempt to migrate along less-travelled paths and/or at night undermining their personal safety. These protective efforts unfortunately put child migrants at greater risk of being trafficked or abused. UNICEF Mali has committed to monitor the effect of implementing the travel document.

During the field visit in Sikasso, the evaluator was unable to meet with an intercepted, returned child and surmised that might be explained by the fact that intercepted children often leave shortly after interception. There was also widespread consensus that work is a part of the socialization process in Mali for children (although child labor and the worst forms of child labor need to be distinguished). One key respondent claimed that since the travel document has been introduced, fewer children are leaving Mali, and more are travelling to other regions of Mali to work in rice paddies or on cotton farms.

Referral mechanisms and the transit centers

In Mali, several implementing partners are involved in referring intercepted children. The transit centers are run by NGOs and not government structures. The initial point of referral for intercepted children is usually either law enforcement agencies or the CSSs. After this first contact, the child might be further referred to the CSS, the police, DNPEF, the transit centre or the regional authorities. Given the reality of multiple authorities and the fact that minors through these processes essentially are being taken into custody, clear referral mechanisms and responsibilities should be established.

UNICEF Mali is still experimenting with a number of referral mechanisms in various regions in the country with the purpose of learning which models work best in different local environments. On the basis of this experience, these referral mechanisms will be shared nationally and replicated. The field visits did suggest that intercepted children are usually brought to either the district-level government office or to the transit centre relatively promptly.

The transit centre visited in Sikasso appeared to be well run and well resourced. The staff appeared to be qualified and sensitive to the situation of newly-arrived children. Upon arrival, children are not pressured into intake interviews or discussions immediately and are encouraged to simply adjust during the first day at the centre. Children are not supposed to spend more than three days in the transit centre, but in practice, the staff allows children who need more time to adjust to stay longer. At the transit centre, children get medical attention if they need it, as well as psycho-social support.

In terms of opportunities for program improvement, it was unclear whether UNICEFs Guidelines for Protecting Child Victims of Trafficking had been distributed to implementing

partner agencies. Also, each agency involved in referrals appears to use different in-take forms or information sheets, and these sheets do not appear to be shared when a child is transferred to another agency. Better coordination and information sharing with transfers could also be introduced. All intercepted children are supposed to pass through a transit centre, as well as meeting with a local DNPEF social worker. However, the evaluation team learned that there are cases where the CSSs send children home by themselves without in-take interviews with any other agencies.

Return

A number of respondents indicated that upon being intercepted, many children do not want to return to their parents' home. In some cases, children have promised their parents to return with money and gifts. In general, a child returning empty handed is considered a failure. In some cases, children and their households may even have incurred a debt by sending their child to another region or district in search of wage labor.²⁶

Children do not appear to be routinely asked whether threats or violence contributed to their decision to leave home. This is obviously needed in order to prevent sending children back into situations where they may be harmed. Notably, interviews about such sensitive issues should be conducted by skilled staff, and further referral mechanisms should be in place when e.g. cases of sexual abuse or threats of forced marriage are detected.

During the field visits, a number of respondents including the CSSs suggested that interception and return are not effective as the children tend to leave again. Some CSS members proposed to open a large training centre to give these children and youth real motivation to stay. These kinds of recommendations point to one of the program's weaknesses, namely, the lack of a reintegration component.

In the opinion of the evaluation team, the reintegration component should be well targeted and aim to help retain primarily some of the younger and most vulnerable children. Integration efforts at the village level should not be overly ambitious. After all, child migration is largely driven by the overwhelming lack of opportunities and prospects for youth in the country side. This is a structural challenge that cannot be solved overnight by a single program. The scarcity of skilled local partner organizations is one of the challenges to creating effective reintegration projects. For the moment UNICEF therefore only supports vocational training and job placement initiatives where they exist like the ENDA workshop in e.g. Bamako.

Upon return to their parental home, follow-up appears to happen during the first month when children live in nearby villages but does not appear to have been formalized as a process. Given the limited local resources, children in more distant villages are as a rule not visited. However, social workers try to get information on the child from different sources.

The intended and unintended effects of focusing on children, in this case in transit, need to be both monitored (by following up on and tracking intercepted children) and considered. In terms of child trafficking, abuse and exploitation, the focus on interception *en route* is but

²⁶ Note that part of this debt may have been necessitated by the need to pay a smuggler to help the child avoid interception in the first place.

one small part of the migration process where a number of other important opportunities to assist and protect child migrants and workers from exploitive forms of labor and from traffickers, namely in the destination communities where the child ends up working. In these communities, children may need support in getting paid, or in finding another job or in dealing with borderline abuse. The current focus also misses those situations when children are accompanied by someone known to them but who are later trafficked upon arrival in the destination community.

As stated above, one respondent indicated that the increased control at the borders with the implementation of the travel document has led to greater internal labor migration towards the rice paddies and cotton fields. Further study is necessary to understand some of the different effects of systematic return of child migrants; however, in terms of child welfare, tracing such children to see where they now work, the conditions under which they are employed, how much they are paid and so on could be very informative about the direct and indirect effects of the return program.

Working with vulnerable children

UNICEF has supported a number of programs for girl domestic workers and vulnerable children in Bamako. Apart from already being in a difficult situation, these children are also at risk of being trafficked. The protection programs for girl domestic workers involve two different NGOs (APAF Muso Danbe and ADJM) although there is some programmatic overlap in terms of the services offered. The target group is girls who have come to Bamako to work as domestic workers. The programs offer literacy classes in the evening after their work day is over, as well as a chance to meet other girls in similar situations. Training in reproductive health is offered, e.g. on topics like sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS transmission.

The program run by the Youth and Development Association of Mali (ADJM) has a small residence where girls who become pregnant or fall ill can come should they have nowhere else to go. The centre ensures that they receive the medical attention they need and also helps them with acquiring a birth certificate should they not have one. Girl domestic workers have high turnover rates and frequently change employers. To help recruitment to the program, the ADJM has outreach activities in areas where domestic workers are found. The structure involves one leader per intervention area (of which there are eight) and a training pair who participate in training-of-trainers sessions, enabling participants to lead training with domestic workers on STIs, HIV/AIDS and on child rights.

Another program which supports both vulnerable girls and boys in Bamako is a one-year vocational training program run by Enda Tiers Monde for children who are from single-parent homes, who are orphans of both parents and/or who are from extremely-poor households. Vocational training is provided in tie-dye batik, hair dressing, auto mechanics, and carpentry. Children and youth who successfully finish the program can apply for a loan (from 150,000 to 300,000CFA or \$350 to \$700USD) to start their own business. Some children get funding from their parents or extended family while others try to find jobs after completing the program.

UNICEF provides material and equipment for the training. During the training, the products made by the children may contribute to pay for the training costs. Occasionally, the child participants are also paid for such products.

Both trainers and trainees claim that the success rate is rather high although no figures were provided. In their opinion most children who complete the program end up finding a job or starting their own small business. The evaluation team visited a half dozen of the Enda workshops and found that while most trainees were satisfied and optimistic with the training and about their perspectives, some did not find jobs.

Interviews with a few of the program participants in the centers for domestic workers indicated that the participants were very satisfied with the services they had received and particularly with the medical services. However, two of the three women interviewed did not actually fit the profiles of the target group the programs were intended to assist. These two women who had received medical attention were not domestic servants but were staying with extended family in Bamako when they had fallen ill. Their family members brought them to the centers and dropped them off to be cared for there. The third woman interviewed was a domestic worker and had come to participate in her first evening literacy class although she had completed seven years of schooling and was literate.

While program flexibility and willingness to include other individuals who are in need should be seen positively (particularly in light of the strategic aim of creating a protective environment for all children), the question which remains is whether these programs are managing to reach the said target groups or not. Sometimes, service providers will include individuals who don't fit the eligibility criteria when they do not have sufficient users or clients. Again, it is not necessarily 'bad' to include others; however, the question which needs to be asked is whether they are reaching the target group they intend to assist, and if not, why not.

Female excision

UNICEF supports efforts to stop the practice of female excision through the governmental body, the National Program to Combat Excision (PNLE) located within the MPFEF. UNICEF has provided an annual follow-up and evaluation of the anti-excision activities by different actors. UNICEF contributes to institutional capacity building through the provision of training, logistics and equipment for social mobilization. Hospitalization and medical treatment is provided in some medically complex cases. While some NGOs receive financial support through the PNLE, there was some criticism that much of UNICEF's support is directed to and through this governmental body and encouraging UNICEF to more directly support civil society organizations.

Data collection, analysis and dissemination of information on child protection (through the creation of a database/information management system)

UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to the development of a database of socio-economic indicators with the GoM, entitled MaliKunafoni. The organization has played a central role in coordinating and establishing a management group to oversee the project. The process of setting up the database appears to have been well thought through. Rather than reinventing the wheel, UNICEF and its partners have built the database on the UNDGs DevInfo system, and indicators have been developed using PRSP and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators. The database is flexible and adaptable to the Nomenclature of Activities of African States (NAEMA). MaliKunafoni is currently in its second

edition (dated November 2007) and is located within the National Bureau of Statistics and Informatics (DNSI) in the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Commerce.

The development process appears to have been very democratic and engaged over two dozen government and ministerial offices. Today, there are 17 focal points in various government departments which feed data into the system periodically. The process of establishing indicators amongst different ministries also appeared to be an important opportunity to better understand the power but also limitations of an information management system. Initially, the wish list of indicators numbered more than 500; however, through the development process, all actors came to an understanding that this number had to be reduced to make the database manageable. The number of indicators was consequently reduced to 330.

Data collection tools have been tested and indicators validated, and the system was revised in light of the piloting experience. The system is operational, and while it is available on CD-ROM, it has not yet been made widely accessible. Further distribution is pending on additional funding. UNICEF has tentatively provided nearly 90% of the funds for this project component, while the GoM contributed the remaining 10% through staff salaries and other inputs.

In the process of developing MaliKunafoni, UNICEF and partners came to know that data on women and children is dispersed amongst different ministries and not well structured. They hence decided to also develop a small database within the larger database project on protection issues related to children and women. To launch the process in 2007, a stock-taking exercise was conducted and validated by all actors, and during that process, the protection indicators were elaborated. The child protection database currently lists 42 indicators but has data on only 16 of them. This smaller database is operational but still requires some adjustments and additional development work.

This smaller database project is currently housed in the National Centre for Documentation and Information on Women and Children (CNDIFE). CNDIFE has played a lead role in data collection and, importantly, in creating and disseminating reports on the basis of the database information. Knowledge generated from the data also supports CNDIFE's advocacy work on women and children's rights. CNDIFE produces information bulletins each semester and annual statistical bulletins, as well as posting information on their website and organizing debates – all based on the MaliKunafoni data.

In terms of the data being input into the smaller system, quality control of data may need more attention – as initially various sources were solicited for information and this information appears to have been scanned without much quality control. However, as this smaller database is quite young and still in development, the evaluators are confident that CNDIFE can resolve this matter.

MaliKunafoni has never been evaluated, and this is recommended. From a protection perspective, the particular focus of such an evaluation should be on identifying how the knowledge compiled in the database could come to effectively help improve the situation of vulnerable groups in Mali. When this is clarified, access and user-friendliness issues that could facilitate for such an optimized exploitation of the data should be suggested.

Capacity building amongst key staff, government and partners

A number of the previous parts of this country report have touched on the institutional capacity building which has taken place both within UNICEF Mali and with its partners. This support includes an extensive array of training, the provision of equipment, logistical support and expertise. The training topics have included: human rights and results-based management; child rights and the CRC; data collection methods; and a variety of special protection issues (such as dealing with child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation).

The evaluation team found that UNICEF's institutional capacity building support was generally well regarded and appreciated. On a strategic level, these investments on the whole also appeared to be in keeping with organizational priorities. In some instances, UNICEF used working meetings and fora to build confidence and initiate dialogue – as with the Pan-African Forum on the Reinforcement of Partnerships for Immunization and Child Survival with religious and traditional leaders.

Given their work with a number of government ministries and agencies, UNICEF Mali might consider developing a framework for capacity building cooperation. This would help clarify the training objectives and priorities and thus at the later stage enable suggesting the development impact of these investments.

Establishing the legal and normative frameworks towards the creation of a protective environment

The development of legal and normative frameworks related to child protection is another area where substantial progress has been made. The Government of Mali has shown political will in striking and signing more bilateral and multilateral agreements than any other country in the region. The GoM participated in the Abuja process leading to the signing of a multilateral agreement to harmonize the notion of child trafficking and identification, as well as signing bilateral agreements with Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.

The drafting and signing of these agreements are significant developments for child protection. However, the impetus and momentum which has been building will now need to shift to the development of the country's capacity to implement these agreements through the executive branches of government. Monitoring efforts will be important to follow the unfolding of these processes and their effects in advancing child protection.

The GoM implemented travel document for children has been one concrete expression of the willingness of the state to use legal measures in protecting children. The actual efficiency of this initiative is disputable, and this, alongside the likely side effects referred to earlier in this report will need to be scrutinized before the reach of the travel document is considered extended to the internal movement for children, for instance. UNICEF Mali has already taken on this challenge and committed to monitor the effect of implementing the travel document.

Regional aspects

The evaluation of the initiatives undertaken by the Regional Office (WCARO) involved a desk study of key program and other UNICEF documents. During the fieldwork visits to Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria, individual interviews with relevant country-level UNICEF staff and partner organizations were made. Telephone interviews with key informants who work at the regional level were solicited and conducted.

UNICEFs Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) (2002-2005) is rights-based and lists child protection as one of UNICEFs five priority actions.²⁷ UNICEFs regional protection program is structured by its' Regional Strategy for Child Protection. While national programming processes deal with the specific protection situations in each country, UNICEF views the development of a regional protection strategic framework as an opportunity to promote a coherent, coordinated approach in each country with a degree of programmatic flexibility. UNICEFs approach also appreciates that regional and sub-regional responses to specific protection situations are sometimes needed.

UNICEF developed its first Regional Protection Strategy (RPS) for West and Central Africa in 2003, and it was approved in 2004 after the anti-child trafficking and child protection proposal was submitted to Sida.²⁸ As a result, some of the strategic directions may be better articulated in the RPS than in the proposal. The development and adoption of the regional protection strategies mark an important shift in how UNICEF operates in the region – namely, shifting away from projects and programs which focus on specific categories of vulnerability towards a more global strategy which emphasizes the creation of a protective environment for all children. The programmatic shift away from particular categories of vulnerability and eligibility criteria constitutes a more inclusive approach. This approach is also better positioned to deal with the realities of children experiencing multiple vulnerabilities in that it can better engage with these multiplicities.

The regional protection team is comprised of a regional advisor, a child protection officer and a programme assistant. This staff strives to build up institutional experience, disseminate knowledge, provide technical support and support advocacy activities in all the countries in the region, with a particular focus on the eight program countries stated earlier. They also work to strengthen regional collaboration and efforts primarily through the Regional Working Group against Trafficking (RWOGAT), the Economic Community Organization for West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community Organization for Central African States (ECCAS).

²⁷ Child Protection and Child Trafficking in West and Central Africa. First report to the Government of Sweden.

²⁸ UNICEF has since developed a second Regional Protection Strategy for West and Central Africa which will be presented for approval by UNICEFs Executive Board later this year.

Program objectives

The goal of the regional component of the Sida sponsored protection program is to create a sustainable protective environment for all children. The program objectives as stated in the proposal to Sida were to:

- *Reinforce UNICEF country program of child protection in Burkina Faso, Mali and Nigeria. In line with strategies and approaches outlined in the MTSP and as reflected in their Country Program Recommendation (CPR), these country programs will contribute to reduce child trafficking, to fight against sexual exploitation and abuse as well as prevent HIV/AIDS among children and youth, and to improve youth development and participation.*
- *Strengthen the Regional Office's capacity in poverty assessments and poverty reduction strategies in West and Central Africa (including strengthening the Regional Office's participation in poverty reduction strategies in the region and supporting Country Offices and partners in developing and implementing Poverty Reduction Strategies).*
- *Reinforce regional interventions to fight child trafficking-related issues (including improving the documentation of the situation of child victims of trafficking, advocating on behalf of children, supporting coordination among key partners, monitoring the implementation of national strategies and programs);*
- *Reinforce actions to fight against child trafficking in Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Gabon, as well as Togo and Equatorial Guinea.*

However, the proposal also presents a mixture of goals, objectives and statements of intent related to: ensuring a solid knowledge base internally and with partners, as well as developing regional indicators and a methodology for collecting and analyzing child protection data²⁹; protecting children from situations of violence and abuse; advocacy efforts with government and lead agencies, as well as advocating on behalf of children; and strengthening partnerships, coordination and cooperation.

Program logic

Three basic needs legitimize a strong role for the regional office in the child trafficking program. First, country offices need technical support in advocating solid legal frameworks for their efforts. Second, specialized skills are needed for effective advocacy for children and women's needs to be integrated in PRSPs, and thus lay the basis for future funding. Third, country offices require coherent policy direction and technical assistance and supervision.

WCARO aims to encourage, influence and advocate the legal and normative frameworks to combat child trafficking vis-à-vis sub-regional and regional bodies. The country offices are generally responsible for advocating to the respective country governments, while WCARO supports those advocacy efforts. The development of legal frameworks – whether at a

²⁹ Note that the proposal originally referred to developing regional child trafficking indicators (pp. 8). Subsequent UNICEF reports have since then focused on developing regional child protection indicators instead.

national, sub-regional or regional level – essentially sets the normative foundation for combating child trafficking and reflects a commitment by governments to address the issue. Establishing the legal and normative environment involves different governmental tasks like signing international protocols and conventions, harmonizing national legislation, training law enforcement agents, and prosecuting child traffickers. Efforts to address cross-border trafficking are frequently viewed as more complex than internal trafficking. Therefore the Regional Office's focus on trans-national anti-trafficking agreements is undeniably important. The Regional Office convenes and facilitates intergovernmental meetings in strategic partnerships with the International Labor Organization (ILO), ECOWAS and/or ECCAS amongst others.

Ensuring sufficient and sustained funding for vulnerable children and women will greatly facilitate future efforts to provide them with protection. The most sustainable way to do this is considered to be giving these groups a prominent place in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of each country. WCARO aims to reinforce institutional capacity on child protection, anti-child trafficking issues and poverty reduction processes. To do so, UNICEF aims to develop its own capacity and that of its partners in a way that enables them to act as effective advocates vis-à-vis decision makers central to the PRSP processes. Support may be material, financial, informational, or related to expertise and knowledge. Investments may thus be made in people such as frontline staff, organizations and government ministries, community associations and NGOs, and in networks such as regional working groups, ECOWAS and ECCAS. Strengthening partnerships to better advocate for vulnerable children and women is in itself important to the efficiency of this component.

Sound laws and financial resources constitute the necessary framework within which functional anti-child trafficking programs can be established in partnerships with government and civil society. The WCAROs third function is very much interlinked, namely the provision of technical supervision and quality assurance, combined with a knowledge management function. Technical and quality assurance ensures that child protection strategies, approaches and interventions are relevant, informed by the body of literature on the phenomenon (such as best practices), and meet regional and international standards and guidelines, where they exist. The goal of the knowledge management function is that the regional office induces reflection and institutional learning in each of the 24 countries, between countries, at the sub-regional and regional level, and beyond the region when appropriate. WCARO holds a central role in facilitating and encouraging institutional learning around child protection. Should there be expertise and knowledge which is not readily available at the country or regional level, then, WCARO may bring in or generate resources – be it through working groups within the region, knowledge exchange based on experiences from other regions, adapted and tested materials or new studies.

Observations and findings

In terms of overall findings and observations, the evaluation team found substantial consistency between the underlying program theory and the outcome of the programs' implementation. The regional interventions have been thoughtful, appropriate and relevant, and the limited human and financial resources have been used very strategically. Despite the challenges of limited resources, the shortage of partners and the need for capacity building throughout the region, a tremendous amount of work has been done, and many significant achievements have been accomplished.

Reorienting child protection and anti-child trafficking initiatives

There is a continuous reflection and evolution process underway within UNICEF on how child protection is best approached and conceptualized. This reflection has a significant impact also on other agencies in the region. The programmatic shift and focus away from categories of vulnerability towards the creation of a protective environment for all children is groundbreaking. Such a strategic approach will also allow UNICEF the opportunity to better connect and integrate the different types of protection work that it does – on for instance child trafficking, the worst forms of child labor, child sexual exploitation – in ways that were not possible before. These connections also offer the opportunity for enhanced learning across special protection categories. The anti-child trafficking focus is being recast into a framework which acknowledges children and youth's right to mobility. The Regional Office has led this strategic reflection and reframing process and is uniquely positioned to facilitate such change in the region – which is a key part of the added value of having a regional protection team.

Since 2002-3, UNICEF WCARO has facilitated a harmonization of the trafficking concept in the region. Many of the key challenges have been related to a comprehension of the phenomenon and concept.³⁰ It is the overall impression of the evaluation team that the WCARO protection team has been strategic and wise in using networking opportunities, working meetings and exchanges within the region while also encouraging protection staff and partner agencies to learn from other countries faced with similar problems and challenges. In its work with government, UNICEF is focusing on putting the best interest of the child first.

Support to the country programs

The WCARO overall provides considerable technical assistance to all three country offices in the form of training, annual regional protection staff meetings, consultants, grant writing, consolidating reports to donors, funds for travel, and manuals and guidelines, as well as specific technical support related to poverty reduction processes and to reinforce institutional capacity. The WCARO support was considered to be timely and of a high quality.

With regards the concrete country program components, WCARO provided consultants and/or training on special protection issues such as: working with sexually-exploited children, child domestic workers and children in institutions; training of trainers sessions and materials on child trafficking; training with law enforcement agencies in a half dozen countries; the development of regional child protection indicators; the development of a training module on child trafficking to be integrated into curricula for civil service training schools; and the joint Interpol meeting in 2006 where best practices and experiential exchange were encouraged.

Several other regional activities received positively received by the participants during this evaluation process:

³⁰ Note the differences between trafficking (*traite*, in French), smuggling (*trafic*), and exploitation. The term 'trafficking' appears to have been introduced in the region based on a calque from English, 'trafic'. However, the use of 'trafic' in French in the region created confusion because it refers to smuggling and/or human smuggling.

- The annual meetings of WCARO protection officers were perceived to have provided important staff development and learning opportunities.
- With regards to the political context, a research study was commissioned based on case studies of four countries in the region and their experiences of engaging in poverty reduction processes so that strategic budgeting processes better take into account vulnerable children and women.
- The WCARO has also developed a model bilateral legal agreement on child trafficking. Moreover, intergovernmental working meetings were facilitated, leading to the drafting and signing of a number of important bilateral agreements between such countries as: Benin and Nigeria; Benin and Côte d'Ivoire; Burkina Faso and Mali, Mali and Côte d'Ivoire; and Mali and Senegal.
- The Regional Office provided support to data collection and database development in Burkina Faso and Mali, by funding a consultant who has been working to develop regional child protection indicators.
- The development of guidelines in English and French for dealing with child trafficking victims is significant. However, the dissemination appears to be somewhat uneven in the countries visited.
- The Regional Office's support to the country protection programs in Benin, Gabon, Togo and Equatorial Guinea are similar to the support in the three focus countries. In some instances, meetings were organized and convened as sub-regional workshops to strengthen sub-regional collaboration and cooperation, for instance, the July 2004 Dakar meetings between Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cameroun and Benin. Other regional linkages which were successful include cross-border cooperation mechanisms between Benin and Gabon.
- In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the conflict and unrest led the Regional Office to approach Sida to reprogram some of the anti-child trafficking funds towards the demobilization and reintegration of child combatants and towards work with internally-displaced children.

Support to the regional plan of action on child trafficking

It's evident that WCARO has focused on the need to create a regional platform to combat child trafficking. These efforts naturally build on the country-level work of UNICEF, especially with regards to sensitizing governments to child trafficking issues and advocating for change. These developments have also led to increased media visibility for UNICEF, its partners and the child trafficking phenomenon.

Three processes have been important in harmonizing the collaboration between the countries in West and Central Africa. In 2006, a meeting of experts was convened in Gabon in May followed by the ministerial meeting in July where a multilateral agreement on child trafficking and identification was ratified by nine countries in the region. Secondly, a previous ECOWAS plan was further elaborated to include Central African countries (ECCAS) into a joint plan of action between the two bodies and their member states. The third process relates to the establishment within ECOWAS of a child-trafficking unit with capacity building support

from WCARO and funding from another donor. However, at the time of the evaluation, the ECOWAS anti-child trafficking post was vacant; the grant had come to a close, and it was unclear whether additional funds would be available to hire a staff person.

Conclusion

The Sida supported trafficking and child protection program in West Africa is very much a reflection of the time period in which it was created. What appeared to be child trafficking cases had created media headlines around the world. Trafficked children were enslaved in the production of the chocolate that western consumers ate. The 'Etienne Slave Ship' was lost in the Bay of Benin. Across the region, children were found working under appalling conditions far away from their relatives and home communities. In short, trafficking was for a while the domineering child protection issue in the West African region.

When Sida wanted to support efforts to curb child trafficking in West Africa, UNICEF placed the trafficking phenomenon within a broader context of child protection. That way, the program became more easily integrated in the regional and national protection programs of the organization. Children at risk for trafficking indeed also face many other risks, and addressing just one of them makes little sense in the field.

As a fundament, child protection, including anti-trafficking efforts, requires;

- supportive normative standards to be internalized by all stakeholders,
- these normative standards to be converted into laws and legal practice,
- funding to be predictable and secure, and
- technical expertise to ensure that policy interventions are well designed.

The Regional Office of UNICEF has taken on responsibility for putting these fundamental conditions in place. Since each one requires advanced skills, it is certainly both practical and cost-effective to centralize such expertise at the regional level. The report has pointed out how the normative standards with regards to trafficking may not have been as clear and constructive as one could have hoped. On the other hand, laws and law enforcement have certainly been improved, as for instance expressed by the many arrests and convictions of traffickers in Burkina Faso. Also in Burkina, child protection issues are effectively integrated throughout the 2006 PRSP report, signaling success in ensuring child protection issues are on the agenda in national budgeting processes. Stakeholders throughout the region assured the evaluators that the technical training and supervision from the Regional Office had also indeed been well received and appreciated.

This evaluation is in no doubt that the regional component of this program is indispensable and needs to be continued. It is suggested to place particular emphasis on promoting an understanding of child protection and child trafficking issues in perspective of the more general concern of the best interest of the child. UNICEF's new protection strategy emphasizes the creation of a protective environment for all children. This evaluation supports such an approach and trusts the new way of addressing child protection challenges will be less problematic than the previous narrow focus on special groups of vulnerable children.

The three country programs supported by the Sida grant were different in design and scope. The program in Nigeria was mainly preventive, while in some cases also supporting the reintegration of previous trafficking victims. The Burkina Faso program approached the trafficking challenge from many angles: laws and legal practice, public awareness, knowledge management, capacity building as well as interception, return and reintegration of children. The Mali program did not have an integration component, but was generally similar to the

Burkina Faso program. A main difference was a stronger focus also on several other groups of vulnerable children in need of special protection.

Comments and suggestions to each country program have been integrated in the respective country chapters. A summary of the main points raised is here organized under three headings: cost related issues, ideological issues and program technical issues.

Cost related issues

Development programming is always a question of priorities. Funding is never sufficient to provide all rights-holders with what they are entitled to. Unless one chooses to do a little of everything, some hard choices must be considered.

- Many small activities vs. a few big ones: doing a little of everything is rarely an efficient use of funding and normally increases administrative costs at the expense of what trickles down to the beneficiaries. On the other hand, focusing on a few interventions involves neglecting important priorities. The evaluation suggests that the programs in Burkina Faso and Mali may have tried to do too many different things within a limited budget, and that this might have affected both program outreach and quality.
- Prevention vs. rescue: To intercept and return a child to his/her home community is expensive. To also add integration services increases this cost further. The same money could probably have prevented many children from ending in the same situation of critical vulnerability. Return efforts in Mali and Burkina Faso have proven to be unsustainable, even when insertion efforts are made. When unsuccessful, the investments made in interception and reinsertion are lost. The Nigeria program should be rewarded for taking a generally preventive approach to child and youth vulnerability.
- Hardware vs. software: Both aid agencies and donors tend to show an unfortunate preference for hardware investments, that is, for buildings, vehicles and electronic equipment that is easily tangible. So called software, on the other hand, like communication processes, is much less visible, and consequently less attractive. Hardware ties up large parts of the project funding. Alternatively, if donated or made available from outside the project, it ties up community resources that tend to be scarce in developing countries. The Nigeria program chose a center based training model over a model that suggested making use of traditional training opportunities in local businesses. Not only is this a costly approach – it also turned out to isolate the trainees from the networks and labor markets outside and that way prevent them from finding employment after their training ended. Tying up resources in the center would limit the capacity of the program of engaging in other activities – like expanding their outreach component into more local communities in the program regions.
- Credits vs. grants: The Nigeria program had a micro-credit component that had taken time to develop and was not yet fully functional at the time of the evaluation. Also the Mali and Burkina Faso programs had considered micro-credit as part of reinsertion efforts. As discussed in the Nigeria chapter, successful micro-credit projects are complex to run and require professional administration. If the challenges of running a professional micro-credit scheme are not taken seriously, participants easily end up indebted and discouraged. This evaluation argues that

unless the program is willing to make the investments necessary to run a professional micro-credit project, giving out grants is probably a better solution requiring far less administration.

- Targeting vs. everyone welcome: All the programs were quite flexible in including children and youth that did not strictly fulfill the program eligibility criteria. In the Nigeria program the participants seemed slightly more resourceful than expected, and the evaluation suggested exploring targeting opportunities to increase the preventive impact. However, targeting is also often a cost issue because it normally requires increased research and administration. Targeting is therefore not necessarily a goal in itself, but should still be considered in each country case.
- State vs. private: The rights based approach presupposes that government is responsible for children's rights to be upheld. A rights based approach is the ideological opposite to charity. Government should therefore have main responsibility for child protection. This has several implications for costs. First, Government has the same responsibility vis-à-vis all child rights holders in their country. It would therefore be difficult to justify interventions for only a lucky few. Second, since developing country governments have very limited resources and the number of vulnerable children typically is high, low cost solutions should be sought. All actors in the field of child protection should make it a priority to help governments develop models that are affordable for a high number of children in their countries. Pilots giving excessive benefits to a few – even compared to non-vulnerable peers - are not up-scalable.

Ideology issues

The ideological framework for child policies was drastically reoriented following the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. This shift was so dramatic that it has taken even those most involved decades to realize the scope of its implications to policy and program design. Child rights thinking has been evolving rapidly since 1989, constantly encountering new challenges, finding new solutions and moving on. This to underscore that a child rights approach is not easily converted into practical efforts anywhere, and West Africa is no exception. Some comments and recommendations to the country programs are therefore related to the following core principles:

- The best interest of the child: The best interest of the child must be considered on a case-to-case basis. Rules and guidelines must be flexible, and project workers must be encouraged to use good judgment to detect cases where the general procedures may come in conflict with the child's welfare and safety.
- Consult the child: It may be difficult to know the child's best interest without consulting with the child. Even an exploited child worker may have fled from an even worse domestic situation. The most intuitively appealing solution, to send the child home, may not be in his/her interest. In line with UNICEF's general policy in this field, the evaluation recommends an even stronger effort made to ensure that children can affect the solutions suggested for them.
- Participation: In some aspects of the programs, and notably the Nigerian one, children and youth had been involved in pre-program assessments, program development and actual execution of the program. The programs in Burkina Faso and Mali need a stronger emphasis on participation. Not only because it will

improve the quality of the programs, but because it is, in fact, the right of children to participate and influence on programs affecting them.

- Rights based: Both the program proposal and UNICEF strategies are rights-based. It must be acknowledged that it is difficult to fully understand what 'rights based' means and implies for practical program work. Training should therefore be thorough with emphasis on practical applications of the ideology. Most importantly, thorough training should reach everyone, not the least those working at the front line, meeting vulnerable children daily in their work.
- Protective environment for all children: The Regional Office should also make it a main priority to ensure that the full meaning of its' programmatic change towards creating a protective environment for all children is well understood. Again, the change of mindset required to internalize and practice the implications of the shift should not be underestimated. The evaluation team is convinced that this change of focus will contribute to prevent many of the problems encountered in the programs currently under evaluation. That is, if the ideology behind the change is indeed understood and accepted by policy makers and those implementing.
- Concepts and focus: The country sections have made several recommendations that would help improve the ideological profile of the programs. Four of the most important ones are to: (i) change the role of village committees from surveillance to advocacy, (ii) change focus from the trafficking victim to the relocating child, (ii) change the role of local authorities from policing relocating children to protecting them, and (iv) make legal authorities persecute perpetrators, not victims.

Technical issues/recommendations for further research

To prevent children from risky relocation has proven challenging indeed. In spite of massive efforts, children still migrate throughout the West African region. And probably for good reasons. Further research is needed to improve programs aiming to help these children to improve their livelihoods and reduce their risks and vulnerability.

- Retaining and reinserting children: Discouraging poor children from leaving destitute villages and areas with few prospects has proven difficult indeed. The likely triggers of child migration, global poverty and lack of opportunities, are systemic and beyond the scope of a child protection program to solve. The Mali chapter therefore recommends that efforts aimed to retain children in their villages and make reinsertion operations more sustainable are kept modest, and focused at the youngest children and those likely to pursue the most risky relocation options. Good studies into the determinants for child relocation should inform all retention and reinsertion efforts.
- Local committees: Making local committees work as intended requires proper recruitment, relevant training, technical follow-up and motivation. When the message to convey is complicated, as it has been in the case of child trafficking, thorough and sustained training is an absolute requirement. Few of the many village committees initiated in West Africa over the last decades have received the training and support they needed to remain operational, probably because the costs of keeping a large number of such committees functional is very high. To determine whether the committees are worth the investment, UNICEF may consider asking they deliver semi-annual one-page-reports to the district level. If reports are not

handed in – as has been the case in many similar projects – likelihood is that the committees have ceased to exist.

- **Databases:** Much effort and funding has been spent on gathering data relevant for child protection in Burkina Faso and Mali. The data should now be used to improve the protection of children, or this considerable investment will have been wasted. This report recommends that a study clarify the possible use of the data (government, agencies, researchers, students, media) and recommends how the databases can be made user friendly and available for the intended users.
- **Employment:** Participants in all three country programs faced challenges in finding a livelihood. Both training in traditional skills and credits for typical local trades run the risk of overcrowding small local sectors that are already populated by the poor. Not only will this depreciate prices for everyone in the businesses, but those likely to go bankrupt first are the most vulnerable ones. Vulnerable youth typically also have poor social networks, and both businesses and trades depend on the operator's social network as the main client base. The evaluation recommends a study into the potential markets for non-traditional products and skills. These markets should preferably be outside the villages of the program beneficiaries. That way, the project would bring money in to the local communities, rather than just contribute to circulating the few means that are already there.
- **Impact:** This evaluation had no way to determine the impact of the programs on the intended beneficiaries. One main reason for this was that little resources had been spent on following up with the previous beneficiaries. Little knowledge therefore existed on whether they had been trafficked or re-trafficked after participating in the programs, if they had a job, if they were infected with HIV/AIDS, etc. The evaluation believes that a tracing study could give valuable information about program impact. More importantly, such a study would provide important lessons for future program work.
- **Lessons learned:** The first command of all development work is to do no harm. This evaluation report indicates that in particular the 'criminalization', interception and return of children the way it was practiced in Mali and Burkina Faso may have caused such harm. In particular, children may have been exposed to more dangerous situations during (necessary) relocation, or returned to unsafe home conditions. The evaluation report strongly encourages UNICEF to commission a study into such unintended side-effects of their program. While the lessons from such a study may be painful reading, they may also be vital to prevent similar harm from happening again in the future.

Child trafficking is a type of phenomenon that changes expression over time, and so do its interpretations and responses. In this respect, this report has been an evaluation of a moving target and the efforts to hit that target with the weaponry available while being half blindfolded. Chasing a moving target takes flexibility and the will to learn from experiences in the field. UNICEF WCARO has proven to have both. It remains a challenge to ensure that learning trickles down, not only to the national UNICEF offices, but all the way to those working at the front line. The Country Offices and those in everyday contact with the children need the courage to dare to be flexible. They may get it, if provided with the confidence from solid, reinforced training, and when shown the trust that they can make good judgments even when program instructions turn out to be inadequate. Donors need to appreciate the value of such project 'software' and allow extensive training to get its proper share of future program budgets.

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the child protection/child trafficking program supported by Sida

Background and justification

Child protection is a universal imperative for both the survival and development of children. Violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination are indeed not only human rights violations but are also constraints to the survival and the harmonious development of the child. UNICEF has been addressing issues related to Child Protection within the global framework of a protective environment. This approach anticipates that the establishment of a caring and protective environment will protect children from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation. Such an environment takes into consideration the eight main elements: the attitudes, customs behaviors and practices; the capacities of professionals interacting with children; the knowledge and know-how of children themselves; the services provided to victims of abuse; the existence and efficiency of a surveillance system to document the incidence and nature of rights violations; the government policies and strategies; the legislation and its implementation: and the attention of the media.

Child trafficking³¹ is considered as one of the most critical “protection situation” identified in West and Central Africa and the fight against this phenomenon has gathered considerable momentum over the past years. There has indeed been increasing political awareness regarding the phenomenon, as illustrated by the adoption of international standards and important commitments undertaken in international conference.

From a regional perspective a multifaceted strategy approach is necessary to combat the multidimensional causes of Child trafficking. UNICEF approach is then articulating itself around three main strategies: an enhanced knowledge and improved awareness raising messages; an improved framework and a strengthened partnership and collaboration at national and regional level; and the development and improvement of appropriate institutional responses and care for children victims of trafficking.

Within this context, Sida (Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency) has for the past years (2003-2006) supported UNICEF Regional Office and Country Offices (in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, and Nigeria) to address the issues of child protection in general and child trafficking in particular in West and Central Africa.

³¹ Since December 2000 and “the Palermo Protocol”, the international community has reached a consensus on a common normative definition on trafficking in human beings, which remains today a core reference: *“Trafficking in persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation*”. The Palermo Protocol also includes a specific definition of trafficking in children: *“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in the first subparagraph of this article”*

As the agreement period comes to an end, an external evaluation of these projects will be carried out in 2007. UNICEF and Sida seek to undertake an evaluation of their child protection and trafficking activities in West and Central Africa, with a geographical focus on Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria and a particular thematic focus on the issues of community based prevention and reintegration of children victims. Furthermore, the added value to the regional approach will also be documented and evaluated.

The necessity to conduct an evaluation at the end of the project cycle was agreed upon between the two partners before signing the project agreement in 2002.

Scope of the evaluation

Under the supervision of the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office and in collaboration with UNICEF country offices in Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, the selected institution should perform the following tasks with the particular focus on Mali, Burkina Faso and Nigeria:

- To evaluate the level of achievement of the project objectives for each component of the project;
- To analyze the strategies and actions implemented;
- To analyze the preparation and implementation process of the activities and highlight the level of synergetic actions among all the components;
- To examine the strengths and weaknesses of/difficulties in the interventions of the project;
- To analyze consistency and accuracy between the activities carried out at regional level and national regional objectives and strategies;
- To evaluate the potential added value of the actions carried out at regional level by UNICEF and by other partners involved in the fight against child trafficking and worst forms of child labors;
- To analyze the implementation and accuracy of community based prevention activities in the framework of the fight against child trafficking and worst forms of child labor;
- To analyze the implementation and effectiveness of reintegration of children victims of trafficking activities;
- To analyze the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms of the actions carried out;
- To make recommendations for improving the strategies and activities.

Methodology of the evaluation

The methodology will be proposed by the evaluators, discussed with and validated by UNICEF Regional and Countries Offices. However the evaluators may wish to consider conducting, a participatory Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat analysis (SWOT). They may also want to review the existing documentation related to child trafficking in West and Central Africa.

Qualifications

Research Institute with an acknowledge and international expertise on the various issues related to child protection and child trafficking, such as vulnerability and exploitation in migration, identification, care and protection of children victims of trafficking, legal and normative framework, etc. The Institute should also have a good understanding of the new aid environment and be able to work both in French and in English.

Time line and estimated costs

The Evaluation should be conducted in June and July 2007. The Final report will be available in August 2007.

The available budget for this evaluation is 115,000\$ and will cover the experts fees (one expert per country) and travel costs.

Deliverables:

- Evaluation framework including, key stakeholders, analytical framework after briefing.
- Summary of data analyses after country visit and data collection.
- Evaluation report and recommendations.

Annex 2: Key Informants

List of interviews with key informants, Nigeria

Dr. Robert Limlim, Chief Protection and Participation, UNICEF Country Office, Abuja, Nigeria

Ms. Sharon Oladiji, Project Officer, Child Protection and Participation Section, UNICEF Country Office, Abuja, Nigeria

Dr. Tajudeen Oyewale, Former Asst. Project Officer, UNICEF Country Office Abuja, Nigeria

Mrs. Roseleen Akinroye, Project Officer, Protection and Participation UNICEF B-Field Office, Lagos, Nigeria

Mr. Roland C. Nwoha, Administrator/Project Coordinator, Model Youth Resource Learning Centre, Benin, Edo

Miss Achara Chigere, Head of Finance, Idia Renaissance

Miss Sandra Onaghise, Student, member of Youth Empowerment Initiative, Benin, Edo

Mrs. A.O. Abiodun, Director of NAPTIP Zonal Office, Benin, Edo

Mr. J.I.O. Uedebor, head of State Steering Committee, Benin, Edo

Dr. Edoreh Odiase, Director of Department of Overseas Devt. Assistance, Ministry of Economic Planning, Asaba, Delta

Mr. Augustine Dafitohwo, Administrator/Project Coordinator, Model Youth Resource Learning Centre, Sapele, Delta

Mrs. Martina Amromanoh Desk Officer NATIP, Asaba, Delta

Mr. T.O.C. Agbeyeke, former UNICEF Desk Officer, Asaba, Delta

Courtesy visit to the Ministry of Woman Affairs, Asaba, Delta

One female group, Youth Center in Edo, 10 girls

One focus group with students in the hairdressing department, the Youth Center in Delta, 12 students of both genders

One focus group with two students from each department of both genders, the Youth Center in Delta

List of interviews with key informants, Burkina Faso

Dr. Marie-Berthe OUEDRAOGO, Chef de la Section Protection. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Désiré YAMEOGO, Protection Juridique et Socio-Economique. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Robert OUEDRAOGO, Planification Sociale et Evaluation. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

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M. Saidou OUEDRAOGO, Direction de la Protection et de la Lutte Contre la Violence (DPLVE – antérieurement la DPEA). Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de Solidarité Nationale (MASSN), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Assita ZONGNABA, Educatrice sociale et Responsable du volet traite des enfants. Direction Régionale de l'Action Sociale et de la Solidarité Nationale du Centre, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Herman ZOUNGRANA, Chef de Projet Lutte contre l'Exploitation du Travail et le Trafic des Enfants. Terre des hommes (Lausanne), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Alain SOME, Directeur. Coopération Allemande (PROSAD), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Nathalie OUEDRAOGO, Directrice du Fonds de Lutte contre la Traite et les Pires Formes de Travail des Enfants. Coopération Allemande (Fonds Enfants), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Léonard OUEDRAOGO, Chef de Service protection, promotion de l'enfant et de la famille (Inspecteur encadrement des jeunes enfants). Direction Régionale ASSN Kadiogo, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Fatimata LEGMA, Gouverneur de la Région du Centre Nord. Gouvernorat Centre Nord, Kaya, Burkina Faso

M. Abdoul BALBONE, Administrateur des Affaires sociales. Direction Régionale ASSN, Kaya, Burkina Faso

Mme. Félicité Z. NANA, Directrice Provinciale de la Province du Sanmatenga. Direction Provinciale ASSN, Kaya, Burkina Faso

M. Ayouba TAO, Educateur social au Service de Protection et Promotion de la famille. Direction Provinciale ASSN, Kaya, Burkina Faso

M. Samuel BAMOGO, Directeur général de la radio communautaire. Action Communautaire de Développement, Kaya, Burkina Faso

M. Roger KABORE, Educateur social et Chef de Service Protection et Promotion de l'enfant et de l'adolescent. Direction Provinciale ASSN, Kaya, Burkina Faso

M. Lucien SOW, Educateur spécialisé et Directeur du Centre TAAB YINGA. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Aoua TRAORE, Animatrice. Terre des homes (Lausanne), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Sali OUATTARA, Animatrice. Terre des homes (Lausanne), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Moumoula Arsène KAYABA, Haut Commissaire. Haut Commissariat de la Province du Mouhoun, Tougan, Burkina Faso

M. Mathias S. ZERBO, Maire de Tougan. Mairie de Tougan, Tougan, Burkina Faso

M. Joanny SAWADOGO, Secrétaire Général. Réseau National de Lutte contre le Trafic des Enfants au Burkina Faso (RELUCOTEB), GRAAD FRB/ RELUCOTEB, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Hariguietta CONGO, Secrétaire Permanente. SP PAN Enfance, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Daniel BAMBARA, DGEP, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Robert SANOU, Directeur de la Planification Sectorielle. DGEP, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Valentin SOME, Assistant du Directeur de la Planification Sectorielle. DGEP, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Agathe SY/OUEDRAOGO, Chargée des Droits des Enfants, du Développement Communautaire, du Genre et de la Communication. PLAN Burkina, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Pingwendé Herman Zoungrana, Chef de Projet Lutte contre l'Exploitation du Travail et le Trafic des Enfants. Terre des Hommes (Lausanne). Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

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M. Camille Sawodogo, Directeur. Centre des Medias Communautaires Africains (CEMECA), Dédougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Clotilde Seni, Superviseur des Programmes. Centre des Medias Communautaires Africains (CEMECA), Dédougou, Burkina Faso

M. A. Dahani, Assistant au Programme. Organisation internationale de migration. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Dr. Mathurin Bonzi, Directeur des Programmes. Aide à l'Enfance Canada, Afrique de l'Ouest, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Mme. Zongo Lucy, Chargé de Suivi. Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

M. Philippe Sekoné, Juriste. Chef de Service Suivi-Evaluation, SP PAN Enfance, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Interviews with program participants and non-participants included: 7 interviews with children and youth (3 boys and 4 girls); and 3 men and 2 women.

List of interviews with key informants, Mali

M. Brehima DIALLO, Chargé de la planification stratégique des programmes. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Kadidia Aoudou SIDIBE, Directrice. AMSOPT, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Diané KONE, Directrice. CNDIFE, Bamako, Mali

M. Somah DOUMBIA, Directeur. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

M. Jacques SOUMBORO, Animateur. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Bintou Koné CISSE, Monitrice. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Djaratou SOUKO, Technicienne supérieure en travail social. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Aminata KONATE, Aide ménagère/participante. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Fatimata KONE, Aide ménagère/participante. AJDM, Bamako, Mali

M. Boukari SAMASSEKOU, Gouverneur. Gouvernorat de Sikasso, Mali

M. Fatogoma OUATTARA, Maire de Zegoua. Mairie de Zegoua, Mali

M. Lamoussa OUATTARA, Président. SSC Zegoua, Mali

M. Foussemi OUATTARA, Secrétaire. SSC Zegoua, Mali

M. Kalifa SOUALIOU, Secrétaire administratif. SSC Zegoua, Mali

M. Issouf KONE, Secrétaire Général. SSC Fanidjama, Mali

M. Daouda COULIBALY, Secrétaire adjoint à l'organisation. SSC Zegoua, Mali

M. Karim DOUMBIA, Secrétaire aux relations extérieures. SSC Zegoua, Mali

M. Abdoulaye OUATTARA, Commerçant. Zegoua, Mali

M. Ali OUATTARA, Menuisier. Zegoua, Mali

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Mme. Fatoumata D. KANE, Chargée de programme/Droits Humains et Démocratie. Ambassade de Suède, Bamako, Mali

M. Alou DEMBELE. Ministère des Affaires Sociales. Bamako, Mali

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M. BAGAYOKO, Chargé du Bureau de Protection. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

Mme. CISSE, Chargée de Programmes de Formation. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

M. Sekou Oumar DIARRA, Administrateur du Programme Protection. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Bamako, Mali

Dr. Alou BARRY, Directeur national. Ministère de la Promotion de la Femme, de l'Enfant et de la Famille. Bamako, Mali

M. Mamadou CISSE, Directeur. Mission d'Appui à la Consolidation de l'Etat Civile (MACEC), Bamako, Mali

M. Bagayoko OUSMANE, Chargé du renforcement institutionnel. Mission d'Appui à la Consolidation de l'Etat Civile (MACEC), Bamako, Mali

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Mme. Agatha, Chargée de Programme/Traite des enfants. OIM, Bamako, Mali

M. Zakari ADAMS, Chef de la Section Protection. UNICEF Bureau du pays, Bamako, Mali

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Mme. Karin ELFVING, Deuxième Secrétaire et Expert associée. Section de la Coopération du développement. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Bamako, Mali

Mme. Katarina JOHANSSON MEKOULOU, Assistant de programme. Section de Protection, UNICEF Bureau du pays, Bamako, Mali

Mamatou DIARRA, Formateur/animateur. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

Kassim DIARRA, Formateur/animateur. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

Mahamadou COULIBALY, Formateur/animateur. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

Mohammed DIARRA, Formateur/animateur. Enda Tiers Monde, Bamako, Mali

Interviews with children and youth participants (Mali Enjeu and Enda Tiers Monde): 7.

List of telephone interviews with key informants, regional component

Mr. Olivier Fenevrol, Regional Child Protection Advisor for West Africa. Terre des Hommes Foundation, Dakar, Senegal

Mr. Pierre Ferry, Regional Child Protection Officer. UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO), Dakar, Senegal

Ms. Giselle Mitton, Chief Technical Advisor. Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking to Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa (BIT/LUTRENA), International Labor Organisation, Dakar, Senegal

Mr. Elkane Mooh, Regional Advisor. Save the Children Sweden, Dakar, Senegal

Annex 3: Financial Utilization Report, Nigeria

Financial Utilization Report: January 2003 - December 2006, in US\$³²

S/N	Activity	Amount
Total Funds Committed in 2003		193,499.44
1	Communication Material Pilot Testing and Finalisation including production of T-shirts	29,980.78
2	Proposal Development and First Quarter Meeting of the State Steering Committee	23,680.78
3	Advocacy and Community Social Mobilisation and networking including dissemination of LPA and child trafficking assessment report	21,362.01
4	Child Protection and Community Development Training	30,492.75
5	Capacity Building training of Staff of the Centres	34,720.00
6	Life Skills Training including Peace Building and Conflict Resolution training for Young People	41,919.66
7	Procurement of vocational, recreational and health equipments	47,170.95
8	Renovation of the centres	280,335.11
9	Donor Report Preparation	1,720.11
10	Salary & related expenses for Project Coordinator	32,306.96
11	Project Related Travels	14,711.48
12	Training of Project Coordinator on Health and Human Rights in Harvard School of Public Health: Sundry Budget	4,956.18
Total Funds Committed in 2004		563,356.77
Subtotal		563,356.77
Grand Total of Funds Committed by December 2004		756,856.21

³² Reference: UNICEF: Final Report Submitted to the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), 2006

Finance Utilization Report: January 2005 - December 2005, in US\$³³

S/N	Activity	Amount
Total Funds Committed in 2003 and 2004		756,856.21
1	1-day commissioning and launching of the centres in Delta State	766.97
2	Sustain Community Participation and Advocacy / Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly meeting of Edo and Delta State Steering Committees and community networks Consensus forum on the role of civil society in building protective environment for children Participation of Partners in Edo and Delta States in the national / regional anti-trafficking networking activities 	44936.98
3	Materials Production and dissemination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills training manual, Manuals on entrepreneurial development, peace building, and information technology Posters on child trafficking, youth violence, HIV/AIDS and leadership Child trafficking & youth violence jingles for use in the centre & the communities SSA (Contract) 	14,520.19
4	Training / Mentoring of Staff and volunteers in Youth Resource centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills, Civic Education, anti-child trafficking, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution; HIV/AIDS Transmission, Prevention and Care of PLWHA; Adolescent / Youth Friendly Health Services and Health Counselling Entrepreneurial development; Information technology; Micro Credit Scheme Pro bono Service and legal counselling 	81240.46
5	Utilization of Services and Facilities available in the centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Skills, Civic Education, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution HIV/AIDS Transmission, Prevention and Care of PLWHA Entrepreneurial development and vocational training Pro bono Services / legal counselling for children in conflict with the law Health education and basic STI management and treatment Provide relevant loan /support to young people 	11,390.12
6	Satellite activities in schools and community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer education programs and outreaches; Interactive sessions on child trafficking, exploitation and abuse, violence and HIV/AIDS Holiday camp for in schools young people in all the thematic areas 	19,875.19
7	Facilitate additional renovation work in the centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional SSA (Contract) for the renovation of the fence in Edo centre Procurement of gravel stones for the floor in Edo and Delta Centre 	3344.95
8	Monitoring, Evaluation and Replication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a routine monitoring system and database for the project. Impact assessment survey of the project 	4,654.27
9	Salary & related expenses for Project Coordinator	61,325.11
10	Project Related Travels	1,382.13
Total Funds Committed in 2005		Subtotal 243, 435.97
Grand Total of Funds Committed in 2003,2004 and 2005		1,000,292.18
Grand Total of funds allotted for the project		1,015029.84
Total Funds Still Available		15,637.66

³³ Reference: UNICEF: Final Report Submitted to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), 2006