Combating child labour: sample good practices guidelines.

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Annex to the Workshop Report: UCW Project Inter-Agency Meeting

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Workshop Report
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As part of broader efforts toward durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) project in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Through a variety of data collection, research, and assessment activities, the UCW project is broadly directed toward improving understanding of child labor, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and effective policies for addressing it. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

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I. WHAT ARE GOOD PRACTICES? WHAT CAN THEY DO?

I.1 What is a good practice?

1. A good practice can be defined as anything that works in some way in combating child labour, whether fully or in part, and that may have implications for practice at any level elsewhere. The following are implicit in this definition:

• A good practice can represent any type of practice, small or large:
  o It can represent a practice at any level. E.g. good practices can range from broad policy-level activities to practices at the grassroots level in the field.
  o It need not represent an overall project or programme. Even if a project overall has not been successful, there still good be good practices that it developed or applied.
  o It could be a very specific “nitty-gritty” process or activity, e.g. a strategy for incorporating questions related to child labour in other household surveys, a means of getting teachers in a rural setting to incorporate child labour considerations into the curriculum, a technique that was successful in getting an employer association on board, an effective communications strategy, an approach that led to the adoption of Convention 182, an innovative legal clause in implementing legislation …
  o It could also represent something that only emerges after comparison across multiple settings, which may be more useful at the policy level than with nitty-gritty programme implementation considerations at the grassroots.

• A key aspect is that a good practice be something that actually has been tried and shown to work, i.e. as distinct from what may be a potentially good idea but has not actually been tested. It could, however, represent work in progress, representing preliminary or intermediate findings.

• While there should be some evidence that the practice is indeed effective, definitive “proof” ordinarily is not essential.

• The overriding criteria should be the potential usefulness of a good practice to others in stimulating new ideas or providing guidance on how one can be more effective in some aspect related to child labour.

I.2 Why good practices? How can they be used, and by whom?

2. IPEC, UNICEF and the World Bank are active in over 75 different countries, working with a multitude of different partners. Other organisations also are active in the child labour arena around the world. Good practices provide a means of being able to learn from and to apply experiences of others. Otherwise, one may devote considerable effort in “reinventing the wheel” or in repeating mistakes that others already have made.

3. Good practices can be used most appropriately to stimulate thinking and to suggest ideas for consideration. It is not expected that good practices necessarily should be copied from one setting to another. The context can vary across settings, and thus even highly successful interventions may not “travel” well. At the least, however, these can provide “food for thought” and ideas about possible adaptations. The more that a similar approach has been tried and shown to work in multiple and varied settings, the more likely that it might also apply in some respect elsewhere as well.
4. Good practices can be used for a variety of different purposes. For example, these purposes can include:

- Informing and improving practice, learning from experience about what approaches work best.
- “Practice” can include policy, planning and research activities, legislation, programmes and projects, as well as “on-the-ground” delivery of programmes.
- Providing guidance for how to do good work, how to improve what we do, as one person put it, how “we can change the way we work in order to be more effective, strategic, and cost-efficient.”
- Contributing to the knowledge base internationally about what is effective in child labour.
- Influencing donors and public opinion about the value and impact of efforts to eradicate child labour.

5. Key users of good practices are expected to include:

- Staff in each agency involved in some way in child labour.
- This includes staff working at both policy and operations, HQs and in the field.
- Other UCW agencies.
- Other partners (including governments, NGOs, and other regional/national/local organisations, as well as beneficiaries).
- Other organisations working in the child labour area.
- Researchers.

1.3 Criteria for determining what makes a practice “good”

6. Following are key criteria of good practices.

- Innovative or creative
  - What is special about the practice that makes it of potential interest to others? Note that a practice need not be new to fit this criterion. For example, often an approach may have been in use for some time at one setting, but may not be widely known or have been applied elsewhere.
- Effectiveness/impact
  - What evidence is there that the practice actually has made a difference? Can the impact of the practice be documented in some way, through a formal programme evaluation or through other means?
- Replicability
  - Is this a practice that might have applicability in some way to other situations or settings? Note that a practice does not have to be copied or “cloned” to be useful to others.
- Sustainability
  - Is the practice and/or its benefits likely to continue in some way, and to continue being effective, over the medium to long term? This, for example, could involve continuation of a project of activity after its initial funding is expected to expire. But it could also involve the creation of new attitudes, attitudes, ways of working, mainstreaming of child labour considerations,
creation of capacity, etc. that could represent legacies of a particular practice. This criterion may not apply to all types of practices.

- **Relevance**
  - How does the practice contribute, directly or indirectly, to action of some form against child labour?

- **Responsive and ethical**
  - Is the practice consistent with the needs, has it involved a consensus-building approach, is it respectful of the interests and desires of the participants and others, is it consistent with principles of social and professional conduct, and is it in accordance with ILO labour standards and conventions?

- **Efficiency and implementation**
  - Were resources (human, financial, material) used in a way to maximise impact?

7. These criteria should be treated as general guidelines. They may vary in applicability depending upon the level or nature of the specific practice, e.g. one would expect specific criteria to be of a different nature for a good practice with respect to a legal approach to action on the Convention than of a policy approach in a district, or of a particular technique used by educators to get parents to agree to send their children to school.

8. Also, good practices do not have to be perfect in every respect (what is perfect in life?). Indeed, information about inhibiting factors, or circumstances limiting the applicability or impact of a practice can be even more useful to others than a 100 percent “success” story.

### 1.4 Degree of Substantiation or “Proof” of Good Practices

9. Good practices can be classified at three different levels, depending upon their degree of substantiation and the number of different situations where the practice has been applied.

**Level 1: Innovative Practices**

10. Practices at this level may not be substantiated by data or formal evaluation, but they have actually been tried and a strong logical case can be made about their effectiveness, in accordance with the seven criteria listed above.

**Level 2: Successfully Demonstrated Practices**

11. Practices at this level have been demonstrated to be successful, with demonstrable results, at one setting. Although this practice is localised, it has characteristics that are transferable to other settings or situations.

**Level 3: Replicated Good Practices**

12. Practices at this level have been demonstrated to work and to lead to desired results at multiple settings. These settings could be across countries, projects, or sectors. But they also could be different settings address by the same project (e.g. in different communities or with different groups).

13. It is important to note that good practices of Level 3 are not necessarily “better” than those at Level 2, nor are those at Level 2 inherently better than those at Level 1.
What distinguishes the good practices from one level to another is the extent to which they have been evaluated or replicated, and thus the degree of supporting evidence.

II. HOW TO PROPOSE GOOD PRACTICES

II.1 Who can propose good practices?

14. As suggested above, good practices can represent any kind of activity related in some way to child labour. E.g. they can be practices of staff working anywhere from the policy to the grassroots level, as well as practices of partners and any organisation, irrespective of funding source.

15. All of the above are encouraged to identify potential good practices. These can be practices that they themselves have been involved with. It could also be promising practices of others that they know about and that they think could be more widely known.

II.2 How can one identify good practices?

16. Identifying potential good practices is easy. There are two basic ways in which this can be done:

1. Bring these to the attention of the Good Practices Coordinator or any of the other staff with specific responsibilities for good practices. You can do this in whatever way is easiest for you (e.g. telephone call, e-mail). They will follow up with you and with others in order to find out more information about the practice, and take it from there.

2. Use the good practices format (see the box above). Or just try to answer these questions, to the extent that you can, in whatever way is easiest for you. In most cases, the GPs Coordinator, or someone else, will check back to gather additional information. They will also draft or edit good practice entries for the database so that they are as consistent with others as possible and as easy to use as possible.
17. Proposed good practices will be classified into Levels 1, 2 or 3 as part of the validation (review) process, depending upon the degree to which the practice has been evaluated. Generally, it is expected that most good practices that will be proposed would be at Levels 1 or 2.

III. A GOOD PRACTICES DATABASE

18. It is expected that good practices that are identified will be maintained in an electronic database of some form. This is needed in order to facilitate sharing and use of the good practices that have been identified.

19. The good practices database should be dynamic rather than static. This means that it will require periodic review and revision in order to keep the information in the database relevant, accurate, and up to date. For example, the classification of good practices can change when further evidence can be provided. For example, good practices classified initially at Level 1 could be reclassified as Level 2 if there are subsequent evaluations providing further documentation of their effectiveness. Likewise, good practices initially classified as Level 1 or 2 that deal with similar issues should be reviewed to see if it would be appropriate to combine these into Level 3 entries. Conversely, entries may be dropped if there is evidence subsequently calling into question the initial assumptions of the practice, or if it is no longer relevant.