

CHILD LABOR IN ASIA: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION IN THAILAND AND INDIA

by

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Child labor is an important global concern. Among 317 million children who are engaged in any type of labor around the world, Asia harbors the largest number of child workers. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has focused on and worked toward the global elimination of child labor, especially its worst forms. Child labor is a complex problem which needs comprehensive approaches in policy implication, education and economic development. The ILO has worked closely with governments to establish and revise policies related to child labor and to implement child labor programs.

This study addresses current child labor trends in Asia and the challenges and responses of the ILO through analyzing its operations in Thailand and India. It examines various steps to eliminate child labor taken by the ILO and other organizations and

suggests ways the ILO could be more effective in its efforts to eliminate child labor in Asia.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Children are the most vulnerable human beings yet are also the hope for humanity's future. The place where we were born and the culture where we grow up make us unique as an individual and allow us to build up our own perceptions towards the world. Regardless of our differences, children are tomorrow's future. However, while there are children who have grown up with economic and physical security in some parts of the world, many children, mostly in developing countries, suffer economic, physical and emotional insecurities. A large number of these children must work for their survival often doing things unthinkable in wealthy countries of the world.

In 2004, there were approximately 218 million child laborers between the ages of 5 to 17 around the world (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2006a, 2006b). There are many reasons why child work, but poverty is the most critical. Since child labor becomes the norm in impoverished families, the demand for education remains low and the lack of educational opportunity perpetuates both poverty and child labor. Recent globalization trends in the world has also accelerated the pace of children entering the labor market to comprise a cheaper labor force, and many parents are willing to offer children to employers to increase the family income for their daily survival.

Considering the diversity of customs and cultures in addition to the ongoing process of economic globalization, we cannot criticize child labor or children in the workplace from a unilateral point of view. The economic help that children provide is

necessary for their daily survival in many countries, and many child workers can successfully combine their daily work with education and play. However, far too many children are placed in dangerous conditions and put their whole future in jeopardy without being guaranteed their rights as a child. While most children work to support their family, many children are treated as slaves and work under indefensible exploitative conditions.

The international community has made determined efforts to respond to child labor by setting high global goals and standards. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) requires that children be protected from all exploitative and hazardous work and from work that interferes with their education and development. International Labor Conventions on Child Labor, such as the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999 (No. 182), set the boundaries of the types of work that are acceptable under international standards.

The elimination of child labor has emerged as a worldwide priority. As the result of recent global collective action against child labor, the number of child workers has fallen by 11 percent of total child workers between 2000 and 2004, while that of children in hazardous work decreased by 26 percent (ILO, 2006a, 2006b). This data shows that when there is a strong international commitment to the elimination of child labor and acceptance of policy measures that contribute to reducing the number of children at work, a significant decline comes over time. However, the global community recognizes there is a need to implement more progressive solutions.

The issue of child labor is very complicated and difficult to solve. Simply releasing children from work cannot fully solve this problem since there are many factors involved in child labor, the most compelling being the economic difficulties of families, cultural acceptance of child labor, and inappropriate and ineffective education systems. A more holistic approach ranging from poverty reduction strategies, substantive and useful education, effective law and policy implementation, and negative sanctions on social acceptance are essential to tackle this problem.

Many organizations are committed to eliminating child labor through working in their respective fields of expertise. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has tackled child labor through offering advice to governments on setting policies or regulations as well as implementing numerous programs. These include direct projects such as offering vocational training to children and indirect projects to strengthen the skill of government officials and members of employers and workers' organizations. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has worked on improving access to and the quality of education and health services. Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the grassroots level have implemented such programs as releasing children from work as well as offering non-formal education options.

It is important to consider why children are working and under what conditions, and to ascertain if the work that children perform is allowed within the framework of protecting their rights as a child in a given country. Thus, in order to tackle the issue of child labor, it is necessary to take into consideration the implementation of flexible and adaptable programs suited for children and the society in which they are living.

### **Objectives and Purposes of This Research**

This thesis is based on my internship experience at the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok, Thailand, from May to September 2007. My goal was to explore the situation of child labor in Asia and the role being played by the ILO for the elimination of child labor. As part of my internship responsibilities, I conducted research on regional child labor issues. Assisting the International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) Thailand deepened my understanding towards the issue of child labor and the role of the ILO for the elimination of child labor.

This thesis has four objectives. The first objective is to clarify what child labor is and to present the current international legal framework on child labor. The ILO has International Labor Conventions to set international labor standards. Two of these conventions are specifically aimed at child labor, defining the minimum age and working conditions in which children are allowed to work. Many governments and organizations adhere to those two conventions when they set labor laws or plan specific programs to tackle the issue of child labor.

The second objective is to present an overview of child labor trends in Asia. Asia harbors the largest number of economically active children age 5 to 14 years—122 million in total (ILO, 2006b)—and many children are found in dangerous and exploitative working conditions. It is important to be aware of industrial sectors in which children are working and if there is gender segregation by industries so as to grasp a more accurate situation of child labor in the region.

The third objective is to analyze the programs of the ILO. The ILO is the leading multilateral organization focused on eliminating child labor. In 1992, it created the IPEC, which has become the largest program of its kind globally and the biggest single operational program of the ILO to address the issue of child labor. This thesis analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the program of the ILO carry out in Thailand and India. Both Thailand and India have historically had an abundance of child laborers. Today, however, Thailand has considerably less child labor than India has. Here we can see clearly the effects of programs underway.

The fourth objective is to analyze the major approaches currently being undertaken to alleviate and eliminate child labor by governments and many organizations. The most effective practices to prevent and eliminate child labor around the world are considered to be policy implementations, introduction of compulsory education, and promotion of economic development. Through a comparison of Thailand and India, which are at different stages of development, I analyze what kinds of approaches serve best to alleviate child labor from countries which have different economic circumstances and opportunities.

### **Organization**

Chapter II presents the internationally accepted definitions related to child labor as well as detailed descriptions of international Conventions on child labor. The Conventions of the ILO are widely accepted to measure acceptable working conditions and sectors and minimum ages to enter work. Governments that have ratified the



international Conventions and support organizations which work for the issue of child labor usually follow the standards stated in those international Conventions.

Chapter III presents the regional characteristics of child labor in Asia and discusses the types of labor in which children are engaged. Around the world and without exception in Asia, most child workers are employed in agriculture. The majority of children also perform domestic duties. Through statistical data in Asia, I present the current situation of child workers there. Chapter III also presents the ILO's operations in Asia and the factors that contribute to child labor and elaborates upon the three major approaches undertaken to alleviate child labor. It is widely understood that poverty, lack of education and child labor are linked strongly to each other. Child labor is a central obstacle to realizing the rights of children to education by depriving them of the opportunity to go to school and hence perpetuating the cycle of poverty. The policy implications of labor law regulations mandating that children be released from work are important to consider, for are there enough educational opportunities provided for such poor children. The availability of universal education is a precondition before it is viable to release children from work and also empower them. Economic development of a country is a necessity to raise households' income to avoid children engaging in productive activities. I also discuss the current discussion regarding the consequences of economic growth on child labor.

Chapters IV and V discuss the ILO programs on child labor through case studies in Thailand and India. As the ILO is the leading organization dedicated to the elimination of child labor, analyzing the programs of the ILO helps us understand and identify the

problems such organizations face and the current trends and best practices of donor agencies to tackle the issue of child labor. I also present my own observations and analysis based on my internship with the ILO. The approach towards the elimination of child labor by multilateral organizations like the ILO and other organizations such as NGOs is quite different. Each organization has both strengths and weaknesses, as I point out in these chapters.

Chapter VI identifies the factors which have brought more success for Thailand in decreasing child labor than in India. Even though both Thailand and India have adopted similar approaches, Thailand has achieved better results than India. I conclude this thesis with suggestions for what India needs to do to decrease child labor, enumerating successful examples of Thailand and challenges the ILO still faces to accelerate the elimination of child labor.

### **History of the International Labour Organization**

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is an affiliate of the United Nations. Its specialization is on labor issues and it is comprised of a body of 178 states members. It is one of the oldest international organizations, created in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I. Its creation was to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. The ILO's own history asserts that driving forces behind its creation arose from security, humanitarian, political, and economic considerations (ILO, n.d. c). Since its creation, the ILO has four main strategic objectives:

- Promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work
- Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income
- Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

The ILO has been devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues (ILO, n.d. a). The ILO helps advance the creation of decent jobs and the kinds of economic and working conditions that give working people and businesses a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. The ILO hosts an International Labor Conference once a year considered as “the international meeting place for the world of work” (ILO, n.d. b). The ILO consists of experts on work and employment who focus on the critical roles that these issues play in bringing about economic development and progress. At the heart of its mission is helping countries build the institutions that are the bulwarks of democracy and to help them become accountable to the people (ILO, n.d. b).

The most prominent characteristic of the ILO is that it encourages tripartism, bringing together workers, employers and governments within member States by promoting social dialogue to help design and implement national policies. The achievement of fair terms of employment, decent working conditions, and development for the benefit of all cannot be conceived without the consent of workers, employers and governments, including a broad-based effort by all of them. The ILO emphasizes and encourages strengthening social dialogue among the tripartite constituents and helps

governments, employers and workers' organizations to establish sound labor relations, adapt labor laws to meet changing economic and social needs and improve labor administration (ILO, n.d. e). Employers and workers' organizations have an equal voice with governments in all its deliberations.

### **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour**

When the United Nations adopted the watershed Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1989, the ILO was poised to provide direct assistance to countries to tackle child labor (ILO, 2006a). In 1992, the ILO created the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labor, which was to be achieved through strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and by promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labor (ILO, n.d. d). IPEC is the single largest operational and technical cooperation program of the ILO focused exclusively on child labor.

Since 2002, IPEC's projects and programs have reached around 5 million children. It currently operates in 88 countries with an annual expenditure on technical cooperation projects that reached over US\$74 million in 2006 (ILO, 2006a). Even though the goal of IPEC is to prevent and eliminate all forms of child labor, the priority targets of IPEC for immediate action are the worst forms of child labor, which are defined in the ILO Convention No. 182, the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 1999.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **WHAT IS CHILD LABOR?**

Child labor is work done for payment by a person who is at the stage of childhood, under 18 years of age.

But what exactly are “child” and “childhood”? Considering the diversity of cultures, economies and political settings, there is no single standard definition of “child” or “childhood.” Since each society has its own interpretation of these two terms, it is ambiguous and challenging for many organizations to define and draw the line between “child” and “adult.”

The term “child labor” is also ambiguous. When we hear “child labor,” we imagine it as any type of labor conducted by children. However, in the field of development, the term “child labor” does not include all piecework conducted by children. In the international Conventions, “child labor” or, in other words, “all economic performance conducted by children,” is classified into several different categories by grouping them by the magnitude of the working conditions. Thus, the term “child labor” in the field of development becomes highly differentiated.

In this chapter, I introduce and clarify these three terms—child, childhood, and child labor—based on the definitions described in international Conventions which serve as the legal standard and guiding principle for many organizations working in the field of development. Generally, both governments and organizations plan and implement

programs based on international Conventions and there is no exception for the issue of child labor.

### *Definition of “Child” and “Childhood”*

The Oxford Dictionary of English (2003) defines a child as “a young human being below the age of fully physical development,” “an immature or irresponsible person,” and “a person who has little or no experience in a particular area.” In reality, each country and society draws a different line between being a child and being an adult. In most countries, 18-year-old is generally the age which divides being a child from an adult. However, this line varies by sociocultural, institutional, economic, and political factors of a given country. For instance, the legal age of majority in Argentina, Bahrain, Cameroon, Guinea, Lesotho, Namibia, Singapore and Swaziland is 21 years, while that of Nepal, Pakistan and Uzbekistan is 16 years (INTERPOL, n.d.). On international Conventions, Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “any human being below the age of 18 years.” In the field of development, a “child” is considered to be a person under the age of 18, following the definition described in the CRC.

“Childhood” is interpreted as “the state of being a child,” “the time in which persons are children” and “the condition or time from infancy to puberty” (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2003). In the field of international development, childhood is recognized as much more than just the space between birth and the attainment of adulthood. UNICEF defines childhood as

the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. Thus, childhood refers to the state and condition of a child's life, to the quality of those years (UNICEF, n.d. a).

Childhood is to be a period of school-learning, of recreation, and of physical, mental and social development, and *not* primarily income-bearing work. It should, ideally, be a time for children to live free from fear, safe from violence, and protected from abuse and exploitation.

#### *Definition of "Child Labor"*

The global community has the consensus view that work that falls within the legal limits established by the country where the child is employed, and does not interfere with the child's health and development or prejudice their schooling, can be a positive experience (ILO, 2006a). When the United Nations (UN) organizations present global estimates and trends, there are three different categories of work performed by children: economic activity, child labor, and hazardous work. Each category includes different types of productive work and is tackled differently by organizations in order to identify and prioritize the children who need our support the most in the field.

"Economic Activity" is a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal, excluding chores undertaken in the child's own household and schooling. To be counted as economically active, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven-day reference period (ILO, 2006a). "Economically active children" is a statistical rather than

a legal notion. The ILO currently estimates that there are approximately 317 million children who are “economically active” in the world (ILO, 2006a, 2006b).

“Child Labor” is a narrower concept than “economically active children,” excluding all those children aged 12 years and older who are working only a few hours a week in permitted light work and those aged 15 years and above whose work is not classified “hazardous.” Light work is the work permitted by law for children of at least 12 or 13 years of age that is not harmful to a child’s health and development and does not prejudice attendance at school or participation in vocational training (Blagbrough & Matsuno, 2006, p.vii). For statistical purposes, the ILO defines light work as that which does not exceed 14 hours per week. Approximately 218 million out of 317 million economically active children are classified as “child laborers” (ILO, 2006a, 2006b).

“Hazardous Work” by children is any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on a child’s safety, both physical and mental health and moral development. The ILO estimates that 126 million out of the 218 million child laborers are engaged in “hazardous work” (ILO, 2006a, 2006b).

In sum, the definition of “Child Labor” refers to the work conducted by children up to age 17, but does not include light work conducted by children age 12 to 14 and light and regular work conducted by 15 to 17 years. Within the framework of the definition of “child labor,” the ages which are permitted to work and its type are in Table 2.1:



**Table 2.1 Age and type of labor allowed in the definition of child labor**

Age	Light Work	Regular Work	Hazardous Work
5 to 11	×	×	×
12 to 14	△ <sup>1</sup>	×	×
15 to 17	○	○	○

Source: ILO, 2005, 2006a

As evident in this table, children age 5 to 11 are not permitted to perform any type of economic activity. Children age 12 to 14 are permitted to perform only light work if national labor law of the country where children reside allows them to do so. Children age 15 to 17 are permitted to perform both light and regular work, however they are barred from hazardous work that is harmful for their physical and psychological health and moral development.

When the global community takes actions against child labor, they specifically target children who perform the “worst forms of child labor,” “labor performed by a child who is under the minimum age specified for that kind of work,” and “hazardous work” (ILO, 2006b). The ILO and its member states have been working to pursue the goal of the effective elimination of child labor by committing themselves first to the elimination of all the worst forms of child labor by 2016 (ILO, 2006a).

“Worst forms of child labor” is internationally defined as slavery, trafficking into exploitative situations, debt bondage, and other forms of forced labor, forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, and illicit activities.

<sup>1</sup> Whether children of age 12 to 14 are able to carry out light work or not varies by a country’s national labor legislation.

“Labor performed by a child who is under the minimum age specified for that kind of work” is defined as work which likely impedes the child’s education and full development. The minimum age specified for that kind of work is defined by national legislations in accordance with accepted international standards. “Hazardous work” is defined as work which involves toxic chemicals or fumes, high-powered equipment or vehicles, cutting, pounding or blasting (ILO, 2005). Hazards could also derive from excessive use workload, physical conditions of work, and/or work intensity in terms of the duration of the hours of work even where the activity or occupation is known to be non-hazardous or ‘safe.’ Children at any age are prohibited to be engaged in both “worst forms of child labor” and “hazardous labor.” Each country sets the minimum age for the employment of children in any kind of work based on the international Conventions.

### **International Legal Framework on Child Labor**

There are very specific multinational agreements on labor standards, including on children that fall under the jurisdiction of the ILO. Two particularly important Conventions specifically focused on child labor are the “Minimum Age Convention of 1973” (No.138), which puts forth the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age for admission to employment and sets the boundaries of the types of work that are unacceptable under international standards, and the “Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention of 1999” (No.182), which prohibits and eliminates the worst forms of child labor.

**ILO Convention No. 138, the Minimum Age Convention of 1973**

The Minimum Age Convention of 1973, the Convention concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment was adopted in June 26, 1973 at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of International Labor Organization Conference and it entered in force in June 19, 1976. At the time of April, 2008, the Convention No. 138 is ratified by 150 countries (ILO, 2008).

The Convention No.138 requires in Article 1 that ratifying states to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labor and progressively raise the minimum age for admission to employment of work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons. Article 2 states the minimum age should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling, setting the minimum age for admission to employment as 15 years of age. However, it also allows an exception of minimum age of 14 years for member states whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. Article 3 specifies that the minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work that jeopardizes the health, safety or morals of young persons should not be less than 18 years. However, it also allows the national laws, regulations or the competent authority to authorize employment from the age of 16 years on condition that the health, safety and morals of the young persons concerned are fully protected and the young persons have received adequate specific instruction or vocational training in the relevant branch of activity. The age limit varies by type of work, but Article 7 sets 13 years of age being the minimum for “light work.”

### **ILO Convention No. 182, the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention of 1999**

The Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999, the Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor was adopted on June 17, 1999 at the Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> International Labour Organization Conference and it entered in force on November 19, 2000. The Convention No. 182 requires in Article 1 that ratifying states to take immediate and effective action to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor as a matter of urgency. At the time of April, 2008, the Convention No.182 is ratified by 165 countries (ILO, 2008).

Article 2 specifies the term “child” should apply to all persons under the age of 18 years, and Article 3 describes the worst forms of child labor as;

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labor, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The Convention allows the last category (d) to be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority by taking into consideration relevant international standards and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Recommendation, 1999.

In addition to Convention No. 182, the ILO adopted “Worst Forms of Child Labor Recommendation No.190” in 1999 at the Session of the 87<sup>th</sup> International Labour

Organization conference as a supplement of the Convention No.182. Recommendation No.190 contains recommendations on the types of hazards that should be considered for inclusion within a country-based definition of the Worst Form Hazards faced by Children at work. Recommendation No.190 should be applied in conjunction with the Convention No.182.

In addition to those two ILO conventions, there are other key international laws, which also set the limit and labor standards for the employment of children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) acknowledges the rights of the child and requires that children be protected from all exploitative and hazardous work and from work that interferes with their education and development. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration also supports the elimination of child labor. These declarations do not explicitly include the eradication of child labor, however, they indirectly support it by recognizing the right of all children to education, which is one of the ways to impede the early entry of children to employment. These Conventions allow national authorities some discretion in setting boundaries for children's work.

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted and opened for signature by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989. It was entered into force on September 2, 1990 after it was ratified by 20 nations. The CRC is monitored by the United Nations' Committee on the Rights of the Child,

which is composed of members from countries around the world. The CRC is currently ratified by 192 countries (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [UNHCHR], 2003).

As Article 2 of the CRC requires states parties to respect and ensure the rights of each child, the CRC is child-centric and the only international treaty to guarantee the civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights of children. It requires ratifying states to act in the best interests of the child and provides the strongest, most consistent international legal language prohibiting illegal child labor. Article 32 of the CRC states that children should 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.

In addition to the CRC, the Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was adopted by the United Nations in 2000. It was entered into force on January 18, 2002 as a supplement to the CRC in response to the increase of international traffic in children for the purpose of the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. States Parties are required to protect the rights and interests of child victims of trafficking, child prostitution, child pornography, child labor, and especially the worst forms of child labor.

The Optional Protocol promotes international law enforcement through provisions covering diverse issues such as jurisdictional factors, extradition, mutual assistance in investigations, criminal or extradition proceedings and seizure and

confiscation of assets. Unlike the CRC, in which States Parties commit themselves only to take appropriate measures to prevent certain practices, the Optional Protocol places an explicit obligation on states under Article 1 to prohibit the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

### **The Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals**

The Millennium Declaration is a United Nations resolution, adopted at the 8<sup>th</sup> plenary of the Millennium Summit meeting on September 8, 2000, with eight major development goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year of 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

The Millennium Declaration and the MDGs do not specifically infer the eradication of child labor or set labor standards for children. However, achieving the fulfillment of the MDGs is strongly related to the eradication of child labor. Eradication of poverty reduces the risk of children falling into employment to meet daily needs. Achieving universal primary education may release working children from their daily labor as well as delay the early entry of children into employment. Promoting gender equality can reduce discrimination against girls towards education and traditional burdens put on girls in their own households. Combating HIV/AIDS can reduce the number of

AIDS orphans that are another contributing reason for child labor. Developing a global partnership can develop decent and productive work for youth since child labor in its worst forms often has cross border links and that decent and productive work for youth are undermined by the existence of child labor (Grimsrud, 2003).

### **United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The Declaration has served as the foundation for the two original legally-binding UN human rights covenants, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

As the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not specifically refer the eradication of child labor or set labor standards for children. However, it states that no one should be held in slavery or servitude in Article 4 and everyone has the right to education, and elementary education should be compulsory in Article 26.

### **Obligations of States Parties to ILO Conventions**

When states ratify an ILO convention, they are bound by Article 22 of the ILO Constitution to submit regular reports on their laws and practices. These are examined by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, made up of independent experts in law and social policy. States are also obliged to send



copies of their reports to employers' and workers' organizations which have the right to comment on them (Blau & Moncada, 2006).

In the case of the CRC, States Parties are required to take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members. Governments of countries that have ratified the CRC are required in Article 44 and 45 to report to, and appear before, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child periodically to be examined on their progress with regards to the advancement of the implementation of the Convention and the status of child rights in their country.

### **Weaknesses of the International Legal Framework**

The number of states that have ratified the international Conventions has increased since their creation. The number of child workers worldwide has fallen by 11 percent between 2000 and 2004, while that of children in hazardous work decreased by 26 percent (ILO, 2006a). International Conventions enable many organizations to monitor how states tackle the problem of child labor and suggest possible intervention if necessary. Ratification of international Conventions also places the responsibility and accountability to take action on the government of each state.

However, the international legal framework has weaknesses. International Conventions are not legally enforceable and their ratification is completely dependent upon the voluntary participation of states. For instance, not all UN and ILO member

states have ratified the Conventions related to child labor. For example, India, the country which harbors the largest number of child workers in the world, has not ratified either ILO Conventions No.138 or No.182 yet. Since India has not ratified them, the Government of India does not have a responsibility to report back to the ILO committee nor establish law specific to child labor contained in the standards defined in the Conventions. While India has several laws banning child labor, without appropriate international vigilance, many organizations have raised questions about its enforcement.

The ILO describes ratification of its Conventions as “the negotiating table at which all interested parties come together and make plans around a common platform and in a spirit of accountability” (ILO, 2005, p.9). Ratifying international Conventions enhance the responsibility and accountability of the government of ratified states. Since the international Conventions take an active role in eliminating child labor, all already States Parties and organizations should put pressure on non-Parties to join the Conventions. This will enable the ILO and all member states to strengthen their efforts to develop coherent and comprehensive approaches to eliminating child labor worldwide.

### CHAPTER III

#### CURRENT CHILD LABOR TRENDS IN ASIA

Asia and the Pacific region is home to the largest number of children of any region of the world, approximately 650 million in 2004. Table 3.1 shows that the Asia and the Pacific also harbors the largest number of economically active children in the 5 to 14 age group, approximately 122 million in total (ILO, 2005).

**Table 3.1 Global trends in children's economic activity in 2004 (age 5-14)**

Region	Child population ( million)	Economically active children (million)	Activity rate (%)
Asia and the Pacific	650	122.3	18.8
Latin American and the Caribbean	111	5.7	5.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	186.6	49.3	26.4

*Note.* ILO only offers data of Asia and the Pacific.

Source: adapted from ILO (2006a, p.8)

While the activity rate is lower than in Sub-Saharan Africa, the largest numbers of children who are engaged in hazardous work are found in Asia and the Pacific. The ILO estimates that 62 million out of 74 million children age 5 to 14 who are engaged in hazardous work around the world are found in Asia and the Pacific (ILO, 2006a).

In this chapter, I present the statistical data that I developed during my internship regarding the situation of child labor trends in Asia. My statistical data is a synthesized study based on three sources: the Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on

Child Labor (SIMPOC) of the ILO, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (MICS2) of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Understanding Children's Work Country Statistics and Report (UCW) of the inter-agency research cooperation project on child labor by ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank. All three sources adopted somewhat different methods and criteria when they conducted research, hence each source presents slightly different data.

There are several points that we should keep in mind when we review the child labor trends through my statistical data. First, the SIMPOC and both the UNICEF MICS 2 and the UCW present data on different age groups of child workers. While the SIMPOC presents the data of child workers age 5 to 17, the UNICEF MICS 2 and the UCW present that of age 5 to 14. The age of child workers in the three sources also varies by country. The UNICEF MICS 2 and the UCW present data for most countries' child workers age 5 to 14, but in the case of Bangladesh, it only includes data on children age 8 to 14 and for India, children age 6 to 9. In some countries, "unpaid" child workers were excluded from the data while they were included and reflected in the data of other countries.

The reason for these differences is that the data in each source was collected from already existing documents that each government already had, such as the National Child Labor Survey or the National Census. Each state has its own definition of child labor and sets its own criteria when it conducts research for child labor statistics. Each country decides what age group of children or what industries it studies and surveys. For instance, unpaid child workers toiling alongside their parents are not reflected in India's

child labor figures in these three sources because the Census of India does not recognize nor count this group of children as child workers. However, many other countries count those unpaid child workers and these figures are reflected in the child labor statistics of their studies.

The data I present in this chapter and Appendices A, B, and C is synthesized “official” data that is recognized and announced by each government. For some countries, figures differ widely. For instance, regarding the number of child workers in India, many organizations have different estimates. UNICEF estimates that since 83 million children between 6 to 14 years are out of school; it expects that most of those children are doing some sort of work, in the home or outside, unpaid or paid in cash or kind (Burra, 1995). Human Rights Watch (1996) estimates approximately 60 to 115 million are engaged in labor in India. The National Sample Survey Organization estimates nearly 16.4 million Indian children aged 5 to 14 are engaged in economic activities and the World Bank puts that figure at 44 million (Chopra, 2006, ¶42). Most organizations’ estimate of the number of child workers is far higher than the one announced by the government. I use official data that the UN organizations avail when they publish statistics on current child labor trends in this region.

### **Causes of Child Labor in Asia**

Poverty is a main cause and consequence of child labor in the region. Impoverished families without other coping mechanisms may see sending children out to work, even at a very young age and under conditions that expose them to extreme risk, as

the only way to make ends meet (ILO, 2005). Poverty also brings forth children living on the streets enforcing them to live separately from their parents or relatives and to make their own livings. In many cases, these children find themselves on the streets because they have run away from their families, or have been abandoned or kidnapped for many reasons, including economic ones (Burra, 1995). Other forces come into play as well such as poor access to quality education, social attitudes, inadequate legislation, weak labor markets, inadequate health and social policies, weak enforcement of laws and policies, and the overall macroeconomic environment. Political volatility and conflict and recent natural disasters have increased the vulnerability of children being forced to work for their survival as well (ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific [ILO ROAP], 2006).

Tradition and culture is also a cause of child labor, especially for female children. Perceptions of childhood and the role and responsibilities of female children towards their elders and siblings often determine whether a child is sent to school or to work. In many Asian societies, female children are seen as poor longer-term 'investments' because someday they will marry and leave the family. While growing up, they are expected to care for siblings and older family members, contribute to household chores or work to help finance the education of boys in the family (ILO, 2005). In Asia, the culture of female children being considered as less valuable than male children can accelerate putting them into any type of work.

'Sudden poverty' also pushes children into work. Sudden poverty occurs when a family that is generally coping is suddenly faced with an unexpected event such as a death, a larger economic crisis, or a natural disaster or outbreak of conflict that causes a

family to now be unable to meet its daily needs (ILO, 2005). In those situations, many parents may consider withdrawing children from school and place them into some kind of employment. The risk of exploitation of the child is high in a situation where the supply of available child labor increases suddenly and the family's bargaining powers are restricted (ILO, 2005). A good example of this situation is the increase in the number of children who were placed into a vulnerable situation in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, by losing their own jobs or whose parents lose their livelihoods in the Tsunami disaster in December 2006. UNICEF discovered a text message advertising to sell at least 300 Aceh orphans for labor which was sent out widely around Asia; there was one confirmed case of child smuggling to Thailand (McCormack, 2005).

### **Regional Characteristics**

Child labor is indeed widespread and seemingly entrenched in Asia. The region contains some of the poorest countries in the world but also some of the most successful in development terms. The ILO estimates that 104 million children between the ages of 5 and 17, and 62 million aged 5 to 14 are engaged in hazardous work in Asia, and at least 6.6 million children are engaged in one of the unconditional worst forms of child labor (ILO, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Table 3.2 shows that there is a registered decline in both the child population and in the number of economically active children from 2000 to 2004. The absolute number of economically active children has reduced 5 million, from 127 million to total of 122 million over four years. However, the situation among child workers has remained more

or less stable, both in absolute and in relative terms since the incidence decreased only 0.6 percent, from 19.4 to 18.8 percent.

**Table 3.2 Regional trends in the number of working children (age 5-14)**

	Population (million)		Number at work (million)		Incidence rate (%)		Change of incidence rate
	2000	2004	2000	2004	2000	2004	
Asia and the Pacific	655	650	127.3	122.3	19.4	18.8	-0.6

Source: adapted from ILO (2006b, p.10)

Child labor in Asia is not a static phenomenon. The nature of child labor in the region is diverse and there is no one pattern. There has been a marked reduction in the number of children trapped in child labor. For instance, the majority of child workers engaged in the garment industry in Bangladesh or in the soccer ball industry in Pakistan have been released from their work. However, new forms of exploitation such as trafficking have emerged (ILO, 2006b). Industrial sectors where children are working also vary by country.

There is no single year study to compare the population of child workers in each country, since each country has conducted its study in different years. However, the approximate numbers of those children and economic activity rate in each country is shown in Appendix A and B. India harbors the largest number of child workers, approximately 12 million (2001), followed by Bangladesh (4.7 million, 2003), Pakistan (3.3 million, 1996), Philippines (2.4 million, 2001), Vietnam (2.3 million, 2000), Nepal (2



million, 1999), Cambodia (1.5 million, 2001), Indonesia (1.1 million, 1999), Sri Lanka (0.47 million, 1999), Lao PDR (0.38 million, 2000) and Mongolia (0.035 million, 2003). Regarding the economic activity rates against the child population, Cambodia has the highest rate of 45% in 2001, followed by Lao PDR (34%, 2000), Nepal (32%, 2004), Vietnam (26%, 2000), Bangladesh (14%, 2003), Sri Lanka (14%, 1999), the Philippines (11%, 2001), Pakistan (8.8%, 1996) and Indonesia (2.7%, 1999). India does not offer any official economic activity rate of child workers, so even though India has the largest number of child workers, we do not know exactly which country has the highest economic activity rates by children.

### **Economic Sectors Where Children Are Working**

The most common industries where children are found working in the region are agriculture, manufacturing and domestic services. Studies conducted by the ILO reveals that approximately 70 percent of children work in the agricultural sector and the remaining 30 percent are found in other sectors (ILO ROAP, 2006). The worst forms of child labor found in the region include slavery, trafficking into exploitative situations, debt bondage and other forms of forced labor, forced recruitment into armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities. The trafficking, both internal and external, has emerged to be a serious problem, which contributes to the increase of worst forms of child labor.

Appendix C presents 11 major industries where children are working, such as agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing,

construction, wholesale and retail trade, electricity, gas and water, transport, communication and storage, hotel and restaurant, finance and real estate, community, social and personal service, and others including private household, and approximate number of children working in those sectors. Since each country has different interpretation of industrial sectors, some countries do not identify nor recognize several sectors and they are not appeared in Appendix C. As we see, in most countries of the region, except India, the highest number of child workers is found in agricultural sector, including forestry, hunting and fishing, and in case for India, the majority of child workers are found in manufacturing sector. It is widely believe that many Indian child workers are found in agricultural sector, however, this recognition is not reflected to the official data announced by India.

The incidence of trafficking associated with economic globalization, sex industries and forced labor is one of the prominent characteristics of the region and is identified in several countries such as Thailand, China's Yunnan Province, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal (ILO, 2005). In Thailand, many trafficked children, especially from neighboring countries such as China's Yunnan Province, Cambodia and Lao PDR are found working in fisheries and the sex trade (Ptanawanit & Boribanbanpotkate, 2007). In India, many trafficked children from Nepal and Bangladesh are found in all kinds of industries. The internal trafficking from rural to urban areas within the country is also common. For instance, in Indonesia, internal sex and labor trafficking is rampant throughout the country. The Riau Islands have continued as transit and destination points for Indonesian women and girls trafficked for sexual

exploitation going abroad and within the country (United States Department of State, 2007, p.118). Trafficking is associated with the worst forms of child labor and trafficked children tend to be engaged in those forms of labor because of their vulnerability.

Street traders are recognized as one of the hazardous occupations for children, but do not usually appear in child labor statistics. "Street children" is often used to describe both children who work in the streets and markets of cities selling or begging and live with their families, as well as homeless children who work, live and sleep in the streets often lacking any contact with their families (West, 2003). The number of street children is almost impossible to ascertain given the nature of mobility of this group. In 2002, there were at least 100 million street children around the world and approximately 25 million of those were found in Asia (UNICEF, 2002). The Consortium for Street Children (n.d.), a UK-based organization, estimates the number of street children in Bangladesh is 445,226, Nepal is 30,000 and India at 11 million; however, it does not offer estimates for Asia as a whole.

Street children may be self-employed such as shoeshine boys or girls, newspaper vendors, ragpickers, hawkers, and vendors, or they may work in establishments such as small food stalls or shops, or as domestic workers and porters, or as casual workers on construction sites (Burra, 1995). They are particularly vulnerable when living or working on their own and are often subjected to both physical and psychological abuses. Girls are considered even more vulnerable since they are more likely to face sexual abuse. "Almost all female street children have been sexually abused by other street kids as part of an initiation process, and then later by local boys or men who take advantage of their

vulnerability” (Nair, n.d.). While boys and girls can be child prostitutes, it is more common for girls. Girls on the street are coerced into sexual acts or raped owing to the fact that they have nobody to protect them. Older males may take advantage of their physical weakness and harass them sexually (Selby, 2008).

### **Child Labor by Sex**

In the region as a whole, the ILO reveals that there is almost no difference between the number of male child workers (58 million) and female child workers (62 million) of age 5 to 14 (ILO, 2006b). As we see in Appendix A and B, in Bangladesh, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka, more male children are found working than female children. In Cambodia and India, almost the same number of children of both sex is identified as working. Only in Nepal, more female children are found working than male children. However, Appendix C shows that more male children are working than female children in every industry studied. Thus, the reason why the total number of female working children appeared higher than male children in Nepal is unknown. The World Bank also presents data that there is no large difference between the number of male child workers and female child workers. It claims that in 2000, approximately 5 percent of both boys and girls age 7 to 14 years in India were economically active, and in Cambodia approximately 52 percent of boys and girls of this age group were engaged in economic activities (World Bank, n.d.).

As we see in Appendix C, industrial gender segregation of working children is found. Most male children are found working in sectors where more physical strength is

required such as mining, manufacturing, and construction. Most female children are found in the service sectors, including domestic service. However, since the exact number of children who are engaged in domestic work, and the number of female children who are engaged in the sex industry is unknown, the number of female children who are engaged in any type of work is commonly considered to be much higher.

### **The ILO in Asia**

The ILO has contributed to a marked decrease in child labor in Asia. The ILO has initiated various “upstream actions” such as support to the preparation of national plans and strategies and input on policy formulation, and “downstream actions” working directly, alongside partners, with children and their families in programs to prevent children from entering the labor pool, to protect victims of child abuse, and those at risk, and to support children withdrawn from exploitative situations (ILO, 2005). In Asia, the ILO is providing technical assistance to governments and social partners as they develop more cohesive strategic platforms for action against child labor (ILO, 2005). Child labor considerations are successfully mainstreamed into the preparation, planning and implementation of national strategies growing out of international commitments and national needs throughout Asia. For instance, Pakistan’s Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) makes specific mention of bonded labor and child labor, and in the Philippines, child labor has become a part of the national education reform agenda. The government of the Lao PDR has incorporated child labor, in particular trafficking as a worst form of child labor, into the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy

(ILO, 2005). Currently seven countries in Asia—Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan and Viet Nam—are in the process of implementing poverty reduction strategies articulated in PRSPs and the ILO has been working with governments in these countries to support decent work and child labor-focused initiatives (ILO, 2005, p22).

The ILO, through the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), has been engaged in supporting ILO-member State governments in the preparation and implementation of Time-Bound Programs (TBPs) for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in many countries in Asia. The TBP is a national plan of action that the government of a member State has developed and implemented in cooperation with constituents and civil society. The TBP links action against child labor into national development strategies but targets priority sectors in which children are engaged in a worst form of child labor, with a view to eradicating them within a designated time frame (ILO, 2005). A government is the most important actor in this arena and the right mix of policy choices and programs is the most important guarantor of success to decrease child labor. The ILO-IPEC promotes the TBP approach as one of its leading implementation strategies and provides assistance to governments implementing such plans of action through its “project of support” if financial resources and technical support are needed (ILO, 2007, p.8). Currently 7 out of 18 countries globally that are in the process of setting up or implementing TBPs are in Asia; by February 2007, the ILO-IPEC had supported TBPs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal,

Pakistan, and the Philippines. Table 3.3 shows the examples of past and ongoing TBPs in five of these countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

**Table 3.3 ILO Programs: Targets, priorities and time-frames**

Country	Targets	Priority sectors/ geographical areas	Time frame
Cambodia	Withdraw 7,270 children from worst forms of child labor (WFCL) Prevent 8,660 children at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child domestic labor</li> <li>• Fishing</li> <li>• Brick-making</li> <li>• Salt production</li> <li>• Rubber plantations</li> <li>• Work as porters</li> </ul>	September 2004 - December 2008
Indonesia	Withdraw 5,100 children from WFCL Prevent 31,500 children at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-shore work and diving</li> <li>• Trafficking into WFCL</li> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Footwear industry</li> <li>• Production and trafficking of drugs</li> </ul>	September 2003 - September 2007
Nepal	Withdraw 15,300 children from WFCL Prevent 9,000 children at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonded child labor</li> <li>• Child domestic labor</li> <li>• Child rag pickers, porters</li> <li>• Mining</li> <li>• Carpet</li> <li>• Child trafficking</li> </ul>	September 2001 - August 2006
Pakistan	11,000 children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mines and quarries</li> <li>• Rag pickers/ street children</li> <li>• Surgical instruments</li> <li>• Glass bangles</li> <li>• Deep sea fishing</li> <li>• Tanneries and leather</li> </ul>	September 2003 - August 2007
Philippines	Withdraw 22,000 children from WFCL Prevent 22,500 children at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar cane plantations</li> <li>• Mining and quarrying</li> <li>• Pyrotechnics</li> <li>• Deep-sea fishing</li> <li>• Child domestic labor</li> <li>• Prostitution</li> </ul>	September 2002 - December 2006

Source: adapted from ILO (2005, p.28)

In the Philippines, for example, the Philippines' National Program Against Child Labor has set the goal to reduce the worst forms of child labor by 75 percent by 2015. As a support of the TBP process, the ILO-IPEC has been providing both technical and financial support to achieve this goal. Technical support includes direct actions on behalf of working children and broad-ranging capacity building of government agencies, employers and workers' organizations, civil society and community organizations. ILO-IPEC has also contributed significantly to a successful advocacy campaign by government and civil society groups for the inclusion of child workers as target beneficiaries of formal education under the Education For All (EFA) National Plans of Action. It has contributed to the knowledge base on child labor through policy studies, rapid assessments and baseline surveys on children in various sectors including sugar cane plantations, pyrotechnics, deep sea fishing, mining and quarrying, prostitution, domestic labor, and drug trafficking (ILO, 2005).

The government of Cambodia's time-bound National Plan of Action on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor has been supported by ILO-IPEC surveys and consultations. These have contributed to its successful implementation by enhancing the capacities of implementing agencies, contributing to the development of sector-specific policy, mobilizing actors and resources (in particular by providing new knowledge and data collection and analysis), and undertaking a number of demonstration projects that might serve as examples for replication and wider use (ILO, 2005).

In addition to supporting the TBPs, the ILO-IPEC has also implemented other programs focusing on specific industrial sectors or regions. A decade ago, in 1997, its



project “Elimination of child labor in the soccer ball industry in Sialkot, Pakistan” had successfully removed children under the age of 14 from 95 percent of the hand-sewn soccer manufacturing lines and offered education for those withdrawn children (ILO, 2005). Currently the ILO-IPEC implements “Monitoring to keep garment factories child labor free: Eradication of hazardous child labor” in Bangladesh in addition to its TBP. In Sri Lanka, it implements “Children affected by war: Upgrading of vocational skills training centers in Mannar, Mullaitivu, Amparai and Vavuniya” (ILO ROAP, 2007). Through cohesion and mainstreaming of child labor concerns, the ILO-IPEC has been successful in contributing to the decrease in the number of child workers in Asia, in particular to those engaged in the worst forms of labor throughout Asia.

### **Approaches for the Elimination of Child Labor**

In order to tackle child labor effectively, there are three major approaches taken by governments, international organizations and NGOs: policy implementation, promoting educational opportunities and economic development. Policy implementation, including regulation of labor laws as well as on education and health, can be effective to release children from work. Compulsory education is widely recognized as a precondition for the elimination of child labor. If child labor is a symptom of poverty, “development is considered as the best overall cure for child labor” (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005, p.200). However, since economic growth takes time to improve living standards, it is widely recognized that providing financial incentives to the poor and improving the educational

system can bring more rapid solutions to the incidence of child labor (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005).

### **Policy Implementation**

Education and health policies, alongside labor law reforms, are indispensable. Such policies are the proof of strong commitment by governments and become the basis of any programs towards elimination of child labor. Policies draw clear lines between what is acceptable and what is not. They determine what is legal and what is illegal and make it easier for organizations that work in a country to complete their mission as well as monitor the enforcement of policies by the government.

Adopting policies and laws to regulate labor standards and conditions by setting minimum age to enter into employment becomes the basis for the elimination of child labor. Policy implementation includes making education compulsory and improving public health. Developing policies in the health sector is usually overlooked in terms of policy implementation regarding child labor. However, while poverty is an underlying cause of child labor, investing in the health sector contributes to reducing a family's private expenditure. Establishing policies and laws, however, is not enough. It is important to secure the enforcement of those laws and policies.

While social attitudes and values are important in tolerating or rejecting child labor, it is the legal framework in place in a country and the determination to implement it that sends out the signal that child labor has no place and that those who perpetuate it are breaking the law and will face the consequences. Governments as well as multilateral

and bilateral agencies have taken the lead on policy implementation. The ILO has played a major role in encouraging governments to establish and revise labor policies and laws according to international labor standards and then take responsibility to monitor the enforcement of those policies and laws. Other organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF, encourage governments to adopt relevant policies in their fields of expertise and then to enforce those policies.

### **Education**

Education, in terms of both policy and opportunities, is a crucial factor to decrease child labor because “child labor is likely to rise where the share of educated workers is very low” (Cigno et al., 2002, p.1587). Receiving education should be a right of all children. Education gives children necessary skills and knowledge for the future as well as social and personal values. Economic and social life has become increasingly based on written words and understanding upgraded working methods and quality control, more sophisticated management procedures and documentation, and compliance with legal frameworks are now requirements for adult workers to acquire good jobs (ILO, 2005). Education, at least in the minimal sense of basic numeracy and literacy, has become increasingly perceived, even by the poor, as part of the necessary skillset to survive in the world. Education is therefore not only a tool to release children from immediate labor in which they might be engaged, but is also an investment for the future to empower people by accumulating life skills and knowledge to cut the vicious cycle of

child labor. As the existence of an educated workforce is associated with a low incidence of child labor (Cigno et al., 2002), the equitable delivery of education can overcome the constraints of poverty that contribute to child labor.

Promising educational opportunities and making education compulsory is not sufficient. There are important costs to sending children to school, to the point where “parental decisions whether a child should work or go to school depend on the costs and benefits of education” (Cigno et al., 2002, p.1587). Without enough public expenditure, it is impossible to improve the quality of education, including infrastructure of schools and preparation of teachers to increase access by children.

The ILO has not implemented programs related to primary or secondary education. However, it has run several projects to offer vocational training in selected schools in many countries. UNESCO and the UNICEF as well as many NGOs at the grassroots level have implemented direct projects to improve both the access and the quality of education. For instance, UNICEF has implemented programs to realize children’s right to a quality basic education, especially focusing on the most excluded and vulnerable children: girls, the disabled, ethnic minorities, rural and urban poor as well as migrants, homeless children and child workers throughout Asia. In Thailand, UNICEF has supported NGOs financially to create a better learning environment for children through training teachers and revising curriculums as necessary (UNICEF, n.d. b). The Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), a local Indian NGO, has rescued many working children as well as offering non-formal education as a part of their rehabilitation

programs to bridge to formal education opportunities in India (B. Ribhu, personal communication, August 31, 2007).

### **Economic Development**

Poverty is widely recognized as a major factor in the vulnerability of children as child laborers. In many places, work is seen as an integral part of children's lives to help other family members who are struggling to make ends meet. For children living on the streets or on their own, economic activity is a means for their own life-survival. Poverty propels families to send children to work instead of letting them play and study. In some cases, it even propels parents to abandon their own children. If poverty is a major factor in child labor, economic development is crucial to its amelioration through increasing the income of families and the revenue for governments.

Governments as well as international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have undertaken numerous economic strategies to improve standards of living through economic growth. However, even though economic growth can bring incentives for many families to seek alternatives to sending children to work, there is an ongoing debate regarding the negative effects of economic growth on child labor (Grootaert & Kanbur, 1995; Swaminathan, 1998; Cigno et al., 2002; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Neumayer & De Soysa, 2005; Kambhampati & Rajan, 2006). Not only anti-globalization supporters but also those who are engaged in efforts to eliminate child labor criticize current economic development strategies taken by some governments and international financial institutions. The ILO expresses its concern

regarding the negative effects of the current market-oriented economic development strategies on child labor:

child labor is also a result of market realities that see producers, company owners and others who employ labor cutting corners to keep down costs to remain competitive or indeed simply to increase profits. Children are seen as cheap labor, not only because they can be paid less and exploited more easily but also because they are less likely to claim the rights that all workers should have: to appropriate remuneration, fair conditions of work, social security and time off (ILO, 2005, p.4).

Kambhampati and Rajan conclude that economic growth actually increases rather than decreases child labor (2006, p.441).

Economic growth is often considered to increase rather than decrease child labor since globalization often brings big corporations into a country to look for cheap labor. However, Neumayer and De Soysa question this point as foreign investors might be less interested in exploiting child workers as “market size and market growth, political stability, infrastructure and high labor skills are often as important” (2005, p.46). In addition, more corporations have adopted voluntary codes of conduct on not employing children. Under higher scrutiny of regulators and being exposed to the supervision of trade unions, the media, consumer, human rights and other activist groups, corporations find it difficult to circumvent anti-child labor laws (Neumayer & De Soysa, 2005).

Neumayer and De Soysa conclude that higher per capita income levels are associated with lower incidences of child labor (2005, p.52). Countries more open to trade or which have a higher stock of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) have a lower incidence of child labor since they may experience more economic growth. There is a consensus view among many economists that an initial impact of growth would be on

increasing demand for child workers, especially in the context of extreme poverty.

However, over time, sustained growth would be reflected both in a decrease in demand for child workers and in a decrease in the supply of such workers (Kambhampati & Rajan, 2006).

In almost all countries in Asia, economic development as a consequence of globalization has been taking place. I analyze how these three approaches undertaken by many organizations have contributed to the decrease in child labor through case studies in Thailand and India in the next two chapters.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**CHALLENGES OF CHILD LABOR IN THAILAND:**  
**RESPONSES OF THE ILO**

In Thailand, the number of child workers has been dramatically reduced in recent years due to rapid economic and educational progress. The Thai government has tried to eliminate child labor by setting up a mass media campaign on child labor, registering child workers, cooperating with hospitals to report cases of tortured child workers, establishing 36 sub-local offices of labor protection and welfare, increasing the number of labor inspectors, and organizing training courses for labor inspectors (United States Department of Labor, n.d.). The Ministry of the Interior has instructed officials to take employers accused of violating child labor laws to the courts immediately without a prior warning. Thailand also increased its public expenditure on health from 1 percent of gross domestic products (GDP) in 1990 to approximately 2.3 percent in 2004 (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2007, p.248, Table 6), which has improved both access and the quality of health services.

In 1992, after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Thai government, the ILO officially launched a national action program under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Thailand had become one of the first countries to join the IPEC. Since 1992, the IPEC has given its full support to the efforts of the Thai government, encouraging to implement the Time-Bound Programme (TBP). The IPEC has worked with the Department of Labor Protection and



Welfare to improve collection and dissemination of information on child labor, and also worked closely with employers and workers' organizations to promote the elimination of child labor. It has also contributed to important legislative and policy developments in Thailand in the first decade of its operations, including the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act 1996, the Labor Protection Act 1998, which increased the minimum age for work from 13 to 15 years, and the National Education Act 1999 (ILO, 2006a).

The commitment of the ILO and the Thai government maintained the downward trend of child labor participation in the 1990s despite the economic crisis starting 1997. Approximate 5 percent of child labor participation rate in 1989 fell to around 1 percent by 2000 (ILO, 2006a). One of the current successful projects of the ILO in Thailand is the "APEC awareness raising campaign: Eliminating the worst forms of child labor and providing educational opportunities." In 2001, the ILO, in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), launched an inter-regional initiative to address the problem of the worst forms of child labor and the lack of educational opportunities in Thailand as well as in Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, and Viet Nam. A major achievement of the project in Thailand was the integration of child labor and education concerns into government structures, emphasizing the political commitment of the government and its partners to ensure that child labor is mainstreamed across all relevant policy frameworks, including education and poverty alleviation, and the long-term sustainability of the project's outputs (ILO, 2006c). Thailand benefited from this project with the establishment of the National Steering committee (NSC) and a new child labor education task force (CLETF). The task force successfully initiated

policy dialogue with key government ministries and high-ranking officials including the Deputy Minister of Education and advisors to the Prime Minister, who expressed strong support for the project campaign (ILO, 2006c). In addition, the project had been initiated to guide education policy reform on how and what kind of education and skills training can best reach out-of-school children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, in particular hill tribe and migrant children. This initiative contributed to the 2005 Thai cabinet approval for migrant and stateless children to have access to compulsory education (ILO, 2006c).

In this chapter, I introduce the child labor situation in Thailand and the responses of the ILO to eliminate child labor from the country. I present and evaluate the ILO project to prevent children from being engaged in the worst forms of child labor in the Northern Province of Chiang Rai from May 2007. I conducted qualitative research, including informal interviews with participants, to assess the project's effectiveness.

### **Child Labor in Thailand**

In Thailand, child labor has been acknowledged as “a social problem arising from the country's social and economic development” (Ptanawanit & Boribanbanpotkate, 2007, p.11). Through the efforts of the ILO and the Thai government to eliminate child labor, including the government-promoted education and health programs, along with its growing economic development and low birth rate, Thailand had successfully reduced its labor participation rates of children under 15 years of age to 1 percent in 2000 (ILO, 2005).

However, despite the reduction in incidences of child labor, Ptanawanit and Boribanbanpotkate (2007) argue that the use of child labor is still not in line with the Labor Protection Act. They point out that even though the number of child workers, especially those under the age of 15, has been reduced, working conditions for child workers has actually worsened. Children are found working more than eight hours a day, working after 5 pm, have no fixed working hours, receive wages lower than legally stipulated, work in environments that are hazardous to physical and mental health, and are subjected to verbal and physical abuse in various forms (Ptanawanit & Boribanbanpotkate, 2007, p.3).

Worsening working conditions for children is strongly associated with the unique characteristics of the child labor situation in Thailand. The number of Thai child workers has dramatically decreased while the number of non-Thai child workers has increased. The introduction of compulsory education and child labor laws has meant that child labor is strictly supervised and controlled by the Thai government. As a result, the number of Thai children who are engaged in work has been reduced. However, Thailand has been a sending, transit and destination country for trafficking in human beings due to its rapid economic growth. Due to the recent increase of trafficking and migration of children from neighboring countries, the number of children who are not protected and supervised by Thai law, because of their undocumented illegal status, has increased. The ILO has identified that many Laotian, Cambodian and Burmese children are working throughout Thailand (Ptanawanit & Boribanbanpotkate, 2007). Those non-Thai children

are placed into vulnerable situations by being invisible and excluded from the protection of the law.

The worst forms of child labor are prevalent in Thailand. Child domestic workers, children working for karaoke bars and restaurants, child prostitutes, and child begging and forced labor are the major worst forms of child labor found in Thailand. A study by Rajabhat University revealed that in Chiang Rai province, among children who were engaged in the worst forms of child labor, 78.4 percent were female and 27.8 percent were below 15 years of age (Ptanawanit & Boribanbanpotkate, 2007). Most worked more than 8 hours a day and 95.7 percent received a salary of less than 4,000 baht a month (less than 10 dollars a month), far lower than the basic minimum wage set by the labor law. Most children reported that they were physically and verbally abused and, furthermore, 14.5 percent had been coerced into begging.

Child prostitution, as one of the worst forms of child labor, has been a serious problem in Thailand but the estimates of the number of child prostitutes varies widely. The Thai National Commission on Women's Affairs reported that there were 22,500 to 40,000 child prostitutes who were younger than 18 years in 2005. However, the Ministry of Public Health made an estimate of children in prostitution whose age was younger than 18 years at only 15,000 the same year (Ptanawanit and Boribanbanpotkate, 2007). In addition to prostitution, it is widely known that many children working in karaoke bars and restaurants face frequent sexual harassment and are in danger of falling into prostitution.

The problem of forced labor is seen mostly among migrant child workers immigrating from Mekong sub-regional countries, especially from Burma (Myanmar). These migrant child workers are normally found working in factories, fisheries, construction, agriculture, service sector (especially domestic work and employment in restaurants and karaoke bars), commercial sexual exploitation, and begging (Ptanawanit and Boribanbanpotkate, 2007). Research on child labor in the fishing industry by Prince of Songkla University reveals that many children working in fisheries are maltreated and work in unhygienic conditions, and some were sold to another fishing boat which prevented them from returning to land after their initial contract finished (Human Trafficking Organization, 2006 ¶22).

### **The AEON-ILO Project in Chiang Rai Province**

In response to the current child labor situation in Thailand, the ILO has worked on targeting the elimination of the worst forms of child labor through various programs and projects. Since May 1, 2007, the ILO Thailand, financially supported by the Japanese company AEON, implemented a project called “Strengthening vocational training options to prevent child labor in rural schools in Chiang Rai Province of Thailand” for a 10-month period. This project was to offer financial support to already existing vocational programs of two schools to prevent children from engaging in the worst forms of labor found in the province such as sex and drug trafficking, child begging and children in domestic labor in addition to other sectors of concern including child labor in karaoke bars and restaurants and in the agricultural sector.

Educators in Chiang Rai have recognized that many children who complete grade 9 will not continue on to higher education (International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour [IPEC] Thailand, 2007), and so explored options to provide vocational skills for these children to be equipped to enter the labor market or become self employed. The AEON-ILO offered financial support to two rural schools identified by the provincial labor office which had been offering vocational trainings to students of grade 7 to 12 for several years to enhance their curriculum.

#### *Background of the Project*

Chiang Rai Province is located in the northern part of Thailand and shares borders with eastern Burma and the northern part of the Lao PDR, at the intersection known as the Gold Triangle. Those borders are porous, which facilitates the movement of migrant labor and the smuggling of drugs and other illegal goods as well as human trafficking. It is a main trade entry point of the North-South Economic Corridor that has sprung up among the neighboring countries, including southern China. While raw materials and labor are available from nearby cities, the quality of labor and the lack of continued labor development are key weaknesses of the province (IPEC Thailand, 2007). The majority of local Thais in the province are rural poor, have relatively little education and limited vocational skills. The province also has a diversity of ethnic minorities. Most of these ethnic minorities have very little education, often do not speak much Thai, and do not possess Thai citizenship, or in many cases, even birth registration (IPEC Thailand,

2007). These factors limit them to working in agriculture or service sector employment in food shops, entertainment places and karaoke establishments.

A number of children from the rural and highland minority communities have been pushed into child labor in Chiang Rai province. Those vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor include children of minority, migrant children and children in poverty.

Table 4.1 illustrates that fewer than 40 percent of those who complete the compulsory education (Grade 9) continue into secondary or vocational education; those who continue in high school tend to drop out at a significant rate before completion.

**Table 4.1 Number of children enrolled in Chiang Rai province in 2005**

Kindergarten	Kinder.1	Kinder.2	Kinder.3	Total
	185	10,155	11,131	21,365
Level 1	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	42,041
	13,773	13,034	14,694	
Level 2	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	47,161
	15,726	15,844	15,591	
Level 3	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	44,574
	14,771	14,784	15,019	
Level 4	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	18,400
	6,880	6,271	5,249	
Secondary or Vocational level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	6,952
	2,800	1,990	2,162	
Grand total:				180,493 students

Source: adapted from IPEC Thailand (2007, p.1)

This low level of education constrains the majority of young persons in the province from aspiration for productive employment and decent livelihoods. Being unskilled and, for many, unprotected by full citizenship, they often become victims of child labor

exploitation. They are poorly informed of the dangers or, even if they are aware of them, they may still decide to take the risk because of lack of better choices (IPEC Thailand, 2007).

### *Objectives of the Project*

The objectives of the AEON-ILO project was to offer financial support, approximately US \$3,000 for each, to the two schools, Janjawah and Maejedi Wittayakom, to continue and strengthen their vocational programs. Both schools were already offering vocational training as career options for students leaving school. Janjawah School had been promoting basic education and training in the field of tourism for children by using local available resources, knowledge, and expertise. Maejedi Wittayakom School had been promoting traditional handicrafts called Wiengkalong ceramics. The schools' selection of training courses had been in line with the communities' targeted product, service and available resources so that these were considered to be the relevant career options for children at these schools. The market needs assessment was conducted at the community level among the authorities concerned, for example, District Office, Tourism Office, Education Office, Labor Office with schools, communities, and others (IPEC Thailand, 2007).

Career promotion programs for children in these two schools started several years ago. Both schools had developed the curriculum as well as its teaching staff over the past few years with some technical support from the National Council for Child and Youth Development and Chiang Rai Provincial Office (IPEC Thailand, 2007). They had



mobilized local human resources available in the communities to support schools in the design of curriculum. However, the two schools had encountered some major problems such as lack of qualified staff, a budget for hiring external trainers, purchasing equipment, and developing new teaching materials.

#### *Activities and Observations at Each School*

##### a) Janjawah School

At the time when the AEON-ILO financial support started, the school already had 3 years of experience offering vocational training opportunities to students. Its main focus had been on tourism business training, including hotel management, tour guide, souvenir craft, and traditional food cooking. The community in which Janjawah School is located is poorer than other communities in the province and many students come from poor families. School faculty created the vocational training programs, taking advantage of the locale's geographical closeness to tourist sites. In addition to tourism business training, the school has also offered other activities such as making bio-fertilizer and breeding organic vegetables, since many people were engaged in agricultural labor in the province.

Support from the AEON-ILO for the Janjawah School for the academic year of 2007 was 100,000 baht (equivalent to US \$3,000) out of the total budget of 130,850 baht. Janjawah School has used the financial support to strengthen the tourist business especially hotel management career by increasing the number of students to participate, inviting more trainers from outside, sending students more often to hotels to receive

trainings, and buying necessary materials. The school has also started to offer Chinese language classes for students from this academic year with the financial support from the AEON-ILO, taking advantage of the closeness to the border with south China. An estimated 190 students are enrolled in vocational training activities. They were selected to participate based on their interests.

The unique characteristic of Janjawah School is that it runs its own guest houses on the school grounds. Students are able to practice their skills when they receive guests at those facilities. Other students who learn weaving, foot massage and cooking also participate. The school and the students share the profits. The school uses these profits in its budget to strengthen vocational activities while students help their families with their income. In 2006, the school received approximately 1,000 guests from all over the world.

The satisfaction of the school faculty regarding current vocational training programs was approximately 50 to 60 percent at the time I interviewed in August 2007. The school appreciates the financial support from the AEON-ILO, although they recognize the necessity of more funding to improve and offer additional programs for students. For instance, the school is eager to increase language training hours, to hire a native-English speaker as a teacher, to offer more computer classes, and to invite more trainers from outside. Even though the school has received the financial support from the AEON-ILO, the annual budget for vocational programs is not enough to fill the need for training in the local community and, hence, prevent children from having to work.

b) Maejedi Wittayakom School

This school had 4-year experience in vocational training activities at the time it received financial support from the AEON-ILO in 2007. Its main focus has been on pottery and ceramic crafts, since the area in which the school is located is very famous for Wiengkalong ceramics. In addition, the school has offered other vocational activities relevant to local industries including bamboo crafts, mango tree carving crafts, wooden accessories, traditional umbrella painting, and batik painting. These activities were created by considering the local specialty where many people in the community were already engaged in these industries.

The financial support for Maejedi Wittayakom School from the ILO-AEON was also 100,000 baht (US 3,000) which consisted of approximately 50 percent of the total budget of the activities for the academic year of 2007. The school has spent this support to strengthen its pottery, ceramics and painting classes through buying new materials, including new machineries for ceramics, inviting more trainers from outside, sending students more often to factories or ateliers, and organizing more field trips and seminars. An estimated 130 students age 15 to 18 in grades 9 to 12 are enrolled in training activities. They are selected to participate based on their interests.

The school has received good collaboration from the community. Many community members volunteer to teach students and donate necessary materials such as books. The school successfully brings in professionals and sends students to ateliers in the community at relatively low cost. Both the school and the community consider those activities as ones to help retain the cultural traditions of the community. Students learn

painting skills from books donated by the community or directly from trainers during classes. Many students also voluntarily go to factories or ateliers to learn more after school or on weekends.

The satisfaction of the school faculty regarding vocational training programs in 2007 was approximately 50 to 60 percent in August 2007. The faculty of the school appreciates the financial support from the AEON-ILO, although they also bring up the necessity to secure more monies to strengthen and improve programs for students. The school is eager to offer training activities to all students, however currently only 130 students out of total 900 students of the school are able to participate. The school also considers expanding its activities beyond painting, but due to the lack of an adequate budget—despite the financial support from the AEON-ILO—it cannot buy machines for students to use as they learn how to make pottery, ceramics and other crafts. The school considers training activities as very important to enhance students' identities as being community members.

### **Evaluation of the AEON-ILO Project**

The project was not concluded at the time when I visited the two schools in August 2007. I do not know the final outcomes or the results of the final evaluation conducted by the ILO for this project. Thus I include a mid-term evaluation of the project. Since it was a short-term project, mid-term quantitative research to evaluate mid-term output was not conducted by the ILO.

I found several limitations in my evaluation. The first was language limitation. Even though I was offered English translation services at the two schools, communication with teachers and students for the research was limited. The second was time limitation. Since my visiting schedule was very limited, despite the numerous sites that the schools offered me to visit, there was not enough time to conduct interviews, especially with students.

Considering the project's objective to strengthen the existing training programs, the AEON-ILO project successfully did so. Both Janjawah and Maejedi Wittayakom Schools have increased the number of activities and students participating in the trainings from the past academic year with the financial support of the AEON-ILO. Janjawah School has started offering the new program of Chinese language learning and the Maejedi Wittayakom School has bought a new machine as well as necessary materials for students' use.

The choice of vocational training options was relevant. Both schools had identified activities suited for the local job market where students may have vocational opportunities in the future. In addition, the training activities had strengthened the community's unity. Since all trainings are related to community specialties, the schools received a great deal of collaboration and assistance from the community. They have successfully mobilized local human resource available in the communities to support the schools. Both schools and the community believe that those activities are going to stimulate community development while helping students to gain some useful vocational skills.

Students have enjoyed participating in vocational programs through gaining new and useful skills for their future. Approximately 40 to 50 percent of Janjawah School graduates have either chosen to keep studying in the tourism-related field at a higher level or directly obtained jobs in tourism. In the case of the Maejedi Wittayakom School, although there is no information of how many graduates are engaged in ceramic and painting business learned in school, most students contended that they were eager to continue gaining traditional ceramic and painting skills.

However, the selection process of students who participate in activities remains in question. Both schools identified participants based on students' interests knowing that the funded purpose for the activities was to prevent students from engaging in the worst forms of child labor after leaving school. In addition, due to the lack of an adequate budget, schools are unable to offer those trainings to all interested students this academic year. I believe that in many cases, students with more familial economic difficulties would fall into any type of labor, especially into the worst forms, without a choice. The schools should have conducted at least some background research on students and their families when they selected participants to make sure that those who needed the training opportunities the most could receive them.

The final quantitative research evaluation for the project has not yet been conducted. Therefore, the effectiveness of this AEON-ILO project to prevent students from engaging in the worst forms of child labor is unknown. However, from my qualitative research, the AEON-ILO project despite its limited budget has successfully brought effective outcomes. This project has improved the already existing vocational

training activities by introducing new machineries or new activities, and moreover, made it possible to involve more students in vocational training activities. Most of the participating students regard their training as a future career option. They told me that they were happy to receive additional education at school to have vocational skills so that they would be able to help their family.

### **Challenges Facing the ILO in Thailand**

In Thailand, the decrease in child labor is recognized. As of January 2008, the ILO has only two on-going projects on child labor in Thailand including “Support for national action to combat child labor and its worst forms” and “Elimination of child labor in Thailand: AEON-ILO project.” It currently focuses on offering vocational training and has been planning to implement more vocational training opportunities in as many schools as possible, especially in Chiang Rai province. Considering the child labor situation in Thailand, offering vocational trainings as direct intervention is effective. Direct action by the ILO has been reduced in Thailand, although it keeps supporting the Thai government in forms of policy advice and technical cooperation to conduct research and labor studies on national action to combat child labor and its worst forms.

The number of trafficked children in Thailand engaged in economic activities has been growing very fast and immediate actions are required to stop this new phenomenon of child labor. Since the issue of trafficking involves other countries in the Mekong region, the ILO’s sub-regional office for Southeast Asia has been working on this issue. It currently carries out four programs related to the trafficking: “Prevention of

trafficking in children and women at a community level in Cambodia and Viet Nam,” “Reducing labor exploitation of children and women: Combating trafficking in the greater Mekong sub-region, Phase II,” “South east Asia drugs trafficking project,” and “Combating child trafficking for the worst forms of child labor Phase II.” However, they are not directly associated with child workers.

Since trafficked child workers tend to be excluded from national actions taken by governments, it is difficult for the ILO to tackle this problem. The ILO should seek cooperation from the Thai government to incorporate these excluded foreign national child workers into its programs as well as work with the government to take immediate action to rescue these child workers. The ILO has an advantage of working very closely to the Thai government for a long time. The research and studies regarding these unprotected children may encourage the Thai government to take action, as it approved migrant and stateless children to have access to education in 2005. At the same time, the ILO should consider taking more active direct intervention targeting trafficked child workers either by implementing projects or supporting NGOs that are already working in Thailand. These children face exploitation every day and taking immediate action is a responsibility of the ILO in its efforts to work for the total elimination of child labor in Thailand.



**CHAPTER V**  
**CHALLENGES OF CHILD LABOR IN INDIA:**  
**RESPONSES OF THE ILO**

Currently, India has the largest number of child workers in the world. India has followed a proactive policy with respect to the problem of child labor, and has stood for constitutional, statutory and developmental measures to combat child labor. As long ago as February 1933, the Enactment of Children (Pledging of Labor) Act was enacted and since then, there have been nine different Indian legislations relating to child labor (Embassy of India, Washington D.C., n.d.). The Factories Act 1948 prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14, and an adolescent aged between 15 and 18 years can be employed in a factory only if he obtains a certificate of fitness from an authorized medical doctor. The Child Labor (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 in 15 occupations that are hazardous to the children's lives and health, and regulates the working conditions of children in other forms of employment. The National Child Labor Policy (NCLP) was adopted in 1987 following the Child Labor Act. The NCLP focuses on general development programs to benefit children wherever possible and has project-based action plans in areas of high concentration of child labor.

As a recent policy implementation regarding child labor, in October 2006, India became the first country in the world to recognize child domestic labor as hazardous and ban the employment of children in domestic services. The Government of India

added domestic labor as well as some other forms of labor performed by children (such as labor at food stalls on the streets, restaurants, hotels, motels, teashops, resorts, spas or other recreational centers) to the list of hazardous occupations in the Child Labor Act. The Government of India is currently in the process of enforcing this new ban throughout country.

Projects emerging from the NCLP are implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, with a great deal of technical support from the ILO since 1988. This successful collaboration during the past two decades is a good example of political will and administrative commitment to eliminate child labor and it is one of the largest child labor projects in the world, with a budget of US \$154 million over five years. The Government of India has also committed to improve the education and health sectors. In 2002, it initiated the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a national flagship program to provide useful and relevant elementary education for all children in the 6 to 14 age groups by 2010. The National Health Policy 2002, which was originally formulated in 1983; seeks to improve the public health sector. However, despite such promises, the Indian government's public expenditure on health was less than one percent of GDP (approximately 0.9 percent of GDP) in 2004 (UNDP, 2007, p.249, Table 6). Compulsory education is still not strictly enforced across the nation even though it is guaranteed as a right of Indian children in the Constitution.

After the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 1992, the ILO has worked very closely with the Government of India to eliminate child labor through

the IPEC. Its national program implements numerous projects across India, focusing especially on children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.

The ILO has a history of working on targeting Indian children engaged in worst forms of child labor. Now, after the addition of child domestic labor to the Child Labor Act, the ILO is expected to be engaged more in the field of child domestic labor through advising, supporting and monitoring initiatives taken by the Government of India. At the same time, the ability and the role of the ILO as it works with the Government of India will be tested.

This chapter introduces one of the worst forms of child labor—child domestic labor—as a case study in the context of the current child labor situation in India. While many see domestic work as a positive experience for children, it is widely reported that children performing domestic tasks are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse as they are working behind closed doors in a private home (Blagbrough & Matsuno, 2006). I analyze the significance of the ban on child domestic labor and the challenges facing the government to implement it. As the largest initiative on child labor in India, ILO-IPEC monitors the enforcement and implementation of the ban. I discuss the responses and challenges of the ILO to support and cooperate with the Government of India to enforce this ban effectively.

### **The ILO in India**

ILO-IPEC in India was launched in late 1992 and has since designed and supported 175 action programs, including two large-scale projects, “Integrated Area

Specific Project” and “Andhra Pradesh State Based Project against Child Labor” (ILO Subregional Office for South Asia [ILO SRO South Asia], 2005). It has been targeting children engaged in hazardous work, especially the worst forms of child labor. Over the last decade, the ILO-IPEC in collaboration with its partners has directly rehabilitated approximately 145,000 children working in hazardous industries (ILO SRO South Asia, 2005).

ILO-IPEC has actively intervened in the National Child Labor Projects (NCLPs) implemented by the Government of India. It has worked to strengthen the NCLPs and develop strategies for providing a comprehensive child labor elimination model in the country. As a result of the strong commitment of the ILO-IPEC and the Government of India, the NCLPs has grown exponentially: started in 12 district in 1988, it was expanded to cover 76 districts in 1994-1995, then 100 districts between 1997 and 2002, and finally 250 districts in 2007 (ILO, 2005). ILO-IPEC has worked in particular on strengthening the capacity of national agencies, particularly the VV Giri National Labor Institute, four state Labor Institutes, the Central Board for Workers Education, and the National Institute of Rural Development, to implement the NCLPs and other child labor elimination programs effectively (ILO, 2005). It has also provided educational and other rehabilitation services (with working partners) to children withdrawn from hazardous work.

Although child labor is under the legislative jurisdiction of the federal Government of India, state governments and grassroots organizations play a crucial role in enforcement, awareness raising and the process of admitting a child to school for

rehabilitation. Initially, the ILO-IPEC in India was working to strengthen and expand the movement at the district and grassroots levels (ILO SRO South Asia, 2005). It facilitated greater coordination of government services at the district level to mobilize departments within the district government as well as grassroots organizations. The integrated approach also mobilized trade unions as well as employers and workers' organizations at the district level.

As a direct action with children, approximately 70 percent of action programs have focused on withdrawing children from the workplace in India. However, during 1992-1999, the ILO-IPEC also made successful interventions in education. The provision of non-formal or transitional education through NGOs directly covered over 80,000 working children. Approximately 86 percent of those children withdrawn from the workforce have been absorbed into mainstream public elementary education and completed their primary education cycle (ILO SRO South Asia, 2005). ILO-IPEC has also offered action programs containing vocational education or skill training components as well as raising public awareness against child labor, building broad institutional alliances among parents' groups, political leaders, community heads, government, and NGOs.

From 2003-2006, ILO-IPEC implemented its largest child labor project in India with a budget of US \$40 million, the "INDUS Child Labor Project." Jointly funded by the United States Department of Labor and the Government of India, the INDUS project targeted 80,000 children employed in ten identified hazardous sectors<sup>2</sup>. This project was

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<sup>2</sup> Identified hazardous sectors include: handrolled bidis/cigarettes, brassware, handmade bricks, fireworks,

implemented in five districts each in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh, and in selected areas of Delhi. The objective was to strengthen the structures, systems and capacities of the government and civil society agencies to develop a comprehensive child labor elimination model through using the following approaches (INDUS Child Labour Project, 2006):

- Children working in selected hazardous occupations in the target districts are identified, in collaboration with communities and other partners;
- Children withdrawn from hazardous work are provided transitional and pre-vocational education, and social support to prevent relapse;
- Adolescents withdrawn from hazardous work are provided vocational training and alternatives for income generation;
- Increased economic security of families who withdraw their children from hazardous work by encouraging savings and development of alternative livelihoods;
- Children are provided access to quality education to prevent them from entering or re-entering hazardous work;
- Monitoring and tracking of children released from hazardous work to ensure that their situation has improved;
- Strengthen capacity of national, state, district, and local institutions so they can function as ongoing support for eliminating hazardous child labor;
- Develop interest in other areas in adopting measures to prevent, remove and provide alternatives for children in hazardous sectors.

Many children have been withdrawn and rehabilitated from their work. Those now at school are receiving vocational training, and the ILO-IPEC has organized numerous workshops and training programs for stakeholders (INDUS Child Labour Project, 2006).

Currently, the ILO-IPEC has 4 ongoing projects regarding child labor in India: i) Integrated area-specific Approach; ii) Combating child labor in India, Andhra Pradesh, phase II; iii) India National Coordination; and iv) Combating child labor and economic

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footwear (leather, rubber, plastic), handblown glass bangles, handmade locks, hand-dipped matches, hand-broken quarried stones, and hand-spun, hand-loomed silk thread, yarn, and fabric (INDUS Child Labour Project, 2006, p.1)

exploitation among adolescents in the sericulture industry in Kamataka (ILO ROAP, 2007). In addition, while not officially launched yet, a new proposal for another five year plan (2008-13) of the INDUS project to expand the NCLPs' coverage to all 601 districts across India was approved in February 2007 (ILO ROAP, 2007). The INDUS project as well as other state specific projects will continue reflecting the strong will of the Government of India to eliminate child labor in hazardous industries.

### **Child Labor in India**

The 2001 Census of India shows that there are approximately 12.6 million child workers age 5 to 14, comprising 3.6 percent of the total labor force of India. Among these child workers, 5.7 million are classified as "main" workers and 6.9 million as "marginal" workers. "Main workers" are those workers who had worked for the major part of the reference period (i.e., six months or more) and "marginal workers" are those workers who had not worked for the major part of the reference period (i.e., six months or less) (INDUS Child Labor Project, 2007). The gender division of child workers is approximately 6.8 million (54 percent) boys and 5.8 million (46 percent) girls; an estimated 2 million children work in hazardous industries (IPEC, n.d.).

Several factors must be considered when looking at data on child workers in the Census. First, it does not include unpaid child workers laboring alongside their parents, since the government does not recognize and count those child workers as part of the working population. Domestic workers are also excluded from the working population. Identifying children in unpaid and domestic labor is difficult because of the invisible

nature of this kind of labor. However, it is widely recognized that many children are engaged in unpaid, family-type and domestic work in India. For instance, it is common in some regions that children help their parents working together at tea plantations or that children work as domestic servants in the homes of the wealthy, or even of middle class families.

Second, the accuracy of the numbers of child workers announced in the Census remains in question. In India, paid child workers are found toiling in restaurants, tea stalls, wayside shops, and as apprentices. Many newspaper vendors, ragpickers, shoeshine boys, peons at construction sites, and street children (including beggars and prostitutes), are also paid child workers. In many cases, children engaged in such labor are not officially registered as workers or the employers simply do not recognize them as workers (Weiner, 1991). Thus, it is considered that numerous child workers are invisible and excluded from figures in the Census, despite receiving wages.

Third, the existence of different estimates of child workers substantiates the inaccuracy of the figures in the Census. While the Census announces 12.6 million child workers, unofficial estimates calculated by organizations working in India put the figure at between 60 to 115 million. If we would count the excluded unpaid children and child domestic workers, and children in invisible and unrecognizable labor, the number of child workers can be estimated at far more than the official 12.6 million.

Children are found working in a variety of industries across India as shown in Appendix C. There are broadly four kinds of child labor in India (Burra, 1995). First are those children who work in factories, workshops and mines and are usually to be found in



both the unorganized and organized sectors. Second are those children who are bonded to their employers, whether in agriculture or industry. Many of these children work in brick kilns in remote locations. The third group includes street children who are classified in the service sector, and the last are children who work as part of family labor in all contexts including agriculture, industry, and home-based work.

There is a clear-cut differentiation between the labor of male and female children. While boys' labor is closely related to apprenticeship training and skill formation, girls are engaged in low-paid or no-wage unskilled labor, which does not necessarily lead to skill formation (Burra, 1995). This gender differentiation in labor can be traced to the larger culture of India where female children are considered less valuable than male children. A son is expected to live with his parents his entire life, while a daughter will be given away in marriage, complete with a dowry. Indeed, the burden of household duties falls largely upon the girl child. When they labor, girls are involved in large numbers in the unorganized sector industries such as the match, coir, carpet, lock, beedi, gem polishing, zari (gold thread embroidery) making and ground nut shelling industries, which are considered 'female' jobs and are generally performed as piecework at home (Burra, 1995), around their domestic chores. Girls are concentrated in the lower end of earnings distribution and earn significantly less than boys. Girls also tend to enter work at a younger age than boys: about 70 percent of girls began working when they were 10 years old or younger, while boys' proportion of beginning at that age was 57 percent (Swaminathan, 1998).

Bonded child labor is a characteristic of child labor in India even though it is prohibited in the Labor Law. Bonded child labor refers to the phenomenon of children working in conditions of servitude in order to pay off a debt (Human Rights Watch, 1996). Bonded labor is an age-old worker-employer relationship in India rooted in its hierarchical culture. Many children are engaged in this labor: Human Rights Watch estimates at least 15 million children are working as bonded laborers across India, the vast majority being found in agriculture, beedi, carpet-weaving, glass, silver, synthetic, silk, leather, and wool industries (Burra, 1995; Human Rights Watch, 1996). Approximately 52 to 87 percent of all bonded child laborers are engaged in agriculture. At least 327,000 children in beedi making, 300,000 in carpet weaving and 200,000 in silk production were identified as working throughout India by Human Rights Watch (Human Rights Watch, 1996, p.19).

#### *Child Domestic Labor in India*

Child domestic labor is one of the most common forms of child labor and a widespread phenomenon. The ILO defines child domestic labor as “situations where children are engaged to perform domestic tasks in the home of a third party or employer that are exploitative” (IPEC, 2004, p.5). Child domestic work includes all children in domestic service who are under the legal minimum working age as well as those above the legal minimum age but under the age of 18 who are in a hazardous or other exploitative situation. A child’s engagement as a domestic worker in someone else’s house often is considered safe and nonstigmatizing, even a part of his/her development

process and may not be considered “labor.” Comments made by both employers and members of the general public in Cambodia and Indonesia indicate that a large proportion of people do not regard the employment of children as domestic workers to be hazardous or exploitative (Blagbrough & Matsuno, 2006, p.2). However, child domestic labor by its nature is susceptible to being one of the worst forms of child labor as defined in Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention 1999).

Child domestic labor is often called a hidden form of exploitation since not only are many children in domestic labor very young, but the tasks they perform are usually undertaken behind the doors of a private home and are closed to outside scrutiny. This includes not only regular labor sector mechanisms like workplace inspections, surveys of labor conditions and the like, but informal scrutiny from visitors, family and friends, other workers and even just passers-by (IPEC, 2004). The tasks the child domestic workers perform are difficult to monitor or regulate and put children in a situation of extreme risk. In extreme cases, domestic labor is associated with sex trafficking, slavery or practices similar to slavery (IPEC, 2004). Children may find themselves traded or trafficked into someone else’s home, toiling seven days a week, every week of the year, in conditions that endanger their physical and psychological health and safety. They may be confined to the house at all times, suffer beatings, be denied access to family, friends, health services and decent food. They may have to handle toxic substances and face severe heat or cold. For their sufferings they may not even receive payment, but be expected to endure abuse in return for poor accommodation and inferior food or some new clothes from time to time (IPEC, 2004). Employers of children in domestic service

have total control over their lives, resulting in the ILO's designation of child domestic labor as a "worst form of child domestic labor" (ILO, 2004).

India is not alone with the problem of child domestic labor. In many cases, it is also associated with the bonded labor. Child domestic labor is culturally accepted and widely prevalent in India with a perception of domestic service as an apprenticeship and hence it is not recognized as a form of child labor (IPEC, 2004). The 2002 ILO Country Report accounted that in the northern states of India, "keeping children as domestic servants has become not only a necessity but a fashion" (IPEC, 2004, p.28). Families often see household work as training for a girl child in domestic skills. As it is regarded as having a positive benefit, some consider it a valid alternative to education. In addition, India's booming economy accelerates the pace of putting children into domestic service. Placement and recruitment agencies in Delhi and Mumbai are growing rapidly and it has become an extremely lucrative business in India (Gentlemen, 2007). Ms. Surina Rajan of the ILO-Delhi said that

because of the booming economy and the spread of the nuclear family, there has seen a rise in demand for domestic help, at a time when it's becoming more expensive to employ people (Gentleman, 2007 ¶ 31).

It is almost impossible to know how many children are engaged in domestic service both because of its characteristics as well as the reality that most reports on adult domestic work do not give the ages of the adults concerned. The reason behind the unknown number of child domestic workers is that the arrangements for the job are frequently made informally between the child's parents and the employer. Employees are not registered and do not feature in employment statistics (IPEC, 2004). While the exact

number of child domestic workers in India is unknown, in 2006 the Ministry of Labor estimated that approximately 185,000 children were involved in domestic labor in India (Global March against Child Labour, 2006).

The factors that place children into domestic labor are similar to those that push children into any type of labor: poverty, lack of education, no available job, conflict, illness or natural disaster, and low status of women and girls. Economic inequality, debt bondage, demand for cheap labor and recruitment networks, services and individuals are other reasons behind child domestic labor (IPEC, 2004). Reducing costs on the family, rather than increasing income, is another reason why children are put into domestic service with no exchange of money at all, meaning that the child is simply “given away” (IPEC, 2004, p.18).

### **Ban on Child Domestic Labor in India**

Child domestic workers are exposed to and face more exploitative situations than other workers because of its hidden and invisible nature of a child being separately employed and working in the seclusion of a private house. Their jobs belong to the informal labor market unregistered and does not show up clearly in employment statistics. Intervening in what happens in the home is both difficult and a challenge for governments, law enforcement, labor inspectors and others who work to protect the rights of those who serve and there is often institutional reluctance to address issues that seem to impinge upon the rights of the family. As a result, domestic work is often excluded from laws and policies designed to tackle child labor or other forms of child exploitation

(IPEC, 2004). In addition, because of the lack of recognition of domestic work as a form of economic activity, regular labor mechanisms are not systematically applied to situations and labor inspections, registration and tracing schemes, and other “checks and balances” on the work place are not put in place. Not only in India but also around the world, many organizations as well as governments have recognized the necessity to take urgent actions in order to improve the working condition for those children engaged in domestic labor.

The Government of India took a step forward by enacting a ban of domestic labor and some other forms of labor performed by children under the age of 14, which became effective on October 10, 2006. Domestic labor and labor at dhabas (roadside eateries), restaurants, hotels, motels, teashops, resorts, spas or other recreational centers were added to the Child Labor Act, originally prohibited the employment of children only in 13 occupations. The ban is aimed at helping thousands of children who are often subjected to physical violence, psychological trauma and sexual abuse when they work in homes and hotels. According to the new Child Labor Act, anyone found violating the ban would be penalized under the Child Labor Act and face up to two years in prison or fines up to 20,000 rupees. The Government of India estimated that the number of children who would be affected by this ban is approximately 256,000 (UNICEF, n.d. c).

### **How the Notification Came to Be**

The initiative to add child domestic labor and some other forms of labor to the Child Labor Act was taken by the notable local NGO, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan

(BBA) (A. Rahman, personal communication, August 6, 2007). In the summer of 1996, the activists of the BBA rescued the boy named Ashraf who worked as a domestic worker, suffered from physical punishments at the residence of a senior government officer. Immediately after the rescue of Ashraf, the activists of BBA took his case to the India's National Human Rights Commission. Through the internal lobbying of the National Human Rights Commission and external pressure, the use of a child servant was declared a major penalty for government servants.

Approximately at the same time of the announcement of the new regulation for government servants, there was a steady growth of the public awareness on the importance of education for all and education came to be recognized as a fundamental right in the Indian Constitution in 2002. A. Rahman (personal communication, August 6, 2007) told that this public and governmental recognition of education as a fundamental right took a crucial part of the background for creating public support for the idea of a ban on domestic child labor. The efforts of the UN agencies, including activities on the World Day Against Child Labor in 2004 by the ILO, also contributed to raising concern about domestic child labor. Raised public awareness towards child domestic labor and the ultimate recommendation from a medically-oriented committee that determined that domestic child labor constituted a form of hazardous child labor pushed finally the government to add domestic labor and working in hospitality industry as hazardous occupations for children under 14 years of age in October 2006.

### **Significance of Legislation and Its Challenges**

The ban is a positive and significant sign that the government has acknowledged the new forms of slavery and forced labor. Almost all people, from media to child's rights activists, welcomed and considered the ban as a milestone and a very progressive step in the battle to stop the abuses of child workers or child labor itself. Since the law announces the child domestic labor as an illegal labor activity, it is expected to stimulate more programs and activities by organizations working in the field of child domestic labor. B. Ribhu, the national secretary and lawyer of the BBA, said that it would become easier for NGOs to take actions, collaborate with police, rescue children from domestic work and report those who employ children to authority to be fined or punished due to the law (personal communication, August 31, 2007).

However, at the same time, almost all people question the effectiveness of the ban due to weak law enforcement by the government. It states that it has taken proactive steps to tackle the problem of child labor through strict enforcement of legislative provisions along with simultaneous rehabilitative measures. State governments, which are the appropriate implementing authorities, have conducted regular inspections and raids to detect cases of violations (Government of India, n.d.). However, many people point out that the government has not taken the matter of child labor as seriously as it warrants even after the Child Labor Act was enacted in 1986. The representative of the BBA and notable child rights activist, Kailash Satyarthi criticizes the government that since the enactment of the Child Labor Act in 1986, not a single offender has been punished as per the provision of the law (n.d. ¶33).



Satyarthi considers that there has been a systematic failure in the government to enforce policies and laws. Dependency on the conventional, inadequate and unskilled or untrained labor inspector system and a lack of sense of urgency towards solving problem are reasons behind this failure. He also points out that there is the absence of an independent, credible and proactive monitoring and evaluation mechanism in India (Satyarthi, 2006).

It is the primary responsibility of the government to “create the trust and optimism in society that elimination of child labor is achievable” (Satyarthi, 2006 ¶119). The government should dispel the current feeling of despair, disillusion and hopelessness at the ineffective implementation of the Child Labor Act. Government should and is expected to take a comprehensive approach. Bringing those responsible for employing children to justice as well as promising the universal education as alternative options for families that depend on income from children, and rehabilitation plan, including non-formal education for children who lose their jobs are important. Inadequate functioning system of the enforcement of law, including inaccurate statistics, lack of funding and apathy of officials who enforce the laws are already detected. The tasks and responsibilities of the government to correct them are enormous.

### **What Has Happened in the Past Year?**

The Ministry of Labor released that 2,229 violations of the recent notification banning employment of children under 14 as domestic help and in hospitality sector were detected, and 38,818 inspections were carried out by some state governments from whom

reports were received and 211 prosecutions were filed (Rao, n.d.). However, the BBA announced that only 6,669 children were identified across the country as child workers under the new Child Labor Act and in all, 872 prosecutions were launched against the offending employers, however, not a single conviction had taken place during the last one year (“Child labour rampant”, 2007). Save the Children India (2007) ironically indicated that the only act implemented by the national and state governments after one year from the amendment was that the central government has asked state governments to develop action plans to rescue and rehabilitate children who are working as child workers. So far, only three state governments, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamilnadu, have published these plans. Even today, after one year of the ratification, 74 percent of child domestic workers are under the age of 16, and in Delhi alone, close to a million children are still employed at homes or in food stalls and another 40,000 work in the southern city of Hyderabad and 50,000 more work in Calcutta (Save the Children India, 2007, ¶12).

### **Challenges Confronting the ILO in India**

In India, the ILO has put its priorities on children working in forced labor and bondage, in hazardous work, child workers below 12 years, and girl child labor (ILO SRO South Asia, 2004). It has provided interventions to mobilize and generate awareness, build the capacity of different social actors, provide non-formal education, advocate institutional reforms, and develop income-generating alternatives (ILO SRO South Asia, 2004). It has also worked intimately with employers and workers’ organizations, factory and labor inspectors, research and training institutions, and government ministries and

departments at the national and local levels. Since the creation of IPEC, it has worked closely with the Government of India, and recently offered strong support to implement the NCLPs to realize the commitment of the Government of India to eliminate child labor. So far, the INDUS project (in support of the NCLPs) has only covered approximately half of the 601 districts in India. The new project proposal covers and targets children engaged in hazardous labor in all districts in India, and the ILO-IPEC needs to find a way to accomplish this.

Until now, on the contrary to its active interventions against worst forms of child labor, the ILO has not implemented any programs targeting child domestic labor in India. This absence is despite that child domestic labor has been internationally recognized and specified in Convention No.182 (Worst Form of Child Labor 1999). It is instead because the ILO takes the principle to work and implement program, which must be in line with the target sectors determined by the government based on its request (S. Rajan, personal communication, August 31, 2007). The Government of India had not recognized child domestic labor as hazardous or one of the worst forms of child labor until October 2006, so that child domestic labor had been excluded from any programs and projects of the ILO. From now on, the ILO would be able to suggest the effective implementation of programs and offer its technical expertise to eliminate child domestic labor as a working partner of the government. The new notification would bring positive interventions from the ILO.

Since the amendment of two new notifications to the Child Labor Act, the Government of India—with technical support from the ILO and UNICEF—has

established an extensive media campaign for public awareness of the notification. It has also created sensitization workshops on the issues among government officials, civil society groups and trade unions to ensure effective implementation and strengthen law enforcement (UNICEF, n.d. c). It has also expanded rehabilitative measures and cooperated with NGOs in cities for rehabilitation of withdrawn children. By the end of August 2007, the government and the ILO were preparing to launch the new child labor survey to grasp more accurate numbers of child workers, including those who are engaged in domestic tasks. After the notifications, the ILO itself has already started to its programs through strengthening supports to state governments to organize workshops and awareness raising campaigns as the beginning of the enforcement of the law, then plan further projects focusing on child domestic labor (S. Rajan, personal communication, August 31, 2007).

Child labor activist and former member of the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), A. Rahman, feels the sense of urgency to take action to press the government to enforce the ban before the government gets used to not enforcing this ban (personal communication, July 23, 2007). Taking advantage of its close relationship to the government, the ILO should support the Government of India at all levels in strengthening and monitoring schemes, monitor the enforcement of the Child Labor Act, offer advocacy and communication initiatives, awareness and social mobilization and support NGOs working for rescue and rehabilitate child domestic workers. The ILO is expected to bring a change in the field of child domestic labor through using its past experiences working in the field of worst forms of child labor.

## CHAPTER VI

### BEST PRACTICES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOR

Poverty and the lack of education are major factors that contribute to child labor and they are strongly interlinked with each other. In many countries, poverty forces a family to place their children into labor or abandoned children to have to make a living on their own. Children often have to work for sheer economic survival. If a child has to work, obviously the demand for education disappears. Child labor is a central obstacle to realizing the right of all children to an education. Lack of education perpetuates both poverty and child labor in the long term. The vicious cycle of poverty, lack of education and child labor continues throughout generations if these three problems are not tackled simultaneously.

Both Thailand and India have embraced each of these three approaches in their efforts to eliminate child labor. My analysis of the transition of the child labor situation in Thailand and India leads me to conclude that the combined approaches have left positive results to reduce the number of child workers. Both countries have shown steady economic growth over the past decade while adopting numerous necessary policies and laws to regulate labor standards. They have done so by setting the legal minimum age for the employment of children as well as increasing the access and quality of education and health. However, even though both countries have taken similar practices towards eliminating child labor, Thailand seems more successful than India in terms of decreasing child labor. What accounts for this difference?

Both in Thailand and India, the ILO launched the IPEC at the same time in 1992. However, after 16 years, Thailand has far less child labor than India. We cannot simply compare those two countries since India's landmass is six times larger than Thailand, with eighteen times more population who have very diverse backgrounds. The two countries have different local cultures and are at different stages of development. However, when we compare Thailand and India in their practices, we can identify the best solutions to addressing child labor by understanding what kinds of approaches have brought better results in Thailand. Conversely, it may also help inform us as to what India needs to improve to decrease child labor. In this chapter, I explore the factors that have brought different results in Thailand and India. I indicate the points that India needs to improve in order to catch up to Thailand in the area of reducing child labor. I conclude with recommendations of best practices to the ILO for elimination of child labor.

### **Comparison of Thailand and India**

#### *Policy Implementation*

Both Thailand and India have adopted numerous policies and laws targeting child labor to regulate labor standards and conditions by setting a minimum age to enter employment. Both countries have made education compulsory up to a certain age for all children. This is now guaranteed in their respective constitutions. Both governments have been very serious in their efforts to eliminate child labor through adopting essential regulations, policies and laws.

Thus, in the area of policy implementation, there seems to be no prominent distinction between Thailand and India. However, I have found differences regarding the commitment of the two governments to educational and health policies as well as to their enforcement. I discuss the differences in educational policies later; at this point, I address the difference in the commitment of the respective governments in health policies.

Cigno et al. point out that the share of public health expenditure in GDP significantly reduces child labor since the increase in public expenditure for health or sanitation would be able to “induce parents to switch from a high-fertility, low-survival, low-education to a low-fertility, high-survival, and high-education strategy” (2002, p.1582). When we review the public expenditure on health of Thailand and India, we see a significant difference. Table 6.1 illustrates that while Thailand’s public expenditure on health was approximately 2.3 percent of gross domestic products (GDP) in 2005, India’s was only 0.9 percent of GDP for the same year. The Thai government has spent approximately three times more on health than the Indian government resulting in people in Thailand having more access to better health services than people in India. This difference is clearly reflected to the infant mortality and total fertility rate of the two countries. By extension, children in Thailand are less in jeopardy of being placed in labor than children in India due to family illness.

**Table 6.1 Public expenditure on health in Thailand and India (2005)**

	<b>Health expenditure (% of GDP)</b>	<b>Per capita (US \$)</b>	<b>Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live birth)</b>	<b>Total fertility rate (births per woman)</b>
Thailand	2.3	293	18	1.8
India	0.9	91	56	3.1

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2007 (Table 5, 6, 7, and 10)

Establishing policies and laws is not enough. They must be adequately enforced throughout the country as well. Thailand has strictly enforced its laws and policies regulating child labor for over a decade and as a result, has successfully decreased the incidence of child labor. However, India has faced difficulties in enforcement and many activists point out the weak enforcement of laws and policies by both central and state government in India. This is another reason why India falls behind Thailand in terms of decreasing child labor.

It is important to secure the enforcement of laws and policies. Especially for India, enforcement of laws and policies is a key factor. Organizations including the ILO have encouraged the Government of India to revise and implement key policies; they need to encourage the government more strongly to enforce them effectively. It is also important for the ILO to convince the Government of India to ratify both Convention No.138 (Minimum Age 1973) and No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor 1999). Ratification of ILO conventions makes it easier for the ILO to monitor the performance of a government.



*Education*

Both Thailand and India guarantee compulsory education for all children in their constitutions. Thailand, in its 1997 Constitution and 1999 Education Act, has established and guaranteed compulsory education up to grade 9 for all children. India also promises free and compulsory education of children up to age 14 in its constitution. In both Thailand and India, many organizations, especially NGOs, have worked in the field of education to improve the access and quality of education through offering formal and non-formal education for children.

Regardless of the compulsory education policy in both countries, India has less primary school net enrollment and lower youth literacy rates than Thailand. As Table 6.2 illustrates, Thailand enjoys a primary school net enrollment rate of 98 percent while India has 84 percent. Among youth age 15-24, Thailand has achieved a 98 percent literacy rate while India has achieved only 76.4 percent. According to my analysis, this is due in large part to the lower public expenditure on education in India. Table 6.2 also shows that Thailand spent 4.2 percent of its total GDP (which was 25 percent of total government expenditure for the year 2005) on education while India spent 3.8 percent of GDP, which was only 10.7 percent of total government expenditures. Indeed, we can see that Thailand has emphasized education more than India.

**Table 6.2 Public expenditure on education and literacy rates (2005)**

	<b>Education expenditure (% of GDP)</b>	<b>As a % of total government expenditure</b>	<b>Net primary enrollment rate (%)</b>	<b>Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older)</b>	<b>Youth literacy rate (% aged 15-24)</b>
Thailand	4.2	25	98	92.6	98
India	3.8	10.7	84	61	76.4

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2007 (Table 11 and 12)

India has successfully increased the net enrollment of children to 84 percent in the past 20 years, and many organizations are offering non-formal education as a bridge to formal education. However, in order to increase the enrollment rate further, India needs to strengthen enforcement of compulsory education as well as increase public expenditure on education so as to improve the quality of education. This encourages many parents to send children to school.

### *Economic Development*

Table 6.3 illustrates that per capita income in India is less than a third of that in Thailand, making India considerably more impoverished than Thailand. While in Thailand, 25.2 percent of the population lives on less than 2 dollars a day, in India, more than triple—80.4 percent—lives on less than 2 dollars a day. Neumayer and De Soysa (2005, p.52) conclude, “higher per capita income levels are associated with lower incidence of child labor;” this certainly appears to be the case in these two countries with Thailand having a child labor participation rate of less than 1 percent while India’s official estimate is about 5 percent.

**Table 6.3 Economic performance and poverty in Thailand and India (2005)**

	GDP (US \$ billions)	GDP per capita (PPP US \$) <sup>3</sup>	Population below international poverty line (%)	
			US \$1 a day	US \$2 a day
Thailand	176.6	7,061	-	25.2
India	805.7	2,221	34.3	80.4

Source: UNDP Human Development Report, 2007 (Table 3 and 14)

To analyze the correlation between economic growth and the decrease in child labor, it is important to confirm whether economic growth has contributed to the decrease in child labor in Thailand or not. Appendix D shows the economic performance of Thailand and India in the past 20 years. We see that steady economic growth had contributed to the decrease in child labor in Thailand at least until 1997 when it experienced severe economic crisis. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thailand had achieved the decline in its child labor participation rate (from 5 percent to less than 1 percent) between 1989 and 2000. Until 1997, Thailand's average annual economic growth was 8.7 percent; I anticipate this growth contributed markedly to the fall in its child labor participation rate. Even though Thailand had experienced negative economic growth in 1997 and 1998, the ground had already been laid for fewer children participating labor. No organization announced an increase in the child labor participation rate, and the ILO has affirmed Thailand's maintenance of a downward trend since the economic recovery in 1999 (ILO, 2006a).

<sup>3</sup> Gross domestic product in purchasing power parity terms in US dollars. Purchasing power parity: a rate of exchange that accounts for price differences across countries, allowing international comparisons of real output and incomes (UNDP, 2007, p.369).

Thailand also harbors a higher stock of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) than India. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) announced that in 2006, Thailand held approximately 33 percent of GDP (US \$68,058 million) as FDI inward stocks while India held only 5.7 percent of GDP (US \$50,680 million) as FDI inward stock. Neumayer and De Soysa (2005) point out that countries which have a higher stock of FDI tend to have a lower incidence of child labor; indeed, Thailand with more FDI stocks than India, has less incidence of child labor.

Economic development helps lower the demand for child workers since globalization may raise the wage rates of primary-level educated workers relative to those of uneducated ones (Kambhampati & Rajan, 2006). I argue that we should be careful with this assumption because it can only reduce the incidence of child labor if there are enough educated workers available. If there are not enough educated workers, child labor may increase as other economic development strategies are pursued.

Economic development has been successful in decreasing child labor in Thailand because it was aligned with the strict enforcement of education for all. Following Thailand's example, India should stimulate more economic growth by opening its economy to increase foreign investment as Thailand has done. However, India should remember that as "child labor is likely to rise where the share of educated workers is very low" (Cigno et al., 2002, p.1587), without strict enforcement of compulsory education for all children, economic growth might place more children in jeopardy to have to work. Education is not only a tool to release children from work, but also affects whether economic development decreases or increases child labor.

Thailand is a step further from India in eliminating child labor. Even though both Thailand and India have established similar laws and policies to regulate labor standards related to child labor, I have found differences in the commitment of the two governments in their education and health policies and their economic development strategies. Both Thailand and India have experienced rapid economic growth but while Thailand has strictly enforced those health and education policies and guaranteed the compulsory education for all, India has faced struggles in enforcing them. As a result, Thailand has been more successful in reducing child labor than has India.

Child labor in India is the result of the country's inability to enforce critical laws and policies. Human Rights Watch criticizes the Government of India given that,

The Indian government has failed to protect its most vulnerable children. When others have stepped in to try to fill the vacuum and advocate on behalf of those children, India's leaders and much of its media have attributed nearly all "outside" attempts at action to an ulterior commercial motive (Human Rights Watch, 1996, p.5).

Laws and policies, including compulsory education, are all in place; India needs to enforce them strictly.

As we see in Table 6.4, India has same child labor participation rate in 2000 to that of Thailand in 1989. However, India's GDP per capita is lower than that of Thailand in 1989. If higher per capita income levels are associated with lower incidence of child labor as Cigno et al. (2002) conclude, India has achieved the same participation rate as Thailand 20 years ago while it has a lower GDP per capita. This signifies that if India achieves a higher GDP per capita, the incidence of child labor would further decrease.

**Table 6.4 GDP per capita and child labor participation rate of Thailand and India**

	<b>Year</b>	<b>GDP per capita (US \$)</b>	<b>Child labor participation rate (%)</b>
Thailand	1989	2,627	5
	2000	5,080	less than 1
India	2000	1,527	5

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicator

We can assume that the current incidence of child labor in India is probably not as serious as that of Thailand in 1988 when we compare it based on similar GDP per capita. My hypothesis is that the child labor participation rate of Thailand in 1988 was higher than five percent since neither the ILO nor other organizations have presented any data of having less child labor incidence than 5 percent before 1989. When we apply this hypothesis to the rate of child labor participation based on similar GDP per capita, currently India has an even lower rate than that of Thailand in 1988. Regardless, the rate of 5 percent in India in 2000 is official data that the Government of India presents. As mentioned in Chapter V, it is difficult to obtain actual, reliable data on the child labor situation in India. The participation rate of the same year may rise even to 12.1 percent, as one researcher concludes (Mehta, 2007). Even though accurate data for current India's child labor participation rate is lacking, I conclude that the situation of child labor in India is not as desperate as some people presume.

This chapter reveals that there are strong correlations between policy implementation, education, economic growth, and the incidence of child labor. Without adequate education, neither greater economic growth nor lessening child labor can occur.

Setting laws and policies cannot make much of a difference unless they are also strictly enforced. In monitoring the activities of multinational corporations, it is very important for a government to enforce its labor law regulations in their activities as well. India is booming and the moment is ripe for the Government of India to strictly enforce compulsory education as well as other policies regarding child labor.

### **Conclusions on Best Practices**

Policy implementation, education and economic development are all crucial factors in order to eliminating child labor. None can be ignored in tackling the problem of child labor and we must take comprehensive approaches that integrate all three arenas. Many organizations have recognized the importance of these factors and, in line with their philosophies and specialties, they have taken different approaches towards elimination of child labor. Many have successfully played a surveillance role over governments and mobilized them to take necessary actions towards eliminating child labor.

However, it is sometimes difficult to apply these three approaches simultaneously. Economic development in particular takes a long time to improve living standards as its benefits are not divided equally among classes. I argue that aggregate economic growth is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the decrease in child labor since economic growth and globalization may demand an increase in a cheap labor force and therefore place more children into work. Human Rights Watch has critiqued India's 1991 economic policy as it promotes privatization of industries and lower import

duties which in turn is exacerbating the child labor situation (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

Educational opportunity is an important means to decrease child labor. If compulsory education is guaranteed for all children, children face minimum risk of falling into labor. The process of withdrawing child workers would also be easier and accelerated. These children receiving education would become educated workers in the future and may make positive contribution to spur economic growth further. Compulsory education is essential because it promises free or low cost education for all children. Many parents cannot send children to school because of the cost, thereby making compulsory education a minimal responsibility of the government.

Non-formal or transitional education plays a very important role here. Non-formal education is a bridge to formal education as well as an encouragement to children who have not previously been educated or whose education was interrupted. Non-formal education as well as vocational training is a very useful strategy, especially for older children as they acquire knowledge and skills for the future. It is often awkward for older children to learn with younger children, and older children in a family may continue working to support their family for daily survival. Vocational training offers opportunities for children to acquire professional skills to minimize the risk to be engaged in hazardous occupations.

Improving the health sector also has a great effect on reducing child labor through alleviating the poverty of individual households. Increasing public expenditure on health as well as active intervention from organizations to improve access and quality of health services can lower extra expenses of the family. With sufficient support for



public health, “parents can procure the same number of surviving children at lower cost, and it is thus as if they had become richer” (Cigno et al., 2002, p.1582). In addition, investment in the health sector can increase family planning education which also contributes to a decrease in child labor because parents generally determine the household’s supply of child labor by determining how many children they have (Cigno et al., 2002). Many parents believe that having many children can alleviate household poverty. However, this false perception frequently sends children to work at very early age. In some cases, having too many children forces parents to abandon their own children because they are unable to sustain them. As a result, children have to live on the streets on their own and the risk for them to be engaged in hazardous work is increased due to their vulnerability. Improving the public health sector contributes to reducing child labor through alleviating household poverty and family planning education.

The example of Thailand shows us that labor law reforms and appropriate policies related to child labor, including health policy, accompanied by a strong commitment by the government to enforce educational opportunity and economic development, are all important and necessary factors and effective approaches toward elimination of child labor.

### **Role and Challenge of the ILO**

The ILO, as the world’s only organization focused exclusively on labor, has worked and supported governments in the areas of labor law and policy reforms as well as mainstreaming child labor concern in development frameworks. For example, in Sri

Lanka, child labor concerns have been mainstreamed into the Sri Lankan National Youth Employment Policy and in Cambodia, child labor concerns have been included as a cross-cutting issue to be addressed in the newly developed Education Strategic Plan for 2006-2010 of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (ILO, 2007, ANNEX II). Throughout Asia, the ILO has provided leadership at the national level, particularly through IPEC's increasing presence on the ground. As discussed in Chapter IV and V, the programs of ILO have contributed to the decrease in child labor in both Thailand and India.

The major task of the ILO is to analyze problematic situations and to offer technical cooperation to governments when they plan and implement programs, including offering inputs in policy revisions highlighting the links between child labor and the principal objectives of policy processes. Through its deep analytical research, the ILO identifies problems that may be rooted in the society and offers ideas for effective programs to eliminate child labor. In Bangladesh, the ILO identified the particular hazardousness of the urban informal sectors for working children and encouraged the Bangladeshi government to have a priority to work in these sectors. Similarly, in the Philippines, the ILO recognized the necessity of establishing programs for child soldiers and offered its technical cooperation to the Philippine government (ILO, 2007, p.39). However, as mentioned in previous chapters, the ILO has always worked in response to explicit government requests. I argue that this is the time for the ILO to change this request-based working style.

In order for the ILO-IPEC to support the Time-Bound Programs (TBPs) as well as monitor the commitments of governments to the elimination of child labor, ratification of ILO Conventions is a key. Ratification of ILO Conventions requires participating governments to conduct a child labor survey and report back to the International Labor Conference about their child labor situation. The TBP is the Member States' practical response to obligations following ILO Conventions especially Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labor 1999). Table 6.4 illustrates countries in Asia which have ratified ILO Conventions with the ratification year.

**Table 6.5 Ratifications of Conventions No. 138 and 182 in Asia**

Country	Convention No. 138	Convention No. 182
Bangladesh	-	2001
Cambodia	1999	-
India	-	-
Indonesia	1999	2000
Lao PDR	2005	2005
Mongolia	2002	2001
Burma (Myanmar)	-	-
Nepal	1997	2002
Pakistan	-	2001
Philippines	1998	2000
Sri Lanka	2000	2001
Thailand	2001	2001
Viet Nam	2003	2000

Source: adapted ILO (2005, p.8)

The fact that neither Convention has been ratified by India, which has both the biggest child population and the largest number of child workers in the world, raises the

global percentage of children not covered by the fundamental Conventions. Around the world, the ratification rate of ILO Convention No. 182 has reflected the overwhelming commitment of governments to act decisively against the worst forms of child labor. The ratification rate of Convention No.138 has shown governments' intent to do this within the context of tackling child labor in all its forms, moving towards keeping children below the minimum working age out of labor and in school (ILO, 2005). Once the government ratifies ILO Conventions, UN organizations as well as the ILO have a role and responsibility to monitor their enforcement in the forms of national laws and policies. For the ILO to take an active responsibility to eliminate child labor, it needs to encourage non-ratifying States Parties to join ILO Conventions.

ILO has enormous experience fighting against child labor around the world. Application of this experience in Thailand and in India has enabled both countries to successfully decrease child labor. However, more efforts are needed. As the ILO is a labor specified agency, it is important to build good coordination with other organizations to make comprehensive approaches towards elimination of child labor through adopting three major approaches simultaneously. For example, in Bangladesh, the ILO, UNICEF and NGOs, together implemented a project to remove child workers from the garment industry and to place them in education programs. UNICEF took the lead in education, the ILO in verification and monitoring and Italian social partners started offering a skill training and micro-credit facility (ILO, 2006a). The establishment of the inter-agency research project Understanding Children's Work (UCW) with UNICEF and the World Bank, including the research and policy engagement from an economic perspective, has

offered broader scope for stronger engagement on the issue of child labor as part of its policy dialogues with governments. World Health Organization (WHO) has supported the ILO in establishing an inter-agency group on eliminating hazardous child work and its centers in occupational health had identified child labor as one of 15 priority area by 2003 (ILO, 2005). These collaborations are indispensable to incorporate child labor into any kind of government policies. The ILO should voluntarily seek more collaboration with other organizations so that it can take comprehensive approaches towards elimination of child labor.

Since the NGOs are active on the ground and in international debates concerning child labor, the ILO should financially support and work more with NGOs. The ILO tackles the problem of child labor at the larger country level while the NGOs tackle it at the grassroots level. While the ILO negotiates with governments to adopt appropriate policies and enforce them, the NGOs are tackling child labor by rescuing children from work and offering rehabilitation programs, health services, non-formal and vocational trainings. In India, the ILO-IPEC's strategy started to re-orient the NGOs already working on children and encouraged them to work on the specific issue of child labor. This initial strategy has built a good working relationship between the ILO and the NGOs since the large base of NGOs from all over India provided a strong foundation around which ILO-IPEC could evolve. This influential partnership has eventually spoken with greater unity on the issue, which in turn has had a broad impact on the media and the general public (ILO SRO South Asia, 2004).

Not all countries in Asia receive global attention regarding child labor. However, awareness raising activities of NGOs, including promoting consumer boycotts of products produced by children under the legal age, have had positive effects on drawing more global awareness. Recent attention has focused on garment manufacturers in Bangladesh as well as other export sectors in the continent (ILO, 2005). To accelerate the pace of eliminating child labor, the ILO should support more NGOs working at the grassroots level so that they can fully use their advantages to eliminate child labor.

Child labor is a very complex social problem and takes time to completely eradicate. Governments are always the key entity to affecting child labor and a strong commitment from a government is indispensable to achieve such long-term goals. The ILO recognizes the strength, too, of grassroots-level activities and promotes them to accelerate elimination of child labor worldwide.

The strength of the ILO is in its close working relationship with governments. The ILO is able to propose and directly encourage governments to take action against child labor. Its ability to support governments and make them commit more to the problem of child labor gets put to the test every day.

**APPENDIX A**  
**CHILD WORKER POPULATION**

Country	Year of Survey	age 5-9			age 10-14			Age 15-17			Age 5-17			Reference
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Bangladesh	2002-2003	* Male: 3372 Female: 1319 Total: 4692						2099	632	2731	5471	1952	7423	SIMPOC
	2002-2003	191	103	297	3139	1194	4326	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
Bhutan	2003	-	-	-	6	9	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW
Cambodia	2001	231	215	446	546	524	1070	393	369	762	1170	1108	2278	SIMPOC
	2001	221	208	429	548	528	1076	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
India	2001	1002	848	1850	5802	5014	10817	-	-	-	-	-	-	Census of India 2001
	1999	660**	520**	1177**	5437	3724	9167	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW
Indonesia	1999	-	-	93	-	-	1097	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2
Lao PDR	2000	-	-	113	-	-	263	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2
Mongolia	2002-2003	9	6	15	14	8	21	19	13	32	42	27	69	SIMPOC
Nepal	1995-1996	352	492	844	756	893	1645	-	-	-	-	-	-	SIMPOC
	1998-1999	223	277	500	692	791	1484	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW
Pakistan	1996	334	239	573	2098	642	2740	-	-	-	-	-	-	SIMPOC
Philippines	2001	144	102	246	1234	700	1934	1170	667	1837	2548	1469	4018	Philippines National Statistics Office
	2001	140	98	242	1251	710	1960	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
Sri Lanka	1999	56	35	89	239	145	384	282	168	451	577	349	926	SIMPOC
	1999	52	32	85	239	146	384	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
Viet Nam	2000	-	-	416	-	-	1859	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2

Notes: (1) \* SIMPOC data for Bangladesh represents the population of working children ages 5-14.

(2) \*\* UCW data for India represents the population of working children age 6-9.

Source: Statistical Information & Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). (updated 2005)

UNICEF the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (UNICEF MICS2). (n.d.).

Understanding Children's Work An Inter-Agency Research cooperation Project on Child (UCW). (n.d.)



**APPENDIX B**  
**ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATES**

Country	Year of Survey	age 5-9			age 10-14			Age 15-17			Age 5-17			Reference
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Bangladesh	2002-2003	* Male: 0.185 Female: 0.079 Total: 0.134			0.474	0.218	0.373	0.241	0.099	0.175	SIMPOC			
	2002-2003	0.021	0.012	0.017	0.362	0.154	0.263	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
Bhutan	2003	-	-	-	0.161	0.227	0.196	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW
Cambodia	2001	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.5311	0.5279	0.5295	SIMPOC
	2001	0.248	0.247	0.247	0.655	0.649	0.652	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
India	1999	0.013**	0.011**	0.012**	0.089	0.066	0.078	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW
Indonesia	1999	-	-	0.004	-	-	0.051	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2
Lao PDR	2000	-	-	0.182	-	-	0.489	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2
Mongolia	2002-2003	0.082	0.061	0.072	0.091	0.054	0.073	0.221	0.149	0.185	-	-	0.101	SIMPOC
	2000	-	-	0.281	-	-	0.454	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2
Nepal	2003-2004	-	-	0.138	-	-	0.501	-	-	-	-	-	-	Nepal Living Standards Survey 2003/04
	1995-1996	0.203	0.295	0.248	0.515	0.659	0.584	-	-	-	-	-	-	SIMPOC
Pakistan	1996	0.03	0.023	0.027	0.225	0.072	0.149	-	-	-	-	-	-	SIMPOC
Philippines	2001	0.028	0.021	0.025	0.237	0.144	0.192	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
	2000	-	-	0.098	-	-	0.24	-	-	0.378	-	-	0.238	UNICEF MICS2
Sri Lanka	1999	0.071	0.05	0.061	0.26	0.165	0.213	-	-	-	-	-	-	UCW/SIMPOC
Viet Nam	2000	-	-	0.101	-	-	0.427	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNICEF MICS2

Notes: (1) \* SIMPOC data for Bangladesh represents the rate of working children ages 5-14.

(2) \*\* UCW data for India represents the rate of working children age 6-9.

Source: Statistical Information & Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). (updated 2005)

UNICEF the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (UNICEF MICS2). (n.d.).

Understanding Children's Work An Inter-Agency Research cooperation Project on Child (UCW). (n.d.)

**APPENDIX C**  
**CHILD WORKER POPULATION BY INDUSTRY**

Industry	Bangladesh age 5-17	Cambodia age 5-17	India* age 5-14	Mongolia			Nepal age 5-14	Pakistan age 5-14	Philippines			Sri Lanka age 5-17	VietNam age 5-17
				age 5-14	age 15-17	age 5-17			age 5-14	age 15-17	age 5-17		
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, and Fishing total</b>	4157	1657	729	34	29	63	1576	2413	1393	956	2349	589	2856
<b>male</b>	2987	891	417	21	17	38	844	1500	977	741	1718	365	1441
<b>female</b>	1165	766	312	13	11	24	732	644	417	215	631	224	1415
<b>Mining and Quarrying total</b>	15	11	38	0.4	0.2	0.6	-	-	9	9	18	12	-
<b>male</b>	5	8	22	0.3	0.1	0.4	-	-	9	9	18	9	-
<b>female</b>	4	3	16	0.06	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
<b>Manufacturing total</b>	1084	144	1727	0.2	0.5	0.7	13	354	90	97	186	137	328
<b>male</b>	689	59	890	0.1	0.2	0.3	8	249	49	49	98	68	82
<b>female</b>	392	84	836	0.05	0.3	0.4	5	105	41	47	89	70	246
<b>Construction total</b>	230	23	207	0.05	0.2	0.2	26	60	10	49	58	18	354
<b>male</b>	186	14	155	0.05	0.2	0.2	13	57	10	49	58	18	233
<b>female</b>	45	8	513	-	-	-	13	3	-	-	-	0.2	121
<b>Wholesale and Retail Trade total</b>	1054	364	360	2	2	3	7	288	449	300	747	100	886
<b>male</b>	903	155	309	1	0.8	2	5	281	206	134	340	69	347
<b>female</b>	152	209	51	0.5	0.9	1	2	7	244	163	407	30	530
<b>Electricity, Gas and Water total</b>	-	0.6	4	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.6	3	4	0.6	-
<b>male</b>	-	0.6	3	-	-	-	-	0.2	0.6	3	4	0.6	-
<b>female</b>	-	-	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Transport, Communication and Storage total</b>	349	17	64	-	0.2	0.2	-	123	29	72	102	9	124
<b>male</b>	334	13	58	-	0.2	0.2	-	122	27	71	98	8	124
<b>female</b>	14	4	5	-	-	-	-	2	3	1	4	0.6	-
<b>Hotel and Restaurant total</b>	186	-	62	0.1	0.2	0.4	-	-	36	59	95	-	-
<b>male</b>	159	-	58	0.06	0.09	0.2	-	-	15	19	33	-	-
<b>female</b>	27	-	4	0.03	0.1	0.2	-	-	22	40	62	-	-
<b>Finance, Real Estate total</b>	-	7	45	-	-	-	-	0.9	40	68	108	0.8	-
<b>male</b>	-	4	30	-	-	-	-	0.7	17	26	43	0.6	-
<b>female</b>	-	3	16	-	-	-	-	0.2	23	42	65	0.2	-
<b>Community, Social and Personal Activities total</b>	319	53	-	0.05	0.3	0.3	-	257	36	40	73	-	-
<b>male</b>	175	24	-	0.05	0.2	0.2	-	172	23	25	47	-	-
<b>female</b>	140	30	-	-	0.07	0.07	-	85	10	15	25	-	-
<b>Others including private household work total</b>	30	-	360	0.2	0.09	0.3	40	-	73	168	241	59	1917
<b>male</b>	16	-	181	0.1	0.07	0.25	23	-	27	17	44	39	1035
<b>female</b>	14	-	179	0.1	0.02	0.05	17	-	46	150	196	20	882
<b>Reference</b>	SIMPOC	SIMPOC	Census of India 2001	SIMPOC			SIMPOC	SIMPOC	Philippines National Statistics Office			SIMPOC	SIMPOC

Notes: \* Number of child workers in each industry was retrieved from the data, which only studied 168 million workers (out of 401 million) of all-age in order to provide data comparable with that of 1991 Census.

Source: Statistical Information & Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). (updated 2005)

Census of India 2001. (n.d.)

Philippines National Statistics Office. (n.d.)

**APPENDIX D**

**ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF THAILAND AND INDIA**

		1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
India	GDP growth (annual %)	5.2	4.8	4.0	9.6	6.0	5.5	1.1	5.5	4.8	6.7	7.6
Thailand		4.6	5.5	9.5	13.3	12.2	11.2	8.6	8.1	8.3	9.0	9.2
India	GDP per capita growth (annual %)	3.1	2.5	1.8	7.4	3.8	3.4	-0.9	3.5	2.8	4.7	5.7
Thailand		3.1	4.0	8.0	11.8	10.8	9.8	7.3	6.8	7.0	7.8	8.0
India	GDP per capita	618	647	677	752	810	870	892	945	994	1,063	1,147
Thailand		1,673	1,779	1,975	2,284	2,627	2,996	3,325	3,634	3,979	4,378	4,825

		1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
India	GDP growth (annual %)	7.6	4.1	6.2	7.4	4.0	5.2	3.7	8.4	8.3	9.2
Thailand		5.9	-1.4	-10.5	4.4	4.8	2.2	5.3	7.1	6.3	4.5
India	GDP per capita growth (annual %)	5.7	2.3	4.4	5.6	2.3	3.5	2.1	6.8	6.8	7.7
Thailand		4.7	-2.5	-11.5	3.4	3.8	1.3	4.5	6.4	5.5	3.8
India	GDP per capita	1,235	1,284	1,355	1,451	1,517	1,608	1,671	1,822	2,001	2,222
Thailand		5,149	5,105	4,569	4,792	5,080	5,270	5,603	6,086	6,605	7,061

Source: World Development Indicator

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