

Combatting child labor in Malawi

IMPAQ International is working with the Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLT) to evaluate a large-scale child labor reduction program in Malawi. This ILAB-funded evaluation will assess to what extent the program is able to reduce child labor and to increase school enrollment and attendance.

A large number of children in Malawi is engaged in the worst forms of child labor, most notably in tobacco farming where children work under hazardous and physically dangerous conditions while often being exposed to pesticides and other chemicals. According to the latest figures by the National Statistical Office of Malawi, 25.7 percent of children aged 5-14 are involved in child labor activities.¹



Young children harvesting tobacco in Malawi

The US Department of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) selected IMPAQ to evaluate the Child Labour Elimination Actions for Real Change (CLEAR II) program in three tobacco-growing districts in Malawi. Specifically, IMPAQ is evaluating the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) component of CLEAR II which aims at boosting household income through credit access and by relaxing liquidity constraints that impede entrepreneurship. This evaluation is part of a cross-country series of ILAB evaluations that IMPAQ is conducting in India, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Rwanda.

The Evaluation Method: At a Glance

- ▶ To detect the impact of the child labor reduction program, IMPAQ is using a randomized control trial (RCT), the gold standard of program evaluation.
- ▶ This method provides rigorous evidence as to whether the program reduces the incidence of child labor, increases schooling, and increases savings and credit access as well as business ownership.
- ▶ To detect the program effect, IMPAQ randomly assigned 27 villages into a treatment group (the one that receives the program) and 28 villages into a control group (not receiving the intervention).
- ▶ The randomization ensures that the villages have the same average socio-economic characteristics at the beginning of the program.
- ▶ After the intervention, any detected differences in child labor incidents and other outcomes between the treatment and the control villages can then be solely attributed to the program.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Ye Zhang
Principal Research Associate
IMPAQ International, LLC
yzhang2@impaqint

¹ Government of Malawi/National Statistical Office. (2012). Statistical Year Book 2012 (child labor figures are from 2006). Retrieved May 10, 2017 from http://www.nsomalawi.mw/images/stories/data_on_line/general/yearbook/2012%20Statistical%20Yearbook.pdf.

² Osseiran, N. (2013, November 14). 'I want to be President' – Malawi's little voices against child labour. Retrieved May 10, 2017 from <https://iloblog.org/2013/11/14/i-want-to-be-president-malawis-little-voices-against-child-labour/>.