

Report

Evaluation of the project

Reduction of worst Forms of Child Labour in Textile Supply Chains (ROWCL) in Tamil Nadu/India

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0. Executive summary

Project Description

The project "Reduction of worst Forms of Child Labour in Textile Supply Chains (ROWCL)" in Tamil Nadu/India" is carried out in 4 districts of Tamil Nadu, India's largest textile and garment production region. The project addresses the issue of bonded labour schemes in the disguise of marriage assistance for poor girls, locally known as Sumangali. Sumangali violates the core labour standards as defined by ILO as well as the ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour. The specific objective of ROWCL is to protect girls and young women from the practice of Sumangali till the end of the project period by the end of September 2015. The project comprises measures to provide care and assistance, educational support for the reenrollment in schools, and vocational training to young girls and women survivors of Sumangali through 6 Subregional Resource Centers. The activities are aimed at reducing the number of young girls and women recruited under the Sumangali scheme. Local stakeholders are addressed to present a common understanding on the negative impact of bonded and child labour against a trained and better educated workforce in compliance with national and international norms.

Objectives and methodology of the evaluation

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness (achievement of results and impact), and sustainability of the project for the activities that have been undertaken during the period from October 2011 to June 2015. It shall provide recommendations about the future direction of the programme with regard to addressing more effectively the causes of the 'Sumangali Scheme' and the provision of assistance to victims. Data collection in the field was conducted from 5 to 14 July 2015 in Tamil Nadu using qualitative methods. Focus group discussions were held with ex-Sumangali girls and their parents, teachers, and various government stakeholders using participatory methods. The evaluation was carried out as scheduled without major limitations.

Key findings of the evaluation

Relevance and responsiveness to the need of the beneficiaries

The relevance of combating child labour in Tamil Nadu results from

- a) the existing legal and institutional government framework concerned with child protection in India that are not enforced effectively and
- b) the situation of the victims of Sumangali that are in dire need of assistance.
 - Child labour defined as hazardous work for children below the age of 14 is forbidden by law and the Indian Constitution. Yet, there is a lot of manipulation of figures and definitions to disguise the presence of child labourers in Tamil Nadu textile mills so that it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of child labourers below the age of 14. The precarious conditions of young women Sumangali workers that must be characterised as "hazardous work" and bonded labour with extremely negative impact on the workers are widely denied. The project is relevant in making working conditions in the textile mills more visible and drawing public attention to these conditions so that concerned government bodies can be pushed to take more action.
 - Concerning the needs of beneficiaries, the relevance of the project is undeniable. The most important factor is that ROWCL raised the awareness of girls, parents and other stakeholders about the false promises of labour brokers that lure girls into the textile mills. Many parents stopped to believe that their girls are safe and will receive good payment at the end of the contract period as they knew better.
 - Many Sumangali workers who do not reach the end of the period due to health problem do not receive the lump sum payment. The project responds to the need for legal advice and constant intervention in order to successfully claim the rights of the young women to the due payment of salaries and compensations from the textile mills in case of accidents.
 - The relevance of providing rehabilitation for ex-Sumangali workers is evident in view of the severe health and psychosocial problems that they have after having worked in the textile

mills. There is a clear need for restoring the physical and psychological health of the girls before any other measure can work effectively.

- The project is relevant for the most vulnerable groups of girls that have entered the textile mills at a very young age and had no chance of pursuing their education beyond 8^o or 10^o grade. Individual education support in response to the needs and capabilities of these girls make sure that they can continue their education and recover schooling years lost during the period of working under Sumangali.
- Skills development is crucial for girls that cannot continue education due to the poverty of the family. Vocational training courses that provide income opportunities within a relatively short time such as the tailoring courses that lead to self-employment are responding to a felt need and are very much appreciated by the beneficiaries.

Outcomes

- Very positive outcomes in restoring the **physical health** of the Sumangali survivors were reported during focus group discussions. On average, it took a period of 4 to 6 months of medical treatment to treat the severe health problems, in some cases even longer. Health conditions of girls have improved in almost 100% of the cases.
- Very positive outcomes could also be observed with regard to the improvement of the **psycho-social conditions** of the Sumangali survivors. The rehabilitation process with group and individual counselling, life skills, decision making etc. opened up new ways for the girls to think about their lives, to regain confidence as a precondition for developing a new outlook on life and make informed decisions about their future.
- The reduction in the number of girls that are recruited for bonded labour is difficult to measure on a larger scale. In some of the communities visited, a **reduction of 50%** was reported. Families and stakeholders reported that recruiters and middlemen seeking for girls were more and more questioned by the better informed parents and were less successful in recruiting girls.
- Positive effects on the income situation of the families were also achieved by bridging the gap between poor communities and existing government programmes to support vulnerable groups. The target groups gained **access to many government support programmes** that were previously ineffective, because people could not use them. This took away some of the financial stress of the families and facilitated the access of the young women to schooling or vocational training.
- Evidence shows that **education and skills training** are key to protect families against Sumangali. The perspective of achieving a higher school degree or a vocational training certificate **worked affectively against Sumangali** as it enabled the girls to have an alternative income perspective other than the textile mill in a foreseeable future.
- **Poverty reduction** was achieved by the income generated by the skilled young women after the vocational training. Almost 100% of the beneficiaries interviewed had passed a vocational training course and were either self-employed or employed and gained an income above that of a skilled worker in the textile mills.
- Lobbying and advocacy activities of partners have established good working relationships with key persons from politics and administration and achieved tangible project support in many cases. The project has a **pivotal bridging role** between government poverty reduction programmes and the communities. This is fully in line with the expected results of the project.

Effectiveness and Sustainability

- The ROWCL project is the first major rehabilitation effort for Sumangali survivors implemented by a civil society organisation in Tamil Nadu and can be regarded as a pilot project. The project is carried out effectively, both in terms of quantity and quality of activities.
- Long-term positive changes can be expected on beneficiaries' and community level. The major changes are in the perception of parents about the right of girl children to education and the empowerment of girls and young women to realise their rights. Education and vocational training lead to gainful employment as a realistic alternative to working in the textile mills.

- To the extent that the alternative options of education and vocational training can be sustained in the project regions, girls will not easily be trafficked into the Sumangali scheme. Protecting families against forced and bonded labour will be sustainable to the extent that young women are able to generate an income.
- No provisions are made so far to achieve financial sustainability of the services. The project is filling a gap and is complementary to government health and social services. Given the poverty background of the families, asking for fees for these services would jeopardize the outcomes of the project. Social services like counselling and rehabilitation will need external funding for a foreseeable future.

Gender

Sumangali is still attractive for parents as an opportunity of employment for daughters and of saving money for a dowry, while keeping them safe until a suitable alliance is found. As long as this role expectation is not questioned, poor families may be still willing to trade their daughters into Sumangali with little thought about their wellbeing or rights. Gender concerns do matter for the ROWCL project but should be integrated more systematically as cross cutting issue that tackle the underlying causes of Sumangali, in particular gender roles and the dowry system.

Recommendations

- One of the major lessons learned by Care-T and implementing partners is that there is an immense demand for care and rehabilitation of Sumangali workers in the project region that was bigger than assumed when the project started. The project managed to register and provide care and support for almost 10 times more Sumangali survivors than anticipated thanks to the opening of 2 additional SRRCs. Still parents and Sumangali survivors interviewed during this evaluation expressed a need to expand the coverage of the project since so many more girls were waiting to be rescued and rehabilitated from Sumangali. All interviewees reported that girls that work in the textile mill sooner or later end up in a state of distress and in extremely poor physical, mental conditions and want to leave the mills. They need time for recovery once they leave the Sumangali system.

Recommendation to tdh

In order to maintain past gains and address the problems of Sumangali survivors more effectively, funding a second phase of the project and extending the coverage of project activities is recommended.

- In order to respond effectively to the needs of survivors of the Sumangali scheme, counselling services are indispensable as an integral part of the rehabilitation process before any other support measures can be effective, such as vocational training and provision of material to earn a livelihood.

Recommendation to Care-T and tdh

When designing a second phase, the holistic approach needs to be maintained with counselling and rehabilitation as core elements to prepare the girls and young women for further education or vocational training.

- The evaluation gives evidence that education and skills development are in fact effective instruments in the struggle against child labour and for the empowerment of children and adolescent girls. Taken together, the findings of the evaluation confirm that interventions addressing school enrolment and vocational training have contributed to a reduction in child labour under the Sumangali scheme.

Recommendation to Care-T and tdh

The right to education, which is closely connected to the topic of child labour, should continue to play a central role in Care-T's lobby and advocacy work.

- The spectrum of vocational training subjects is limited to classical female areas. Tailoring skills have been a special focus of vocational training since it is a skill that survivors often request. After a short training period of 6 months, income opportunities as tailors are there,

primarily in the form of village-based self-employment. However, nursing, computer and typing training are more marketable skills for formal employment and higher salaries.

Recommendation to Care-T

Care-T needs to offer a broader range of skills training for Sumangali survivors, not limited to the traditional “female” employment sectors and combine vocational training with job placements.

- Care-T’s strategy of collaboration with the government has produced concrete benefits for the beneficiaries. Access to welfare scheme was time consuming and needed specific knowledge and skills. Extra training was provided to the field officers about existing schemes and conditions to submit applications. Where responsive government officials were to be found, the co-operation was effective.

Recommendation

Care-T should follow its general strategy to cooperate with different stakeholders in the best interest of the beneficiaries. If need be, more specific training on major government schemes, procedures and how to deal with government officials should be provided to staff members.

- Economic support to families was secured mainly through access to government schemes. Under a rights base approach it is important to keep pursuing access to government schemes and qualify beneficiaries and staff accordingly. Linkages with government schemes and benefits have been effective for accessing some benefits that the survivors and their families are entitled to. On the other hand, not all government schemes are put in practice and procedures are very time consuming for project staff. Linking families with government schemes should therefore not be the only means of poverty reduction for the families and complemented by income generating activities. Families have already given suggestions for support such as providing goats or cows that should be further explored.

Recommendation

Care-T should explore strategies to set up complementary income generating activities for families in order to reduce dependency from government schemes that are becoming unreliable.

- A combination of economic and social pressure is often the reason behind the decision of parents agree to the Sumangali system. The social pressure to accumulate enough money to ensure a good marriage alliance is a big factor in parents’ decisions. More awareness needs to be created about the fact that Sumangali is reinforcing the dowry system.

Recommendation

Care-T should integrate gender more as cross-cutting issue into all activities, for instance by educating about gender equality, or linking the social status of girls and women with other phenomena that violates their rights, such as child marriages.

1. Introduction

The textile industry has an overwhelming presence in the social and economic life of the State of Tamil Nadu. Apart from providing one of the basic necessities of life, the textile industry plays a pivotal role. It is the second largest provider of employment after agriculture and contributes to industrial output and export earnings of India. According to recent investigations done by Care-T, there are 2.816 textile mills and 4.003 garment and allied industries registered in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu textile producers have introduced various employment schemes in order to ensure the retention of sufficient workers. In many cases this entails multi-year arrangements for one, two or five years. Spinning mills operate 24 hours a day and workers are needed around the clock to keep the machines going. It is in the interest of the manufacturers to have a substantial part of their labour force residing on the factory grounds or in hostels near the factory, so that a constant supply of labour is ensured. Workers that come from other districts or states usually are accommodated in hostels that are either owned by the factory or operated by a third party. Around 40% of the workforce resides in these hostels; they are referred to as camp labour.

Workers are recruited through a network of brokers spread across the state of Tamil Nadu. In some cases, workers are employed through a labour agency, but factory bus drivers or members of the communities also act as brokers. A broker will receive 1.000 to 5.000 Rs. (around €15 - €76) for each worker he or she brings to the factory.

Because of labour shortages and high turnover rates, recruitment from other states has increased over the last years. Migrants from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Telengana, West Bengal, Manipur and Meghalaya are recruited to work in the Tamil Nadu textile mills. These workers often do not speak the local language and have no family or friends nearby whom they can resort to if they encounter problems.

Recruitment is targeted at young, mostly unmarried women and girls, aged between 14 and 25. The majorities of these workers have a Dalit (scheduled castes) or other low caste background and come from poor, often landless and indebted families that depend on irregular income earned as agricultural coolies. Orphans and children of single parents are also targeted. Brokers convince parents to send their daughters to the textile mills under the so-called Sumangali scheme with promises of a well-paid job, comfortable accommodation, three nutritious meals a day and opportunities for training and schooling. The perspective of sending the girls to work in the mills where they will receive daily meals is a relief for the household and the income girls bring in is a much needed addition to the means of the family.

The lump sum amount that the girls may receive at the end of a three years contract varies from 30.000 Rs. (€460) to 56.000 Rs. (€860) to be paid at the end of the contract period as a lump sum. Besides this amount, Sumangali workers should receive a monthly wage. This wage varies greatly from factory to factory. Interviewed ex-Sumangali workers reported monthly wages from around 1.200 Rs. (€14) to 3500 Rs. (€54). Taken together, this is a large amount for families

from poor backgrounds. But even if the lump sum is added to the monthly wages, the total amount earned in the contract period in most cases still does not equal the amount a worker would have earned if she had received the minimum wage in the garment industry.

The characteristics of the Sumangali scheme are not uniform in textile mills, but the general practice of binding workers to schemes that offer lump sum payments at the end of a fixed number of years of work where they cannot change employers must be regarded as a form of bonded labour. Sumangali restricts individual workers' freedom to move and exposes them to exploitation without any limit or protection and to the complete arbitrariness of factory owners and (male) supervisors, so that many activists would label the Sumangali scheme as a contemporary form of slavery.

Sumangali violates the core labour standards as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), as well as ILO convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour¹. The young girls and women face the worst exploitative conditions like low wages, long hours of work, physical and verbal abuses. Though there may be employment contracts, often they are not followed. When workers terminate their contract before they complete their term, they are regularly deprived of the payment for the complete term of work. Sumangali workers below the age of 18 years are not eligible for Provident Fund (PF) ² and Employee State Insurance (ESI). But when PF contributions were deducted from the salary, the young women did not receive the amounts after the end of their contract.

A number of national laws and policies, among them the Constitution, the Penal Code, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act aim to provide for the protection of children from exploitation. However, this legislation does not ban all forms of child labour as defined by the ILO Convention No. 182 as "Worst Forms of Child Labour", in particular the hazardous work performed by children between the age of 14 to 18.

The Indian government tries to limit the definition of "child labor" by introducing a law that sets the minimum working age at 14 years, thus excluding work performed by children under 18 years of age from the definition of child labour. It is argued that activities which keep to the legal limits and are not "hazardous", i.e. do not affect the health or personal development of a child, are acceptable. Thus, a strong and unanimous political will to ban child labour in all forms defined by the ILO is lacking. Mill owners that engage young girls and women argue that work in the mills is not hazardous for workers above 14 while disguising the numbers of child workers less than 14 years of age that would prompt the government labour inspectors to take action.

¹ According to the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, workers under 18 who perform work that is likely to harm their 'health, safety of morals' are also regarded as child labourers. This includes 'work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer'.

² The Employees' Provident Fund (PF) is a statutory body of the Government of India under the Ministry of Labour and Employment. It administers a compulsory contributory Provident Fund Scheme, Pension Scheme and an Insurance Scheme.

This ambiguous situation leads to a lot of manipulation of figures. Almost a decade ago, in its affidavit to Madras High Court on 14/2/2007 the state government of Tamil Nadu had recognized that 38.451 girls were employed under Sumangali scheme in 406 textile mills. The figures have gone up since. According to research done by Care-T in the fiscal year of 2014-2015, 260.000 girl children and young women were in hostels either located within the factories or outside controlled by factory management. 187.000 workers out of this work force were girl children in the age group of 14 to 18 years and 73.000 were in the age group of 19 to 25 years. According to an assessment made by Care-T in 2015 more than 90.000 girls and young women are supposed to come out of the textile mills and will be replaced by the same number of new camp labour workers. But government action against Sumangali is scarce and inefficient.

The project ROWCL contributes to the global efforts to protect and promote the rights of children, especially their right to be free from economic exploitation and from the worst forms of child labour. The specific objective is to protect girl children and young women from the practice of bonded labour under the Sumangali scheme promoted by textile mills in different districts of the Tamil Nadu State of India till the end of the project in September 2015.

The project is implemented by Care-T and its supporting organisations READ Foundation and TEST in 4 districts of Tamil Nadu. The project addressees primarily the children and adolescents women affected by Sumangali and their direct environment, i.e. parents and siblings, relatives, guardians, neighbours and village communities. Other important actors involved in project activities are schools, school management committees, teachers, vocational training institutions, and officials of state Ministries and social services schemes that have the mandate to protect children.

The strategic approach of the project consists of two major programme areas to achieve the specific objective

- (I) on the level of victims and their families and communities, girl children and young women are protected from the practice of being kept in bonded child labour to reduce the number of children trafficked into the Sumangali scheme and to strengthen the self-help capacities,
- (II) on the level of the local stakeholders to publicly present a common understanding on the negative impact of bonded and child labour against a trained and better educated workforce in compliance with national and international social and legal standards and norms.

2. Evaluation design and methodology

The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness (achievement of results and impact), efficiency and sustainability of the project. The evaluation is supposed to consider all activities that have been undertaken by the CARE-Trust ROWCL project during the project period from November 2011 to June 2015 and provide lessons learned and recommendations about the future direction of the programme with regard to addressing more effectively the causes of the 'Sumangali scheme' and the provision of assistance to victims.

The evaluation was carried out during a period of 19 days in July/August 2015. After the preparation phase, data collection was conducted in Tamil Nadu from 5th until 14^h July 2015. Field visits were carried out in all four districts where project activities are implemented, e.g. Coimbatore, Dindugal, Virudhunagar and Pudukkottai district, both supplier and receiver districts of migrant labourers for Sumangali.

Focus groups discussions were held with a total number of 163 beneficiaries and members of their families. Each group had 20-35 participants on average. In addition, representatives of 6 member organisations of the Tirupur People's Forum (TPF) which also works against the Sumangali scheme and coordinates with ROWCL project, 17 key local stakeholders (including teachers, Panchayat, government health workers) and 15 government officials participated in focus group discussions. (See schedule of villages visited and number of participants in Annex 1).

Sampling of stakeholders and beneficiaries to participate in interviews and focus group discussions was done in cooperation with tdh regional office and Care-T. The sample size as described above covering all districts (sourcing and destination areas of migrant labourers) and a cross-section of the project's major beneficiaries and stakeholders was sufficient for getting reliable and accurate information on outcomes of the project.

The evaluation followed the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards as outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR). Guided by the questions of the TOR, a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools was applied for data collection. While project documents and reports had provided predominantly quantitative data on goal achievement, data collection in the field explored particular topics in depth through interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders.

Focus group discussions based on guiding questions with beneficiaries and stakeholders were an efficient method to explore the changes caused by the project, the nature of the changes or the barriers to change. Thus the relevance of the interventions as well as the quality of outcomes and the perception held by beneficiaries and stakeholders about the quality and direction of changes could be assessed. Triangulation of the data from different sources allowed cross-check and provided a multi-faceted perspective. The field visits including transport and accommodation were perfectly organized by the coordinators and field staff of Care-T so that all meetings with beneficiaries and stakeholders could be realized as scheduled. No major limitations to the evaluation were experienced.

Data sources:

- Project documents, updates for the years 2011-2014; internal documents
- Discussions during the briefing workshop in Coimbatore with Care-T director and staff as well as regional representatives of tdh
- Field visits to Sub Regional Resource Centers (SRRC) in Sulur, Annavasal, Valparai
- Focus group discussions with beneficiaries and parents
- Focus group discussions with different stakeholders: teachers, village representatives, government officials, and NGOs

- Discussions during the debriefing workshop with Care-T director and staff and representatives of tdh where the preliminary outcomes of the evaluation were presented.

Acknowledgements

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3. Key findings

3.1. Relevance

3.1.1. Alignment with the mission, objectives and skills of Care-Trust

The ROWCL project has been prepared in close cooperation with the local partner Community Awareness Research Education Trust (Care-T), which is a long term partner organisation of terre des hommes Germany (tdh) in the field of child labour. Care-T is an expert for child rights and one of the leading organisations of the Tirupur People's Forum (TPF), a network of local NGOs that was founded 2006 in Tirupur/Tamil Nadu as a response to the deplorable situation of young female workers in Tamil Nadu's textile mills. Care-T has conducted various research projects on Sumangali, hostels and camp labour schemes in the textile industry in the past, in cooperation with tdh and the Clean Clothes Campaign, among others. These studies have highlighted the plight of Sumangali girls both nationally and internationally and sensitised media, civil society and international brands that have set up several initiatives to end the practice since. The specific aim of the ROWCL project of protecting girls and young women from the practice of being kept in bonded labour under the Sumangali scheme in the textile mills aligns entirely with the mission, objectives and skills of Care-T.

Due to its constant commitment against child labour over many years with a focus on awareness building and advocacy, Care-T is very well connected in national and international networks, with local and international NGOs and the local media. The ROWCL project is the first major rehabilitation project for survivors of Sumangali implemented by a civil society organisation. Having a clear focus on the reduction of child labour and gender, the ROWCL project complements previous activities and outcomes in a coherent way.

Care-T brings along very sound expertise for the design and implementation of the ROWCL project. The strength of Care-T resides in good management structures and implementation capacity as well as in the trained, experienced and motivated staff. Field staff members are qualified social workers with longstanding experiences in working with adolescents. All come from the villages themselves and have very good relations with the population. They are highly motivated and well equipped to perform their tasks. Capacity building for the entire ROWCL project team (19 per-

sons) on counselling, psycho social care, motivation and life skill education was conducted by experts from the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). Refresher courses and supervision is done regularly so that the field staff members have the skills needed to carry out psychosocial counselling and life skills training for the Sumangali survivors. During the field visits, the evaluator was able to observe the trustful relationships between field staff members and beneficiaries and the high esteem of the project expressed both by beneficiaries and local representatives.

3.1.2. Relevance and responsiveness of ROWLC to the needs of beneficiaries and other stakeholders

The problem analysis of the project proposal is comprehensive and comprehensible, and describes the problems of the persons concerned in detail. The ROWCL project is relevant to combat the problems defined in the situation analysis on two interrelated levels. The relevance of combating child labour results from a) the existing legal and institutional government framework concerned with the issue of child labour and child protection in India and b) the situation of the victims of Sumangali scheme that are in dire need of assistance.

a) Child labour is forbidden by law in India. According to the Indian Constitution of 1949, 'No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed in work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment'. The mechanisms to combat the worst forms of child labour, e.g. children below the age of 14 are specified in national laws and regulations. Government offices are established that have the mandate to combat child labour and ensure enforcement of different acts to protect children.

However, there is a lot of manipulation of figures and definitions to disguise the presence of child labourers in textile mills so that many of these laws are not effectively implemented for the benefit of most of the child labourers in the Tamil Nadu textiles industry. Many girls who enter the mills do not have identity papers and thus no proof of their age. When they enter the factory they are subjected to a medical examination by the factory's medical staff. Incidents have been reported whereby the medical staff had drawn up medical reports with false age details of the workers or the recruiter provides factory management with a falsified medical document.

Yet, the precarious occupational health and safety situation for young women Sumangali workers above 14 make the work extremely "hazardous" and results in negative health consequences which are widely denied by mill owners. Yet, there is a need to increase information about the seriousness of the issue of child labour in the age group of 14 to 18 years which is not fully accepted in India. Working conditions in the textile mills need to become more visible and public attention has to be drawn so these conditions so that concerned government bodies feel responsible to respond. Data about labour conditions in textile mills are not fully available. The size of the workforce, the methods by which workers are recruited, whether the workers are lodged in hostels, the location of such hostels, the number of hostel residents – such information is not easily available.

ROWCLS responds to fill the gaps by creating a more comprehensive common understanding of child work and to create wider concern on the most pressing issues of child workers in the Tamil Nadu textile mills. This is done by documenting cases of girl children and young women trapped under the camp labour/Sumangali scheme and campaigning for the abolition of all forms of child labour.

The project is thus a contribution to informing and raising awareness about working conditions of young women in the age group 14 to 18 and non-compliance with international labour laws. Not only are labour laws violated by extremely long working days and forced overtime. Accidents at workplace due to fatigue and overwork also happen frequently, but only a few of them are recorded. Over the last years, some alarming reports about young textile mill workers committing suicide have come to the public, but no exact figures are given by the mill owners. According to investigations by TPF, more than 100 female workers have taken their lives in the past two years because they could not face the hardships of working and living in the mills anymore.

As textile mills owners are powerful economic players in Tamil Nadu that close up their factories against outsiders, government authorities are sometimes reluctant in taking action against them. Cases of legal violations therefore need to be documented and denounced. Government bodies have to be kept informed about such incidents and reminded that is their mandate to protect children. This is particularly relevant since only government authorities, in particular the Child Welfare Committees, can take official action against employers who violate labour laws and can order raids in factories to rescue child labourers.

b) For the beneficiaries, the relevance and responsiveness of the project is undeniable. As one of the parents put it during a focus group discussion “The importance of the project lies in the word CARE which means caring for the children”. During focus group discussions ex-Sumangali workers and their families clearly identified the major problems and needs to which the project responds:

Raising awareness about the nature of Sumangali working conditions and false promises

Workers often do not receive a contract, leaving them without any written proof of what has been promised by the labour brokers. So it happens that parents that send their daughters to work under the Sumangali scheme believe that the promised lump sum payment after the completion of three or five years is a bonus, while in fact the lump sum payment consists of withheld wages. Once the girls have entered the factories it becomes clear that many promises will not be fulfilled. The lump sum amount will in most cases only be paid out after completion of the entire period. In order to receive their payment, Sumangali workers are thus forced to stay with a factory for all these years.

Parents who send their daughters to the factories in good faith need to be informed about the contractual conditions and the reality of Sumangali scheme in order to question the labour brokers who make false promises and prevent their daughters from being trafficked into the textile mills. Only then will they be able to gain a realistic picture of Sumangali and take an informed

decision about the future of their daughters. Stakeholders like teachers, government health worker and other social service providers in the communities that are confronted with the negative effects of Sumangali in their daily work also need information and skills in order to work against the Sumangali scheme.

Legal assistance to claim payments

Many Sumangali workers do not reach the end of the period as they fall sick due to the unhealthy working conditions. It is a common practice that the lump sum payment is denied if a worker leaves the factory before the end of the contract period. Care-T has documented cases whereby workers never received the lump sum, nor part of it. Many workers do not receive the Provident Fund (PF) contributions they are entitled to. During focus group discussions the majority of ex Sumangali workers confirmed that they were denied payment after having left the textile mill before the end of the contract. Interviewees reported that they lacked the courage, knowledge and skills to negotiate with the factories and would have given up claiming the payment or compensation in the case of accidents without the assistance of Care-T. Legal advice and constant intervention was needed in most cases order to successfully claim the rights of the young women to the due payment of withheld salaries and/or PF contributions from the textile mills.

Medical treatment and psychosocial support

All the girls and young women interviewed reported that they felt emotionally distressed due to overwork, limited freedom of movement, isolation and harassments while working under the Sumangali scheme. Living in hostels made them extremely vulnerable to be subjected to excessive and forced overtime work. Many of the interviewed workers said that working night shifts was the most difficult aspects of their job. The interviewees were also frequently woken up in the middle of the night to complete urgent orders. Refusing overtime work was not an option as the supervisors put pressure on the workers to keep on working.

Female workers who stayed in hostels were severely restricted in their freedom of movement and had almost no opportunity to interact with the outside world. Leaving unaccompanied was difficult in the cultural tradition of India where unmarried girls are not supposed to be on their own but have to be protected. It is important to note here that this is one of the promises that labour brokers make to convince parents: that their daughters would be safe in the factory premises. In fact, the daughters were trapped in a system that turned out to mean complete isolation.

The combination of extremely long working days, the abusive behaviour of male supervisors towards the young female workers, lack of free time and scarce opportunities to interact with family and friends caused fatigue and physical breakdowns. All the interviewed girls reported that they suffered from severe health problems that started after a short time of working in the textile mills:

- Headaches, fever, heart problems due to the heat and machinery noise and the lack of sufficient recreation,
- Skin diseases, allergies and Asthma due to dust and lack of protective gear,
- Stomach pains caused by cotton fibers filling the stomach,
- Anemia due to poor quality of meals,

- Menstruation problems due to poor sanitary facilities.

In light of these serious health problems, there is a need both for immediate medical treatment and for psychosocial support for the survivors of Sumangali. As was reported during the focus group discussions, women as young as 17 years felt worthless and depressed for not having fulfilled the expectations of their parents. Parents felt bad because they had exposed their daughters to a terrible situation in good faith. As communication between the two parties was sometimes difficult, the young women stopped talking about their experiences at all, thus increasing the mental stress.

The project responds to the need for restoring the physical and psychological health of the girls before any other measure can work effectively. The young women need to develop a new life perspective that poor parents are unable to offer. The project responds to the needs by implementing a holistic approach including psychosocial counselling and treatment for the girls and young women. Group counselling and individual counselling that can take up to 6 months make sure that every survivor has the possibility to overcome the trauma. Care-T field staff members estimated that 2% of the survivors of Sumangali are severely traumatized and need referral to psychotherapeutic treatment. Linkages with professional institutions like NIMHANS make sure that high quality treatment is provided. Given the extremely low self-esteem of the young women and girls, live skills training and career guidance worked as an empowerment strategy to give them a new outlook on life. This work needed a family approach as parents often are helpless when confronted with the sufferings of their daughters.

Education and vocational training

India has established an educational system that guarantees equal opportunities for education, based on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE). According to RTE, the government is duty bound to make provisions for every child to complete elementary education. But when free education ends at 8^o standard (at the age of fourteen) parents from poor backgrounds often lack the means to enrol all their children in school for further education. In most cases girls are the ones that stay behind and are expected to contribute an income to the family budget. Agents that recruit for spinning mills or garment factories are aware of the situation and strategically chose those poor families for the recruitment. Sending the unmarried girls to work in the mills where they will receive protection and daily meals is a relief for a poor household, and the promised income means a much needed addition to the means of the family.

The project is relevant for these most vulnerable groups of girls that have entered the textile mills at a very young age and had no chance of pursuing their education beyond 8^o or 10^o grade. Individual education support in response to the needs and capabilities of these girls make sure that they can continue their education and recover schooling years lost during the period of working under Sumangali.

Skills development is important for all but has a pointed relevance for girls that cannot continue education due to the poverty of the family. Many of them have dropped out of school at an early

age and do not possess any skills that meet market demands. Therefore ROWCL has paid special attention to skills development and vocational training. Vocational training courses that provide income opportunities within a relatively short time such as the tailoring courses – that lead to self-employment - are responding to a felt need and are very much appreciated by the beneficiaries.

Access to government schemes

A number of Indian laws guarantee social services, and a sometimes confusing number of welfare schemes for the deprived sections of society are established. The programmes are being implemented through various Ministries and Departments dealing with children, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Department of Family Welfare and NACO, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Ministry of Labour, etc. Many of the programmes provide financial and material assistance and thus could reduce the financial stress of the families. Potential beneficiaries are in need of information about practical support to access subsidies provided. Awareness needs to be created among the families about relevant government schemes and their entitlements to them, so that they have access and benefit from them.

3.2. Effectiveness

The project is based on the needs and priorities of the target groups which were collected in the preparatory phase through a household survey and the consultation with traditional representatives (neighborhood groups, Panchayat) of the communities. Local stakeholders (social workers, ASHA workers³, teachers, etc.) contributed to the research that was conducted to set up a baseline on the number of girls currently employed under Sumangali scheme, former child labourers and families vulnerable to forced labour.

The ROWCL project is the first major rehabilitation effort for Sumangali survivors implemented by a civil society organisation. Previous child labour projects of Care-T and other NGOs focused more on documenting labour law abuses, on national and international advocacy and campaigning for child rights. The ROWCL project it is based less on ‘best practices’ drawn from similar or previous projects but more on the experiences of CARE-T staff in dealing with child labour and working with the victims of child labour. Accumulated experience and the needs assessments carried out in the preparation phase identified some gaps in these approaches that had been applied so far by Care-T and others. In particular, the provision of assistance to Sumangali victims/survivors was lacking. The specific needs for rehabilitation in the sense of psychosocial support and motivation for Sumangali workers and their families to quit bonded labour work and attend formal schooling or vocational training was thereby identified.

For complete recovery from the bonded labour status, the provision of psychosocial counselling and direct assistance to Sumangali survivors were designed as core elements of the project. As

³ Accredited Social Health Activist – National Rural Health Mission

complementary measures to improve the economic situation, families were assisted to gain access to government support schemes. The ROWCL project was regarded as a pilot project and Care-T was open to learn from experiences made during the implementation phase and fine-tuned project activities according to lessons learnt in order to better respond to upcoming needs.

3.2.1. Alignment with Government policies and regulations

The above mentioned regulations on child labour are legally binding for companies located in all states. Various government bodies and instruments are in place that should guarantee that national legislation is respected and implemented. The ROWCL project supports key government bodies in their implementation and works towards and enforcement of national legislation regarding child labour. The general approach of the ROWCL project is convergence and cooperation with government bodies that have the mandate to implement actions to protect children while maintaining a critical distance. Care-T with other members of TPF keep watching and documenting the situation of workers in the textile mills, and are active to denounce human rights abuses in textile mills, promote investigations and consult and collaborate with local stakeholders to inform government bodies and officials.

Major government bodies and the convergence with the project's activities are summarised in the table below:

Key Government Body	Specific Mechanism	Convergence with ROWCL	
Government of Tamil Nadu	Department of Social Welfare	Access to welfare schemes like marriage assistance for poor girls, provision of free tailoring machines.	
	Department of Social Defense – Child Welfare Committees and District Child Protection Units	Associate with the Child Protection Committees at village, block and district level to carry out prevention activities and secure legal protection for the rescued children like reunion with family and reintegration with families.	
	Department of School Education		Enrollment of dropouts of girl children in middle and high schools as per the Right to Education Act & higher secondary schools girls.
			Awareness programmes held in schools for prevention of trafficking.
			Special tuition and evening classes offered for the slow learners.
ICDS – Integrated Child Development	Access to ASHA and SABALA schemes ⁴ for nutrition supple-		

⁴ Government Health services

	opment Scheme	ments and training on personal health and hygiene and free sanitary napkins.
	Anti-Human Trafficking Wing of Police	Protection and rescue of girls trafficked for bonded labour and child labour.
Government of India	Child Line 1098 – Ministry of Women and Child Development	Training programs of the adolescent girls. Support during the rescue operations and medical examination of the victims.
	Training Institutes – Nursing	Enrollment of the interested participants in the Diploma in Nursing Course and job placements.
	National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences – NIMHANS	Capacity building of the team to conduct training of staffs and volunteers.
Local Governments	Village Panchayats – Town Panchayats	Transparency in project operations – provision of support for SRREC by panchayat.
		Prevention activities through the Village Child Protection Committees.

During the focus group discussion, government officials on State level stated that they are well aware of labour rights violations against young women workers under the bonded labour Sumangali schemes and acknowledged that the key government bodies have legal obligations to intervene and protect the rights of the children. They expressed appreciation for the efforts of Care-T and other NGOs, particularly through the TPF in promoting the eradication of child labour and in principle endorsed the demands of TPF to ban the Sumangali scheme.

On the other hand, government officials also stated that implementation and monitoring of national laws, and creating compliance with international norms and standards remain a challenge for all government bodies. Budget constraints and lack of effectiveness contribute to a widespread absence of law enforcement or weak functioning of labour inspections.

Compared to government projects and services addressing forced/bonded or child labour, the ROWCL project has some salient features that makes it more effective in terms of addressing the rights and needs of the beneficiaries⁵:

Salient Features	CARE- T	Government
Focus on priorities of the participants	Options available in the rehabilitation programme provide every opportunity to the participant to select according to their interests, motivation and qualifications	Fixed programme agendas

⁵ Based on the focus group discussion with government officials

Convergence in terms of multi stakeholder approach	Convergence with key stakeholders like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government departments • Other NGOs and networks • Child Protection Mechanisms • Local Governing Institutions • Technical Institutions • Former middlemen 	Rarely work in this approach and with limited stakeholders.
Value additions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic rehabilitation approach for girl children at risk • Counselling as per the nature of the participant either group or individual • Counselling for family members • Life skill education for volunteers, staffs and key group of beneficiaries • Psychosocial care • Referrals and recommendations for treatment on case by case basis • Supporting higher education through other local charities for achieving additional target 	Counselling is not done in a structured way. Life skill education and support for higher education are done with a limited scope.
Follow-up	Made as a common feature for the benefit tracking of the participants	Absent or not done in a very structured way.
Transparency	Transparency mainstreamed or inbuilt in the project activities. Strong ownership of community stakeholders project activities.	Rare phenomenon.

3.2.2 Synergies with similar or complimentary projects in the region

Besides the above mentioned government bodies, other NGOs are not directly addressing the needs of Sumangali survivors to a significant extent in the project region. Most of the NGOs focusing on the prevention of child labour, forced labour and camp labour in textile mills in Tamil Nadu follow a Human Rights (HR) approach using established HR instruments, such as

- Documentation of cases
- Legal advice and support of victims to receive payments and compensations
- Filing of cases in court
- Mobilisation of trade unions and other political supporters, public hearings.

Many of these NGOs in Tamil Nadu are members of the Tirupur Peoples Forum. TPF was explicitly established with the aim of creating synergies among NGOs and building the capacity of their staff to be aware of and deal with the social, legal, economic and cultural dimension of the Sumangali scheme.

TPF started as small informal network of civil society organisations working on the promotion and protection of child rights, women's rights, labour rights and environment. TPF has acted as an eye opener for many CSOs working with vulnerable populations or migrants before, but were not fully

aware of the problems of Sumangali workers. To date, TPF is a well-connected network with 45 members working in 25 districts in Tamil Nadu affected by camp labour /Sumangali practice.

As reported in the group discussion with TPF member organisations, TPF provides an important forum for exchange and strategy building among its members. Major activities of TPF (e.g. research studies on the scope and negative impacts of Sumangli scheme, sensitisation on the importance of girl children's education, legal support to Sumangali survivors, and advocacy through conferences and public hearings) have generated wider concern on camp and forced labour among national and international stakeholders.

As a network of NGOs, TPF is an important interlocutor with textile mill managements and government officials and has achieved commitments and agreements than any single NGO could not achieve. There is also strong convergence with local institutions and key stakeholders, such as government departments, schools, vocational training centres, and village authorities that appreciate the results and impacts of Care-T's activities.

3.2.3 Achievement of intended outputs

The target-actual comparison of outputs on the basis of target indicators shows that in quantitative terms the project has considerably exceeded the target values.

No.	Description of Activities	Target	Achieved
1	Identifying girl children/young women workers	1300 girls	10,053 girls
2	Counselling for Girls-Group/Individual counselling	400 girls	4,016 girls
3	Sub Regional Resource Centres	4 centres	6 centres
(a)	Tailoring training certified courses		667 girls
(b)	Computer education certified courses		192 girls
(c)	Nursing training courses		31girls
(d)	Fashion technology, Mushroom, Beautician & typing		6 girls
(e)	Driving & Conductor Training		12 girls
(f)	Embroidery Training		20 girls
	Sub-Total	320 girls	928 girls
4	Educational support		
(a)	Enrolment of drop out girls in schools	320 girls	487 girls
(b)	School enrolment campaign	29 in 92 places-12,685 per-son	

5	Informal Education-continuing education	220 girls	358 girls
6	Sensitization-organizing girl children & stakeholders		
(a)	Organizing girl children	1000 girls	4,446 girls
(b)	Sensitization for Parent Teachers Association	1000	3,683 person
	Sensitization for Girl children- Middle & High school) on child & forced labour	20 schools	146 schools
(c)	Officials & elected representatives of local bodies	20 trainings	92 trainings
	Participants	1000 person	7,231 person
(d)	Women SHGs, NGOs and community leaders	20 events	49 events
	Participants	1000 person	7,851 person
7	Economic support to families of girls- linkages with Government welfare measures	700 families	1,999 families
8	Documentation of case studies	240	335
9	Capacity building Trainings for staffs & volunteers No. of trainings	7 trainings	11 trainings
	No. of staffs & volunteers	50 person	271 person

The figures show that the project had to cope with an enormous need for counselling, rehabilitation and educational support for Sumangli survivors in the 4 districts where the project was operational. In fact the first proposal for the ROWCL project that was developed for EU funding and was not approved had higher target values and budget. The budget presented for C&A funding was a reduced budget. Experiences show that it was hardly possible to cover the identified needs within the reduced budget. Due to excess funds received through currency exchange gains, it was possible for Care-T to open up two additional Sub Regional Resource Centres (SRRCs) and offer more counselling and vocational training services in to cover the needs brought forward. This was also possible with the help of a big number of volunteers that contributed to activities on community level.

4. Outcomes and impact

4.1. Care and rehabilitating for survivors of Sumangali

The holistic approach including individual and needs based support for Sumangali survivors, namely psychosocial counselling and rehabilitation, educational support, and skills training have widely contributed to achieve the intended outcomes. 6 SRRCs were established on community level, each of them covering three blocks in each district so that a SRRC is in general within a reasonable distance to be reached by the beneficiaries of the target communities. Qualified staff members, teachers and animators are stationed at the SRRCs that are equipped to conduct all activities of the ROWCL project: counselling, career guidance, trainings and sensitisation meetings.

Linking up with NIMHANS for basic training combined with constant supervision and refresher trainings has created a sound knowledge and skills basis for the field staff to provide direct psychosocial support to Sumangali survivors. Staff members were also trained to recognise their limits and to refer girls and young women to clinical therapies in cases of girls needing professional assistance (app. 10-15% of cases according to staff).

Very positive outcomes in restoring the **physical health** were reported during focus group discussions. In general, it took a period of up to 4 months of medical treatment to heal the severe health problems, in some cases even more. Health conditions have improved in almost 100% of the cases.

Very positive outcomes can also be observed with regard to **psychosocial conditions** of the Sumangali survivors. The psychological healing is a very importance outcome, given the fact that the girls were often depressed, highly disturbed and discouraged after they had prematurely left the textile mill. They felt exploited and abused and regarded themselves as losers. Many of the young women had avoided to share their experiences fully with their parents in order not to make them feel guilty. During group counseling and individual counseling girls were encouraged to open up and to reflect their experiences. Only in the group of peers with the same experience they were able to talk about their partial traumatic experiences, in many cases for the first time.

The counselling process with live skills, decision making etc. opened up new ways for the girls to think about their lives, to regain confidence as a precondition for developing a new outlook on life and make informed decisions about their future. The mindset and behaviour of the girls has changed; they (re)gained self-esteem and are now confident to enroll in schools or successfully pass a vocational training. They appreciate that various options were made available in the programme to select according to their interest, motivation and qualification (no „one size fits all“-approach“).

As a side effect, the SRRRC turned out to be a protected and enabling space for the young women where they came together regularly to discuss common issues, including personal and family problems. As they wanted to grow more independent from parents, young women needed the emotional relationships and friendships with their peers as part of the rehabilitation process. In a family approach, parents and eventually husbands were invited to find solutions in the best interest of the young women. During focus group discussion, the young women mentioned very private issues such as marriage problems or family planning that could be solved with the help of Care-T staff and peers. SRRRC are thus a forum for the empowerment of girls and young women. During focus group discussion it was fascinating to observe the strength and determination of the Sumangali survivors in their struggle for self-determination who also begin to raise their voices against gender discrimination. Those girls and young women will definitely act as agents of change to prevent their peers from being recruited under Sumangali.

After counseling, the motivation and capacity of the girls to continue education or go for vocational training was restored and choices could be made with regard to the various options. This is remarkable, because many of the young women had left school after the 8^o grade or had dropped out from school. Due to constant and individual support from the project's facilitators they regained courage and a considerable degree of self-confidence in coping with potential problems on their way. When asked about their future plans, the majority of young women responded that they would prefer to be self-employed and work on their own terms instead of returning to the textile mill or depending on any other employer.

4.2. Enforcement of workers' rights to payments and compensation

It was extremely difficult for the victims of Sumangali to exercise their rights to payment of salaries or compensation from the textile mills. Textile mill owners are often simply denying that ex Sumangali workers are entitled to receive payment as they did not fulfil their contracts. Likewise, Provident Fund also refuses payment. When young women or parents claimed payment on their own, they were not taken seriously and in general procedures were time consuming. The project staff was successful in asserting the rights to payment of the dues like salary, scheme amounts, provident fund and gratuity etc. with the management of textile mills or the Providence Fund. Many claims were accepted and paid. Over the project period, a total of 91 beneficiaries received 450.000 Rs. (ca. 695 €) as contributions from the Provident Fund. This had positive effects on the income situation of the families and further facilitated the access of the young women to schooling or vocational training.

4.3 Prevention of trafficking of young girls into the Sumangali scheme

Awareness is the key to preventing the trafficking of young girls into the Sumangali scheme as could be evidenced during all focus group discussions. The collaboration of the ROWCL project with stakeholders on different levels has contributed to creating more awareness on the scope and negative impacts of the Sumangali scheme and reduced the recruitment of girls for bonded labour contracts.

First of all, the awareness creation is based on the strong rapport of ROWCL staff with the parents. Parents generally were aware about the poor labour conditions in the textile mills and the sufferings of their daughters. Some had taken back their daughters to treat their health problems. However, having no alternative, the chances were high that those girls would end up in the textile mills again. During the identification phase, staff carried out household visits to inform parents of Sumangali workers about the opportunities of educational support and vocational training in the framework of the ROWCL project that would prevent the girls to return to the mills.

Once they received proper information about the Sumangali conditions, parents realised that they had been naïve in trusting the labour brokers – who often were members of the community – without questioning any of the promises that were made. During focus group discussions, all parents expressed their determination not to believe the labour brokers anymore and inform friends

and relatives about the issue of bonded labour in order to prevent further recruitment for Sumangali. Parents confirmed that they would never again send their girls to a textile mill under a bonded labour contract and affirmed their desire to provide better education for their daughters and thus open up better opportunities for them to qualify as skilled labourers.

Challenging the labour broker system by creating awareness on village level was the key to break the cycle of false promises that lure girls into the Sumangali system. The more parents knew about the reality, the better was their position to question the labour brokers. Ex Sumangali workers also played a strong role in preventing trafficking for bonded labour. Beneficiaries of the project acted as the most efficient agents to create awareness on Sumangali and to prevent recruitment.

On community level, teachers, ASHA workers and church members were also aware of the situation of Sumangali. They were the ones that had to deal with the different negative effects of Sumangali as they were in direct contact with the affected families. However, they were unaware how to work effectively against the phenomenon on a broader basis. These stakeholders were made important actors for increasing awareness in their respective area of work and for joint campaigning.

The reduction in the number of girls that are recruited for bonded labour is difficult to measure on a larger scale. In some of the communities visited, a reduction of 50% was reported. Families and stakeholders reported that recruiters and middlemen seeking for girls were more and more questioned by the better informed parents and were less successful in recruiting girls. This was confirmed by the testimony of a former middleman that attended one of the focus group discussions.

In very rare cases, girls rejoined Sumangali scheme after a period of medical treatment due to family pressure. It was important that the project could prove through evidence that there were other realistic options for income generating after a short period of skills training. The poverty as the underlying problem may persist, but when families were fully aware about the sufferings that girls face under Sumangali, this was no longer an attractive option.

It can be assumed that of the more than 10.000 girls and young women that were identified and registered in the ROWCL project have better chances to be prevented from bonded labour in a middle and long-term perspective to the extent that the other options or education and skills training can be sustained. Parents were most likely to question the labour brokers and abstain from signing a bonded labour contract when they could be persuaded that there are other options for their daughters.

While positive effects of the awareness building, counselling, and skills training on the reduction of Sumangali recruitments could be observed after a short time, the outcomes of the advocacy and lobby work with the government to ban child labour as per the ILO Convention 182 can only be assessed in a long term perspective. Efficiency of government bodies is difficult to influence and there are many external factors and vested interests from textile mill owners that work

against the objectives and strategies of the project. However, by lobbying and advocacy activities partners have established good working relationships with key persons from politics and administration and achieved tangible project support in many cases. In addition, the project has a pivotal bridging role between government poverty reduction programmes and the communities. This is fully in line with the expected outcomes of the project.

4.4. Protection of families against forced and bonded labour

Evidence shows that education and skills training are key to protect families against Sumangali. The perspective of achieving a higher school degree or a vocational training certificate worked affectively against Sumangali as it enabled the girls to generate an income in a foreseeable future that otherwise families would have expected from work in the textile mills.

In total, 845 girls were reintegrated into school and/or received educational support. Teachers reported that those girls are highly motivation and determined to pass all the examinations. According to teachers' observation, girls that had experienced Sumangali were even more mature than their peers due to their exposure to the external world. The school performance of reintegrated girls improved over time and drop-out rates reduced due to tuition classes provided by ROWCL project to support the slow learners. Teachers are prepared and motivated to follow up on each child that is enrolled in school. This provides an opportunity for better qualifications and career prospects, which in turn will later benefit the families economically. Those girls who have passed vocational training are role models for other girls and motivated many of them to join the project instead of going to work in a textile mill.

Vocational training for young women is based on their needs and seeks to develop their abilities in a holistic way. Accordingly, vocational training also includes general education, the teaching of basic skills like reading, writing and arithmetic, and information about child rights. There were no drop-outs from vocational training in the communities visited for the evaluation. Some of the young women participated in two training courses.

Out of 928 young women who successfully passed certified courses, 667 (71%) chose tailoring training, followed by computer education (20%) and nursing training (3,3%). This repartition shows a concentration on classical female occupations with the only exception of 12 girls that have passed driver and conductor training. On the other hand, it reflects the trades and professions sought-after in the respective regions and the options for self-employment.

4.5. Poverty reduction

Enhanced incomes to families and thus poverty reduction were achieved by two mechanisms:

a) Linkages with government schemes

The project played a pivotal role in bridging the gap between poor communities and existing government programmes to support vulnerable groups. Synergies with government support schemes (for children and their families) were created to enforce the right based approach of the project. Families were motivated and learned about various government schemes for which they are eligible. Government officers were invited as resource persons to introduce the eligibility criteria for different schemes, required documents, processing the application and time frame for the delivery of welfare measures. By understanding the individual background of each beneficiary, Care-T field workers identified suitable government schemes and helped families to register under these schemes.

The community stakeholders were introduced to the officials of Social Welfare, Social Justice, Women and Child development, Child Welfare Committees, Provident Fund and other relevant welfare department officials and ensured that linkages were created between the stakeholders and the government departments. Care-T has developed a handbook on social welfare schemes that was shared with the community stakeholders.

The target groups have gained access to many government support programmes that were previously ineffective, because people could not use them. Overall applications for 1.999 families were processed for economic support; however, many of them are still pending.

Facilitating access to government schemes was time consuming and needed specific knowledge. Extra training was provided to the field officers of Care-T about existing schemes and conditions to submit applications. Corruption found among the welfare scheme officials has delayed and sometimes prevented the processing of the beneficiaries applications. The field workers were struggling to move the applications from table to table. This work was enormous in terms of the number of visits made to the offices and the time spent by staff on each and every application. Where responsive government officials were to be found, cooperation was effective. Otherwise, much effort had to be made to get the applications through.

b) Income generated by young women

Success rates of young women having passed vocational training and generating an income are high with almost 100% of the beneficiaries interviewed that had passed a vocational training course. Most of them were either self-employed (as tailors) or employed (as nurses and office workers) and gained an income above that of a skilled worker in the textile mills.

The tailoring courses offered the best opportunities to generate an income after a relatively short training. The incomes of self-employed tailors are in the range of 300–400 Rs. per day (app. 5 €). The interviewed young women appreciated being self-employed as they were too tired of having to follow instructions from superiors. Self-determination was mentioned as the major advantage of being self-employment, besides practical considerations, such as flexibility in time that leaves room for family obligations, child care or simply recreation.

Incomes are generated not only in the informal sector. Computer training – provided by professional training centres - opened up a wide range of opportunities for employment, for instance in the police services, retailer shops or as insurance agents where incomes of up to 7.000 Rs. (app. 107 €) per month were earned. All young women who had acquired a nursing diploma were formally employed in hospitals or medical laboratories where they gained up to 6.500 Rs. (app. 100 €) per month.

5. Efficiency

5.1 Project management

The ROWCL project has established coordination mechanisms among Care-T and the implementing organisations READ and TEST that have been effective to ensure timely delivery of activities. The coordination committee composed of the directors of each organisation, as well as the coordinators of the 6 SRRCs hold quarterly meetings in which progress is reviewed, experiences are shared and detailed operational planning is done.

As the lead organisation, Care-T has set up a core team for project management. The five members are: the overall project coordinator, the director, the counselling coordinator, and the office coordinator. Field staff members hold monthly meetings in the SRRCs with beneficiaries and volunteers to ensure that activities are implemented according to the plans and to reflect results and outcomes. Minutes of each meeting are produced and main conclusions feed into the monthly meetings of the core team.

There were no changes or deviations from the original project design. Adjustments were made in the first phase when one organisation (SSSS) did not fulfil the assigned responsibilities. Care-T professionally addressed the issue by ending the collaboration with SSSS and implementing the activities with the help of staff from other NGOs and volunteers.

There were no unforeseen developments or negative side effects during project implementation. Adjustments were made in the allocation of funds within the overall budget. Due to the unexpected high demand for counselling and rehabilitation that came up after four SRRCs had been established, the project extended the coverage by establishing 2 additional SRRCs. Following the opening of the SRRCs, additional funds were allocated for vocational training, educational support and informal education. Funds for sensitisation were reduced as TPF was doing this complementary to the ongoing ROWCL project. These budget adjustments were agreed upon with tdh and C&A Foundation and the additional budget needs were covered by excess funds deriving from the exchange gains. The overall objective, the planned activities and the expected outcomes remained the same.

5.2 Financial management

All financial operations are closely monitored, and effective internal control mechanisms are in place. For the overall financial management, Care-T established a financial committee, consisting of the director, the project coordinator, the accountant cum treasurer and the office secretary. The financial committee meets 3 to 4 times per year plus ad hoc every time when funds are transferred from tdh Germany. Another meeting takes place every 6 months upon receipt of the unaudited statement of accounts.

Budget monitoring is done on a monthly, quarterly and half-yearly basis to verify whether expenditure and receipts are in balance and to assess whether expenditures are consistent with the proposed budget and decide whether adjustments in the allocation of funds have to be made.

High standards are kept for internal financial control according to the requirements of the Indian Government and tdh, in compliance with German BMZ standards. Proper books of accounts are kept and at the end of each month a balance between expenditures and activities of all SRRC is done on the basis of a voucher and document check.

The regional office of tdh is closely monitoring the financial and overall project management. During his biannual project visits, the tdh coordinator Mr P.E. Reji conducts detailed checks of vouchers and the ledger book and makes recommendations for improvement. The biannual revenue and expenditure account is set up by Care-T and a copy goes to the tdh office.

5.3 Monitoring and evaluation frameworks

Care-T has established an effective results-based monitoring system that makes project's progress assessments possible on a regular basis.

Field workers record their activities in the communities and summarize them in a monthly activities' report sent to the overall project coordinator. Weekly staff meetings and monthly evaluation meetings with stakeholders make sure that transparency about successes and shortcomings of the project is as high as possible. In addition to target vs. performance comparisons, different registration and monitoring tables are used by which the progress and changes observed with all registered girls and young women are being followed up. Through this "benefit-tracking" it is possible to obtain reliable data on the concrete benefits of the activities for the target groups.

During the identification phase, field workers established a basic profile/identification sheet for every girl or young women to register them as participants of the ROWCL project. The identification sheets contain personal data such as age, education, years worked under Sumangali, a photograph and basic information about the family background.

Based on this profile, a second identification sheet is established for each beneficiary that informs about the identified needs for counselling and career guidance as well as their interest in education or skills training.

A separate format is then used by the counsellors to document the counselling process and changes observed during the process. All information feed into a monitoring format for each beneficiary that is used to follow up and document the progress and status on a biannual basis.

The formats in use could be made more efficient in order to provide an easier overview about changes and outcomes. As some of the categories are overlapping in the identification and monitoring sheet, the two sheets should be merged into one condensed monitoring sheet.

5.4 Constraints

Constraints in implementing the project activities were mostly related to the secluded nature of the Sumangali scheme and the conspiracy between textile mill owners and brokers regarding recruitment practices. The project staff had good problem solving capacities and managed to cope with these constraints. For instance, as it was impossible to contact the girls within the premises of the mills during their working time, ROWCL staff used public holidays when Sumangali workers were allowed to visit their parents to contact them and motivate them to join the project.

6. Sustainability

The project works towards sustainability of the outcomes on the beneficiaries' and community level by changing the mind-set and behaviour of the beneficiaries and by building the capacities and empowering stakeholders.

Long-term positive changes can be expected on beneficiaries' level as a direct result of the care and rehabilitation as well as awareness creating activities of ROWCL. The major contributing factors are the changes in parent's perception of the right of girl children to education on the one hand and the psychosocial care that enable girls and young women to realise their rights on the other hand. Education and vocational training lead to gainful employment as a realistic alternative to working in the textile mills and thus to sustained livelihoods for the girls and their families.

- The mind-set of parents has changed. The project opened up many options for support of the family via government schemes that parents were unaware of. This makes it easier to accept that a girl goes for higher education and will support the family afterwards with better skills.
- The mind-set of girls has changed. They are aware of their legal and labour rights and see that they can have a say in their future and decide for themselves.
- Girls and young women have gained qualification levels that will allow them to sustain themselves and support their families.

Awareness and information are also important factors for a prevention of trafficking of young girls into the Sumangali scheme. Challenging the labour broker system by creating awareness of stakeholders on village level was the key to break the cycle of false promises that lure girls into the Sumangali system. The more stakeholders and parents knew about the reality of Sumangali, the more they turned away from the Sumangali system. To the extent that the alternative options of education and vocational training can be sustained in the project regions, girls will not easily be trafficked into the Sumangali scheme. Protecting families against forced and bonded labour will be sustainable to the extent that young women are able to generate an income.

No provisions are made so far to achieve financial sustainability of the services. Most private service providers charge training fees that the poor families cannot afford. Offering free services and vocational training has been the most important contributing factor for the positive outcomes of ROWCL. Given the poverty of the families, asking for fees for these services would jeopardize the outcomes of the project. Social services like counselling and rehabilitation will need external funding during a foreseeable future.

7. Gender

Girls and young women are the direct target groups and major beneficiaries of the ROWCL project. The evaluation gives evidence of the benefits for girls and young women in terms of rehabilitation from Sumangali, gains in self-esteem and capability to pursue own choices for higher education or vocational training. All the young women interviewed who successfully passed the training courses were able to gain an income. These achievements would not have been possible without the involvement of males, in particular fathers, teachers, pastors, middlemen. In the focus group discussions, all of these stakeholders expressed their willingness and determination to protect their daughters and other girls from the community from being recruited for bonded labour again.

However, the beneficiaries' stories also reflected the traditional cultural norms that impede gender equity, particularly in the rural areas. According to these norms, women's sole purpose in life is to have a good husband and a family. Women are married young (some child marriages were detected during focus group discussions), quickly become mothers, and are then burdened by domestic and financial responsibilities. Women are prevented from accumulating substantial financial assets, making it difficult for them to establish their own autonomy. The culture of son preference in India keeps daughters becoming a liability for parents and the social expectation of women is that of marrying well with a dowry paid for them.

Sumangali was attractive for parents as an opportunity to find an employment for daughters and save money for a dowry, while keeping the girls safe until a suitable alliance is found. Based on this perception of a women's role, families among the poorest and marginalised sectors of the population may be still willing to trade girls into Sumangali with little thought to their wellbeing or rights, making them extremely vulnerable to trafficking.

It is evident that it will take time to end the myths about Sumangali and raise awareness about the fact that it is reinforcing the concept of the dowry system. Research conducted by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) shows that Indian men were among the least supportive of equitable relationships and roles between men and women. ⁶ The country is nonetheless home to some progressive affirmative action policies, such as adding reserved spaces for women in parliament or "gram panchayats," the village councils. Against this background, gender concerns need to be integrated more systematically as a cross cutting issue that tackles the underlying causes of Sumangali, in particular gender roles and the dowry system.

8. Lessons learned and recommendations

8.1. The ROWCL project is the first major rehabilitation effort for Sumangali survivors implemented by a civil society organisation in Tamil Nadu and can be regarded as a pilot project. The project is carried out effectively, both in terms of quantity and quality of activities. Project outputs exceeded the targets set in the project proposal. The project was so successful in motivating parents and girls to quit the textile mills that it was challenged by its own success. One of the major lessons learned by Care-T and implementing partners is that there is an immense demand for care and rehabilitation of Sumangali workers in the project region that was bigger than assumed when the project started. Coping with the discrepancy between the scope and nature of the needs that Sumangali survivors brought forward and the target values set up during the planning phase and existing resources available for responses was a big challenge for Care-T.

The project managed to register and provide care and support for almost 10 times more Sumangali survivors than anticipated thanks to the opening of 2 additional SRRCs. Still parents and Sumangali survivors interviewed during this evaluation expressed a need to expand the coverage of the project since so many more girls were waiting to be rescued and rehabilitated from Sumangali. All interviewees reported that girls that work in the textile mill sooner or later end up in a state of distress and in extremely poor physical, mental conditions and are in need of time for recovery once they decide to leave the Sumangali system. Scaling up and extending the coverage of the project is therefore justified to address existing needs problems of Sumangali survivors more effectively. Project activities should be extended to more communities in the blocks already covered by ROWCL. Care-T should programme activities and budget on the basis of existing registers in the SRRCs.

Recommendation to tdh

In order to maintain past gains and address the problems of Sumangali survivors more effectively, funding a second phase of the project and extending the coverage of project activities is recommended.

8.2. The priorities of the project intervention should remain the same with some recommended adjustments. In order to respond effectively to the needs of survivors of the Sumangali scheme,

⁶ <http://www.icrw.org/media/news/gender-equality-indian-mens-attitudes-complex>

counselling services are indispensable as an integral part of the rehabilitation process before any other support measures can be effective, such as vocational training and provision of material to earn a livelihood. Field staff members and survivors confirmed that rehabilitation takes 4 to six months on average and that both health problems and psychosocial rehabilitation have to be dealt with.

Recommendation to Care-T and tdh

When designing a second phase, the holistic approach needs to be maintained with counselling and rehabilitation as core elements to prepare the girls and young women for further education or vocational training.

8.3. The evaluation gives evidence that education and skills development are in fact effective instruments in the struggle against child labour and for the empowerment of children and adolescent girls. Taken together, the findings of the evaluation confirm that interventions addressing school enrolment and vocational training have contributed to a reduction in child labour under the Sumangali scheme.

Recommendation to Care-T and tdh

The right to education, which is closely connected to the topic of child labour, should continue to play a central role in Care-T's lobby and advocacy work.

8.4. The spectrum of vocational training subjects is limited to classical female areas. Tailoring skills have been a special focus of vocational training since it is a skill that survivors often request. After a short training period of 6 months, income opportunities as tailors are there, primarily in the form of village-based self-employment. However, nursing, computer and typing training are more marketable skills for formal employment and higher salaries.

Recommendation

Care-T needs to offer a broader range of skills training for Sumangali survivors, not limited to the traditional "female" employment sectors and combine vocational training with job placements.

8.5. Care-T and other civil society organisations are persevering in their work for human rights and all odds. Still, more needs to be done to achieve an official ban of the Camp Labour Sumangali Scheme to make a real difference. The state which acts as the ultimate guarantor when it comes to implementing and enforcing established rights, must take over more responsibility for protecting children's rights and reducing child labour. Political decision makers, who not only pass laws but also drive their implementation, therefore continue to represent an important target group for the ROWCL project. The best way to address any practices violating labour laws is to bring them to the attention of the government and urge government action. This is the strategy of TPF members.

Care-T strategy of collaboration with the government has produced concrete benefits for the beneficiaries. Access to welfare scheme was time consuming and needed specific knowledge and

skills. Extra training was provided to the field officers about existing schemes and conditions to submit applications. Where responsive government officials were to be found, the cooperation was effective.

The cooperation with the government has advantages and risks when addressing inadequacy and inefficiency of social and welfare schemes. The current government policy both on state and on national level to cut down allocations on social expenses puts pressure on Care-T and other NGOs to fill the gaps. There is a tendency that NGOs are welcome in a function as service providers that look after the basic needs of the poor. But when it comes to addressing shortcomings in government services or campaigning for human rights, there is a risk of negative government reactions and shrinking spaces for NGOs.

Recommendation

Care-T should follow its general strategy to cooperate with different stakeholders in the best interest of the beneficiaries. If need be, more specific training on major government schemes, procedures and how to deal with government officials should be provided to staff members.

8.6. Provisions to address the root causes of Sumangali, namely the poverty of marginalised and migrant families that make girls and young women vulnerable for recruitment, have been tackled to a rather limited extent. Economic support was secured mainly through access to government schemes. Under a rights base approach it is important to keep pursuing access to government schemes and qualify beneficiaries and staff accordingly. Linkages with government schemes and benefits have been effective for accessing some benefits that the survivors and their families are entitled to. On the other hand, not all government schemes are put in practice and procedures are very time consuming for project staff. Linking families with government schemes should therefore not be the only means of poverty reduction for the families and complemented by income generating activities. Families have already given suggestions for support such as providing goats or cows that should be further explored.

Recommendation

Care-T should explore strategies to set up complementary income generating activities for families in order to reduce dependency from government schemes that are becoming unreliable.

8.7. A combination of economic and social pressure is often the reason behind the decision of parents agree to the Sumangali system. Work in the textile mills is regarded as one of the few employment opportunities available for unskilled young women in poor communities. The social pressure to accumulate enough money to ensure a good marriage alliance is a big factor in parents' decisions. More awareness needs to be created about the fact that Sumangali is reinforcing the dowry system.

Traditional gender roles are already challenged by the fact that girls receive quality education and skills training. Gender roles have yet to be considered in the broader context of the social and cultural roles within which young women become employed under Sumangali. Addressing gender

roles would shed more light on the underlying social, cultural and economic factors that determine gender inequity. Moreover, husbands with higher levels of awareness are more likely to respect their partners as equals.

Recommendation

Care-T needs to integrate gender more as cross-cutting issue into all activities, for instance by educating about gender equality, or linking the social status of girls and women with other phenomena that violates their rights, such as child marriages.

9. SCHEDULE for tdh (G) - CARE-T project evaluation

Time	Location	Details of programme
5 July 2015		Arrival in Coimbatore
6 July 2015		
Morning	Coimbatore	Familiarisation of the Project Presentation and discussion on contextual background of the project, progress/status with tdh (G) staff & Care-T core staffs
Afternoon	Coimbatore	Briefing workshop Purpose, methodology and use of evaluation results, etc. Participation of all project staffs - 23 persons
7 July 2015		
Morning	Coimbatore	Workshop on TPF Presentation of Overview of TPF; district level activities of TPF by 6 members Total participants -15 persons
Afternoon		Departure to Sullur
	SRRC, Sullur, Coimbatore District	Focus group discussion with elected representatives of local bodies/key local stakeholders Total participants-15 persons
		Focus group discussion with beneficiaries in two batches Total Participants-30 persons
8 July 2015		
Morning		Travel from Coimbatore to Trichy
Afternoon		Departure from Trichy to Annavasal
	SRRC, Annavasal	Focus group discussion with families of the beneficiaries Total Participants-15 persons Interaction with Beneficiaries Total Participants-20 persons
9 July 2015		
Morning		Travel from Trichy to Dindugal
	Ayyalur, Vadama-durai, Dindugal District	Focus group discussion with families of beneficiaries Total Participants-20 persons
		Focus group discussion with beneficiaries Total participants-15 persons
Aftrenoon		Travel to Sempatty
	Sempatty, Attur, Dindugal	Focus group discussion with beneficiaries Total participants-15 persons
		Focus group discussion with women groups Total participants-20 persons
		Travel to Madurai
10 July 2015		
Morning		Departure to Virudhunagar
	Virudhunagar	Workshop with Government officials from - National Child Labour Eradication Programme - District Social Welfare Office - District Child Protection Office - Child line (Ministry of Women and Children)

		and other stakeholders - Coordinator World Vision - Human Rights Organisation Total participants-15 persons
Afternoon		Travel to Valparai
11 July 2015		
Morning	Valparai	Focus group discussion with elected representatives of local bodies, teachers, ASHA workers, local stakeholders Total participants-15 persons
		Interaction with families and beneficiaries Total participants-20 persons
	SRRC, Valparai	Interaction with Beneficiaries Total Participants-15 persons
Afternoon		Interaction with families of beneficiaries (Tea Plantation workers) Total Participants-15 persons
12 July 2015		
Morning		Travel to Coimbatore
Afternoon	Coimbatore	Data processing, preparation of ppt for debriefing workshop
13 July 2015		
Morning	Coimbatore CARE-T office	Review of documents and project records
Afternoon	Coimbatore	Debriefing workshop Presentation of preliminary results Participation of all project staffs- 23 persons
14 July 2015		
Morning	Coimbatore	Reflective session of evaluator with tdh (G) deputy regional coordinator, core staff & project director of CARE-T
Afternoon		Evaluator's journey to Ahmedabad

Annex 2 List of persons met/interviewed

Focus groups discussions were held with a total number of 163 beneficiaries and members of their families. In addition, representatives of 6 member organisations of the Tirupur People's Forum (TPF) which also works against the Sumangali scheme and coordinates with ROWCL project, 17 key local stakeholders (including teachers, Panchayat, government health workers) and 15 government officials participated in focus group discussions. The number of participants is indicated in the schedule in Annex 1, but no participants' lists were established.

Key resource persons and stakeholders interviewed are listed below.

Name	Institution
Brandee Butler	C&A Foundation Brussels
P. E. Reji	Tdh (G) Programme Coordinator Southern Office
Dr. Arul Roncalli	Tdh (G) Coordinator South Zone
S.M. Pritiviraj	Care-T Director
M. Mothiraj	Care-T
Juliya Jerosa Valparai	Care-T
K. Thamarni Selvi	Care-T
P. Saravanabavan	Care-T
R. Karuppusamy	READ/TPF
R. Ramadoss Pudukottoi	READ/TPF
Ms N. Palanjsamy	HOPE/TPF
Mary Thinsi Rani	SPSSS/TPF
David Nathan	Educational Trust/TPF
P. Durai Randi	Cosco/TPF
Joseph Raj	TEST/TPF