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Labour
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GIVE GIRLS A CHANCE

Tackling child labour, a key to the future



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

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FOREWORD

It is now ten years since the ILO adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Convention, which became the most rapidly ratified of all ILO Conventions, helped generate an enormous change in attitudes towards child labour. An important element of the Convention was that attention should be given to the special situation of girls and to children at special risk.

The ILO estimates that some 100 million girls are involved in child labour around the world. Many have little or no access to education and many are working in situations that place their health, safety and morals in serious danger.

This report focuses on girls and child labour, the theme of the World Day against Child Labour for 2009. This, of course, does not diminish our concern with the harm suffered by boys engaged in child labour. However the report is intended to bring home to readers the particular vulnerability of girls.

The report presents a comprehensive profile of child labour among girls. In its assessment of the work that girls perform in the world today, it presents important new statistics on certain aspects of that work – for example, on the extent of engagement in unpaid household services. While there is little difference in the involvement of boys and girls in economic activity in general, the report suggests that girls work significantly more than boys in household chores and as a result often jeopardise their schooling.

Although progress has been made in reducing child labour during the course of the past ten years, the onset of the global financial crisis threatens to erode recent advances. When families are pushed deeper into poverty and have to choose between sending their sons or their daughters to school, it tends to be the daughters that lose out. As the crisis deepens, young girls could well be among the main victims.

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The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour has acquired substantial experience of working to combat child labour, both at the local level in its work to assist children and at the policy level in work with governments. Tackling child labour effectively calls for an integrated policy response based on strategies for reducing poverty and promoting decent work for adults. Among these strategies, the single most important policy step is the provision of free quality education for all children up to the minimum age of employment.

As we review the progress in combating child labour that has been achieved over the past ten years, as well as the challenges that lie ahead, the report provides ample evidence that the situation of girls warrants special attention. The opportunities or lack of opportunities that girls are afforded early in life may well determine their future and that of future generations. Girls have the right to grow and develop free of child labour and girls have the right to education. We must give girls a chance to make these rights a reality.

Michele Jankanish
Director
ILO International Programme
on the Elimination of Child Labour

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1 – Why focus on girls?

The report draws attention to the international legal framework as it relates to child labour and children’s rights, and specifically to the situation of girls. It identifies the reasons why it is so important that the issues facing girls engaged in child labour be urgently addressed: the hidden nature of many forms of girls’ work; the special vulnerability of girls who face multiple disadvantages; the “double burden” of having to combine household chores and economic activity; and the huge indirect impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on child labour in general and on girls in particular. Chapter 1 also reminds us that almost two-thirds of the world’s illiterate population is female. It draws attention to the value of investing in girls’ education, and to the resulting benefits that accrue both to individuals and to society at large.

Chapter 2 – Statistics on girls work

Over 100 million girls between 5 and 17 years old are believed to be involved in child labour worldwide. Of these more than half (53 million) are estimated to be engaged in hazardous work. Especially alarming is the fact that girls constitute a large proportion of the children engaged in some of the most dangerous forms of child labour, including forced and bonded labour and prostitution.

Differences in data regarding the work of boys and of girls can be due to the definition of “work” used. The report provides an analysis of the work of girls and boys in sixteen countries looking both at economic activities and unpaid household services or “household chores”. Taking a combined picture of both economic and non-economic activities it suggests that overall girls work longer hours than boys. The report says it is clear that a comprehensive analytical framework is needed to capture all the forms of work performed by children.

Chapter 3 – Features of child labour by girls

The majority of girls who work are in agriculture, with large numbers also working in services and small scale manufacturing. The report looks at the nature of girls' work in a number of sectors and gives examples of the problems confronting girls. It also considers what can be done to tackle various types of child labour and notes that urgent action is required to remove girls from the worst forms of child labour. It also points to the need for strategies that prevent girls entering the workforce at an early age and for stronger enforcement of laws against child labour.

Chapter 4 – Investing in the education of girls

Education is a universal human right. However, global data show that at all levels girls have less access to education than boys. Almost two thirds of the world's illiterate population are female, a statistic that reflects the depth of inequality in education. Some 55 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age are girls.

While progress has been made in increasing girls' access to education, there is a danger that the global economic and financial crisis will erode progress. Current estimates suggest that the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of having all children complete a course of primary schooling by 2015 will be missed, and that 29 million children will still not be enrolled. The report stresses the need for free and compulsory education up to the minimum age of employment and for measures to tackle specific barriers that can prevent girls accessing a quality education.

Chapter 5 – Adolescent girls and the youth labour market

The inequalities that many girls face in education mean that by the time they reach the minimum age of employment they are already at a disadvantage compared to boys, suffering as they often do from a lack of education, particularly secondary education, and limited access to training in basic skills. As a result, they are likely to have fewer employment options later in life.

The report calls for the implementation of youth employment policies that facilitate young women's participation in the labour force, that provide them with opportunities to catch up on missed education and for skills training that is accessible to girls.

Chapter 6 – Summary and the policy response

Governments have the prime responsibility to tackle child labour, and chapter 6 calls for the strengthening of policy and programme responses so as to take into account the special situation of girls. It also calls for dialogue on this issue within national structures responsible for the elimination of child labour, with the full involvement of the social partners.

This chapter emphasizes the need to mainstream child labour issues within poverty reduction programmes, especially as they relate to girls, and restates the importance of tackling barriers to girls' education. It draws attention to the positive experience of conditional cash transfer programmes in tackling poverty and expanding access to education.

Attention is also drawn to the threat that the global financial crisis poses to progress in tackling child labour and increasing access to education. The report points to the need for priority to be given in budget expenditure to measures aimed at benefiting poor and vulnerable households.

Chapter 6 also highlights the importance of increasing the involvement of labour inspectorates in the elimination of child labour and monitoring the working conditions of young workers. Training for labour inspectors on the special problems facing girls and the need to reach children in "hidden" work situations would be of particular importance.

Finally, the report emphasizes the need to strengthen the knowledge base on issues of child labour among girls, in order to support future policy and programme development.

WHY FOCUS ON GIRLS?

Box 1.1 Bitter daydreams of a daughter

From October to May, Jyotsna (aged 15) works in the desolate salt pans of western India where her parents earn their living raking salt crystals from the ground. The cracked, dry seabed stretches endlessly in every direction.

Jyotsna and her parents arrive when the summer monsoons end and the water recedes from a vast plain. Jyotsna's two younger brothers stay behind in their village, Kharaghoda, a seven-hour walk from their isolated hut on the salt pans. "It's easier to be a boy", says Jyotsna, who was forced to drop out of school at 10 to help her parents. "They get to go to school".

Jyotsna's mother said she could not afford to let all three of her children study, so she picked her daughter to work with her. "I regret she has this hard life", her mother Ranjanben (age 35) says, "but this is the destiny of girls. It was my destiny too".

Unlike her mother, who never set foot in a classroom, Jyotsna did study on and off for a few years, thanks to a major government effort over the past decade to enrol all children. But Jyotsna can barely read or write. "My brothers, they will study. They can hope for different things", she says. "What can I be?"¹

¹ M. Jordan, "Bitter Daydreams of a daughter", Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service reproduced in *Irish Times*, 24 December 2008.

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1.1 GIRLS AND BOYS SHOULD HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Do girls have equal opportunities?

In many countries and cultures the opportunities enjoyed by boys and girls differ, from the earliest stages of life through childhood and into adulthood. In fact, there are very few countries, societies or communities where girls have exactly the same opportunities as boys.

Access to education is a human right², and an important foundation for an individual's future prosperity and welfare. Yet in much of the world boys and girls continue to be treated differently in terms of access to education. Parents often place more value on their sons' education than on their daughters', and girls therefore are often taken out of school at an earlier age than boys. The result of these inequalities in education can be seen in global literacy statistics. Of the 16 per cent of the world's population who are unable to read or write a simple statement, almost two out of three are women.³

The discrimination against girls in education often stems from the view that in later life boys will have better labour market opportunities, while girls will assume domestic responsibilities, marry and move to another family. The inequalities in access to education mean that by the time girls reach the minimum age of employment many are already at a social and economic disadvantage.

What are the consequences of different gender roles?

Children are taught from an early age to model themselves on their parents. In most societies different gender roles mean that boys and girls engage in different activities. For example, a person is not born with the ability to do needlework or cook but acquires such skills over time. In most cultures it is more likely that girls will be taught such "female skills" than boys.

The different patterns of work of males and females may vary from society to society. However, most boys and girls are eventually channelled into what are perceived as male or female work roles. Generally speaking, the role of females is often viewed as being of less importance or value than that of males. Girls are more likely to engage in types of work for which earnings are relatively low.

The opportunities that girls encounter early in life may well determine their chances later on. If girls lack basic education and engage in child labour at an early age they may be condemned to a future of poverty.

Gender inequalities in societies mean that girls and boys often have unequal opportunities.

² Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 23.

³ UNESCO: *Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters*, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009*, (Oxford University Press, 2008). p. 93.

1.2 GIRLS WORK IS OFTEN HIDDEN

In which sectors can work by girls be hidden?

Much of the work undertaken by girls is less visible than that of boys. Sometimes those outside the family and close community may be altogether unaware of it. Typical examples are work on farms and in small-scale agriculture, domestic work, and work in small home-based workshops.

The often hidden nature of domestic work has given rise to particular concerns. Girls engaged in domestic work are frequently reported as being treated poorly and sometimes being physically abused. Although some of these cases do become public, the fact that the work takes place within the confines of a private home means that abuse very often goes unseen and unreported.

This problem extends beyond domestic work. Girls working in many other situations also have little contact with others outside the immediate work environment, thus giving rise to concerns for their safety and welfare. Some of the worst forms of child labour may entail girls being deliberately hidden from the outside world. Girls trafficked for labour and prostitution, for instance, can sometimes be held as virtual prisoners.

The hidden nature of much of the work engaged in by girls carries with it a potential threat to their safety and welfare.

1.3 GIRLS CAN BE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE

Why are girls particularly vulnerable?

All children involved in child labour are vulnerable. To begin with, the chances are that they come from poor families. They often belong to a socially excluded community, such as an ethnic or indigenous group or a group with a subordinate station in the social hierarchy. They may live in rural areas where there are few facilities. All these factors create disadvantages which have an impact on boys and girls alike, but girls face additional challenges.

In many societies cultural norms and values place women in an inferior position, and this can result in girls being discriminated against in many ways. For example, girls and young women are more likely to lack basic education, which makes it more difficult for them to protect their rights. As girls enter the labour market, they may be directly discriminated against, being paid less than boys or being restricted to menial tasks.

Along with factors such as their relative lack of physical strength, the absence of protective legislation and a failure to enforce such laws that exist, the particular vulnerability of girls may also derive from the work situation itself. A United Nations report on violence against children drew attention to the problem

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of violence against children at the workplace, including both verbal and physical abuse. The report identified a number of sectors in which violence can be a particular problem. Most of these were sectors in which girls work in large numbers. The report also indicated that incidents of violence against under-age workers are unlikely to be reported.⁴

The subordinate and marginalized position of girls in society compounds the problems they face in the labour market.

1.4 THE DOUBLE BURDEN

What do we mean by “double burden”?

The term “double burden” is used to describe the workload of those who are not only engaged in an economic activity but also have responsibility for unpaid domestic work in their own household. Women and girls often spend significantly more time on household chores and caring duties, such as child-rearing or attending to the sick, than do their male counterparts. The obligation to undertake household chores inevitably limits the time available for education and other activities.

It is commonly assumed that in many countries, as young people start working, the boys go into paid or unpaid economic activity while the girls engage in domestic work in the home. In practice, however, as shall be seen later in this report, the picture is more complex. It appears in fact that during childhood years, girls are employed in economic activities almost as much as boys, but in addition they are expected to devote significantly more time than boys to domestic duties.

Having to combine domestic work commitments and economic activities can have a negative impact on education.

⁴ P.S. Pinheiro: “Violence against children in places of work.”, chapter 6 of United Nations: *World report on violence against children* (UN doc. A/61/299, 29 Aug. 2006), p. 242. Available at: http://www.violencestudy.org/IMG/pdf/6._World_Report_on_Violence_against_Children.pdf.

1.5 GIRLS, WORK AND HIV/AIDS

Children forced into work

The HIV/AIDS epidemic has forced many children to enter the labour market prematurely. UNAIDS has estimated about 12 million children under 18 years of age have lost one or both parents as a result of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵

Often, when an adult family member falls ill or dies, one or more children are sent to stay with members of the extended family to ensure that they are cared for. However, as the number of orphans grows and the number of potential care-givers shrinks, traditional coping mechanisms are stretched to breaking point. If children remain at home, then the oldest is often obliged to act as head of the household.

In some countries in Africa, up to 10 per cent of all children orphaned by HIV/AIDS are heads of households and caring for siblings. Child-headed households exist because there are no relatives left to care for the children, or else those that are still alive are too over-burdened or sick themselves to care adequately for the children they have “inherited”. Many children who become household heads have little option but to seek work to support themselves and their siblings.⁶

Girls at risk

Among young people in the 14-25 age group in Africa, the prevalence of HIV tends to be significantly higher among females than among males. Even so, young girls and women are much less likely than young men to have a clear knowledge of HIV/AIDS.⁷

HIV/AIDS makes children more vulnerable to exploitation. Moreover, girls are generally at greater risk of being sexually abused and of becoming HIV-positive than are boys.⁸ Girls who are orphaned and poor sometimes have no choice but to engage in commercial sex for survival, and this of course significantly increases risk.

The spread of HIV/AIDS has a major impact on girls as they are often forced to take on additional responsibilities inside and outside the household.

⁵ UNAIDS: *2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic* (Geneva, 2008).

⁶ A. Amorim and N. Osseiran: “HIV/AIDS and child labour in sub-Saharan Africa”, in Hugh D. Hindman (ed.): *The world of child labour: A historical and regional survey* (Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, forthcoming), pp. 177-184.

⁷ UNAIDS, op. cit., p. 7 and p. 14.

⁸ ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work: *HIV/AIDS and work: Global estimates, impact on children and youth, and response* (Geneva, ILO, 2006), p. 33.

1.6 INVESTING IN GIRLS FOR THE FUTURE

Can an added emphasis on girls help to break the poverty cycle?

A vicious circle connects poverty, lack of education and child labour. The children of the poor who become child workers are themselves likely to be poor as adults, and their children in turn will face limited access to education and may also end up in child labour.

Research shows that educating girls is one of the most effective ways of tackling poverty. Educated girls are more likely to earn more as adults, marry later in life, have fewer and healthier children, and have decision-making power within the household. Educated mothers are also more likely to ensure that their own children are educated, thereby helping to avoid future child labour. Tackling child labour among girls and ensuring their right to education are therefore important elements of broader strategies to promote development.

In addition to the economic benefits of an educated female labour force, there are major social gains to be had from investing in the education of girls. These social benefits accrue to the individuals themselves, to their families and to society at large, and are sustained over time. Chapter 4 looks at this issue in greater detail.

Girls' education yields some of the highest returns of all forms of investment in development.

1.7 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND ATTENTION TO GIRLS

The ILO's Conventions and Recommendations, along with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, provide an important legal framework for addressing issues of child labour and for ensuring that girls receive special attention.

ILO Conventions and Recommendations

An ILO Convention is an agreement under international law entered into by States and international organizations. Once a member State ratifies a Convention, it undertakes to accept its terms and to apply it in law and in practice. The State must, if necessary, adopt new laws and regulations or modify existing legislation and practice in order to apply the Convention.

An ILO Recommendation is an instrument that is not open to ratification but which lays down general or technical guidelines to be applied at the national level.

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and Recommendation (No. 190)

With the adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 in 1999, a global consensus was reached on the need to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Convention targets such practices as the use of children in slavery, forced labour, trafficking, debt bondage, serfdom, prostitution, pornography, forced or compulsory recruitment for armed conflict, illicit activities and various forms of hazardous work. Each State that ratifies Convention No. 182 must, as a matter of urgency, take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.⁹ Article 7 (e) of ILO Convention No. 182 stipulates that the special situation of girls must be taken into account.

Convention No. 182 calls for programmes of action to eliminate child labour, while accompanying Recommendation No. 190 stresses that such programmes should aim at giving special attention to younger children, the girl child, the problem of hidden work situations in which girls are at special risk, and other groups of children with special vulnerabilities or needs. In determining the hazardous nature of work referred to in Convention No. 182, consideration should be given to work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse.

ILO Global Action Plan on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

An ILO Global Action Plan on the Worst Forms of Child Labour was endorsed in 2007 and pursues the goal of eliminating all the worst forms of child labour by 2016. Among the areas identified for action in the Plan is the need for attention to the special situation of girls.

Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and Recommendation (No. 146)

One of the most effective methods of ensuring that children do not start working too young is to set and enforce the age at which they can legally work or be employed. ILO Convention No. 138 concerns the minimum age for admission to employment or work, which it stipulates should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, generally 15 years old. However, a State whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may initially specify a minimum age of 14 years.

Convention No. 138 states that children between 13 and 15 years of age (or between 12 and 14 years old where the latter is the minimum age) may be allowed to engage in “light work”. Light work is defined as work that is “not likely to be harmful to the health or development of young persons and not such as to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational

⁹ ILO Convention No. 182 has recorded a very high rate of ratification - by February 2009 the Convention had received 169 ratifications.

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orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the education received'. Thus light work is always linked to the importance of education and skills training for children and young persons. The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or by the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons is 18 years.¹⁰

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international Convention setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. Article 32 of the CRC asserts that States parties to the Convention recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. States parties to this Convention must respect the rights set forth therein and ensure that they apply to all children regardless of sex.

The body of international law regarding child labour and children's rights provides a framework for addressing the special situation of girls.

¹⁰ In some cases, under strict conditions, 16 years may be allowed.

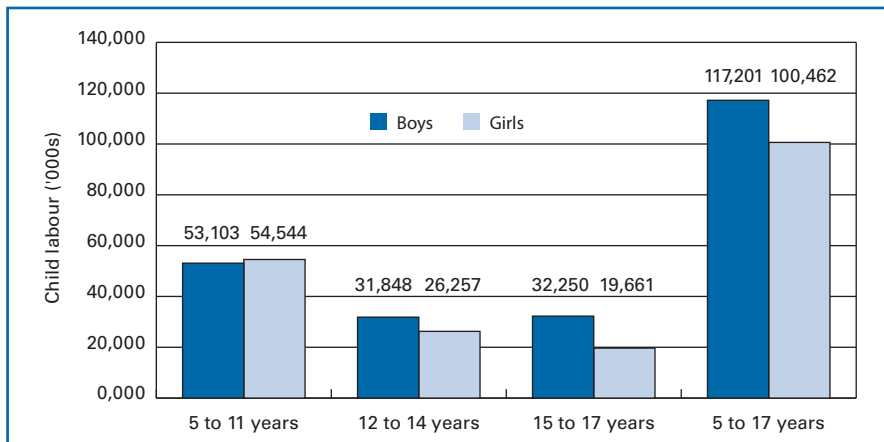
STATISTICS ON GIRLS WORK

2

2.1 GLOBAL STATISTICS ON CHILD LABOUR AMONG GIRLS

The ILO's most recent global estimate of the extent of child labour indicated that more than 100 million girls between 5 and 17 years old were involved in child labour in 2004 (chart 2.1).¹¹ Girls accounted for approximately 46 per cent of all child workers.

Chart 2.1: Child labour by age group and sex (thousands)

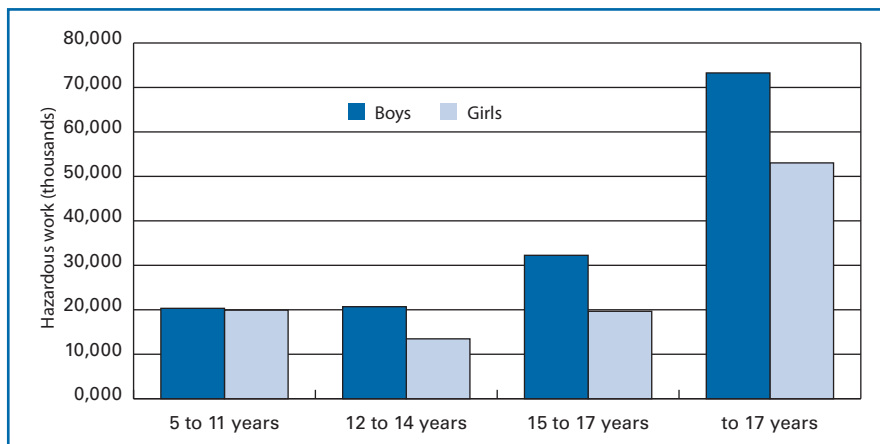


Source: ILO, 2006.

¹¹ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach, Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2006* (Geneva, 2006).

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Chart 2.2: Hazardous work, by age group and by sex (thousands)



Source: ILO, 2006.

Approximately 53 million girls were estimated to be in hazardous work identified as one of the *worst form of child labour* (chart 2.2). Of these, 20 million were less than twelve years old.

Reliable estimates on the extent of the worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work (for example, commercial sexual exploitation of children, forced and bonded labour, etc.) are difficult to obtain, but specific studies on the subject show that the majority of children involved are girls.

Differences in statistics on the work of boys and girls, which are to a large extent due to the underlying definitions of “work” used in compiling the data, are discussed later in this chapter.

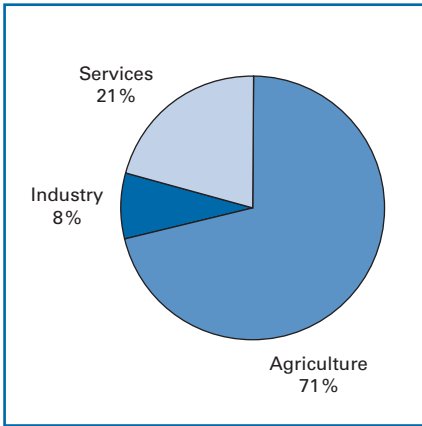
2.2 SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT

To obtain a more detailed picture of the extent and nature of girls’ and boys’ work, ILO-IPEC’s Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) analysed data on children’s work obtained from nationally representative household surveys conducted in 16 countries between 1999 and 2007.¹² This showed that the majority of girls who worked were employed in agriculture. Some 61 per cent of economically active girls in the 5–14 year age

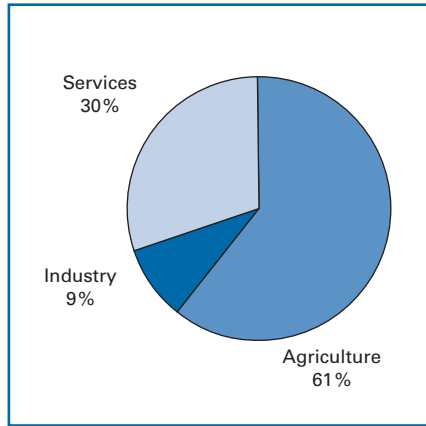
¹² F. Blanco Allais. *Addressing the gender gap: Evidence from SIMPOC surveys*, working paper, IPEC Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). (Geneva, ILO, 2009). This paper provides an analysis of data from Colombia (2001), Ecuador (2006), El Salvador (2001), Guatemala (2006), Burkina Faso (2006), Malawi (2002), Mali (2005), Senegal (2004), Cambodia (2001), Mongolia (2002), Philippines (2001), Sri Lanka (1999), Azerbaijan (2005), Kyrgyzstan (2007), Turkey (2006) and Ukraine (1999).

Chart 2.3: Sectoral distribution of employment in a sample of 16 countries

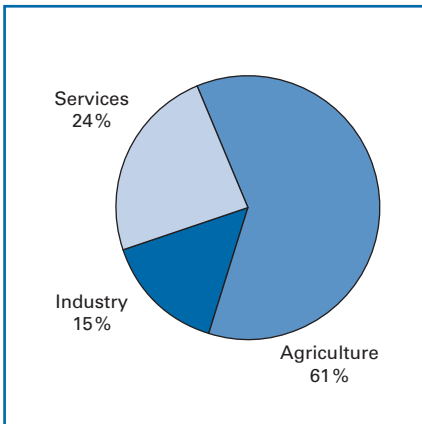
2.3.1. Boys aged 5 to 14 years



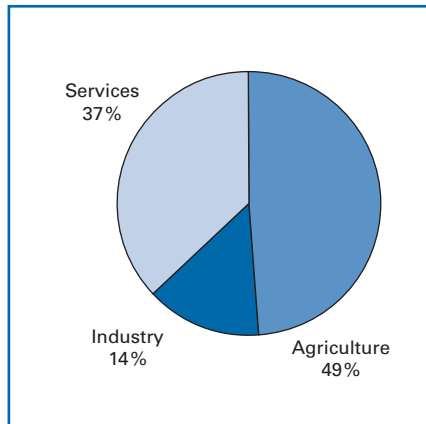
2.3.2. Girls aged 5 to 14 years



2.3.3 Boys aged 15 to 17 years



2.3.4 Girls aged 15 to 17 years



Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

group were working in this sector.¹³ As both girls and boys grow older, the level of employment in agriculture declines somewhat, with 49 per cent of working girls aged 15-17 in this sector.

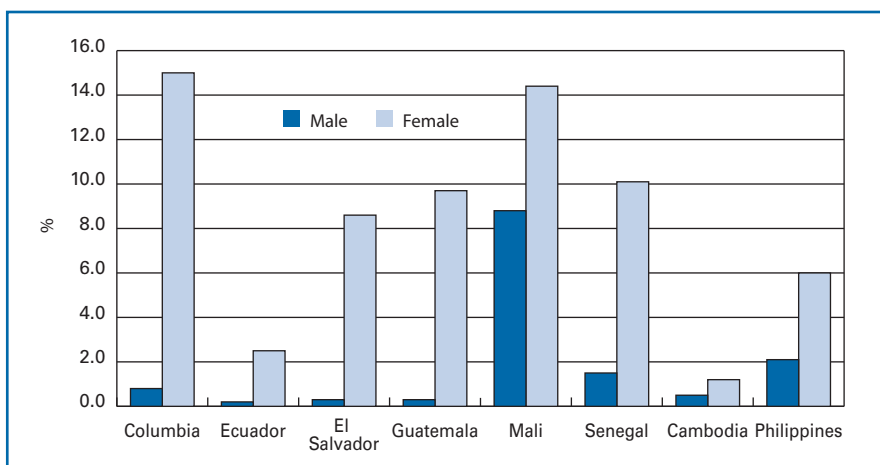
¹³ The 2006 estimates of child labour provided for the first time a global sectoral distribution of children's employment, but not disaggregated by sex. The indicator of employment by sector broke employment down into three broad groupings of economic activity: agriculture, industry and services.

Give girls a chance

2.3 CHILDREN IN DOMESTIC WORK IN THIRD-PARTY HOUSEHOLDS

Domestic work for an employer in a third-party household raises particular concerns in the area of child labour and is considered one of the worst forms of child labour in many countries. This is because of its frequently hidden nature and the regular reports of abuse of children in domestic work. The data from the surveys mentioned below show that the overwhelming majority of child domestic workers are girls (chart 2.4).

Chart 2.4: Proportion of working children aged 5 to 14 years in child domestic work, by sex



Note: Only countries where it was possible to isolate the branch of activity corresponding to "Activities of private households as employers of domestic staff" under the International Standard Industry Code (ISIC) were included. This should therefore be considered as a minimum estimate of girl's engagement in child domestic work in the countries concerned.

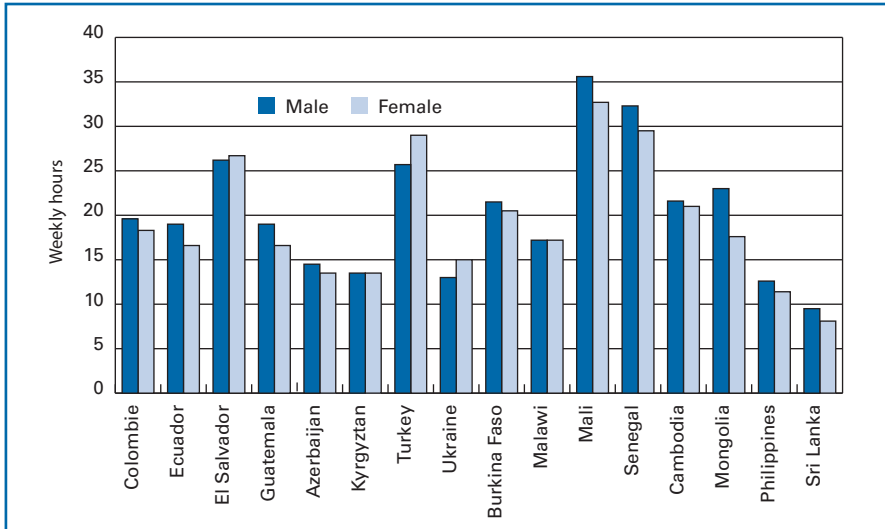
Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

2.4 HOURS IN EMPLOYMENT

Employment hours are important because they determine the time that is available to attend school, do homework and benefit from rest and leisure. The average hours of boys and girls in employment are quite similar, though working boys in the 5–14 range have slightly longer hours (20.2 hours per week for boys versus 19.2 hours per week for girls). However, as will be seen later, the hours that girls spend on domestic work in their own homes mean that their total working time (in employment and at home) is on average greater than that of boys.

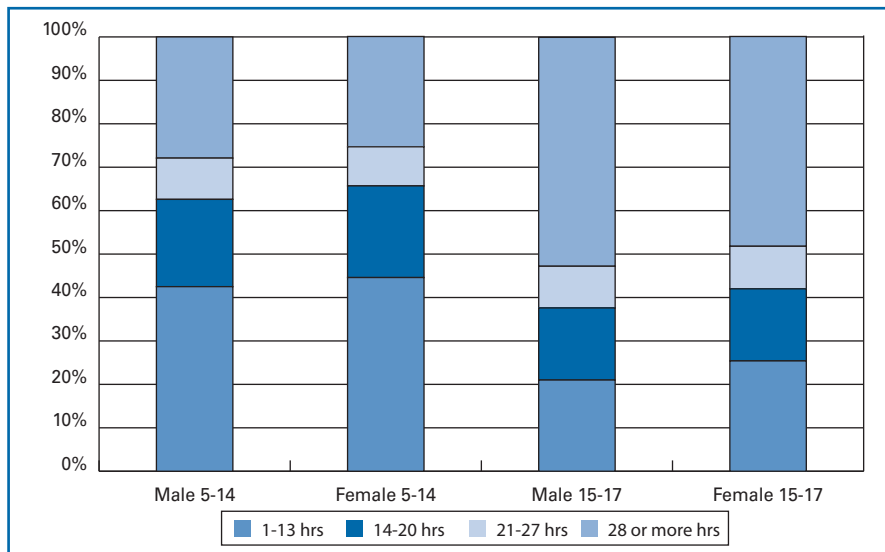
More than 35 per cent of working boys and girls below the age of 15 are in employment for 21 hours or more hours per week (chart 2.6). At such levels of work it becomes increasingly difficult for children to maintain effective participation in education.

Chart 2.5: Average weekly hours in employment, 5 to 14 year age group, by sex and by country



Note: Note: Average weekly hours in employment among boys = 20.2; average weekly hours in employment among girls = 19.2.
Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

Chart 2.6: Proportion of working children by number of hours in employment, sex and age group



Note: The four categories considered in calculating the number of hours worked are: children employed (i) between 1 and 13 hours per week, (ii) between 14 and 20 hours per week, (iii) between 21 and 27 hours per week, and (iv) for 28 hours per week or more.

Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

2.5 CHILDREN IN UNPAID HOUSEHOLD SERVICE: THE INVISIBLE WORK OF GIRLS

A comprehensive and gender-sensitive picture of children's work has to take into consideration the performance of unpaid household services – commonly called household chores.¹⁴ In collecting data on child labour in the past, a distinction has been made between economically active children and children involved in household chores. The distinction between the two, however, was essentially technical. For example, if a boy helped his father on a family farm, his contribution would place him in the “economically active population”, but if a girl assisted her mother in the household she was not considered “economically active” in the same way and would therefore not be included in official statistics on working children. By contrast, if the activities of *both* children were carried out outside the household, they would be considered work in both cases – in the agricultural sector for the boy and in the services sector for the girl.

The resolution on child labour statistics adopted at the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2008¹⁵ established that the broadest concept related to the measurement of child labour is that of children in productive activities falling within the general production boundary as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA).¹⁶ This includes both children in employment and children in other productive activities, the latter being defined as “the production of domestic and personal services by a household member for consumption within their own household”, i.e. household chores.

It has become evident that a definition of work that is restricted to economic activities is insufficient to capture a number of very important forms of non-economic work. This is of particular importance from the gender perspective, given that it is girls rather than boys who tend to be assigned to unpaid household services.

Of course not all children in employment or in other productive activities should be considered as being engaged in child labour that needs to be eliminated. The ICLS resolution provides guidance as to which forms of “employment” and “unpaid household services” can potentially constitute child labour: “For the purpose of statistical measurement, children engaged in child labour include all per-

¹⁴ This is different from the performance of household services in a third-party household, paid or unpaid, which is included within the production boundary of the System of National Accounts (SNA).

¹⁵ The Report of the ICLS is available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---integration/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_101467.pdf

¹⁶ *The general production boundary* also distinguishes between economic and non-economic production, understanding economic production to include any human-controlled activity resulting in outputs appropriate for exchange – i.e. the goods and services produced should be marketable. The latter criterion suggests that only basic human activities (e.g. eating and sleeping) are excluded, while services such as washing; preparing meals; and caring for children, the aged, and the ill fall within the general production boundary, since they can be exchanged between different units.

sons aged 5 to 17 years who, during a specified time period, were engaged in one or more of the following categories of activities: (a) worst forms of child labour [...]; (b) employment below the minimum age [...]; and (c) hazardous unpaid household services, as described in paragraphs 36 and 37, applicable where the general production boundary is used as the measurement framework.¹⁷

It is the prerogative of countries to decide on the framework they want to use to measure child labour. If they opt for the more general analytical framework of the “general production boundary”, the performance of hazardous unpaid household services should be included as a component of the measurement of child labour. However, if a more restrictive approach is used, child labour will be measured only in terms of children in employment.

2.6 THE PREVALENCE OF UNPAID HOUSEHOLD SERVICES

The difference between girls and boys in terms of their involvement in unpaid household services is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa (44 per cent), followed by Latin America (29 per cent), transitional and developed countries (15 per cent) and Asia and the Pacific (8 per cent).¹⁸

Overall, the percentage of girls aged between 5 and 14 who are working is 15 per cent higher than that of boys (chart 2.7). The engagement of both boys and girls in household services increases as they grow older. In the 15–17 age group the increase is almost twice as high for girls as it is for boys, rising by 20 percentage points as against 11 among children aged 5 to 14.

2.7 HOURS IN UNPAID HOUSEHOLD SERVICES

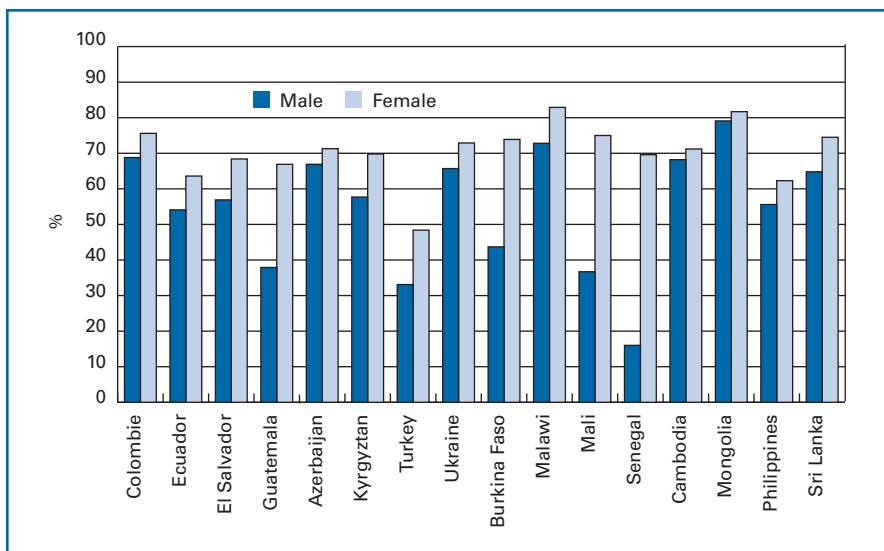
While the analysis of hours in employment referred to earlier showed that boys and girls work roughly the same hours, the differences were more noticeable when comparing the intensity of “household chores” by sex. In all the countries surveyed, girls worked more hours per week than boys (chart 2.8).

¹⁷ Paragraph 37 reads as follows: “*Hazardous unpaid household services* by children are those performed in the child’s own household under conditions corresponding to [...] unpaid household services performed (a) for long hours, (b) in an unhealthy environment, involving unsafe equipment or heavy loads, (c) in dangerous locations, and so on. The definition of long hours in unpaid household services of children, relative to their age, may differ from the one applied in respect to children in employment. The effect on a child’s education should also be considered when determining what constitutes long hours.” The ICLS accordingly requested the ILO to develop guidelines on the treatment of long hours by children in unpaid household services with respect to age and hours thresholds and to report on progress to its 19th Conference.

¹⁸ Based on an indicative global sample of sixteen national household surveys on child labour.

Give girls a chance

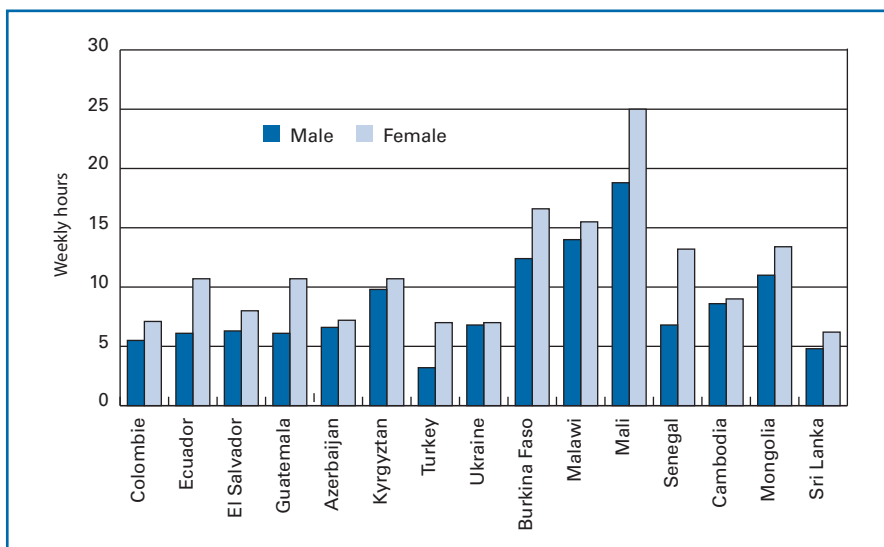
Chart 2.7: Percentage of children aged 5–14 years engaged in unpaid household service, by sex



Note: Average incidence of unpaid household services among boys = 54.9 per cent, among girls = 70.5 per cent.

Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

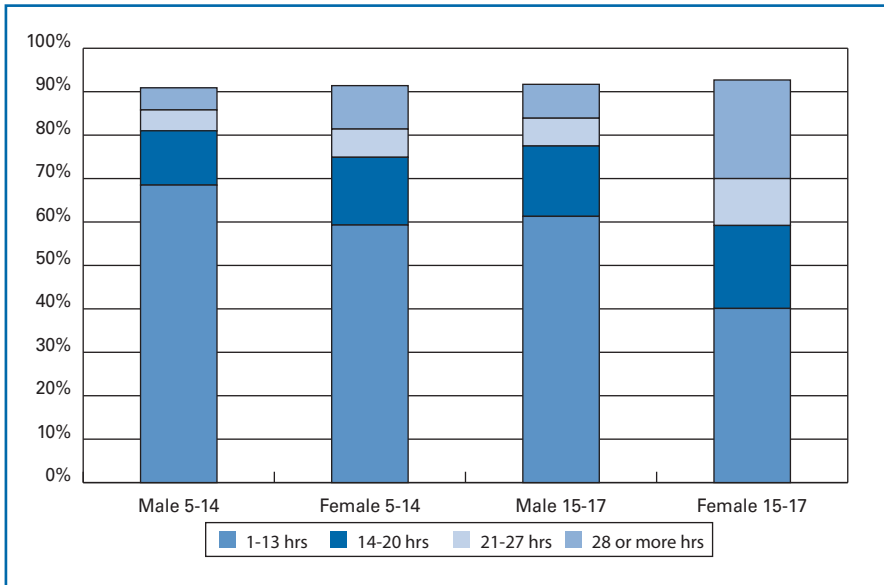
Chart 2.8: Weekly hours of work in unpaid household services by 5–14 year-olds, by sex



Note: Average weekly hours of household chores performed by boys = 8.5 by girls = 11.2.

Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

Chart 2.9: Proportion of children engaged in unpaid household services, by number of hours and by sex (percentages)



Note: The four categories considered in calculating the number of hours worked are: children employed (i) between 1 and 13 hours per week, (ii) between 14 and 20 hours per week, (iii) between 21 and 27 hours per week, and (iv) for 28 hours per week or more.
 Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

It is important to note that the proportion of girls between 5 and 14 years old who are engaged in household chores for 28 hours or more is twice as high as for boys, and about three times as high among children aged between 15 and 17 years (chart 2.9).

2.8 IMPACT OF WORK ON SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance rates vary significantly according to whether children undertake an economic activity only, an economic activity combined with household chores, or household chores only (chart 2.10). The lowest attendance rates were among girls only engaged in an economic activity (61.3 per cent), while girls involved in both an economic activity and household chores had an attendance rate of 71.3 per cent. This apparent paradox suggests that children combining an economic activity with household chores devote fewer hours to the former than do those engaged exclusively in an economic activity and that it is the long hours spent in regular employment that are most detrimental to school attendance. Girls who were not involved in any economic activity but were occupied only in household chores had an attendance rate of 81.5 per cent.

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Chart 2.10: Proportion of 5 to 14-year-olds attending school, by type of work and by sex (percentages)

Countries grouped by region	Sex	Employment only	Unpaid household services only	Employment and unpaid household services
Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador and Guatemala	Male	67.4	91.2	75.4
	Female	69.4	88.6	75.1
	Female/male gender gap	2.0	-2.6	-0.3
Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Ukraine	Male	84.2	95.9	91.1
	Female	80.5	94.4	85.7
	Female/male gender gap	-3.7	-1.5	-5.4
Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali and Senegal	Male	39.3	61.8	49.4
	Female	30.0	55.3	44.4
	Female/male gender gap	-9.3	-6.5	-5.0
Cambodia, Mongolia Philippines and Sri Lanka	Male	70.3	87.9	74.9
	Female	65.4	87.8	79.9
	Female/male gender gap	-4.9	-0.1	5.0
Total	Male	65.3	84.2	72.7
	Female	61.3	81.5	71.3
	Female/male gender gap	-4.0	-2.7	-1.4

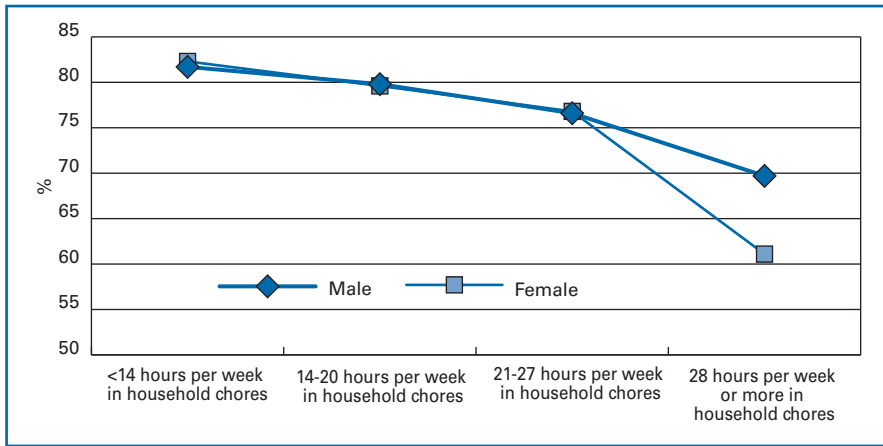
Unpaid household services

As the number of hours devoted to household chores increases, the capacity of children to attend school diminishes. Girls working more than 21 hours a week are particularly affected (chart 2.11).

Employment

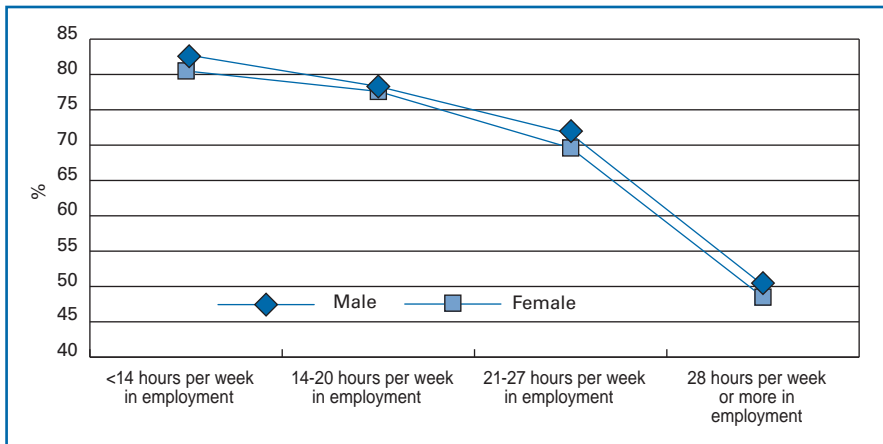
The drop in school attendance is sharper as the hours in employment increase. Thus, the average school attendance rate of economically active children working for 28 hours or more per week is only 62 per cent of that of those working fewer than 14 hours. The pattern is similar both for boys and for girls.

Chart 2.11: Proportion of 5 to 14-year-olds attending school, by hours devoted to household chores and by sex (percentages)



Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

Chart 2.12: Proportion of 5 to 14-year-olds attending school, by hours in employment (percentages)



Source: SIMPOC calculations based on national child labour surveys from 16 sample countries.

2.9 WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS PICTURE?

While it is important not to draw global conclusions solely on the basis of data taken from the survey of sixteen countries presented here, the data does provide an important indication of the pattern of work among girls and boys engaged in both economic activities and unpaid household services. Some of the key points are:

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- If economic and non-economic activities are taken together, the statistics indicate that girls work more hours than boys. This confirms the need for a comprehensive framework for analysing all the forms of work performed by children and for assessing the implications of those activities.
- There is little difference between the hours that boys and girls spend working in economic activities but girls work quite significantly more than boys in unpaid work in their own household.
- More than 25 per cent of boys and girls below the minimum age of employment who were employed in economic activities worked for 28 hours or more per week. At this level it is very difficult to engage in education.
- Ten per cent of girls aged 5–14 years performed household chores for 28 hours or more per week. This is twice as high as the percentage of boys.
- The average school attendance rate of girls who performed household chores for 28 hours a week was 25 per cent lower than that of girls who do so for fewer than 14 hours a week.

FEATURES OF CHILD LABOUR BY GIRLS

3.1 CHILD LABOUR AMONG GIRLS – MAINLY IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

Child labour tends to be concentrated in the informal economy, which is typically dominated by large numbers of the working poor. Even if child labour is legally prohibited in a particular country, it often continues to flourish in informal settings. Children work extensively in small-scale farming, domestic labour, home-based workshops, street food-stalls, scavenging, quarrying and fishing. In many cases young children accompany their mothers or relatives and begin to work by helping older family members.

Because of the lack of recognition or protection of workers in the informal economy, they are especially vulnerable. And although the money children earn for the household in this way can be important for the family unit, the income boys and girls can derive is usually too low to have more than a marginal impact on poverty. Indeed, children often receive no payment at all and are unlikely to benefit from any protection if they are maltreated or injured.

The extent and nature of such factors as working hours and occupational hazards are difficult to document systematically, though rapid assessment research has provided a snapshot of child labour in certain informal sectors, often highlighting a range of risks to safety and welfare.¹⁹ Many child workers are ignored, “hidden” or “invisible” within the informal economy.

¹⁹ The findings of a series of rapid assessments of some of the worst forms of child labour in specific countries are available at <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/lang--en/index.htm>

Box 3.1 Ramatu's story

In West Africa women traders use girls to move their goods between markets or purchasing points and transport facilities such as lorries and bus stations. Many young girls from northern Ghana end up as load carriers at marketplaces in Kumasi, Yendi and Accra. The girls, known as “kayaye”, enter the business in order to save enough to move to less arduous and more profitable occupations.

Ramatu is 9 years old and for the past 8 months she has been working as a kayaye. She sleeps and works in the Agbogbloshie market. When her widowed mother became sick and died, Ramatu left Yendi and travelled to Accra in the company of a relative who took her to a family who required some house help. On their arrival, however, the family refused to hire Ramatu. Since she did not want to go back to Yendi without any money, she became a kayaye in Accra.²⁰

3.2 AGRICULTURE

There is a need to focus on girls in agriculture because the majority of girls involved in child labour are in this sector. Many girls face the double burden of agricultural work combined with heavy domestic chores.

Most girl child workers are employed in the agricultural sector

Sixty per cent of the population in developing countries – amounting to half the world's population – still live in rural areas. Three-quarters of the world's poor, those earning less than a dollar a day, live in the countryside.

Chapter 2 indicated that close to two thirds of economically active girls in the 5–14 age group work in the agriculture sector. Given the number of children employed in the sector, it is clear that child labour in agriculture must be given priority in countries' efforts to eliminate child labour.

Agricultural work is highly diverse

Agriculture is not a homogenous sector but takes many different forms in terms of the system of farming, farm size, the level of mechanization, integration with markets, household structure, land tenure, agricultural hazards and proportion of migrant or seasonal workers.

²⁰ West African AIDS Foundation: *A rapid assessment report on girl child labour, especially commercial sexual exploitation, in Ghana* (Accra, WAAF, 2003). Also IPEC: *Girl child labour in agriculture, domestic work and sexual exploitation: Rapid assessments on the cases of the Philippines, Ghana and Ecuador* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

Not all agricultural work performed by children is child labour – but much of it is

In rural communities it is common for boys and girls to assist with various tasks. Light work appropriate to a child's age can have a positive side, helping them to learn skills that may be useful in their adult lives. And of course for many poor families the contribution of children to the survival of the family is seen as critical at certain periods of the year (e.g. harvesting).

However, the outcome of work undertaken by children is not always positive. Owing to a variety of factors, including poverty, a demand for cheap and seasonal labour and family debt in the form of bonded labour, many girls and boys end up performing work that is clearly hazardous rather than light work appropriate to their age.

Girls and boys often perform gender-differentiated tasks in agriculture

Both boys and girls begin working in agriculture at an early age, often accompanying their mother or father to work. In many cases, a mother has nowhere to leave her children and therefore takes them with her to the field. This is very often the child's initiation to the world of work.²¹ At adolescence the agricultural work of girls and boys often becomes increasingly differentiated. In some communities, cultural traditions and taboos dictate the agricultural and domestic tasks girls and boys undertake. For example, certain ethnic groups consider it inappropriate for girls or women to handle cattle, while in many countries raising poultry is strictly a female responsibility. However, socially determined gender roles in agriculture are dynamic and they are liable to change according to necessity and circumstances.

Box 3.2 Shrimp farming

A study of the shrimp sector in Bangladesh shows that the shrimp value chain is a highly sex-segregated market in which women and men cluster in different activities. Women and girls make up 40 per cent of all fry catchers and 62 per cent of all processing plant workers. They are noticeably absent, however, from several major stages of the production chain, and this limits the extent to which they can make a living from shrimp farming. Female fry catchers and sorters earn only about 64 per cent as much as men.²²

There is sometimes a perception that women's and girls' involvement in agricultural production is for the household rather than for the market. And it

²¹ ILO: *Decent work in agriculture* (Geneva, 2003).

²² USAID/GATE Project 2006, quoted in E. Cook: Module 8 "Gender issues in agricultural labour", in *Gender in agriculture sourcebook* (Washington DC, World Bank, 2008), p. 321

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is precisely because of this misconception that the agricultural advice provided by government agencies sometimes ignores the real role that women play in the economy, focussing instead only on their contribution to the household. However, it is now acknowledged that a large proportion of women and girls are producers in their own right or wage-dependent, taking on seasonal or casual work to supplement low incomes with paid work on other farms or plantations.²³ Girls and young women also find work associated with export-oriented agricultural products including coffee, fruit, flowers, sugar cane, vegetable growing and packing, fish and shellfish.

In some rural areas, children begin working before they are even 10 years old, but much of their labour goes unacknowledged as it is absorbed into the “piecework” or “quota” of the family work units.²⁴ Where children are in paid work, girls are often paid less than boys for the same job, indicating that gender inequality in paid employment spans all age groups.²⁵

Agricultural work is hazardous

Agriculture is one of the three most dangerous sectors in terms of the number of work-related deaths, accidents and cases of occupational disease and ill health. Boys and girls engaged in agricultural work can be at greater risk than adult workers doing the same work, as their bodies and personalities are still developing.²⁶ In many instances, the health implications of working as a child in agriculture may not become apparent or significant until the child is an adult. Health hazards are often slow-acting, cumulative, irreversible and complicated by non-occupational factors such as malnutrition and disease. Carrying heavy loads as a child, for instance, may result in musculoskeletal damage in later life; exposure to toxic chemicals can lead to cancer and reproductive problems.²⁷

The potential hazards are numerous and the level of danger often high. Both boy and girl child workers are at risk from carrying heavy and awkward loads, often over long distances, and from doing strenuous, repetitive tasks that can stunt their physical development and lead to musculoskeletal disorders. Children often work for very long periods at a time under extreme temperatures. They can be injured by farm machinery and from cutting tools which are frequently used in agriculture. Working often barefoot in fields and around livestock exposes children to cuts, bites, injuries, skin disorders or water-borne diseases. They

²³ ILO: *Decent work in agriculture* (Geneva, ILO, 2003).

²⁴ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach* (Geneva, 2006), pp. 37-38.

²⁵ For example, in a study of children engaged in crop cultivation in the Philippines, a girl's average daily pay was 77.50 pesos, compared to 97.7 pesos for boys. See IPEC: *Girl child labour in agriculture, domestic work and sexual exploitation: Rapid assessments on the cases of the Philippines, Ghana and Ecuador*, op.cit., p. 35.

²⁶ IPEC: *Training resource pack on the elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture* (Geneva, ILO, 2009 revised edition).

²⁷ IPEC: *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice* (Geneva, ILO, 2005).

may also be exposed to toxic substances and risk pesticide poisoning and skin problems.

Box 3.3 Occupational hazards as seen by working girls

“Stress; exhaustion; sunburn; too much heat; backache; long working hours; a lack of good drinking water; falling trees; tripping on ropes; wounds from machetes; using bare hands to apply fertilizer....”

These were some of the responses from 200 girls when asked about working conditions in agriculture in the Ashanti, northern, Brong Ahafo and eastern regions of Ghana.²⁸

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Ensure that all rural girls and boys enter the education system

Low school attendance, early dropout of students, adult illiteracy and gender inequality in education are disproportionately high in rural areas. Urban-rural disparities in educational investment and learning opportunities are wide. Although in some regions access to schooling has improved over the years, getting boys and girls into rural schools and enforcing the minimum legal age for employment is extremely challenging. The provision of compulsory and free education of good quality has to be accompanied by a special effort to encourage rural girls to attend school. This issue is covered in greater detail in chapter 4, “Investing in the education of girls”.

Strengthen the monitoring, regulation and enforcement of child labour legislation

Regulations governing child labour are often ignored in rural areas. Besides, work on family farms is often excluded from national labour legislation. Under-resourced and poorly trained labour inspectorates all too often focus only on formal industrial operations, ignoring rural and informal areas of work. There is, therefore, an urgent need for countries to review the situation of child labour in agriculture, as well as the processes for monitoring and enforcing child labour legislation in rural areas.

Improve skills training for girls

Broadening the agricultural skills of older girls who have reached the minimum age of employment is a valuable means of increasing the productivity and profit-

²⁸ Murray, U. (2004) *A Comparative Analysis: Girl child Labour in Agriculture, Domestic Work and Sexual Exploitation, the cases of Ghana, Ecuador and the Philippines*, (Geneva, ILO) p. 40.

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ability of the local agriculture sector, and there is an urgent need to focus on training for young women and young men in market-oriented agricultural skills.

Box 3.4 Skills training in agriculture, with a focus on gender and child labour

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the ILO have collaborated in producing a training module on child labour in agriculture for use in the Junior Farmer Field and Life Skills Schools (JFFLS). In collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP) and other partners, the FAO supports these schools for youth in parts of Africa that have been badly affected by HIV/AIDS. Implemented by community facilitators, the curriculum focuses on skills training in agriculture in combination with life skills.

The JFFLS curriculum has a strong gender component. A special child labour module is directed at boys and girls who work in agriculture, using role-play and active learning techniques to build on local know-how and highlight health and safety issues.²⁹

Support the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture

International and national agricultural agencies and organizations can play an important role in eliminating child labour in agriculture, especially in relation to hazardous work. These organizations have close contacts with national ministries of agriculture, agricultural advisory extension services, farmers' cooperatives, producers' organizations, research bodies and other organizations. An International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture has been set up between ILO and six international agricultural organizations, with a focus on eliminating hazardous work. The Partnership's aims include reducing the urban/rural and gender gaps in education and promoting youth employment in agriculture under decent conditions of work.³⁰

3.3 DOMESTIC WORK

Domestic work for girls is extremely common. However, because of its hidden nature, girls in private households can be particularly vulnerable.

²⁹ More information on the JFFLS is available from the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division of FAO's Economic and Social Development Department in Rome, Italy.

³⁰ The Partnership includes the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), and International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

What domestic work is of concern?

Chapter 2 considered the involvement of children in unpaid household services within their own household. In this section we look at the children working beyond the immediate family in third party households.

Throughout the world children are working in households other than their own performing tasks such as cleaning, ironing, cooking, minding children and gardening. Generally speaking, domestic work is perceived as “women’s work”. The overwhelming majority of child domestic workers are girls, for all intents and purposes “mimicking” in other homes the chores that they carry out in their own family environment. Indeed, in many countries domestic work is a protected type of work for girls, who may have few other employment opportunities.

Of course, the rights of child domestic workers are not systematically infringed everywhere, and the practice of placing a daughter in another household where her future prospects might be better is common practice in many parts of the world. It is often seen as a good option, particularly where girls from poorer or struggling households can be sent to work with relatives or acquaintances that are wealthier or where the environment is more secure.

However, for many, moving to another household where they are expected to “help out” is not a positive experience. Because of the potential dangers associated with working anonymously in a private household and because of the frequent instances of abuse, some countries have designated domestic work as one of the worst form of child labour.

Box 3.5 Words of a former child domestic worker

“When I was 5 years old I was found abandoned in a park (in Ambato, Ecuador). Then I lived at a home with other girls who didn’t have parents. When I was 10, they sent us to work in homes as domestic workers.

In the house where I worked, the woman was bad and hit me. Then they took me out of there and sent me to another place – the house of a family that was rich. There was an old man there, the woman’s husband, and whenever I was alone he would touch me and want to do things to me. I told the social worker, but she didn’t believe me. One of the family’s neighbours also told her, and then she did believe me. She took me out of there but she sent me to a worse place to work. At that house, the 16-year-old son called me into his room and pushed me onto the bed. Twice he tried to rape me. I got away from him and ran away from the house and didn’t go back to the home. I was about 14 years old ...”³¹

³¹ IPEC: *Girl child labour in agriculture, domestic work and sexual exploitation: Rapid assessments on the cases of the Philippines, Ghana and Ecuador*, op.cit.

Difficulties encountered by girls in child domestic work

Hazards facing domestic workers

Domestic work can be hazardous both because of the tasks undertaken and because of the conditions of work. Regular tasks performed by young girls include kitchen duties (involving work with knives and hot pans), laundry and cleaning (sometimes entailing the use of toxic chemicals), helping out in the employer's business, undertaking agricultural tasks for the family and child minding. Many girls work very long hours, often more than 15 hours daily, and they are always on call.³² The heavy workload and lack of rest can pose a serious problem, and many girls experience stress and fatigue due to lack of sleep.

Lack of access to education, low pay and lack of entitlements

A study in Nepal found that a large proportion of child domestic workers are illiterate,³³ though this is not the case everywhere. Some girls are unclear about the wages they are entitled to, their hours of work, whether or not they are authorized to attend school and other conditions of work. Domestic work is generally not well paid, and sometimes not paid at all. In Haiti, for example, many children work in exchange for food and lodgings. In South Africa one study found that boys are more likely to be paid for domestic tasks than girls, who spend much longer on such work.³⁴

Hidden work facilitates abuse

Because the work is undertaken in private households, government services, trade unions and NGOs often have difficulty reaching and protecting girls in domestic service. When girls are allowed by their family to spend long hours in other people's households, they are completely under the control of the employer or relative, who may not necessarily have the girl's best interests at heart. With no system of regulating or enforcing children's rights, vulnerable young girls are sometimes subjected to beatings and brutal treatment, as well as to verbal or sexual abuse. Consistent subjection to abuse inevitably leads to a loss of self-esteem and thus the abuse becomes self-perpetuating, with girls accepting a low status and being unable to challenge the situation.³⁵

³² See, for example, Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11690/section/6>

³³ S.K. Joshi and P. Dahal: "Occupational health in small scale and household industries in Nepal: A situation analysis", in *Kathmandu University Medical Journal*, Apr.-Jun. 2008, pp. 152-60

³⁴ D. Budlender and D. Bosch *South Africa: Child domestic workers, A national report*. (ILO, 2002)

³⁵ See also Pinheiro, op. cit.

Box 3.6 Thao – a child domestic worker

Thao started working as a child domestic worker when she was 11 years old. Following her father's death she went to Jakarta with her mother to look for a job. She soon found an employer in the Bekasi suburb of the city.

Though initially well treated, after her employer had a baby she became increasingly harsh with Thao. Thao was subjected to constant harassment and verbal abuse. She had not been paid for over a year and a half when she was withdrawn from domestic service through a centre for child domestic workers run by the Indonesian Children's Welfare Foundation and supported by the ILO. Thao is keen to continue her studies. "I never want to go back to work in domestic service", says Thao. "I prefer living alone with my sister to living with my employers in Jakarta".³⁶

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Initiate dialogue on child domestic work

In many countries domestic work for children is not recognized as a form of child labour even when minimum age laws are flouted. There is often an institutional reluctance to address issues that seem to impinge on the rights of the family, so domestic service is sometimes excluded from laws and policies designed to tackle child labour. Working for "relatives" makes the work situation appear beyond regulation.

Nevertheless, there is an ongoing policy debate and legislative reform on domestic work in a number of countries. For example, in Zambia the Ministry of Labour has set up a task force that has contributed to policy dialogue on the issue. Zambia's labour inspectors are now allowed to inspect homes in cases where there have been allegations of abuse of child domestic workers.³⁷ While countries differ in their approach to regulating domestic work, many (Brazil, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Philippines, for instance) have taken steps to address the issue as part of a national plan of action to eliminate child labour.³⁸

Provide rehabilitation for girls in need

Girls who are employed in the worst forms of child labour need help so that they can be removed from such work immediately. They may require temporary shelter, medical care, legal assistance and counselling, particularly if they cannot return to their family. In Ilala District, United Republic of Tanzania, a crisis and rehabilitation centre has been set up for girls who have been withdrawn from

³⁶ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach*, op. cit., p. 31 .

³⁷ ILO: *Emerging good practices on action to combat child domestic labour in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia* (Dar es Salaam, ILO, 2006), pp. 61-63.

³⁸ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach*, op. cit., p. 42.

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domestic service. Many girls stay there for six months before they are provided with an alternative or taken back to their family.³⁹

Implement a code of conduct

Codes of conduct have been developed in a number of countries to encourage labour supply agencies to observe minimum age laws. Much could be done to develop this approach further among agencies that supply domestic workers.

Box 3.7 Suppliers of domestic workers in Indonesia

The Indonesian Association of Domestic Worker Suppliers (APPSI) represents 107 members that are involved in supplying domestic workers to private households in Greater Jakarta.

Following assistance from the ILO, APPSI has since 2005 been applying a policy of non-recruitment and non-placement of children younger than 15 years old despite the fact that the biggest demand from employers is for children between 13 and 16 years of age. This new policy is reflected in APPSI's guidelines for members on the recruitment and placement of domestic workers.

Work with employers of child domestic workers

Encouraging employers of children to improve the working conditions of girls over the minimum age for employment is considered by many to be a way forward. Work with employers often involves using the media or other avenues to conduct a public awareness campaign. In Zambia a programme supported by the Ministry of Labour used debates, drama and music to reach audiences in schools and marketplaces. The drama group consisted of former child domestic workers who helped to pass on to the general public messages about the need to change patterns of behaviour towards child domestic workers.⁴⁰

In some countries televised “soap operas” have featured domestic workers in their story lines. This is one way to raise awareness of the conditions of domestic workers.

Work with trade unions

Trade unions have been very concerned with the problems facing children in domestic work. In 2006 an ILO-IPEC interregional workshop enabled trade unions to share experiences and information about efforts to reach out to child domestic workers and efforts to provide children and their families with alternative solutions. The final workshop Declaration stated that at the national, regional and international level, trade unions should lobby for legislation that prohibits

³⁹ ILO: *Emerging good practices* ..., op. cit.

⁴⁰ ILO: *Emerging good practices* ..., op. cit

children's work in the sector below the minimum age of employment, and extends protection to working children above the minimum age.⁴¹ It also called for a range of union action designed to reach and assist children in domestic work.

Box 3.8 Standard-setting on decent work for domestic workers

Domestic work has long been a concern of the ILO. However, existing international labour standards do not always offer adequate guidance on how to address the specific circumstances in which it occurs.

In March 2008 the ILO Governing Body agreed that in June 2010 the International Labour Conference would have a discussion on setting a new standard on domestic work. The Conference will decide on the form of any draft instrument that might be adopted – whether a Convention or a Recommendation, or both. The Conference will then discuss in 2011 the standard or standards proposed.

3.4 MANUFACTURING SECTOR

There is a need to focus on girls in manufacturing because girls are often considered by employers to be more docile and more manageable than boys or adult workers. This makes them a potential target for exploitative practices.

Child labour in manufacturing

About 9 per cent (almost 20 million) of the estimated 218 million child labourers worldwide are employed in manufacturing. Girls and boys produce a range of goods including garments, carpets, toys, matches, brassware, footballs, fireworks, and hand-rolled cigarettes. These are sometimes manufactured in workshops set up within the household, where the whole family takes part in the production line.

The manufacturing method itself may encourage the involvement of children. For example, many women work as independent contractors in the garment industry, where they are paid on a piece-rate basis. In such situations, there is every possibility that there will be pressure on the daughters to help their mothers, or to take over the domestic duties so that their mothers can concentrate on their output. In both cases the likely outcome is that the girls will miss school.

Because labour inspection is virtually non-existent in home based production, child labour can all too easily go unchallenged.

⁴¹ IPEC: *Child Domestic Labour and Trade Unions: Report*. (ILO, Geneva, 2006)

Box 3.9 Maria's daughter

Maria is a home-worker who sews pre-cut pieces of cloth into finished garments on an industrial sewing machine. Although she puts internationally known labels in the garments she makes, she has never met any company representative. Instead, she deals with a local intermediary who brings the material to her, collects the finished garments and pays her a piece rate.

Maria keeps her 10-year-old daughter home from school to help her. The girl sews on buttons, then presses and folds the finished garments. She also looks after her 2 year-old brother and 4 year-old sister. This allows Maria to concentrate on machine-sewing and increases her output.⁴²

Supply and demand in manufacturing

There are both supply and demand factors in manufacturing that determine the extent of child labour. Extensive poverty in rural or urban areas ensures that there is a steady supply of unskilled labour of all ages. The absence of child-care facilities means that when parents go to work the children go too. Labour-intensive production and a lack of mechanization in some manufacturing sectors result in a demand for cheap labour. Often the demand is seasonal (for example, in the period leading up to special holidays, when there is a known demand for particular products). Employers sometimes prefer to hire children because they are “cheaper” than their adult counterparts (though low wages may be offset by lower productivity).⁴³

Some employers hire children because they are more manageable than adults. Children, and girls in particular, are looked upon as more docile and more suited to tedious, repetitious, monotonous work. Moreover, girls are less able to defend their rights and interests than are adult workers.

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Ensure that government, employers' associations and trade unions work together to eliminate child labour

The active and close involvement of government and employers' and workers' organizations can strengthen the effectiveness of programmes aimed at tackling child labour in manufacturing. Strengthening labour inspection services so that they can effectively reach small production workshops is of particular importance.

Through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the ILO has acquired considerable experience in mobilizing partners to

⁴² D. McCormick and H. Schmitz: *Manual for value chain research on homeworkers in the garment industry* (Universities of Sussex, UK, and of Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 2001), p.13.

⁴³ ILO: *Eliminating child labour: Guides for employers* (Geneva, 2007).

work in an integrated way to address child labour issues in industry. For example between 2004-2006, an ILO-IPEC project implemented together with Turkey's Ministry of Labour and the social partners resulted in more than 4,000 children working in the furniture industry in three Turkish provinces, Ankara, Bursa and Izmir, being withdrawn or prevented from entering child labour. On a daily basis, many of these children had handled hazardous chemicals and worked with dangerous machinery, surrounded by noise and dust exceeding prescribed levels. Labour inspectors identified at risk children and talked to their employers. After discussions with employers and children's families children were directed to a Social Support Centre which undertook medical checks of children and referred them to education or training programmes. Such workplace inspections often also led to discussions between the labour inspectorate and employer on general workplace improvements.

Focus efforts on the elimination of child labour in supply chains

Many of the areas in which child workers are employed are part of a supply chain that links firms and production sites of all types. The supply chain may be local, national or global. Today, through employers' organizations, trade unions and civil society initiatives in several countries, employers are being strongly encouraged to ensure that child labour is not used in the supply chain.

Many companies are attempting to implement corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies. Their efforts go beyond ensuring that the company does not employ children, often extending the ban on child labour throughout the supply chain, including to their subcontractors.

Develop effective codes of conduct based on ILO standards

A number of employers' organizations and manufacturing sectors have for some time been developing codes of conduct. For example, the United States apparel manufacturers and retailers have generated recommendations for a code of conduct detailing principles aimed at the elimination of child labour.⁴⁴ In 1994 the Rugmark label for Indian hand-knotted carpets started using social labelling to encourage consumers in North America, Europe and elsewhere to make ethical choices when they purchase carpets.⁴⁵ Many other initiatives have arisen in recent years. One prominent example, the Ethical Trading Initiative, is a multi-stakeholder initiative in the United Kingdom that uses the ILO's core Conventions to define workers' rights. Founded on the principle of social dialogue between workers and employers, it is internationally recognized for its

⁴⁴ J. Wolfe and M. Dickson: "Apparel manufacturer and retailer efforts to reduce child labor: An ethics of virtue perspective on codes of conduct", in *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 2002, Vol.20, No. 4, pp. 183-195.

⁴⁵ G. Chowdhry and M. Beeman: "Challenging child labor: Transnational activism and India's carpet industry", in *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 2001; Vol. 575, No. 1; pp. 158-175.

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efforts to help companies to promote respect for international labour standards in their supply chains.

Box 3.10 ILO and employers promote good practices

The ILO promotes ethically sound practices among multinational enterprises (MNEs). As far back as 1977 the ILO adopted the Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, one of the foundations upon which the corporate social responsibility movement is built. The ILO's tripartite structure has a comparative advantage in the area of corporate social responsibility, as it is able to bring governments, employers and trade unions on board.

But how far can CSR be applied in practice at the informal manufacturing and subcontracting level? The ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities has produced guides suggesting how both employers' and employees' organizations can work together to combat child labour, including a guide on how to work towards a child-labour-free supply chain.⁴⁶

Progressive elimination of child labour from manufacturing

Action is required that balances the dual concerns of removing children from work and finding ways to ensure that family income is maintained. The progressive elimination of child labour is usually better than introducing bans on child labour overnight without any consideration of the immediate financial effect on households. The ILO has stressed the importance of an integrated approach that looks at the needs of families and children and puts into place a comprehensive set of measures to support both.

3.5 MINING AND QUARRYING

Girls are exposed to the dangers of mining more frequently than is often thought.

Child labour and quarrying in mining is in the small-scale informal sector

The extent and severity of the hazards and the risk of disease, injury and death make mining and quarrying particularly dangerous. Many countries have therefore ruled that work in mining and quarrying by persons under the age of 18 should be regarded as one of the worst forms of child labour.

⁴⁶ ILO: *Eliminating child labour: Guides for employers* (Geneva, 2007).

Small-scale mining and quarrying usually entails the low-output, non-mechanized, labour-intensive extraction of minerals for economic gain. Because of the remoteness of the locations, the informal nature of the sector and the mobility of those working in the sector, the number of children involved is difficult to ascertain. However, the ILO estimates that nearly 1 million children from 5 to 17 years of age work in mines and quarries.⁴⁷

Both boys and girls are involved in mining and quarrying

Studies suggest that the proportion of boys and girls working in mining and quarrying is often similar. Evidence from Ghana, Niger, Peru and the United Republic of Tanzania has demonstrated that the involvement of girls in mining is much more common than was previously supposed.⁴⁸ Girls can be found working in the extraction, transportation and processing stages of mining as well as in related jobs such as selling food and supplies to the miners. Girls in the sector may also be targets of abuse and of child prostitution.

Box 3.11 The typical child worker in mining

A “typical” child worker in small-scale mining is a boy or a girl aged between 10 and 15, mainly working above ground in a family group, digging, crushing or grinding ore, or transporting it in sacks weighing 10-25 kg over distances of up to 600 metres. He or she uses adult-sized tools (bar, pick, hammer, shovel) and is unlikely to possess any proper protective equipment.

These children receive no direct pay but, instead, contribute to the earnings of the family unit. If they attend school, which is unlikely if they are over 12 years old, they will probably work two or three hours a day after school and all day at the weekends and during holidays. If they do not go to school, there is more likelihood of their working independently of the family, doing whatever they are told to do with little or no concession to their age.

Children who are employed in the processing of gold-bearing ore may show symptoms of mercury poisoning. Whatever sort of mining or quarrying they are involved in, they usually develop respiratory problems, skin problems and musculo-skeletal disorders.⁴⁹

Mining is hazardous for all child workers

Child workers in mining face serious health hazards and risk being severely injured, permanently disabled, or even killed. Health problems, however, may

⁴⁷ IPEC: *Eliminating child labour in mining and quarrying: Background document* (Geneva, ILO, 2005).

⁴⁸ IPEC: *Girls in mining: Research findings from Ghana, Niger, Peru and United Republic of Tanzania* (Geneva, ILO, 2007).

⁴⁹ Drawn from N.S. Jennings: *Child labour in small-scale mining: Examples from Niger, Peru & Philippines*. (Geneva, ILO, 1999).

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not become apparent until years later when the child grows up. Because their bodies and minds are still growing and developing, the risk of being injured or falling ill is even greater than for adults.

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Urgent action to tackle child labour in mining and quarrying

Considering the obvious dangers of child labour in mining and quarrying, it is not surprising that many countries have ruled that the employment of children under 18 in the sector is one of the worst forms of child labour. It is important that countries examine the situation of both boys and girls in small-scale mining and quarrying and tackle the whole issue of child labour in the sector.

“Minors out of Mining” is a global programme of action led by the ILO. It aims to eliminate child labour in small-scale mining completely within ten years, starting with countries where the problem is most serious. It is a tripartite effort initiated by the concerned governments with the support and assistance of the industry (both companies and workers) and the ILO through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. Thirteen countries have committed to eliminating child labour in mining by 2015.⁵⁰

To focus efforts and assist countries, IPEC has undertaken over a half dozen projects focused on removing girls and boys from mining. For example, a project on the prevention and elimination of child labour in mining in West Africa has been working in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali. A commitment of resources, including from the industry and international community, however, is still needed urgently to end this exploitation on a broader basis and contribute to the overall elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Recognize that girls are exposed to the same hazards as boys

Girls’ work can sometimes be invisible in mining and quarrying and yet they perform the same kind of hazardous tasks as boys. Moreover, because they often have to do domestic chores as well, their overall workload may very well be even heavier. National development programmes and measures in small-scale mining must pay particular attention to the role of girls in this sector.

3.6 FORCED AND BONDED LABOUR

Girls are particularly vulnerable to contemporary forms of forced and bonded labour.

⁵⁰ IPEC: *Minors out of mining!*, Partnership for global action against child labour in small-scale mining (Geneva, ILO, 2006).

Forced child labour

Forced labour is work or service that is exacted under the threat of punishment and undertaken involuntarily. It is a violation of ILO Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29). If it happens to a child under the age of 18 years, it is one of the worst forms of child labour as defined in ILO Convention No. 182. Forced labour occurs not only when boys or girls are coerced by a third party to work under threat of reprisals, but also when a child's work is part of the forced labour imposed on the family as a whole. Children engaged in forced or bonded labour account for two-thirds of those who are found in the worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work. As to forced commercial sexual exploitation, 98 per cent of the victims are believed to be women and girls.⁵¹

Bonded child labour

Bonded labour is when an individual's labour is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan. The person is then trapped into working for very little or no pay, often for seven days a week. The value of the time worked is invariably greater than the original sum of money borrowed. Millions of men, women, boys and girls are held in bonded labour around the world. Debt bondage thrives in the most remote regions, where isolation, threats and violence make it impossible for workers to leave. With direct bonded labour, the debtor pledges his or her own person in return for a loan and is released only on repayment of the debt. Indirect bonded labour occurs when children are bonded through the head of the household. In such cases they are not recognized as workers in their own right.

In some regions of the world bonded child labour is a common traditional arrangement in the agricultural sector. Children born into families that are bonded are likely to become bonded child workers themselves.

Girls frequently enter bonded labour through debt-bondage arrangements negotiated by their parents or guardians, who borrow money by entering into a contract with a broker. Family expenses incurred in order to finance social ceremonies on the occasion of puberty and marriage, were found to be the main origin of bonded debts in Tamil Nadu, India.⁵² Employers offer advances to the male family members, who then put the whole family to work. Debt bondage can render any daughters in the indebted family especially susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.

In Bolivia, research on forced labour among the Guaraní people of the Chaco region found evidence of debt bondage following the payment of advances in cash and in kind.⁵³ The *patrones* who make these arrangements often overprice the goods they offer and under-measure and undervalue the wood they take in exchange. Community members are then required either to provide greater

⁵¹ See ILO: *A global alliance against forced labour* (Geneva, 2005).

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 40-41.

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amounts of wood or to work without pay in nearby logging camps. Wives and children are expected to provide free labour.

If the problems are known, what can be done?

A study published by the ILO in 2005, *Global alliance against forced labour*, cited many anti-forced-labour measures illustrating what has been achieved so far. It presented a global plan for future action in which appropriate legislation plays a major role. One of the priorities identified in the study is prevention, through vigorous enforcement of national laws and regulations. Because poverty and tradition breed forced labour, it is necessary to tackle the underlying causes. These include addressing the problem of marginalization of girls, which can leave them particularly vulnerable. Raising awareness of forced labour is important both for the population at large and for the police and judiciary and other responsible authorities. Follow-up support and rehabilitation are also needed for workers released from forced labour.

3.7 TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Girls and young women are the main victims.

What is trafficking?

As defined by the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, trafficking is “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation”⁵⁴. Trafficking is a crime, through which victims are reduced to commodities to be bought, sold, transported and resold for labour, sexual exploitation and other criminal purposes.⁵⁵

Trafficking in persons

The ILO has estimated that some 2.45 million people are engaged in forced labour as a result of trafficking,⁵⁶ of which children account for between 40

⁵⁴ Article 3(a) of the supplementary Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

⁵⁵ IPEC: *Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation: A resource kit for policy-makers and practitioners*, (Geneva, ILO, 2008).

⁵⁶ ILO: *Human Trafficking and Forced Labour Exploitation: Guidance for Legislation and Law Enforcement* (Geneva, 2005), p. 14.

and 50 per cent. Trafficking for labour is closely linked to work in agriculture, domestic work, construction and unregulated sectors. However some 43 per cent of all those trafficked for forced labour are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. Of this number the overwhelming majority (98 per cent) are women and girls.

Girls vulnerable to trafficking

Much trafficking of children involves young people from rural areas. Young people often do not see rural life as offering attractive prospects for the future. As a result, they can all too easily find themselves recruited to work far from home, sometimes having been promised work with high earnings. When they arrive at their new workplace, they very often find that what is expected of them is not at all what they were promised.

The risks that girls face in such situations vary. On a personal basis, their vulnerability may stem from their young age, from their lack of citizenship if they have moved across a national border, or from reliance on the person who has organised their move.

The fact that they find themselves cut off from their family and community can render girls who have migrated for work particularly vulnerable.

Commercial sexual exploitation of girls

ILO Convention No 182 identifies the use of children in prostitution and pornography as one of the worst forms of child labour. While it is impossible to know the true extent of the problem, the ILO has estimated that at least 1.8 million children are exploited in commercial sex or pornography worldwide, the vast majority of them being girls.⁵⁷

As indicated above, trafficking of girls from rural areas has been identified as a major problem. Very often girls are lured into prostitution in cities, having travelled from rural areas in the belief that they had a chance of employment in legitimate work. Practices such as sending daughters to live and work with members of the extended family can contribute to the vulnerability of girls. A domestic labour environment that becomes abusive can result in the girls leaving the family in which they work. If they believe that they cannot return home or have nowhere to go, such girls are then immediately more vulnerable to individuals who prey on young people in difficult situations.

Some girls become involved in commercial sexual exploitation simply to survive. Very often alternative survival strategies (getting married, entering domestic employment, living with relatives) have failed. Others may have experienced physical or sexual abuse, lack of protection, emotional neglect or abandonment.

⁵⁷ ILO: *A future without child labour: Global report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (Geneva, 2002).

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The effect on girls

Victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation are often subjected to extreme violence, and they may require gynaecological treatment as well as therapeutic counselling for trauma. Sexually exploited girls may experience unwanted pregnancies, and are in danger of contracting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

What are the demand factors?

To meet the demand of the users, or “clients”, there is a knock-on demand for recruiters, traffickers, pimps, brothel owners and employers. “Intermediaries” who facilitate trafficking and sexual exploitation (and who can be family members) also create a demand, regardless of whether or not they are involved in the final exploitation of girls. Addressing the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of girls calls for a strong focus on the demand factors. Users and abusers of girls can only operate when laws are weakly enforced and society and law enforcers turn a blind eye.

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Strengthen national laws and regulations against trafficking and sexual exploitation

The State is responsible for ensuring protection against trafficking and sexual exploitation. This necessarily requires a proper legal framework. Little headway can be made in the elimination of such practices if the legislation and its enforcement are weak. In some countries advocacy is required to improve the legal framework. International or regional pressure can also help to promote the enforcement of the laws against trafficking.

Many international agreements stipulate that underage persons should be protected against commercial sexual exploitation and that the law should punish the adults who are responsible. National laws against the sexual exploitation of children in certain countries must also be strengthened and enforced. Victims must be provided with the care and services they require.

Take action to prevent trafficking

The steps taken by governments and national and international bodies to stop trafficking and sexual exploitation need to work at two levels. On the one hand, urgent action is required to assist victims, removing them from their present environment and supporting them as they seek to rebuild their lives. At the same time an equal focus must be placed on preventative measures, so that the underlying causes of the problem are properly addressed.

Provide information on the dangers of trafficking and sexual exploitation

Experience gained from past programmes of action shows that the most cost-effective way to fight child trafficking is to stop it before it happens. Prevention calls for an understanding of the risks at source, transit and destination. Apart from poverty, the vulnerability of girls at certain ages and from certain backgrounds is a factor that has to be taken into account in the fight against trafficking. Some girls are more at risk than others, and working with the local population at the grassroots level and with former victims of trafficking makes it easier to identify those who are most vulnerable.

In areas known to have high numbers of vulnerable girls, local authorities, schools and other community centres must have information available about the dangers of trafficking and sexual exploitation, so as to raise awareness among girls from an early age. It is important that girls be made aware of the possible dangers before they drop out of school.

Provide employment opportunities and positive options for girls in rural communities

In communities known to be “sending areas”, i.e. the areas girls are trafficked from, development strategies need to focus on providing opportunities for families and girls reaching the minimum age of employment. Local socio-economic development initiatives combined with awareness raising can do much to minimize the need to migrate. ILO-IPEC and other agencies have acquired considerable experience working in sending areas, and the possibility of expanding such efforts should be examined.

Many sending areas suffer from a lack of educational opportunities, and this contributes to pushing girls into exploitative situations. Expanding education and training in these areas is very important.

As girls reach the minimum age of employment, matching employers' demand for certain skills in urban areas with affordable skills training for girls in rural areas has proved promising, according to ILO-IPEC's experience in three provinces in China.⁵⁸ This kind of work, aimed at making the move to urban areas a positive rather than a negative experience, calls for careful coordination, cross-sectoral linkages and networking.

Address demand factors

Male attitudes and behaviour are largely responsible for sexual exploitation and abuse and tolerance of such abuse must be challenged. A study of men and the male image in Latin America that focused on demand issues and increasing awareness and behavioural change among men is described below.

⁵⁸ IPEC: *Trafficking prevention in China: The way forward* (ILO, 2007).

Box 3.12 The male image: A focus on the demand side

In Latin America an innovative study on men and their male image recently opened up new avenues for the prevention of the commercial sexual exploitation of girls and adolescents.

The study showed a surprisingly high tolerance of sexual exploitation of children among men of all social classes, educational levels, ages and places of residences. Training and awareness-raising activities focussing on the male image were organized in several countries, with participants from trade unions, law enforcement agencies, the military, public institutions and NGOs.

As a result of the study, ILO-IPEC in Latin America has produced a range of short briefing notes highlighting the role that various stakeholders can play in the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of girls. Each briefing note is targeted at a specific group, such as police officers, migration officers, teachers, etc.⁵⁹

Stressing human rights and equality

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights instruments place great emphasis on the issue of equality. Raising awareness of equality issues is important if communities are to learn to view girls as equal human beings rather than a burden.

Box 3.13 ILO and UN.GIFT

The United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT) is a partnership initiative aimed at mobilizing state and non-state actors to eradicate human trafficking.⁶⁰

In 2009 UN.GIFT launched its Global report on trafficking in persons. The report reflects the world's response to human trafficking and contains information from 155 countries and territories.

Under UN.GIFT, ILO-IPEC and UNICEF head an initiative that is designed to develop a comprehensive training package to fight trafficking in children.

⁵⁹ IPEC: *The demand side of the commercial sexual exploitation of adolescents: Qualitative study in South America-Summary of results* (Lima, ILO, 2007).

⁶⁰ UN.GIFT partners include the ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

3.8 GIRLS ASSOCIATED WITH ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

There is a need to focus on girls associated with armed forces and groups because girls have special needs during the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Children associated with armed forces and groups

The term “children associated with armed forces and groups” refers to those below 18 years of age who are or have been recruited or used by an armed force or group in any capacity, including but not limited to children used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. In other words, the term does not refer only to boys or girls who take a direct part in hostilities.⁶¹

It is estimated that there are at least 250,000 girls and boys associated with armed forces and groups throughout the world.⁶² Vastly larger numbers are directly affected by armed conflict, including millions of boys and girls trapped in various forms of economic exploitation. Many refugees and war orphans end up on the street, where the risk of commercial sexual exploitation is great.

A number of international instruments prohibit the use of children in armed conflicts, some focussing attention on girls. Some important commitments by the international community are outlined below.

Box 3.14 International commitments on the association of children with armed forces

The ILO’s Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) considers forced or compulsory recruitment of children under 18 in armed conflicts as one of the worst forms of child labour to be eliminated as a matter of urgency.

In February 2007 a number of conflict-affected countries, signed up to the **Paris Commitments to protect children from unlawful recruitment or use by armed forces or armed groups** and the **Principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups** (known as the Paris Principles). The Paris Principles provide guidance on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all categories of children associated with armed groups. Specific guidelines for the reintegration of girls who have been recruited or used by armed forces or armed groups are contained in sections 7.59-7.67.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, which was adopted in 2000, is the first resolution ever passed by the

⁶¹ *The Paris Principles: Principles and guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups*, February 2007. Available at <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/paris-principles.html>.

⁶² Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, available at <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/conflicts.html>.

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Security Council that specifically addresses the impact of war on women, and women's contributions to conflict resolution and sustainable peace. It requires parties in a conflict to respect women's and girls' rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, adopted in 1969, calls on governments to take all feasible measures to ensure that children under the age of 15 do not take a direct part in hostilities and that appropriate measures are put in place to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of child victims of armed conflict. The **Optional Protocol** to the Convention adopted in 2000 urges States to prohibit all recruitment — voluntary or compulsory — of children under the age of 18 by armed forces and groups.

The **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court** makes it a war crime, liable to individual criminal prosecution, to conscript or enlist children under the age of 15 years into armed forces or groups or use them to participate actively in hostilities.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1612, which implements a monitoring and reporting mechanism regarding the use of child soldiers, was adopted in 2005. The resolution requires both governments and armed groups to use time-bound plans of action to end the use and recruitment of child soldiers and calls for the United Nations to monitor and report on violations against children, including the killing or maiming of children, the recruitment or use of child soldiers, attacks against schools or hospitals, rape and other forms of sexual violence, the abduction of children and the denial of humanitarian access.⁶³

Girls in armed forces and armed groups

In times of war girls and young women are often subjected to severe sexual violence. There are many horrific testimonials of girls being abducted, sexually abused, subjected to extreme violence, mutilated and forced to live under inhuman conditions, sometimes as “bush wives”. Girls, including those who join armed forces “voluntarily” in order to escape poverty or for material gain, are particularly vulnerable in situations of conflict.

At the local level, there can be different perceptions of boys and girls who return to their villages after having left the armed forces and groups. Communities may not welcome girls because of the stigma attached to rape, sexual slavery and mothering babies fathered by armed fighters or as a result of rape. Babies can be rejected. At the same time, sexually transmitted diseases are of particular concern, and if these girls die their children become even more vulnerable. It is imperative that girls formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups receive appropriate support.

⁶³ See also <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/resolutions.html>.

A study in 2004 found how that in the aftermath of war, girls and women were usually urged by organizations and community leaders to resume traditional gender roles instead of making new choices and seeking broader opportunities.⁶⁴ The failure to address the needs of demobilized girl soldiers has for long been a glaring problem, as the example below shows.

Box 3.15 Ignoring girls in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process in Sierra Leone

From 2000 onwards, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes were organized for children associated with armed forces and groups in Sierra Leone. More than 6,774 children entered the DDR programme. It was estimated that 30 per cent of the child soldiers in the conflict in Sierra Leone were girls. And yet only 8 per cent (513) of the former child soldiers that took part in the programme were female. This was because the DDR programme did not take into account the gender-specific role played by the girls and the complexity of their situation.

In fact, most of the girls had been considered camp followers and not combatants in their own right, even though they had played many roles in the conflict, as porters and fighters as well as “bush wives” held in sexual slavery by their captors. Some commanders to whom the girls had been attached as bush wives refused to allow the girls to participate in the programme. Other girls refused to take part for fear of stigmatization. When girls cease their association with armed conflicts, some prefer to disappear rather than be further stigmatized as “ex-combatants” as a result of their participation in a DDR programme.⁶⁵

If the problems are known, what can be done?

Address economic aspects of prevention and reintegration

One of the main reasons children become associated with armed forces and groups is to fulfil their material and economic needs. Strategies to address the economic needs of children and their families can therefore play an important role both in preventing children being drawn into association with armed groups, and helping the reintegration into society of children previously associated with such groups. Measures of this kind must be planned and implemented in a manner that meets the different needs and priorities of both male and female children.

⁶⁴ S. McKay and D. Mazurana: *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Mozambique: Their lives during and after war* (Montreal, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 2004).

⁶⁵ *Final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone*, October 2004, and Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers: *Child soldiers global report 2008 – Sierra Leone* (Sierra Leone, 2008).

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Time must be allocated to build the capacity of agencies (such as DDR commissions and other relevant bodies, United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs and civil society groups) so that they can include economic components in programmes aimed at boys and girls.⁶⁶

Ensure gender responsiveness in economic prevention and reintegration

“Gender responsiveness” should be a guiding principle to prevention of recruitment and reintegration through economic measures. The ILO has developed a framework for addressing the economic gap in the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups. One of the six principles of this framework is gender responsiveness. According to this principle, particular attention should be taken to avoid reinforcing existing inequalities between male and female children during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

Ensuring that economic hardship is not made worse for a girl is also stressed. Pro-active female-specific interventions are often necessary to correct gender imbalances and to ensure that girls and young women benefit from prevention and reintegration to the same extent as boys and young men. Agencies involved in DDR must pay attention to the often different economic needs of girls in the wake of armed conflict. Every effort must be made to protect girls from exploitation, including through education and vocational skills training and the provision of alternative economic strategies.⁶⁷

ILO-IPEC experience

The ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour implemented two successive projects from 2003 to 2009 aiming at preventing the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict and supporting the reintegration of those currently involved.

These projects developed and implemented a specific methodology for the economic reintegration of children of working age. This methodology includes provision of vocational orientation, training for economic empowerment (functional literacy and numeric skills, life skills, vocational skills and management training), assistance in starting and maintaining self employment (material support, formulation of business plans, creation of cooperatives, access to micro finance, including micro health insurance) and assistance in obtaining and maintaining wage employment. The methodology is adapted to children with particular needs, including girls.

⁶⁶ IPEC: *Wounded childhood: The use of children in armed conflict in Central Africa* (Geneva, ILO, 2003). Available at <http://www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=948>.

⁶⁷ ILO-IPEC is preparing an Operational Guide on economic reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. As per Article 7.64 in the 2007 Paris Principles and Guidelines on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. Available at <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/parisprinciples.html>.

IPEC's *Strategic Framework for addressing the economic gap in prevention of child recruitment and reintegration of children who have been associated with armed forces and groups* (2007) builds on this experience. It provides a detailed strategic framework to guide child protection agencies implementing DDR programmes for children in order to address issues from an economic perspective.

Box 3.16 Democratic Republic of Congo: Monique's story

Monique was forcibly recruited by the Mai Mai rebels when she was 14 years old. For three years she was used as a cook, a spy and sometime as a fighter. At the age of 17 Monique was released, with her baby fathered by a Mai Mai combatant. Upon her return to her community, she went through a difficult period – two extra mouths to feed were a heavy burden on her already very poor family.

After a few months, Monique was lucky to obtain skills training in agricultural techniques. Through ILO partners, she was provided with entrepreneurship training. Monique was soon able to design a plan for her petty-trade business selling agricultural products. Through the ILO's Start your own business programme, she also gained access to and qualified for micro-credit and health insurance. Monique got married and had a second baby. She is now able to support her two children as well as her parents and siblings.

INVESTING IN THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

4

4.1 EDUCATION – A HUMAN RIGHT AND A KEY TO TACKLING CHILD LABOUR

As stated in Article 23 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, education is a universal human right. However, global data show that at all levels of education girls have less access than boys. Almost two thirds of the world's illiterate population is female, a statistic that reflects the extent of educational inequality.

Children's access to education and the elimination of child labour are closely related. On the one hand, when education is compulsory, free and of good quality, it can greatly help to reduce child labour. On the other hand, child labour is one of the main obstacles to education. Children who are working full time simply cannot manage to attend school as well. The more hours that children work the less likely they are to benefit from schooling.⁶⁸

Investing in the improvement of girls' access to education is widely acknowledged as providing benefits that are important not only in terms of girls' personal development but also as a means of supporting social progress and economic development in general. Educating girls can provide benefits to their future families, their communities and society at large. Some of the specific benefits associated with an investment in girls' education are outlined in Box 4.1 below.

⁶⁸ F. Blanco Allais and F. Hagemann: *Child labour and education: Evidence from SIMPOC surveys*, working paper, IPEC Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) (Geneva, ILO 2008).

Box 4.1 Some of the returns on investment in girls' education⁶⁹

Reducing women's fertility rate

Women with formal education are much more likely to delay marriage and childbearing and have fewer and healthier babies than women with no formal education.

Lowering the infant and child mortality rate

Women with some formal education are more likely to seek medical care, ensure that their children are immunized, be better informed about their children's nutritional requirements, and adopt improved sanitation practices. As a result, their infants have a higher survival rate and tend to be healthier and better nourished.

Lowering the maternal mortality rate

Women with formal education tend to have better knowledge of health care, are less likely to become pregnant at a very young age and tend to have fewer, better-spaced pregnancies and to seek pre- and post-natal care.

Protecting against HIV/AIDS infection

Girls' education is one of the most effective means of reducing girls' vulnerability.

Increasing women's labour force participation rate and earnings

Education both increases potential earnings for wage earners and improves productivity for employers.

Helping the next generation

A mother with a few years of formal education is considerably more likely to send her own children to school, helping to avoid future child labour.

4.2 THE INTERNATIONAL DRIVE TO PROMOTE EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are a major statement of the international community's determination to tackle global poverty and to promote development. Although they do not have a specific target or indicator relating to the elimination of child labour, the MDGs are closely related to efforts to tackle child labour.⁷⁰ The target of the second MDG is to ensure that by 2015 boys and girls everywhere are able to complete a full course of primary

⁶⁹ World Bank: *Girl's education: A World Bank priority*, available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,contentMDK:20298916~menuPK:617572~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y,00.html>.

⁷⁰ H. Tabatabai: "Child labour and the MDGs", in *Inclusãso Social* (Brasília), March 2007, pp. 135-139.

schooling. Achieving universal primary education would be a major step towards the elimination of child labour. The third MDG, to promote gender equality and empower women, seeks to eliminate gender inequity at every level of education by no later than 2015.⁷¹

The MDG targets on education cannot be met unless the factors that generate child labour and prevent families from sending their children to school are addressed.⁷² Many of the MDG targets will not be met unless countries increase their efforts and unless a favourable international environment is created for development and increased donor support.⁷³ The 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report predicted that, on present trends, in 2015 there will still be 29 million children who are not enrolled in primary school.

Box 4.2 Factors that must be addressed to meet the MDG education targets

The following action has been called for by the ILO:

- providing free, public and compulsory education
- reducing poverty and creating decent work for adults so that they can afford to send both their daughters and their sons to school
- ensuring that boys and girls have access to a school and a safe and good-quality learning environment
- enforcing laws against child labour and laws on compulsory education
- ensuring that the teaching force is properly trained and professional
- raising public awareness of the need to eliminate child labour and of the importance of education
- providing transitional education for boys and girls and young adults who have missed out on formal schooling
- removing specific barriers to girls' education.⁷⁴

4.3 GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Education for All (EFA)

The *Education for All* movement made up of governments, NGOs, civil society, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and the media has been gaining

⁷¹ Also relevant to efforts to tackle child labour is MDG 8, “Develop a global partnership for development”. The unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds (youth employment) is one of the goal's indicators

⁷² IPEC: *Education: The right response to child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2008).

⁷³ United Nations: *The Millennium Development Goals report 2005* (New York, United Nations, 2005).

⁷⁴ IPEC: *Education: The right response to child labour*. op. cit. p. 6.

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momentum since the early 1990s. In 2000 participants from 164 countries gathered in Dakar, Senegal, for the World Education Forum, at which a document entitled *Education for all: Meeting our collective commitments* was adopted and the *Dakar Framework for Action* was agreed to by governments. The *Dakar Framework for Action* lays out six goals around education. The first part of an ambitious two-part agenda on gender equity seeks to achieve gender equity in school participation; a second part is aimed at progress towards gender equity in educational opportunities.

Box 4.3 The United Nations Girls' Education Initiative

The *United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UN.GEI)* was launched in 2000 by the United Nations Secretary-General to assist national governments meet their responsibilities towards education and gender equality for all children, girls and boys alike. UN.GEI partners mobilize resources for targeted project interventions, country programmes and activities designed to affect the education system as a whole, but with a clear focus on the promotion of education for girls.⁷⁵

What does gender equality in education mean?

Gender equality in education means girls and boys having equal opportunities to access and participate in education. Gender roles for girls may act as a barrier to their education. For instance, if girls are kept out of school to complete a particular task, such as minding younger siblings, which is deemed more appropriate for girls than for boys, this would be a form of gender inequity affecting the girls' education. Gender inequalities in education can affect both boys and girls. For example, some of the reasons cited for boys dropping out of secondary school in Latin America have been found to relate in part to peer pressure and popular views on gender identity (for example, the view that it is "girlish" for a boy to be too studious helps to form a child's idea of the male image).⁷⁶

4.4 DATA ON GENDER DISPARITIES AND FACTORS AFFECTING GIRLS' EDUCATION

Considerable progress has been made in increasing access to education, especially for girls. Gender gaps in educational attainment are also narrowing. However by 2006 only 59 of 176 countries with data available had achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education enrolment.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ More information at <http://www.ungei.org>

⁷⁶ See also the presentation by Jyotsna Jha: *Boys' underachievement in school* at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLACREGTOPGENDER/Resources/PresentationJha.ppt>

⁷⁷ UNESCO: *Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters*, op cit p.97-107. Provides the data on school enrolment contained in section 4.4.

Gender parity in primary level education

Some 75 million children are still not enrolled in primary school, and 55 per cent of them are girls. In 2006 about two-thirds of the countries with data available had achieved gender parity in primary education enrolment. More than half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States had yet to do so. Some countries, including Pakistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger, still enrol only 80 or fewer girls for every 100 boys at primary level. In 2005 in Afghanistan, there were fewer than 70 girls for every 100 boys entering school. On the other hand, improved policies in some countries have led to a higher enrolment rate. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a much greater effort is needed on all sides for gender parity to become a reality in primary enrolment by 2015.

Gender parity in secondary level education

The number of children enrolled in secondary school worldwide, expressed as a percentage of the total number of children of secondary school age (the gross secondary school enrolment ratio), is 67 per cent for boys and 63 per cent for girls. However, enrolment ratios vary enormously from region to region. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the secondary school enrolment ratio for boys is just 36 per cent and for girls only 29 per cent.

It should be noted that gender disparities are not always at the expense of girls, and there are a number of countries where it is the boys who are negatively affected at the secondary school level. The overall global data, however, show a clear picture of girls in general being at a disadvantage, and in many countries very significantly so.

Being female and poor decreases the likelihood of access to education

Gender disparities in enrolment are only one factor affecting access to education and educational outcome. According to the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009*, global and regional averages can conceal as much as they reveal. In all countries, some girls face greater disadvantage than others. Children in poorer households are less likely to attend school than their wealthier counterparts, whether they are boys or girls. For example, in Mali girls from poorer households are four times less likely to be attending primary school than richer girls, and eight times less likely at the secondary level.

Poorer families are often unable to afford school fees, uniforms and other indirect costs associated with school. When a family has to make a choice between sending a boy or a girl to school, it is often the boy who will go. Girls are especially disadvantaged and at higher risk of being excluded from education in fragile States and during emergencies.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ UNGEI: *Transforming policy and practice for gender in education: A gender review of the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report*, UNGEI technical paper, November 2008 .

Progress is being made

Many governments have made substantial commitments to improve access to education and to increase the enrolment of girls. There has, for example, been substantial progress in many countries in South and West Asia, where between 1999 and 2009 the number of girls enrolled per 100 boys rose from 84 to 95. A range of initiatives aimed at boosting education are currently under way in countries across the world. Most significant has been the move in many countries to abolish school fees, which has led to significant increases in enrolment.

Conditional cash transfers (CTTs) have proved to be an effective means of encouraging school attendance in many countries. CCT programmes involve governments making cash payments to persons who meet certain criteria; these may include the regular attendance of children at school or regular visits of family members to health centres.⁷⁹ In general, these programmes are believed to be yielding positive returns in terms of school attendance and impact on child labour. Brazil's Programme for the eradication of child labour *Programa de erradicação do trabalho infantil* (PETI), which has the reduction of child labour as its foremost objective, is a case in point.⁸⁰

CCTs have generally been reported as having a positive effect on girls' education. Some countries, like Mexico, even pay a higher stipend for girls to attend school than for boys. Cambodia and Pakistan's scholarship programmes transfer cash to families provided their daughter enrolls in secondary school.⁸¹

School feeding programmes can also be a powerful incentive for poor families to send their children to school. In some cases the meal a child receives at school may be the only meal of the day, so the importance of such programmes cannot be underestimated.

Box 4.4: Cash transfer programmes to promote education

The Girls' Stipend Program in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the Female Secondary School Stipend programme has provided money directly to girls and their families to cover tuition and other costs, on the condition that they be enrolled in secondary school and remained unmarried until the age of 18. By 2005 girls accounted for 56 per cent of secondary school enrolment in the areas covered by the programme, compared to 33 per cent in 1991.⁸²

⁷⁹ H. Tabatabai: *Eliminating child labour: The promise of conditional cash transfers*, IPEC. (Geneva, ILO, 2006).

⁸⁰ Programa de erradicação do trabalho infantil (PETI),

⁸¹ ILO Gender Bureau and IPEC: *Formula for progress: Educate both girls and boys!* (Geneva, ILO, 2008).

⁸² J. Raynor and K. Wesson: "The girls' stipend program in Bangladesh", in *Journal of Education for International Development*, July 2006.

PROGRESA and the continuation of girls' enrolment in secondary school

PROGRESA is a major programme of the Mexican Government. Cash transfers are given to mothers in poor households on condition that their children attend school regularly and that the family members visit health care centres. Statistics show that PROGRESA has had the largest impact on children who enter secondary school, with a percentage increase in enrolment of more than 20 per cent for girls and 10 per cent for boys. Most of the positive impact on enrolment is attributable to an increase in re-enrolment from one year to the next rather than on getting out-of-school children to return.⁸³

LEAP in Ghana

In Ghana the *Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty* (LEAP) programme is being developed as a national social protection strategy which provides direct cash transfers to support the poorest and most vulnerable segments of the population. Participating households are required to enrol and keep all school-age children in public schools. LEAP aims to ensure that no child in the household is trafficked or employed in any activities constituting the worst forms of child labour.⁸⁴

The global financial and economic crisis threatens progress

There is serious concern that the current global economic and financial crisis could have a significant negative impact on education and child labour. A number of reasons justify this concern:

- The ILO and other international agencies have pointed to the likelihood of a major increase in unemployment and poverty resulting from the crisis. In cultures where a higher value is placed on the education of male children and a poor family has to decide between educating a boy and a girl, the girl may well lose out and be taken out of school.
- Remittances are a key source of income for rural families and can provide a financial buffer to allow for younger children to receive an education. A decline in remittances (both national and international) is expected, and this could have a serious knock-on effect in poorer regions.
- Governments may be forced to make budget cuts. Education is sometimes seen as a “soft” budget that can easily be reduced. Cuts in spending on education can create pressure leading to children dropping out of school and entering the workforce.
- A reduction in international aid budgets could threaten donor support for education and jeopardize any education plans that depend on it.

⁸³ E. Skoufias: *PROGRESA and its impacts on the welfare of rural households in Mexico*, Research Report Abstract 139 (Washington DC, International Food Policy Research Institute).

⁸⁴ See the LEAP website at http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghana/livelihood_empowerment_against_poverty_leap_some_facts_you_need_know.jsp

Give girls a chance

Against this background it is critical that policy-makers undertake an assessment of the employment, education and welfare effects of proposed recovery packages. The response to the crisis must include measures to re-prioritize budget expenditures so as to benefit poor and vulnerable households. It is important to guard against the risk of both girls and boys being removed from school.

4.5 LINKS BETWEEN CHILD LABOUR AND EDUCATION

There has been increasing international recognition of the need to link work on tackling child labour with efforts to promote education, two goals that are directly related. A 2008 ILO report showed that a high incidence of child labour was associated with a low position on the Education for All Development Index.⁸⁵

There is growing interest in looking at ways of using household data on child labour and experience of what actually works in tackling child labour to help provide targeted education programmes. The aim would be to ensure that education programmes effectively benefit the children who are most difficult to reach. In doing so, special attention must be given to girls. As has been seen, domestic and other work as well as the weight of tradition can restrict girls' access to education, and the "invisibility" of girls who work in households and in agriculture makes them especially hard to reach.

Education as a monitoring mechanism for child labour

The education system can itself be a very useful means of helping to monitor child labour. Teachers, for example, can identify children who are at risk of dropping out of school. In Kampot and Sihanoukville in Cambodia, IPEC has worked with teachers in certain schools in order to set up a child labour warning system. When teachers see signs that children are regularly missing school, they contact the guardians or parents, explaining to them the long-term importance of education and of the children staying in school.⁸⁶

Children can learn about child labour at school

Education can provide an opportunity to help boys and girls find out about their rights and to protect them from child labour. Information on the subject is being

⁸⁵ F. Blanco Allais and F. Hagemann, op.cit. The Education for All Development Index (EDI) is a composite using four of the six EFA goals, selected on the basis of data availability. The higher the EDI value, the closer the country is to achieving Education for All.

⁸⁶ IPEC: *Consolidated good practices in education and child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2008).

integrated into curricula in many parts of the world, as well as being communicated through non-formal education projects.

Box 4.5 SCREAM: Supporting Children’s Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media

SCREAM is a tool developed by ILO-IPEC to help educators in formal and non-formal education settings to cultivate young people’s understanding of the causes and consequences of child labour. It has a strong gender focus, enabling girls and boys to consider how child labour can affect them and their families. SCREAM equips young people with knowledge, information and tools and gives them confidence to act against child labour. The SCREAM Education Pack is now available in 19 languages and has been integrated into school curricula in many countries.

4.6 TACKLING BARRIERS TO THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS

Quality education requires adequate investment and focus on needs of girls

Many countries are faced with a lack of schools, classrooms in serious disrepair, lack of textbooks and a shortage of trained teachers. These factors present barriers to enrolling children and to delivery of quality education. For girls, the distance to school and safety concerns, lack of separate sanitary facilities at school, and lack of female teachers particularly at secondary level, are factors which can lead to early drop out from school. Tackling these problems and providing quality education requires adequate financial resources to be allocated to the education sector.

Some specific measures to attract and keep girls in school are listed in box 4.6.

Box 4.6 Keeping girls in school

Keeping girls in school calls for a variety of measures. These include:

- Addressing cultural and social constraints to girls’ education and ensuring girls’ safety in accordance with cultural requirements. Girls are often more restricted in their movements than their brothers. While the physical distance to schools can hinder all children’s attendance, concerns about pregnancy in some cultures result in excessive restrictions on girls, thereby limiting their chance of receiving education.
- Making schools more “girl-friendly” and improving their infrastructure – for example, providing separate toilet facilities for girls.

Give girls a chance

Teaching in ways that discourage gender stereotypes; training female teachers to act as role models

Including the community in the management of schools; sensitizing parents and guardians so that they perceive education as relevant to their daughters' lives and overcoming the perception that education for girls is merely an investment in the future husband's household rather than in the bride's household.

Increasing demand for education by eliminating school fees, providing stipends and conditional cash transfers for girls.

Improving the economic returns to education for girls by improving its quality; the educational curriculum can often appear detached from local needs, values and future employment opportunities for girls.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ World Bank: *Girls' education in the 21st century: Gender equality, empowerment, and economic growth* (Washington DC, 2008), p. 6; and B. Herz and G. Sperling: *What works in girls' education: Evidence and policies from the developing world* (Bangkok, Council on Foreign Relations, 2006).

ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

5

5.1 AN UNEQUAL STARTING LINE

This chapter focuses on the experience of girls who have reached the minimum age of employment and who require decent work. For young persons, especially those suffering from poor education or poverty, the transition to the labour market can be particularly difficult. If they are unable to continue in education, by the time they reach the minimum age of employment, girls may already be at a disadvantage compared to boys.

5.2 THE TRANSITION TO A “DECENT WORK” SITUATION CAN BE ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT FOR GIRLS

Adolescent girls receive a variety of conflicting and confusing messages on their gender role from their parents, teachers, peers and the media, and these can often be decisive in channelling girls into working at home or taking up some form of employment outside the home. Such decisions may well affect their future capacity to support themselves and other household members.

Girls entering the labour force may be unclear about their rights and responsibilities on issues such as recruitment processes, wage systems, hours of work and other working conditions.

Box 5.1 Protection of young girls in their first employment: Staying safe at work

Girls or young women aged 14-18 years who are starting out in their working life may be less aware of the risks they may encounter when they start working. For example, many girls are not well informed about hiring procedures, which leaves them at a disadvantage as they are not sure what to expect or what to ask. Many girls, too, are unaware of the benefits they are entitled to at work. They may also not realise that they are eligible to join a trade union.

In order to make up for this lack of information in the United Republic of Tanzania, the ILO office in Dar es Salaam has produced a useful guide for girls outlining what they need to know to stay safe at work.⁸⁸

Access to skills training for young women

Vocational training and skills development for young men and women can play an important role in the transition to work, but opportunities for training are often limited. In many cultures the training that is available to young women is still restricted to traditional “female” skills. Many of the courses that are organized for young women actually reinforce their traditional roles and responsibilities (for example, health, beauty and child-care courses). Such an emphasis reduces the chances of their entering careers or fields that are perceived as “unfeminine.” Young women who may have the opportunity to move beyond traditional skills and into newer or non-traditional occupations can become more “employable” and possibly earn a better living too.

Social factors often put pressure on women to engage in training that gives them access only to low-productivity and low-paid jobs. Sometimes young women require much encouragement and strong incentives to sign up for courses which they may have been told are not appropriate for them. Moreover, because many young women may already be mothers or have caring responsibilities outside work, logistical arrangements must be carefully planned.

Box 5.2: A gender-sensitive model for training institutions

The FORMUJER programme in Argentina, Bolivia and Costa Rica has provided opportunities for vocational training institutions to enhance their capacity to improve the quality of training.

FORMUJER has a focus on the labour needs of low-income women. The approach adopted in the FORMUJER programme is that individuals themselves must become empowered if they are to change their own situation. Strengthening the employability of women often requires basic skills training. Women account

⁸⁸ ILO: *Protection of girls at work “What girls need to know to stay safe at work”*, (Dar es Salaam, 2008).

for 85 per cent of the individuals trained under the programme, many of them receiving training in areas that are not traditionally “female”.⁸⁹

Apprenticeships and young women

Informal, or “traditional”, apprenticeships are a major source of skills and training for work. However, traditional apprenticeships tend to benefit boys more than girls.⁹⁰ Girls may be told that certain occupations are only appropriate for boys and employers of apprentices may restrict their choice of apprentices to boys. Encouraging girls to undertake apprenticeships can assist them in moving into “non traditional” areas of work in which earnings may be better.⁹¹

Box 5.3 Moving beyond jobs traditionally reserved for boys requires support on many fronts

Reforming traditional apprenticeships is part of the strategy of an ILO/IPEC project to combat the worst forms of child labour in the urban informal economy in sub-Saharan English-speaking Africa.⁹² One of its aims is to provide girls with opportunities to engage in training in traditionally male-dominated trades, for example in the electricity, construction and computer-related trades. Providing girls with opportunities has meant confronting opposition on several fronts, including at times from the parents of the girls and the apprenticeship partners themselves. Such opposition is often based on gender stereotypes.

Information on jobs and training opportunities that is not available to women

Information about training and employment opportunities sometimes does not reach young women. This may be because information is conveyed through channels that are inaccessible to them, or because placement services are geared to a male clientele. Much recruitment is through informal contacts and networks, and if young women are excluded from them they will not receive information.

⁸⁹ E. Leite: *FORMUJER: An integral perspective on equity and quality in training*, Ex-post executive summary, (June 2004), p. 5.; and CINTERFOR/ILO: *A training policy model for enhancing employability and gender equity: The FORMUJER Programme*.

⁹⁰ ILO: *Youth Pathways to decent work. Promoting youth employment – Tackling the challenge*, Report VI, International Labour Conference, 93rd Session (Geneva, 2005).

⁹¹ U. Murray: *Gender and skills development: Practical experiences and ways forward*, (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming).

⁹² ILO: *ILO activities in Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda* (Dar es Salaam, 2008).

Give girls a chance

Early marriage or motherhood limits training opportunities

Many young women in the developing world have little choice but to get married early. Most young brides become young mothers. Apart from the health implications of early pregnancy, this restricts the access of young women to productive jobs. For young mothers, childcare and household chores tend to severely limit the possibility of further training or education.

5.3 DATA ON LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PERSONS

On average, both young women and young men are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than adults.

An examination of the youth labour force participation rates shows that the differences in employment opportunity between the sexes are pronounced.⁹³ In 2007 the male youth labour force participation rate was 58 per cent, while the female participation rate was 43 per cent. The biggest percentage differences between male and female youth labour force participation rates were in South Asia (64 per cent for males and under 28 per cent for females) and the Middle East (almost 51 per cent for males and 22 per cent for females).⁹⁴

Since the late 1990s there has been a closing of the gaps between young males and young females in terms of labour force participation in all regions. Employment growth among young women has outpaced that of young men in six out of nine regions globally.⁹⁵

There remains a need to analyze the type of employment that is being made available to young women and the links between education, child labour and future labour force participation.

5.4 SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Informal sector work options for young women

In most countries wage employment and the formal economy can only absorb a fraction of all new labour force entrants. It falls upon the informal economy to absorb the rest. As we have seen in this report, girls' employment is concentrated mainly in informal employment in agriculture, in domestic work and other services and in small-scale manufacturing.

⁹³ The labour force participation rate is the sum of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the working-age population.

⁹⁴ ILO: *Global employment trends for youth*, op. cit., table A3, (Geneva, 2004) p. 53.

⁹⁵ ILO: *Global employment trends for youth*, (Geneva, 2004) p. 5.

Female entrepreneurs need support

Despite the hurdles that women face, female entrepreneurs are becoming a driving force of many economies, particularly in Africa where some studies indicate that businesses owned by women can account for as much as 50 per cent of all businesses.⁹⁶ Young women may begin their working life by helping out or working for female entrepreneurs, who may be their relatives or friends. Before they can branch out and start their own business, they may have to overcome many barriers.

Training in entrepreneurship can do a good deal to help young women to run small businesses. Unfortunately entrepreneurship training opportunities – if available at all – are often not as accessible to young women as they are to young men. In addition, young women may be denied access to financial credit and business support to enable them to run competitive businesses. The lack of collateral to secure credit is a common problem for young women, often due to gender bias in patterns of inheritance and ownership legislation. This bias against women taking initiatives in small enterprises exists in many countries.⁹⁷

Box 5.4 Supporting female entrepreneurs

Many guides have been published by the ILO and by national and international agencies on the training for women entrepreneurs.

The ILO's Know about Business (KAB) is an entrepreneurship education programme for young women and men in secondary, technical/vocational training schools and higher education. The programme has been implemented in more than 40 countries and has reached more than half a million students.

GET Ahead for Women Entrepreneurs was developed by the ILO for the specific needs of women with low-income and low-literacy levels. GET Ahead aims to: promote women's economic and social empowerment among low-income groups and equal opportunities for women and men in enterprise development; to increase the capacity of entrepreneurs to consolidate and grow their income generating activities into sustainable enterprises; and to increase the capacity of trainers to provide participatory training in order to build basic business management skills among entrepreneurs.

⁹⁶ International Organisation of Employers (IOE), quoted in ILO: *Skills and entrepreneurship: Bridging the technology and gender divide*, (Geneva, 2008).

⁹⁷ U. Murray and A. Boros: *A guide to gender-sensitive microfinance* (FAO, Rome, 2002). Available at <http://www.fao.org/sd/seaga/downloads/En/Microfinanceen.pdf>

5.5 ADDRESSING PROBLEMS THAT ADOLESCENT GIRLS FACE IN THE YOUTH LABOUR MARKET

Providing opportunities for young women to catch up on missed education

Former child workers who miss out on basic education should be offered opportunities to correct this. Good practices have been documented which describe efforts to provide non formal and vocational education for girls, and in many instances there is potential for replicating such good practices.⁹⁸

Devising youth employment policies that are gender sensitive

Labour market policies and programmes can help to facilitate the entry of young men and women into the labour market. Many governments have designed policies that emphasize youth employment. Labour market programmes should include explicit strategies to facilitate female participation.

Tackling gender stereotypes in skills training

Training course providers should avoid targeting skills training at one sex rather than another. Stereotyping can be simply a matter of the language used in the description of training courses, but it may also stem from gender bias within the training institution itself.

Providing apprenticeship opportunities for young women

Apprenticeship opportunities should be equally accessible to girls and boys. Deliberate strategies should be put in place to encourage girls to undertake apprenticeships. One key step is to examine the social factors that act against girls in specific trades and identify ways to overcome barriers to their participation.

Overcoming gender constraints in enterprise level and entrepreneurial training

Strategies are needed that encourage both young women and young men to benefit from enterprise-level training and skills development. Entrepreneurship training must take account of the particular needs, constraints and opportunities of younger women.

Ensuring young workers are aware of their rights

It is important that young people commencing work are aware of their legal rights. Employers and trade unions both have a role to play in providing clear

⁹⁸ See for example Case Studies from China and the Philippines in UNGEI: *Empowering girls through partnerships in education* (East Asia and Pacific Region UNGEI, 2007).

information to young workers on matters of pay, hours of work, health and safety and other working conditions.

Collecting data on the youth labour market

National development strategies need to have access to accurate, high-quality and disaggregated data. The ILO's Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), urges member States to collect information, disaggregated by sex, age and other socio-economic characteristics, on education levels, qualification, training activities and employment and incomes in order to guide them in their policy-making. The ILO's School-to-Work Transition Survey is a tool that can help countries to collect in-depth information on the labour market situation of young men and women.⁹⁹ The systematic analysis of data reveals strengths and weaknesses in the youth labour market and can point to the main challenges to be addressed by policy makers.

⁹⁹ Country reports from ILO School-to-Work Transition survey's are available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/yett/swts.htm>

6

SUMMARY AND THE POLICY RESPONSE

6.1 GOVERNMENTS HAVE PRIME RESPONSIBILITY

This report has presented an overview of the problem of girls and child labour in the world today. It has provided data on the scale of the problem, looked at the nature of girls work, and has detailed the reasons why the situation of girls requires special attention. In looking at various forms of girls work the report has identified some of the main actions needed to combat child labour in specific sectors.

It is the responsibility of Governments to take the lead in tackling child labour. ILO Convention No. 182 calls for time-bound measures to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and countries ratifying the Convention are required to take immediate measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. The Convention states that this should include consideration of the special situation of girls.

Ten years after the adoption of Convention No. 182 it would be appropriate for national governments, through established structures that address child labour, to reflect on progress being made and action required to meet their obligations under both Convention No. 182 and Convention No. 138 with specific attention to the situation of girls. Effective representation by the social partners will be very important in such discussions, especially in helping countries to develop broadly supported strategies to achieve the ILO's goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach* (Geneva, 2006) op. cit. p. 85.

6.2 FOCUS ON POVERTY REDUCTION

Girls and boys in situations of poverty are much more likely to be engaged in child labour than those from more affluent families. Development policies that seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability of children are the key to achieving major and sustainable progress in tackling child labour. National poverty reduction strategies play an important role in determining the path of economic and social development in many developing countries and it is important that issues of tackling child labour and promoting decent work for adults are integrated into such strategies.

Investment in the education and training of girls can play a very important role in helping to break the poverty cycle and should be a priority reflected in development plans and programmes. It is also important that plans and programmes address issues of gender inequalities in labour markets, which can limit the opportunities available to girls who have reached the minimum age of employment.

Social protection measures that target poor families can play an important role. Cash transfer programmes provide examples of resources being used to target and support vulnerable families, improving children's prospects of education and health care. Incentives such as school food programmes, which ensure that poor children receive a meal each day at school, can make the difference between a child being in school or in child labour.

The need to tackle child labour cuts across the mandate of many ministries. Ministries including those responsible for labour, education, finance, social affairs, women, children and youth should all have an interest in tackling child labour. Each should identify how their policies and programmes can be developed in order to support efforts to eliminate child labour and should give specific consideration to the situation of girls.

6.3 FOCUS ON EDUCATION

The provision of free, compulsory and quality education, at least up to the minimum age of employment, is the most important policy step a government can take to tackle child labour. Reducing the indirect cost of education (uniforms, books, transport, food, etc.) is also an important means of removing burdens that may otherwise prevent poor families from sending their children to school.

There are often specific barriers to girls' participation in education arising from cultural attitudes, safety concerns, and the multiple disadvantages that girls may experience. Such barriers need to be identified at the national and local level so that appropriate strategies to tackle them can be identified and implemented.

Quality education requires a professional teaching force and a decent school environment. It is therefore important that national governments and donors support the education sector with adequate investment. There is a major

worldwide shortage of teachers which needs to be tackled. Female teachers can serve as role models for girls and encourage their participation in education.

In developing education sector plans consideration must be given to those children who remain unreached by, or poorly served by the education system. Children in child labour are a major part of this group. Available data and knowledge on child labour, including child labour among girls, can be used to support the targeting of children currently excluded from education. Good practices in tackling child labour among girls and promoting their education should be identified and scaled up into national initiatives.

6.4 LABOUR INSPECTION

Effective labour inspection is vital to ensure that the principles embodied in international labour standards and national legislation on child labour are respected. Labour inspection can play an important role both in enforcing minimum age legislation and in monitoring the working conditions of young people who have reached the minimum age of employment.

In the discussion of ways and means of tackling child labour, labour inspection is all too often not assigned the priority it deserves. This may be because child labour is mainly concentrated in agriculture and in small-scale informal enterprises, which under-resourced labour inspectorates have difficulty reaching. It is therefore necessary to examine how the capacity of labour inspection services can be built up so that they can effectively reach such workplaces.

Labour inspectorates need to develop policies to address child labour and to provide appropriate training for inspectors, bearing in mind the special problems facing girls and the need to reach children of both sexes engaged in “hidden” work. Helping to tackle the problem of child labour is one way in which labour inspectorates can raise their profile and demonstrate their effectiveness in supporting good governance of the labour market.

6.5 KNOWLEDGE BASE

This report has provided an overview of many of the issues surrounding child labour among girls. To support further policy and programme development, the knowledge base relating to the work of girls needs to be strengthened. This should include an in-depth analysis of the various aspects of child labour among girls, as well as of the relationship between child labour and the challenges facing adolescent girls in the labour market.

6.6 RESPONSES TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The global financial and economic crisis is pushing an increasing number of families into poverty. This could have a negative impact on child labour if families pull children out of school. When a poor family has to choose between sending either a boy or girl to school, in cultures in which a higher value is placed on boys education, girls are at particular risk of being pulled out of school.

Governments should ensure that measures implemented in response to the crisis do not have the effect of making the child labour situation worse. It is important that policy makers undertake an assessment of the possible employment, education and welfare implications of proposed recovery packages. The response to the crisis must include giving priority to budget expenditure that benefits poor and vulnerable households. Care must be taken to guard against the risk of both girls and boys being pulled out of school, and it should be noted that girls could be at special risk.



**International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
International Labour Office (ILO)**

**4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland**

Tel: +41 (0) 22 799 81 81

Fax: +41 (0) 22 799 87 71

e-mail: ipec@ilo.org

www.ilo.org/ipec

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