Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law To Address Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (ATLAS)

2019–2022

BEST PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WINROCK INTERNATIONAL.

Commissioned by Winrock International

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARCH	Actions to Reduce Child Labor in Areas of Rubber Production
ATLAS	Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
BOK	Body of Knowledge
CL	Child Labor
CLEAR II	Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor project
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CONAETI	National Inter-Institutional Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor
CONTRAFOR	National Commission for Fundamental Rights in Work and the Prevention of Forced Labor
COPRETI	Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor
CSJ	Supreme Court of Justice
DMOP	Differentiated Model of Practice
DOPA	Department of Provincial Administration
ETP	Enforcement Training Program
DyA	Desarrollo y Autogestión
FL	Forced Labor
GoL	Government of Liberia
HT	Human Trafficking
LWOB	Lawyers Without Borders
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MAUEP	Multi-Agency Unified Enforcement Procedures
MDP	Ministry of Public Defense
MDT	Multi-Disciplinary Team
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MP	Public Ministry
MSC	Most Significant Change
MSDHS	Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
MTE	Midterm Evaluation
MTESS	Ministry of Labor (Paraguay)
OAG	Office of the Attorney General
PSA	Pre-Situational Analysis
POA	Partners of the Americas
P&R	Pause and Reflect
PRV	Trafficking Victims Rescue Program
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPR	Technical Progress Report
USDOL	U.S. Department of Labor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Winrock International, in partnership with Lawyers Without Borders (LWOB), Partners of the Americas (POA), and Desarrollo y Autogestion (DyA), has implemented the United States Department of Labor (USDOL)-funded project "Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking" (ATLAS). ATLAS is implemented in Argentina, Liberia, Paraguay, and Thailand. It is designed to strengthen the response capacities of governments to address child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, focusing on legislative frameworks, coordination, and enforcement. The project was initiated in January 2019 and will end in March 2023.

An innovative nine-step strategy was rolled out for the ATLAS Project, the "Differentiated Model of Practice" (DMOP). The strategy centers stakeholder-led decision-making within a step-by-step process, which moves from evidence, design, and piloting to refinement and institutionalization of interventions, enhancing government coordination and enforcement.

Purpose and objectives of this report

This report consolidates the ATLAS project's deliberations about best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for future projects. It draws primarily from the project's "closeout" activity, an in-person Pause and Reflect Workshop convened by Winrock in September 2022 in Washington, DC. These workshops have been a regular part of the ATLAS project's monitoring and evaluation activities, providing rich knowledge-sharing opportunities for field and headquarters teams to discuss implementation experiences, lessons, and epiphanies in real time. Staff from four ATLAS countries traveled to Washington to participate in the September workshop.

Definitions

Best practices are defined as practices that (i) produce a good outcome according to the subjective perspective of the ATLAS project teams, and (ii) are adaptable to different contexts. Lessons learned are defined as insights achieved through experience. These definitions are not about evidence derived from scientific evaluation processes. Instead, they are determined based on the implementer's impressions and intuitions. Due to various unforeseen circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political changes due to elections, and prolonged delays in decisions from the donor, the ATLAS project was constantly learning and adapting. The project's documentation of best practices and lessons learned captures this learning, allowing the insights of professionals experienced in labor and human trafficking issues to inform and shape topics for future programs.

BEST PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED, RECOMMENDATIONS

Best Practices

1. Community referrals strengthen the link between community awareness and enforcement.

2. Conducting awareness-raising and/or training on child labor (CL), forced labor (FL), and human trafficking (HT) before coordination activities allows coordination stakeholders to reach a baseline level of knowledge.

3. Pre-engagement research ensures that the stakeholders and institutions that need to work together are identified to the extent possible at the outset, including, crucially, victims of CL, FL and HT.

4. Stakeholder engagement and participatory processes build the relevance and sustainability of ATLAS projects.

5. Integrating curricula into institutions that already provide relevant training ensures sustainability.

6. Building on existing relationships opens opportunities to advance project aims.

7. Improving judiciary capacities leads to improvements in legal frameworks.

LESSONS LEARNED	RECOMMENDATIONS
THE ATLAS PROJECT STRATEGY	
The nine-step DMOP strategy is workable. Upon implementation the ATLAS project gained insight into the sequencing of the steps. For example, more upfront stakeholder mapping and research were needed, and research should have been ongoing, rather than just for the first two steps. Though adaptable, the process is "heavy" for stakeholders and needs streamlining.	A DMOP version 2.0 should preserve the overall DMOP approach but should be more flexible, modular, and redesigned with stakeholder time constraints in mind. The Body of Knowledge should not be the first step in the DMOP process. A preliminary stakeholder mapping should be a prerequisite of the Pre-Situational Analysis. Additionally, more user-friendly nomenclature should be identified, and sustainability strategies should be augmented. It is integral to the DMOP strategy to conceptualize rolling or continuous research and needs assessments.
THE ATLAS PROJECT THEORY OF CHANGE	
The ATLAS project found that when planning, piloting, and developing government coordination and enforcement capacities, it is crucial to include local, marginalized groups and grassroots voices, especially of victims. This helps to accurately understand the needs, policy gaps, and perspectives of those at the ground level and forges links with enforcement.	Include victims of CL, FL, and HT at the beginning of any process aimed at curtailing these harmful practices.
The ATLAS project found it necessary to invest broadly in awareness-raising activities about CL, FL, and HT. For example, amongst professionals, it was necessary to establish a common understanding of terms. And amongst vulnerable families and communities, it was necessary to build the capacity to know and call out instances of rights violations. Strategies that the ATLAS project used included a range of formats and delivery systems, from symposia to multi-lingual videos, TV soaps, radio spots, posters, brochures, and theater. However, there was no way to systematically track the qualitative results of these investments. This topic is not covered in the ATLAS project Theory of Change or the project's results matrix. The project needs to monitor qualitative results for reporting purposes.	Related to Enforcement (Outcome 2), a component should be added to strengthen community referral systems. When vulnerable families and communities know what constitutes CL, FL, and HT and how to report their occurrence, it leads to better enforcement. This symbiotic relationship should be reflected in the Theory of Change and the results reporting, which should likewise envision the importance of awareness-raising activities among professionals delivering services and the vulnerable families and communities who must be able to identify wrongful practices when they occur. The project teams need training on qualitative monitoring of capacity-strengthening interventions.
ANTICIPATING PROGRAMMING CONTEXTS	
The ATLAS project learned that cultural connotations of project terminology should have been sorted out before the project began to avoid confusion and other difficulties associated with concepts that do not translate identically across all contexts. The concept of "champions" was particularly confusing or difficult to translate across contexts.	An emphasis should be placed on proactively adjusting project concepts to the local context, anticipating that there is no "one size fits all" category for important project concepts.
The ATLAS project was called on to manage more requests for technical support than could be met.	Demand-supply experiences should be documented and shared with the donor and governments proactively for project design, budgeting, expectations management, and sustainability planning.

LESSONS LEARNED	RECOMMENDATIONS
DEVELOPING SUSTAINABILITY	
The ATLAS project found that a focus on relationship-building with government technical staff helped to promote institutionalization and minimize disruptions related to elections and changes in government leadership.	To the extent possible, select countries and implementing partners where there are solid pre-existing relationships to build on. If the project is in a new context, time should be budgeted to allow the relationships to develop.
The ATLAS project found that the program design and timelines need to factor in the unpredictable, such as donor delays, the pandemic, political changes, etc. Field operations especially need to be insulated from delays at the donor level.	Contingency planning should be embedded into the program design and timelines. Delays relating to natural disasters, pandemics, and donor processes also must be factored into the program design and time forecasting. Contingency planning is essential for Winrock's contracts with the U.S. Department of Labor.
The ATLAS project found that to solidify stakeholder involvement and institutionalization, strategies such as signing agreements (e.g., memoranda of understanding) help at the beginning of the process.	At the project outset, evaluate the mechanisms institutions utilize, such as memoranda of understanding, that signify and formalize intent, if not outright commitment and budgets.
EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	
The ATLAS project could have benefitted from a broader range of knowledge sharing and mentoring opportunities, internally and externally.	Expand and diversify knowledge management activities. Develop a plan to publicly disseminate the Most Significant Change stories to the stakeholders.
STREAMLINING PROJECT REPORTING	
The ATLAS project found that reporting requirements are onerous and repetitive.	Review reporting requirements to eliminate redundant reports and streamline reporting where possible.

DMOP = Differentiated Model of Practice, CL = Child Labor; FL = Forced Labor, HT = Human Trafficking

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

Winrock International, in partnership with Lawyers Without Borders (LWOB), Partners of the Americas (POA), and *Desarrollo y Autogestion* (DyA) has implemented the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-funded project "Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking" (ATLAS). ATLAS has been implemented in Argentina, Liberia, Paraguay, and Thailand. It is designed to strengthen the response capacities of governments to address child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, focusing on legislative frameworks, coordination, and enforcement. The project was initiated in January 2019 and will end in March 2023. [1]

This report consolidates the ATLAS project's reflections on best practices, lessons learned, and recommendations for future projects. To gather this information, the ATLAS project has engaged in ongoing formal and informal information-gathering activities. The primary activities include:

Pause and Reflect (P&R) Workshops. The P&R workshops have been a consistent part of the ATLAS project's monitoring and evaluation activities. They have provided staff in the field and at headquarters with opportunities to exchange in real time about implementation experiences, emerging good practices and lessons, and discuss and share interpretations of Most Significant Change (MSC) stories. In September 202, the ATLAS project hosted an in-person closeout P&R Workshop in Washington, D.C., with staff from all four countries and the headquarters team.

Bi-annual Technical Progress Reports (TPRs). TPRs include sections where emerging good practices and lessons are presented. Implementing countries track these topics through routine monitoring and knowledge management activities, including the MSC technique and P&R workshops.

The Midterm Evaluation (MTE). **MTE** was a qualitative exercise focusing on Thailand and Paraguay and used questionnaires to gather information from project teams about their activities, achievements, best practices, and challenges.

Perception Assessment with ATLAS stakeholders. This qualitative initiative was conducted in the summer of 2022 across the four project countries by the ATLAS Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team.

The themes and issues covered in this report are based on the activities described above, with particular emphasis on the September P&R Workshop, which included extended discussion and consensus-building.
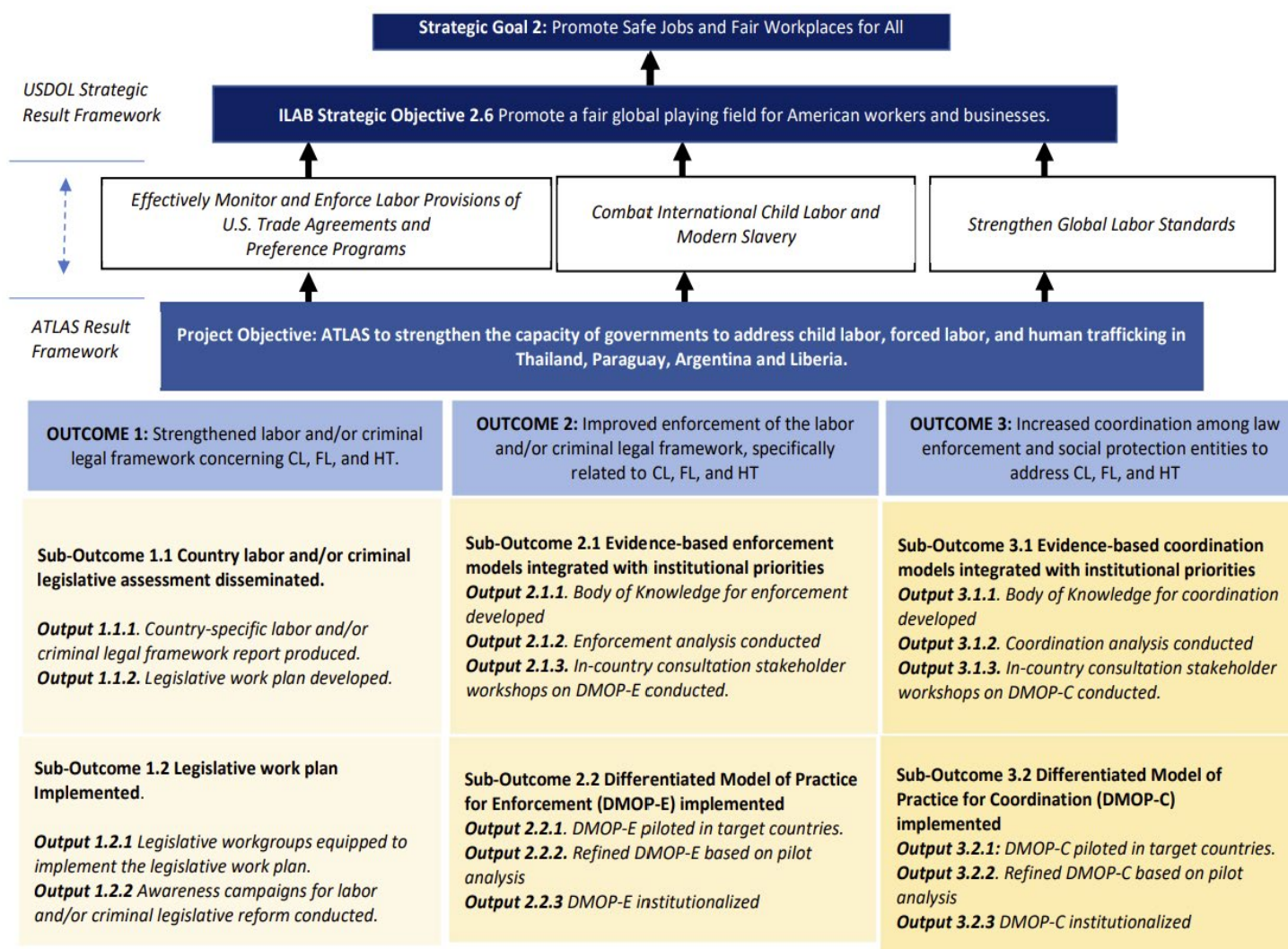
ATLAS THEORY OF CHANGE

The ATLAS project has three targets for boosting government response capacities to address CL, FL, and HT: (1) strengthening legal frameworks, (2) improving enforcement, and (3) increasing coordination among social protection agencies and law enforcement. In the project's Theory of Change (ToC), these targets are described as follows:

> If legal frameworks for CL, FL, and HT are in place that meet international standards, AND IF relevant enforcement entities have the knowledge, resources, and standard procedures to implement the legal framework, AND IF enforcement and social protection entities can effectively coordinate within and among each other, THEN target governments will have the capacity to address CL, FL, and HT. (Winrock International. June 2021. ATLAS Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan)

The ATLAS project ToC is shown in Figure 1.

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1   Winrock previously implemented another child labor-facing project in one of the ATLAS countries, Liberia. The Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor II Project (CLEAR II), funded by USDOL, focused on legal advocacy interventions and was implemented in Burkina Faso, Nepal, Honduras, Liberia, Belize, Panama, and Jamaica. Especially in Liberia, the relationships forged through the CLEAR II project helped enable the ATLAS project to make progress.

FIGURE 1. ATLAS THEORY OF CHANGE

Strategic Goal 2: Promote Safe Jobs and Fair Workplaces for All		

USDOL Strategic Result Framework

ILAB Strategic Objective 2.6 Promote a fair global playing field for American workers and businesses.

Effectively Monitor and Enforce Labor Provisions of U.S. Trade Agreements and Preference Programs	Combat International Child Labor and Modern Slavery	Strengthen Global Labor Standards

ATLAS Result Framework

Project Objective: ATLAS to strengthen the capacity of governments to address child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking in Thailand, Paraguay, Argentina and Liberia.

OUTCOME 1: Strengthened labor and/or criminal legal framework concerning CL, FL, and HT.	**OUTCOME 2:** Improved enforcement of the labor and/or criminal legal framework, specifically related to CL, FL, and HT	**OUTCOME 3:** Increased coordination among law enforcement and social protection entities to address CL, FL, and HT
Sub-Outcome 1.1 Country labor and/or criminal legislative assessment disseminated. *Output 1.1.1.* Country-specific labor and/or criminal legal framework report produced. *Output 1.1.2.* Legislative work plan developed.	**Sub-Outcome 2.1 Evidence-based enforcement models integrated with institutional priorities** *Output 2.1.1.* Body of Knowledge for enforcement developed *Output 2.1.2.* Enforcement analysis conducted *Output 2.1.3.* In-country consultation stakeholder workshops on DMOP-E conducted.	**Sub-Outcome 3.1 Evidence-based coordination models integrated with institutional priorities** *Output 3.1.1.* Body of Knowledge for coordination developed *Output 3.1.2.* Coordination analysis conducted *Output 3.1.3.* In-country consultation stakeholder workshops on DMOP-C conducted.
Sub-Outcome 1.2 Legislative work plan Implemented. *Output 1.2.1* Legislative workgroups equipped to implement the legislative work plan. *Output 1.2.2* Awareness campaigns for labor and/or criminal legislative reform conducted.	**Sub-Outcome 2.2 Differentiated Model of Practice for Enforcement (DMOP-E) implemented** *Output 2.2.1.* DMOP-E piloted in target countries. *Output 2.2.2.* Refined DMOP-E based on pilot analysis *Output 2.2.3* DMOP-E institutionalized	**Sub-Outcome 3.2 Differentiated Model of Practice for Coordination (DMOP-C) implemented** *Output 3.2.1:* DMOP-C piloted in target countries. *Output 3.2.2.* Refined DMOP-C based on pilot analysis *Output 3.2.3* DMOP-C institutionalized

The ATLAS project found that to strengthen the legislative environment and build government enforcement and coordination capacities, a great deal of effort is necessary to address the normative operating environment, including establishing common definitions of CL, FL, and HT and building or strengthening community referral systems. Awareness-raising activities are envisioned in the ToC but only in relation to improving legislation and regulations (Output 1.2.2). However, the ATLAS project found that they are also critical to Outcomes 2 and 3 (Enforcement and Coordination). For example, building governments' response capacities for coordination required intensive investments in building common understandings of terminology before initiating coordination work. All ATLAS countries invested in awareness-raising activities to improve coordination. Because these investments were not envisioned in the ToC for Outcome 3 (Coordination), they were not reflected in the CMEP with indicators, and there was no way to report the results.
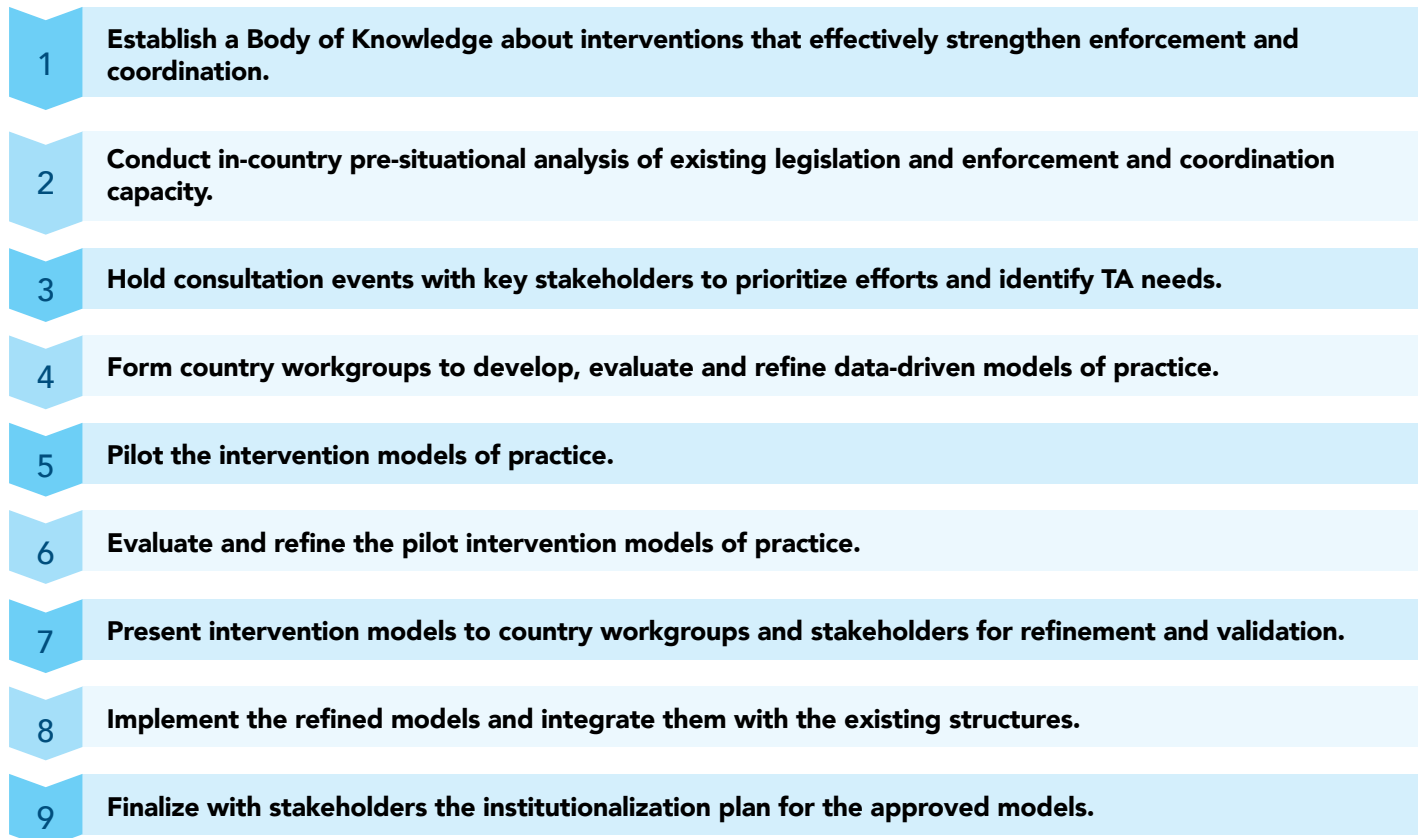
On a broader scale, regarding Enforcement, the ATLAS project found that building community response capacity goes hand-in-hand with strengthening enforcement. That is, building the capacity of vulnerable families and communities to identify instances of CL, FL, and HT and report them leads to better enforcement. This is especially relevant where customary practices are involved, such as the *criadazgo* system in Paraguay. In this system, poor children in rural areas get "adopted" by affluent families in the cities with the promise of education in exchange for light domestic work, very often winding up as domestic slaves. The ability to de-normalize practices like this—and then to identify and refer such cases for enforcement—depends on what vulnerable families and communities understand about what constitutes a child rights violation and the accessibility of systems for reporting these violations. As such, the ATLAS project in Liberia, Paraguay, and Thailand invested in projects to strengthen community referral systems. However, once again, there was no way to report on the results of these investments, which had not been envisioned in the ToC for Outcome 2 (Enforcement), and therefore, there were no relevant indicators in the CMEP. In a sense, results relating to strengthening community referral systems were hidden outcomes as there was no way to report on them qualitatively.

ATLAS PROJECT STRATEGY

To implement the ToC, the ATLAS project trialed an original strategy, the Differentiated Model of Practice (DMOP). This strategy was the focus of the MTE, which describes the DMOP as follows:

> [A] specific process to tailor project interventions and outcomes through an evidence-based approach that adapts technical assistance to country-specific priorities. This process consists of developing specific intervention models (individually called Differentiated Models or Practice, or DMOPs) that are tested and implemented in each country to improve enforcement and/or coordination around CL, FL, and HT. These interventions are informed by a Body of Knowledge (BOK), a global-level research document that reviews evidence on the effectiveness of previous efforts to address CL, FL, and HT, and by individual country-level Pre-Situational Analyses (PSAs). (Winrock International. 2022. ATLAS Mid-Term Evaluation)

FIGURE 2. ATLAS DIFFERENTIATED MODEL OF PRACTICE[2]

1	Establish a Body of Knowledge about interventions that effectively strengthen enforcement and coordination.
2	Conduct in-country pre-situational analysis of existing legislation and enforcement and coordination capacity.
3	Hold consultation events with key stakeholders to prioritize efforts and identify TA needs.
4	Form country workgroups to develop, evaluate and refine data-driven models of practice.
5	Pilot the intervention models of practice.
6	Evaluate and refine the pilot intervention models of practice.
7	Present intervention models to country workgroups and stakeholders for refinement and validation.
8	Implement the refined models and integrate them with the existing structures.
9	Finalize with stakeholders the institutionalization plan for the approved models.

The final steps, involving integration and institutionalization, are taken in the context of the project's Sustainability Strategy. For ATLAS, sustainability:

> ….refers to a country's ongoing capacity and resolve to work together to establish, advance, and maintain effective practices to reduce Child Labor (CL), Forced Labor (FL) and Human Trafficking (HT). This ATLAS sustainability strategy is dynamic and will adapt as the ATLAS project progresses. Key components ATLAS considers necessary for sustainability throughout the project are stakeholder engagement, in-country leadership, and country ownership. To achieve this, ATLAS will have an integrated and open process that engages key stakeholders and target country priorities to strengthen legislative, enforcement and/or coordination systems. (Winrock International. ATLAS Sustainability Strategy 2019–2022, 8)

Government stakeholders interviewed for the project's Perception Assessment (summer 2022) suggested that there could be more emphasis on planning how to convince government institutions to commit resources to sustainability. The ATLAS project will shortly initiate a final evaluation where the full measure of sustainability practices will be considered. The September 2022 P&R Workshop included a "deep dive" into the DMOP strategy for best practices, lessons, and recommendations. The strategy was also evaluated during the MTE, which found that the strategy's participatory and inclusive processes resulted in activities that had a high degree of relevance for the project's stakeholders. The project's Perception Assessment echoed this finding. Themes and issues relating to the DMOP strategy are covered in Chapter Two.

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2   In Argentina and Liberia Step 8 was omitted due to limited time.

ATLAS ACTIVITIES

Project implementation started in 2019 in Thailand and Paraguay and in 2021 in Argentina and Liberia. The ATLAS project implemented Enforcement initiatives in all four countries (Outcome 2); Coordination initiatives in Argentina, Paraguay, and Thailand (Outcome 3); and Legal Frameworks in Liberia (Outcome 1).

Enforcement Initiatives

Under Enforcement, all countries implemented an **Enforcement Training Program (ETP)**. The ETP is a training series that consists of presentations and a detailed manual. It is intended for use and adaptation globally to train frontline workers, including labor inspectors, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other government and civil society workers on the various steps in enforcing laws and investigating and prosecuting child labor and trafficking crimes. ATLAS developed a global training program consisting of five modules and 31 presentations. These modules and presentations are translated and adapted to each country's context. In Argentina, the implementing institutions are the primary designers of the ETP curriculum, facilitating trainings

and integrating the curriculum into the existing training frameworks of the various agencies. This integration, discussed in the next chapter, is the key to sustainability and a best practice. In addition to the ETP, the following additional Enforcement DMOPs were implemented:

LIBERIA

The **Grassroots Training of Trainers (ToT)** trained local and grassroots actors in addressing and reporting cases of CL, FL, and HT. It targeted both local government and non-government officials outside of Monrovia, such as town and village chiefs, religious leaders, youth groups, women's groups, and civil society organizations. A visual curriculum and facilitator's guide were developed for use in low-literacy communities.

The **Child Labor Monitoring System** consisted of standard operating procedures to standardize and outline procedures, reporting pathways, and formats for escalating identified cases of CL to the national agencies that prosecute these crimes and provide services to victims at the community, district, county, and national levels.

The **Enforcement Living Lab** was a participatory approach to learning, knowledge sharing, and the development of solutions with judges and public defenders to address the weak capacity of enforcement agencies to (1) assess the damage caused to victims by CL, FL, and HT; and (2) compensate victims fairly through legal remedy (i.e., compensation for tort damage).

The **Moot Court** was a competition where participants adopted the roles of prosecutors and defenders in hypothetical human trafficking cases. The competition engaged justice sector workers who support judges, prosecutors, and others in the prosecution, trial, and sentencing of human trafficking cases. Participants included staff of the criminal sentencing courts, prosecutors' assistants, and public defenders' assistants who manage the day-to-day processes around prosecution, trial, and sentencing of cases. In the first-ever instance of inter-institutional coordination for Paraguay, the Moot Court brought officials together from the Supreme Court of Justice (CSJ), Public Ministry (MP), and Ministry of Public Defense (MDP).

THAILAND

The **Practitioner's Guide on the Investigation of Forced Labor** was a guide for authorities such as labor inspectors, immigration officers, and other law enforcement officers to assist in differentiating forced labor from human trafficking and better enforce Thai law on forced labor and child labor. ATLAS facilitated and supported work among Thai government agencies to develop this guide. The Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) Research Institute for Investigation Development and Prosecution spearheaded the development of the Guide, and the Ministry of Labor and other relevant government agencies assigned their officials to participate in drafting work protocols pertinent to forced labor and child forced labor in the non-maritime sector. A technical working group reviewed inputs, produced iterations of the Guide, and designed case studies to help orient workshop participants to the Guide's content.

Coordination Initiatives

The following DMOPs were implemented for the Coordination Outcome area:

ARGENTINA

The **Social Cartography** convened communities (children, adolescents, and adults) in the Lomas de Zamora municipality, where there is a high density of in-home garment workshops vulnerable to CL, FL, and HT. Residents came together in workshops to map where they live, work, shop, learn, and socialize and to analyze what
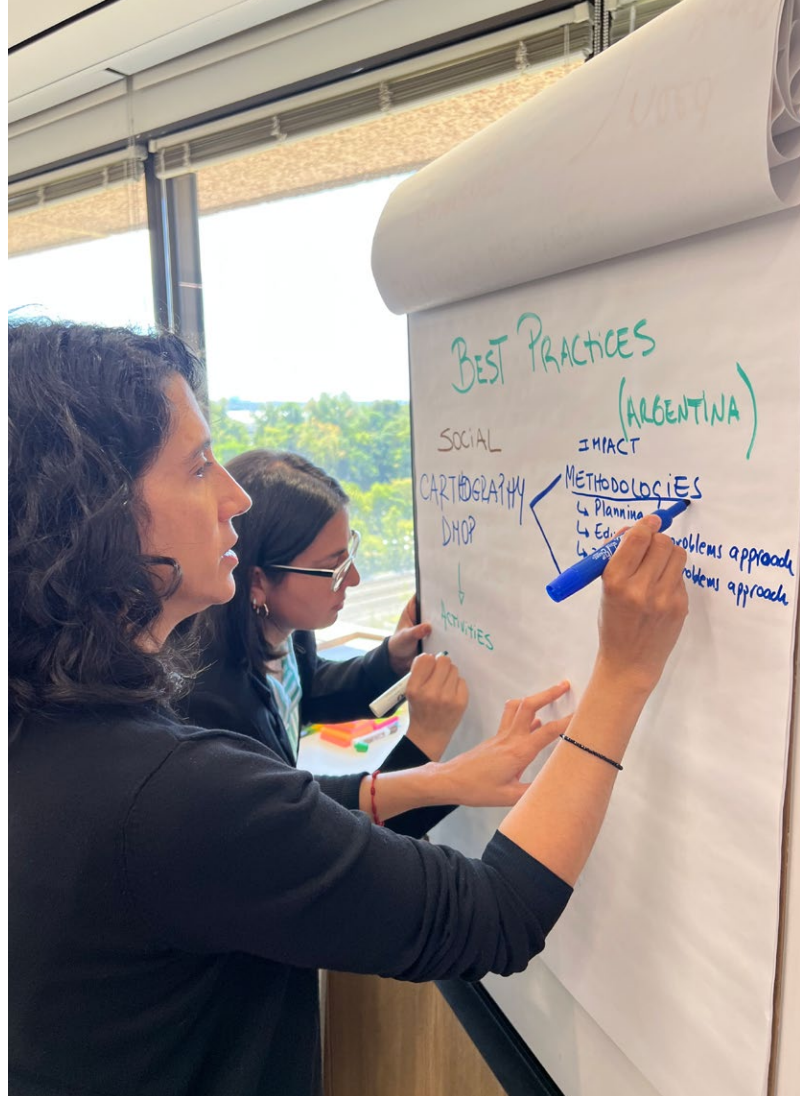
works and is not working about the social services in their neighborhoods. Based on this information, the Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (COPRETI) worked with the local municipality to develop and implement a joint plan of action.

The **Local Implementation Guide for the Trafficking Victims Rescue Program.** The Trafficking Victims Rescue Program (PRV) of the province of Buenos Aires currently has many internal policies and protocols. However, the program asked the ATLAS project for assistance in developing a Local Implementation Guide to outline how the program will implement these policies on the ground and, importantly, how it will coordinate with municipal actors.

PARAGUAY

The **Multi-Agency Unified Enforcement Procedures to Address CL, FL, and HT (MAUEP)** are a document and plan to improve coordination between government agencies and streamline enforcement and attention procedures relating to CL, FL, and HT, which have historically had different procedures depending on the crime. ATLAS trained local actors—specifically, members of the Departmental Inter-Institutional Commissions to Prevent and

Combat Trafficking in Persons—about the procedures in designated territories and hosted awareness-raising workshops as a preliminary step toward disseminating the MAUEP.

The **Inter-Platforms Action Plan Coordination Mechanism** aimed to harmonize public policy instruments related to CL, FL, and HT in Paraguay. Currently, there is a different roundtable or inter-institutional committee for each type of crime: the National Inter-Institutional Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (CONAETI), the National Commission for Fundamental Rights in Work and the Prevention of Forced Labor (CONTRAFOR), and the Inter-Institutional Roundtable for the Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Persons. Each one has its own action plan. The Coordination Mechanism aimed to increase coordination between these platforms by generating spaces where they could find convergences in their operational plans and thus be able to plan actions together, avoid duplication, and optimize their actions. The evaluation of the pilot phase concluded with a unanimous decision by the coordinators to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the authorities of the Ministry of Labor (MTESS) and Ministry of Foreign Relations to provide an institutional framework for coordinating efforts by these platforms.

The **Community Referrals** consisted of communications actions and strategies to increase the identification and referral of CL, FL, and HT cases by local communities to the appropriate authorities. To improve government coordination to tackle these problems more effectively, in Paraguay, ATLAS also promoted a comprehensive understanding of CL, FL, and HT among members of the coordination platforms at the central and local levels in the territories prioritized by the project. The communication actions ranged from radio soap operas, animations about decent work, posters and brochures, and performances of a play developed to convey the definitions and possible indicators of human trafficking called *"Te Puede Pasar"* ("It Can Happen to You").

THAILAND

The **Practitioner's Guide on Coordination** is a document to strengthen coordination among law enforcement and social protection entities in addressing CL, FL, and HT by outlining coordination procedures with a focus on labor inspectors and their relations with other agencies and actors. The goal was for this guide to be adopted and institutionalized within the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) and the Ministry of Labor's Labor Inspectorate.

The **Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) Training** worked with MDTs, which are local-level bodies that are often the first actors to respond to cases of human trafficking and assist victims. Depending upon the details of the case, they may include an officer from the MSDHS, a labor inspector, a social worker, a psychologist, representatives from non-governmental organizations, and/or other actors. To improve communication and coordination between these government agencies and civil society actors and create uniform understandings of CL, FL, and HT, ATLAS developed and implemented a training program specifically for MDTs.

The **Community Referrals** consisted of communications actions and strategies to increase the identification and referral of FL, CL, and HT cases by local communities to the appropriate authorities. ATLAS worked with the Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA) to conduct in-person events outside Bangkok that raised awareness of CL, FL, and HT and the reporting mechanisms. This was done through the presentation and discussion of a video on CL, FL, and HT called "Breaking a Vicious Cycle." The video tells the story of a girl who becomes the victim of CL, FL, and HT. The video defines and educates about CL, FL, and HT; refers to the girl's story to illustrate key concepts; and explains how to report these crimes.

Legal Frameworks Initiatives

In Liberia, ATLAS implemented initiatives to improve legal frameworks under Outcome 1 of the project: Strengthened labor and/or criminal legal framework concerning child labor, forced labor, and/or human trafficking. The project implemented activities in two areas, focusing on (1) human trafficking and forced labor, and (2) child labor. ATLAS completed a Pre-Situational Analysis (PSA) that identified the gaps in capacity and convened a legislative reform committee from the relevant stakeholders to address these gaps by developing a legislative and advocacy work plan. This work plan consisted of initiatives that address human trafficking and child labor.

Human trafficking. Instead of developing and advocating for novel reforms on human trafficking, ATLAS supported the Ministry of Labor's efforts to prepare a new human trafficking law. ATLAS provided technical expert input into the new human trafficking bill, which was signed into law in October 2021.

Child labor. The project has advocated for reforms in laws and regulations around child labor based upon recommendations generated by Winrock's previous US-DOL-funded child labor project in Liberia, CLEAR II. As a result of project advocacy efforts, the Minister of Labor approved Hazardous and Light Work Lists developed by Winrock and LWOB under the CLEAR II project and Liberia formally approved ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age for work. ATLAS also provided technical support to the Ministry of Labor in drafting a new child labor law. This law was drafted by Ministry of Labor consultants and shared with ATLAS for input. ATLAS and LWOB reviewed the draft closely and provided suggestions for improvement. This law has been finalized and submitted to the legislature.

CHAPTER 2: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS

DEFINING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The ATLAS project defines best practices as having two basic features. A best practice (i) produces a good outcome according to the subjective perspective of the ATLAS project, and (ii) can be adapted in different contexts. This is the working definition of "best practices" for this report, and it can be applied to processes and products. "Lessons learned" are defined as insights achieved through experience, which is a similarly straightforward definition that is also based on the subjective perspective of the ATLAS project. The idea is that experience leads to better, improved, and adaptive practice.

These definitions are not about evidence derived from scientific evaluation processes. Rather, they are determined based on the implementer's personal impressions and intuitions. Due to various unforeseen circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, political changes due to elections, and prolonged delays in decisions from the donor, the ATLAS project was constantly learning and adapting. The project's documentation of best practices and lessons learned captures this learning, allowing the insights of professionals experienced in labor and human trafficking issues to inform and shape topics for future programs in addition to using conventional, evidence-based evaluations.

This chapter covers the exchange of ideas that took place during the September 2022 P&R Workshop in Washington, D.C. At the workshop, participants analyzed the ATLAS initiatives in the four countries and the project's M&E and Operations and Management systems through the lens of the definitions listed above. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the analyses generated during the workshop were aligned with findings and observations in other project M&E and knowledge management activities, namely, the TPRs, the MTE, and the Perception Survey.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED: PROJECT STRATEGY

Overall, the DMOP process is workable, but stakeholders are expected to review too many materials that are too dense and should be streamlined. The DMOP language is also not user-friendly. Although stakeholders say the project has a high degree of relevance for their countries, the DMOP process is too time consuming and must be simplified. Additionally, if donor decision-making or environmental factors such as the pandemic cause delays

in the project's initiation, the DMOP process gets too compressed unless the closeout date of the project is extended. Part of the process should include identifying a lead institution for each activity, and workshops—which are part of DMOP steps four and five (stakeholder consultation and workgroup formation)—must happen much earlier, during the Pre-Situational Analysis phase. Another lesson learned is that more time must be devoted to sensitization about the issues before piloting the DMOP to ensure common definitions and understandings.

DMOP Steps 1–2 (Body of Knowledge, Pre-Situational Analysis)

Body of Knowledge Best Practices and Lessons Learned. As designed and sequenced, the BOK is not a best practice. The BOK did not work as planned either because it was too dense, too general, or was not communicated effectively. It was not participatory and limited government buy-in. As noted above in the case of one of the PSAs, there were also substantial delays in obtaining donor approval of the BOK, leading to questions about what the donor could do to ensure a more efficient, predictable process.

Pre-Situational Analysis Best Practices. The PSA is a useful vehicle for building relationships and drawing in stakeholders who could stay involved throughout the project. The fact that validation and presentation of results are embedded in the PSA process offers a significant mechanism for engaging stakeholders.

Pre-Situational Analysis Lessons Learned. Working groups should be formed at the PSA phase (i.e., start early). For the PSA, it is important to include victims' voices to create an accurate design and integrate diverse perspectives into the PSA development process. The PSA needs to be conceived of as an evolving research tool and not as a static document. Digestible versions of this and other project knowledge products need to be developed, such as FAQs, videos, and briefing notes.

The place of the PSA in the genesis of projects came under scrutiny. On one hand, the PSA is a good practice because it is an effective starting point for identifying gaps and stakeholders. On the other hand, in some countries, such as Paraguay and Argentina, it was felt that preliminary stakeholder mapping should come before the PSA. The ATLAS project found that the PSA should come before the BOK, using the PSA as a context for organizing workgroups. Further, it was observed that using local consultants helped build government confidence. And finally, the gap between production and approval of the PSA by the donor was too long. Technically, the PSAs were expected to be approved by USDOL within a month of their initial submission by Winrock. This period included time for USDOL's review and for Winrock to

address feedback and finalize the document. However, in one case, it took six months for USDOL to approve a PSA.

DMOP Steps 3–4 (Stakeholder Consultations and Workgroup Formation)

Best Practices. Stakeholder consultations to identify and select activities are good practices. Participatory processes laid the project's foundation. Activities were defined in coordination with local actors instead of established externally, so there was a lot of stakeholder input and buy-in about which activity would occur in which country. At the heart of the DMOP strategy, these participatory, consultative activities are best practices.

Lessons learned. Maintaining continuity with stakeholders is challenging. Because managers need to provide their approval, the decision-makers must be involved in the consultations or those at the technical level must consult with their decision-makers in a timely manner. That said, it helps generate continuity to work with the technical focal points because changes can occur at the government decision-maker level, for example, because of elections. While validation and presentation of the results of knowledge initiatives such as the PSA are important mechanisms for engaging stakeholders, it was found to be extremely important to ensure that stakeholders with specific technical and legal knowledge are participating in activities.

DMOP Steps 5 –7 (pilot, evaluate, and refine)

Best Practices and Lessons Learned. The ATLAS project found that, in some respects, the evaluation and refinement steps are too similar. Others described a frustrating level of redundancy in the refinement process, resulting in stakeholders dropping out due to responsibilities and requirements that they experienced as burdensome. There were concerns that the pilot phase was overly compressed and subject to time constraints when there were delays earlier in the sequence, leaving too little time to develop results or reflect on implementation. Project activities that included training provided opportunities to gel relationships and stakeholder roles and create departmental partnerships. Activities without training engaged people from different levels, including technical experts and government agencies (i.e., Living Lab, Moot Court, and the Community Referral DMOPs).

DMOP Steps 8–9 (integration and sustainability)

Best Practices and Lessons Learned. The groundwork for sustainability is that local and national stakeholders are included throughout the entire process. Their perspectives are consistently solicited, and it is clear how the input is being considered. Another sustainability best practice is tying training to training centers instead of to people.

There were different perspectives on reimplementing (Step 8) the refined models (Step 7). In one context, the re-implementation step was seen as successful because it increased local ownership by showing stakeholders that their feedback was listened to and incorporated. In another context, to avoid losing the project's purpose or randomizing the pilot, it was better to drop the re-implementation step.

The ATLAS project found that sustainability cannot be guaranteed due to the lack of long-term funding and governments' reliance on external resources to conduct ATLAS activities. However, securing letters of agreement and financial support at the time of the pilot and comprehensive agreements at different stages throughout the process help confirm investment in the project. Finally, a lesson learned for insulating the project from interruptions relating to political uncertainty is to work with technical focal points in the ministries.

BEST PRACTICES: ATLAS INITIATIVES

Overview

The ATLAS project identified several general common-sense best practices, including having events to showcase the project's work and accomplishments; establishing mechanisms for continued communication with stakeholders; working with technical focal points in government ministries as insulation from political turnover; ensuring that stakeholders from all levels are engaged with events and materials targeted, tailored, and accessible to each group's needs; and embedding training curricula into existing institutions to avoid duplication and ensure relevance and coordination. In addition, the ATLAS project identified a set of best practices that were especially significant:

Community referrals strengthen the link between community awareness and enforcement.

Conducting awareness-raising and/or training on CL, FL, and HT before coordination activities allows coordination stakeholders to reach a baseline level of knowledge.

Pre-engagement research ensures that the stakeholders and institutions who need to be working together are identified to the extent possible at the outset, including, crucially, victims of CL, FL, and HT.

Stakeholder engagement and participatory processes build the relevance and sustainability of ATLAS projects.

Integrating curriculum into institutions that already provide relevant training ensures sustainability.

Building on existing relationships opens opportunities to advance project aims.

Improving judicial capacities leads to improvements in legal frameworks.

The coordination and enforcement DMOPs that embody these best practices are presented next.

Strengthening Community Referrals Improves Enforcement

Strengthening community referral systems is a key element of the case management process (identification and referral), leading to enforcement. Therefore, conducting awareness-raising with vulnerable families and communities is a best practice for enforcement. Strengthening community referral systems is a best practice. Liberia, Paraguay, and Thailand implemented community referrals DMOPs. Argentina conducted awareness-raising.

In the context of the **Social Cartography DMOP**, the ATLAS project in Argentina developed resources and tools to reach vulnerable communities that had not been contacted previously, including producing materials in relevant languages for local radio stations, working with community leaders, and conducting sensitization workshops.

In Liberia, the **Grassroots ToT Program DMOP** provided a curriculum for local actors and grassroots programs that can be implemented without electricity and for groups with low literacy. In Liberia, CL, FL, and HT are glaringly common local practices, so there was a need to invest in increasing knowledge at the grassroots level. This is an example of the overall lesson learned from the ATLAS project: improving enforcement requires increasing community referral systems.

In Paraguay, the **Community Referrals DMOP** produced communications materials not only for people at the grassroots level and the public but also, simultaneously, for government stakeholders. A communication kit, for example, was distributed at an institutionalization event for all the allied institutions aimed at stakeholders that work on these subjects (CL, FL, and HT). Audio-visual materials were produced for TV at the local level in the five prioritized territories (Boquerón, Ñeembucú, Guairá, Caaguazú, and Itapúa), and the human-trafficking play called "It Can Happen to You" was performed for vulnerable populations and high school students in 11 districts.

The Thailand **Community Referral DMOP** produced animated awareness videos in multiple languages as tools to increase knowledge and identification of HT, CL, and FL among vulnerable families.

Conducting Awareness-Raising is a Precursor to Coordination

The ATLAS project found that before coordination work could begin, stakeholders' varying understandings of what constitutes CL, FL, and HT had to be reconciled. Providing opportunities to raise awareness was, therefore, a prerequisite for coordination. This was especially true in Paraguay, where members of Departmental Human Trafficking Commissions did not have adequate knowledge and understanding of human trafficking, despite their posts. It was thus necessary to provide

these local stakeholders training in CL, FL, and HT before coordination activities could begin.

Pre-Engagement Research Improves Stakeholder Identification

Pre-engagement research ensures that the stakeholders and institutions that need to work together are identified at the outset to the extent possible, including, crucially, victims of CL, FL, and HT.

Argentina's **Social Cartography DMOP** (a coordination DMOP) illustrates a best practice because it provides a context for provincial and municipal levels to coordinate actions and allocate budgets. These institutions had not met before. *Desarrollo y Autogestión's* (DYA's) pre-engagement research had identified that these institutions held prominent pieces of the enforcement puzzle but previously had not coordinated. In the context of the DMOP, these institutions signed a working agreement, started working from the initial step of the diagnosis, committed budget to finance the project, and began implementation. DYA provided technical assistance and developed the methodology to help implement projects, which targeted home-based garment factories. In this context and through intensive engagement with vulnerable families and communities, DYA provided support to strengthen day care institutions for children of women who work in these factories.

Paraguay's **Inter-Platforms Action Plan Coordination Mechanism DMOP** illustrates the deep benefit of POW's research into public policies and inter-institutional enforcement procedures on child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking. As described in the previous chapter, a different roundtable or inter-institutional committee exists for each type of crime (CONAETI, CONTRAFOR, and the Inter-Institutional Roundtable for the Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Persons). Each had its own action plan. As a result of Partners of the America's (POA's) research and the important processes involved in stakeholder validation, CONAETI and CONTRAFOR developed a joint action plan to implement at the end of the project.

Integrating Curriculum into Training Institutions

In all four countries, ATLAS worked to institutionalize the trainings developed, specifically the ETP, into government training schools for long-term use. In Thailand, ATLAS worked to institutionalize the ETP within key government agencies such as the OAG, the Immigration Bureau, the Ministry of Labor, Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons of the MSDHS, and DOPA by helping them to incorporate training materials and modules into their institutional learning resources and academies. In Paraguay, ATLAS worked to institutionalize the ETP by incorporating modules into the training institutes of the CSJ, MDP, MP, and the National Police and by helping

the MTESS to form a training unit that can administer the ETP in the future. In Liberia, ATLAS worked to institutionalize the ETP within the Liberian National Police's training institute, the Judicial Institute that trains judges and prosecutors, and the Ministry of Labor and Ministry of Gender.

In Argentina, ETP trainings were developed and inserted into existing training academy programs, and the academies themselves implemented the modules. For example, ATLAS supported COPRETI of Buenos Aires province to develop and implement six hours of synchronous and asynchronous learning to be included as modules in COPRETI's annual diploma course hosted online through the National University of Mar del Plata for the COPRETI, also for the Commissions of Tucumán and Misiones provinces.

Building on Pre-Existing Relationships

Liberia legislative advocacy has been focused on CL reforms, specifically the Hazardous Work List, Light Work List, Children's Law, and Decent Work Act. The best practice here is how ATLAS in Liberia built on pre-existing relationships forged through the CLEAR II and Actions to Reduce Child Labor in Areas of Rubber Production (ARCH) projects, so these work lists are now attached to the Decent Work Act as regulations and enforceable under law. Here, the combination of known relationships and institutional memory brought prior work to fruition. The Liberia ATLAS project prioritized regular communication and building goodwill with the Government of Liberia (GoL) to maintain coordination and collaboration with LWOB. These efforts benefitted from strategies such as engaging in event facilitation, having a standing location agreement (i.e., reserved space with a hotel for meetings, trainings, etc.), and having advance teams prepare for activities outside Monrovia. Liberia ATLAS emphasized that involving partners throughout the planning process enhances ownership and the project's credibility. The project also generated goodwill with GoL by providing additional requested resources (i.e., World Day Against CL, hosting a symposium for the draft CL Law).

Similarly, in Paraguay, ATLAS benefitted from the pre-existing relationships with government stakeholders under another USDOL-funded project, Paraguay *Okkakua*.[3] And in Argentina, a strategic decision of the ATLAS project for building relationships with the government was the selection of DyA as a partner. DyA had implemented prior USDOL projects in the county and brought a depth of knowledge to stakeholders in the sector.

Improving Judiciary Capacity

Regarding capacity strengthening, a best practice is to invest in improving public policy conditions. For example, in Paraguay, the ATLAS project provided technical support to reactivate the Departmental Human Traffick-

ing Commissions. Additionally, with ATLAS support, the Ministry of Public Defense established a unit specializing in victim compensation and developed tools for judges and law enforcement actors to measure victim compensation. In Thailand, the Practitioner's Guide on Investigation of Child Labor and Forced Labor is a best practice for improving public policy conditions. Forged through the DMOPs' participatory and consultative processes with government institutions, this Guide has been incorporated into the country's national policies and plans.
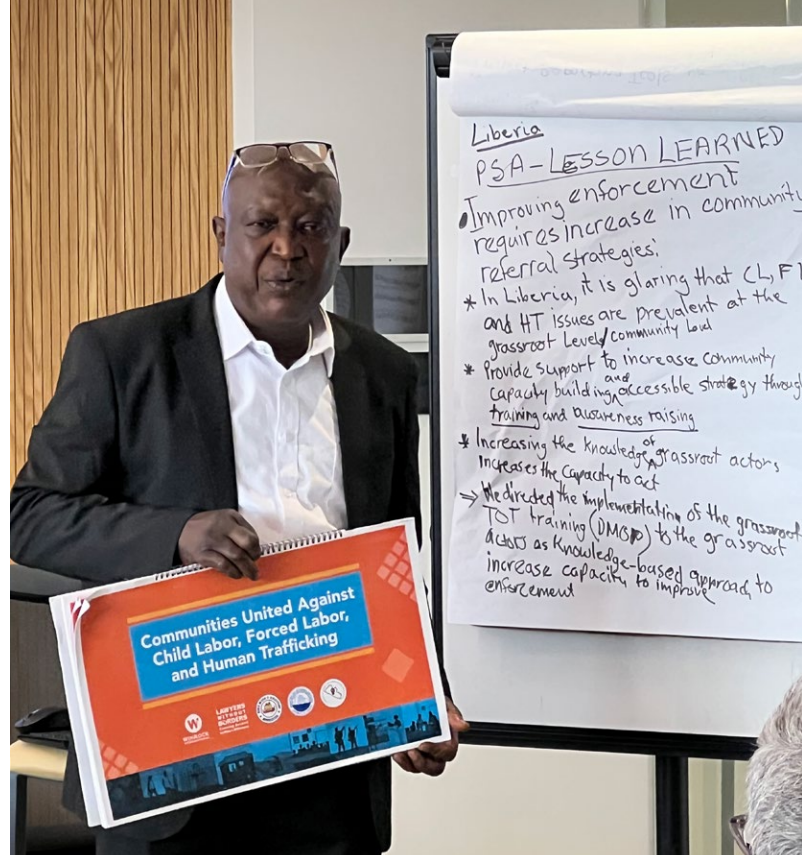
The **Moot Court** in Paraguay illustrates a best practice targeting judicial capacity building because it targeted the staff of judges, thereby enhancing capacity within the justice system. These are the individuals who manage the day-to-day processes around the prosecution, trial, and sentencing of cases. This is the first time this methodology has been extended to this tier of professionals within the justice system.

The **Living Labs** in Paraguay illustrates a best practice because it closed several institutional silos surrounding Victim Compensation. Using the participatory Living Lab methodology, Paraguay ATLAS drew in experts from the Ministry of Labor, Supreme Court, Ministry of Public Defense, and Public Ministry. Participants studied best practices and the law addressing victim compensation. Before this, no one was using the law to compensate victims. While the law existed before, there were no unified criteria—and now there are. This is the context for establishing a new unit within the Ministry of Public Defense, mentioned above, specializing in victim compensation.

3   Paraguay *Okakuaa* (Paraguay Progresses) was funded by the USDOL for six years (2015–2021) to strengthen the enforcement of labor laws in the agricultural sector and provide support for families whose children are vulnerable to child labor in the sector.

LESSONS LEARNED: ATLAS INITIATIVES

General Lessons

Include local, marginalized groups, and grassroots voices when planning, piloting, and developing projects to understand the needs, policy gaps, and perspectives of those at the ground level.

Plan contingencies into program design and timelines by considering possible delays such as country and political instabilities, government and leadership changes, and global events like the recent COVID pandemic. The ATLAS project found that it is important to work with technical staff, not only elected officials, to be insulated from political instability to the extent possible and thereby promote institutionalization and reliability.

Solidify stakeholder involvement and institutionalization by signing agreements, MOUs, and commitment forms and securing funding from the beginning of the process.

The Trafficking in Persons Report, produced by the United States Government, has been an enabling factor for the ATLAS project across all four countries.

Enforcement And Community Referral Systems Go Together

As shown in the previous chapter, these investments are directly relevant to Outcome 2 (Enforcement) because increasing community awareness is a necessary step to increasing referral of cases, which then improves enforcement or, at least, raises the demand for enforcement. Notably, even though community referral systems strengthening was not a target in Outcome 2, stakeholders naturally identified it as a key element of the case management process.

Community referral systems strengthening involved a variety of tools and methods across the ATLAS project countries:

Liberia primarily focused on community leaders, although the project also worked at the grassroots level with village leaders, religious leaders, youth groups, women's groups, and some local officials with government agencies.

Paraguay produced materials for TV in the five prioritized territories and sponsored the development of a play about HT called "It Can Happen to You." This was performed for vulnerable populations and high school students nearly a dozen times in 11 districts.

Thailand produced a multi-lingual animated video (Burmese, Lao, Khmer, Thai) to educate families about predators luring children of poor families to cities on the promise of work and education.

Argentina integrated a range of awareness-raising activities into the Social Cartography DMOP. For instance, the ATLAS project identified that the only media being used in the sweatshops is radio, so the project developed awareness-raising radio spots in the language of the migrant workers who work in the sweatshops.

Qualitative Results Are Not Systematically Reported

Significant information is not fully captured and reported through the CMEP if there are no indicators for important results related to awareness raising and community referral. In Paraguay, for example, numerical data is required on topics such as the number of participants in activities and trainings for the ETP and the Moot Court, but there are no such requirements regarding tracking data on qualitative shifts in behaviors, practices, and attitudes. In Argentina, while there are indicators for the number of participants in trainings, the ATLAS project also exerts enormous effort on pre-training relationship building that deepens identification with the activities. Indicators should be established to understand what that identification turns into over time, which can be a critical factor for institutionalization and sustainability. The lessons learned here are that these and other qualitative results need to be envisioned in the project's Theory of Change, especially for Outcome 2 (Enforcement) but also for Outcome 3 (Coordination), and then reflected with indicators in the CMEP.

As a corollary, the ATLAS project identified a broad need for tools to conduct qualitative research and monitoring and staff capacity building for monitoring and setting indicators for qualitative data.

Field Operations Must Be Insulated from Delays

Delays within systems and institutions impacted payment, hiring, and starting and performing activities. USDOL delays were challenging, specifically regarding approvals for starting up. At a fundamental level, the period of performance of a typical USDOL project did not allow for all the upfront approvals needed, which were slow to get from USDOL. This meant that the overall time available for implementation was too limited to achieve the deliverables. Additionally, payment delays by both the donor and Winrock resulted in field staff having to use personal resources in some countries.
USDOL delays appear to have been more substantial in the past three years than during the previous 20-year period.

Some Project Concepts Were Culturally Non-Transferrable

Each country was involved in identifying individuals or groups to help advance the purpose and objectives of the DMOPs for enforcement, coordination, and legislation. The ATLAS project's term for this was "champion." Translating this term became complicated. In Thailand, for example, the term connotes a hierarchical relationship or ranking. In Argentina, it was challenging to identify champions because it was a local project where they worked with many field technicians, building different kinds of relationships. It was difficult to show why some would be called "champions" and others would not. There were also hierarchies within the governmental offices.

The Supply of ATLAS Support Could Not Match the Demand

A topic that percolated through the P&R Workshop and was also raised in the Perception Survey was the relevance of the ATLAS project in meeting the coordination needs of the project countries. The relevance of the activities, forged through the consultative and participatory DMOP strategy, resulted in situations where demand for the project's technical support very often exceeded the supply.

ATLAS connected different institutions across governmental levels that had either never worked together before (Argentina, Thailand) or had never addressed a particular topic, such as victim compensation (Paraguay). The desire to address the problem is there, but either the financial support is lacking (Liberia), there is not enough awareness (Paraguay), or there is an inability to reach the field (Argentina). The ATLAS project found that ATLAS almost acts as a translator to get everyone on the same page. It gives governments the opportunity to pause and reflect

from the daily running of the country, which helps incentivize the government to buy-in. For example, in Paraguay, the government was primarily focused on emergencies or operating on a day-to-day basis, so they were unable to think of these issues strategically. ATLAS provided research to raise attention to these issues in Paraguay and draft a long-term plan. In Liberia, ATLAS provided the opportunity to expand on the Decent Work Act 7–8 years after it had been passed. Hazardous and Light Work Lists are now attached to the Act as regulations, so they are enforceable under the law.

The ATLAS Project Needs More Diverse Knowledge-Sharing Opportunities

P&R sessions, focus groups, and the Most Significant Change (MSC) tool are strong components of the project's Knowledge Management as they provide opportunities for sharing experiences, success stories, and strategies. At the same time, the ATLAS project found that a more diversified menu of options would enhance knowledge sharing and learning, for instance, topic-based webinars, informal brown bags, and peer mentorship.

Winrock's Internal Processes for Registration Require Streamlining

On Winrock's side, there was confusion about in-country registration protocols regarding which department owned which part of the process. There was no consistent approach for Winrock when registering for a multi-country project versus an individual country project. In Liberia especially, the in-country registration process was a substantial hindrance, causing delays in starting the project.

Internal Reporting Requirements Are Onerous and Repetitive

Formal reporting from field teams to the Winrock home office consists of monthly reports plus bi-weekly calls. The ATLAS project found that these requirements were burdensome for M&E especially. Reporting requirements were not factoring in the time expenditures for activities such as preparing the slide presentations and other materials every two weeks on top of an already heavy schedule. Where the working language was not English, this added to the burden. At the same time, the ATLAS project found that bi-weekly meetings helped at the headquarters level in updating and maintaining a centralized work plan. Another finding was that thresholds for the Scheduled Designation of Authority for approvals were too low and created inefficiencies.

CHAPTER 3: RECOMMENDATIONS

TOWARDS A DMOP VERSION 2.0

Introduction

In the previous chapter, best practices and lessons were presented about the DMOP strategy, which was rolled out for the first time in the context of the ATLAS project. Through extended discussion and analysis, the ATLAS project concluded that the strategy has leeway for innovation and adaptation. Its participatory processes laid the project's foundation. All DMOP activities were defined in coordination with local actors instead of established externally, and this helped to optimize proactive stakeholder input on which activity would occur in which country. It is extremely important that stakeholders with specific technical and legal knowledge participate in activities. It is recommended to continue evolving the DMOP strategy through the modifications and refinements outlined below.

DMOP Recommendations

Preserve the overall DMOP approach but make it more flexible and modular. As a strategy, the DMOP approach can be too prescriptive. Not every DMOP must follow every step, and not all the steps are relevant in each circumstance. For example, in some contexts, the "refinement" step was experienced as redundant, running the risk of losing stakeholder interest and engagement. In other contexts, the re-implementation step was successful because it increased local ownership by showing stakeholders that their feedback was listened to and incorporated. The strategy needs to be flexible to account for these context-specific realities. Another related recommendation is to allot more time after implementation for evaluation to allow results to manifest.

Be realistic about stakeholder time constraints. The process is too time consuming for stakeholders. Consideration needs to be given to streamlining the steps and the number of materials stakeholders are asked to read and digest. Stakeholders need short, digestible information, e.g., two-page briefing notes and short videos.

The Body of Knowledge should not be the first step in the DMOP process. The BOK is too generic to inform a DMOP. On the other hand, from a management perspective, the BOK is necessary because it is not persuasive or professional to go "empty-handed" to potential government partners. A compromise needs to be designed to reconcile these points of view.

Preliminary stakeholder mapping should be a prerequisite of the Pre-Situational Analysis. The PSA should come before the BOK. The period between the finalization of the PSA and the donor approval needs to be shortened. Victims' voices must be included from the very beginning, and impacted families and individuals should be part of the PSA and all DMOP processes.

Identify more user-friendly nomenclature. The DMOPs use terms and concepts that are not in everyday practice and may not transfer as intended into different cultural contexts.

Augment sustainability strategies. There is a need for more funding and the normalizing of follow-up project monitoring.

Conceptualize ongoing or continuous research and needs assessments as integral to the DMOP strategy. The DMOP strategy should make it explicit that research and needs assessments are ongoing and not confined to the front end of the project with the BOK and PSA. Ongoing research is needed as part of the DMOP process to further identify needs and gaps. Based on the first round of the DMOP process, a suggested minimum time for different DMOP typologies is needed.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ATLAS Theory of Change

Link community referral systems strengthening to enforcement outcomes

Following lessons learned regarding the significance of community referral systems as complements to government- and institution-focused enforcement capacity building, a recommendation is to incorporate community referral activities into the project design for Outcome 2. The ATLAS project found results from Enforcement capacity building could not be effective without robust, complimentary initiatives to strengthen community referral systems. This symbiotic relationship needs to be reflected in the Theory of Change.

It is significant that the prioritization of integrating community referrals came directly from government stakeholders and civil society partners who participated in the DMOP processes. Based on the DMOP strategy, where decision-making happens through consultations versus top-down mandates, participants were in the driver's seat in defining the necessary steps toward building an enabling enforcement environment. In their collective estimation, the normative environment that enables CL, FL, and HT in the first place is a necessary corollary to improving enforcement. In this sense, this is a true "lesson from the field" to inform the design and strategy of any CL, FL, and HT project design.

Link awareness raising to coordination outcomes

Following lessons learned about the significance of awareness-raising investments, especially as a precursor to building coordination capacities, a recommendation is to incorporate awareness raising into the project design for Outcome 3 and targets into the CMEP accordingly. There is currently no way to qualitatively track the results of investments to raise awareness about CL, FL, and HT. The ToC and the CMEP need to be able to reflect the qualitative results of awareness-raising tools and methods on behaviors, mindsets, and practices.

Integrate indicators for community referral and awareness raising into the CMEP

Following lessons learned that important qualitative results are not systematically captured, the recommendation is that changes in behavior, outlook, and practices be integrated into results monitoring. Two kinds of qualitative indicators are recommended. First, in the longer term, when community referral systems are operational and sustainable, referrals could be an indicator of changing behavior and attitudes. Second, indexes for coordination and capacity could be developed with baselines set at the beginning of the project.

Build Staff Capacities in Qualitative Monitoring and Research

From the lessons learned that staff felt under-prepared to take on the qualitative research and monitoring and lacked knowledge of the tools to carry out these activities, the recommendation is to incorporate training in qualitative methods into regular M&E trainings. Training

and capacity building are needed for designing and conducting qualitative research, developing indicators and qualitative monitoring strategies, and using tools like the MSC effectively.

Sustainability

Select countries and implementing partners where there are solid pre-existing relationships

Following the lessons learned about the wealth of traction that projects such as ATLAS can gain by building on pre-existing relationships, the recommendation is to factor the existence of pre-existing relationships into decision-making about future projects.

Build in contingencies for project delays

From the pandemic to elections to overly delayed donor approval timelines, the ATLAS project encountered a series of unanticipated interruptions. Fortunately, the project was adaptable. An overall recommendation was to plan for delays. A specific recommendation was to consider an MoU at the start of the project to help offset delays resulting from changes in government leadership.

Contingency planning is essential for Winrock agreements with USDOL

Following lessons learned that donor delays had a domino effect on the project—from hiring staff to redesigning and changing the scope of activities due to implementation timeline shortfalls—it is recommended that projects funded by USDOL anticipate delays and incorporate them into work planning. Communications need to be meticulously documented, and follow-up must be constant.

To minimize and prevent holds to the extent possible, the ATLAS project recommends a review of the topics that the donor regularly brings up to get a deeper understanding of what USDOL questions and what feedback is expected. The donor could consider conducting field visits. Winrock senior management could escalate the issues with delays. Winrock must streamline oversight of the in-country registration and ensure a consistent in-house approach.

Project Localization

Emphasize localization of project concepts

From the lessons learned about the complexities of translating project concepts and terminologies, a recommendation is to address this matter proactively before project initiation. A process should be instituted that reviews the cultural connotations of project terminology to situate the terms, with necessary refinements, into the local cultural and political contexts and with sensitivity to

dynamics of power, hierarchy, and rank. A target number of "champions" should not be set.

Document demand-supply experiences and share these with the donor and with governments proactively for sustainability planning

From the lesson learned that the demand for ATLAS project technical and financial support often exceeds the supply, the recommendation is to start knowledge management practices around this topic. Documenting the number and types of requests along with what could be accommodated gives planners and donors insights to inform future project design and financing strategies.

Knowledge Management

Expand and diversify knowledge management activities

From lessons learned that knowledge sharing is working well but that the opportunities and modalities are somewhat limited, a recommendation is to focus on expanding events such as informal webinars and brown bags across the ATLAS countries. Mentorship was another recommendation in this arena. Winrock should develop a plan and budget for externally disseminating the qualitative information generated through tools such as the MSC. Currently, this information is presented only internally in the context of the Technical Progress Reports. In-person, in-depth global exchanges are invaluable. A living "best practices" platform or wiki could be considered along with a midterm in-person P&R Workshop.

Reporting Protocols

Review and adjust reporting requirements

One of the lessons learned was that the project's thick menu of reporting was repetitious and time consuming. A recommendation is to review and look for ways to adjust the reporting requirements. For M&E, the recommendation is to delay reporting until there are outcomes to report. For the overall project schedule, the recommendation is to reduce the monthly reporting to semi-annual reporting and move the bi-weekly meetings to monthly. The monthly reporting was described as too onerous. ATLAS headquarters recommends maintaining and referencing the global work plan. While country and global plans exist, the latter is not regularly updated.

Reviewing and raising the thresholds for the Scheduled Designation of Authority for approvals is recommended. Additionally, Winrock must analyze its internal oversight of in-country registration processes and streamline and clarify responsibilities for those processes.