



EX-POST EVALUATION OF ABK3-LEAP PROJECT

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) MECHANISM
IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS THAT ADDRESS WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (WFCL)

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Ex-Post Evaluation of ABK3-LEAP Project to Support the Development of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Mechanism in Implementation of Programs that Address Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL)

Prepared by

Programme Research Unit

Strategy Management, Impact and Learning Department

World Vision Development Foundation

Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Philippines

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Through this research, we aim to highlight significant practices and issues that affect the sustainability of “system-strengthening” or capacity-building interventions aimed at preventing and addressing child labor practices, particularly in the sugarcane industry.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ex-post evaluation study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the sustained effectiveness of “system-strengthening” initiatives, within the Capacity Building component of the ABK3 LEAP project. ABK3-LEAP stands for: *Ang Pag-aaral ng Bata para sa Kinabukasan – Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection to Reduce Child Labor in the Sugarcane Industry*. The initiatives were categorized into three major pillars: 1) Strengthening the capacity of local systems and structures, 2) Enhancing the sugar industry’s engagement with and role in eradicating child labor, and 3) Undertaking advocacy and reforms to bolster the campaign against exploitative child labor in the sugarcane sector.

This ex-post evaluation was funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) through Project ACE as part of project activity supporting in the development of monitoring, evaluation (Activity 3.2.4). Project Against Child Exploitation (ACE), currently being implemented by World Vision Development Foundation, Inc. (WVDF), aims to strengthen the capacity of the government to address the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), including Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and violations of acceptable conditions of work (ACW) in the Philippines.

The ex post evaluation study of ABK3 LEAP program is aimed to provide Project ACE knowledge-related outputs and outcomes such as: i.) providing evidence of possible pathways to success in engaging and synchronizing the activities and initiatives of local partners and stakeholders in responding to violations of ACW (i.e what worked?), and ii.) identifying challenges and hindering factors based on previous child labor intervention programs, and identifying opportunities for improvement (i.e., what did not work and what can be improved?).

Findings from the project endline assessment highlight striking impact ABK3 was able to generate. **The project helped reduce child labor in sugarcane farms from 94% at baseline in 2011 to just 16% in 2016** This achievement is underpinned by improved socio-economic conditions, including a 72% increase in average monthly income among participants and enhanced awareness of child rights. Given the project’s transformative effect, it’s clear the effort to assess its ongoing effectiveness and sustainability through the ex-post evaluation was a worthwhile endeavor.

The study gathered data from groups in two distinct sites— one in Visayas Region (Negros Occidental) and the other in Mindanao Region (Bukidnon), both of which are also ABK3 implementation areas. More specifically, the study sites included the provinces of Negros Occidental (municipalities of Moises Padilla and La Castellana) and Bukidnon (municipalities of Don Carlos and Maramag). Negros Occidental was selected due to its significant project efforts during the ABK3 project implementation, driven by the extensive prevalence of child labor within its sugarcane industry. Conversely, Bukidnon, located in Northern Mindanao, was chosen because the Northern Mindanao Region had recorded the highest number of child-labor incidents at the time of the study based on the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) national data.

To robustly measure the enduring impact of a project like ABK3, it’s crucial to recognize that endline results do not necessarily reflect sustained success. This post-program evaluation required a comprehensive approach, looking beyond immediate outcomes. The research primarily focused on the ongoing implementation of child labor-related policies at the grassroots level, including ordinances, resolutions, and programs initially developed in collaboration with local government entities during the project’s duration. Additionally, the study examined the sustained functionality and effectiveness of community watch groups and child labor education task forces, both which received substantial support from the project. Furthermore, an assessment of the private sector’s adherence, particularly among employers, to the voluntary child labor codes of conduct developed under the ABK3 project was conducted. In essence, the research aimed to illuminate the evidence of long-term Impact that stems from the project’s critical Interventions.

Key findings of the study are as follows:

- 1. Child labor remains a pressing issue in Negros Occidental due to economic pressures and the demand for labor in the sugarcane industry.** Local actors and the new systems experience challenges, such as a lack of comprehensive data and disruptions from the ABK3 project closure. They also see the need to strengthen institutions like the Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC). In Bukidnon, progress has been made through a supportive approach in local ordinances, addressing root causes with data-driven

strategies and specialized councils like the Provincial Council Against Child Labor (PCACL) and the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Committee. For both regions, the protection of children and elimination of child labor require a continued commitment and collaboration among actors that has been difficult to maintain over time.

2. Following the conclusion of the project, communities in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon encountered a pivotal moment in their ongoing fight against the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) within sugarcane areas. **The project closure presented both regions with significant challenges in maintaining their child-protection endeavors and adapting to changing circumstances. However, it also acted as a driving force, inspiring community members and local leaders to take proactive measures, reaffirming their dedication to eliminating child labor and safeguarding children’s well-being.**
3. **The project’s activities produced several notable achievements and positive outcomes.** These included: 1) *a significant reported increase in community awareness and active participation; 2) significant personal and professional growth among project participants — particularly among former volunteers of the Community Watch Groups (CWG), teacher members of the Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF), former children members of the Barangay Children’s Association (BCA) Group; and 3) a consistent stream of valuable external support and assistance from local partners and stakeholders — particularly financial assistance and livelihood funding from national government agencies such as the Department of Labor and Employment and social development programming interventions from local civil society organizations such as the Sugar Industry Foundation, Inc.*
4. **Additionally, respondents highlighted significant challenges and impediments that hampered the sustainability mechanisms necessary to uphold the intended outcomes of the “system-strengthening” interventions carried out during the project.** These challenges were five-fold: 1) *transitions in leadership and shifts in group dynamics with members of the groups; 2) financial limitations and budget constraints that support capacity-building activities; 3) a shift from preventive measures to crisis response when addressing other forms of child exploitation and abuse; 4) complexities in monitoring child labor cases; and 5) the imperative requirement for well-defined reporting and*

referral systems to manage child labor cases effectively.

5. **The private sector faces challenges in adhering to anti-child labor standards, especially in Negros Occidental, where labor scarcity—driven by competition from other industries like construction—is prominent.** The declining status of the sugar industry has shifted the focus from eradication to minimizing child labor, with some farms struggling to enforce preventive measures. The pandemic disrupted progress, and reintegrating children into schools after becoming accustomed to earning income remains challenging. **In Bukidnon, the loss of funding from major community programming interventions, such as the ABK3 project, has impeded community-based monitoring activities. This includes checking with private sugarcane plantation owners on their compliance with voluntary codes against child labor.** Despite these setbacks, it is worth noting that the shift toward mechanization in the sugarcane industry and agricultural production in general has contributed to a decrease in the incidence of child labor in the province.
6. **In summary, Negros Occidental has been making efforts to expand the voluntary code of conduct despite the challenging economic conditions in the sugarcane industry. Conversely, Bukidnon has struggled to achieve compliance, primarily due to limited coordination between community and industry initiatives, leading to a decline in grassroots-level awareness and monitoring efforts.**

The ex-post evaluation study focused on understanding the sustainability of intervention programs addressing Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), mainly in the agriculture sector. It aimed to extract lessons and best practices for creating lasting solutions through systemic interventions, emphasizing local policy strengthening, implementation, and adherence. Using ABK3 LEAP project as a case study, this study examined “system-strengthening” interventions, offering key insights for Project ACE to enhance sustainability planning, and mechanisms. Most importantly, the insights derived from this study can serve as a foundation for supporting the development of a more improved, adaptive and enduring monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework. This framework, while initially tailored for Project ACE, holds the potential to significantly enhance the implementation and monitoring of programs addressing Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL)

including responding to emerging issues like Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC).

In fact, a significant finding of the ex post evaluation study highlighted the lack of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism for effective sustainable planning and exit strategies in the project. This gap included the absence of specific indicators addressing hindering factors. The study recommends incorporating clear dimensions with measurable indicators to track progress, development, and sustainability of system-related interventions. More specifically, the research team offers the following recommendations:

- **For government partners, especially those at the local and barangay level**, the tool should feature indicators facilitating the tracking of policy development and implementation related to child labor prevention, particularly at the local and barangay levels. More specifically:
 - **Local Ordinance** – Government partners, especially at the local and barangay level, should enact and enforce child-labor ordinances, detailing penalties, reporting mechanisms, and resource allocation for prevention and rehabilitation programs. Monitor their adoption and implementation. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *ordinance adoption rate, ordinance implementation, penalties imposed, reporting mechanism usage, and resource allocation.*
 - **Supportive Legislation** – Government partners, especially at the local and barangay level, should advocate for aligning regional and local laws with international standards, defining child labor clearly, and specifying government agency responsibilities. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *legislation development, policy amendments, alignment with international standards, and clarity of definitions.*
 - **Child-Friendly Policies** – Government partners, especially at the local and barangay level, should advocate for child-friendly governance policies covering protection, education, healthcare, and overall well-being. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *adherence to child-friendly policies, adoption of child labor indicators in assessing overall child well-being, and child participation.*
- **Local- and barangay-level government partners and community-based organizations and associations** should find in the tool indicators reflecting challenges in implementing activities that address child labor-related issues. Additionally, it should provide possible action plans, particularly focusing on issues related to:
 - **Leadership Changes and Group Dynamics** – Government partners, especially those at the local and barangay level, and community-based organizations and associations should explore how leadership transitions within child-protection councils and community groups affect group dynamics and initiative effectiveness. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *knowledge transfer, leadership adaptation, and institutional memory preservation.*
 - **Financial Sustainability** – Government partners, especially those at the local and barangay level, and community-based organizations and associations should analyze financial challenges in child-labor prevention projects, including resource diversification, cost-efficiency, and local resource-mobilization strategies. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *resource diversification, cost-efficiency measures, local resource mobilization.*
 - **Monitoring and Identification Challenges** – Government partners, especially those at the local and barangay level, and community-based organizations and associations should identify complexities in monitoring child labor (especially in informal employment) including sustainability, identification difficulties, and data issues. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *monitoring system sustainability, monitoring effectiveness, and reporting system enhancement.*
 - **Reporting and Referral Mechanisms** – Government partners, especially those at the local and barangay level, and community-based organizations and associations should focus on developing effective systems for child-labor case reporting and referral, emphasizing procedure clarity, efficiency, and stakeholder guidance. The research team proposes these indicator measurements: *reporting system clarity, referral system effectiveness, and guidelines development.*

- **For private sectors at both the national and local levels**, the tool should encompass indicators for regular tracking and accountability mechanisms. These mechanisms are crucial in ensuring adherence to a voluntary code of conduct aimed at eliminating child labor in the sugarcane industry. The indicators may specifically include:
 - **Independent monitoring progress** – Private sector entities at both the national and local levels create a technical working group or national councils with representatives from both local government and community partners that will lead and monitor unbiased compliance evaluation, oversee whether penalties and consequences for code violations relating to acceptable work conditions are being enforced, and can incentivize code-compliant private employers.

Integration of evaluation key findings and recommendations

In April 2023, the National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL) sanctioned the Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) Strategic Framework 2023-2028, featuring six components geared towards achieving specific end-of-program outcomes. Over a six-year period, PPACL seeks progress in fostering positive attitudes toward child-labor prevention, reinforcing structures for law implementation, enhancing service delivery, and improving child-labor statistics and knowledge management.

Findings from the ex-post evaluation of the ABK3-LEAP project align directly with the second end-of-program outcome of the PPACL framework that focuses on enhancing “system-strengthening” interventions. Project ACE takes a macro-level approach, incorporating these insights to ensure that identified barriers and hindering factors are addressed. The project, in particular, aims to successfully enforce sustainable legal frameworks and policies on child labor, including online exploitation, at both national and country levels.

Most importantly, Project ACE demonstrates its responsiveness and agility by strategically implementing program activities in direct response to the recommendations from the evaluation, showcasing its commitment to improving efforts for sustainable implementation of strengthening institutional mechanisms that addresses WFCL.

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CHAPTER 1 | Introduction



1.1. Working Children and Child Labor Situation

Child labor involves the use of children's efforts in exploitative, covert, or illicit operations, often concealing illegal activities. The workload imposed on children surpasses their age and abilities, placing an excessive burden on them without any protective scope of legislation, social security, and benefits. They are subjected to extensive working hours, leaving them with minimal or no time for education, recreation, or rest. Child laborers engage in various types of work across different industries, including manufacturing, mining, quarrying, construction, domestic service, and general services such as retail, restaurants, and hotels.

The latest Global Estimates indicate that 152 million children – 64 million girls and 88 million boys – are in child labor globally, accounting for almost one in 10 of all children worldwide¹. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labor is often defined as work that

deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. The agricultural sector, in fact, is reported to have 71% of children involved, while 69% perform unpaid work within their own family unit.

Globally, Africa ranks highest among regions both in the percentage of children in child labor – one-fifth – and the absolute number of children in child labor – 72 million. Asia and the Pacific, on the other hand, ranks second highest in both these measures – 7 percent of all children and 62 million in absolute terms are in child labor in this region. In general, the Africa and the Asia Pacific regions together account for almost nine out of every ten children in child labor worldwide².

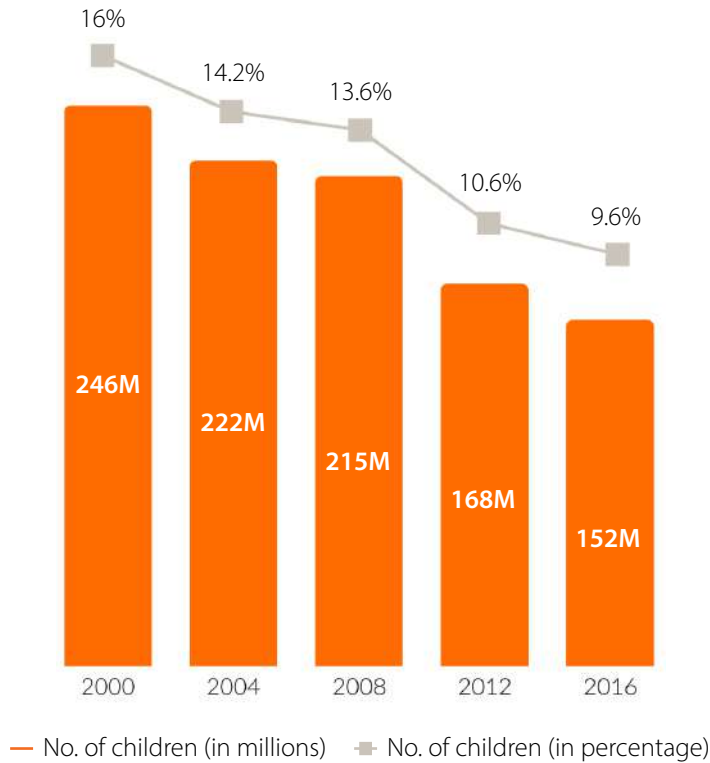
The analysis of Dachille et. al (2017) showed that while there have been encouraging advancements in reducing child

¹ Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes. 2018. International Labour Organization

² ILO: Child Labour – Global Estimates and Trends, 2000-2016, Geneva, International Labour Office. 2017

labor over the last two decades, the pace of progress has slowed in recent years³. The table below illustrates this worth noting finding.

Figure 1. Percentage and number (in millions) of children in child labour, 2000-2016



The graph shows that although there has been some decline in child labor, progress has not been consistent over the span of 16 years. Rapid declines have been followed by periods significantly slower progress. More worrying are the effects of the global pandemic on this trend. In 2020, the country saw a rise in child labor, the first such increase in two decades. This disheartening turn of events is detailed in a report jointly released by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF.

According to this report⁴, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a crisis that dramatically elevates the risk of millions of children being forced into child labor. This crisis jeopardizes the hard-earned progress made in the fight against child labor over the past 20 years.

The 2021 Global Estimates on Child Labour⁵ underline the harsh reality that families, grappling with income losses due to the pandemic, may resort to child labor as a last resort to compensate for their financial difficulties. The closure of schools during lockdowns compounds these risks, particularly for vulnerable children. Additionally, the transition from school to paid work for these children not only disrupts their education but also presents significant hurdles when they attempt to re-enter the formal education system.

1.2. Child Labor in the Philippines

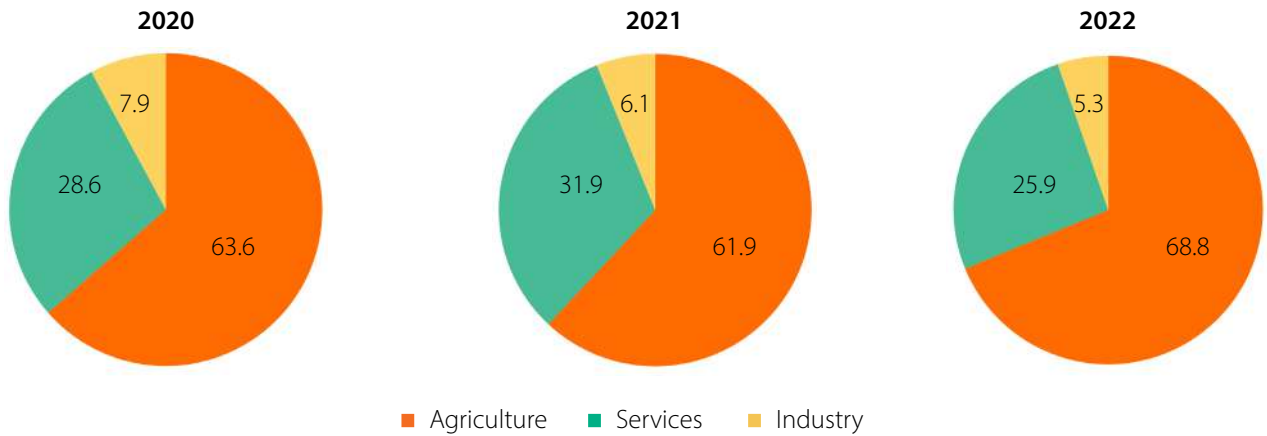
Child labor is a pressing issue in the Philippines, with its highest prevalence found in the agriculture, retail, and trade sectors, areas where many women-run businesses are active. According to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority's 2020 Labor Force Survey, out of the 31.17 million children aged 5-17 years, approximately 872,000 were engaged in child labor, with nearly 3 million exposed to hazardous conditions. Notably, 47.4% of these working children were identified in the agriculture sector⁶, primarily involved in the cultivation of sugarcane, as well as in the production of coconuts, corn, rice, rubber, tobacco, bananas, and hogs

The exact figures regarding child labor in sugarcane have varied, with estimates ranging from 60,000 to 200,000 children; comprehensive data differentiating between large and small farms⁷ remains scarce. The nature of children's labor in these sectors often involves grueling hours performing hazardous tasks such as operating dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads, and handling fertilizers and pesticides in the fields⁸.

Moreover, children in the Philippines are tragically subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, often connected to human trafficking,

³ Dachille, G., Guarcello, L., Lyon, S., and Rosati, F.C. Understanding trends in child labour, Understanding Children's Work Project (UCW). Working Paper, Rome. 2017
⁴ International Labour Organization and United Nations Children's Fund, 'COVID-19 and Child Labour: A time of crisis, a time to act', ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2020.
⁵ International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. License: CC BY 4.0.
⁶ Working Children and Child Labour Situation. Philippine Statistics Authority. December 21, 2021
⁷ Adapted from the ABK3 LEAP Technical Proposal.
⁸ Adapted from World Vision, ABK3 LEAP Project Document. August 31, 2011

Figure 2. Percent Distribution of Child Laborers 5 to 17 Years Old, By Broad Industry: October 2020, October 2021, and October 2022¹⁰

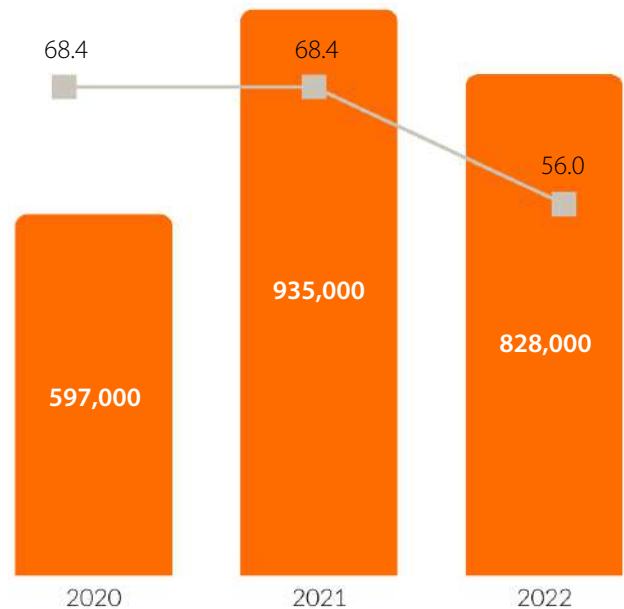


and forced participation in armed conflicts. It is especially alarming that children, primarily girls hailing from rural communities, are trafficked domestically to urban centers and tourist destinations, where they are forced into roles involving domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation⁹.

As of the latest estimates from the Philippine Statistics Authority, the agriculture sector continued to account for the largest share of child laborers at 68.8 percent, followed by the services sector with 25.9 percent share and the industry sector with 5.3 percent share (see Figure 2).

The latest data released by the PSA in 2023 sheds light on the Working Children and Child Labor Situation¹¹ in the country for the year 2022. It highlighted that the estimated number of working children aged 5 to 17 years old was 31.71 million in 2022, surpassing the previous year's figure of 31.64 million.

Figure 3. Proportion of Working Children Engaged in Child Labor: October 2020, October 2021, and October 2022¹²



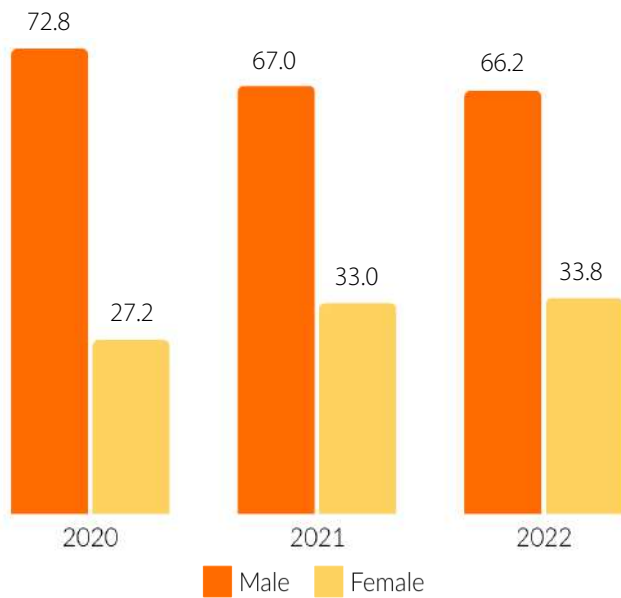
⁹ 2020 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Bureau of International Labor Affairs, US Department of Labour

¹⁰ Details may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding. Based on the Updated Population Projections using the Results of POPCEN 2015. Philippine Statistics Authority, October 2020, October 2021 and October 2022 Labor Force Survey

¹¹ Working Children and Child Labour Situation. Philippine Statistics Authority. December 21, 2021

¹² Based on the Updated Population Projections using the Results of POPCEN 2015. Philippine Statistics Authority, October 2020, October 2021, and October 2022 Labor Force Survey

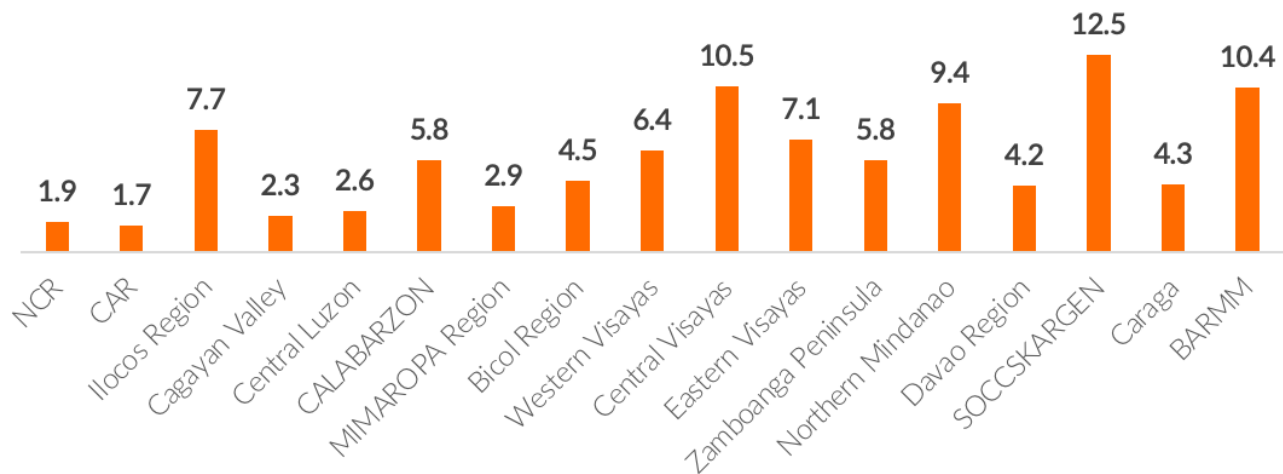
Figure 4. Percent Distribution of Child Laborers 5 to 17 Years Old, by Sex: October 2020, October 2021, and October 2022¹³



The proportion of child laborers in the country, however, decreased in the most recent survey. In 2022, 56.0 percent of working children were found to be engaged in child labor, marking a decrease compared to the estimated proportions in both 2021 and 2020, both of which were 68.4 percent (see Figure 3). Additionally, the majority of children engaged in child labor were boys. Out of the estimated 828 thousand working children participating in child labor in 2022, 548 thousand, or 66.2 percent, were male, while the remaining 280 thousand, or 33.8 percent, were female (see Figure 4).

On a regional scale, SOCCSKSARGEN stood out with the highest proportion of child laborers in the country, accounting for 12.5 percent. Following closely behind were Central Visayas and BARMM, with respective shares of 10.5 percent and 10.4 percent. Conversely, CAR recorded the lowest percentage of child laborers at 1.7 percent, closely trailed by NCR, which had a 1.9 percent share (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percent Distribution of Child Laborers 5 to 17 Years Old, by Region: October 2022¹⁴



¹³ Details may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding. Based on the Updated Population Projections using the Results of POPCEN 2015. Philippine Statistics Authority, October 2020, October 2021 and October 2022 Labor Force Survey

¹⁴ Details may not add up to 100.0% due to rounding. Based on the Updated Population Projections using Results of POPCEN 2015. Philippine Statistics Authority, October 2022 Labor Force Survey

1.3. Responding to the issue of child labor - ABK3 LEAP (Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection to Reduce Child Labor in the Sugarcane Industry)

The ABK3 LEAP (Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection to Reduce Child Labor in the Sugarcane Industry) was a comprehensive project undertaken by the World Vision Development Foundation Inc. in partnership with various agencies¹⁵. It was implemented over a five-year period, starting from September 30, 2011, and concluding on September 29, 2016. The primary objective of the project was to combat child labor within the sugarcane industry by addressing the underlying issues through a multi-faceted approach.

The geographical scope of the project covered 11 provinces in the Philippines, which collectively accounted for 94.3% of the country's sugarcane production. Within these provinces, ABK3 LEAP targeted 43 municipalities, strategically focusing on 148 barangays and communities that were heavily affected by child labor.

The project received crucial financial support from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), enabling the effective implementation of interventions and strategies. With this funding, ABK3-LEAP aimed to make a significant impact on the lives of children and families involved in the sugarcane sector by promoting alternative livelihood options, ensuring access to quality education, providing protection and support for vulnerable individuals, and advocating for policies and reforms to address the root causes of child labor.

The overall goal of ABK3 LEAP is to reduce exploitative child labor in sugarcane areas of the Philippines by:

- 1. Direct Assistance Interventions.** Providing target households with direct education, livelihood, youth employment and social protection services and linkages to support services.
- 2. Capacity Building.** Strengthening policies and capacity on child labor, education, sustainable livelihoods and social protection.

- 3. Advocacy and Awareness Raising.** Raising awareness on exploitative child labor, its root causes, and the importance of education, social protection and decent work for children/youth of legal work age.
- 4. Enhanced Knowledge Base on Child Labor in Sugarcane.** Supporting research, evaluation and the collection and dissemination of reliable data on child labor, including its root causes and/or effective strategies
- 5. Sustainability Mechanisms.** Promoting the long-term sustainability of efforts to combat exploitative child labor and improve livelihood.

The project's Theory of Change¹⁶ (TOC) (see Figure 6) proposes that eliminating child labor in the sugarcane sector of the Philippines requires addressing the diverse causes and factors contributing to its existence. Based on their experience with ABK1 and ABK2, the partners of ABK3-LEAP have devised a set of strategies aimed at bringing about social and institutional transformations. ABK3 has developed a comprehensive approach consisting of multiple strategies that target different identified issues. These strategies can be grouped into two main categories:

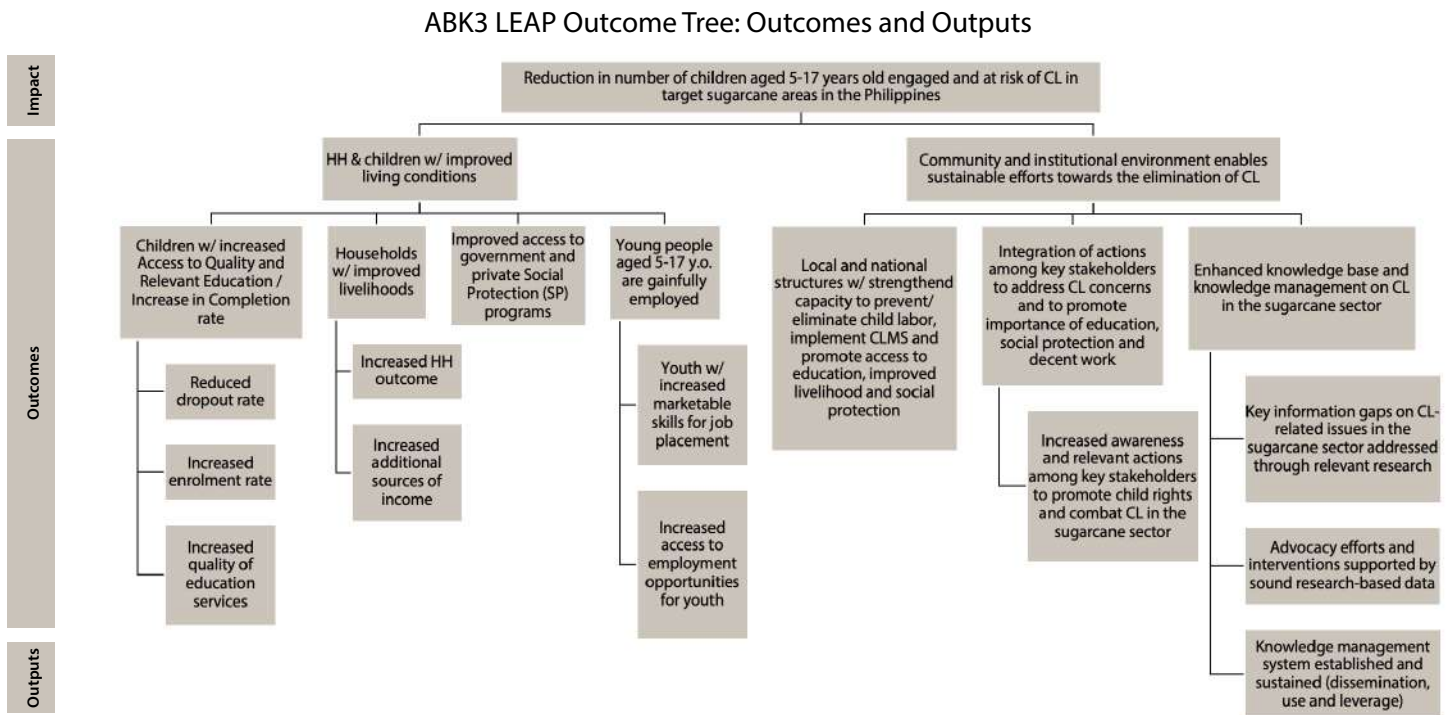
1. Those aimed to reduce households' and children's vulnerability to child labor, and;
2. Those aimed at improving the capacity of the institutional environment (e.g. ability of policy and institutional structures to address child labor, awareness of child labor and the knowledge base).

More specifically, at the level of the enabling environment, the project's three main sets of strategies are: (a) building strong policy and institutional structures for child labor; (b) raising awareness among actors at multiple levels; and (c) improving the knowledge base on child labor.

¹⁵ ChildFund Philippines (CF), Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation, Inc. (ERDA), Community Economic Ventures, Inc. (CEVI), the Sugar Industry Foundation, Inc. (SIFI), and the University of the Philippines Social Action and Research for Development Foundation, Inc. (UPSARDF)

¹⁶ Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: Philippines ABK3-LEAP

Figure 6. Theory of Change (ToC) for ABK3 LEAP Project



1.4. Additional Context: State of the Sugar Industry in the Philippines

The Philippines has long been a significant player in the global sugar industry, but recent trends and challenges are reshaping its landscape. The 2021 Sugar Annual report by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service¹⁷ indicates that the country is expected to produce approximately 2.1 million metric tons of raw sugar in the 2021/2022 crop year, a figure that remains largely unchanged from the previous year.

The sugar industry continues to hold great significance within the national economy, primarily meeting the demands of Philippine consumers and producers. Its exports are predominantly directed toward the American market, with limited involvement in the global sugar market as an exporter. However, the industry faces challenges in competing at the global market price¹⁸.

This lack of growth can be attributed to several factors,

notably a reduction in sugarcane cultivation area and subpar farm productivity particularly in Negros Island, which significantly impacts the national average. The Sugarcane Industry Profile¹⁹, as provided by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), reveals that over half of the sugarcane plantations are located in Negros. The other 21% are in Mindanao (primarily Bukidnon), 11% in Luzon, and the remainder in Panay and Eastern Visayas.

Majority of sugarcane farmers are smallholders, owning land holdings of 5 hectares or less. Smallholders may struggle to compete with larger, more mechanized sugarcane farms in terms of productivity and economies of scale. This can lead to income inequality within the industry, with smaller farmers potentially earning less than their larger counterparts. Furthermore, income generated from sugarcane farming often supports local economies and provides livelihoods for families in these areas.

¹⁷ US Department of Agriculture – Foreign Agricultural Service. Philippines: Sugar Annual. April 18, 2022. Available at: <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/philippines-sugar-annual-6> (Accessed: 02 May 2023)

¹⁸ Sicat, Gerardo. (2022). The Philippine sugar industry today. Philstar Global. Available at: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/11/02/2220814/philippine-sugar-industry-today> (Accessed: 02 May 2023)

¹⁹ Department of Science and Technology – Sugarcane Commodities. Available at: <https://ispweb.pcaarrd.dost.gov.ph/isp-commodities/sugarcane/> (Accessed: 02 May 2023)

The challenges faced by the Philippine sugarcane industry are multifaceted. Low farm productivity and inefficiencies in milling operations have been persistent issues. These problems are rooted in a variety of factors, including poor-quality soil, fragmented farms, a shortage of labor, inadequate farm machinery, rising input costs, pest and disease infestations, and the impacts of climate change. Milling efficiency is further hampered by factors like insufficient cane supply, subpar cane quality, and frequent breakdowns in milling equipment.

The industry is not immune to climate change issues, with droughts and excessive rainfall posing significant challenges. Furthermore, there is a growing inclination among farmers to explore more profitable crops, leading to a decline in sugarcane cultivation.

Another concern is the government's contemplation of liberalizing the sugar industry. This proposal has sparked worries among farmers and millers who fear that the industry is ill-prepared to face increased competition without a guaranteed demand.

In light of these challenges, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) conducted an assessment in 2021²⁰ to explore potential reforms for the Philippine sugar industry. The report acknowledges that despite these hurdles, the industry remains a significant employer, covering a larger land area than in previous years (approximately 410,000 hectares) and contributing substantially to the economy, with an estimated value of P86 billion. Additionally, the industry is diversifying its portfolio by exploring new business opportunities in alternative products such as bioethanol, muscovado, biomass-based electric power, and more.

Ensuring the industry's future viability hinges on several factors: (1) its capacity to compete against non-cane-based sugar and sugar substitutes, (2) securing its share of both domestic and export markets, (3) improving production efficiency to vie with other sugar suppliers, and (4) addressing environmental concerns that may impact its attractiveness relative to competing land uses. Despite the hurdles, the Philippine sugar industry retains its status as a significant contributor to the nation's economy and continues to adapt to shifting market dynamics.

In summary, the diminishing sugar industry in the Philippines carries several implications that could impede efforts to reduce child labor, especially in regions heavily reliant on sugarcane farming. The economic strain resulting from decreased production may force children into hazardous work to supplement family income, exacerbating the cycle of poverty. This economic pressure could also lead to a higher likelihood of children dropping out of school to support their families, further limiting their opportunities for a better future.

Moreover, a decline in sugarcane production may prompt the working-age population to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. This migration could leave vulnerable sectors, particularly impoverished farming families with children, exposed to the risks of exploitative labor practices. Employers may turn a blind eye to labor to meet demands and increase production, leaving children susceptible to harmful and unsafe working conditions.

²⁰ National Economic Development: An Assessment of Reform Directions for the Philippine Sugar Industry. December 2020. Available at https://neda.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/03132021_Sugar-Study_Discussion-Note_Final.pdf (Accessed: 02 May 2023)

CHAPTER 2 | Ex-Post Evaluation Study Rationale, Scope and Objectives

2.1. Rationale

Since the conclusion of the ABK3 LEAP project in 2016, World Vision Development Foundation (WVDF) has seen a marked decrease in the engagement of targeted children and adolescents (participants) in hazardous forms of child labor, especially in the sugarcane sector²¹. However, there are still significant gaps in learning following project closure for both WVDF and the broader child protection community, particularly on the sustainability of systemic interventions (e.g. strengthening government, civil society, or private employer capacity and coordination).

WVDF, with its continued programmatic and geographic footprint in many now-closed program areas, such as the ABK3-LEAP reached communities in the country, is now in a unique place to contribute to this evidence gap through the evaluation of the sustainability of system-strengthening interventions in areas where child labor programming has now ended.

Currently, WVDF is implementing its Project Against Child Exploitation (ACE)²² that aims to strengthen the capacity of the government to address the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), including online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) and violations of acceptable conditions of work (ACW) in the Philippines.

Thus, this ex-post evaluation of the ABK3-LEAP funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) through Project ACE, as part of its activity in supporting the development of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) mechanisms in the implementation of the programs in addressing WFCL including OSEC, will support and improve the development of a more responsive and sustainable MEL mechanism in implementing and monitoring programs addressing WFCL.

This ex-post evaluation study is aimed at contributing a better understanding of the sustainability of intervention programs addressing WFCL within the context of the

agricultural sector, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, comprises the largest share of child labor-related issues reported in the country. It is also intended to highlight lessons learned and best practices in creating sustainable solutions to address WFCL through systemic interventions that demonstrate long-term sustainability beyond donor funding.

Using the child labor intervention programs implemented by ABK3-LEAP as a case study, this study is hoping to provide the following knowledge-related outputs and outcomes that will benefit and be utilized by Project ACE to improve program implementation:

- Evidence of possible pathways to success in engaging and synchronizing the activities and initiatives of local partners and stakeholders in responding to violations of ACW (i.e., what worked)
- Identifying challenges and factors that hinder local actors from making progress now, based on previous child labor intervention programs and systems that were left in place, and identifying opportunities for improvement (i.e., what did not work and what can be improved)

²¹ ABK3 LEAP Endline Study, December 2015 - August 2016

²² "Project ACE strengthens local capacities and awareness to reduce Child Labor and Exploitation of Children", World Vision Development Foundation. <https://www.world-vision.org.ph/news/project-ace-capacities-and-awareness/>



2.2. Scope of the Evaluation

This ex-post evaluation will mainly focus on the system strengthening interventions or the capacity building output or objective^{23 24} of the project. These interventions would refer to the activities implemented throughout the project that aimed to strengthen relevant policies and build capacities of children, parents, communities, the Government of the Philippines (GoP) institutions, and the sugar industry to combat exploitative child labor in sugarcane.

The evaluation will cover major initiatives in three areas, namely: i.) Building and strengthening capacity of local systems and structures, ii.) Enhancing the involvement of the sugar industry in efforts to eliminate child labor, and iii.) Advocacy and reform to strengthen efforts to combat exploitative child labor in the sugarcane industry. The table below summarizes the institutions or groups that were strengthened and supported by the project in building capacity and policy support to address the issues that negatively impact child labor and poverty in sugarcane communities.

²³ ABK3-LEAP Proposal Narrative, 2011.

²⁴ ABK3-LEAP: Philippines. Interim Evaluation, 2014

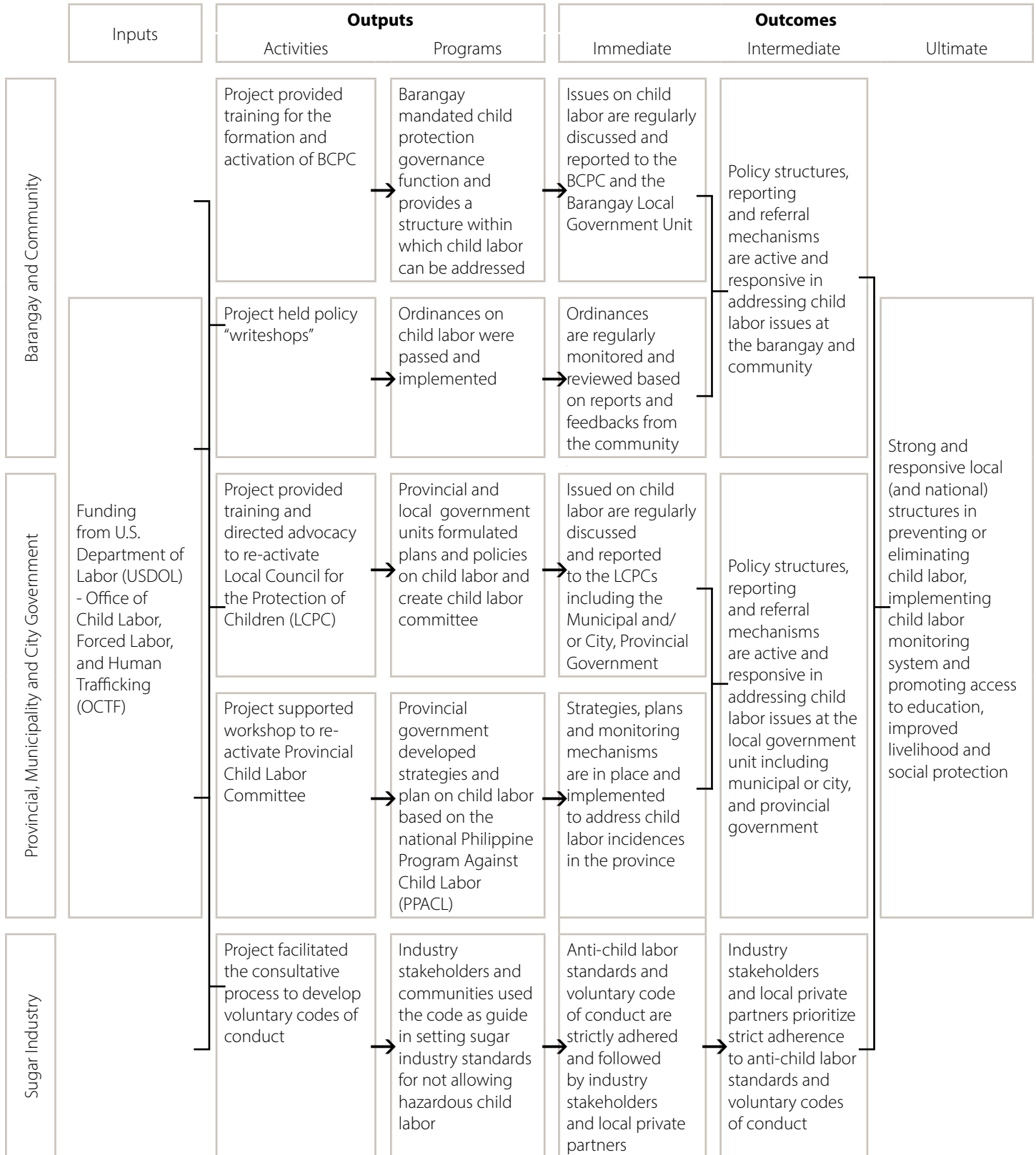
Table 1. Capacity building objectives of the ABK3 LEAP Project

Capacity Building Objectives	Institutions or Groups Supported	Activities and/or Programs Implemented
1. Building and strengthening capacity of local systems and structures	Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF)	<p>A community structure that responded to child labor through a “bayanihan” concept of engaging all community members to contribute resources and respond with action to issues such as child labor.</p> <p>The CLETF was trained in awareness, advocacy, and creating partnerships with the government and the sugar industry to eliminate exploitative child labor in their community.</p>
	Community Watch Group (CWG)	<p>Group of teachers, community leaders, and parents who took the responsibility to monitor the work and education status of children in the community. CWGs were formed in new areas and current.</p> <p>CWGs were strengthened and linked to Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) in relevant milling districts. CWGs received training on identifying exploitative child labor, and monitoring and data collection for practices within sugarcane industry.</p>
	Barangay Children’s Association (BCA)	<p>The BCA is a mass-based organization of children at the community level that promotes children’s rights. It is an avenue to develop child leaders and advocate for child concerns and issues.</p> <p>BCA representatives participated in the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), where it can influence local policy formulation. BCAs received training, divided by age groups of 5-11, 12-14, and 15-17, on leadership, advocacy, and hazards in sugarcane work.</p>
	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)	<p>The BCPC is mandated by law to be organized in every barangay to draw up and implement plans for the promotion of child and youth welfare. It includes representatives of children, youth, government, and organizations concerned with child rights and welfare.</p> <p>ABK3-LEAP worked with BCPCs to advocate for local policies on exploitative child labor in the sugarcane industry.</p>
2. Enhancing the involvement of the sugar industry in efforts to eliminate child labor	Sugar Industry Foundation Inc. (SIFI) and other sugar federations and foundations (i.e. National Federation of Sugarcane Planters, Inc. – NSFP, United Sugarcane Producers Federation of the Philippines Inc. – UNIFED, Confederation of Sugar Producers Associate Inc. – CONFED)	<p>ABK3-LEAP engaged and trained planters’ associations to adopt internal policies on hazardous child labor in sugarcane, establish or strengthen Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) within plantations, and share good practices across associations.</p>
3. Reforming advocacy and reform to strengthen efforts to combat exploitative child labor in sugarcane	Local Protection Council for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) including Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC), Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC), and Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)	<p>Advocacy initiatives in supporting the increase of budget allocation to government units and agencies in addressing child labor, poverty and education.</p> <p>In addition, the ABK3-LEAP project worked with LGUs to pass s local ordinances to prevent and eliminate exploitative child labor in the sugarcane industry.</p>

A re-construction of the logic model or results chain based on ABK3-LEAP's ToC for the capacity building objective or output has been illustrated (see Fig. 4) to clearly define the objective or output's intended impact and goals.

Since the project closed in 2016, the ex-post assessment is aimed to examine if outcomes achieved for capacity building at the end of the project intervention persist, with or without external support. The sustainability of

Figure 7. Reconstruction of logic model or results chain for ABK3-LEAP's Capacity building objectives



outcomes²⁵ are examined based on two different types:

- I. Organizational outcomes – whether these organizations continue to produce the desired outcome(s) and/or examine how local ownership or local actors continue to produce the outcome.
- II. Institutional outcomes – whether the policies, rules, laws, infrastructure, practices and even processes introduced during the project are sustained and continue to evolve and adapt to changes in the operation context.

2.3. Specific Study Objectives and Questions

To understand the factors that affect the sustainability of “system-strengthening” interventions, the ex-post evaluation study focused on analysis of the following:

- Sustainable implementation of local level, child labor-related policies (i.e., ordinances, resolutions and programs) that were developed by local government units with project assistance;
 - Activity/functionality of project-supported, community watch groups and child labor education task force; and
 - Adherence by the private sector (employers) to voluntary child labor codes of conduct developed under the ABK3-LEAP project.
- II. To what extent do private sector actors continue implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) practices and child labor standards?
 - II. To what extent are reporting and referral mechanisms for child labor still utilized and functioning (operational)?
 - II. What reasons can be identified for failure to sustain activities or results, including potential impacts of the global pandemic or crisis/disaster?

More specifically, the assessment aimed to address the following questions:

- I. To what extent do local partners and stakeholders (i.e. local government units, community watch groups, and child education task force) maintain activities and demonstrate skills following project closure?

²⁵ Discussion Notes: Ex-Post Evaluations, 2021. USAID

CHAPTER 3 | Methodology



3.1. Evaluation Approaches

In addressing the ex-post evaluation study objectives and questions, the assessment involved four (4) key major processes:

1. Comprehensive Review of Literature: A comprehensive literature review was undertaken to delve into the intricacies of child labor in the Philippines, exploring not only the issue itself but also the multifaceted landscape of governmental responses, policies, and interventions designed to combat this pressing concern.
2. Reconstruction of Timeline: A thorough reconstruction of the timeline was conducted to capture all the system-strengthening interventions that includes local policies, ordinances, resolutions and even capacity building programs initiated during the ABK3-LEAP project and subsequent years (i.e., 2011 to the present). This provided a comprehensive overview of the interventions implemented over time.
3. Updates on Sustainable Mechanisms: The evaluation specifically addressed and highlighted the current updates and progress made in relation to the sustainable mechanisms established through the system-strengthening interventions. This involved assessing the ongoing implementation and effectiveness of these mechanisms, such as the sustainable implementation of local-level child labor policies, the functionality of community watch groups and child labor education task forces, and the adherence of the private sector to the voluntary child labor codes of conduct developed under ABK3-LEAP project.
4. Tracking Former Participants and Focal Persons: An integral part of the evaluation process involved tracking and identifying former participants and focal persons involved in the project-supported community watch groups and education task force. This information was crucial in the conducted Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) that gathered valuable insights and perspectives on the impact and sustainability of the interventions. These individuals provided firsthand accounts of their experiences and offer valuable feedback on the long-term effects of the project.

3.2. Evaluation Methods

The ex-post evaluation assessment employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing focus group discussions and interviews with key informants. These methods actively engaged specific stakeholders who were previously involved in the ABK3-LEAP project within the designated intervention areas.

Review of secondary data, such as project documents and local level child labor-related policies (i.e. ordinances, resolutions, and programs), has also been conducted to deepen and contextualize the analysis of the sustainability of system-strengthening interventions when it comes to implementing such policies. By integrating these diverse data sources, the assessment aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the project’s sustainability and its impact on the outcomes (see Appendix 1.A for complete details on the Evaluation Methodology Matrix).

3.3. Definition of Terms

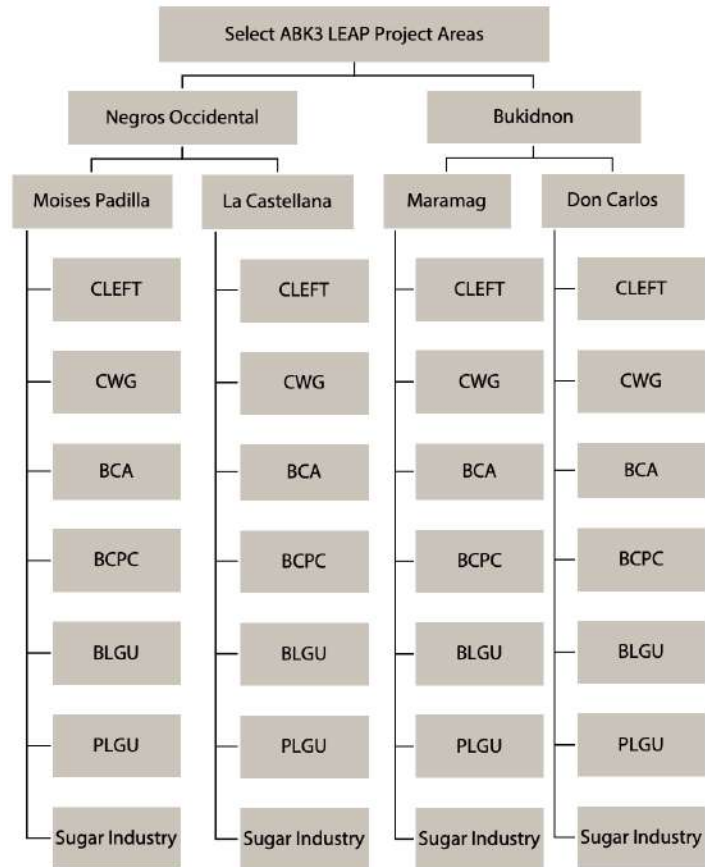
The evaluation intentionally sought precise definitions for key terms related to child labor to promote a clear and comprehensive understanding of this complex issue. For detailed definitions, please refer to *Annex A: Definition of Terms*.

3.4. Sampling Strategy for Identifying Respondents

The evaluation employed a purposive sampling strategy for the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to ensure the relevance and representation of gathered insights. Inclusion criteria for participant selection include former participants directly involved in the ABK3-LEAP project, such as members of the project-supported community watch groups and education task force, private sector members, members of the children’s rights associations, as well as focal persons from the local government units holding key roles within these groups.

Exclusion criteria encompass individuals with limited or no direct involvement in the project or those unable or unwilling to provide detailed information about their experiences. By adhering to these criteria, the purposive sampling approach aimed to gather precise and valuable data from individuals with firsthand knowledge and perspectives, contributing to a comprehensive evaluation of the interventions’ impact and sustainability.

Figure 8. Target respondents per category group and study site in KIIs and FGDs for the Ex Post Evaluation Study ABK3-LEAP’s Capacity building objectives



The study meticulously ensured that, for each study site, a representative from various groups was identified, including the selected barangays participating in the ABK3-LEAP project. In accordance with the ex-post evaluation’s objectives, these groups are as follows: i.) Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF), ii.) Community Watch Group (CWG), iii.) Barangay Children’s Association (BCA), iv.) Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), v.) Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU), vi.) Local Government Unit, encompassing the Provincial Government and Agencies, and vii.) Sugar Industry Sector, which includes the Sugar Industry Foundation Inc. (SIFI). Figure 8 provides a visual breakdown of the target respondents for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) within each subgroup and across different study sites.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to notable constraints and limitations as follows:

- **Limited Budget and Timeframe:** The study has a very restricted budget for the ex-post evaluation, meaning there are financial limitations on what the study can achieve. Additionally, there is a tight timeframe, which implies that the study must operate within a limited period for data collection and analysis.
- **Focus on Specific Areas:** Due to the constraints mentioned above, the study researchers concentrated efforts on four specific areas within the ABK3-LEAP implementation sites. These areas were chosen because they had the highest levels of project activity or effort. This focus allows the study to maximize the impact of its limited resources by diving deeply into these specific locations.
- **Primary Participants:** The primary participants in the study are key representatives from reached communities, local government units, and sugarcane companies in the selected areas. These individuals and entities have direct involvement in or connection to the project, making them valuable sources of information for the study.
- **Challenges Due to Time Passage:** The study acknowledges that the passage of time since the conclusion of the project has created difficulties. This is because it can be challenging to identify and engage with key stakeholders who possess the institutional knowledge needed to provide insights into what transpired during the project and the reasons behind its outcomes, 8 years after the project has ended.
- **Reliance on Qualitative Analysis:** The study's approach primarily relies on qualitative analysis. This means that it emphasizes understanding the nuances and contexts surrounding the project through interviews, discussions, and narratives rather than relying solely on quantitative data. Qualitative analysis allows for a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
- **Data Availability Issues:** The depth and quality of the review of child labor-related policies and initiatives depend on the availability of local data. This data comes from various sources, including private organizations, government agencies, and civil society groups in the identified areas. Unfortunately, the study researchers encountered missing or incomplete documents, which impacted the output.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are vital when conducting research in the context of child labor. The following ethical issues were addressed to ensure the well-being and rights of participants involved in the study.

Informed consent (see Appendix 2.A. Informed Consent) was obtained from adult participants, ensuring they fully understand the purpose, procedures, and potential risks or benefits of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity are maintained to protect the privacy of individuals involved in discussions. Data protection regulations and ethical guidelines are adhered to when handling and reporting data.

Moreover, voluntary participation was emphasized, and individuals have been informed about the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study without any negative consequences. Power imbalances and potential biases were acknowledged, and efforts were made to

ensure equitable and respectful discussions. Transparent and accurate reporting of findings were conducted while maintaining the confidentiality of individuals involved.

CHAPTER 4 | Findings and Results

4.1. Literature Review on Child Labor Legislations and Relevant Programs in the Philippines

4.1.1. TIMELINE OF CHILD LABOR LEGISLATIONS FROM ABK3 LEAP PROJECT TO PRESENT

Over the past two decades, the Philippines has made significant legislative strides in addressing the most severe forms of child labor. A comprehensive two-decade legislative timeline was provided in *Annex B: Timeline of Child Labor Legislations from 1993-2022*, allowing the main report to focus on a succinct summary of ABK3's inception and its relationship with existing legislation.

From this data, the Philippines has shown its commitment to combat child labor by ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182. This commitment focused on eliminating the worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work and exploitation, and ensuring access to education and family support for children. Since the ratification of ILO Convention 182, urgent actions have been taken by the government to eradicate this exploitative practice and protect the rights of children. This underscores the government's dedication to eliminating the worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work, forced labor, and trafficking.

The country has also enacted several laws, such as Republic Act No. 7658, Republic Act No. 9231, and Republic Act No. 7610, to provide stronger protection for children and prohibit child labor. Republic Act No. 7610 defines a "child" as an individual below 18 years of age or above 18 but physically, mentally, or socially handicapped. This definition highlighted the urgency of eradicating hazardous conditions, enslavement, and separation from families that some children face.

Republic Act No. 7610, also known as the "Special Protection of Children against Special Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act," also played a central role in the policy framework against child labor. This act provided stronger deterrence and special protection against child abuse, exploitation, and discrimination. It explicitly prohibits the worst forms of child labor, including tasks similar to those found in sugar farm operations, and lays the foundation for

safeguarding the rights and well-being of children.

Most importantly, the period from 2011 to 2013, coinciding with the initiation of the ABK3-LEAP project, witnessed the laying of essential foundations for combating child labor through significant legislative acts. Republic Act No. 10364 marked a commitment to eliminating the worst forms of child labor. In tandem, Republic Act No. 10821 further strengthened government efforts against child labor. This was complemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development's Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act (4Ps), designed to provide financial assistance to families in need.

At the national level, the focus shifted towards collecting data and implementing targeted interventions from 2014 to 2015. The Strategic Help Desks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Services (SHIELD) against Child Labor pilot testing aimed to provide critical services to vulnerable children.

4.1.2. LIST OF CHILD LABOR-RELATED GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

The implementation of these legislations paved the way for the establishment of social development programs by pertinent government agencies, which aim to address and alleviate the prevalence of the most severe forms of child labor. While establishing a definitive causal connection between the implementation of ABK3-LEAP programming interventions and the inception of these government initiatives may be challenging, there is a noteworthy correlation in the timelines. It is plausible that the interventions of ABK3 played a role in shaping these programs, given the synchronicity in their development timelines.

Through the institutionalization of these programs, governments enhance their responsiveness, efficiency, and, most importantly, create a conducive environment for the effective operation of sustainability mechanisms aimed at addressing and mitigating the most severe forms of child labor.

4.1.2.1. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Programs

4.1.2.1.1. Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Services (SHIELD) Program

In the ongoing efforts to combat child labor following the ABK3-LEAP project's closure, interventions from the government have emerged like Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Services (SHIELD) against Child Labor of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Social Technology Bureau²⁶.

The SHIELD project was born out of a study conducted by STB in 2016, which shed light on the most severe manifestations of child labor. With recognition of the Department's involvement in the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), this project materialized as a response to the aspiration of rescuing one million children from labor that exploits their youth.

SHIELD harmonizes with the Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL) and is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in RA 9231. SDG 8, focused on Promoting Decent Work and Economic Growth, serves as the framework for tackling child labor, encompassing measures to eliminate forced labor, modern slavery, human trafficking, and the direct forms of child labor, including the recruitment and deployment of child soldiers promptly and effectively. The objective is to completely abolish child labor in all its manifestations across the country by 2025, aligning with the broader worldwide commitment to realize sustainable development and safeguard the well-being and rights of children universally. Specifically, SDG 8.7 underscores the critical significance of eradicating every facet of child labor, particularly aspects like perilous tasks, coerced employment, and child trafficking.

The municipality of Maramag, Bukidnon in Region X (Northern Mindanao) was one of the implementing sites of ABK3-LEAP. In the recent years, it was also chosen as one of the pilot areas for SHIELD Program²⁷. In 2019, the Department of Labor and Employment-10, in collaboration with ChildFund Philippines, the Local Government of

Maramag, Bukidnon, including the local officials of Barangays Camp 1 and Base Camp, and Kaanib Foundation, Inc., initiated the project. This endeavor aimed to strengthen the capacity of local government units (LGUs) in preventing and eliminating the worst forms of child labor. In this particular area, 54 children who had fallen victim to child labor were identified and assisted.

4.1.2.1.2. Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps)

Another government intervention that might have contributed to the reduction of child labor incidents is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps). The primary goal of the program is to enhance the overall health, nutrition, and education of beneficiary households, all while fostering positive behavioral changes. This comprehensive initiative represents a vital tool in addressing the complex issue of child labor, potentially serving as one of the closest related government interventions for families who might otherwise be subjected to such circumstances.

The 4Ps is enshrined in Republic Act No. 11310, known as the "Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program Act". The law outlines key provisions including the program's objectives, coverage criteria, conditionalities, grievance redress mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation procedures. The legal mandate underscores the 4Ps' significance as a national poverty reduction strategy in the Philippines. In alignment with international best practices, the 4Ps strives to make a tangible positive impact on the lives of vulnerable Filipino families, paving the way for a brighter future.

One of its key objectives is to increase school enrollment and attendance rates among children, contributing to their educational advancement. By doing so, the program seeks to reduce the incidence of child labor, safeguarding the well-being of young individuals and enabling them to focus on their studies and personal growth.

Another vital aspect of the 4Ps is its commitment to elevating the standard of living in impoverished households, particularly in terms of food consumption. By providing financial assistance, the program aims to enhance the ability of these families to access essential nutrition. Moreover, the 4Ps strives to foster a culture of investing in human capital, encouraging parents to allocate resources towards the health, nutrition, and education of their

²⁶ Department of Social Welfare and Development. "Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Services (SHIELD)." Department of Social Welfare and Development. Accessed August 25, 2023. <https://stb.dswd.gov.ph/shield/>.

²⁷ Department of Social Welfare and Development. "DSWD-10 Helps Children Affected by Child Labor." DSWD Field Office X, July 29, 2019. <https://fo10.dswd.gov.ph/dswd-10-helps-children-affected-by-child-labor/>.

children. This encompasses not only the development of the younger generation but also the holistic well-being of parents themselves.

4.1.2.1.3. Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program for Families in Need of Special Protection (CCT for FNSP)

In 2013, the National Advisory Committee (NAC) of the 4Ps introduced a Modified Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Program for Families in Need of Special Protection (CCT for FNSP). This program is tailored to provide support to families, particularly those with child laborers, who require specialized care and protection.

By offering targeted education and health grants, the modified CCT for FNSP aims to address the unique challenges faced by vulnerable families, including hazardous occupations and difficult circumstances that children may encounter. This initiative forms a crucial part of the government's program aimed at eradicating child labor, reinforcing the commitment to uplift the well-being of marginalized children.

Furthermore, in 2017, DSWD launched the Family Development Session Module on Child Labor as an integral component of the 4Ps comprehensive efforts to combat child labor. This module serves as an educational tool, enlightening parent beneficiaries about the detrimental impacts of child labor and empowering them to act against it within their communities. The incorporation of this module into the regular monthly Family Development Sessions equips parents with valuable information and skills essential for fulfilling their roles as caregivers. The DSWD's proactive measure aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the Philippine Program Against Child Labor and contributes to the broader international campaign against child labor, championed by the International Labor Organization.

4.1.2.2. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Programs

4.1.2.2.1. Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program (CLPEP)

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) also remains unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding children's rights and shielding them from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and discrimination, including child labor. A cornerstone of this commitment is the Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program (CLPEP), an initiative with a primary focus on rescuing children from child labor, with a particular emphasis on eradicating its most severe manifestations²⁸.

In harmony with the Philippine Program Against Child Labor, CLPEP champions a diverse range of interventions that center on actions directed at children, uphold their rights, and foster sustainable development. It encourages collaboration among a myriad of stakeholders, all working towards the common goal of ending child labor.

At its core, CLPEP seeks to drive change at the grassroots level, honing in on barangays and business establishments where child labor persists. By engaging stakeholders and raising awareness, the program strives to eliminate child labor on a local scale, while also cultivating widespread public support. DOLE actively encourages businesses to embrace responsible practices and compliance, offering incentives such as certification as child labor-free establishments, thereby fostering an environment conducive to the well-being of children.

4.1.2.2.2. HELP-ME Convergence Program

Another facet of CLPEP is the implementation of the HELP-ME Convergence Program. HELP-ME stands for Health, Education, Livelihood, and Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, Monitoring, and Evaluation. This comprehensive program plays a crucial role in addressing child labor, employing synchronized strategies to prevent children from being drawn into hazardous work. The program targets work that endangers children's well-being, characterized by elements such as physical and emotional abuse, exposure to dangerous conditions, and utilization of hazardous machinery.

²⁸ Department of Labor and Employment. "Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program (CLPEP)." Department of Labor and Employment. Accessed August 25, 2023. <https://www.dole.gov.ph/child-labor-prevention-and-elimination-program-clpep/>.

For instance, DOLE Region X has provided a livelihood grant of P6 million to support the parents of 406 child laborers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. This initiative aims to uplift the economic conditions of these families, ensuring sustainable income and reducing their dependence on child labor for survival.

4.1.2.3. Project Angel Tree

In 2018, DOLE organized a “Walk for a Cause for Child Laborers in Negros Occidental,” drawing around 2,500 participants, including government employees, students, and partner groups²⁹. The event aimed to boost awareness of individual roles in eradicating child labor, utilizing walk registration fees to buy school supplies for 100 child laborers. The event featured the signing of a memorandum of agreement between DOLE and non-government organizations, enhancing child labor data collection for prevention and eradication efforts. These endeavors included livelihood projects totaling PHP1.914 million. The initiative also introduced “Project Angel Tree,” a vital component of the CLPEP, operating within its Batang Malaya campaign³⁰.

Project Angel Tree’s primary aim is to liberate children from child labor in its most egregious forms. Collaborating with private sectors and benefactors, referred to as “Angels,” Project Angel Tree extends crucial assistance and social services to child laborers and their families. Support includes feeding programs, donations such as school supplies and hygiene kits, and annual events held to coincide with the World Day Against Child Labor, as declared by the International Labor Organization³¹.

In Bukidnon, the efforts of the Bukidnon Federation of Family Welfare Committees (BFFWC) under Project Angel Tree have yielded tangible outcomes. Around 250 child laborers received school supplies, and 35 parents were provided livelihood starter kits valued at P525,000. DOLE Region IX, in partnership with the Valencia Rural Improvement Multi-Purpose Cooperative, has pledged additional livelihood support worth P5.9 million through the DOLE Integrated Livelihood Program (DILP).

Similarly, in Negros Occidental, Project Angel Tree made a positive impact by offering services to over 150 profiled

child laborers, including haircuts, food packs, and medical assistance. DOLE Region VI’s efforts have resulted in over P6.7 million worth of livelihood assistance provided to parents of child laborers, focusing on various livelihood avenues such as farming, fishing, retailing, and off-farm projects.

4.1.2.4. Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD)

Another intervention from DOLE that might have helped provide access to financial resources to families in need is the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD). This program is a community-based assistance initiative designed to promptly employ displaced, underemployed, and seasonal workers for 10 to 30 days based on the assigned tasks. Initiated in 2010, millions of Filipinos have benefited from TUPAD. In 2020, amid the pandemic, unused DOLE funds were reallocated to bolster TUPAD’s budget, aiding economic distress. The program supports diverse projects, including social and economic community enhancements and agro-forestry initiatives.

Enforced by the Republic Act 10121 of 2010, the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act assures labor protection and equal employment post-disasters. The Republic Act 11469, Bayanihan to Heal as One Act of 2020, reallocated unused 2019-2020 funds to boost social protection programs. Thus, DOLE launched TUPAD #Barangay Ko, Bahay Ko (TUPAD #BKBK) Disinfection/Sanitation project during the first wave of enhanced community quarantine. Republic Act 11494, Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, further expanded TUPAD in response to the pandemic.

Per Department Order (D.O) 219 series of 2020, TUPAD applicants must be informal sector workers, excluding government employees, and meeting specific criteria. DOLE actively involves parents of child laborers, aligning with the goal of eradicating child labor. In 2023, thousands of parents from various regions, including Surigao Del Sur, Camarines Norte, and Negros Oriental, benefited from TUPAD.

In Bukidnon, DOLE Region X engaged 7,012 residents across 13 provinces in the TUPAD Program, disbursing P25.5

²⁹ Guadalquiver, Nanette. “2.5K Join ‘Walk for a Cause’ for NEGOCC Child Laborers.” Philippine News Agency, 2018. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1033787>.

³⁰ Department of Labor and Employment. “DOLE’s Project Angel Tree Grants Aid to 50 Former Child Laborers.” DOLE National Capital Region, July 12, 2022. <https://ncr.dole.gov.ph/news/does-project-angel-tree-grants-aid-to-50-former-child-laborers/>.

³¹ International Labour Organization. “World Day Against Child Labour (Child Labour).” International Labour Organization. Accessed August 26, 2023. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/campaignadvocacy/wdacl/lang-en/index.htm>.

million for work in agro-forestry, sanitation, and disinfection. Similarly, in Negros Occidental, over P17 million wages were distributed among 3,805 TUPAD beneficiaries, fostering tangible impact, particularly in areas like Candoni, Hinobaan, and others.

4.1.2.5. *Batang Malaya Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System (CLKSS)*

In 2023, the DOLE has also been working on improving mechanisms to report child labor incidence through the recently launched *Batang Malaya Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System (CLKSS)*, a website³² which features a reporting module that the public can use to report child labor incidents. It also serves as a knowledge sharing platform that provides information on child labor and efforts and initiatives of the National Council Against Child Labor and its partners against child labor.

More specifically, CLKSS aims to achieve the following:

- I. Provide a functional and user-friendly platform for:
 - a. Raising greater awareness on the child labor situation in the country
 - b. Sharing information and getting public support on the different programs, projects and activities of the NCACL and its social partners to address child labor
 - c. Relaying updates on accomplishments and regard to the Philippine Program Against Child Labor and the Batang Malaya Campaign
- II. Enable integration of quad-media features and updates on child labor in the country
- III. Encourage reporting of child labor incidents through an enhanced reporting module

4.1.3. EMERGING NATIONAL PATTERNS IN CHILD LABOR STATISTICS

The concept of child labor, as defined by the government, encompasses children aged 17 and below engaged in employment within any public or private establishment, irrespective of parental guardianship. Recent data from PSA in 2021 reveals a surge in the prevalence of child labor in the country. Among the demographic of children aged 5-17, approximately 4.3% (equivalent to 1.37 million) were found to be involved in child labor activities. Notably,

insights from the National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL) illustrate that a majority of child laborers were boys, constituting 858 thousand (62.8%), while the remaining 508 thousand (37.2%) were girls. An interesting trend emerges, with older children displaying a higher propensity for employment, accounting for a significant 63.8% of the overall population of working children.

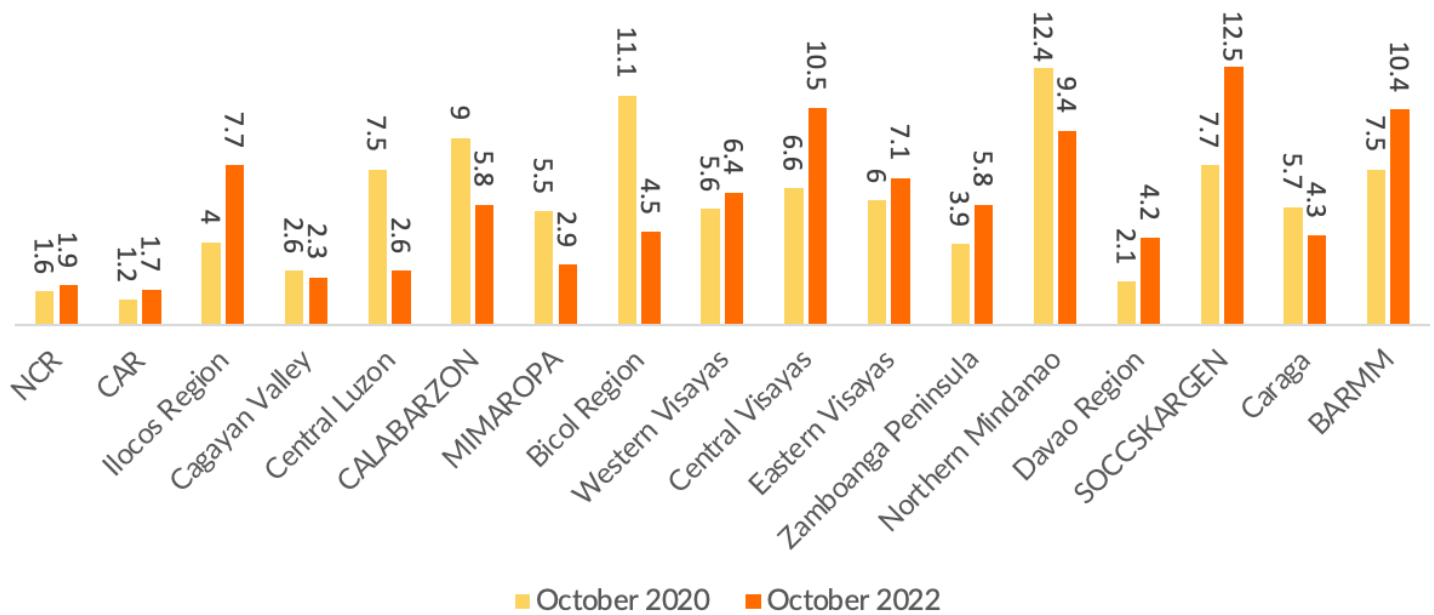
Analyzing the domains of child labor, the agricultural sector emerges as the most prominent, encompassing a substantial 45.7% of the total child laborer population. Closely following is the services industry, representing 45.4% of the total. Notably, a significant proportion (55.9%) of child laborers are engaged in work for 20 hours or fewer per week. The subset working between 21-40 hours per week is 27.6% in 2021.

Considering regional distribution, Mindanao consistently emerges as a hotspot for child labor, registering the highest prevalence across the nation. In the year 2021, Northern Mindanao documented a notable 13.7% of working children, closely trailed by the CARAGA Region at 11.1%, and the CALABARZON region at 10.1%. Strikingly, Western Visayas contributed 8.7% to the aggregate working children population, with a particular concern in Iloilo, where seven out of ten children are either found on the streets or employed mainly in eateries and shops. In contrast, the NCR demonstrates the lowest incidence of child labor at 1.6%, trailed by the CAR region at 1.7%, and BARMM at a modest 2.1%. These insights underscore the complex and widespread nature of child labor across various industries and regions within the Philippines.

Despite the concerning increase in child labor in specific regions of the country, there has been a remarkable 12.4% reduction in the overall prevalence of child labor nationwide. This represents a significant improvement compared to the alarming rates of 68.4% observed in both 2021 and 2020. Central Luzon leads the way with a 4.9% reduction in child labor incidence, followed by CALABARZON (-3.2%), Northern Mindanao (-3.0%), MIMAROPA (-2.6%), Caraga (-1.4%), and Cagayan Valley (-0.3%), all contributing to the positive pattern.

³² <https://batangmalaya.ph/about/batang-malaya-child-labor-knowledge-sharing-system/>

Figure 9. Percent Distribution of Child Laborers 5 to 17 Years Old, by Region: October 2020 vs. October 2022



4.2. Local Policies and Programs Implemented Related to Child Labor

This study also aimed to chronicle key events linked to the execution of local policies addressing child labor in specific study sites, spanning from the initiation of the ABK3-LEAP project in 2011 to its completion in 2016. It specifically tried to delve into the developmental trajectory of introduced and implemented policies over time, evaluating their effectiveness in combating the most severe forms of child labor within their respective communities. The study heavily relied on the secondary data collected from local partners and stakeholders at the Provincial, Municipal, and Barangay levels (outlined in *Annex C: List of Local Policies and Programs Implemented Related to Child Labor from 2011-2023*, across select ABK3 study sites) as primary sources of timeline information.

Under capacity building objectives of the ABK3-LEAP project, the primary focus has been on training local government partners to formulate, enact, and implement child labor ordinances through a series of policy *writeshops*. This study tried to evaluate the sustainability of this effort by reconstructing the timeline and tracking the progression of local ordinances over time. However, one major limitation for this exercise arose from the conspicuous absence, damage, or potential loss of a substantial amount of secondary data and documents. Various factors contributed to this limitation, including improper turnover to new

barangay leaders and natural disasters such as flooding and typhoons, which adversely affected the offices where these records were stored. Consequently, the analysis in this study is limited only to the available information that has been gathered and collected.

4.2.1. POLICY CONTENT REVIEW FOR NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

At the local level, executive orders have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive policy framework addressing child labor and safeguarding children’s rights. In both regions, the pivotal establishment of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) and the Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC) has played a crucial role in this regard. Mandated by national laws and policies, these councils serve as entities instrumental in safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation. Additionally, they ardently advocate for the rights of children-in-conflict with the law, children-at-risk, and those in need of special protection. The BCPC and MCPC served as indispensable platforms for the development and implementation of policies and programs dedicated to eradicating child labor in the sugar industry.

The review surfaced how the ABK3-LEAP project successfully implemented a comprehensive strategy in various regions, spurring the establishment of legislative foundations and subsequently extending into community-focused, data-driven initiatives. In Negros Occidental, specific communities like Brgy. Nato (Municipality of La Castellana) and Brgy. Crossing Magallon (Municipality of Moises Padilla) have explicitly cited the ABK3-LEAP project accomplishment reports in their executive orders, serving as the groundwork for the formulation of local ordinances addressing child labor issues. These ordinances feature dedicated sections mandating the continual support of key project interventions, including financial backing for child labor monitoring activities conducted by Community Watch Groups and the provision of catch-up lessons for children-at-risk.

4.2.2. POLICY CONTENT REVIEW FOR BUKIDNON

In select areas of Bukidnon, the ABK3-LEAP project played a pivotal role in raising awareness about child labor issues within the sugar industry. Proactive initiatives have been spearheaded by Barangays such as Kuya, Panadtalan, and San Roque in the Municipality of Don Carlos. Both municipal and barangay monitoring reports and ordinances have been established, outlining comprehensive plans and guidelines dedicated to safeguarding children's rights. These regulations underscore a steadfast commitment to eliminating child labor practices and reflect a concerted effort towards creating a protective environment for the well-being of children.

The data indicates that the ABK3-LEAP project significantly heightened awareness within both regions regarding the detrimental consequences of various forms of child labor, especially in the hazardous realm of sugar plantation work. This heightened awareness has, in turn, provided these communities with the understanding that meaningful interventions and solutions are not only plausible but can be implemented effectively at the local level.

These positive strides have served as a catalyst, motivating the communities to embrace accountability and take

responsibility for sustaining these crucial efforts. One noteworthy initiative is the formulation of system-strengthening interventions, exemplified by the creation of local policies and ordinances. These measures are strategically designed to mitigate and ultimately eradicate child labor practices within the sugar industry in their respective communities.

With the recent issuance of Executive Order No. 138 s. 2021³³ in supporting the efficient implementation of the Mandanas Ruling³⁴ and strengthen the autonomy and empowerment of local government units (LGUs), LGUs both at the municipal and barangay level can now have additional resources that they can tap into to sustain these institutionalized efforts.

However, while examining the timeline, it also becomes evident that an essential limitation comes to the forefront. It emphasizes a crucial point that is – the mere existence of local ordinances and policies does not guarantee their effective adherence and implementation.



³³ Full Devolution of Certain Functions of the Executive Branch to Local Governments, Creation of A Committee on Devolution, and For Other Purposes. <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2021/06/01/executive-order-no-138-s-2021/>

³⁴ "The Mandanas Ruling (also called as the Mandanas-Garcia Ruling) is a Supreme Court decision in 2018 which ruled that the just share of LGUs from the national taxes is not limited to "national internal revenue taxes" collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue but includes collections (customs duties) of the Bureau of Customs, and other tax collecting agencies. With the expected increase in the just shares of LGUs, they will be better equipped to assume responsibility for the delivery of devolved services as prescribed under Section 17 of the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act [RA] No. 7160) and other pertinent laws." Lifted from <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/Mandanas-Garcia-Case/IEC-Materials/FAQs-Mandanas-Garcia-Ruling.pdf>

4.3. Status of Groups and Institutions Supported by ABK3 LEAP

I. Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF)

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

Negros Occidental and Bukidnon share common challenges stemming from the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project, which local actors currently experience. These challenges primarily impact the ability to sustain initiatives against WFCL. As highlighted by one member of the CLETF:

“After the ABK3-LEAP Project, it seems that our reporting efforts have lost their focus. There is no longer a lead person. Child labor remains a concern, but it has reduced in prominence.”

Both regions stress the need for external support and follow-up mechanisms to continue vital programs, emphasizing education’s significance in child labor prevention. Despite the project’s closure, they acknowledge a lasting impact on the reported community awareness and commitment to child protection advocacy.

However, they differ in the adoption of specific initiatives and the resulting community response. Negros Occidental prioritized ABK3-supported activities such as children and youth groups and database development for tracking child labor cases. At the project’s end, some activities began faltering, highlighting the need for sustained community engagement.

In contrast, Bukidnon had an underutilization of ABK3 initiatives, emphasizing challenges in addressing child labor effectively. Proactive measures by community members were taken to sustain ABK3-initiated activities, particularly in education and child welfare.

• On Reporting and Referral Mechanisms

Negros Occidental initiated changes in reporting mechanisms and efforts to clarify misconceptions. Its approach emphasized community involvement. Additionally, Negros Occidental found the tools and survey forms introduced during the project helpful for capacity building.

In contrast, Bukidnon had concerns about the effectiveness of the reporting tools and had inconsistent use of said tools. The region also notes a loss of focus in reporting, highlighting concerns about addressing child labor and pandemic-related challenges. As mentioned by one member of the CLETF:

“The biggest challenge that we’ve had is the misconception about reporting that parents or guardians will be imprisoned.”

II. Community Watch Group (CWG)

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

In both regions, the group’s monitoring efforts came to a halt. Parents in the community group now seek funding support for their activities, given the absence of ABK. The challenges were compounded by the pandemic, making it increasingly challenging for children to abstain from working and contribute to their families’ financial needs. As one of the members of the group stated:

“The closure of the ABK3-LEAP would have been okay, but when the pandemic happened, that’s when things became challenging because everything became expensive. The children needed to help their parents, even just with buying some rice, which is already quite expensive. So, the children felt obligated to assist their parents.”

Moreover, group members experienced a sense of neglect from the barangay, significantly impacting their capacity to sustain initiatives. Despite members initially making personal financial contributions to fund these efforts, eventual withdrawal occurred due to the perceived lack of support from the barangay.

Nevertheless, unanimous among all group members is the consensus that monitoring efforts should persist without interruption. In the event that they receive information about any individual involved in child labor within the sugarcane plantation, it was deemed crucial to promptly report such cases to the barangay for appropriate and immediate action.

The introduction of the Community Managed Savings Credit Association (CoMSCA) through ABK3-LEAP project

also proved beneficial, eliminating the community's reliance on borrowing money during planting seasons. CoMSCA is an economic development project model developed by WVDF that aims to provide simple savings and loan facilities to communities, especially in rural areas, where access to financial services is difficult. Individuals began borrowing from CoMSCA for school expenses instead of seeking external financial assistance. As highlighted by one of the members:

"During planting season, they used to borrow money for the expenses in planting, which they would repay with the harvest. But now, with CoMSCA, they get the funds for buying fertilizers and for paying for land irrigation through CoMSCA. It's like that; the practice of borrowing money during planting season has disappeared because they now get it through CoMSCA."

• On Reporting and Referral Mechanisms

Since the conclusion of ABK3-LEAP, there have been notable shifts in reporting child labor within the community. Most significant is the perceived lack of specific guidance when it comes to reporting cases of child labor.

Some members expressed reluctance to report, acknowledging that the children involved are primarily assisting their parents due to prevailing poverty. This hesitancy to report is rooted in a deep understanding of the economic challenges faced by families, further exacerbated by the pandemic. Children often contribute to the household income out of necessity. The nuanced nature of these circumstances complicates the reporting process, creating a scenario where the line between child labor and familial economic support becomes blurred.

Adding to the complexity is a prevailing misconception within the community. Some individuals believe that reporting instances of child labor may lead to the imprisonment of parents or guardians. This fear further complicates matters, as it introduces uncertainty about the consequences of reporting and raises concerns about who will provide for the family's needs, particularly those of the child.

III. Barangay Children's Association (BCA)

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

In both Negros Occidental and Bukidnon, the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project had a profound impact on communities' ability to combat WFCL. Both regions faced challenges in sustaining their efforts, including changes in group dynamics and leadership. This is stated by one of the members of the BCA:

"It really affected us because there's no one supporting us anymore; there's no one behind us saying, 'Go ahead and do it, we're here for you.'"

Nevertheless, in both areas, some individuals and group members continued their initiatives independently, playing a pivotal role in maintaining the fight against child labor. Increased community awareness emerged as a common theme in both regions, with residents becoming more vigilant about discouraging child labor and emphasizing the importance of education, particularly among parents.

External investments were also mentioned as contributing to the decline in child labor in Bukidnon; Negros Occidental had no mention of external support.

Additionally, personal and professional growth was observed among group members as they discovered and honed talents that boosted their confidence and contributed to advocacy work. As mentioned by one of the members of the BCA:

"It's the eagerness, skills, and capacity that have made a difference. ... The knowledge and wisdom instilled in us from being 'Little Teachers' and the training provided by World Vision through ABK, these are the most successful aspects. We can see the impact it has."

IV. Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

In both Negros Occidental and Bukidnon regions, the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project had similar impacts on efforts to address WFCL. Both regions experienced leadership changes within their respective councils, creating a need for amendments to existing child protection ordinances and emphasizing the importance of maintaining continuity in addressing child labor issues.

The closure of ABK3-LEAP led to financial constraints in both areas, limiting the ability to sustain initiatives, organize meetings, conduct awareness campaigns, and provide educational programs. As one of the members of the BCPC narrated:

“When the project ended, it felt like things had weakened. Because the children used to be really active back then, they were quick. They used to distribute a lot of things, and they were very fast. But when the project ended, it seemed like there were some initiatives that became paralyzed.”

Despite these challenges, both regions recognized the importance of continuity in addressing child labor and children’s rights, making efforts to carry forward projects initiated by ABK3-LEAP. Community engagement played a crucial role, with local community members actively involved in identifying child labor cases and raising awareness about children’s rights.

The impact of the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project differed in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon. In Negros Occidental, the absence of dedicated child labor protection programs created a resource gap, and leadership changes within the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) disrupted efforts, with a shift in focus towards other issues. Negros Occidental also faces political challenges and place a greater emphasis on reporting to external authorities like the Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC).

In Bukidnon, emphasis was on amending ordinances to adapt to changing council compositions, reflecting the importance of continuity, while local leaders took proactive steps to create new ordinances. This region emphasizes local resolution through dialogue and mediation. Community engagement and awareness-raising were vital in Bukidnon, and the absence of ABK3-LEAP’s educational materials and gatherings had a deeper impact on advocacy efforts and child labor monitoring.

• On Reporting and Referral Mechanisms

BCPCs engage in monitoring and verification of reports within the barangay, educate the community about child labor policies, and promote prompt responses by barangay officials. The community also plays a role in facilitating discussions between employers and parents, and cases are reported to relevant authorities such as the VAWC Committee. In both regions, the primary goal is to

resolve child labor issues at the local level, with a preference for dialogue over immediate legal action.

In both regions, the reporting and referral mechanisms have seen limited change in recent years. Cases of child labor persist primarily due to poverty, and attention to these cases has diminished over time. The response to complaints remains largely reactive rather than proactive, and political challenges continue to hinder effective child labor intervention.

Meticulous documentation and record-keeping of child labor cases are a common practice in both regions. Detailed records are maintained by designated officers, aiding in evaluations and assessments to combat child labor effectively. Negros Occidental provides more detailed information about structured reporting processes and resolution procedures compared to Bukidnon. However, Negros Occidental noted a decline in the level of organization and regular monitoring by the BCPC, compared to when a dedicated CWG was in place.

The utilization of the BCPC budget is also emphasized in both regions, with funds allocated to provide financial assistance to children and establish rules and guidelines for appropriate behavior. Specific details about the BCPC budget utilization are not provided for Bukidnon.

V. Sugar Industry Foundation Inc. (SIFI) and other sugar federations and foundations

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

Negros Occidental and Bukidnon collaborate with local institutions and multi-sector participation to address child labor. However, they differ in certain aspects. In Negros Occidental, the closure of the ABK project led to the emergence of a new project funded by Nestlé, ensuring continuity in addressing child labor, especially in sugar farms. The community diversified its efforts, incorporating strategies from the previous project, such as Community Rights Advocates (CRA).

In Bukidnon, the loss of funding for monitoring activities and changes in project oversight hindered their capacity to continue WFCL-related initiatives effectively. The community responded by shifting towards mechanization in the sugar industry, leading to reduced child labor. Challenges in the private sector’s compliance with anti-child labor standards persisted, with limited coordination and awareness efforts. A staff from SIFI

highlighted this by stating:

"In encouraging compliance to the voluntary code of conduct it should really be both, we should have a presence in the community and in the sugar industry. But with the multitude of associations, it's only SIFI. There's no significant force at the top of the sugar industry."

Adding to the complexity of this problem was the sugar industry's declining status that hinders the eradication of child labor. This was further elaborated by a representative of one of the largest private sugarcane federations in Bacolod:

"Other industries are competing with us, such as construction. We have tried many ways to prevent child labor, but because our sector is also affected, some children end up working. The sugarcane industry is in a declining stage, and we find ourselves looking for solutions."

• On Reporting and Referral Mechanisms

In Negros Occidental, SIFI initiated the formation of organizers during the ABK3-LEAP project to support reporting and referral mechanisms. This step was crucial in addressing issues related to poverty and child labor, ensuring that these concerns were not solely the responsibility of project implementers. They facilitated referrals not only to DOLE but also to other relevant agencies, aiming to enhance the effectiveness of interventions and comprehensively address child labor issues. A voluntary code of conduct was also introduced in the sugar industry, and efforts were made to expand it to encompass both community and industry interventions, although challenges were encountered.

In Bukidnon, there were challenges in encouraging compliance with the code, particularly due to limited coordination between community and industry initiatives, resulting in dwindling awareness and monitoring efforts at the grassroots level. SIFI in Bukidnon did not emphasize specific actions related to referral and reporting mechanisms following the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project. This suggests that, unlike Negros Occidental, the region did not highlight explicit efforts to strengthen or sustain reporting and referral mechanisms as a primary response to the project's closure.

VI. Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU)

• On Project Closure and Perceived Changes

Negros Occidental and Bukidnon share common challenges resulting from the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project, which significantly impacted their ability to combat WFCL. Both regions face difficulties in monitoring child labor cases, especially those based on contracts or piecework, due to resource constraints and a lack of project funding. As mentioned by one of the *Barangay Kagawads* (*Barangay Deputy Officer*):

"Before, there was a Community Watch Group (CWG) that focused on monitoring child labor cases, so the reporting was more organized compared to now. That's why it's really better to have monitoring at the barangay level."

They have also observed a shift in focus, with an emphasis on addressing children in crisis situations or child offenders in certain instances. Engaging parents in discussions and interventions to reduce child labor remains a common strategy in both regions, as does a recognition of the importance of clear guidelines for reporting and referral mechanisms.

However, both regions differ in specific concerns and approaches. Negros Occidental highlights the absence of funding and resources, as well as the closure of livelihood projects, as major challenges.

In contrast, Bukidnon emphasizes the influence of negative peer pressure and technology on children, and the need to revisit ordinances to align with international standards. Moreover, Bukidnon places a greater emphasis on programs involving child teachers to foster self-improvement and leadership skills among children. Additionally, it underscores concerns about the actions of the DSWD in response to child offenders.

• On Reporting and Referral Mechanisms

Both Negros Occidental and Bukidnon share common concerns about changes in these mechanisms since the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project. There is a shared emphasis on the need for clear guidelines, ordinances, or standards to effectively guide interventions related to child labor. This highlights the importance of having structured procedures in place.

Bukidnon faces challenges related to a lack of reporting

on child labor cases in their barangays and places more emphasis on addressing child offenders. This shows potential differences in priorities and community involvement regarding reporting and intervention strategies between Negros Occidental and Bukidnon.

4.4. Overall Synthesis of Child Labor-related Policies and Programs Implemented in Select Study Sites in Negros Occidental

Child labor persists as a grave concern in Negros Occidental, driven by economic pressures within families and the demand for labor in the sugarcane industry. Children often contribute to household income by engaging in work on sugarcane plantations during their free time. In response to this pressing issue, a range of initiatives and partnerships have been implemented, aiming to tackle child labor while strengthening the protective framework.

While comprehensive provincial statistics on child labor remain limited, data spanning from 2018 to 2021 indicates a consistent pattern in labor force entry at age fifteen across various age groups. This stability becomes particularly evident during job fairs organized by the Public Employment Service Office (PESO), which attract a significant number of applicants within this age bracket. However, despite these insights, the systematic reporting and monitoring of child labor cases continue to require substantial improvement. The existing data collection process lacks the necessary structure and comprehensiveness required to accurately capture the full extent of the issue. This limitation hampers the formulation of targeted interventions and the evaluation of ongoing initiatives.

A significant contributing factor to this data gap is the conclusion of the ABK3-LEAP project in 2016. Unfortunately, the project's closure occurred without an effective turnover of mechanisms and systems to successor initiatives or governmental bodies. This oversight has disrupted the continuity of efforts and eroded institutional memory, making it difficult to build upon the project's successes and lessons learned. Ensuring proper knowledge and resource transfer during project closures is imperative to mitigate such challenges in the future.

Most participants in FGDs and KIs acknowledge the pressing need for enhanced reporting and monitoring

mechanisms for child labor cases. This entails establishing a well-structured and comprehensive data collection system that fosters collaboration among relevant agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. Such a system would enable timely and accurate identification of child labor incidents, facilitating swift interventions and necessary support for affected children and families.

Shortages in manpower and technical expertise hinder efficiency in monitoring, emphasizing the need for capacity building efforts. Continuous advocacy and widespread information dissemination remain pivotal to raising awareness among families, communities, and stakeholders. The exacerbation of child labor during the COVID-19 pandemic underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions, as families grapple with intensified economic hardships. The dire economic circumstances faced by families may lead them to prioritize short-term economic survival over the long-term well-being and education of their children.

4.4.1. LOCAL COUNCILS AND GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

The Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC) employed an online database for monitoring child labor. However, the effectiveness of this initiative dwindled over time, leading to its eventual expiration. Ongoing efforts and refreshed strategies are required to re-establish the PCPC.

Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) play a pivotal role in child labor prevention, yet their functionality varies due to political challenges and organizational limitations. The potential impact of the Mandanas Ruling presents a promising avenue for bolstering child labor prevention efforts, potentially allocating more substantial budgets and enhancing local council effectiveness. This highlights a positive direction for

addressing systemic challenges and establishing a robust protective environment for children.

The educational sector also significantly contributes to child labor prevention. Teachers and schools actively implement child protection policies and conduct awareness campaigns, effectively fostering a culture of child welfare and education. Collaborative initiatives such as CoMSCA, further demonstrate the potential of collective action in driving positive community development and providing essential emergency support.

Collaborative efforts within the private sector have notably contributed to reducing child labor. The introduction of a voluntary code of conduct by sugarcane plant owners, endorsed by local government units, played a pivotal role in prohibiting the employment of child laborers. Implemented during the ABK3-LEAP project timeline, this code underscored ethical labor practices and the collective engagement of stakeholders, resulting in a positive outcome. This collaboration highlights the potential of partnerships in creating meaningful change and advancing the fight against child labor.

Efforts at the local level have been made, including programs like the Child Friendly Local Governance Audit (CFLGA) and the Local Council for the Protection of Children. These initiatives identify exemplary barangay councils dedicated to child protection, expanding the reach of child labor prevention objectives. Local government engagement in these endeavors demonstrates a commitment to comprehensively address child labor.

4.4.2. LAWS AND GOVERNANCE

The adoption of national laws at the local level is of paramount importance as it highlights the commitment of LGUs to addressing the issue of child labor. LGUs, being closer to the realities of children and the communities around them, play a critical role in implementing and enforcing these laws effectively. Child labor often varies in its forms and prevalence across different regions, making it essential for LGUs to tailor their approaches to suit the specific needs and challenges faced by their communities.

This localized approach enables LGUs to craft policies and programs that are contextually relevant and responsive to the unique circumstances of the children involved. Moreover, by actively engaging with local stakeholders, including the BCPC and other community organizations, LGUs can effectively mobilize resources and coordinate

efforts to combat child labor and create a safer and more conducive environment for the development and education of children. Other initiatives also include provision of livelihood programs for families.

In relation to the national program, the 4Ps has emerged as a pivotal factor in the battle against child labor in Negros Occidental. This initiative helped curb child labor through consistent monitoring of school attendance among child beneficiaries. This prerequisite serves as an incentive for parents to ensure their children's regular school attendance, as the program rewards families with financial support. Teachers also play an indispensable role in upholding the unwavering commitment of both students and parents to continuous schooling. They monitor attendance records, reinforcing the idea that education is a superior alternative to child labor.

Parallel to the 4Ps program, LGUs have harnessed the DOLE's Project Angel in Negros Occidental. This project focuses on the profiling of child laborers, and has emerged as another effective strategy in curbing child labor issues. However, resources allocated to Project Angel are constrained, necessitating the exploration of supplementary funding channels within the governmental framework and from external sources.

LGUs have assumed a pivotal role in safeguarding the welfare and well-being of children within their jurisdictions. LGUs have been working tirelessly to combat child labor practices, aiming to provide children with access to quality education and a safe environment. However, the landscape of child protection has grown more complex, necessitating LGUs to allocate their resources to a variety of concerns that demand urgent action.

4.4.3. REPORTING, MONITORING, AND ENGAGEMENT

In addressing the problem of child labor, there exists a significant challenge stemming from a lack of clarity surrounding the reporting and referral mechanisms. Local communities and individuals engaged in VAWC programs often find themselves uncertain about whether their actions align with the established mechanisms for curbing child labor. This ambiguity can hinder the effectiveness of the system in place. A concerted effort is needed to bridge this gap and ensure that every stakeholder is well-informed about their role within the reporting and referral process.

At present, several avenues for reporting child labor cases



have been established to varying degrees of awareness among the community. Schools and educational institutions also play a crucial role, with teachers and administrators acting as vigilant frontline reporters, identifying children engaged in labor activities during school hours. Health centers, being central community points, can additionally contribute by reporting cases through Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) where children exhibit work-related injuries or health concerns. Furthermore, the DSWD and DOLE also hold a significant role in the referral process. Local DSWD and DOLE offices extend crucial resources including financial aid when circumstances demand. Labor inspectors contribute their expertise by investigating child labor cases, ensuring adherence to labor laws, and taking decisive actions against those exploiting child labor. In 2019, the Kabuhayan Program of DOLE was able to help 152 individuals, including those below 25 years old.

During the time ABK3-LEAP was active, Moises Padilla was able to involve at least 32 people for different positions like livelihood focal, village agent, education focal, advocacy focal, CoMSCA president, little teacher, among others. La Castellana had at least 29 people involved.

While commendable progress has been made in diminishing child labor in Negros Occidental, sustained

collaborative efforts, vigilant monitoring, heightened awareness, and a comprehensive approach remain essential. The commitment of diverse stakeholders, encompassing governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions is paramount in creating a lasting and impactful solution. The simultaneous focus on immediate interventions and systemic transformation remains crucial in realizing a future free from child labor. Strengthening local ordinances and institutional mechanisms is key to achieving this vision.

4.5. Overall Synthesis of Status on Child Labor-related Policies and Programs Implemented in Select Study Sites in Bukidnon

In Bukidnon, the commitment to combat child labor is strengthened by the implementation of an adopted ordinance. This legal framework serves as the cornerstone of efforts and establishes the foundation for awareness-building initiatives. This ordinance guides the community in facilitating the reporting of child labor incidents, streamlining the process for individuals to engage with their designated purok officials.

The ABK3-LEAP project's lasting impact is evident through the continued presence of CoMSCA and a functional Learning Center. Additionally, the initiative conducted a three-day livelihood training. The ABK3-LEAP project also facilitated various capacity development trainings and seminars.

One of the key strengths of the ABK3-LEAP project lies in its comprehensive data collection and analysis methods. The project has developed a robust database that records information related to child labor cases, including demographic data, socio-economic conditions, educational status, and specific details about the nature of child labor in various sectors. This data-driven approach allows for informed decision-making and targeted interventions.

4.5.1. LOCAL COUNCILS AND GRASSROOTS EFFORTS

The LGU of Bukidnon has leveraged the data generated by the ABK3-LEAP project to enhance its efforts in monitoring child labor cases within the province. By accessing the project's data, the LGU gains insights into the geographical distribution of child labor, the sectors most affected, and the age groups at risk. This information enables the LGU to allocate resources effectively, design tailored awareness campaigns, and implement preventive measures that align with the specific challenges faced by the communities.

A specialized Provincial Council Against Child Labor (PCACL) is dedicated to eradicating child labor and safeguarding children's welfare. This council focuses on policy development, program implementation, and initiatives to protect children's rights from labor exploitation. Conversely, the Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office (PSWDO) has a broader mandate, encompassing various social welfare and development programs, including child

protection, family support, and community development. While the PSWDO may address child labor within its wider responsibilities, the PCACL primarily concentrates on eradicating child labor.

Furthermore, the Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) played a pivotal role in addressing child labor. Its multifaceted approach begins with extensive awareness campaigns that shed light on the detrimental impacts of child labor on young individuals. Through strategic collaboration with local educational authorities and ABK3-LEAP project implementers, the committee identified and supported at-risk children engaged in labor, offering tailored educational solutions. Furthermore, it established support networks that aimed to alleviate the economic pressures driving child labor by connecting families to available resources and opportunities. Leveraging their influence, the VAWC committee advocated for policy reforms to strengthen child protection measures, urging stricter enforcement of existing laws and policies that prioritize children's access to education. Their consistent monitoring and reporting efforts ensured that the impact of the ABK3-LEAP project in reducing child labor incidents was effectively measured and adjustments made as needed.

While VAWC committees primarily focus on issues related to violence against women and children, the reporting structure for child labor cases involves routing them through the appropriate channels, such as government agencies like DSWD, that specialize in child protection and welfare. This delineation underscores the need for a collaborative approach among different agencies to comprehensively address various aspects of child welfare and protection. Mandates vary among VAWC committees in Bukidnon.

During the ABK3-LEAP project, Barangay Maray-Maray in Don Carlos was able to identify 40 children for child labor monitoring. Other interventions like DSWD SHIELD also identified 216 child laborers across the province as program beneficiaries. Maramag was also able to involve at least 38 people for different positions like livelihood focal, village agent, education focal, advocacy focal, CoMSCA president, little teacher, among others. Don Carlos had at least 21 people involved.

After the successful conclusion of the ABK3-LEAP project in

Bukidnon, a new challenge emerged: a decline in human resources. Key individuals like CWGs, CRAs, BCAs were no longer engaged; these parties were instrumental in identifying and reporting child labor cases. This reduction in vital personnel has notable implications, including potential underreporting of child labor and a loss of community trust.

4.5.2. LAWS AND GOVERNANCE

Local ordinances play a crucial role in shaping the development and progress of communities, addressing specific needs and concerns that may not be adequately covered by broader legislative frameworks. When instances of child labor were reported, the respective ordinance addressing child labor was made known to the parents and extended family members involved. This step was carefully designed to facilitate a clear understanding of the importance of the ordinance and the reasons behind its implementation, rather than penalties. By engaging parents and families in these discussions, the intention was to create a space for open dialogue, increase awareness about the negative consequences of child labor, and encourage them to collectively reach an agreement that prioritizes the child's well-being and development.

Bukidnon's commitment to child welfare is evident through a range of initiatives, including the Child Friendly Local Governance Audit 2022, which assesses local governance for child-friendly policies. The Local State of Children Report 2021 provides insights into children's well-being, while the Comprehensive Local Juvenile Intervention Plan (CLJIP 2019-2022) addresses juvenile issues and rehabilitation. The Local Development Plan for Children (LDPC) 2021 focuses on children's holistic development, with corresponding City/Municipal Work and Financial Plans for Children 2021 ensuring resource allocation. Moreover, the City/Municipal Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) Work and Financial Plan 2021 emphasizes child protection at the community level.

However, the sustainability of these ordinances can often be compromised by various factors, especially after the conclusion of externally-funded projects such as ABK3-LEAP. One of the most prominent obstacles to the continuation of local ordinances is the scarcity of financial and human resources. During the ABK3-LEAP project, external funding often supports the establishment and implementation of ordinances, allowing local governments to invest in research, public awareness campaigns, and administrative staff. However, when this external support ceases, the local authorities are left grappling with limited budgets and

understaffed departments. This hampers the enforcement, monitoring, and adjustment of ordinances, resulting in their gradual erosion over time.

For instance, the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) Committee on Education in Bukidnon shoulders the vital task of improving the well-being of local youth. Mandated to develop interventions for educational advancement, the committee faces a persistent obstacle: inadequate funding. Despite its crucial role, insufficient financial support hampers the SK's capacity to enact meaningful change. The allocated portion of the internal revenue allotment often falls short, hindering the implementation of scholarships, workshops, and educational programs. It is worth noting that initiatives like the ABK3-LEAP project advocate for local ordinances, which should ideally ensure the allocation of necessary funds.

A transition in leadership and administration also impacts the maintenance of local ordinances. With changes in political ideologies, priorities, and personnel, the commitment to previously established ordinances may waver. The lack of continuity in administrative vision can lead to a decreased emphasis on ordinances enacted under ABK3-LEAP, ultimately resulting in a loss of momentum and enforcement efforts.

4.5.3. LOCAL ADAPTATIONS

Local ordinances have undergone a transformation in their approach towards addressing child labor. Rather than primarily focusing on punitive measures, the emphasis has shifted towards establishing a supportive framework that nurtures both children and their families. The objective now is to create an environment conducive to growth, not just for the children, but for their entire families. By offering comprehensive support systems, these ordinances strive to empower families economically and socially, enabling them to distance themselves from the lure of child labor.

This shift recognizes that punitive measures alone may not address the root causes of child labor effectively. Instead, by addressing the socio-economic factors that push families towards child labor, these ordinances intend to break the cycle and create sustainable change. This approach encompasses initiatives such as skill development programs, access to quality education, and assistance in securing stable livelihoods for parents. By fortifying families' capacities and prospects, these ordinances aspire to create a harmonious environment where children can thrive without being subjected to exploitative labor practices.

To support adherence to the child labor ordinance, regular assemblies are held every first and second quarter of the year, organized by “purok” or neighborhood. Currently, there are five or more ordinances in place, each specifically focused on children’s well-being. These assembly sessions are pivotal for disseminating information. The overarching goal is to educate community members on the proper protocols for reporting child labor cases. Through this approach, every member of the community is empowered to actively contribute to the protection of children’s well-being. A network of informed purok officials assumed a pivotal role in facilitating the reporting of child labor incidents. This grassroots engagement guarantees that communities are equipped with the necessary insights and tools to promptly recognize and report instances of child labor. During these assemblies, the commitment to enforcing ordinances is also reiterated, to ensure child welfare remains paramount for BCPC and CRA members.

CHAPTER 5 | Study Summary and Conclusion

5.1. Child Labor and Protection Strategies in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon

Negros Occidental and Bukidnon share a commitment to eradicating child labor and promoting child welfare. The challenges they currently face underscore the need for sustained commitment, comprehensive approaches, and collaboration among stakeholders to create environments where children can grow and thrive, free from the burden of exploitative labor.

5.1.1. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Since the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project in Negros Occidental, child labor remains a persistent and pressing concern. The main driving forces behind this ongoing problem are the economic pressures faced by families in the region and the sustained demand for labor within the sugarcane industry. Despite numerous initiatives aimed at addressing this issue, several critical challenges have emerged.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of comprehensive data on the extent and nature of child labor in the province. Without accurate and up-to-date information, it becomes difficult to design targeted interventions and assess the effectiveness of ongoing efforts. The closure of the ABK3-LEAP project exacerbated this issue, as it concluded without a seamless transition of mechanisms and systems to successor initiatives or government bodies. This disrupted the continuity of efforts and hindered the ability to build upon the successes and lessons learned from the previous project.

To address these challenges, revitalizing institutions like the Provincial Council for the Protection of Children (PCPC) is essential. The PCPC plays a crucial role in coordinating and implementing child protection initiatives. By strengthening its capacity and ensuring its active involvement, the province can better tackle child labor.

Another potential avenue for improvement is the Mandanas Ruling, which offers the possibility of allocating more substantial budgets to enhance local council effectiveness. This presents a positive direction for addressing

systemic challenges and establishing a robust protective environment for children.

5.1.2. CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN BUKIDNON

In Bukidnon, the fight against child labor has seen notable progress through the implementation of a local ordinance. This ordinance serves as the foundation for a comprehensive strategy that includes awareness campaigns and streamlined reporting of child labor incidents. A significant shift in approach is evident, as local ordinances have moved away from punitive measures and now emphasize creating supportive environments for children and their families.

This change recognizes that merely penalizing child labor may not effectively address its root causes. Instead, the focus has shifted toward addressing the socio-economic factors that push families into engaging in child labor. By offering comprehensive support systems, such as skill development programs, improved access to quality education, and assistance in securing stable livelihoods for parents, these ordinances aim to empower families economically and socially. The ultimate goal is to break the cycle of child labor and create a nurturing environment where children can thrive without being subjected to exploitative labor practices.

The success of these child protection efforts in Bukidnon is further bolstered by a data-driven approach. During the ABK3-LEAP project, a robust database was developed to record information related to child labor cases. This includes demographic data, socio-economic conditions, educational status, and specific details about the nature of child labor in various sectors. This wealth of data enables informed decision-making and the design of targeted interventions.

Specialized councils, such as the Provincial Council Against Child Labor (PCACL), play a pivotal role in policy development, program implementation, and the protection of children's rights from labor exploitation. Additionally, the

involvement of the Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Committee has been crucial. They have conducted extensive awareness campaigns, identified and supported at-risk children, and advocated for policy reforms to strengthen child protection measures.

and human resources, as well as transitions in leadership, compromise the continuity of these critical initiatives. However, the commitment to child protection remains strong, emphasizing the need for ongoing dedication and resource allocation.

Despite these positive developments, Bukidnon faces challenges in sustaining local ordinances. Limited financial

5.2. Sustaining Efforts Against Child Labor After ABK3-LEAP Project

In the wake of the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project, communities in Negros Occidental and Bukidnon found themselves facing a critical juncture in their ongoing battle against the worst forms of child labor (WFCL) in sugarcane areas. The impact of this closure rippled through these regions, challenging their ability to sustain their child protection efforts and adapt to evolving dynamics. Yet, it also served as a catalyst, propelling community members and local leaders into action, reinforcing their commitment to eradicating child labor and ensuring children’s well-being.

The following thematic analysis delves into the repercussions stemming from the conclusion of the ABK3-LEAP project within the selected areas of Negros Occidental and Bukidnon. This analysis is structured into two core sections: “Milestones” and “Challenges,” each encapsulating significant themes that surfaced through interviews and observations conducted in these focal areas.

Milestones – Negros Occidental and Bukidnon

Increased reported community awareness and engagement	<p>There was a notable rise in reported community awareness regarding the perils of child labor in both regions. This true across all groups interviewed. Community residents became more vigilant and proactive in discouraging child labor practices, emphasizing the importance of children’s rights and education.</p> <p>This heightened awareness not only reduced child labor incidents but also contributed to the formation of a culture of child protection. Parents, in particular, became more conscious of the significance of education in breaking the cycle of child labor.</p>
Personal and professional growth	<p>In both regions, group members experienced personal and professional growth, which boosted their confidence and contributed to their advocacy work. This is particularly evident among former volunteers of the Community Watch Groups (CWG), teacher members of the Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF), former child members of the Barangay Children’s Association (BCA). Individual talents and skills were discovered and honed, in an effort to enhance their capacity in addressing child labor in their communities.</p>
External assistance and support from local partners and stakeholders	<p>External support and investments have provided lifeline in maintaining initiatives and programs in addressing child labor in both communities.</p> <p>Since the closure of ABK3-LEAP project, assistance and interventions, particularly from regional and provincial agencies such as DSWD and DOLE, have provided continued helped to families and children at risk of child labor. In addition, there were social development programming interventions from local civil society organizations such as the Sugar Industry Foundation.</p>

Challenges – Negros Occidental and Bukidnon

Financial and budget constraints	Financial constraints emerged as a substantial barrier that hampered the efforts of both Negros Occidental and Bukidnon in their mission to combat WFCL following the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project. These constraints had far-reaching implications that reverberated across various aspects of their child protection initiatives such as limiting their ability to organize meetings, conduct awareness campaigns, and provide educational programs.
Leadership transition and changes in group dynamics	<p>With the conclusion of the ABK3-LEAP project, there was often a leadership vacuum or transition at various levels of child protection councils and community-based organizations or groups that were supported during the project. The individuals who had previously been at the forefront of the project’s implementation, providing guidance and coordination, may have moved on to other roles or projects. This leadership transition can disrupt the continuity of initiatives and the institutional memory of successful strategies.</p> <p>The departure of key project personnel and leaders, coupled with evolving priorities and engagements of community members, led to shifts in group dynamics. This has resulted in alterations to the roles, responsibilities, and focus areas of community organizations and councils. New leaders may need time to adapt and develop the same level of commitment and expertise as their predecessors.</p> <p>Crucially, there has been a lack of effective knowledge transfer among these key actors, which jeopardizes the preservation of valuable lessons, best practices, and successful strategies acquired during the ABK3-LEAP project. This risk entails losing the valuable insights and experiences gained throughout the project’s implementation.</p>
Shift from prevention to crisis response	<p>An important observation in both regions was a shift in focus regarding child labor. Rather than solely concentrating on child labor prevention, there was an emphasis on addressing children in crisis situations or even child offenders in certain instances.</p> <p>This shift in focus suggests that the closure of the ABK3-LEAP project led to a reevaluation of priorities, with resources being redirected to address urgent child protection issues, such as children in crisis or those engaged in unlawful activities.</p>
Difficulty in monitoring child labor cases	<p>Both study sites faced challenges in effectively monitoring child labor cases, especially those associated with short-term contracts or “pakyawan” arrangements, where individuals are paid a fixed rate for specific services rendered. This underscores the intricate and often concealed nature of child labor, which frequently occurs within informal employment settings.</p> <p>Moreover, the sustainability of the monitoring systems implemented by the project was compromised by issues such as the unsuccessful transfer of documented files and shortcomings in the reporting system’s infrastructure. These issues also include the expiration of software systems housing the data repository and compatibility issues with hardware during the transition to partner organizations.</p>
The need for well-defined reporting and referral systems in handling child labor cases	<p>The emphasis on clear reporting procedures suggests that many regions recognized the importance of having structured mechanisms in place for reporting child labor cases. This ensures that cases are documented, tracked, and addressed in a systematic manner.</p> <p>In conjunction with reporting, referral systems play a vital role in addressing child labor cases. Once a case is reported, a referral system determines how that case should be handled and which agencies or organizations should be involved.</p> <p>The study showed that even though some regions had structured reporting procedures, a clear guidance on how to properly refer such reported cases of child labor in their community is still a challenge.</p>

5.3. Adhering to Voluntary Code of Conduct in Combating Child Labor

The ABK3-LEAP project has heightened awareness of child labor and fostered a stronger commitment to responsible labor practices within the sugar industry. The overall impact has been mixed. While there was a decline in child labor by 2018, this progress was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, luring children back to school after they have earned income presents its own set of challenges. Despite unwavering dedication to tackling child labor, practical hurdles persist.

Negros Occidental initially introduced a voluntary code of conduct in the sugar industry. There were also efforts to expand its scope to encompass both community and industry interventions, although these efforts faced challenges. Additionally, the private sector's adherence to anti-child labor standards faces obstacles such as labor scarcity triggered by competition from other industries such as construction. The sugar industry's declining status exacerbates the challenge, shifting the focus from complete eradication to a more pragmatic emphasis on minimizing

child labor. Some farms grapple with the enforcement of preventative measures, which underlines a pressing need for values formation and bolstered support for children's education.

In Bukidnon, the loss of funding for monitoring activities and shifts in project oversight have hampered the region's ability to effectively pursue WFCL-related initiatives. In response, the community initiated a transition toward mechanization in the sugar industry, resulting in a reduction in child labor. Nonetheless, issues persist concerning the private sector's compliance with anti-child labor standards, marked by limited coordination and awareness efforts within the community. This ultimately led to diminishing awareness and monitoring efforts at the grassroots level.



CHAPTER 6 | Recommendations

The ex-post evaluation study aimed to enhance a better understanding of the sustainability of intervention programs targeting Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), particularly in the agricultural sector, where majority of reported child labor issues in the country arise. The emphasis was on identifying evidence of how to foster long-term sustainability beyond donor funding. The research focused on system-strengthening interventions under the capacity building objectives of the ABK3-LEAP project. Key findings will offer insights to guide Project ACE in refining its sustainability planning initiatives, especially in sustaining efforts responsive to the evolving dynamics of WFCL, now encompassing Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC).

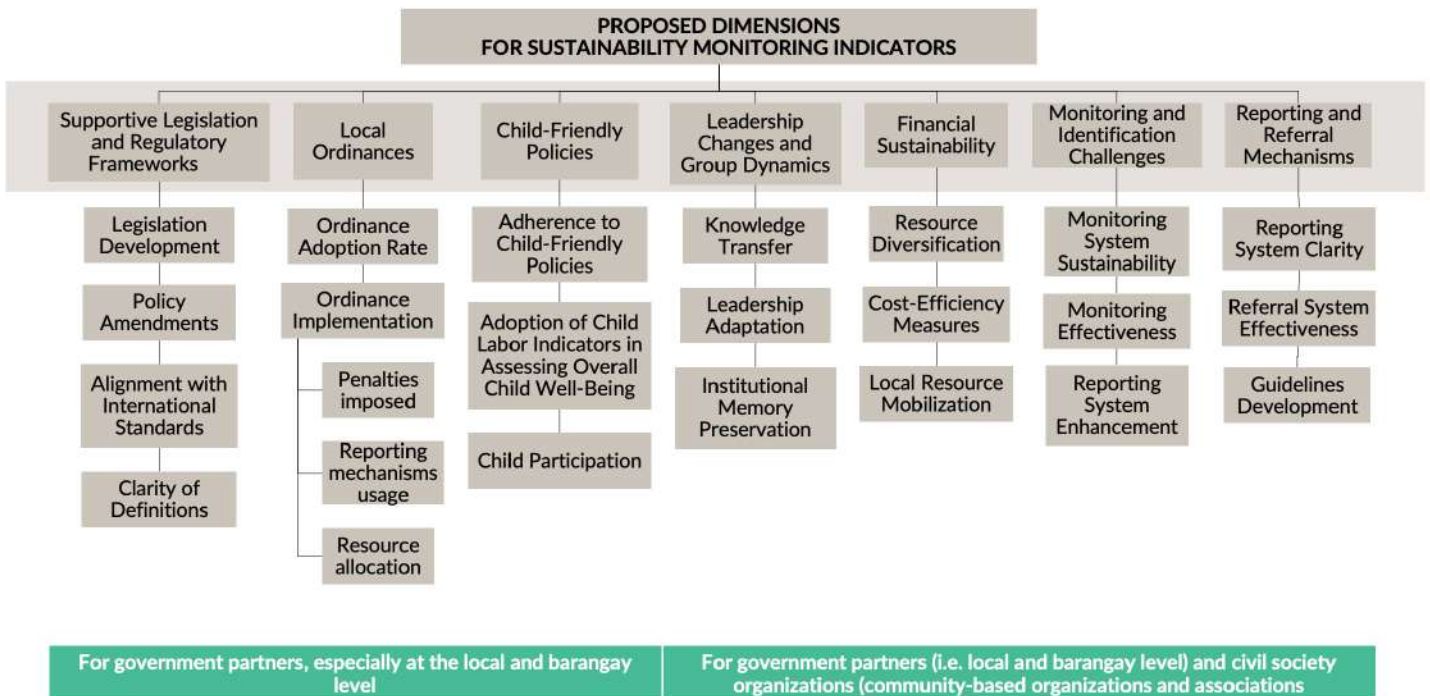
A critical finding of the evaluation study is the absence of a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation, and learning mechanism that would facilitate better sustainable planning

and exit strategies for the ABK3-LEAP project. This gap included the lack of specific indicators or dimensions that aim to address identified hindering factors and barriers.

In response, the study proposes the incorporation of indicators designed to better capture progress, development, and monitor the sustainability of implemented interventions that aim to strengthen systems-related programs (Fig. 10). These proposed indicators include:

- 1. Policy and advocacy.** Tracking the development and implementation of policies related to child labor prevention particularly at the local level (including barangay level) should be in place. This responsibility should be entrusted to the local governments. More specifically, measures or indicators should capture three (3) major domains:

Figure 10. Proposed Dimensions for Sustainability Monitoring Indicators of System-Strengthening or Capacity-Building Interventions that Address WFCL



Domain	Proposed Indicator Measurement
<p>Supportive Legislation: Local government should advocate for the development and amendment of regional and local laws and policies that address child labor. This includes aligning existing laws with international conventions and standards, setting clear definitions of child labor, and specifying responsibilities of various government agencies.</p>	<p><u>Legislation Development:</u> Measure progress in the development of regional and local laws and policies specifically addressing child labor (i.e. track the legislative process including stages of drafting, review, and formal enactment of child labor-related local laws and policies.)</p> <p><u>Policy Amendments:</u> Monitor changes or updates to existing child labor policies to ensure they remain relevant and effective to regional and local contexts.</p> <p><u>Alignment with International Standards:</u> Assess the degree to which the newly developed or amended legislation aligns with international conventions and standards on child labor, such as ILO conventions.</p> <p><u>Clarity of Definitions:</u> Ensure that the legislation provides clear and comprehensive definitions of child labor, hazardous work, and the worst forms of child labor.</p>
<p>Local Ordinances: Local government should develop and enforce ordinances specifically targeting child labor. These ordinances can outline penalties for those who will be involved in child labor, establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing cases, and allocate resources for prevention and rehabilitation programs. Monitor the adoption and implementation of these ordinances.</p>	<p><u>Ordinance Adoption Rate:</u> Measure the percentage of local governments that have adopted ordinances specifically targeting child labor within a defined period.</p> <p><u>Ordinance Implementation:</u> Assess the extent to which the adopted ordinances are effectively implemented, including the enforcement of penalties, reporting mechanisms, and resource allocation.</p> <p><u>Penalties Imposed:</u> Track the number and severity of penalties imposed on those who will be found in violation of local child labor ordinances.</p> <p><u>Reporting Mechanism Usage:</u> Monitor the utilization of reporting mechanisms established by local ordinances to report child labor cases.</p> <p><u>Resource Allocation:</u> Evaluate the allocation and utilization of resources for child labor prevention and rehabilitation programs specified in the ordinances.</p>
<p>Child-Friendly Policies: Local government should promote the adoption of child-friendly local governance policies that encompass child protection, access to education, healthcare, and overall well-being.</p>	<p><u>Adherence to Child-Friendly Policies:</u> Evaluate whether local governments are effectively implementing child-friendly measures and ensures transparency in their actions (i.e. Assessing Child-Friendly Local Governance Audit and Children Local Plan Reports).</p> <p><u>Adoption of Child Labor Indicators in Assessing Overall Child Well Being:</u> Integrate specific measures related to child labor across overall child well being tools and plans implemented by local governments.</p> <p><u>Child Participation:</u> Evaluate the extent to which children are involved in decision-making processes related to the development and implementation of local child-friendly policies.</p>

2. **Sustainable strategies and solutions.** Local government units at all levels need to adopt a holistic approach to tackle child labor and its underlying causes. This involves acknowledging and addressing root causes, challenges in adoption, and barriers to continuity, in order to arrive at sustainable solutions.
3. To sustain and enforce adherence to a voluntary code of conduct among private sector actors in the elimination of child labor in the sugarcane industry, independent monitoring can be implemented:
 - **Independent Monitoring Progress.** Establishing an independent monitoring body or commission is crucial. This entity would be comprised of private sectors at both the national and local levels that will lead the creation of a technical working group or national councils with representatives from both local government and community partners. This working group will lead and monitor unbiased compliance evaluation, oversee whether penalties and consequences for code violations relating to acceptable work conditions are being enforced, and can incentivize code-compliant private employers.

Domain	Proposed Indicator Measurement
<p>Leadership Changes and Group Dynamics: Encompasses the challenges and adaptations related to changes in leadership within child protection councils and community-based organizations at the local government level. It also explores how transitions in leadership impact group dynamics, roles, responsibilities, and the overall effectiveness of initiatives.</p>	<p><u>Knowledge Transfer:</u> Assess the effectiveness of knowledge transfer mechanisms between outgoing and incoming leaders, such as mentorship programs, handover documentation, or training sessions.</p> <p><u>Leadership Adaptation:</u> Evaluate new leaders by tracking their involvement, decision-making, and commitment to project goals.</p> <p><u>Institutional Memory Preservation:</u> Monitor the preservation of valuable lessons, best practices, and successful strategies by documenting them in accessible repositories or manuals.</p>
<p>Financial Sustainability: Focuses on the financial challenges faced by child labor prevention projects at the local government levels. It also examines the constraints, resource diversification efforts, cost-efficiency measures, and strategies for mobilizing local resources to sustain project activities.</p>	<p><u>Resource Diversification:</u> Track the diversification of possible funding sources (i.e. CoMSCA can be tapped as budget resource) and efforts to secure additional financial support to mitigate budget constraints.</p> <p><u>Cost-Efficiency Measures:</u> Assess cost-efficiency measures to optimize the use of available resources and ensure that funds are allocated strategically.</p> <p><u>Local Resource Mobilization:</u> Monitor efforts to mobilize local resources, including community fundraising, volunteer contributions, or in-kind donations.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Identification Challenges: Addresses the complexities involved in monitoring child labor cases, particularly those related to informal employment arrangements. It also examines the sustainability of monitoring systems, identification difficulties, and issues related to data collection and storage for all local government units.</p>	<p><u>Monitoring System Sustainability:</u> Evaluate the sustainability of monitoring systems by tracking the functionality of software, hardware, and data repositories.</p> <p><u>Monitoring Effectiveness:</u> Assess the effectiveness of monitoring efforts by measuring the identification and resolution of child labor cases.</p> <p><u>Reporting System Enhancement:</u> Identify and address issues in the reporting system infrastructure to improve data collection, storage, and retrieval.</p>
<p>Reporting and referral mechanisms: Revolves around the development and effectiveness of reporting and referral systems for child labor cases. It also explores the clarity of reporting procedures, the efficiency of referral mechanisms, and the importance of clear guidance for stakeholders, including government and non-government actors.</p>	<p><u>Reporting System Clarity:</u> Assess the clarity and accessibility of reporting procedures by gathering feedback from stakeholders and beneficiaries.</p> <p><u>Referral System Effectiveness:</u> Evaluate the effectiveness of referral systems by tracking the timely and appropriate handling of reported child labor cases.</p> <p><u>Guidelines Development:</u> Develop clear guidance on how to properly refer reported child labor cases within the community and ensure that stakeholders are trained in its use.</p>

CHAPTER 7 | Project ACE's Adaptive Response to Post-Evaluation Insights

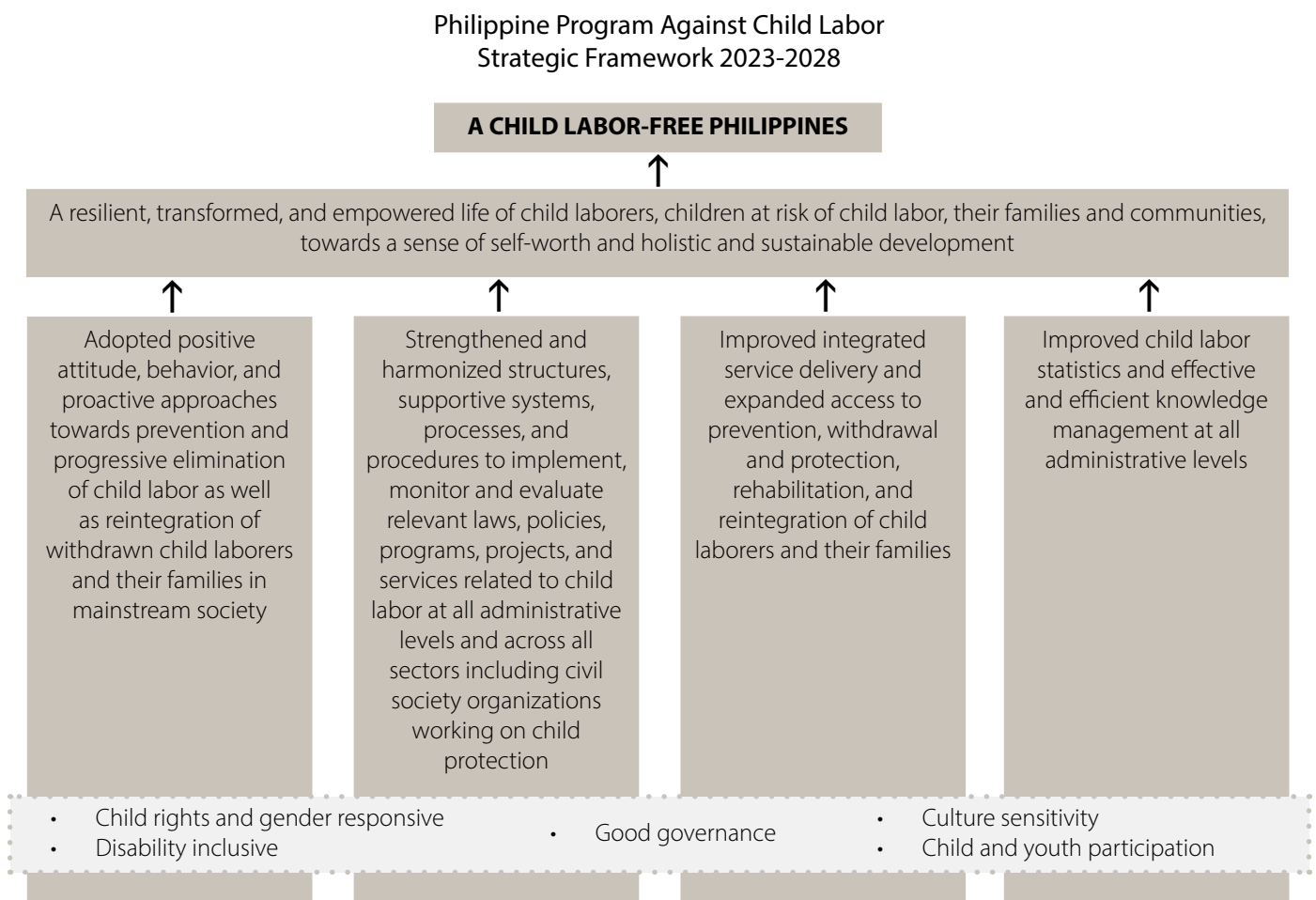
In April 2023, the Philippine Program Against Child Labor (PPACL)³⁵ Strategic Framework 2023-2028³⁶ (Fig. 10) was approved by the National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL)³⁷, led by the Department of Labor and Employment.

The program framework consists of six interrelated components aimed at realizing the end-of-program outcomes. Over the six-year duration (2023-2028), PPACL seeks to attain and assess its progress based on the four

specified End of Program Outcomes outlined on page 4 of the Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework 2023-2028:

1. Adoptive positive attitude, behavior, and proactive approaches towards prevention and progressive elimination of child labor, as well as reintegration of withdrawn child laborers and their families in mainstream society;

Figure 11. Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework 2023-2028



³⁵ The PPACL is a program designed by the Philippine government in cooperation with employers groups, workers organizations, civil society organizations, and international social development organizations for the purpose of preventing and eliminating child labor in the country.

³⁶ A Resolution Approving The Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework 2023-2028, Council Resolution No.1 Series of 2023, National Council Against Child Labor. <https://batangmalaya.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/NCACL-Resolution-No-1-Series-of-2023-with-Annex.pdf>

³⁷ World Vision Development Foundation Inc. is the only current non-government organization part of the council.

3. Strengthened and harmonized structures, supportive systems, processes, and procedures to implement, monitor, and evaluate relevant laws, policies, programs, projects, and services related to child labor at all administrative levels and across all sectors, including civil society organizations working on child protection;
4. Improved integrated service delivery and expanded access to prevention, withdrawal and protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of child labors and their families; and
5. Improved child labor statistics and effective and efficient knowledge management at all administrative levels.

policies addressing the worst forms of child labor (WFCL), encompassing online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) and violations of acceptable working conditions, at both the national and country levels.

To this end, it is important to note that the insights derived from the ex-post evaluation study of the ABK3-LEAP projects, along with its recommendations for sustainability planning strategies and monitoring, align with the 2nd End of Program Outcomes of the PPACL strategic framework. WVDF elevates these study findings, particularly those related to system-strengthening interventions, into broader consideration at the macro level by incorporating these key insights into Project ACE. Specific findings, results, and recommendations from the ex-post evaluation study of ABK3-LEAP are being considered in the program activities and outputs of Project ACE. Some of examples of these are as follows:

Achievement of these outcomes entails a concentrated effort to bolster the enforcement of legal frameworks and

Table 2. Select Key Ex Post Evaluation Findings and Recommendations vis-à-vis list of Project ACE's related program output and activities

Ex Post Evaluation Findings and Recommendations	Project ACE related program output and activities	How Project ACE is responding?
<p>Improvement on Local Ordinances: Local government should develop and enforce ordinances specifically targeting child labor. These ordinances can outline penalties for those who will be involved in child labor, establish mechanisms for reporting and addressing cases, and allocate resources for prevention and rehabilitation programs. Monitor the adoption and implementation of these ordinances.</p>	<p>Output 1.1 Labor inspectors and major stakeholders (national and local) are trained on legal ways to address WFCL, including OSEC protection and violations of acceptable work conditions.</p>	<p>The project trained labor inspectors nationwide on how to identify, document, and track cases of WFCL, including OSEC and violations of acceptable work conditions. The project target for this fiscal year (FY 24) is to develop a module that can be used across the country in partnership with the DOLE Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC).</p>
<p>Enablement of Supportive Legislation: Local government should advocate for the development and amendment of regional and local laws and policies that address child labor. This includes aligning existing laws with international conventions and standards, setting clear definitions of child labor, and specifying responsibilities of various government agencies.</p>	<p>Output: 1.2 Institutions adapt laws, policies, and procedures on WFCL, including OSEC, and violations of acceptable conditions of work to meet local context based on national laws.</p>	<p>The project gives more focus and emphasis on facilitating the mapping of existing policies and frameworks (presenting the legal analysis and mapping of services and gaps) at the sub-national (region 10 and NCR) and city (CDO and QC) levels and down to the covered barangays (community leaders, BCPC members, and institutions) through workshops on contextualization, local adoption of policies and/or regulations addressing WFCL, including OSAEC, and violations of acceptable conditions of work.</p>
<p>Development of Child-Friendly Policies: Local government should promote the adoption of child-friendly local governance policies that encompass child protection, access to education, healthcare, and overall well-being.</p>	<p>Output 1.4 Community stakeholders disseminate key messages on identifying and addressing cases of WFCL, including OSEC, and violations of acceptable conditions of work.</p>	<p>The project focuses on working with LGUs and LCPCs to conduct information-education drives (including the development of appropriate IEC materials) in the community to raise awareness (World Day Against Child Labor, World Day Against Trafficking, Children's Month, Safer Internet Day, and the like) and provide support and capacity building for the DOLE anti-child labor program that implements local awareness-raising campaigns, institutes child labor monitoring mechanisms, and requires neighborhoods to develop child labor elimination plans.</p>

	<p>Output 1.5 Child labor structures receive capacity-building assistance to better address WFCL, including OSEC and violations of acceptable conditions of work.</p>	<p>The project mapped and reviewed current local ordinances and structures addressing child labor issues (local governments and regional CLC/IACAT structures will be involved). This is to determine what technical assistance should be provided (for the establishment and institutionalization of procedures, including work and financial plans) in order to ensure proper budget allocation to address WFCL, including OSEC and violations of acceptable working conditions.</p>
<p>Mitigating Leadership Changes and Group Dynamics: Encompasses the challenges and adaptations related to changes in leadership within child protection councils and community-based organizations at the local governments. It also explores how transitions in leadership impact group dynamics, roles, responsibilities, and the overall effectiveness of initiatives</p>	<p>Output 2.1 Service providers are trained to better implement programs addressing WFCL, including OSEC, at the local, regional, and national levels.</p>	<p>The project held meetings, workshops, or capacity building with relevant stakeholders (from regional CLCs, provincial CLCs, cities, and barangay LCPCs that include local social welfare agencies, schools, and community stakeholders, as well as other groups and professionals in the community who support efforts) to identify roles and responsibilities for detection, monitoring, and appropriate referral mechanisms in addressing WFCL, including OSEC. Thus, the project provides support for the establishment of a local referral system, which enhances cooperation among service providers through the use of standard referral and reporting forms. (This is also considered part of ensuring proper monitoring, identification challenges, reporting, and referral mechanisms).</p>
<p>Ensuring Financial Sustainability: Focuses on the financial challenges faced by child labor prevention projects at the local governments. It also examines the constraints, resource diversification efforts, cost-efficiency measures, and strategies for mobilizing local resources to sustain project activities.</p>	<p><i>Also applicable to Output 1.5</i></p> <p>Output 2.2 Community members and community-based organizations organize awareness-raising events about the existing services and programs for victims of WFCL, including OSEC.</p>	<p>The project provides capacity building for community-based child protection groups in reporting, referral, protection, and assistance procedures for child labor victims and survivors, as well as engaging community members in information-education and behavior change sessions on child labor and OSEC. The project provides orientation for LCPCs, LCAT-VAWC, and the community on how to access the different key programs and services to address child labor and victims of WFCL. These include OSEC prevention programs such as the Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (Conditional Cash Transfer Program), Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP), Alternative Learning System Program, and Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) for Child Laborers</p>
<p>Addressing Monitoring and Identification Challenges: Addresses the complexities involved in monitoring child labor cases, particularly those related to informal employment arrangements. It also examines the sustainability of monitoring systems, identification difficulties, and issues related to data collection and storage for all local government units.</p>	<p><i>Also applicable to Output 2.1</i></p> <p>Output 3.2 Partners implement programs to address WFCL, including OSEC, and violations of acceptable conditions of work.</p> <p>Output 3.3 Linking private sector reporting mechanisms to government hotlines and reporting platforms.</p>	<p>The project engages and capacitates regional bodies or works at the regional level (i.e., RCLCs, RCWCs, etc.) with civil society groups to strengthen service delivery mechanisms (reporting, referral, and program provision) for WFCL victims, including OSEC. The project supports the development of monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) systems for the implementation of WFCL-related programs, including OSEC, in existing target areas aligned with the NCACL results framework for 2023–2028.</p> <p>The project continuously conducts workshops and meetings and provides support for institutionalizing reporting mechanisms with relevant stakeholders (including other NGOs, the private sector, business sectors, and other civil society organizations) to identify roles and responsibilities for improved coordination among local partners.</p>

	<p>Output 3.4 Information-sharing opportunities were conducted.</p>	<p>The project organizes summits or learning exchanges to share information from a promising practices report based on experiences and lessons learned in addressing the complexities of WFCL, including OSEC, from subnational governments and identified civil society groups in the implementation areas in collaboration with the different member agencies of the national coordinating councils (NCAACL, IACAT, etc.). This serves as a venue for new and current players to build good collaboration and sustained relationships in monitoring child labor cases (both formal and informal employment), sustaining monitoring systems, and resolving issues related to data collection and storage.</p>
<p>Improving the Reporting and Referral Mechanisms: Revolves around the development and effectiveness of reporting and referral systems for child labor cases. It also explores the clarity of reporting procedures, the efficiency of referral mechanisms, and the importance of clear guidance for stakeholders, including government and non-government actors.</p>	<p>Output 1.3. Community stakeholders are trained on reporting and referral mechanisms.</p>	<p>The project focuses on developing and implementing capacity-building plans for existing community structures (LCPC structures at the regional, provincial, city, and barangay levels), including establishments to strengthen reporting mechanisms (how to identify, document, and track cases) and make them functional in order to provide appropriate responses. Project ACE is currently providing support in the establishment and institutionalization of reporting and referral systems at the city level (Quezon City Unified Referral System and capacitating the 122 hotline operators to become child-friendly) and at the national level by providing support for popularizing Makabata Helpline as a national hotline that can be accessible across provinces.</p>

ANNEXES

A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Child	<p>Republic Act No. 11930: Section 3.</p> <p>(a) Child refers to a person below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability or condition. For purposes of this Act, a child shall also refer to:</p> <p>(1) A person regardless of age who is presented, depicted or portrayed as a child as defined herein; and (2) Computer-generated, digitally or manually crafted images, or graphics of a person who is represented or who is made to appear to be a child as defined herein.</p>
Legally Working Children	<p>Republic Act No. 7610:</p> <p>Acceptable conditions of work Sec. 2-A. Hours of Work of a Working Child. - Under the exceptions provided in Section 12 of this Act, as amended:</p> <p>(1) A child below fifteen (15) years of age may be allowed to work for not more than twenty (20) hours a week: Provided, That the work shall not be more than four (4) hours at any given day;</p> <p>(2) A child fifteen (15) years of age but below eighteen (18) shall not be allowed to work for more than eight (8) hours a day, and in no case beyond forty (40) hours a week;</p> <p>(3) No child below fifteen (15) years of age shall be allowed to work between eight o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning of the following day and no child fifteen (15) years of age but below eighteen (18) shall be allowed to work between ten o'clock in the evening and six o'clock in the morning of the following day.</p> <p>Sec. 12-B. <i>Ownership, Usage and Administration of the Working Child's Income.</i> - The wages, salaries, earnings and other income of the working child shall belong to him/her in ownership and shall be set aside primarily for his/her support, education or skills acquisition and secondarily to the collective needs of the family: Provided, That not more than twenty percent (20%) of the child's income may be used for the collective needs of the family. "The income of the working child and/or the property acquired through the work of the child shall be administered by both parents. In the absence or incapacity of either of the parents, the other parent shall administer the same. In case both parents are absent or incapacitated, the order of preference on parental authority as provided for under the Family Code shall apply.</p> <p>Sec. 12-C. <i>Trust Fund to Preserve Part of the Working Child's Income.</i> - The parent or legal guardian of a working child below eighteen (18) years of age shall set up a trust fund for at least thirty percent (30%) of the earnings of the child whose wages and salaries from work and other income amount to at least two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) annually, for which he/she shall render a semi-annual accounting of the fund to the Department of Labor and Employment, in compliance with the provisions of this Act. The child shall have full control over the trust fund upon reaching the age of majority.</p>
Children engaged in Child Labor (CL)	<p>Republic Act No. 7610: Section 3</p> <p>(2) Any act by deeds or words which debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being;</p> <p>(3) Unreasonable deprivation of his basic needs for survival, such as food and shelter; or</p> <p>(4) Failure to immediately give medical treatment to an injured child resulting in serious impairment of his growth and development or in his permanent incapacity or death.</p>

(c) "Circumstances which gravely threaten or endanger the survival and normal development of children" include, but are not limited to, the following;

- (1) Being in a community where there is armed conflict or being affected by armed conflict-related activities;
- (2) Working under conditions hazardous to life, safety and normal which unduly interfere with their normal development;
- (3) Living in or fending for themselves in the streets of urban or rural areas without the care of parents or a guardian or basic services needed for a good quality of life;
- (4) Being a member of a indigenous cultural community and/or living under conditions of extreme poverty or in an area which is underdeveloped and/or lacks or has inadequate access to basic services needed for a good quality of life;
- (5) Being a victim of a man-made or natural disaster or calamity; or
- (6) Circumstances analogous to those above stated which endanger the life, safety or normal development of children.

(d) "Comprehensive program against child abuse, exploitation and discrimination" refers to the coordinated program of services and facilities to protected children against:

- (1) Child Prostitution and other sexual abuse;
- (2) Child trafficking;
- (3) Obscene publications and indecent shows;
- (4) Other acts of abuses; and
- (5) Circumstances which threaten or endanger the survival and normal development of children

International Legal Framework:

"Child labor" is defined by a combination of three international conventions and individual countries' legal frameworks.

1) U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (UN CRC) and its Optional Protocols provide an overall framework of human rights for children, including their right to protection from economic exploitation, including hazardous work and specifications related to other worst forms of child labor. (See WFCL definition for more details). Article 32 states:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

2) ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age (1973), sets age 14 as the minimum age for ordinary work, age 13-15 as the minimum age for light work. The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years. Developing economies may specify age 14 as the minimum age for ordinary work, per the full convention text.

3) Much more specific is ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999), which prohibits the use of children in slavery, commercial sexual exploitation, and other illicit activities (such as drug trafficking), and hazardous work, or "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children." While ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labor Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) attempts to further define the Worst Forms, according to Article 4 of Convention 182, countries are able to define hazardous work in their own context, meaning that there is no single legal definition of child labor that can be used around the world. Taken together, ILO Conventions 182 and 138 and ILO Recommendation 190 provide the definitional basis for the following terms: child labor, worst forms of child labor, and hazardous work for children. See more detail on this term in the WFCL definition below.

Child labor is broader than WFCL but a narrower concept than "children in employment" or "working children", as Child Labor excludes children working legally. Children working legally are children who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those above the minimum age whose work is not classified as a worst form of child labor (WFCL includes hazardous child labor). Child Labor includes those children (minors under age 18) working in the worst forms of child labor as outlined in ILO Convention 182 and children engaged in work that is exploitative and/or interferes with their ability to participate and complete required years of schooling, in line with ILO Convention 138, Article 7. Child labor also

	<p>includes children under the minimum age for work engaged in economic activities, and children who are engaged in light work beyond the number of hours allowable by law.</p> <p>Household Chores. Household chores, or unpaid household services in a child's own home, are different from home-based economic activities or domestic service (i.e., working as a domestic servant at someone else's home). In many contexts, household chores are an important part of children's daily activities and may affect their development and well-being. However, the International Conference of Labor Statisticians at the ILO cites an analysis of survey data of 65 countries which concluded that "Children's participation in household chores for over 20 hours per week has a negative effect on children's school attendance." In the absence of an internationally agreed-upon consensus on how to define the number of hours after which household chores become hazardous, projects should not include long hours in household chores in the definition of child labor unless national legislation provides further guidance, or unless otherwise agreed with project stakeholders and OCFT. However, household chores or unpaid household services that include hazardous activities or are completed under hazardous conditions, per ILO C. 182, Recommendation 190, and national legislation, should be considered hazardous work.</p>
<p>Children engaged in Hazardous Child Labor (HCL)</p>	<p>Republic Act No. 11862: Section 3. Definition of Terms</p> <p>(a) Trafficking in Persons – refers to the recruitment, obtaining, hiring, providing, offering, transportation, transfer, maintaining, harboring, or receipt of persons with or without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or 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 which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others, or the engagement of others for the production or distribution, or both, of materials that depict child sexual abuse or exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude, or the removal or sale of organs.</p> <p>The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, adoption or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation or when the adoption is induced by any form of consideration for exploitative purposes, shall also be considered as 'trafficking in persons' even if it does not involve any of the means set forth in the preceding paragraph.</p> <p>(b) Child - refers to a person below eighteen (18) years of age or one who is over eighteen (18) but is unable to fully take care of or protect himself/herself from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation, or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition.</p> <p>(c) Prostitution - refers to any act, transaction, scheme or design involving the use of a person by another, for sexual intercourse or lascivious conduct in exchange for money, profit or any other consideration.</p> <p>(d) Forced Labor and Slavery - refer to the extraction of work or services from any person by means of enticement, violence, intimidation or threat, use of force or coercion, including deprivation of freedom, abuse of authority or moral ascendancy, debt-bondage or deception.</p> <p>(e) Sex Tourism - refers to a program organized by travel and tourism-related establishments and individuals which consists of tourism packages or activities, utilizing and offering escort and sexual services as enticement for tourists. This includes sexual services and practices offered during rest and recreation periods for members of the military.</p> <p>(f) Sexual Exploitation – refers to any means of actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, or lewd designs, including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another, regardless of whether or not consent was given.</p> <p>(g) Debt Bondage - refers to the pledging by the debtor of his/her personal services or labor or those of a person under his/her control as security or payment for a debt, when the length and nature of services is not clearly defined or when the value of the services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt.</p>

	<p>(h) Pornography - refers to any representation, through publication, exhibition, cinematography, indecent shows, information technology, or by whatever means, of a person engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a person for primarily sexual purposes: Provided, That when a child is involved, the material shall be considered child sexual abuse and exploitation material as defined under paragraph (j) of this section.</p> <p>(i) Child Laundering – refers to an act of stealing and selling a child to adopting parents under false pretenses and using schemes such as falsifying the child’s details or manipulating the child’s origins to make the child appear an orphan or foundling.</p> <p>(j) Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material or Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAEM or CSAM) – refers to photos, images, videos, recordings, streams, or any other representation or form of media, depicting acts of sexual abuse and exploitation of a child or representation of a child as a sexual object, whether or not generated digitally or by, through, and with the use of information and communications technology. It shall also include materials that focus on real or simulated genitalia or other private parts of a child.</p>
<p>Children engaged in other Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) (if applicable)</p>	<p>Republic Act No. 9231:</p> <p><i>Violations of acceptable conditions of work</i></p> <p>Sec. 12-D. Prohibition Against Worst Forms of Child Labor. - No child shall be engaged in the worst forms of child labor. The phrase “worst forms of child labor” shall refer to any of the following:</p> <p>(1) All forms of slavery, as defined under the Anti-trafficking in Persons Act of 2003”, or practices similar to slavery such as sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; or</p> <p>(2) The use, procuring, offering or exposing of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; or</p> <p>(3) The use, procuring or offering of a child for illegal or illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of dangerous drugs and volatile substances prohibited under existing laws; or</p> <p>(4) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is hazardous or likely to be harmful to the health, safety or morals of children, such that it:</p> <p>a) Debases, degrades or demeans the intrinsic worth and dignity of a child as a human being; or</p> <p>b) Exposes the child to physical, emotional or sexual abuse, or is found to be highly stressful psychologically or may prejudice morals; or</p> <p>c) Is performed underground, underwater or at dangerous heights; or</p> <p>d) Involves the use of dangerous machinery, equipment and tools such as power-driven or explosive power-actuated tools; or</p> <p>e) Exposes the child to physical danger such as, but not limited to the dangerous feats of balancing, physical strength or contortion, or which requires the manual transport of heavy loads; or</p> <p>f) Is performed in an unhealthy environment exposing the child to hazardous working conditions, elements, substances, co-agents or processes involving ionizing, radiation, fire, flammable substances, noxious components and the like, or to extreme temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations; or</p> <p>g) Is performed under particularly difficult conditions; or</p>

	<p>h) Exposes the child to biological agents such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, protozoans, nematodes and other parasites; or</p> <p>i) Involves the manufacture or handling of explosives and other pyrotechnic products.</p> <p>International Legal Framework:</p> <p>For the project definition, Other Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) should include Parts (a)-(c) as defined in ILO Convention 182:</p> <p>(a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;</p> <p>(b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;</p> <p>(c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties.</p> <p>OCFT defines the Worst Forms of Child Labor using ILO Convention 182, although the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) also specifically outlines other related protections that may be relevant for some projects, depending on context.</p>
Occupational Safety Health (OSH)	<p>Republic Act No. 11058:</p> <p>Section 1. Declaration of Policy. - The State affirms labor as a primary social and economic force, and that a safe and healthy workforce is an integral aspect of nation building.</p> <p>The State shall ensure a safe and healthful workplace for all working people by affording them full protection against all hazards in their work environment. It shall ensure that the provisions of the Labor Code of the Philippines, all domestic laws, and internationally-recognized standards on occupational safety and health are being fully enforced and complied with by the employers, and it shall provide penalties for any violation thereof.</p> <p>The State shall protect every worker against injury, sickness or death through safe and healthful working conditions thereby assuring the conservation of valuable manpower resources and prevention of loss or damage to lives and properties consistent with national development goals, and with the State's commitment to the total development of every worker as a complete human being.</p> <p>The State, in protecting the safety and health of the workers, shall promote strict but dynamic, inclusive, and gender-sensitive measures in the formulation and implementation of policies and programs related to occupational safety and health.</p> <p>Section 12. Occupational Safety Health (OSH) Program. - Covered workplaces shall have a safety and health program including the following policies, guidelines or information:</p> <p>(a) Statement of commitment to comply with OSH requirements;</p> <p>(b) General safety and health, including a drug-free workplace;</p> <p>(c) Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS)/tuberculosis/hepatitis prevention control;</p> <p>(d) Company or project details;</p> <p>(e) Composition and duties of the safety and health committee;</p> <p>(f) Occupational Safety and health personnel and facilities;</p> <p>(g) Safety and health promotion, training and education;</p> <p>(h) Conduct of toolbox meetings;</p> <p>(i) Accident/incident/illness investigation, recording and reporting;</p> <p>(j) Provision and use of PPE;</p> <p>(k) Provision of safety signage;</p> <p>(l) Dust control and management, and regulations on activities such as building of temporary structures, and lifting and operation of electrical, mechanical, communications systems and other equipment;</p> <p>(m) Provision of workers' welfare facilities;</p> <p>(n) Emergency preparedness and response plan;</p> <p>(o) Waste management system; and</p> <p>(p) Prohibited acts and penalties for violations.</p>

The safety and health program shall be prepared and executed by the employer, contractor or subcontractor, if any, in consultation with the workers and their representatives and shall be submitted to the DOLE which shall approve, disapprove or modify the same according to existing laws, rules and regulations, and other issuances.

The approved safety and health program shall be communicated and be made readily available to all persons in the workplace.

B. TIMELINE OF CHILD LABOR LEGISLATIONS FROM 1993 - 2022

1993

Republic Act No. 7658 (An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Children Below 15 Years of Age in Public and Private Undertakings, Amending for This Purpose Section 12, Article VIII of Republic Act No. 7610)

- Sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years old and amends relevant provisions of Republic Act No. 7610 to reflect this requirement.
- Children below the age of 15 are not allowed to be employed in any public or private establishment except when they work directly under the sole responsibility of their parents or guardian or when their participation in public entertainment or public information is essential.

1994

Department Order No. 18 of the Department of Labor and Employment

- Provide detailed guidelines for the lawful employment of children in non-hazardous work, ensuring that their rights and well-being are protected while allowing them to gain valuable work experiences in safe environments

2003

Republic Act No. 9231 (An Act Providing for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Affording Stronger Protection for the Working Child)

- Amended certain provisions of Republic Act No. 7610 and further strengthened the government's efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor
- Provides stricter penalties for violations and defines hazardous work and conditions for children

Republic Act No. 9208 (Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003)

- Primary legislation that criminalizes human trafficking in the Philippines. It defines trafficking in persons, prescribes penalties for offenders, and establishes mechanisms for the protection and assistance of victims.
- This policy is related to child labor as it defines trafficking in persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer or harboring, or receipt of persons with or

without the victim's consent or knowledge, within or across national borders by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or of position, taking advantage of the vulnerability of the person, or, 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 which includes at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery, servitude or the removal or sale of organs.

Republic Act No. 9344 (Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006)

- Emphasizes the rights and well-being of children who have been accused of committing crimes and aims to provide them with appropriate support and rehabilitation rather than subjecting them to punitive measures.

Administrative Order No. 070, s. 2003 of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

- Provide guidelines in the Implementation of Social Welfare Services for Children Victims/Survivors of Child Labor

2004

Department Order No. 65-04 of the Department of Labor and Employment

- Pursuant to Section 10 (Implementing Rules and Regulations) of Republic Act No. 9231.

2009

Republic Act No. 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009)

- Strengthens the legal framework against child pornography, protect children from sexual exploitation, and uphold their rights and dignity
- Repealed with the passage of RA11930

2012

Republic Act No. 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012)

- Contains provisions related to the online aspects of human trafficking and cybersex trafficking of children

Republic Act No. 10364 (Expanded Anti Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012)

- Expand the coverage of RA 9208 and strengthen the country's efforts to combat human trafficking. It enhances penalties for traffickers, provides additional protection for victims, and mandates the establishment of specialized anti-trafficking courts

Republic Act No. 10361 (Domestic Workers Act or "Batas Kasambahay" of 2012)

- Aims to protect the rights and welfare of domestic workers by setting labor standards and regulations for their employment.

2013

Republic Act No. 10630 (An Act Strengthening the Juvenile Justice System in the Philippines)

- Focuses on the rehabilitation and treatment of children in conflict with the law and provides measures to protect them from exploitation and abuse including child labor and instigation to commit crimes

2015

Republic Act No. 10821 (Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act of 2015)

- Protect the fundamental rights of children before, during, and after disasters and other emergency situations when children are gravely threatened or endangered by circumstances that affect their survival and normal development

2016

Department Order No. 149-2016 of the Department of Labor and Employment

- Provides Guidelines in Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below 18 Years of Age

2018

Republic Act No. 11310 (Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) Act of 2018)

- Provides financial assistance to impoverished families and supports the education aspect of their lives

2019

Republic Act No. 11188 (Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act)

- Aims to protect children in situations of armed conflict, including the prevention of their recruitment and use by armed groups, which is a form of child labor

Executive Order No. 92, s. 2019

- Institutionalizing the National Council Against Child Labor to upscale the implementation of the Philippine Program Against Child Labor

2022

Republic Act No. 10364 (Expanded Anti Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022)

- Includes holding internet and financial intermediaries accountable in the promotion of trafficking in persons

Republic Act No. 11862 (Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022)

- Gives authorities additional tools to fight human trafficking, particularly against the use of the internet and digital platforms to commit crimes

Republic Act No. 11930 (Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act)

- Amends the Anti Child Pornography Act of 2009 and ensures that every child is protected against all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation, especially those committed with the use of information and communications technology (ICT)

Memorandum Circular No. 11, s. 2022 of the Department of Social Welfare and Development

- Provides the Implementation Guidelines of the Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood and other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) against Child Labor Project

C. LIST OF LOCAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED RELATED TO CHILD LABOR FROM 2011-2023, BY SELECT ABK3 STUDY SITES

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
ABK3-LEAP													
PLGU Negros Occidental											Child Labor Profiling 2019, 2021, 2022		CICL and CAR Report 2023
LGU Moises Padilla											Annual Accomplishment for 2021 with Utilization of budget for children's PPAs	Documentation of Child-Friendly Facilities in All Barangays	
												2022 LCPC Provincial IMTF Assessment Review Result	
											Annual Work and Financial Plan of LCPC for 2024 with Available and Implemented Local Plans for Children	Annual Work and Financial Plan of LCPC for 2024 with Budget Allocation for Children's PPAs	
												Assessment Form on the Functionality of BCPC	
Brgy. 6 Poblacion												Executive Order No. 01-2022	
												Executive Order No. 02-2022	
Brgy. Crossing Magallon			Ordinance No. 2013-003										
Brgy. Guinpanan													Status of Child Labor Data
Brgy. Magallon Cadre											Executive Order No. 2021-003		
LGU La Castellana													

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Brgy. Camandag											Executive Order No. 21-04		
Brgy. Nato				Resolution No. 2014-17									
				Ordinance No. 2014-04									
Brgy. Sagang												Executive Order No. 003-2022	
PLGU Bukidnon													DOLE Region X Report on Child Labor Related Programs for the Past 10 years
LGU Marag		Ordinance No. 2012-041		Ordinance No. 2014-081				Child Laborer Profiled		Resolution No. 2020-303		4th Quarterly Meeting Agenda and Discussion, including Day Care Service	
									Child Laborer, including At-Risk Children Profiled 2019-2020			Accomplishment Report of LCPC	
Brgy. San Roque					Ordinance No. 2015-001						Executive Order No. 2021-02		
Brgy. Panadtalan				Ordinance No. 2014-001									
Brgy. Kuya					Resolution No. 2015-380						Executive Order No. 2021-01		
Brgy. Maray Maray	Executive Order No. 03-S-2011	ABK3-LEAP Project Barangay Maray-Maray Qualified Beneficiaries		An Ordinance for Protection the Children from All Kinds of Labor							Executive Order - Creation of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)		
		ABK3-LEAP Child Labor Monitoring											

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
LGU Don Carlos		Resolution No. 2012-172	Accomplishment Report as of 2013-2014		Ordinance No. 2015-174		Ordinance No. 2017-424		Executive Order No. 13-2019-A	Resolution No. 2020-429	Local State of Children Report 2021	Executive Order No. 024-2022	
							Resolution No. 2017-184		Inventory of CICL Case 2019-2022				
											City/Municipal Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) Work and Financial Plan 2021	City/Municipal Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) Work and Financial Plan 2022	
											City/Municipal Work and Financial Plan for Children 2021	Accomplishment Report for the City/Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC)	
											Local Development Plan for Children (LDPC) 2021	List of PPAs for the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC)	
												Local State of Children Report 2022	
												Child Friendly Local Governance Audit 2022	
										Comprehensive Local Juvenile Intervention Plan (CLJIP 2019-2022)			
	Brgy. San Nicholas											Executive Order No. 2021-02	
Brgy. Sinanguyan													
Other NGOs: SIFI													

APPENDICES

A. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY MATRIX

Capacity Building Activity or Output based on ABK3 LEAP ToC	Ex Post Evaluation Objectives	Ex Post Evaluation Research Questions	Data Sources	
			Stakeholder interviews through focus group discussion and key informant interviews	Secondary Data
1. Building and strengthening capacity of local systems and structures	a. Sustainable implementation of local level, child labor-related policies (i.e., ordinances, resolutions and programs) that were developed by local government units with project assistance	To what extent do local partners and stakeholders (i.e. local government units, community watch groups, and child education task force) activities demonstrate following closure?	Representatives from the following sectors/groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Welfare and Development Office from local government units (LGUs) including Provincial and City and/or Municipal Government • Barangay local government units (BLGUs) • Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) • Barangay Children's Association (BCAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive orders • Resolutions • Ordinances • LCPC Work and Financial Plan • Child Friendly Local Governance Audit • Local Development Plan for Children • Local State of Children Report
		What reasons can be identified for failure to sustain activities or results, including potential impacts of the global pandemic or crisis/disaster?		
		What perceived changes in prevalence of child labor do local partners and stakeholders (i.e. local government community groups, and education task force) identify, and to what do they attribute those changes?		
2. Enhancing the involvement of the sugar industry in efforts to eliminate child labor	b. Activity/ functionality of project-supported, community watch groups and child labor education task force	To what extent are reporting and referral mechanisms for child labor still utilized and functioning (operational)?	Representatives from the following sectors/groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Labor Education Task Force (CLETF) • Community Watch Groups (CWGs) • Children Rights Advocates (CRAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring plans and reports • Accomplishment reports
3. Reforming advocacy and reform to strengthen efforts to combat exploitative child labor in sugarcane	c. Adherence by the private sector (employers) to voluntary child labor codes of conduct developed under the ABK3 LEAP project	To what extent do private sector actors continue implementation of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) practices and child labor standards?	Representatives from the following sectors/groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Labor and • Employment – Provincial Offices • Sugar Industry Foundation, Inc. (SIFI) • Private Sugar Cooperatives and Confederations (i.e. NFSP, CONFED, and UNIFED) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-child labor standards and voluntary code of code in the elimination of child labor (i.e. guidelines and ammendments, if any) • Profiling information of reported cases of child laborers • Monitoring plans and reports on violations of acceptable work conditions (ACW)

B. INFORMED CONSENT



Informed Consent Form

Title of the Study: **Ex-Post Evaluation of ABK3 LEAP project to support the development of M&E and learning mechanism in the implementation of programs in addressing Worst Form of Child Labor (WFCL) including OSEC (Guidelines)**

Name of Principal Investigators (PI): Alberto Marin (Program Research Specialist) and Noelle Anne Cubacub (Program Research Assistant)

Contact Information of PIs: alberto_marin@wvi.org; noelle.cubacub@obf.ateneo.edu

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary, which means you are free to choose whether or not to participate. If you decide not to participate there will be no penalty or negative consequence.

Before you make a decision you will need to know what the study is about, the possible risks and benefits of being in the study, and what you will have to do if you decide to participate. The researcher is going to talk with you about the study and/or give you this document to read. They recognize the sensitivity of the topics that will be discussed in this research endeavor.

Do not sign or agree to participate if you are unsure or have remaining questions. Please ask the researcher to explain anything unclear to you, including any words in this form. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this informed consent form and a copy or record of your consent and the study information will be given to you. Keep this form as it has the contact information and answers to questions about the study.

What is the purpose of the study?

This study aims to conduct an ex-post evaluation of the ABK3 LEAP project to support the development of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and learning mechanisms in the implementation of programs addressing Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL), including Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) guidelines, specifically in Bukidnon and Negros Occidental. We aim to assess the effectiveness and impact of the ABK3 LEAP project on the reduction of WFCL and OSEC in the two provinces, as well as identify best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement. Through this ex-post evaluation, we aim to know if the interventions initiated during the ABK3 LEAP project have been sustained, particularly systems strengthening interventions (e.g. policies, ordinances). This study also aims to contribute to the understanding of how M&E and learning mechanisms can strengthen the implementation of programs addressing WFCL and OSEC, and inform future programming and policy development.

Why am I being asked to participate in the study?

We are seeking participants who have been involved during the ABK3 LEAP project, particularly with expertise in the field of child labor and experiences working in programs that address WFCL and OSEC in

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Bukidnon and Negros Occidental. Your participation will be crucial in providing valuable insights on the effectiveness and impact of the ABK3 LEAP project in addressing these issues, identifying areas for improvement, and whether system strengthening interventions have been sustained.

What will I be asked to do?

As a potential participant in the Ex-Post Evaluation of ABK3 LEAP project, you may be asked to participate in either key informant interviews (KIIs) or focus group discussions (FGDs) that will last approximately 1 to 2 hours. However, further clarification during the data analysis stage may be necessary for the researcher.

The purpose of these discussions will be to gather information and insights from individuals who are knowledgeable about child labor, specifically in Bukidnon and Negros Occidental. Your participation would involve sharing your experiences, knowledge, and perspectives during the implementation of ABK3 LEAP project and after the project closure.

How will the data collection take place?

Before the study commences, proper communication will be established with relevant stakeholders such as the ABK3 LEAP project and concerned organizations in Bukidnon and Negros Occidental to ensure ethical and legal considerations are in place for the participants. The researcher will then contact potential key informants or focus group participants who have been involved during the ABK3 LEAP project, particularly with expertise in the field of child labor and experiences working in programs that address WFCL and OSEC in the said areas.

A written Informed Consent Form will be provided to all interested participants, outlining the purpose of the study, the benefits and risks of participation, confidentiality and anonymity assurances, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Once the participants have provided their signed consent form, arrangements for key informant interviews or focus group discussions will be made at their convenience, preferably through virtual or online means.

During the interviews or discussions, participants will be asked questions related to experiences, knowledge, and perspectives during the implementation of ABK3 LEAP project and after the project closure. The interviews and discussions will be recorded using mobile device or any recording device for proper documentation. Any sensitive information shared by the participants will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will not be disclosed without their explicit consent, except where required by law.

Are there any risks and what are they?

Ethical concerns through appropriate data collection methods are being considered in the study as the worst forms of child labor are sensitive topics that may provoke your strong emotions and feelings of pain, suffering and trauma. There are no foreseeable physical risks to you given the legal and ethical consideration before the data collection.

The interview will be kept confidential within the research group. You do not have to incriminate yourself with regard to possible involvement in illegal activities. You may also refuse to answer or even terminate the interview whenever you please, especially with regard to any disclosure of your involvement in any illegal activity that may warrant disciplinary action from the authority.

What are the benefits of participating in the study?

No monetary or in-kind benefits will be provided for your participation in this study. However, your input will contribute to the evaluation of the ABK3 LEAP project, its sustainability of interventions, and the development of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labor (WFCL) and Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) in Bukidnon and Negros Occidental. By sharing your experiences and insights, you can help identify gaps and challenges in the implementation of programs and policies related to child labor, which can ultimately lead to improved interventions and protections for children at risk of exploitation.

What happens if I do not choose to join the research study? Can I stop or withdraw from the study even after it has started?

You may choose to join the study or you may choose not to join the study. Your participation is voluntary. There is no penalty if you choose not to join the research study. You will not lose any benefits or advantages that you are now receiving or will receive in the future.

You can stop your participation in the research study and withdraw your data at any time even after it has started. There is no penalty or loss of benefits if you decide to do so. Participation in the study can be terminated both by the you and the researcher if:

- There is a re-consideration of the probability of research risks that may be greater than originally anticipated by both parties.
- The researcher protects you from excessive risk, considering the sensitivity of the study.
- Both parties aim to maintain the integrity of the data (e.g., the researcher is not following study procedures or you may be deliberately providing false information).

If you no longer wish to be part of the research study, or if you want to withdraw your data so that the research will no longer use it, you should let the researcher know through the contact information provided above. You may provide the researcher with the reason for withdrawing from the study, but are not required.

How will confidentiality be maintained and my privacy protected? What personal or identifiable data will you obtain? Who will have access to or see my data?

The information you provide is confidential. Your full name will not appear on any of the questionnaires, and information identifying you will not appear in any report or publication of this study. Only the principal investigators and field researchers will know the identity associated with the information collected for this study, and they will not reveal it to anyone else.

Will I have to pay for anything?

There is no cost associated with participating in this study.

Will I be paid for participating in this study?

No compensation will be provided for the voluntary study participation.

Who can I call for questions about the study or if I'm concerned about my rights as a research participant?

If you have questions or concerns regarding the study and your participation in it, contact the Principal Investigators listed on page 1 of this form.

Certificate of Consent

I have been invited to participate in a study to know if the interventions initiated during the ABK3 LEAP project have been sustained, particularly systems strengthening interventions (e.g. policies, ordinances), and to support the development of M&E and learning mechanisms in the implementation of programs in addressing Worst Form of Child Labor (WFCL) including OSEC (Guidelines). In the study, I am asked to share my knowledge and experience on WFCL through a KII or FGD.

I have read the information about the study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and they have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

Signature of Participant: _____

Printed Name of Participant: _____

Date (month/day/year): _____

Statement by the researcher/person obtaining consent

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this document has been provided to the participant.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent: _____

Print Name of Researcher/person taking the consent: _____

Date (month/day/year): _____



MANILA OFFICE

389 Quezon Ave., cor. West 6th St.
West Triangle, Quezon City 1104
+632 8374 7618 to 28

CEBU OFFICE

2F Arcada 5 Building, Highway Tipolo
Mandaue City 6014
+6332 505 4444

DAVAO OFFICE

340 Apo St., Central Park Subdivision,
Bangkal, Davao City 8003
+6382 327 4564

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