

PROJECT BRIEF



ABK3 LEAP (LIVELIHOODS, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND PROTECTION TO REDUCE CHILD LABOR IN SUGARCANE AREAS)

The ABK3 LEAP (Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection to Reduce Child Labor in Sugarcane Areas) project was a 5 year, multi-sectoral project implemented by World Vision and partners in 8 sugar-growing provinces of the Philippines from 2011 to 2016, with funding provided by the US Department of Labor under Cooperative Agreement No. IL-22508-11-75-K. This brief is an excerpt from the 2016 ABK3 LEAP: Good Practices in Reducing Child Labor in Sugarcane Farms Handbook.

Engaging LGUs to combat child labor:

Building and sustaining child labor-free communities

The local government units (LGUs) and the local councils for the protection of children (LCPC) play vital roles in ensuring that there are effective and sustainable undertakings to combat child labor. A key approach of ABK3 LEAP is to strengthen the capacities of the LGUs and LCPCs to uphold children’s well-being through policy issuances and allocation of resources for effective and innovative programs resulting to child labor-free communities.

Consultations with partner barangay, city/municipal and provincial LGUs were conducted to explore ways to address child labor in sugarcane farms. All were unanimous in expressing that appropriate policies and effective programs need to be in place. ABK3 LEAP facilitated Policy Writeshops aimed at building their competence in policy development. Increasing the knowledge on child protection and improving the policy writing skills of council members became necessary elements needed to jump-start the process.

Alongside this, the project also advocated for the strengthening of the LCPCs to serve as the coordinating body for children’s programs, projects and activities. Orientations, trainings on referral systems for children’s concerns, and planning workshops were facilitated with the LCPCs to build their capacities and ensure that children’s welfare is included in the community development plan with corresponding budget allocations.

Facilitating Factors

Understanding children’s right to protection. One of the identified gaps in addressing child labor at the community level is the lack of understanding of children’s rights, including their right to be protected from hazardous child labor. Acknowledging that there is a problem of child labor in the community is a critical step in urging policy makers to act. Local leaders shared that their participation in the trainings, workshops and events of ABK3 LEAP were central to their increased awareness of the issue of child labor in their communities. Once they realized and understood that they are accountable to the holistic development of the children in their communities, local leaders started prioritizing efforts for children and allocating resources for children’s programs such as the establishment of Learning Resource Centers (LRCs), supporting the catch-up program, child labor monitoring, and raising awareness of the communities.

The increased awareness about child rights and the detrimental effects of child labor to children has also transformed local leaders to become advocates against child labor. We now see barangay leaders actively involved in educating parents about child rights and the hazards of child labor during general assemblies, monitoring children in the barangay, and seeking partnerships with government agencies, teachers and sugar industry players to support programs for child laborers and their families.

Strengthening local capacities to address child labor.

The DILG provides LGUs with a wide range of technical assistance on governance and legislation at the start of their terms. Policy development is one of the many competencies downloaded to officials, and thus easily not retained. The Policy Writeshops led by ABK3 LEAP, in collaboration with DILG and DOLE, focused on the intricacies and nuances of policy development, and made LGUs understand deeper their roles as legislators. During the writeshops, LGUs drafted ordinances on child labor elimination or on childrens welfare development and pinned down dates for subsequent actions by the councils, up to the time when the ordinance will be presented and approved on its final reading. Public hearings to get the sentiments of constituents on proposed policies were held for the first time in some barangays—a process that was truly valued by the officials and communities. The local leaders also set out to re-organize and strengthen LCPCs. The project’s trainings and workshops reiterating the LCPC’s functions in preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the overall development of children to their fullest potential, paved the way for the reactivation and/or strengthening of the LCPCs in ABK3 LEAP’s assisted areas.



The active Barangay Council in the province of Batangas during their meeting.

The capacity building and planning workshops with LCPCs led to the inclusion of initiatives on children in the Annual Investment Plans of the LGUs. Majority of the barangay LGUs developed action plans with funding requests for children’s programs, such as advocacy against child labor. By enhancing local leaders’ capacities to prepare plans and programs for children with funding allocations on an annual basis, resources will surely be available for such programs. More importantly, LCPCs were capacitated and empowered to design project proposals, apply for funding, and implement these programs on their own.

Consultations with LGUs and LCPCs revealed that the technical support they received from ABK3 LEAP rekindled their passion to serve the youngest members of their communities and equipped them with the skills required to create a nurturing environment for the children.

Institutionalizing child protection structures, systems and programs with funding.

Together with partner LGUs and communities, the project embarked on a systematic policy advocacy campaign in target areas. Essential to the sustainability of the campaign against child labor is the mobilization of political decision makers at all levels. Local child rights and child labor policies were passed. These policies mandate the LCPCs to develop and monitor programs for children, the establishment of child labor monitoring systems, and the development of programs in education, livelihoods and awareness raising with budget allocations.

“Through the assistance of ABK3 LEAP, we were informed of children’s right and became aware on the issue of child labor in our village. After attending the Policy Writeshops, our barangay council was able to lobby and pass an ordinance for the protection of children against child labor.”
 —Monico Pelagio, Barangay Captain

At the barangay level, policies passed include ordinances on child labor prevention and resolutions supporting education-related initiatives such as LRCs and catch-up. At the city/municipal level, Children’s Code’s were crafted or updated, Anti-Child Labor Ordinances were passed, and Executive Orders establishing Child Labor/Child Monitoring Systems were also signed. At the provincial level, ABK3 LEAP supported the review and updating of Children’s Codes and other relevant policies that cater to children’s welfare.

The policies are true testaments to participatory and multi-sector collaborations at work to ensure child labor-free communities.

Key Accomplishments

