

Collaborating or Competing?

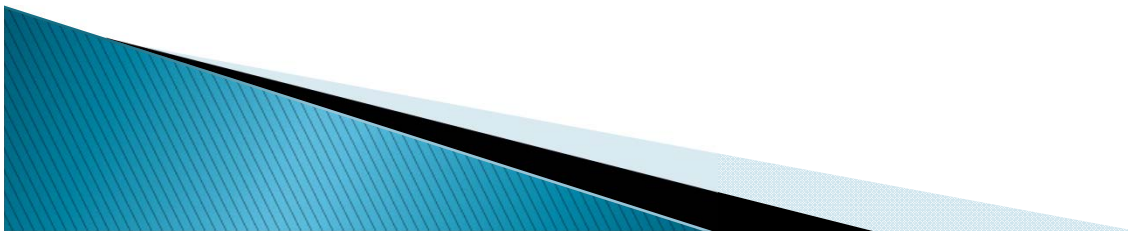
*A Study Evaluating the Work of NGOs
Dealing with Child Labor in El
Salvador*

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Research Question

- ▶ Competition among suppliers generally considered desirable
- ▶ However, its impact on aid effectiveness is more questionable
- ▶ This paper examines the question by analyzing how mutual relations among three NGOs working in the field of child labor in El Salvador affect the overall effect of their work



Outline of Presentation

- ▶ Brief overview of existing literature
- ▶ Hypothesis
- ▶ Research Methods
- ▶ Results and Analysis
- ▶ Concluding Remarks



Aid Coordination

- ▶ Lack of aid coordination among official donor agencies mostly seen as negative (Knack and Rahman 2004, Bigsten 2006, Lawson 2010)
- ▶ High-level efforts to improve it (Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, Accra Agenda for Action)
- ▶ Less agreement on the lack of coordination among NGOs
 - Some found the lack of cooperation disruptive of overall NGOs' goals (Pfeiffer 2003, Telford and Cosgrave 2007)
 - Others found the existing state of NGO coordination to be relatively satisfactory (Edi and Setianingtias 2007, Moore et al. 2003, Ohler and Nunnenkamp 2012)



Child Labor

- ▶ Work that deprives children of their childhood, potential, and dignity – any work under 14 and hazardous work under 18
- ▶ ILO Conventions 138 and 182, UNCRC
- ▶ Researchers split among “adaptive” ones who see bans on child labor as harmful and economic interventions as appropriate and “abolitionist” ones, who argue in favor of bans
- ▶ El Salvador – 17,000 child laborers (9%), 73% boys, 60% in rural areas



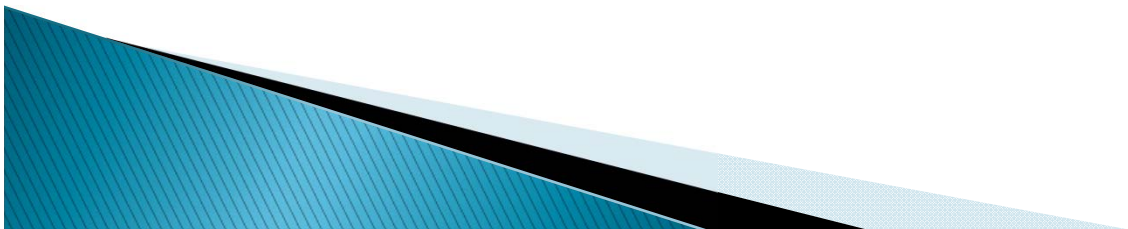
Hypothesis

- ▶ I expect to find that the NGOs examined do not coordinate their activities
- ▶ However, it remains a matter of empirical investigation whether the overall impact of their work is consequently weakened – by duplicity, lack of cohesiveness, and a small scale of their projects – or rather strengthened, by providing a variety of “remedies” to child labor closely adapted to the specific circumstances and needs of the aid recipients



Research Methods

- ▶ Case study of **three NGOs** from a pool of approximately 30 mid-size international NGOs working with children in El Salvador
- ▶ To protect the NGO employees and their projects, I use aliases: Alliance, Bond, and Closer
- ▶ Information collected during fieldtrips in 2007 and 2010
- ▶ Methods used: formal and informal interviews, participant observation, study of existing documents



NGOs' Approach to Child Labor

NGO	Approach to Child Labor	Relationships with Other Institutions/ Mother NGOs	Funding
Alliance	Close to an Adaptive approach	Out of the three, the most "locally based" NGO	Funding raised mostly privately and from church institutions
Bond	Somewhere between an Adaptive and an Abolitionist Approach	Some ties and cooperation with the ILO, relations with "mother" and "sister" NGOs stronger than Alliance	Half the funding obtained from small private donations, the other half from official donor agencies, including the US Government
Closer	Close to an Abolitionist approach	Strong links both with the ILO and the US government. Closer is the least autonomous out of the three NGOs examined	Closer obtains more than 70 per cent of its funding from the US government, the rest comes from the ILO and private donations

Relations among the NGOs and Their Joined Impact

- ▶ As expected, the NGOs neither collaborate nor communicate; however, some do not even know of the others' existence
- ▶ Possibility of duplication of efforts
- ▶ Positive side of the lack of coordination – local 'tailoring' of projects – not there as projects designed without extensive local feedback
- ▶ Most disturbing – child-labor approaches at cross-purposes = thus potentially annul each other's efforts



Concluding Remarks

- ▶ The situation of NGO dis-coordination and cross-purpose work ineffective and undoubtedly present in many other development issues
- ▶ Primary purpose of this paper – to call attention to the situation
- ▶ Possible solutions
 - Bolster the involvement of local populace in the design of development projects
 - Encourage creation of NGO networks that will help NGOs working in one country and one issue to streamline their efforts and make their projects complementary
 - Encourage closer oversight of international NGO work by the government

