

Miriam Gachago's executive summary

## **Executive Summary**

In July 2002 TECS launched its Integrated Child Labour Project (ICLEP) in Malawi to be implemented in Ngala, Dowa district and Dwangwa, Kasungu district. The project was a result of a long and thorough process of consultation with the communities in the two areas. During the consultations poverty was identified as the main cause of child labour. TECS therefore developed an integrated project that would address issues poverty reduction and thus reduce child labour in the impact areas. The main aim of the project is to reduce the incidence of child labour among the tobacco growing communities in the pilot project areas of Dwangwa and Ngala of Kasungu and Dowa districts respectively. The specific aims are:

- i. Reduced morbidity and mortality rates of children under the age of 15 years and women of reproductive age in the selected tobacco growing communities in Kasungu and Dowa districts.
- ii. Improved and sustainable clean water supply for the people of Dwangwa and Ngala made possible through capacity building of its communities.
- iii. Increased primary school enrolment and reduced enrolment dropouts in the selected tobacco growing communities in Kasungu and Dowa districts.
- iv. Improved food security, income levels and the use of natural resources leading to sustainable increase in farm productivity and a better environment for the child.

In order to achieve these specific aims, four project components were identified each dealing with one of the specific aim. The health component did not take off due to failure to identify a suitable implementing agency. The three components that took off were:

- Education and community mobilization
- Food security and agro-forestry
- Water and sanitation

Partner NGOs were selected at the proposal development stage to implement these project components. Each of them developed a proposal for their component and TECS coordinated the compilation of the proposal document that was presented to ECLT for funding.

The project management structure has consisted of the TECS board of directors, a project management committee consisting of all the implementing agencies and TECS, a project implementing committee consisting of the implementing agencies as well as their collaborators in the field. The involvement of the government departments in the field has been crucial as a means of attaining sustainability. At the community level, the local administration structure (chiefs) has been very instrumental in community mobilization and total project implementation.

The project took off very well and has gone through three and a half years of implementation. The results of the project are visible at the community level and the achievement levels very high according to the planned end of project results.

- Various committees have been formed to steer the implementation of different project components. Their capacity has been developed gradually making them a valuable community resource
- Communities have been mobilized in order to participate in the development process and make decisions on how to deal with child labour in their communities
- Communities have constructed school blocks and teachers' houses with the assistance from the project and this has resulted to increased enrolment in the schools.
- The school environment has improved encouraging the older children to stay in school longer
- Shallow wells have been installed in the villages resulting to improved health in the community.
- The installation of the wells has resulted reduced workload for women and girls giving the girls an opportunity to participate fully in school.
- The treadle pump irrigation has resulted to better food security and stable incomes for the participating families
- The tree planting component has resulted to better environmental conservation as well as making fuel wood available to the homestead again saving the time for women and girls.

On the whole, the project has been successful but it is still difficult to measure its impact on child labour. While the increase in school enrolment has all been attributed to the existence of ICLEP, it is not possible to tell which of the children who have been enrolled during that period were working. The Community Child Labour Committees (CCLCs) have been working hard to ensure that no children are working in the tobacco plantations or home but there is no documentation of the results of their work in order to provide a measure on reduction of child labour. Documentation is only available at the school level where the data related to enrolments and drop-outs is maintained. This is not sufficient for establishing the impact on child labour

The sustainability of the project at community level is well on the way to being achieved. The structures to ensure that this happens are in place but there is need for further capacity building. The project however needs to be mainstreamed into the district project monitoring and implementation processes. This will mean further strengthening of the district teams to ensure project ownership at that level.

It is however important to note that, the project in its current form may not impact on poverty significantly within the project period. Poverty is a deeply rooted issue and it takes time to address. The project is also operating within zonal boundaries and is surrounded by communities that do not have similar project interventions. This tends to affect the project results because the neighbouring areas tend to share the resources although they were not considered. There are also issues that need policy interventions for greater impact to be achieved. For example, the issue of compulsory basic education still remains in the balance. There is need for policy dialogue on the whole issue of environmental degradation in Malawi and specifically in the project areas. The production of tobacco through the tenancy system is another that needs to be dealt with at policy level. TECS cannot

therefore expect to reduce poverty only with direct action within the project areas. There is need to move to the next level with a policy advocacy component.

Finally, TECS has to always keep itself focused on child labour for ICLEP to achieve its main goal as a project. It is easy for the implementers of various components to be carried away with their individual components so long as they are achieving their set objectives. It however should be the responsibility of TECS to ensure that the child labour focus is maintained and therefore develop indicators to ensure that it is progressively reduced. These indicators were not developed by any of the implementing agencies because each of them developed indicators that were relevant to their project components. This is evident from the targets set in the project proposal document. This should be corrected in the development of the next phase of the project.

## Innocent Mugwagwa's executive summary

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2002, the Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco-growing (ECLT) a Geneva based not-for-profit foundation, entered into a four-year partnership agreement with Together Ensuring Children's Security (TECS), a Malawi-based trust, for combating child labour in Malawi agriculture using the poverty reduction approach. TECS in turn partnered three Malawi non-governmental organizations in implementing the Integrated Child Labour Elimination Project (ICLEP) in two districts in Malawi in three thematic areas: water and sanitation, education and food security. A fourth component to deal with health issues was not implemented as planned.

In this architecture, TECS acted as a coordinating body responsible for accountability, planning, monitoring and resource mobilization.

During the review period, TECS and its partners met and in many cases exceeded planned targets in all thematic areas. TECS put in place administrative systems for the smooth running of the ICLEP project. These included the registration of the institution as a trust and policies for accounting and personnel.

The TECS Board of Trustees was found to be well constituted in terms of the organization's constitution. In addition, the Board, through its 'one-gets-one' initiative increased corporate membership from 5 to 20 in 2005. The corporate members' contribution to TECS increased as a percentage of total income from 14% in 2002, to 32% in 2003 before declining in relative terms to 26% in 2004. However, it was noted that the board lacked financial management expertise and that it did not define TECS' mission and vision leading to organizational myopia.

TECS adopted a lean management structure that reduced its share of total budget from 50% in 2002 to 44% in 2003 and 23% in 2004. A motivated and results oriented team, TECS management cultivated a good working relationship with partners and created such for a as the Project Implementation Committee and Community Umbrella Committee for steering project implementation together with

stakeholders. However, TECS did not put in place measures for the efficient implementation of the project. The absence of an Accountant in TECS deprived the organization of leadership in financial matters. Problems such as over-budgeting, budget over-runs and under-utilization of capacity were evident across the partnership divide. The use of cash accounting throughout the partnership also led to misleading financial reports and misinformed decisions.

The CCAP was found to be a low cost partner with expertise and experience in managing water and sanitation projects. The partner had evident excess capacity that was not utilized to provide this critical resource further at the same budget cost. CRECCOM was also found to be a well-established partner experienced in mass mobilization and education projects. TLC was by far the most expensive partner with salaries consuming nearly 50% of total budget.

It was recommended that TECS go through a strategic planning process to clarify its vision and define its place in combating child labour in Malawi. In addition, it was recommended that TECS broaden its board membership to include financial management and development skills. The employment of an accountant will ensure that there is a resident cadre to provide financial leadership and improve efficiencies across the TECS partnership portfolio.

Lastly, it was recommended that ECLT define how exchange gains, losses and interest may be used by TECS, if ever, and set limits within which budget deviations may be allowed.

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