



ECLT FOUNDATION
Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco-growing

Association for the Elimination of Child Labour - AECL

TADWE School Project

Mwansambo - Nkhotakota district

Internal participatory evaluation

SUMMARY

The Tadwe school project of the Association for the Elimination of Child Labour (AECL) is contributing to the fight against child labour by

- ◆ providing better access to school
- ◆ raising awareness on education and on child labour
- ◆ organising and training communities to be in a better position to eliminate child labour.

The two year project period goes from December 2002 until November 2004.

The Tadwe school opened a few months ago (January 2004). Until then, the main focus of the project had been mainly to motivate and organise the communities around the building of the school. Sensitisation sessions and training activities had started, but attention remained on the structure coming out of the ground, and later on getting the class furniture, the borehole, and not the least, the teachers.

Awareness-raising and a school enrolment campaign ensured that over 300 children started the academic year.

It is only after having the children in school that the drop-outs could be noted and that observation could be made that the enrolment rate fluctuates according the agricultural rhythm, i.e. with the need to harvest subsistence food and cash crops.

The perception on child labour does not change in a few months.

From the initial assertion, made at the very first stages of the project's identification, that all children from the concerned communities would go to school, to the reality of rural life, there is quite a gap. More organising and more awareness-raising are obviously needed to stabilise school enrolment and attendance rates, and notably reduce the occurrence of child labour. The dynamic is only getting started.

It is only starting, but concerns on child labour are strongly increasing; with a clear mobilisation within the communities and with an improved dialogue between all the actors concerned. The dynamic taking place around the Tadwe school is being watched in the whole district.

The internal participatory evaluation, which was carried out in April 2004, focused on this dynamic. Through evaluation sessions organised with different groups of actors so that they could express their perceptions, and other discussions with key players, the strengths and weaknesses of the project were listed. This process highlighted:

- ◆ A strong mobilisation dynamic, both for the school building itself and for the campaigning against child labour.
- ◆ A strong increase in school attendance, due to growing awareness and school accessibility.
- ◆ A decrease in child labour occurrence.
- ◆ The mobilisation and training sessions have improved peoples' abilities, but moreover have notably improved the dialogue and understanding within the communities and between all actors.

ON THE OTHER HAND IT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT:

- ◆ The mobilisation dynamic is fragile and needs consolidation through more awareness-raising and training.
- ◆ The school enrolment is not stabilised and is still depending on the need for labour in the fields.
- ◆ More has to be done on child labour; this notion and the priority given to education still seem relative and are adaptable according to needs.
- ◆ Infrastructure questions have to be solved (the borehole) or addressed with the relevant authorities (bridge, health centre).

FURTHER CONCLUSIONS ARE THAT:

- ◆ The dynamic created has to be consolidated for further actions and sustainability.
- ◆ Activities need to focus on organising, building confidence, training, in order to
 - a) Empower the committees to go on being pro-active on improvements of the communities' situation.
 - b) Follow up the evolution of the situation regarding school attendance, child labour, living and working conditions.

Quantitative results are beginning to show up through school attendance and training activities; but changes in the child labour situation have to be monitored to be able to assess, after more than a few months following school opening, if the changes are long-lasting.

Wider needs were also expressed by the community related to the child labour situation, oriented to a needs and development approach which considers the general living conditions inducing child labour; aspects not originally taken into account by the project.

In the last semester of the project implementation there is need to consolidate what has been done in terms of awareness-raising and training sessions, strengthening the committees to take over from the project facilitators. But beyond this, there is a need to empower these committees and support the emergence of active people to build upon this existing dynamic. This way the communities could possibly start responding to the expressed needs, find solutions, go on requesting to the relevant authorities and finding partners in order to meet their needs and carry out their initiatives to improve their living and working conditions.

AECL, as the project implementer, has managed well with the school building, and has positively set the observed dynamic in place. As the project management structure it has to be strengthened, mostly by its Board's support and further involvement.

In short and at this stage a strong dynamic was created; the potential is there which needs to be developed for lasting impact.