

Good Practices and Lessons learned on child and adolescent domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic: A gender perspective



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Foreword

Throughout the world, there are thousands of girls, boys and adolescents who carry out household labour in the homes of others. This form of labour is considered one of the most general forms of exploitation, while at the same time it is the least understood and receives the least amount of attention in terms of assistance. Child domestic labour is directly related to poverty and to the demographic factors that force families to either migrate from rural or marginalised urban areas or to send their children, primarily their girls, to other areas in search of better economic and educational opportunities.

It is not known how many boys, girls and adolescents work in child domestic labour, because by definition it is a “hidden” activity, but it without a doubt common and widespread. This is especially true for young girls who make up one of the most difficult sectors of the population to protect, since they work in private homes and their labour is not considered work, but rather a mere extension of the obligations they have in their own homes.

The victims tend to be identified as “house girls”, “girls being raised”, “servants” and “maids” together with other euphemisms used to avoid recognising the tasks carried out and to justify the exploitative conditions. This has increased the “invisibility” of minors underage workers involved in this practice, since they are dispersed, hidden and ignored. In addition, their tasks are not considered to constitute work.

In Central America and the Dominican Republic, many minors involved in child domestic labour in the homes of others are victims of the sexual and gender violence that often characterises this activity, as well as exploitation, abuse, mistreatment, discrimination, lack of pay, long working hours, limited educational opportunities, isolation from their families and exposure to hazardous products and tools.

Even though the causes of child domestic labour are diverse, there is a direct relationship to poverty, which leads societies to legitimise the use of [s1]very young girls, often from indigenous cultures, in domestic labour in the homes of others under unfavourable conditions. Cultural factors, discrimination against women and a lack of educational opportunities also play an important role. However, due to the hidden nature of this activity, it is difficult to quantify this problem with exact numbers.

This report, “Good Practices and Lessons Learned on Child and Adolescent Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic: A Gender Perspective”, was prepared by the International Labour Organisation’s International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC), within the framework of the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”.



This report forms part of the technical co-operation programme on child domestic labour, which during its three years of implementation has worked to promote greater reflection on gender related aspects of the problem.

This publication contributes to IPEC's efforts to identify and document successful forms of intervention aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child domestic labour and to share these findings and models with participating organisations, governments and civil society groups.

By documenting good practices and lessons learned, as well as outlining the existing challenges and providing recommendations, the ILO hopes to provide inputs for a new initiative that would approach and overcome issues of gender and ethnic discrimination, children's and adolescent's rights and labour rights.

In particular, we wish to express our gratitude to all of those agencies, governments and civil society members who took the time to share the fruits of their own reflections in collaboration with the study, which we hope will be of great use for all interested individuals.

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Introduction

- and analytical perspective





I. Introduction and analytical perspective

This document constitutes part of the Sub-regional Project “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic” developed by the ILO/IPEC International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. Throughout the world, millions of children and adolescents work as domestics in the homes of others. This type of work is increasingly understood, as one of the best examples of forced labour, since, in many cases, it is performed under conditions of servitude, hidden from view in the privacy of the home, and completely dependent on the employer. This activity has been kept invisible, and has not even been considered as work; despite it’s being very common, especially among children. Even though female domestic workers constitute one of the most exploited social groups and due to the characteristics of the work performed, this population is one of the most difficult to provide with and guarantee rights.

The countries of Central America and the Dominican Republic have historically faced poverty, war, social conflicts, human rights violations and inequality. Although during the 90’s there was a wave of democratisation processes, following on the signing of peace agreements and free elections, social and economic conditions are still unstable in most countries. Poverty affects more than 50% of households in some countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua) and it tends to concentrate in rural areas, among indigenous populations, and has the greatest incidence on women and children.

This situation has serious consequences for the holistic development and fulfilment of children and adolescents’ rights. Likewise, many countries in the region have a weak institutional system, which affects the capacity of the State to guarantee and ensure citizen’s rights, especially those of children and adolescents. Conditions of poverty, gender inequities and institutional weaknesses cause many types of social exclusion in the region; one of which is child domestic labour. Studies carried out around the world reveal that there are more girls under the age of 16 years in domestic service than in any other type of child or juvenile work.¹

Despite the foregoing, girls and adolescents in domestic labour are ignored in their jobs and lie beyond public and institutional scrutiny, because their work is carried out behind closed doors on private premises. Moreover, this topic has traditionally not been considered a relevant social problem.

Therefore, the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”, with the support of the Government of Canada, has promoted a series of actions to heighten awareness and disseminate information on child domestic labour, in order to incorporate it into the region’s social agenda.

¹ Helping Hands or Shackled Lives: Understanding Child Domestic Labour and Responses to It. ILO-IPEC, Geneva, 2004.



This document includes several good practices and lessons learned while carrying out the project, related to the achieving its objective of contributing to the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

The analytical approach stems from on three perspectives: a human rights approach, a gender perspective and criteria for identifying ILO-IPEC good practices.

The human rights approach implies a drastic change to the traditional view of childhood and adolescence based on a doctrine of an “irregular situation”, which considered this human group as individuals who must be protected by virtue of their social vulnerability. The new approach, on the other hand, recognises all children and adolescents, regardless their gender, culture, nationality or any other condition, as entitled to the whole range of rights inherent to human beings, as well as those considered special or specific. In this sense, the aim is to leave behind the idea that minors are non-citizens; legally incapable, and therefore, passive receivers of this protection, to consider them true subjects of these rights and duties, in accordance with their own situational development.

This approach also states that the State and society in general must guarantee the necessary spaces, opportunities, and conditions so that children and adolescents can develop all their abilities. Recognition and defence of the whole range of rights that children are granted by the State, social institutions, families, and civil society, among others, are what guarantee universal and particular attention and protection for this human group and provide opportunities for their human development.

Parallel to the human rights approach, a gender-sensitive analysis is necessary, in order to identify and confront particular obstacles children and adolescents face because of their sex. Thus, in this collection of good practices, a gender perspective was also applied. This is an analytical concept that refers to the social constructs of meanings, relationships, and identities as a result of biological differences between sexes. Since gender converts differences into inequalities, this concept is very useful for understanding the differentiated social status of men and women and its impact on the organisation of social institutions.

In other words, the gender perspective gives us an ideal approach to analyse historical, cultural and situational differences of what is feminine and what is masculine, on the relationships between men and women and on building unequal power relationships. This requires that we look at any social situation or intervention programme from a perspective that allows one to understand its differential effects on men and women.



An effective gender analysis includes:

- Gathering information disaggregated by sex
- Identification of gender differences at work and in life
- Understanding boys' and girls' needs, as well as the restrictions, and opportunities available for each one, in a given social context
- Economic and non-economic activities carried out by children
- Extent of their participation in domestic labour either paid or un-paid
- Needs, options, strategies, opportunities and limitations corresponding to each gender
- Review of the capacities of existing institutions and their mechanisms for reaching boys and girls in an equitable manner.²

It is also important to note that ILO directly promotes gender equality through its integration strategy, aimed at ensuring that this perspective be included in all ILO-IPEC policies, programmes, budget, and objectives. All members must systematically include this perspective in their work, in order to reach gender equality.³

Finally, guidelines to identify, review, structure, and spread ILO-IPEC good practices were used in the preparation of this document. A good practice can be defined as "any experience that, fully or in part, works to combat child labour and that may have practical implications at any level in another context or situation."⁴ A key issue is that a good practice is something that has been experimented and which has been proven to work.

The key principle of a good practice is its usefulness in promoting new ideas or in acting as a guideline to be more efficient in any issue related to prevention or elimination of child labour. To wit, a good practice allows us to learn from others' successful experiences and insights, and apply them more widely in other contexts.

Good practices may be classified into three different levels, depending on verification efforts made and on the number of different situations in which these have been tested. There follow the levels defined by ILO-IPEC:

Level 1: Innovative practices

Level 2: Successfully proven practices

Level 3: Replicated good practices

² Adapted from: Integrando el género en las acciones contra el trabajo infantil: las buenas prácticas. OIT-IPEC, Geneva, 2002.

³ Haspels, N., M. Romeijn and S. Schroth. Promoting gender equality in actions against child labour: a Practical guide. Bangkok, ILO-IPEC, 2003.

⁴ Guías de DED: "Buenas Prácticas". OIT-IPEC, Geneva, 2001.



In addition, there are seven key criteria to determine whether a practice is “good”:

- Innovation or creativity
- Efficacy/Impact
- Replicability
- Sustainability
- Relevance
- Ethics and responsibility
- Efficiency and implementation

1.1. Areas for Identifying Good Practices and Lessons Learned

According to experience garnered from the project, the following action and intervention areas resulted in good practices and lessons learned:

- Knowledge building
- Communication and dissemination
- Direct assistance and empowerment for girls and adolescents
- Social mobilisation
- Institution building

1.2. Target Audience

The final document will be available to the general public, but especially for those individuals working in domestic labour issues related to children and adolescents.

1.3. Methodological Strategy



The preceding diagram represents the methodological strategy used, which includes:

a) Sources:

- Documents: project documents, action plans, advance reports, research reports, training and dissemination material, training seminar reports, national statistics, newspapers clippings on this issue, assessments carried out, and relevant national documents.
- Social actors: programme staff, consultants, researchers, government representatives, NGO staff and community groups, local leaders, trade union members, journalists, mothers, children and adolescents

b) Techniques:

- Documentary analysis
- Field observation
- Semi-structured interviews (customized interview guides were prepared depending on the type of respondent)
- Group interviews (group interviews were organized in order to promote collective building of perspectives and opinions), drawing techniques, role-playing and games to gather information were used in sessions with children and adolescents.

A theoretical analysis of child domestic labour and its causes from a gender perspective is presented first in the document. Secondly, a description of the project, its objectives and the main goals achieved are included. In third place, the document presents the twelve good practices found, and then closes with a compilation of the lessons learned derived from the action areas chosen.





11 ● Child domestic labour from a gender perspective



II. Child domestic labour from a gender perspective

Child domestic labour, primordially that carried out in the employer's household, is considered a type of labour exploitation for individuals under the age of 18 years. Increasingly, this kind of labour, which is basically carried out by girls and adolescents is being understood as a type, par excellence, of forced labour.

On a daily basis, throughout the world, millions of children carry out domestic labour. This labour may be paid or not, in their own home or not. In many cases, this work is carried out under exploitative conditions, with long working hours, un-paid or for a pittance, with minimum or no payment at all, in the privacy of others' homes and with almost full dependence on their employers. These conditions trap children in a destructive cycle of exhausting tasks, which usually do not allow them access to school or recreation. These children are not even considered workers, although they are frequently abused and subject to strict disciplinary regimes by their employers. A labour relationship is masked under a relationship of supposed aid or co-operation or responsibilities delegated by the family of origin to other families, thereby justifying the abuse.

It must be noted that, although both boys and girls are involved in this kind of labour, this activity has gender specific characteristics. According to studies carried out throughout the world, girls represent 90% of domestic workers. Based on estimates, on the average, girls and adolescents may work up to 30 hours more per week in domestic labour, in comparison to the work carried out by the males in the family.⁵ In Central America, when boys perform domestic labours in an employer's household they work under conditions different from those of girls. In general, these children do not live in their employers' homes and their working conditions and wages are governed by more explicit arrangements. Despite such differences, generic characteristics of the work done by women and girls and the excess load they face, are just beginning to be socially recognised.

Child labour in both males and females has deplorable, and at times irreparable consequences on their health; prevents their access to children's rights, and has ominous consequences on their present and future. As a result of such negative effects and the violation of their fundamental rights, a negative trend has resulted. In this trend, labour by boys and girls is merged into the same category, which sets boy children and their work as the "standard." This combination is a serious mistake that sets aside specific issues related to the jobs carried out by girls. At the same time, it reflects once again the invisibility of this work and its contribution to the household and even the world economy.

⁵ Del Rosario, Rosario. 1998. "Girl Child Workers Carrying the Burden of the World." Paper discussed during the Roundtable Discussion conducted by the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies; Ilahi, Nadeem. 2000. "The Intra-household Allocation of Tasks: What Have we Learnt from the Empirical Literature?" Policy Report on Gender and Development, Working Paper Series No. 13; Hochschild, Arlie. 1988. *The Second Shift*. New York: Avon Books



Thus, even though these girls are present and active in the labour market from early childhood, work carried out by girls and adolescents is mainly behind closed doors, protected by the invulnerability and privacy of the home. This work is carried out in a subordinate and undervalued way; it is kept invisible and is not even considered work. In fact, its invisibility is a clear indicator of gender inequality and social devaluation of all tasks considered “feminine”.

Gender inequality affects young girls as well as adult women. Family interests, values, expectations, and customs as they relate to boys and girls are different. The sex division of labour that is apparent from early in children’s lives is a clear example. Girls, and particularly adolescents, are responsible for an excessive load of domestic labour, while boys and male adolescents are essentially free from these responsibilities. There is a social norm that expects that the girls will contribute to household upkeep by replacing or helping their mothers in a wide number of tasks. In many cases, responsibilities imposed on these girls greatly exceed their physical strength or emotional resources.

The hard work performed by girls and adolescents in domestic environments is both a reflection and a prediction of their social status as second-class citizens. There is also a significant relationship between girls’ socialisation, gender discrimination, and early incorporation into domestic labour. Domestic labour, imposed as an inevitable fate, is further evidence of the idea that girls are born just to be mothers and wives.

This work is understood by their families, employers and the girls themselves as a “natural” activity for females. These girls, with little recognition as right-entitled citizens, are usually considered from childhood through womanhood as objects, as a body to be used by others, whether as domestic servants, nannies, or sexual objects. The mere fact that they were born females has confined them to the worst and most dangerous forms of works, serving other people, to be used and neglected by others.

2.1. Causes of Child Domestic Labour

This kind of job, like all other child and adolescent work, has no single cause. It is a multiple-cause phenomenon involving many economic, social, cultural, family, and institutional factors. There follows a discussion of some of the factors that drive girls and adolescents into domestic labour in the households of others.

a) Poverty and Social Exclusion

In general, most studies carried out worldwide agree that poverty is one of the principal determinants of domestic labour. It has even been shown that the incidence



of child labour decreases as a country's per capita income increases.⁶ However, poverty is a complex phenomenon that should not necessarily be considered as self-explanatory, causal, or independent. To wit, poverty is, rather, the result of social and economic inequality; it is the visible and measurable face of social injustice, and unequal distribution of the resources of a given society.

Based on this perspective, poverty subsumes a series of social exclusion issues related to low household income, debts, migration, limited access to labour markets, property, credit, services and productive resources, as well as an unequal distribution of burdens and social benefits. In summary, poverty has to do with the denial of rights, especially, the rights to well-being, justice, and social security.

When such phenomena of social exclusion take root in a society, they create a context that impels many children to work. Children's work becomes a mechanism to increase family income or, at least, to reduce expenses. The latter becomes one of the core reasons why children undertake domestic labour in the households of others. Furthermore, one resource of support networks created by poor women in their communities is the exchange of favours. Among these favours is the provision of aid to one another with domestic labours and childcare. The daughters from these families become significant links in the chain of favours by carrying out such services, which generally are not paid in money but in kind, and send them into the world of domestic labour in the homes of others.

Thus, social exclusion and increasing inequalities and social hierarchies create conditions for child labour and the use of children as resources to be appropriated and utilised by adults.

b) Gender Discrimination

While child labour is closely related to poverty and social exclusion, the excessively high proportion of child labour that is domestic labour can only be explained on the grounds of gender issues, to wit, the historical gender discrimination that allows and promotes female domestic labour.

It is easily assumed that any girl or adolescent is prepared to do these tasks and that no prior training is required. This is an extension of the concept that, because of their nature, females know, or should know, how to do those "feminine" tasks. The same is not true for boys; since it is not assumed that they know how to do such labours

⁶ Grootaert, Christiaan y Harry A. Patrinos. 1999. "A Four Country Comparative Study of Child Labour." Washington, DC: World Bank.



because they are not part of male nature. Therefore, except for few occasions, boys are not prepared to carry out such tasks and are not even taught to appreciate them. Thus, for men and society in general, domestic labour does not have a true human value.

A different situation occurs with women: a relationship is assumed between their being mothers or their being future mothers (something that is considered natural and instinctive) and their obligation of caring and assisting other people starting when they are still young girls. In the same “natural” way in which girls have children, they are supposed to naturally know how to take care and maintain people around them, during the different phases of life: siblings, parents, suitors, spouses, superiors, sick relatives, the disabled, etc. Thus, girls are socialised to look on reproductive labour as an inevitable fate, which is intimately linked to their feminine being. Skills for domestic labour as an essential part of reproductive labours are thus conceived as a part of these “natural abilities” that women have or should have.

Therefore, in cases of poverty, a daughter’s domestic labour is an easy option understood as a “natural” activity by both families of origin and employers. While children, in general, are seen by many sectors of society as a malleable, cheap, and easily exploitable workforce, girls face a much worse situation. Girls are also socialized to be obedient in servitude, which makes them more vulnerable to be exploited as domestic workers. Girls and adolescents become a resource to be appropriated by their family of origin, their employers and society in general. In fact, there are estimates that a significant proportion of economic growth is owed to domestic labour and to the non-paid work that these girls, adolescents, and adult women perform daily around the world.⁷

c) Social Tolerance

Child domestic labour has very deep cultural roots that have legitimated this work and made it an invisible type of exploitation. As mentioned above, the fact that this work has been seen as a part of the “natural” labours carried out by females has contributed to its acceptance by many families and employers as an adequate option for a girl to start her “training” as a servant. Furthermore, this work is defined as a “safe” work for girls, since it takes place within a household, not on the streets or in other public places, which traditionally have been considered dangerous for women.

The premise that domestic labour is beneficial for girls also lies behind the situation faced in many countries, where families themselves and employers consider that employing a girl to work in a household is an act of good faith and collaborative action that gives her more opportunities. In many cases, the idea that employers are

⁷ Sagot, Montserrat. 2002. “Pobreza y Ciudadanía de las Mujeres en la Sociedad Globalizada” en Cuadernos de Desarrollo Humano. Guatemala: UNDP.



“benefactors” leads to incorporate girls, from very early ages, into domestic labour so the employer may “prepare” and “help” them in their development as adult women. Thus, many girls working in domestic labour are euphemistically called “house girls”, “inside girls”, and “girls being raised.” These terms legitimate their condition, but hide the existing work relationship and potential conditions for exploitation.

On the other hand, a widely held belief states that working from very early ages contributes to the formation of a person’s character. For example, a survey on perceptions in Costa Rica showed that 43% of the adult population considered it important for children and adolescents to work and study at the same time, and not to devote themselves only to their studies. It is also reported that the third most frequently mentioned reason for adults to allow their children leave school is “that it is important that boys help their fathers and girls help out at home.”⁸

Thus, girls and adolescents are especially vulnerable, since domestic labour is understood as part of their “natural” obligations; in addition, girls are assigned specific responsibilities regarding the family and reproductive activities. That is, the sex division of labour has led to the acceptance of all jobs performed in the household as natural ones; furthermore, this division incorporates an important double standard. On the one hand, these tasks are obligatorily assigned to females, but on the other hand, it is assumed that no effort or training is needed to perform them. Some authors point out “taking care of others has been considered a natural ability, something that women have received freely through their feminine nature.”⁹ As a result of conceptions such as these, domestic labour carried out by girls becomes invisible and is undervalued, while practices of employing girls in the households of others is legitimised, with the argument that this is the correct thing to do, what is expected and even recommended.

d) Lack of Social and Institutional Response

The extent of the lack of social and institutional response is very broad. It encompasses different factors related to macro-social issues, to wit, the economic and social policies of States, their regulations and society’s attitudes.

Regarding macro-social issues, absence of redistributive policies guaranteeing families opportunities for development, quality jobs, and access to good health, education and social protection services promotes and leads to child labour. Cuts in a country’s social investment generally make families, especially women, bear a greater workload to guarantee their members’ well-being and survival.

⁸ UNICEF. 1998. Percepción de los Adultos Costarricenses sobre los Derechos de la Niñez y la Adolescencia. San José: UNICEF.

¹⁰ Carcedo, Ana. 2003. “Desde Niñas, Mujeres Invisibles: El Trabajo Infantil Doméstico en Hogares de Terceros. En Una Mirada de Género al Trabajo Infantil Doméstico. San José: OIT; Guzmán, Virginia y Rosalba Todaro. 2001. “Apuntes Sobre Género en la Economía Global” en El Género en la Economía. Santiago de Chile: Isis Internacional



Cuts in public education budgets also tend to promote child labour. Many children are expelled from school because they are unable to assume additional expenses (uniforms, transportation, school supplies, food, etc.), or because of negative experiences related to low-quality levels, low relevance of the education they receive or mistreatment from their teachers. In some countries, many girls seek incorporation into domestic labour as a way of obtaining the funds needed to pay for their schooling or attend a better school. Finally, one of the key reasons that leads women from around the world to get involved in domestic labour is, precisely, their “having dropped out of school.”¹⁰

In regulatory terms, due to a traditional conception that what happens within a household is private; there is a general lack of policies, laws, and regulations for child domestic labour in the households of others. Even in the case of adult women, the scant existing legislation is classified under “special regimes”, to wit, all of the rights set forth for other workers are not necessarily recognized.

Although as a result of the ratification of ILO’s Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, all countries in the sub-region have drafted regulations to define the minimum age for admission to employment and to immediately eliminate the most intolerable forms of child labour. In general, however, these regulations do not govern work carried out in private premises, such as households, which are ideal places for exploiting girls and adolescents at work. On the other hand, most of these regulations, as with almost all western laws, have been made up using “male minor children” as the model. In other words, it is a model based on the male body, as well as those abilities and activities historically and culturally carried out by men. No explicit measures to guarantee the protection and rights of girls involved in labours that do not fall within the male standard have been taken. In addition, no great advances have been made to include domestic labour as one of the worst forms of child labour or in its definition as “hazardous labour.”

Given these antiquated concepts, which tend to consider domestic labour as excluded from work activities and the legal and regulatory gaps, until recently, the region had no policies or programmes aimed at recovering female domestic workers and giving these girls their rights. Although some progress has been made in this field, existing programmes in the countries in the sub-region are, as yet inchoate and focus on few cities. Consequently, no alternatives of assistance can be offered to the thousands of girls and adolescents who are trapped in this kind of labour exploitation.

¹⁰ Helping Hands or Shackled Lives: Understanding Child Domestic Labour and Responses to It. ILO-IPEC, Geneva, 2004



Finally, one of the causes of the many forms of child labour, especially domestic labour, is ignorance and the stereotyped views held by those in charge of protecting children. When employees of public and state agencies are unaware of the problem and its potential risks, they themselves become promoters of the problem, since they are not providing an adequate response to its severity and the needs of the affected girls.



Project on the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour





III. Project on the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour

In May 2001, ILO/IPEC undertook a project on the “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic.” Its main objective was to “contribute to the elimination of child domestic labour in 6 countries in Central America and the Caribbean through the implementation of a situational analysis and the definition of strategies to eliminate it.”¹¹

Prior to this project, there were no sub-regional initiatives to approach this problem, so that the core activity was to research the extent and characteristics of child domestic labour in each country (Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Dominican Republic). Thus, an increased understanding of the phenomenon was sought, as well as the identification of useful strategies to design assistance programmes to be developed in a second phase of the project.

Aware of the complexity of dealing with domestic child labour, ILO/IPEC assumed a multidisciplinary approach, whose core aspects were legal issues, heightened awareness, cultural practices, educational opportunities, and generation of alternative income sources. In addition, the project document posed the need for all areas to apply a gender approach, so that male and female role differences could be taken into account, as well as avoiding the social reproduction of stereotypes.

Implementation of the project was planned in two phases. The first would be 12 months long (from May 2001 to May 2002) and the second was designed to last 24 months (from June 2002 to June 2004). Owing to institutional dynamics and pace in each country, both phases overlapped. Instead of being an obstacle, it allowed the synergies between both phases to strengthen them.

A description of each project phase follows. It is worth noting that it is not possible to precisely separate strategies and actions for each phase, since they were administered jointly, seeking to complement efforts.

3.1. Project Phase I

Immediate objectives for this stage were:

- a) By the end of the project, IPEC and its main counterparts will have information on child domestic labour in selected areas in Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. Children and

¹¹ Project Proposal. Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic (Phase I). May 2001 - May 2002. ILO/IPEC, 2001.



adolescents identified as performing domestic labours will have received the necessary support.

- b) By the end of the project, public opinion, decision makers, and children and adolescents involved in child labour have been informed and are aware of risks of child domestic labour and of the rights children and adolescents have regarding domestic labour.
- c) By the end of the project, a comprehensive strategy has been drafted and jointly agreed in order to fight child domestic labour in the 6 countries and sub-regionally.

These objectives would be achieved by means of:

- a) Research activities
- b) Production and distribution of awareness-raising materials
- c) Creation of coordinating networks
- d) Direct attention for boys, girls and adolescents
- e) Drawing up of national strategies to fight child domestic labour within the sub-region.

The project set up three direct beneficiary populations: a) boys, girls and adolescents in domestic labour, 2) boys, girls and adolescents at risk of becoming involved in domestic labour, and 3) institutions that would carry out the research (since the sub-region had only recently begun to deal with this issue, there was a need to train those individuals responsible for carrying out studies, so that they could approach the problem from a shared and collectively-constructed perspective).

Other beneficiaries of the project were public agencies, such as ministries of labour, education, social development, rural development, health and planning, women's institutes, non-governmental organisations, the media, schools and other institutions involved in combating child domestic labour.

Development of project activities in its initial phase resulted in the following advances:

- a) **Greater knowledge of the problem:** Selecting entities to carry out the survey in each country was a huge challenge for ILO/IPEC, since there were no organisations experienced in these issues. Organisations with different capacities and approaches (2 with experience in gender issues; 2 with experience in childhood, 2 with experience in social research) were selected. These organisations took part in a regional seminar, which allowed them to share their methodological proposals. Furthermore, a common framework for carrying out national studies was also established. During the first semester of 2002, six national studies (Costa Rica,



Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, and Dominican Republic¹²) were completed and published, together with a regional synthesis that characterized and quantified child domestic labour in the sub-region.

b) Identification and attention for children and adolescents in domestic

labour: Parallel with the research, direct intervention programmes for children and adolescents in domestic labour were also developed. Despite the short length of such programmes (less than 8 months), hundreds of children and adolescents took part in the project and received different educational, legal counselling, and health services, as well as scholarships, school supplies, and vocational training, among others. Thanks to these actions a significant percentage of children and adolescents improved their labour conditions, remained in or returned to formal schooling, or were withdrawn from DL. It must be noted that withdrawal of girls and adolescents was not expected during this first phase. The purpose was solely to send them to the corresponding institutions; however, the awareness-raising process allowed the withdrawal of some children.

c) Visualisation and awareness regarding the problem: Production and distribution of information and educational materials through the media contributed to a heightened awareness among officials of state agencies, institutions from civil society, and trade unions, all of which began to show interest in the problem.

d) Social mobilisation and network creation: Communication and dissemination activities, together with a series of training workshops for leaders and decision makers, teachers, journalists, labour inspectors, women's institutions, organisations within civil society, and trade unions, among other key groups, helped these sectors to begin showing interest in including this issue in their working agendas. Such actions also allowed promoting the creation of inter-institutional coordinating networks in different countries.

e) Advances in strategies to deal with child domestic labour: Local and national research and actions allowed important inputs and lessons learned that were taken up in Phase II of the project.

This first phase of the initiative produced significant challenges that would be tackled during the next phase of the project. As a consequence of such complex issues derived from and replicated by child domestic labour, direct intervention programmes involving an holistic perspective had to be developed not only for girls and adolescents

¹² The study in El Salvador was carried out as part of another ILO/IPEC project. Even though a different approach was used, the main results were included in the regional synthesis. However, the other project activities could not be carried out in this country, since the Time Bound Programme of El Salvador did not give priority to child domestic labour as one of the worst forms of child labour that must be dealt with.



but also for their families and other local players from the community of origin and the receiving community.

Similarly, the studies and experiences carried out evidenced the need for delving further with the awareness-raising strategies for different key players, especially governmental agencies. CDL, by being both “hidden” and socially unrecognized as a form of exploitation, encountered a great deal of resistance; actions to position this issue in the public agenda still need to be taken. Commitment by individuals and institutions to discuss this problem and seek solutions for the situation of children and adolescents is still a pending task.

Finally, despite training activities carried out, not only public but also private entities revealed significant information gaps in respect of the problem, as well as institutional weakness in responding to the population’s needs. National and local networks established to combat CDL were inchoate and demanded more technical support to effectively carry out actions aimed at preventing, protecting, and attending children and adolescents in domestic labour.

3.2. Project Phase II

Immediate objectives for this stage were:

- a) By the end of the project, society in general will be aware of DL, children and adolescents involved in DL and their families will have been informed of their rights and legal resources that exist to assist them.
- b) By the end of the project, public opinion, decision makers from different sectors, trade unions, employees and organisations in civil society will have been informed and trained on DL risks and consequences; their institutional capacities will have been strengthened.
- c) By the end of the project, a set of recommendations to improve national legislation and its effective application in terms of child domestic labour will have been presented to national legislators.
- d) By the end of the project, 200 children and adolescents will have been withdrawn from conditions of abuse and exploitation. These children and adolescents will be benefiting from alternative schooling systems, economic and health resources; their families will also have access to economic alternatives.

Strategies for achieving project goals were focused on the following issues:



- a) Heightened awareness
- b) Institution building
- c) Review and effective application of legislation
- d) Direct intervention programmes for children and adolescents involved in DL and their families

The main project goal was direct intervention for 1,000 individuals under the age of 18 years in domestic labour and 450 of their families of origin, in the six countries participating in Phase I. The beneficiary population would be selected from among those children and adolescents identified through prior research and awareness-heightening actions.

As an indirect population, the project was to heighten awareness among and train 600 professionals, including public officials, journalists, opinion leaders, employers' organisations and trade unions as well as staff from agencies responsible for enforcing the law.

Additionally, national forums to develop public policies in education and health would be promoted; these forums would include the participation of at least 360 representatives of different sectors.

Due to the great number of proposals derived from the project, a regional team was established, composed of the Project Manager and national consultants.¹³ This team would coordinate with the corresponding National Committee on Child Labour and provide follow-up for ILO/IPEC-sponsored activities.

The project's main achievements in this phase were:

- a) **Looking differently at child domestic labour:** The actions to disseminate information and training workshops have been effective channels to communicate research results and raise awareness among individuals on the realities of life for girls and adolescents in domestic labour. Little by little, this has contributed to change existing concepts about this population, to recognize dangers they are exposed to, and to take action to have their rights respected.
- b) **Creation of inter-institutional networks:** The project faced a series of institutional weaknesses to deal with the problem, both in state and private entities. Therefore, most of the actions of the project have been aimed at strengthening their

¹³ They worked half-time on this project. The other half-time was used to follow up actions of another ILO/IPEC sub-regional project on the prevention and elimination of commercial sexual exploitation of children.



capacities to handle the complexity of this problem and incorporate it into their institutional strategies. In most countries, a noticeable impact on the national sphere has been very difficult; however, at the local level, inter-institutional networks were established with regards to direct intervention programmes, in order to facilitate prevention and care efforts promoted by different agencies.

c) Ascertaining the scope of legal frameworks: Studies were carried out on legislation about child domestic labour in the six countries. Through such studies it was possible to ascertain the scope and limitations of current legal frameworks to regulate and sanction this practice. Proposed amendments were prepared in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, while in the Dominican Republic, after a legal study, an amendment to the Code on Childhood was approved. In this amendment, domestic labour was recognized as labour exploitation of minors.

d) Development and validation of intervention models: Due to the limited experience in this issue in the region, entities in charge of executing direct intervention programmes developed their own care models or modified the ones previously used in-house when working with this population. Part of the reforms to the intervention models included incorporating the rights approach and the gender perspective. Experiences developed by Defensa de los Niños Internacional (DNI) in Costa Rica, Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina (CIPAF) in Dominican Republic, and Instituto de Promoción Humana (INPRHU) in Nicaragua were systematized so they could be used as models by other non-governmental organisations interested in implementing action programmes with children and adolescents in domestic labour. When this study was carried out, DNI in Costa Rica and CIPAF in Dominican Republic had finalised their projects. Experiences in Guatemala (Asociación Proyecto Conrado de la Cruz), Tegucigalpa (Reyes Irene), Veraguas, Panama (CEPAS) and Managua (INRPHU) had been underway for at least 2 years; the others were in their very early stages.



IV. Good practices





IV. Good practices

4.1. Knowledge Building

The implementation of actions aimed at eliminating child domestic labour usually requires information about working conditions, legal frameworks, people who carry such work out, and social causes that encourage these activities. Likewise, it is very important to understand gender differences in order to promote actions that have a positive impact on both boys and girls.

Knowledge in the sub-region about child domestic labour was virtually non-existent. There were no studies or data to visualise the problem, to understand its characteristics or to ascertain the experiences of those who perform these labours in the households of others. In fact, because of the invisibility of the problem, there was no certainty as to where to find the affected population. From that perspective, the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic” proposed the development of a series of knowledge building activities aimed at bringing to light the situation of child domestic labour in the region. From the results of these activities, it was possible to comprehend the specific situations faced by boys and girls; thus, more precise actions could be taken since these were based on a body of knowledge and data gathered by working teams, which got close to this population’s daily living experience.

This way, rapid assessments, legal studies and systematisation of pilot intervention programmes were very useful for generating and spreading new knowledge on this problem.

4.1.1. Rapid Assessments on the Situation of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic: A Research-Action Process

Level 3: Replicated Practice

Key words: Quantitative and qualitative research, child domestic labour, living conditions, legislation, rights of children and adolescents, causes of child domestic labour, opinions and perceptions, gender differences.

Description of a Good Practice

In 2001, a series of national studies to better understand the characteristics of the problem was proposed as the first step to draw up an integral programme to prevent, protect, and combat the problem of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic. The aim of this research was to gather quantitative and qualitative data in each country about the scope of the problem, characteristics of domestic workers in the households of others, their families, and employers’ families, as well as



the causes of this type of child labour and its consequences. Furthermore, the research results would provide guidelines and recommendations for an intervention proposal.

Guiding questions for research in all countries were:

- Who are the boys and girls involved in domestic labour?
- What do they do and what are their working conditions and hazards?
- Why do they become involved in domestic labour?
- Who are their families and why do they send their girls and boys to domestic labour?
- Who are their employers and why do they hire children?
- What are possible strategies for intervention?

It is important to note that in many of the countries under study the Ministries of Labour had an active participation in the entire process. They were involved in research design, research-team selection, definition of a methodological strategy, and analysis of results. Thus, a true tripartite alliance, government-IPEC-civil society was created; as a result, the activity was a joint effort among the sectors involved. Likewise, the active participation by Labour Ministries aided their adoption of this problem and more active incorporation of it in their agendas.

The research applied a methodological design arrived at in a joint workshop attended by researchers, NGO representatives working in the fields of children's rights and women's rights, universities, the government and international organisations. The workshop established the importance of gathering qualitative and quantitative data, so that this information could cast light on size of the problem, as well as the cultural, social, and economic processes that cause it and on the experiences of the girls, boys and adolescents. And finally, although the data gathering instruments and procedures would be similar for purposes of comparison, a standard research protocol would not be followed, due to the flexibility and adaptability needed in different cultural contexts.

The research results and the regional synthesis made possible an approximation to the reality faced by thousands of girls, boys and adolescents in the countries involved. It was determined that child domestic labour is a type of labour exploitation that basically affects girls from large, poor households in marginal urban settlements and rural areas. It was also found that a significant proportion of their mothers have worked or currently work in domestic labour. To wit, within the region, inequity is transmitted by the female side. The studies also found that the employers are middle class individuals that prefer hiring girls and adolescents for reasons of lower costs and greater docility.

In addition to being inputs for programme designs aimed at dealing with the problem, research results also became powerful arguments to make governmental and private entities more aware on this issue. The findings have also helped to draw the



attention of journalists and the media, and have been used in different national and local information and awareness-raising campaigns.

Key Steps to Carrying Out the Studies

- A careful selection process for research teams, with the participation of IPEC and Labour Ministries that implied seeking research proposals from several organisations and institutions, analysing the proposals, listening to each bidder's propositions and contrasting them with each other.
- Hold an international workshop on research methods on child domestic labour in order to discuss the different proposals and agree on a methodological strategy.
- Select some research teams with highly experienced experts in the fields of women's and girls' rights, and gender equality, who contributed important methodological and ethical aspects for study design.
- Define a methodological strategy that included a series of techniques, such as the survey, in-depth interviews, observation, focus groups and workshops, which would allow triangulation to verify the data.
- Define a similar methodological strategy to allow for comparisons, but flexible enough to be adapted to different countries and cultural contexts
- Publish findings in each country and convoke a public presentation as a tool to heighten awareness and disseminate the findings.
- Form a regional synthesis to have a comparative view of the problem.
- Use research results as core inputs in information and awareness campaigns

Why was the Research Process Successful?

This process was successful because it revealed the gender perspective of a hidden reality in the region. The research results showed the reality of the girls, boys and adolescents involved in child domestic labour, that of their families and of their employers. In addition, it contributed to understanding the causes of the problem and the specific issues found in each country in the region. On the other hand, the studies provided irrefutable data on gender differences in the origin and types of child domestic labour.

These findings not only confirmed the problem existed by providing reliable data, but also the findings helped raise awareness among institutions and communities and to guide the development of future actions, such as social mobilisation, institution building and the creation of alternatives for children and adolescents in domestic labour.

Research was successful in six countries and its rapid assessment methodology may be used in other climes and contexts; i.e., a significant possibility exists for repeating the process and obtaining similar-quality comparative results.



Some Precautions

It is important to emphasise that although social research is an excellent tool for approaching reality before initiating actions to prevent and provide assistance for child domestic labour, because of its own characteristics, this type of research is not necessarily adequate for detecting children in domestic labour. Thus, social research allows us to understanding the context, specific issues and dynamics of the problem and those who are involved in the problem in question. Nevertheless, when detecting children in domestic labour in order to start a direct action programme, other approaches to reality, other techniques, experts in the field, and people close to communities where the programme will be implemented are needed. In general, the individuals or agencies experienced in carrying out social research do not have the expertise required to develop direct action programmes and vice versa.

From the foregoing perspective, research in all countries cast light on the problem, helped make it visible and provided excellent empirical information, from the gender perspective, on the reality experienced by the girls, boys and adolescents in domestic labour in the households of others. In other words, the research provided a general overview and a baseline for defining future actions. However, due to its very nature, we cannot expect that this type of studies be used as an instrument to detect children for a direct action programme or that the same individuals or implementation agencies must necessarily perform both tasks.

Conditions Necessary for a Good Research-Action Process on the Issue of Child Domestic Labour

- Building a joint research proposal among the parties interested in the issue (universities, non-governmental organisations, public agencies, international organisations).
- The will of a government and an international cooperation agency that understand how important social research is as a tool to perform actions, create awareness and foster change.
- Use of the “rapid assessment” methodology that provides relevant information relatively quickly and at a reasonable cost
- Careful selection of research teams composed of technically trained individuals that are sensitive and experienced in child domestic labour as well. It must be noted that when the gender problem plays an important role in research, it is essential to have researchers experienced in this kind of analysis. Otherwise, it is not possible to recover the particular gender issues or understand the social dynamics that affect the problem. In this case, participation of researchers from several women’s organisations provided key methodological and analytical tools to increase the quality of the findings.



- Good and close control of the research process by ILO/IPEC technical staff
- A clear methodological design flexible enough for comparisons between countries, which provided space for recovering regional diversity and cultural-specific issues
- A solid strategy for use of the research findings that provided inputs and data to institutions, as well as interesting material to the media to disseminate those findings. As a result, for the first time the negative effects of child domestic labour in the region were visualised and advances in the discussion of possible solutions within the framework of children's and adolescent's rights could be made.

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4.1.2. Studies of National Legislations Regarding Child Domestic Labour as Inputs to Draw up Proposals for Legal Reform

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: Legislation, legal reform, prevention, surveillance, social control, domestic workers' protection, special regime for domestic service

Description of the Good Practice

In all countries in the region, domestic labour is governed by a special regime that sets it apart from the general regime for most labour contracts. Although domestic labour presents a series of particular issues, special regulations do not refer to these particular issues; to the contrary, they reduce the rights of domestic workers as a result of deeply rooted beliefs that place domestic labour on a par with slavery.

In respect of child domestic labour, the situation is much more complex, since a wide range of legislation has been passed in recent years, in all of the countries, seeking to protect the rights of children and youths, without eliminating many of the



previous rules. In this sense, there has been a legislative overlap from different philosophical principles: labour codes still have the traditional discriminatory concept of domestic labour as a special regime; a concept that still prevails in some legislation representative of the old school that considers boys, girls and adolescents must have a guardian. In addition, new laws related to childhood and adolescence based on a Rights Approach have been passed. This situation not only causes opposing views, but also administrative chaos, problems with the competency of public agencies, and problems with the administration of justice.

Based on this perspective, in 2003, the Sub-regional Project for the “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic” proposed a revision and systematisation of national legislation and existing mechanisms regarding child and youth labour to sort out this intricate legal web and propose pertinent legislative changes.

Carrying out national studies, especially in Costa Rica and Honduras, and the regional comparison required an important process of social mobilisation and heightened awareness. That is, in addition to bibliographical revision, the process for preparing the studies demanded a series of meetings and consultations with different sectors, including Ministries of Labour, Ombudsman and human rights commissioners, legislative bureaus, institutes for the family, childhood and women, special childhood defenders, non-governmental organisations and girls and adolescents involved in domestic labours.

Interviews and consulting processes helped in raising awareness among authorities about the importance of the problem and, in many cases, forced them to reflect, for the first time, on this problem’s social and legal consequences. Similarly, through this process, representatives of the different institutions became aware of how vulnerable girls and adolescents in domestic labour are.

Consultations with girls and adolescents in domestic labour were a key issue in this process, especially in Honduras, as a way of gathering information about their experiences and needs. Consultations were dynamic and participatory, through workshops that allowed girls to talk about their experiences, risks, abuse, working hours, wages, family relationships, living conditions, access or lack thereof to services, such as, health, entertainment, recreation, etc. This was a primordial step, since their reality must be the starting point for any proposed legal change.

Through these studies, it was determined that there is no protection whatsoever for girls and adolescents in domestic labour and that there are too many inconsistencies between national labour codes and international treaties or agreements ratified by the



individual countries. Furthermore, these studies were the basis for drafting several proposals now under discussion in different countries in the region.

Key steps to Carrying Out Legal Studies

- Researchers carried out a comprehensive revision of national and international legislation and of existing mechanisms in each country. Different laws and regulations, existing gaps, inconsistencies, regulatory overlaps, as well as the mechanisms for legislative application were examined.
- The consulting process with individuals from different sectors was an essential instrument not only to gather different views, but also to heighten awareness, allowing each player to consider its role in protecting and guaranteeing the rights of girls and adolescents in domestic labour.
- Workshops and interviews with girls and adolescents in domestic labour allowed gathering information about their experiences and needs, contrasting them with existing regulations and proposing legal modifications in accord with the demands they expressed.
- Sound technical criteria from experts in legal and labour issues were used to prepare proposed legislative changes. Contributions from officials in charge of administering justice and protecting children and adolescents, as well as from the young domestic workers themselves were also used.

Why was the Research Process Successful?

This process was successful because in addition to producing a series of studies that provide a clear perspective of national legislations and their shortfalls, it also became a process for heightening awareness and social mobilisation. Thus, the strategy applied promoted the participation of different sectors that felt included in the efforts to develop better protection mechanisms for the girls in domestic labour. In turn, this strategy allowed the different entities and individuals consulted to clearly express their visions, needs, and expectations. By doing so, documents were not only validated but subsequent proposed legal changes were socially and institutionally legitimated.

On the other hand, including girls and adolescents' perspectives in this process was also a key issue. In this sense, these documents are consistent with girls' and adolescents' needs, so it can be stated that they were prepared from a perspective sensitive to gender issues related to child domestic labour.



Conditions Necessary for a Good Legal Analysis Process and Preparation of Proposals for Legislative Changes

- Selection of highly skilled researchers in legal analysis, who are very sensitive and highly knowledgeable regarding the rights approach and the gender perspective
- A broad and participative consultation process to gather perspectives, experiences and opinions from the different social players to understand “living” issues of legal rules and regulations
- The consultation processes should also be aimed at raising awareness and social mobilisation. That is, while gathering the information necessary to enrich the study, it is also important to take advantage of the opportunity to heighten awareness among the different actors in a process that provides for a faster approval of the needed legal changes to protect and guarantee the rights of girls, boys and adolescents in domestic labour
- Inclusion of actual needs, expectations and demands of child and adolescent workers in domestic labour in any legal analysis and proposed legislative change.

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4.1.3. Systematisation of Experiences with Direct Action Programmes: Building from Practice

Level 3: Replicated Practice

Key words: systematisation, attention model, knowledge generation, withdrawal of girls and adolescents from domestic labour, empowering girls, boys and adolescents

Description of the Good Practice

Knowledge generated from research on child domestic labour in the region allowed the visualisation of specific issues of the phenomenon in each country. It posed the challenge of developing models of direct action that might deal holistically with the multiple needs for empowerment, restitution of rights and relief from poverty required by both girls and adolescents in domestic labour and their families.

Some organisations in civil society were already developing working proposals with this population; nonetheless, not all these organisations had a direct action model designed from the rights approach and gender perspective. These two issues are essential for an effective recovery of girls and adolescents from domestic labour.

In this context, ILO/IPEC backed the development of pilot experiences in the countries of the sub-region. Each of the selected organisations implemented the project from its own perspective, in order to verify model effectiveness and provide recommendations and lessons learned that might be replicated by other organisations interested in this problem

To multiply the models, direct action models required a systematic documentation and follow-up process, so that at the end of the intervention, the executing agency could have a document that would describe and critically analyse the implementation process and provide elements to improve the effectiveness of their intervention models.

Only three implementing agencies were able to carry out this systematisation: CIPAF in the Dominican Republic, DNI in Costa Rica, and INPRHU in Nicaragua. Systematisations were very useful for other organisations reproducing and adapting the direct action models to the specific intervention context.

Even though systematisations were carried out using different methodologies, aspects used in action programme systematisations are very similar and include:

- a) Project description: approach, objectives and main strategies



- b) Description and diagnosis of the target population
- c) Methodological approach to the project (includes definition of team characteristics and instruments to be used in data gathering)
- d) Results of the direct action
- e) Factors and conditions that facilitate or hinder the process
- f) Recommendations
- g) Lessons learned

Key Steps for Systematisation

- Design a theoretical intervention model that should be verified in practice and that should explain the approach, objectives, strategies and assumptions that back the intervention
- Design tools to diagnose the situation of the target population and their systematic application to obtain a description of the boys, girls and adolescents in domestic labour and their families.
- Document project actions, especially of those modifications and adjustments during model implementation that allowed reconstructing the experience and identifying critical issues that drove team decision-making.
- Permanent reflection within the team that facilitated and increased appropriation of the intervention model by its members as well as monitoring process scopes and constraints.
- Dissemination of the model and its feedback based on its application by other organisations. This became a source generating new knowledge on the strengths and weaknesses of the model in different contexts.

Why was the Systematisation a Successful Practice?

Independent of findings in each systematised direct action program, the most valuable aspect of this practice is the possibility of generating and sharing new knowledge on the potentialities and limitations of the strategies for combating child domestic labour.

Agencies that executed the direct action programmes not only learned from the implementation of the intervention model, but the systematisation process itself also enabled them to reflect and view critically the intervention hypothesis and the assumptions that back it. In addition, this retrospective reading contributed in the identification of their institutional strengths and weaknesses to face the issue and achieve the objectives proposed.

Systematisation of direct action programmes is a good practice since it helps organisations working with boys, girls and adolescents' in domestic labour improve the applicability, efficiency and effectiveness of their intervention strategies, based on the lessons learned.



Conditions under which the Systematisation was made

- Implementing agencies that systematised the experiences are characterised by having skilled professional research staff. Nonetheless, at least one of them faced constraints to implement the direct action model.¹⁴
- Other direct action programmes implemented by grass-roots organisations have had a good performance level, but these organisations had neither the ideal staff nor the abilities to implement the systematisation process. In these cases, it would be interesting to provide technical support to document, analyse, disseminate, and share such experiences with other key actors.
- At first, these pilot programmes would be implemented with children and adolescents identified during national research on child domestic labour so that the situations identified could be acted on directly. In practice, because of mobility common to this group, implementing agencies could only identify a small portion of the previously contacted population. Consequently, to develop pilot programmes, a new process for locating children and adolescents was undertaken.
- Action programmes were short-term (shorter than a year), which caused great tension and dilemmas for the implementing agencies: Is it possible to develop a model for direct action over such a short term? Which real changes could be generated in a year? How valid is a short-term model for direct action when dealing with a deeply rooted and complex problem requiring cultural and structural changes?

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¹⁴ Because of its profile as an organization focused on research and on public policy impact it had neither the skills nor the experience needed to carry out direct action. Therefore, an alliance was established with a non-governmental organization with experience in direct action with working children, in order to implement the proposal based on their theoretical framework.



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4.2. Dissemination and Communications

Child domestic labour has deep cultural, social and economic roots that have granted it legitimacy and invisibility as a form of exploitation. This type of labour is neither valued nor recognized as a social problem. In fact, there is a serious lack of knowledge on the risks child domestic labour pose to the boys, girls and adolescents directly as well as to their overall development.

Thus, a key step to prevent and eliminate this type of labour exploitation is by heightening the population's awareness through messages presenting the reality of child domestic labour, the individuals involved in it and their living conditions. Some of the most effective strategies for disseminating such awareness-heightening messages are workshops, conferences, and media campaigns.

The Sub-Regional Project on "Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic" proposed the production and dissemination of a series of materials to heighten awareness on the scope and characteristics of the problem. These informative and educational materials have been presented in activities with many different sectors, including governmental institutions, organisations from civil society, groups of workers, teachers, parents, children and adolescents. Likewise, these materials have also been disseminated through national and local mass media.

Research findings and the voices and experiences of children and adolescents in domestic labour have been used in the media campaign. The voices and images of children and adolescents have been particularly effective and have had a great impact, since they have demonstrated the size and consequences of the problem from the players' own perspective. Thus, dissemination and communication activities have been



highly useful in making the problem visible and informing on its size, risks, and consequences.

4.2.1. Mass Media Campaigns as a Core Element to make Child and Adolescent Domestic Labour Visible

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: Communications media, heightened awareness, dissemination, communications campaigns, training, audiovisual messages, radio messages, printed materials

Description of the Good Practice

Making child and adolescent domestic work visible in the countries of the region is a challenging task. As mentioned previously, a majority of the population considers it a “normal” and “acceptable” phenomenon, to the point of being necessary and beneficial for the girls and youths involved, since it “is a way to help the poorest families obtain additional income.”

Given this social tolerance, lack of knowledge and insensitivity to the personal risks and negative social consequences domestic labour has on children, introducing the issue in the public agenda, preventing and acting directly on the situation of these children and adolescents are tasks that demand systematic, permanent and integrated efforts by a large group of social players.

Media campaigns have been one of the most important actions to have people consider child domestic labour as a problem and to start working in prevention, intervention and protection¹⁵. In different countries of the region, there have been mass media campaigns aimed at one or several of the following objectives:

1. Identify child domestic labour as a highly hazardous activity for the public discussion agenda, as well as showing the effects it has on working children and adolescents and their employers
2. Promote the human rights of children and adolescents by disseminating national and international legislation that protects or sanctions those involved in child domestic labour.
3. Promote the search for alternatives for the boys, girls and adolescents in domestic labour among the different sectors involved and key allies.

¹⁵ A social communications campaign is a set of strategies designed to persuade one or several groups of people, to accept, modify, or abandon certain ideas, attitudes, and/or behaviours. Such campaigns are an organized effort through the media for a fixed period of time.



Three of the most systematic mass media campaigns on child domestic labour were carried out in Costa Rica, Panama, and Honduras.

In Costa Rica, the DNI agency, with IPEC support, developed a communications strategy during five months focused on society in general, public and private entities that have to deal with this problem, the media and families of the Greater Metropolitan Area, especially the populations of Cartago and Pavas, where the highest incidence of child domestic labour was identified.

This mass media campaign worked at two levels:

- Nationally, there was awareness heightening among journalists and reporters, so they would include this issue in their informative agenda. Radio spots were broadcast through the National Chamber of Radio (with more than 75 radio station members), spots were broadcast on the country's main television channels, and IPEC staff and the main implementing agencies were interviewed in several radio and television shows. This strategy provided heightened visibility for the problem in the agenda of the communications media.
- Locally, children and adolescents in domestic labour were trained, to inform them of their rights and build their self-esteem. Officials of local entities in charge of dealing with this population were also trained, so they had improved capacities for handling the problem.

Campaign design and implementation took advantage of active participation by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS), achieving improved legitimacy and institutional support for the messages.

In addition, in Veraguas, Panama, a local media campaign was carried out to raise awareness and prevent child domestic labour. This campaign began with a public act in which local authorities and players involved took part. This campaign was supplemented with radio spots and information segments broadcast without cost by community stations. Individuals related to the local committee participated in radio and television interviews, so the problem was approached from a multi-sectorial perspective. In addition, the Catholic Church was involved, so that the provincial Bishop transmitted a message against domestic child labour.

In San Pedro Sula, Honduras, a campaign was also carried out with local media. In this community, first a series of visits to local media were made to heighten awareness and distribute information produced by the project. Thus, free radio time was obtained to carry out several one-hour radio forums with open telephone lines for



public participation. Officials from different agencies in the local working group dealing with this issue also participated. This campaign was very successful, since it resulted in many accusations by children and adolescents in domestic labour being filed at the pertinent agencies.

Key Steps for the Implementation of Mass Media Campaigns

- Drawing up a plan with clear objectives and target populations that combine different strategies and formats (mass messages for radio, television and newspapers focused on raising awareness; providing direct training in rights; and generating opinion from local or national authorities).
- Systematic implementation of communications activities that present the child domestic labour issue related to the socio-economic, political, and cultural context within which it occurs, to give witness to the multiple causes and complexity of the problem. This perspective attracted journalists' attention and enabled a broader discussion by key parties; it promoted the participation of several sectors in activities fostering public reflection, and it even promoted accusations filed by some working children and adolescents.
- The use of research results gave greater credibility to the messages, while at the same time provided well-grounded bases for the arguments given by key actors in the media.
- Testimonials and life histories of girls and adolescents in domestic labour "deeply touched" the audience, since it was possible to specify the realities shown by research.

Why are Mass Campaigns a Good Practice?

The media have become very powerful in recent decades, and this seems to validate the saying "if it doesn't come from the media, it doesn't exist." In this sense, mass media campaigns have an enormous potential to "make people talk about a topic."

Because of the problem's invisibility and social tolerance, it cannot be assumed that media actions themselves can change people's perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Thus, the scope and impact of campaigns can be visualised over the long term, and as a contribution to more holistic processes of intervention.

In this sense, local and national communications strategies used by the ILO/IPEC were able to make some sectors, mainly local players consider child domestic labour as a problem that does affects childhood and adolescence, as well as to include this problem in their working agenda. In addition, these players developed a deeper knowledge and consciousness of the consequences of domestic labour in children;



furthermore, they have integrated this knowledge into their discourse and intervention proposals.

Regarding the efforts to heighten awareness and train journalists and reporters, the openness of the media to broadcast messages free of charge, and the creation of spaces to reflect on this topic evidence an increasing commitment to and identification of communicators with the problem. The local media are worthy of a special mention, for promoting real dialogues among key players and the community, thanks to their being close to the audience and their degree of identification with local problems.

Some Precautions

It is important to note that being very visible and having a frequent presence in the media does not necessarily mean a greater awareness of the problem, mobilisation of individuals for prevention purposes or for direct action. On the contrary, an inadequate approach to the problem may even cause indifference among the audience, especially when solutions are not given and they feel that they are incapable of doing anything to change the situation.

This communications strategy is part of a broader intervention strategy, which must include institution-building activities to create the capacity in state and private agencies in charge of dealing with this problem, as well as to influence public policies and those legal frameworks that sanction exploitation of children or adolescents in domestic labour.

In this sense, a mass campaign on child domestic labour must guarantee that responsible entities are capable of dealing with the demands for information and intervention derived from the campaign among target groups at whom the messages are aimed.

Conditions under which the Campaigns were Carried Out

- Taking advantage of key contacts with individuals from the media to benefit from their commitment and help. In this sense, incorporation of a renowned journalist or reporter in the sector, in charge of “opening-up doors” in the media and of providing contacts is essential for invitations to workshops and negotiating spaces in the media.
- Setting up alliances with local media, as a strategy to encourage free dissemination of materials and to guarantee the relevance of the information to the specific issues of the local reality. These mass media usually have more flexible programming, since they have fewer advertising commitments and it is easier to include spots, interviews or reports on community-interest issues.



- Availability of materials with analysed information ready for dissemination in the mass media is important to facilitate the work of journalists that want to publish news and articles on this issue. In this sense, radio and television spots, press releases, reports and editorials, statistics and listings with the names of individuals that are key information sources are useful ways to speed up journalists' work and to ensure an adequate coverage of the topic.
- When campaigns revolve around a message of prohibition, feelings of guilt, pursuit or punishment for those who encourage or perform child domestic labour, the impact may be negative, since it is possible that individuals may try to hide the situation because of their fear of sanctions. In these cases, a message of understanding, the joint search for solutions, progressive elimination of child domestic labour, and institutional support may be more persuasive and effective.

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4.2.2. Life Histories as Tools to Heighten Awareness

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: Awareness-raising, training, communications, testimonials, life histories, documentaries, radio spots, audiovisual material.

Description of the Good Practice

Child and adolescent domestic labour invisibility is undoubtedly connected to gender socialisation processes that reproduce stereotypes regarding social roles men and women have in society. For this reason, an awareness-raising strategy on the problem must begin by demythologising the beliefs that justify domestic labour by girls and adolescents as an extension of their household chores. Child domestic labour in the households of others is a form of exploitation and discrimination, because it curtails the basic rights of girls and adolescents making them vulnerable and placing their physical, emotional, and psychological health at risk.



One of the most effective strategies identified in the project to overcome resistance, eliminate scepticism, and find spaces for dialogue and reflection on the characteristics and nature of the problem has been the use of testimonials and life histories in the materials disseminated by the project.

Although statistics are important for measuring the problem, in the case of child domestic labour, a “hidden” and “invisible” activity, the level of under registration is very high. In addition, numerical data have certain limitations for reflecting the living conditions of the girls and adolescents in domestic labour. For this reason, life histories of girls and adolescents working in domestic labour have been used in documentaries to heighten awareness among the population on the causes, risks and consequences of domestic labour in children and adolescents in the region.

The sub-regional video “Entre sueños, lágrimas y esperanzas” (“Between Dreams, Tears, and Hope”) prepared by the project co-ordinator and the documentary “Testimonios de infancia robada” (“Testimonials of Stolen Childhoods”) produced in the Dominican Republic, as part of a mini-programme to raise awareness and provide training, by Fundación Casa de la Mujer de Villa Altagracia, are two examples of how victims’ testimonials have been used to confront different social sectors and public agencies with the reality of these children and adolescents.

“Entre sueños, lágrimas y esperanzas” is 15 minutes long and uses testimonials from more than 10 girls and adolescents from different countries in the region; the video shows the conditions of exploitation experienced by these women and the numerous risks they face when working in households of others (physical and psychological abuse, long working hours, bad wages, isolation, severe limitations to study, rest, or spending time with their families, among others).

On the other hand, the Dominican documentary builds its argument based on the statements of 5 adult women who were child domestic labourers. The power of the message lies in the perception of the effects their working in the households of others under exploitation and abusive conditions has had on their lives (low self-esteem, reproduction of the poverty cycle, victimisation, low levels of schooling, problems in their physical or psychological health).

Under the same conceptualisation, ILO/IPEC and DNI-Costa Rica prepared the document “El Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente Doméstico... pesa demasiado. Historias de vida de siete niñas y adolescentes mujeres trabajadoras domésticas en casas de terceros en Centroamérica, México y República Dominicana” (“Child and Adolescent Domestic Labour...a Heavy Burden. Life Histories of Seven Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour in the Households of Others in Central America, Mexico and the



Dominican Republic"). This document reflects the similarity in the conditions of exploitation and abuse these women suffered.

Key Steps for the Use of Life Histories as an Instrument to Heighten Awareness

- A clear definition of the video's objectives within a broad and coherent awareness-raising strategy. In both cases, prior to producing the message, the use of the videos in workshops, seminars, talks and activities implemented by the project was discussed, so the audience could reflect and propose solutions to the problem, from their own field of action.
- Selecting an audiovisual production team that was experienced, aware, and socially committed with this issue, as well as politically clear on the problem and willing to learn and work in coordination with the project staff.
- Identification of key statements that could reflect different points of this complex problem of child domestic labour. The life histories selected are heartbreaking, but fairly close to most people's daily lives. The testimonials make the audience question itself on the common image of girls and adolescents performing domestic labours in the households of others and reflect on the consequences this situation may have on these women's lives as well as their own points of view regarding child domestic labour.
- While the sub-regional documentary includes testimonies from all of the countries, the Dominican one was made specifically to reflect national and local aspects. This is important to ensure suitability of the message to the context and to increase audience identification with this problem.
- The awareness-raising capacity of the videos lies in their ability to reach as many people as possible; thus, it is essential that the videos be disseminated not only in training activities but also to the mass media, to place the issue in the public agenda and achieve social mobilisation to seek an answer.

Why are Life Histories Effective Instruments for Heightening Awareness?

Video documentaries are key communication instruments. In a summarized (15 minutes) and impacting manner, they give an integral view of the problem, make the causes of child domestic labour visible, give examples of consequences and risks these girls face, and remind national and local players of their responsibilities for the prevention, intervention and protection of children in domestic labour.

Audiovisual material has been useful in group activities and the mass media, reaching the "innermost" being of local players and sending a simple, clear, and credible message to get people to act in favour of girls and adolescents involved in child domestic labour.



Conditions under which the Process was Developed

- Video as a means, not as the end. The documentary is useful as long as it is produced as part of a global strategy to heighten awareness since by itself, it will be unable to change reality. As part of a constant and comprehensive awareness-raising strategy, the video is one more instrument among all the actions required to mobilize target populations or to influence decision-making.
- Selection of the production team. In audiovisual production, form and content are inseparable elements, so that whoever produces the video not only has to translate the text into images, but also has to work with the approach, the terminology and the project's action proposal in order to present an effective and persuasive message.
- Pre-production as a key task for the IPEC team. The power of a documentary lies in the possibility of identifying individuals with the most representative experiences, so it can show child domestic labour as a social problem; not as a particular situation. The production team has neither the criteria nor the contacts to identify such individuals. Consequently, if the IPEC staff does good pre-production work, a more effective product will result, with a considerable reduction in costs. These pre-production tasks include contacting the individuals to be interviewed; obtaining permits to shoot in institutions, logistics of the production team, and providing guidelines for the topical approach used.

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4.3. Direct Action Programmes

One of the main problems faced by children and adolescents in domestic labour is the lack of a social and/or institutional response in the face of their gruelling lives. In the region, there is a widespread lack of programmes or projects directly aimed at attending these working girls' needs and trying to restore their rights.

If the goal is to reduce working hours, improve working conditions, and finally, achieve a total withdraw of girls and adolescents from domestic labour, these individuals need to receive support and a series of services to ensure their right to education, integral health, entertainment, and personal development opportunities.

From this perspective, ILO/IPEC promoted a series of direct action programmes in the region, in order to offer education, legal counselling, and health services, as well as scholarships, school supplies, vocational training and orientation and personal attention to girls and adolescents involved in child domestic labours. Those programmes also included activities to ensure alternative economic resources to families and to heighten awareness among their employers.

It must be noted that these direct action programmes are in their early stages and there is little experience in the region in assisting children and adolescents involved in child domestic labours. Consequently, most of these programmes have served the population that is the most accessible and the easiest to detect. That is, greater maturity and more experience are required to develop strategies to detect and reach child and adolescent victims of the worst forms of child domestic labour. However, expertise gained with direct action programmes may result in more precise strategies to deal with the worst forms of this type of labour, as well as to define more specific actions to attend age, gender, and ethnic differences of children performing domestic labour.

While each direct action programme used different models, all of them were based on results of rapid assessments, so that the profile, regions of origin, risk levels of their labours, working conditions, needs and expectations of female domestic workers were quite clear.

These actions allowed a large proportion of the girls and adolescents participating in processes aimed at improving their working conditions, to broaden their life expectations, grow stronger personality, remain in or return to formal schooling or optimally, withdraw from child labour.



4.3.1. Direct Action for Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour in Guatemala

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: direct action model, prevention, protection, empowering girls, education, citizen participation, community networks, gender perspective, multicultural approach

Description of the Good Practice

The Asociación Proyecto Conrado de la Cruz was founded in 1995 as a non-governmental organisation to prevent, protect, and care for working girls and adolescents in Guatemala City.

Right from the start, the organisation chose, as its target population working girls involved in domestic labour, draw-back industry, informal sales, tortilla-making factories, and non-traditional agricultural products. This population consists mainly of Mayan girls aged 10 to 15 years, who migrate from rural areas and who belong to three ethnic groups:

- ◆ **Mames:** an ethnic group in the north-western region of the country, in Huehuetenago, San Marcos, and Quetzaltenango provinces. Historically these have been migrant populations that came down from the mountains to coastal areas to work on a seasonal basis in coffee, sugar, banana, and cotton harvesting. However, due to the war, agricultural crises that affected those products, and general poverty in Guatemala, these girls and women have been forced to migrate to the city to seek work.
- ◆ **Kichés:** They come from the north-central region of the country (Quiché, Totonicapán, southern Quetzaltenango, northern Retalhuleu, Mazatenango, and some cities in Sololá). This was the ethnic group most repressed by the military during the civil war; however, their resilience has permitted the creation of different economic alternatives in addition to tourism, trading, handicrafts and agriculture. Domestic labour is just another economic alternative this ethnic group has developed through its large networks of friends and family.
- ◆ **Cackchiqueles:** these people are from areas near the capital city and Antigua. They have experienced many changes in their environment, as a consequence of the establishment of draw-back industry factories, tour promoters and family-managed farms for small scale agricultural export that produce flowers, fruits and vegetables. Influenced by competitive trends of the urban zones, girls from this ethnic group are pushed into domestic labour at early ages.



The child domestic labour programme is designed to deal with the worst forms of child domestic labour, since it focuses on approximately 200 indigenous girls. These girls are mainly migrants living in conditions of discrimination, poverty and social exclusion. The association's aims covers the following areas:

Intervention:

It provides the girls with holistic services for education, health, recreation and companionship when feeling vulnerable, mistreated, and neglected. The main strategies have been:

- a) Empowering and personality building.** The main challenge of the programme is to make children change their view of themselves, so they can visualise a life project beyond domestic labour and can establish a different relationship with people and their environment. With the support of the project staff, girls record their internal process by keeping a personal journal and work on changes with their self-help group.
- b) Formal and vocational training:** Through the Centro Educativo para las Mujeres Jóvenes Mayas Trabajadoras, which has its own plan of studies approved by the Ministry of Education, free elementary education is provided to girls excluded from formal schooling. Students are enrolled in accelerated primary schooling that is supplemented with studies on their rights and vocational courses in typing, computing, secretarial studies, cooking, handicrafts, and as nursing assistants, among others.
- c) Organisation and children-youth leadership:** Girls that took part in the project are organized in boards of directors democratically elected and registered at the municipality. Each of the 4 current boards of directors is a member of community networks, in which the family, local authorities, governmental entities and non-governmental organisations participate to promote continuity and sustainability of the actions carried out by the girls. In addition, the same girls are trained as promoters or volunteers on the rights of working children, allowing the Association to renew its staff and improve the quality of its community work.
- d) Integral health:** Participants have access to health services, vocational orientation, and psychological care, if needed. In addition, becoming a member of community networks provides them with socialisation and recreational possibilities as well as an alternative to establish new connections while in the city.

Prevention

Even though intervention is just beginning at this stage, actions to raise awareness, train,



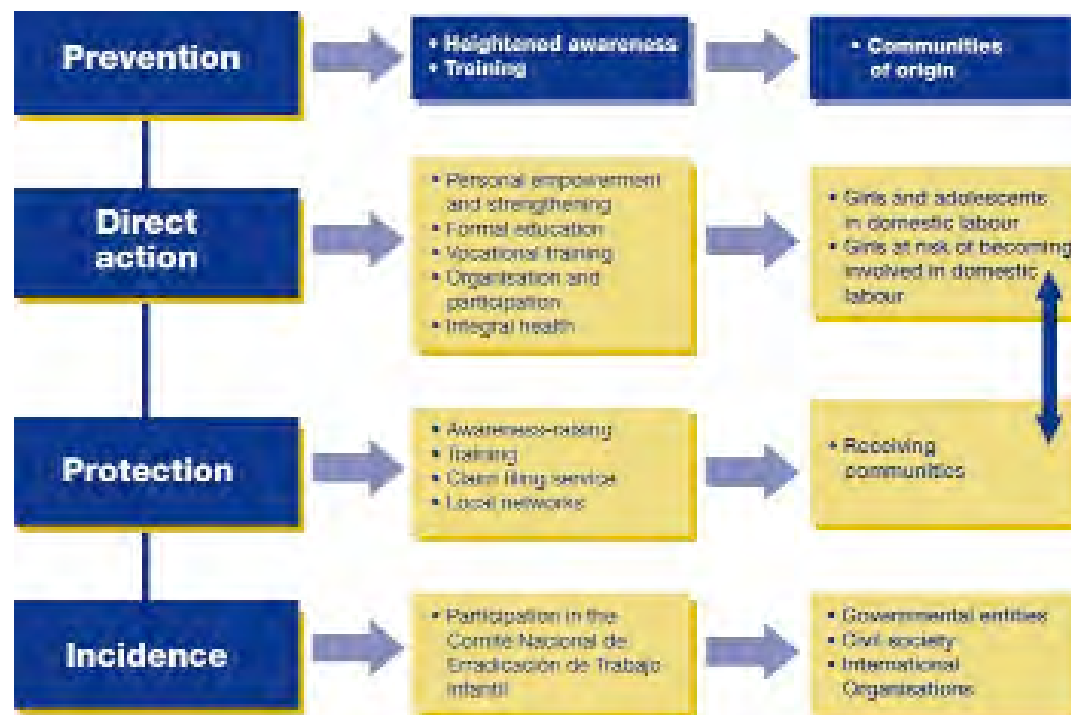
and strengthen the communities of origin of the girls have already been implemented. The purpose is that schools, authorities, families, and institutions act to retain the girls in their communities and prevent their migration and labour force involvement at an early age. Family income generation is a component for future development.

Protection

Together with the Defensoría de la Mujer Maya and under peace agreements regarding Indigenous People's Rights, local offices for the Defensoría de la Niñez (Ombudsman for Childhood) have been established to hear accusations of violence, abuse and exploitation against girls working in private households. In addition, it promotes the defence of girls' rights through dissemination, awareness-heightening, and training actions to have girls' rights respected, especially in receiving communities. At present, different activities to make this problem visible and to heighten awareness have been carried out in bus terminals, parks, and public areas of those communities where the project has been implemented.

- Incidence in public policies: The association takes part in the Comité Nacional de Erradicación de Trabajo Infantil, in the domestic labour subgroup, to provide technical support for the design and implementation of public policies in favour of working children.

Direct Action Programme Strategies



Key Steps in the Development of the Direct Action Model

- Identifying and contacting working girls by promoters and facilitators, who having previously been domestic workers, are very sensitive to detect girls and have a more effective approach. Contact is mainly made when these children go to markets, on Sundays in the parks, and in bus terminals at the end of the school year when those girls migrate to the city looking for a job.
- Intrapersonal and interpersonal work. The sustainability of their withdrawal from domestic labour is possible thanks to personal empowerment. If girls cannot change their own view of themselves as indigenous, poor and excluded individuals, they will not be able to think of a life project different from that society has imposed on them.
- Process to integrate girls in domestic labour as well as the population at risk into schools. Modifications to the plan of studies include changes not only in contents but also in schedules and time as required by the girls.
- Integration of girls into self-help groups as fundamental spaces, where they can share their life histories, receive support in difficult situations and take part in recreational and socialisation activities.
- Creation and organisation of the boards of directors is possible through work to heighten their awareness of their rights, self-esteem improvement, and strengthening of their capacity to participate as citizens.
- Integrating the boards of directors of girls involved in child domestic labours to community networks and their active participation in local activities strengthens their group identity and facilitates recognition by their community.
- Training girls and adolescents in the project as promoters and facilitators ensures more empathy, commitment and knowledge of the reality faced by the target population.
- Integration with organisations of the communities of origin and reception to make the intervention strategy sustainable and have an holistic approach to prevention, protection and intervention.
- Focussing the work in a limited number of communities, without losing sight of activities with national impact, or in order to bring about changes in public policies related to the problem.

Why is it a Good Direct Action Model?

The Conrado de la Cruz project has developed an intervention model that encompasses gender and ethnic issues of working girls and adolescents taking part in this project. Intervention is based on their personal empowerment and strengthening, so they can have a life project different from that society has imposed on them. Thus, the project work has been based on understanding and recovering the particular issues



of these girls' ethnic groups and to integrate the project into indigenous communities working on other problems that also affect girls and adolescents in domestic labour.

Training girls to be the promoters and facilitators of the same prevention, attention, and protection processes of child domestic workers results in a commitment of the beneficiaries themselves and a the strengthening of local capacities to continue with the proposal.

In addition, by encouraging the participation of girls and adolescents in local networks and in community activities, the project is contributing to creating a different perception of themselves and their environment. In this context, those girls can exercise their citizenship actively and defend their rights.

Some Precautions

One precaution with educational systems paralleling the formal system is not substituting or weakening it, but supplementing it and becoming an integral part of the country's public and free schooling. In the case of the Conrado de la Cruz project, it is important to guarantee that the education offered has the same or a higher quality than the regular school system, so that these girls are not at a disadvantage as against other elementary school students.

Another disadvantage of alternative schooling is its conflict of rights, since girls go to class on Sundays, the only day off for such girls. In this sense, it is important the programme achieves an impact on working conditions and schedules, so these girls have the right to education and rest.

Conditions under which this Model was Implemented

- The project implementing agency has prior experience in assisting girls in domestic labour; has strong contacts with community and local entities; shows knowledge of the reality and specific characteristics of the target population; and has achieved a good integration of local action and national impact.
- Despite the conditions of institutional weakness and the severe exclusion and discrimination faced by girls in domestic labour in Guatemala, the association has been able to create an effective intervention model focused on rights and integration of the girls' needs. This has been achieved thanks to the flexibility of the organisation, its learning capacity¹⁶ and the participatory spirit it promotes from the target population, as the protagonists of their own change.
- Facilitators and the project team assume an optimistic, joyful, and responsible approach to their duties and the challenge of creating a sound and sustainable intervention proposal.



- The project offers private health services, since it has not been able to get the commitment of local entities to assist girls participating in the program. Institutionalisation of medical, dental, and psychological services by local entities is very important to achieve model sustainability and to advance in the restoration of these individual rights by the State.

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4.3.2. Direct Intervention for Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour in Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: Holistic intervention for girls and adolescents, education, professional training, recreation, girls' withdrawal.

Description of the Good Practice

The Proyecto Reyes Irene Valenzuela of the Sociedad Amigos de los Niños is being carried out with the support of ILO/IPEC and other international organisations. This project was created in 2001 as a response to the institutional gap in support for girls and adolescents in domestic labour in Honduras.

The purpose of the project is to improve living conditions of domestic workers through educational, training, and recreational activities. The project offers options for the enrolment of girls and adolescents in formal education, human and vocational training, psychological, legal, and health services, and recreational activities. There is



a multidisciplinary professional team to facilitate the process of recruitment, integration and permanence of the girls and adolescents in the program. To date the project has involved approximately 400 girls in the following issues:

- **Formal education:** Girls are given the opportunity for reinsertion in the formal school system and to finish school, through different programmes, such as, distance learning, partial class attendance (semipresencial) (a system in which students attend school on specific fixed dates to receive classes), radio lessons, individual and group tutored lessons. Likewise, school supplies and other materials are provided.
- **Vocational training:** As a complement to formal education, these girls also receive vocational training in different occupations, so they may have alternatives to domestic labour. An agreement with the Instituto Nacional de Formación Profesional was signed so this institution provides instructors and materials to carry out these activities.
- **Human formation:** The girls and adolescents are given education in human rights, duties, national and international regulations protecting the rights of the child, personal development, and reinforcement of their self-esteem.
- **Health services:** Education in health issues, medical care and referral to health centres in case of specific problems of the girls and adolescents are also provided.
- **Legal counselling:** Legal counselling is given to this population. In addition, connections with the Ministry of Labour have been established to protect and defend their labour rights.
- **Psychosocial attention:** Socio-economic studies of the girls and their families are carried out to define additional support that may be necessary. In addition, girls are given individual and group therapy, so they can recover from the problems faced in their personal lives, such as sexual abuse, mistreatment, teenage pregnancy, and other forms of violence.
- **Recreation:** Girls are provided a series of recreational activities and techniques that combine playing with learning. Likewise, agreements with different organisations, such as the Asociación de Guías Scout de Honduras, have been signed to organize games and outdoor activities.
- **Work with families:** When a family is located (many of these girls' families live in rural areas and are not within the scope of the project), the project carries out awareness-raising and informational activities. Furthermore, an effort is made to involve the family in the process their daughters are going through.
- **Work with employers:** From the moment a domestic worker gets involved in the project, a written notice is sent to her employer, which explains the actions of the organisation and the employer is invited to participate in some activities. Even though not many employers accept this invitation, some do and a labour of awareness heightening is undertaken with those employers; the work also

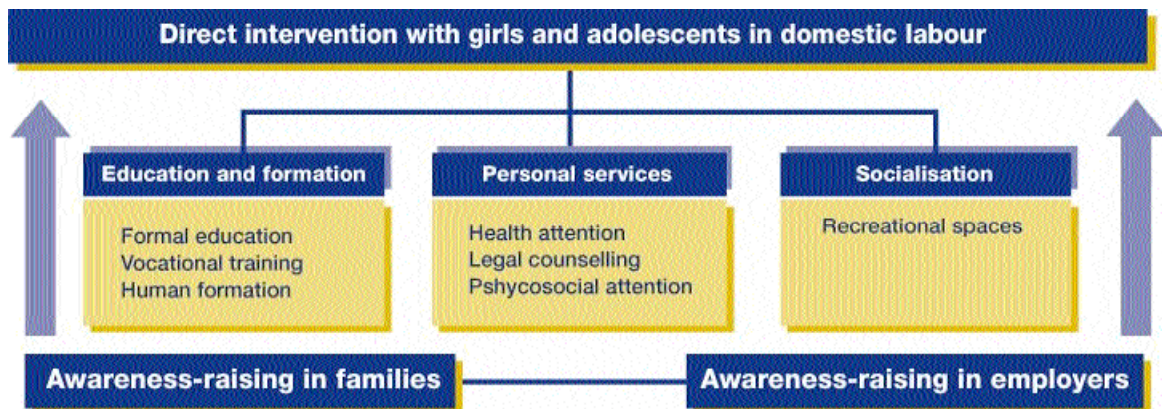


encompasses giving information about workers' rights and their duties and obligations as employers.

Methodologically, the project recruits girls and adolescents through visits to parishes, parks, bus terminals, and social clubs. A technique known as "snowballing" is also used; that is, some participants may attend the programme with friends or relatives. In this sense, work is basically done with adolescents (aged 12 or older) who work in Tegucigalpa, who have the possibility of leaving their employers' home to take part in recreational or religious activities, as well as with those girls who, at least, have one day off a week.

From this perspective, the project takes advantage of some domestic workers' day off and concentrates education, training, and formation activities in a 10-hour-day weekly schedule. The approach of this initiative is to foment a broad participation by adolescents while incorporating their needs, aspirations and demands. These girls are involved in a reflection and participation process in which they are considered significant players. Regardless of the project's recent implementation, there have been important results: some adolescents not only have finished their secondary education but also have enrolled in the university. This has been a drastic change in their life expectancies.

Direct Action Programme Strategy



Key Steps for Services to and Empowerment of Girls and Adolescents

- Conviction of a local organisation and several international organisations of the need to provide specific services and opportunities to serve and give support to girls and adolescents in domestic labour
- Draft a proposal for holistic attention focused on education, as well as vocational training, human formation and recreation. These are key elements for



strengthening the girls, providing them with material, technical, psychosocial and affective tools for their personal development and empowerment.

- Entering into alliances with other agencies, such as international cooperation organisations, public institutions, and groups from civil society to create synergies and maximize resources
- Incorporating the girls' families of origin and even employers in some project activities, making it possible to have an holistic approach to the girls and the problem as well
- Developing an approach that considers girls and adolescents as the principal players in the process, which is based on the needs, expectations, demands and real conditions of these individuals.
- Participating in a multidisciplinary team that supervises and supports the educational process for those girls and adolescents, while providing them with health, psychological and legal counselling services.
- Incorporating play and recreational activities into the program, in order to encourage learning through enjoyable activities, allowing these children to recover a part of their lost infancy

Why was the Direct Action Process Successful?

This program made possible the reincorporation into the school system of a large group of girls and adolescents in domestic labour that had been excluded. In addition, the project is successful in ensuring their enduring presence in the process; 90% of these girls have passed their academic year. In fact, it has been possible for some adolescents to complete their secondary education successfully and start their university studies.

Vocational training together with formal education has also proved a good alternative, since adolescents are able to acquire some technical and professional knowledge, which gives them broader opportunities beyond domestic labour.

Holistic attention by an interdisciplinary team and treatment of girls as social players entitled to full rights ensures their personal growth, develops their skills and increases their knowledge of their rights and other issues. All this results in their forging a new life project. Likewise, through their participation in the program, girls and adolescents have been able to improve their working conditions, reduce their work schedules, and ultimately, find new opportunities to leave domestic labours. This can be defined as a good practice from a gender perspective, since it directly faces girls' and adolescents' needs and the program is based on their particular problems.

The project can also be considered successful, since alliances with a series of organisations and national and international entities have been established and



maintained. Thus, financial and technical resources are maximized to strengthen their service platform. Likewise, good coordination with donors and public institutions and serious and efficient relations ensure their social legitimacy and sustainability. Such social legitimacy has even made the programme itself an awareness-raising instrument, since it has drawn the attention of the media and public opinion to the reality of girls and adolescents in domestic labour.

Some Precautions

While this project has been very successful in achieving its goals, it is important to verify the possible conflict of rights that arises when girls and adolescents are asked to attend school on their only day off. That is, even though currently there are no other alternatives, it is necessary to develop medium-term and long-term actions to reduce work schedules and working conditions, so that domestic workers do not have to sacrifice their weekly day of rest to have access to their educational rights.

On the other hand even though this project places special emphasis on personal and spiritual development of working girls, more explicit and aggressive strategies must be developed to face flagrant violations to some girls' rights. In this sense, more explicit actions to face sexual abuses and all types of violation suffered by girls and adolescents in different areas of their lives are needed, but especially in their employer's homes. According to the Approach on Rights, defence of all the rights of children and adolescents by social institutions, public entities or even the courts, is what guarantees universal and particular care and protection for this group.

Necessary Conditions for an Holistic Intervention Process for Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour

- Having a socially aware and committed organisation to assist and offer solutions to girls and adolescents in domestic labour.
- Seriousness and dedication of project staff that combines social awareness with broad technical knowledge.
- Development of an holistic and multidisciplinary model that encompasses education, training, emotional, and recreational issues.
- The will and desire to excel among most of the girls and adolescents in the project.
- Respect and attention to needs, expectations, and demands of girls and adolescents themselves.
- Considering girls and adolescents as the principal players and active participants of their own process of empowerment.
- Effective and timely coordination with donors and other entities involved in the project



- Have a pleasant and adequately-equipped site available to apply the holistic model
- Good organisation, careful planning and constant assessment of the different activities carried out

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4.3.3. Direct action for Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour in Pavas and Cartago, Costa Rica

Level 2: Successfully proven practice

Key words: Child and adolescent services, education, professional training, recreation, life project.

Description of the Good Practice

Denying the right to education is one of the most harmful consequences of child domestic labour. When girls and adolescents are excluded from the school system, a chain of denied rights and opportunities begins that will affect their entire lives and that will also contribute to reproducing the cycle of inequality in the next generation. From that perspective, the objective of this initiative, developed by Defensa de los Niños y las Niñas Internacional (DNI) together with ILO/IPEC with technical assistance from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, was to implement an holistic intervention model for girls and adolescents in domestic labour based on educational support and supplemented with personal attention, self-formation processes and institutional support. The project was carried out during an 8-month period, from 2002 to 2003. Its specific objectives were:



- Create the conditions necessary for the operation of two assistance centres for children and adolescents in domestic labour, one in Pavas (San José province) and other in Cartago province
- Support the reintegration into society and continuance in the school system of 100 child domestic workers, who were enrolled in formal, regular, and formal-open modes
- Strengthen capacities of boys, girls and adolescents in Domestic Labour to actively exercise their rights and take full advantage of personal development opportunities through different services, such as, training, extramural academic support, and informative spaces
- Contribute to increasing the possibilities of sustainability for the assistance programme by strengthening the managerial capacity of Pavas and Cartago communities through training and promotion of community leaders

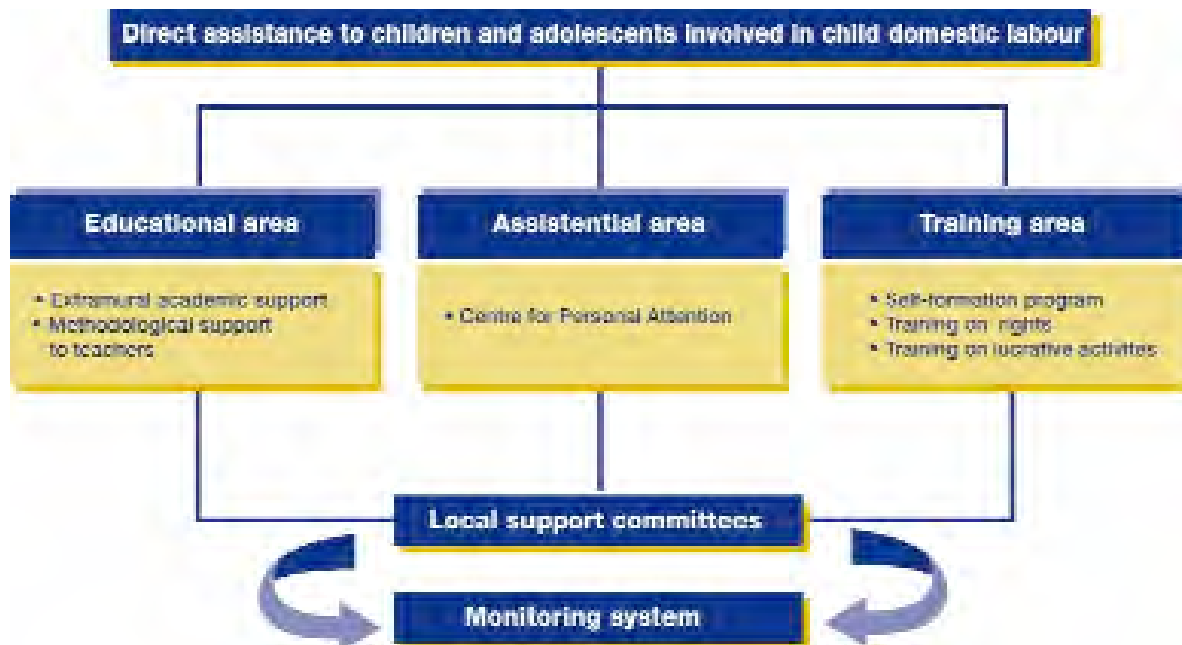
General strategy of the project included direct efforts in three areas:

- **Education:** This area included reintegration to the school system, extramural academic support, awareness raising, and training for teachers of boys, girls and adolescents in domestic labour, and the direct donation of school supplies to boys and girls and their schools.
- **Personal attention:** As part of this area, three problems were approached: the body and its languages, intra-familial relationships and prevention of abuse in order to promote socio-emotional development and their capacity to confront adversity effectively and positively. As part of this component, a series of recreational activities, like field trips to parks, museums and cine forums were carried out.
- **Training:** The training component concentrated on two core themes. First, on children's and adolescents' rights and national and international regulations for the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, in order to create spaces for reflection so that boys and girls could express their views and talk about their experiences in child domestic labour. Second, training was also included in lucrative activities, such as, pastry, international cuisine, painting on cloth, flower arranging and computing.

This project worked with children and adolescents contacted in communities in Pavas and Cartago, which had been identified as key points of origin for many children in domestic labour. As a consequence of the limited-term of this project, it was possible to integrate only the population that was the easiest to access and that had the best possibilities of taking part in proposed academic and recreational activities.



Strategy of the Intervention Programme



In the process, alliances with local organisations were set-up, in order to ensure the physical space necessary for the initiative, to make it sustainable and give it continuance. There was also a group of volunteers, mostly university students, who helped in extramural educational support. Finally, important efforts were made to work with parents of boys, girls and adolescents in domestic labour in order to raise awareness among them, without making them feel guilty, and present them with some labour options.

Key Steps for the Educational Support and Empowerment of Boys, Girls and Adolescents in Domestic Labour

- The presence of a non-governmental organisation with prior experience in child domestic labour with technical strengths in alternative teaching methods and good relations with affected communities
- Active participation of ILO/IPEC and the Ministry of Labour in project management and implementation
- Drawing up a clear, simple and coherent proposal that emphasizes education, as well as personal development, and training
- Integration of play and recreational activities to the program, which stimulate learning through enjoyment
- Setting up alliances with community organisations, which resulted in physical space



to develop the project and involve these organisations in the actions carried out to deal with the problem

- Lobbying and convincing local educational authorities to make children's reintegration easier and to make possible teacher training in the use of appropriate teaching methodologies, according to the needs of the target population
- Participation of a multidisciplinary team highly skilled in alternative pedagogies and in a rights approach, which supervised and gave support to CDL schooling and provided them with personal assistance
- Integration of families into the process in order to heighten their awareness of the importance of education for the development of their children and particularly of the girls to continue in school

Why was this Direct Action Project Successful?

The project succeeded in reincorporating about 50 children and adolescents in domestic labour into school; 100% of the girls in the project passed their academic year. This resulted in an increase in their own self-esteem and their viewing themselves as capable of achieving a goal that previously had been very distant. In addition, personal development and training activities allowed them to strengthen their skills to start a new life project and to diversify their labour opportunities. Likewise, these activities made possible a reduction of domestic labour hours for many participants.

On the other hand, the project established important cooperative ties with community groups and encouraged the establishment of local support committees for the centres created. From that perspective, there was heightened awareness in the community regarding the importance of preventing early entrance of children into domestic labour and on the need to offer them support to continue in school. Similarly, the project worked with families, especially with mothers, from a sensitive point of view to prevent their feeling guilty; placing emphasis on the importance that their daughters continue in school to have different life opportunities.

Finally, an important effort was made in schools and with teachers. School supplies were donated to schools and teachers were trained in alternative methodologies to work with vulnerable populations.

Some Precautions

This project was very successful, since 100% of students passed the academic year. However, because of its short-term and the model proposed, no specific strategies to deal with child domestic labour were established, since this work is carried out behind closed doors, out of the public eye, and is rampant with myth denying it as a



form of labour. From this perspective, despite its success, this programme could not be clearly differentiated from other proposals to deal with child labour as a whole.

Necessary Conditions for a Successful School Support Process for Children and Adolescents in Domestic Labour

- The presence of an organisation with experience in this issue with technical strengths, and prior work with affected communities
- Excellent qualifications of the implementing team, which combine social awareness with their knowledge in the field
- Willingness of children and adolescents in domestic labour to enthusiastically take part in all the activities of the project
- Develop a clear, simple and coherent proposal that takes into account education, training, recreational, and personal issues
- Effective and timely coordination with DNI, IPEC, and the Ministry of Labour
- Participation of the Ministry of Labour in direct assistance for young people, as well as in its support to guarantee them scholarships through the Fondo Nacional de Becas para la Educación, the national public scholarship board for children and adolescents
- Readiness of local organisations to provide physical space necessary and become involved in project initiatives
- Willingness of schools in the area and their staff to take part in the project and provide support to children and adolescents in domestic labour
- Collaboration by a group of volunteer women to give extramural support to children and adolescents in domestic labour
- Acquisition of resources from a series of donors and public institutions that could be allocated to schools and families of girls and adolescents that participated in the project
- A good project performance supervision and monitoring system by the DNI

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4.4. Social Mobilisation

As a consequence of their lack of knowledge, different state and civil society institutions in the countries in the sub-region had not included child domestic labour in their agendas. This is an important challenge since this form of labour cannot be prevented and eradicated without active participation by key social players. To wit, when officials of state and private entities are not aware of the problem and its possible risks, they become a factor that prevents advances towards its solution, since these officials do not provide an adequate response to the seriousness of the problem and the needs of the affected girls and adolescents.

Under the Sub-Regional Project “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”, numerous activities have been developed aimed at leaders, decision-makers, teachers, journalists, labour inspectors, women and children’s agencies, and labour unions, among others. These actions have contributed to raise the interest of these sectors to include this problem in their working agendas.

These spaces also contributed to promote the establishment of inter-institutional networks in different countries related to direct attention programmes. These inter-institutional networks have facilitated preventive efforts as well as assistance for girls and adolescents by implementing agencies and have raised the visibility of the problem in different communities. Likewise, development of local responses appropriate to the needs of those girls and adolescents has been made easier.

4.4.1. Local Network to Protect Children and Adolescents in Domestic Labour

Level 3: Replicated practice

Key words: Social mobilisation, community networks, inter-institutional integration, inter-sectorial coordination, citizen participation, protective networks, local committees

Description of the Good Practice

One of the challenges generally faced by direct action programmes is continuity of the services provided to the target population, once external funding terminates.

Even though non-governmental organisations that guide processes have permanent projects aimed at children and adolescents in domestic labour, this population demands holistic, inter-institutional responses. Thus, the capacity for response by a sole organisation is insufficient. For this reason, local committees to eradicate child labour



have been established in all countries; some of these committees were specifically created to eradicate child domestic labour. These committees are aimed at consolidating a protective network to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents involved in domestic labour. These committees are integrated by local authorities of the ministries of labour, health, and education, child protection agencies, judicial authorities, local government or municipal officials, and representatives of civil society working directly with this problem.

While processes to integrate the committees are different in each country, the contribution of these local structures has been essential to consolidate action programmes. For instance, in Panama, the fight against child labour is carried out from the National Committee, which issues the general political guidelines to face the problem. To put these guidelines into practice in Veraguas, the Provincial Subcommittee was utilised. This Subcommittee is composed of entities that are natural programme counterparts (Ministry of Labour and Ministry of the Family), as well as health and education institutions, the Office of the First Lady, judicial authorities, local government officials, and representatives of civil society. A technical secretariat was formed within the committee and is responsible for drawing up a plan to harmonise national policies with specific needs of children and adolescents in domestic labour of two priority districts selected in the province (Mesa and Cañazas). The technical secretariat assumed the responsibility for financing the plan through resources available in the participating institutions, as well as for monitoring the plan's performance.

In León, Nicaragua, the local network to fight child domestic labour is based in the Comisión Coordinadora de Atención a la Niñez (CCAN), an organisation that brings together 20 public and private organisations (6 public ones, 13 from civil society and the municipality). This commission, in turn, is divided into expert committees by topic; it has monthly meetings to coordinate its actions and promote joint local initiatives. Through the CCAN, Asociación Las Tías (agency that is executing the assistance programme in León) has had valuable allies to detect and refer cases, to provide health services to the target population by the Ministry of Health, to integrate efforts to heighten awareness and local impact campaigns, as well to support actions to include child domestic labour in the local political agenda.

In San Pedro Sula, Honduras, a technical subcommittee was created including the Ministries of Labour and Health, the municipality, the Instituto de la Niñez y la Familia and several organisations from civil society. The sub-regional project provided training and awareness heightening for this sub-committee, which resulted in drafting an action plan to deal locally with child and adolescent domestic labour. Representatives of these institutions have taken part in different dissemination activities, which include, radio forums and a press conference, in which this issue was seen as a social problem and a reality that



considerably affects the northern region of the country. In the same way, these institutions are already receiving and processing claims filed by working girls and adolescents.

Another local network created and still working is the one in Desamparados, Costa Rica. The municipality participates continuously in this network, together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, representatives from the education sector and the police. This network has the particular characteristic that it acts to defend and promote the rights of local children and adolescents, by working together in each district with the Governance Section of the Municipality. The network carries out activities aimed at raising awareness, training, and looking for alternatives for minors. To this end, the network tries to influence local, regional, and national entities to maximize and efficiently use existing resources. One priority of the network is to prevent and combat child domestic labour; a local exploratory survey on the status of this problem in the municipality was carried out together with IPEC.

In Panama, the Dominican Republic and Guatemala, these networks have played a key role in making this problem visible. A specific example were the marches and activities on June 12, World Day against Child Labour, which proved their pulling power and their organisational potential. They brought together hundreds of individuals in different communities to have creative demonstrations against labour exploitation of minors, especially, child domestic labour.

Key Steps to Establishing Local Networks

- Lobbying national and local authorities to visualise the magnitude of the problem, at the local level, and to identify existing spaces and resources to combat child domestic labour
- Identifying and establishing mechanisms for local and national coordination and integration, to achieve harmonisation of national policies and local programmes
- Actions to heighten awareness and train local authorities to make this problem one of their priorities in their political agenda, so they can define their role and responsibilities in the local strategy to prevent, protect, assist and eradicate child and adolescent domestic labour
- Draft a working plan agreed by consensus in which responsibilities and financial contributions of each participant are detailed. This plan allows envisaging scopes and constraints of the strategy as well as guiding the search for allies and resources to cover existing needs and gaps.
- Leadership of a local entity to call to permanent meetings, follow up the working plan, and get members of the committee working when needed. Likewise, it is essential for plan implementation to identify and involve people highly committed to the problem.



Why are Local Committees a Good Practice?

Organisations that develop direct action programmes tend to be very efficient in achieving their objectives and goals; however, they are not always capable of ensuring sustainability of the intervention or results, since they fail to integrate the proposal into local institutions. Consolidation of local networks is fundamental to ensure continuity of actions, because local entities furnish their resources based on working plans, to comply with international agreements in favour of children and adolescents signed by their countries. In addition, this model directly contributes to creating and strengthening capabilities of public and private entities to contribute to the fight against child domestic labour.

It must also be noted that such local structures make the fight against child domestic labour more effective; these structures have a greater capacity to put national policies enacted by the central government into work at the local level. Their presence in the same context as the direct action programmes, allows them to adapt actions to particular needs and requirements of the target population and the communities, making the intervention more appropriate.

Some Precautions Regarding the Local Protection Network

- Vision and mission of the local committee must be clearly defined as well as the responsibilities of each participating sector or institution. This way the working plan can be drawn up based on a realistic distribution of functions, in accordance with each member's capacity for implementation. All parties involved must be clear on the intervention model being implemented in the community.
- An effective local committee must have an active participation of all sectors involved in the fight against child domestic labour. Therefore, those countries that organized their services based on geopolitical criteria and have decentralised structures are better prepared to establish holistic protection networks for children and adolescents.
- In most countries of the region, public agencies are fragile entities; therefore, the scope and limitations of the local committee must be measured based on the availability of financial and material resources from governmental entities. In these cases, complementing efforts with those of other local players, such as the private sector, is essential to strengthen the response capacity of the protection network.
- Coordination, integration, and communication mechanisms among the attention program, the local committee, and the national committee must be clear, not only to draw up and implement the working plan, but also to ensure accountability in both directions for each of the entities.



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4.4.2. Awareness-Raising and Mobilisation of Churches on the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Panama

Level 1: Innovative Practice

Key words: Awareness-raising, social mobilisation, churches, theological approach, drafting proposals

Description of the Good Practice

One of the main challenges to creating a current of public opinion at odds with child domestic labour through a heightened awareness relates to a generalised



ignorance of this problem and its risks by among the population. Thus, to carry out awareness-raising actions, it is important to take advantage of existing organized forces in the countries and of their capacity to disseminate messages to the sectors they work with. Campaigns focused on particular sectors, especially those with influential powers, may produce a “cascade effect” in disseminating the messages. Likewise, through this type of actions, it is possible to make a direct call to a specific sector and propose specific actions this sector could develop. Thus, more specific commitments would be attained.

With this perspective, a special awareness-raising project was developed in Panama. It was aimed at churches of different denominations influential in the country. This project was executed by the Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Mujer y la Familia (IDEMI), with IPEC support. Objectives of the project were:

- Mobilise and heighten the awareness of the effects of child domestic labour for the lives of children from the different churches in Panama with the pulling-power to bring people together and the capacity to demythologise, heighten awareness, and modify their parishioner’s culture in order to eliminate one of the worst forms of child domestic labour in the homes of others.
- Create a space to reflect on biblical-theological bases for the elimination of child domestic labour.
- Help convince their parishioners to contribute to the elimination of child domestic labour and to create programmes to support children and families affected by this form of labour exploitation.

Two activities were carried out to achieve these objectives: a meeting with different churches to discuss the elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour that closed with a public religious event, and a workshop on “Gender, Theology, and Domestic Labour” to discuss domestic labour and women’s roles from a biblical perspective.

Around 200 leaders from Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Bahai, and Buddhist religious groups took part in these two activities. Results of the survey on child domestic labour supported by this project were presented, and the project was discussed from a theological perspective. Two statements with proposals to be implemented by different churches and public policies in favour of children and adolescents resulted from these activities. Impact from these events was widespread thanks both to their novelty and the media coverage received.

Key Steps in the Process

- Presence of an agency, such as IDEMI, with contacts in different sectors and a great deal of creditability



- An extensive and open call to churches from an agency considered “neutral” in religious terms, but respected by different religious denominations
- Activities were also endowed with credibility through sponsorship by a renowned international organisation, such as ILO as well as other national entities, such as the Ministry of Labour and the Office of the First Lady
- Development of an inclusive and ecumenical working methodology to avoid religious competition, but rather, to recover ethical and theological issues common to different religious viewpoints, which lead to setting up a defence for children’s and adolescents’ rights
- Use of a methodology that provided serious and reliable data, derived from Project surveys, which resulted in a statement that could be signed by almost all participants
- An attractive call to the media broadened social impact and visibility of such activities. A journalist had been contracted in anticipation to motivate the media and handle public relations.

Why was the Process Successful?

This process can be considered successful for a number of reasons. First, it was innovative. Rarely does this type of ecumenical activity take place; where churches that are in conflict in other fields, got together to discuss a topic and propose common solutions. On the other hand, these activities are particularly significant thanks to the influence of these churches on their parishioners. The faithful consider their ministers as authorities that govern their actions and ethical and moral values. From this perspective, press releases and statements derived from church activities have been widely disseminated and with great legitimacy.

As a result of this work with churches, on June 12, 2004, the World Day against Child Labour, The Bishop of Veraguas Province made a statement against child domestic labour.

On the other hand, the workshop on “Gender, Theology, and Domestic Labour”, given by a theologian and minister of a Protestant church, promoted reflection on child domestic labour from a biblical perspective and helped participants to understand the concept of servitude to which women have historically been subjected through domestic labours. From this perspective, these initiatives also promoted an understanding of the particular issues and the implications of gender in domestic labour.

Thanks to such attractive and innovative activities and the effective summons to the media, there was significant media coverage that contributed to the dissemination of the information and a heightened awareness.



Necessary Conditions for a Process to Successfully Heighten Awareness and Foment Social Mobilisation among Churches

- Having a highly credited and renowned agency or organisation to convoke different religious denominations
- Making an open and inclusive call to make all religious denominations feel welcome
- Being supported or sponsored by international organisations and public agencies to provide legitimacy and prestige to the convocation and the activity itself
- Defining a discussion methodology from a ecumenical perspective, not giving preference to any particular church position or beliefs
- Including a gender perspective in the activities, so that ideals of equity and eradication of all forms of discrimination against women and girls are incorporated into the religious discourse
- Issuing statements or declarations that group together concrete commitments or actions to be executed by participants
- Ample dissemination of statements derived from these activities, thanks to the power and authority religious leaders' sayings have on a large portion of the population
- Ensuring the widest media coverage to act as a multiplier of the churches' messages and declarations

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4.5. Institution Building

As a consequence of all the cultural and social factors that keep child domestic labour hidden, different key institutions and organisations have been reluctant to



include it within their working agenda. Furthermore, those institutions that do so, in fact, do not consider it a priority but a marginal activity.

When this project began, public and private entities had a series of institutional weaknesses for dealing with this issue. Thus, many Project actions have been focused towards strengthening institutional capacities to handle such a complicated problem and to integrate it into their strategies. Training workshops and technical assistance by the ILO/IPEC team have been essential for increasing the abilities of the staff and institutions to face the problem from a perspective on rights and gender.

Such actions have contributed to initiate a process of institutional acknowledgement and acceptance of the problem, which must be strengthened to make it politically sustainable. However, there have been significant advances, since there has been progress from a stage in which the project was ignored to one in which it is being included in the discourse and actions of some key institutions.

4.5.1. Developing Capacities in Dominican Society

Level 3: Replicated good practice

Key words: Development of capacities, training, awareness raising, non-governmental organisations, labour unions, sustainability, institutionalisation of the issue, social mobilisation

Description of the Good Practice

The change of Government in the Dominican Republic in 2004 raised serious challenges for the Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour” in this country. It was to be expected that a new president would replace a majority of government employees that had already gone through IPEC training and awareness-raising stages.

To keep this transitional process, the climate of uncertainty and lack of definition of new political and technical guidelines enacted by the new administration from hindering Project progress; the IPEC team developed a parallel structure to strengthen civil society’s capacities. This parallel strategy would allow other local and national entities to become the leaders in this issue while the transitional process was completed in the Secretary of Labour and other agencies of the Comité Nacional contra el Trabajo Infantil.



This emphasis on strengthening capacities to deal with the problem was focused on grass-roots organisations, labour unions, and other local participants with prior experience in dealing with working children. Awareness raising workshops for these groups allowed them to implement a series of actions and initiatives.

For example, the Instituto Dominicano de Apoyo a la Juventud (INDAJOVEN, Dominican Institute for Youth Support) developed awareness-raising workshops for local decision-makers. The Institute was able to involve them in local networks for protection and assistance for girls and adolescents in domestic labour. These workshops complemented regular literacy campaigns, school support through study halls, technical training and social formation for working children and adolescents assisted by the organisation.

The Consejo Nacional de Unidad Sindical (CNUS, National Trade Union Council) that encompasses the four Dominican labour unions carried out workshops to heighten awareness among representatives of regional committees, so that each participant would return with this topic to their own labour unions. This has allowed IPEC wider Project coverage and work with labour unions, which are key ILO participants.

On the other hand, since 1996, Fundación Casa de la Mujer de Villa Altagracia, a grass-roots organisation, has done work to attend and prevent intra-family violence. It included awareness-raising workshops on child domestic labour within its regular activities with inhabitants in the municipality. These awareness-raising workshops aimed at communities themselves have spread knowledge on children and adolescents' rights and included this issue in the local agenda.

Likewise, the Centro de Planificación y Acción Ecuménica (CEPAE, Centre for Ecumenical Planning and Action) is doing research to deepen understanding of child domestic labour in those neighbourhoods served by the organisation, to have better bases when designing its assistance program. This effort is carried out by the organisation using its own resources.

In summary, this process has contributed not only to develop abilities in civil society to prevent and attend the problem but also to promote creation of a space for coordination between social organisations that can speak out, and legitimacy to serve as interlocutors to the government regarding child domestic labour.

Key Steps in Institution Building in Civil Society

- Definition of grass-roots organisations interested and capable of coordinating child domestic labour issues within their institutional tasks.
- Necessary training and technical assistance so that organisations integrate this



problem into their core activities or action programmes to deal with the issue from a suitable approach on rights and gender.

- Provide spaces to coordinate among organisations to exchange knowledge and plan joint actions. For example, these organisations could work together to coordinate the Global March on the World Day against Child Labour (June 12).

Why is Institution Building in Civil Society a Good Practice?

Even though international agreements indicate that governmental entities are responsible for protecting and solving needs of working children and adolescents, such entities are institutionally weak and face financial constraints to meet their obligations. In addition, and in most cases, changes of government also imply a staff turnover in agencies responsible for following up the problem. Therefore, resources must periodically be invested in training new employees.

In this context, strengthening capacities in civil society is an essential strategy to avoid leaving the population unprotected and to ensure continuity of services required by girls and adolescents while governments reorganize their priorities. It is also an important way to promote social mobilisation and get local key players involved, since these organisations have local networks already established. These networks could be used to take advantage of the work in target population prevention and protection.

Conditions under which the Institution Building Process Took Place

- Dealing with child domestic labour within a time bound programme allows placement of the problem into a broader context as well as development of strategies that involve other types of child labour. For example, the link between minor children in agricultural and domestic labour has been understood and dealt with through a TBP. Likewise, involving labour unions has been easier from a general perspective of labour, since domestic labour (an activity in the informal economic sector) does not fall within the scope of labour unions.
- The IPEC team tries to avoid the identification of child domestic labour as characteristic of only one sector of society, rather, that it be identified as a problem that involves organisations related to children, women, community development, human rights, education, health, etc. Thus, efforts have been made to maintain the representation of the organisations endorsed and a coherent approach to the problem.
- A risk of strengthening civil society without a parallel and effective strategy to strengthen public entities is that the latter may end up delegating their responsibilities to non-governmental agencies. Even though civil society plays an important role in attacking child domestic labour, the State is solely responsible for a number of actions to protect children and adolescents. Therefore,



precautionary measures must be taken to clearly demarcate the fields of action for both sectors and to guarantee their effective performance.

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4.5.2. Intervention by the Ministry of Labour of Panama in Residential Homes where Children and Adolescents are in Domestic Labour

Level 1: Innovative practice

Key words: Labour inspection in residential homes, labour rights, working conditions, restoration of rights, legal representation of girls involved in child domestic labour

Description of the Good Practice

All of Western political theory and, consequently, the composition of social and political institutions have been highly influenced by Aristotle, who excluded the household from the scope of justice. In this sense, matters related to private life and the network of relationships in each home have traditionally been excluded from the public arena, i.e., the one in which the Government and society must assume their responsibilities. Thus, serious acts of injustice have been committed, since every act that takes place within the sanctity of the household is excluded from law, although the fundamental rights of individuals in conditions of inequality and subordination may be at risk.

Domestic labour is even more complex since this activity is considered a natural extension of female task roles; therefore, it has not been defined as work. In the specific case of children in domestic labour, a work relationship is not even acknowledged; on the contrary, it is interpreted as an exchange of favours or a mutual “aid” relationship. Consequently, there has been great resistance to defining the household as a work site that may eventually require the inspection by public entities in charge of regulating labour relationships between workers and employers. As a result, there is scant



legislation that expressly regulates inspection in residential homes by governmental employees without a court order. In Costa Rica, for example, entering a residential house without a court order is an “unlawful entry”.

Nonetheless, as a result of IPEC’s training and awareness-raising process regarding child domestic labour, beginning in 2003, the Ministry of Labour of Panama started an intervention process in households, based on an article of the Political Constitution. Even though this constitutional article had been previously enacted, it was not until the training and information process had been completed that representatives of the Ministry of Labour understood this problem to fall within their scope of action. Then, they looked for an adequate form to carry out their inspection tasks in respect of claims of girls and adolescents in domestic labour. In this process, the decision was made to use Article 26 of the Political Constitution. This Article reads:

Article 26.- The residence or home is inviolable. No one may enter it without the owner’s consent, except for a written order of a competent authority and for specific purposes or to come to the aid of victims of crimes or disasters. Public employees of the labour, social security, and health sectors may, once they have identified themselves, carry out visits to households or visits to comply with social or public health laws.

This action demonstrates an institutional acknowledgement of child domestic labour as a problem the Ministry of Labour must confront. Thus, labour inspectors, who are always accompanied by a social worker during their visit, have also been trained to evaluate both working conditions and social conditions of the minor child. In addition, employers are given instructions and guidelines during the visit, which may open up possibilities for follow-up.

When non-compliance with legal working conditions is found, adolescents receive the Ministry’s support to demand their rights and payment of legal benefits. To wit, a representative of the Ministry goes with them and represents them in legal proceedings to reach a payment arrangement and termination of the labour agreement. When children under minimum legal age are found working, they are withdrawn and sent to social welfare institutions. Social workers of the Ministry of Labour are in charge of their follow-up.

Key Steps for the Process

- A prior process of training and heightened awareness on child domestic labour for employees of the Ministry of Labour in charge of dealing with this issue
- Carrying out a national awareness-raising campaign with reliable data and testimonials to prove the problem is not uncommon in the country. The main



social concern, derived from the campaign, also served to generate the demand that the Ministry of Labour deal with the problem

- Creating a support department to attend domestic labour providing accessible options, such as a free hotline where girls, boys and adolescents could file their claims
- Developing dissemination campaigns so that children and adolescents were informed of options and resources provided by state agencies, especially the Ministry of Labour
- Disposition of employees from the Ministry of Labour to include child domestic labour as part of their duties and responsibilities
- Decision to seek alternatives and execute actions to deal with the problem as a labour issue under the responsibility and supervision of the Government

Why was the Process Successful?

This process is successful since it broke away from the myth of household privacy as a territory not affected by legislation and legal supervision. In addition, current legislation is used creatively and applied to child domestic labour.

Moreover, this has been a successful practice since the Ministry of Labour carries out visits to households and gives legal support to girls and adolescents in Domestic Labour to have their rights restored. That is, girls and adolescents are considered citizens with full rights and under the protection of the Government and society as minor children. This has had a positive effect on the girls involved, since they feel legally supported by a public entity, which makes them aware of their rights to complain and rebel in the face of an unjust situation.

Finally, this practice has a sustainable character, since it is implemented by a public entity that has undertaken this problem as a policy and has devised the legal path to implement it.

Necessary Conditions for a Successful Process of Intervention in Private Households in Cases of Child Domestic Labour

- An intensive training and awareness-raising process for employees from the Ministry of Labour and related agencies to understand specific issues related to child domestic labour and to assume this issue as part of their duties and responsibilities.
- A special training process for labour inspectors providing them with a deep knowledge of international and national regulations to protect and guarantee human rights, in order to counteract myths and fears about entering a private household when fundamental rights of individuals are violated therein under conditions of inequality or subordination.



- Creativity to arrive at an appropriate means allowing access to residential houses pursuant to current legislation
- Having key employees in the Ministry of Labour that understand how important it is to make efforts to deal with child domestic labour and to develop actions to face it as one of the worst forms of child and youth labour exploitation
- Availability of material resources to carry out labour inspections in residential households and to accompany working women and be their representative in legal processes related to their rights.

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V. Lessons learned





V. Lessons learned

5.1. Knowledge Building

- a) Studies and research that delve into the link between child domestic labour and other forms of domestic labour are essential to understand critical routes that lead girls, boys and adolescents to suffer from different forms of exploitation and expose them to situations hazardous to their physical and emotional health. This research allows a more integrated approach to the problem. It is also important to delve into an analysis and understanding of labour hazards associated with child domestic labour.
- b) Social research plays a critical role illuminating the context, dynamics, and characteristics of the problem, as well as the experiences and conditions undergone by the girls, boys and adolescents. Nonetheless, this kind of research is not appropriate for detecting children and adolescents in order to start a direct action programme. For this purpose, different methodologies and specialists in these particular tasks are needed. Individuals doing social research who provide quality findings are not necessarily the same individuals who can implement an action programme and vice versa.
- c) To have a sustainable knowledge gathering on the problem, closer work with academia is needed, in order to include this issue in syllabuses and research programmes of universities and in their social outreach programmes. Support of academia in validation and systematisation of direct action programme processes is highly important for core organisations. Participation by individuals from universities has proven very beneficial, providing academic credibility and theoretical strength to the project.
- d) Clear and similar research protocols must be used when doing research on this problem, but these must be sufficiently flexible to allow for dealing with national and culture-specific issues. Nonetheless, it is also important that researchers have a space to exchange and receive feedback for their proposals in order to facilitate comparing results at a later stage.
- e) Participation by the Ministries of Labour in research design, research team selection and analysis of the findings was an important strategy to have the Ministries internalise this issue and make them true national participants in the fight against child domestic labour in the homes of others.
- f) Involving individuals or organisations working with a gender perspective has been very useful for the project. Research with this approach has provided a more comprehensive insight to the problem and has thrown more light on how to achieve a differentiated approach to the topic.



- g) Because of the complex nature and multiple causes of child domestic labour, using research strategies that combine different techniques and data sources has made possible a triangulation of findings and has provided a more holistic view of this problem.
- h) Even though research has produced essential data to draw up effective intervention strategies, it is necessary to delve further in the study of the communities of origin of girls and adolescents in domestic labour. Accurate identification of those issues that “expel” this population from their communities and families is crucial for preventive actions.

5.2. Dissemination and Communication

- a) Training and heightened awareness among journalists have been an effective strategy to disseminate and position child domestic labour in some media information agendas. However, different experiences show the need to redouble efforts with the media, so they incorporate a rights and gender approach in their news.
- b) Though most mass campaigns were aimed at a specific target population, it is important that future actions have messages drafted and disseminated in accordance with the reactions and actions expected from each target group. At least three types of target groups can be identified: a) general population for the dissemination of information that makes the problem visible; b) specific groups with the capacity to reproduce the message and information (journalists, churches, labour unions); c) decision-making groups that can act to deal with the problem (governmental representatives working with child and adolescent programmes, local organisations serving children, legislators, etc.)
- c) In countries, such as Nicaragua, different local and national participants have assumed a position of spokesperson and leadership to deal with the media. This has proved fundamental to have the media adopt this topic and the sustainability of the dissemination and communication strategies. Excessive presence of IPEC staff as an information source in the news and media spaces related to child labour does not contribute to strengthening the capacities of local entities.
- d) Local media have a greater ability to reflect the reality of the community and to delve into the problems that affect their audience. As a result, active participation of local media in the communication strategy played an essential role in reaching the target population and emphasising the issue in the local agenda.
- e) Informational and educational materials on child domestic labour must be designed



in accordance with the characteristics of target populations. For example, research findings have been more effective for indicating the size and characteristics of child domestic labour among teams of technicians and decision makers, while testimonials have been crucial in affecting people's sensitivity and making an emotional impact. In addition, for the working girls and adolescents to benefit from materials especially prepared for them, these materials should not create stigmas or make them feel victims; thus, care must be taken with the language and images used. The messages must encourage positive and hopeful perceptions of the life projects these children and adolescents may build.

- f) Information and awareness-raising campaigns, by themselves, do not generate changes; they must be supported by an adequate institutional response. Since these campaigns create expectations among the population that, if not fulfilled, may cause scepticism, a loss of awareness or apathy.
- g) The link between child domestic labour and education is essential, so a strategy for dissemination and communication must always reinforce education as a right of children and adolescents, as well as a mechanism that allows them to break the poverty cycle and improve their capacity to face life.

5.3. Direct Assistance for Children and Adolescents in Domestic Labour

- a) Intervention programmes must develop actions that respond to the particular issues regarding age, gender, ethnicity, and nationality of the children and adolescents affected. Likewise, it is important to develop strategies to detect and reach those individuals involved in the worst forms of child domestic labour.
- b) Action Programmes must also execute actions, even in the area of criminal denunciation, in the event they encounter flagrant violations of human rights of children and adolescents, such as sexual abuse, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, etc. Additionally, programmes must be prepared to respond, in a sensitive and timely manner to the needs of minor children suffering from these forms of violation and exploitation.
- c) Different experiences analysed in this study seem to show that every context requires an intervention model that accounts for the particular issues of the problem in the country or region. However, there are basic issues that every attention model must include to guarantee the effectiveness and sustainability of findings. Some of these basic elements are:



- Work with families of boy, girl and adolescent domestic labourers is fundamental for a change in this population's conditions of exploitation and vulnerability. Although parent awareness, involvement, and commitment are critical, implementation of effective income-generating strategies is also important. In this sense, actions must either be coordinated with other key participants or the required capacities must be provided to implementing agencies, since there are many gaps in this field.
- Intervention programmes funded for a one-year term or less have not been the most recommended ones, since they tend to set short-term objectives that do not benefit model sustainability. Stress generated between the process and its goal attainment tends to tip the balance in favour of the latter. In general, these projects do not promote institutionalisation of services by the State, because more time is required before obtaining results. In addition, effective implementation time is affected by preparatory activities; therefore, the months implied in programme start-up must be included as part of the proposal.
- These programmes must have systematic and coherent strategies to empower girls, boys and adolescents in domestic labour. Participation must be promoted and secured in all stages of the process, so these individuals assume a leading and decisive role. Personal strengthening that comes from interpersonal work is essential so girls and adolescents can improve their self-perception and their possibilities for changing their environment. Programmes show a variety of techniques to deal with this situation, from personalized psychological attention, training in individual rights, self-help groups, community organisations, play and artistic activities, among others.
- To achieve an effective withdrawal of minor children from domestic labour, work must be done in the communities of origin, since that is where the causes are found. In respect of the Action Plan in Guatemala, the regions or communities of origin for most of these children were revealed through good diagnostic efforts. Thus, joint actions with local participants were implemented in order to improve conditions in communities and prevent children and adolescents leaving their communities.
- Implementing agencies with the best results are those with firm ties to the community where the intervention model is implemented. Organisational capacity to involve social participants and construct protection networks has been essential to guarantee an adequate assistance for working children and adolescents. Therefore, experiences have proven that direct assistance is more efficient through local base organisations.



- Work with teachers is essential for an effective selection of the target population and to ensure that girls and adolescents stay in school. An awareness heightening strategy and teacher training must be accompanied by a local protection system that ensures an effective referral and assistance for minor children detected. If not, frustration and apathy may arise on the part of these key partners.
- As has been indicated, effectiveness of intervention programmes depends to a great extent on their coordination with local partners; consequently, training and awareness-raising actions in those communities are very important. Participation and involvement of these actors make the model more sustainable by allocating responsibilities for finding, attending, protecting, preventing, and following-up girls, boys and adolescents in domestic labour. The inchoate model being implemented by the Asociación Las Tías in León, Nicaragua, was conceived following this strategy; currently, it is being successful in creating a platform of integral services for girls and adolescents in domestic labour.
- Attention programmes also have a better impact if they establish coordination with local and national entities working in political issues. Thus, feedback on their activities would be possible and their actions could be better adjusted within a broader and more holistic scope of intervention (for example, a regional or national plan to eliminate child labour).

5.4. Empowering Girls and Adolescents

- a) Empowering girls, boys and adolescents in domestic labour is not achieved with a few workshops or conferences; it requires a systematic and sustainable process so this population develops a broader view of their possibilities in life. Opportunities for personal strengthening, better education, vocational training, spaces for socialisation and citizen participation must be broad enough to not limit their ability to dream and aspire to a different life.
- b) Networks established by girls, boys and adolescents may become effective empowering methods, since sharing experiences, mutual support, and comradeship help break the cycle of exclusion and isolation this population generally suffers, while it improves their self-perception and the possibility of changing their condition.
- c) A deeper application of the gender approach to deal with the problem is vital to improve the impact of actions focused on this population. This perspective would allow the design and implementation of very diverse strategies to face specific circumstances regarding sex, age, ethnicity, country of origin, etc. In addition,



incorporating an analysis of internal power relations in the families and in domestic labour is essential to enrich assistance models and intervention strategies.

5.5. Social Mobilisation

- a) Creation and consolidation of local protection networks have been essential to guarantee the institutional response required by children and adolescents in domestic labour. In addition, they have played a key role for following-up the withdrawn population and for prevention actions. These local networks must be established by public and private organisations, creating their own capacities to renew themselves and to involve the communities in their mission.
- b) Social mobilisation must include at least three key actors: a) women's organisations, b) childhood organisations, and c) labour unions. All these sectors are somehow related to the different phases of the problem. However, there are other actors in an excellent position to place the issue on the public agenda, influence public opinion and carry out actions in favour of children and adolescents in domestic labour. Some of these key actors are churches, local or community leaders, and educational personnel.
- c) While direct attention programmes have contributed to improve the conditions of children and adolescents in domestic labour, their impact on the global problem has been very limited because their actions are reduced to a limited geographic area. Thus, it is important to promote alliances with social organisations with the ability to make a political impact that influences national or regional policies, programmes and institutional frames of reference.

5.6. Institution Building

- a) The tripartite relationship IPEC-Ministries of Labour-Civil Society to develop many of the Project's actions has been very beneficial in creating synergies, sharing knowledge, and promoting development of shared visions and policies agreed by consensus.
- b) It is important to reinforce efforts with regional labour inspections. Because of their close work with communities and the knowledge gathered, these inspections have the highest potential to detect child domestic labourers in the employer's households.



- c) Periodic turnover of government employees interrupts and hinders processes aimed at generating institutional capacities to face the problem; therefore, creative strategies need to be created to deal with this problem. In some countries, several plans have been implemented, among them, strengthening of local multi-sectorial technical agencies and incorporating the problem in local or national development plans focused on several areas: poverty, childhood and educational improvement; strengthening civil society to act as interlocutor with the government on this topic; strengthening the mechanisms to enforce current legislation, are all complementary strategies that can be implemented to ensure a certain degree of continuity in the institutional strengthening efforts.
- d) Inclusion of child domestic labour into a National Plan against Child Labour or in a Time Bound Programme, as were the cases in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic, respectively, allowed the generation of synergies among different initiatives focused on fighting child domestic labour and making possible the incorporation of this particular issue in the agenda of different organisations; even in national policies (Employment Policy in Nicaragua).
- e) Promoting legal frameworks that encompass the needs of children and adolescents in domestic labour is essential to guarantee withdrawal and improvement of the conditions of this population. These legal frameworks must, at least, envisage inspections of homes with minor children in domestic labour, define child domestic labour as a hazardous activity, and modify their status as a special-regime labour condition.
- f) Amendments to legal frameworks are not relevant if methods to administer justice are not improved. Such methods must guarantee an effective approach to the situation of children and adolescents in domestic labour.
- g) Legal amendments cannot and must not be made directly in the office of the experts; to the contrary, these amendments must be derived from extensive social consultation processes, which include all key participants, even girls in domestic labour can express their opinions, construct dialogues and reach a consensus.
- h) To provide children in domestic labour direct assistance from base entities requires that those agencies be strengthened. This process must encompass technical assistance and training in programme management, including design and planning, monitoring, systematisation of the experience and information systems, among others.

Finally, it must be clear that as long as governments do not modify their social policy to encompass a redistributive vision to ensure families opportunities for development and decent jobs, access to good health services, education, and social protection



services, child domestic labour will continue to be encouraged. In addition, gender equality and equity must be promoted, allowing a redefinition of the sexual division of labour, making domestic labour visible and valued, which would eliminate gender stereotypes and redistribute burdens and social benefits between the sexes.





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Appendices





Appendix 1. Terms of reference

“Preparation of the document on good practices and lessons learned regarding child and adolescent domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”

1. Background of the consultancy

Throughout the world, millions of children carry out domestic labours in the homes of others. This work is considered one of the most common types of exploitation, but at the same time, one of the least detected and assisted problems. The exact number of children and adolescents involved in this labour is unknown, since it is a widely spread “hidden” activity, especially among girls. These girls constitute one of the populations for whom it is most difficult to enforce their rights since they work in private homes and their jobs, generally, are not considered work but an extension of their household chores. Therefore, they are called house girls, kitchen help, servants, and maids; euphemisms used to avoid acknowledging their labour and that justify their exploitative conditions. As a result, children involved in this kind of labour are frequently considered “invisible”, since they are scattered, hidden, ignored, and doing tasks that are not considered work.

For this reason, the International Labour Organisation’s International Program on the Elimination of Child Domestic Labour, under the auspices of the Government of Canada and within the Sub-Regional Project on the “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”, promoted studies of this issue on each country in the region, to ascertain the characteristics and extent of the child domestic labour problem, and propose recommendations to deal with it with the support of government institutions and organisations within civil society.

From this perspective, activities to heighten awareness and disseminate information have been carried out within the technical cooperation program on child domestic labour. The aim is to make visible the presence of at least 176,000 girls, boys and adolescents in child domestic labour. In many cases, these children are victims of the sexual abuse, gender violence characteristic of this activity, as well as the exploitative conditions, abuse, mistreatment, discrimination, non-payment, long working hours, limited educational opportunities, family isolation, and exposure to hazardous products and tools. Around 90% of these child labourers are girls who started to work between the ages of 8 and 12 years, while supporting workloads equal to or greater than those of an adult.

Child domestic labour is, as yet, not considered a relevant problem in the social agenda. Moreover, different sectors among the organisations and entities of civil society, employers, families of origin, and child and adolescent domestic labourers themselves have a favourable perception of this activity. Therefore, it is necessary to set guidelines for the fight against child labour in the region, especially in its worst forms, by going beyond prejudices and ideas that encourage discrimination and exploitation of thousands of girls and adolescents.

2. Scope of the consultancy:

This consultancy falls within the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic” implemented under the ILO/IPEC

International Program on the Elimination of Child Domestic Labour.

3. Development objective:

Contribute to the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

4. Specific objective:

Prepare a document on good practices and lessons learned in respect of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic with a gender equity approach.

5. Target public:

The document prepared will be available for society in general, but especially for those organisations involved with child domestic labour and working girls.

6. Didactic material approach:

The document on good practices and lessons learned must maintain a human rights and child and adolescent rights approach. It must adopt a framework of respect for the image and identity of the child and adolescent domestic labourers and it must consider a gender equity approach.

Furthermore, identification of good practices and lessons learned must follow the methodology and criteria defined by ILO, and it must take into account cultural differences found in the Central American and Dominican Republic Sub-Region.

7- Methodology and criteria for the definition of good practices:

ILO promotes gender equality through an integrative strategy aimed at ensuring that gender equality is included in ILO-IPEC policies, programmes, objectives and budgets.

Consultants must take into account gender integration¹ in project activities carried out during the identification of good practices, this is understood as:

- ◆ Integration of a gender perspective is a process of appraisal of the consequences for men and women, or girls and boys, of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels.
- ◆ It is a strategy to incorporate concerns and experiences of women (and girls) and men (and boys) as an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes at all political, economic, and social levels, so that men and women (or boys and girls) receive equal benefits, while it prevents the perpetuation of inequality.
- ◆ Achieving gender equality is the ultimate purpose of integration.

For ILO-IPEC, a good practice is a procedure that²:

- Works well in terms of actions to combat child labour, and
- Implements, fully or in part, the gender integration strategy set by ILO.

¹ Gender integration was defined by ECOSOC (Concurred Conclusion E/1997/L30 pag. 2), and adopted by member States of the United Nations in 1997.

² Taken from OIT-IPEC (2002) . Las Buenas Prácticas: Integrando el género en las acciones contra el trabajo infantil, Geneva, Switzerland, adapted definition.



To define good practices, the application of the following criteria is recommended:

- **Innovation/creativity:** What makes a practice so special that it becomes potentially attractive to other individuals?
- **Effectiveness/impact:** What evidence is there that the practice has effectively made some changes in terms of the fight against child labour?
- **Possibility for replication:** Could this practice be pertinent under different conditions or scenarios?
- **Sustainability:** Could this practice and/or its benefits be maintained and still be effective over the mid- and long-terms?
- **Suitability:** How does this practice make a direct or indirect contribution to prevent and eliminate child labour?
- **Sensitivity and ethical initiative:** Is the practice consistent with the needs identified by girls and boys? Does it include a consensus-building approach? Does it respect the interests and desires of the participants and others? Is it consistent with the principles of good social and professional behaviour? Does it conform to labour conventions and rules set forth by ILO? Were boys and girls given a voice to have a more ample participation and guarantee that their interests and views were taken into account?
- **Efficiency and implementation:** Were necessary human, financial, and material resources used to maximize the impact?

The criteria above are not always applicable; the consulting team must visit each country participating in the Sub-Regional child domestic labour project. During these visits, the team must revise all Project documentation and that of the action programmes implemented. Likewise, experiences and actions regarding child domestic labour being implemented in those countries, but not supported by ILO-IPEC must also be analysed.

In addition to the criteria listed, good practices must be divided into three levels:

Level 1: Innovative practices. These practices may not be corroborated by a formal evaluation, but if they have already been tested, an empirical case can be drafted according to the 7 criteria listed above. Those criteria are related to their effectiveness towards gender integration and the fight against child labour.

Level 2: Successfully tested practice. These practices have been successfully tested in a specific situation, site or event. Even though this practice is specific, it has some elements or characteristics of gender integration that may be transferred to other situations.

Level 3: Replicated good practices. Practices at this level of the fight against child labour follow ILO strategies for gender integration and have proven to work under different circumstances and sites; for example, different communities and groups.

7.1 Five elements that must be considered from a gender perspective:

Clearly, gender must be integrated in ILO/IPEC activities, because of results achieved when issues related to child labour and gender have been joined and explored.

Some actions are required on different fronts; ILO/IPEC explains 5 of these as follows:³

Actions required in the five scenarios for gender integration, according to ILO/IPEC guidelines:

- Analyse situations to identify differences
- Integrate specific gender actions where differences between men and women or boys and girls are found, in order to correct these differences. This means that the projects are directly focused on each gender.
- Undertake a process of institutional change within ILO/IPEC or its agencies, to include all gender issues in procedures and programme themes.
- Give girls and women (and other deprived groups) the opportunity to increase their participation by guaranteeing that their perspectives are taken into accounts.
- Carry out gender audits and budgets.

8. Functions of the consultancy:

- a) Prepare a proposal and a methodological design
- b) Review documentation
- c) Interview ILO/IPEC consultants in the participating countries
- d) Interview counterparts
- e) Carry out field trips in each country
- f) Identify good practices
- g) Identify lessons learned
- h) Prepare the final report

9. Products:

- a. A methodological proposal to identify good practices and lessons learned
- b. Draft a report on good practices and lessons learned on child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic

10. Monitoring and evaluation:

Consultants shall hold periodic work sessions with the Sub-Regional Coordination of the "Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic."

Contents of the consultancy, advances, and final products will be reviewed and approved by Rigoberto Astorga, Project Manager and by Anita Amorín HQ, in Geneva, Switzerland.

11. Credits

Any and all materials derived from this contract shall be the property of ILO/IPEC. Individuals who have taken part in the production of the materials shall be duly acknowledged.

³ N. Haspels; M. Romeijn; S. Schroth: Promoting gender equality in actions against child labour: A practical guide (Bangkok, IPEC/ ILO, 2000 and 2003 updated version).



Appendix 2. Proposal

Preparation of the Document on Good Practices and Lessons Learned on Child and Adolescent Domestic Labour in Central America and The Dominican Republic: A Gender Perspective

Montserrat Sagot / Rosa Cheng Lo • August 2004

1. Introduction and Analytical Perspective

This document constitutes part of the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic” being carried out by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, ILO/ IPEC. Throughout the world, millions of children and adolescents work in domestic labour in the homes of others. This type of work increasingly begins to be understood as one of the best examples of forced labour; in many cases, it is performed under conditions of servitude, within the privacy of the home and completely dependent on the employer. This activity has been kept invisible, and has not even been considered work, despite the fact that it is very common, especially among children. Although young female domestic workers belong to the most exploited social groups and due of the characteristics of the work performed, these girls constitute one of the populations for whom it is most difficult to guarantee and enforce their rights.

Therefore, the Sub-Regional Project on “Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Domestic Labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic”, under the auspices of the Government of Canada, has promoted a series of actions to heighten awareness and disseminate information on child domestic labour, in order to incorporate it into the region’s social agenda.

This consultancy is aimed at gathering several good practices and lessons learned during the development of the project, related to the achievement of its objective of contributing to the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

The analytical approach stems from three perspectives: human rights, gender and criteria to identify ILO-IPEC good practices.

The human rights perspective demands a drastic change in the traditional view of childhood and adolescence based on the doctrine of an irregular situation, which considers this human group as individuals who must be protected as a result of their social vulnerability. This approach requires the recognition that all children and adolescents, regardless their gender, culture, nationality or any other condition, are entitled to a whole range of rights inherent to human beings, as well as those considered special or specific. In this sense, the aim is to overcome the idea that minor children are non-citizens, legally incapable, and therefore, passive receivers of this protection, in order to consider them as subjects of these rights and duties, in accordance with their own development conditions. This approach also proposes that the State and society in general must guarantee the necessary spaces, opportunities, and conditions so that children and adolescents can develop all their capacities. Recognition and defence of the full range of rights that children have from the State, social institutions, families, and civil society, among others, is what guarantees universal and particular attention of this human group and provides opportunities for their human development. Parallel to the focus on human rights, a gender-sensitive

analysis is necessary, in order to identify and confront particular obstacles children and adolescents face because of their sex. Thus, this consultancy will also apply a gender perspective. This is an analytical concept that refers to socially built meanings, relationships, and identities as a result of biological differences between sexes. Since gender converts differences into inequalities, this concept is very useful to understand the differentiated social status of men and women and its impact on the organisation of social institutions. To wit, the gender perspective gives us an ideal approach to analyse historical, cultural and situational differences in the meaning of what feminine and masculine are, in the relationships between men and women and in the building of unequal power relationships. This forces us to consider any social situation or intervention programme from a perspective that allows understanding its differential effects in men and women.

An effective gender analysis includes:

- Gathering of information disaggregated by sex
- Identification of gender differences in work and in life
- Understanding the needs of girls and boys, as well as the restrictions, and opportunities each has in a given social context
- Economic and non-economic activities carried out by girls and boys
- Extent of their participation in domestic labour either paid or un-paid
- Respective needs, options, strategies, opportunities and limitations corresponding to each gender
- Revision of the capacities of existing institutions and their mechanisms to reach children in an equitable manner.¹

Finally, guidelines to identify, review, structure and disseminate ILO-IPEC good practices will be used in this consultancy. A good practice can be defined as “any experience that, fully or in part, works to combat child labour and that may have implications for this practice in any other context or situation.”² A key issue is that a good practice is something that has undergone experimentation and it has been proven that it works. The key principle of a good practice is its usefulness in promoting new ideas or in acting as a guideline to be more efficient in any issue related to prevention or elimination of child labour.

Good practices may be classified into three different levels, depending on verification efforts made and on the number of different situations in which these have been experimented. Levels defined by ILO-IPEC are as follows:

- Level 1:** Innovative practices
- Level 2:** Successfully proven practices
- Level 3:** Replicated good practices

In addition, there are seven key criteria to determine whether a practice is “good”:

- Innovation or creativity
- Efficacy/Impact
- Duplicability
- Sustainability

¹ Adapted from: Integrando el género en las acciones contra el trabajo infantil: las buenas prácticas. OIT-IPEC, Geneva, 2002.

² Guías de DED: “Buenas Prácticas”. OIT-IPEC, Geneva, 2001.



- Suitability
- Ethics and responsibility
- Efficiency and implementation

2. Objective of the consultancy

Prepare a document on good practices and lessons learned in respect of child domestic labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic with a gender equity approach.

3. Possible areas to identify good practices and lessons learned

According to experience garnered by the project, the following action and intervention areas resulted in good practices and lessons learned:

- Construction of knowledge
- Dissemination
- Direct intervention
- Empowering girls and adolescents
- Withdrawal of girls and boys
- Communication
- Social mobilisation
- Institution building

Given the foregoing identification, special emphasis will be given to those areas during fieldwork. However, the consulting team will leave open the possibility that good practices or lessons learned may be derived from other areas within the analysis of documentation or fieldwork. It must be noted that all ILO criteria may not always be applicable. Likewise, the consulting team will take into consideration cultural and ethnic differences in Central America and the Dominican Republic. This might result in relevant differences at the moment of identifying and defining a good practice.

4. Target public

The final document shall be available for the general public, especially for those people working in domestic labour issues related to children and adolescents.

5. Methodological strategy



The foregoing diagram represents the methodological strategy used, which includes:

1) Sources:

- Documents:** Project documents, action plans, advance reports, research reports, training and dissemination materials, training seminar reports, national statistics, newspaper reports on this issue, assessments made, relevant national documents and ILO/IPEC annotated bibliography on gender and child labour
- Social players:** programme staff, consultants, researchers, government representatives, NGO staff, community groups, local leaders, labour union members, journalists, parents (if possible), boys, girls and adolescents (if possible)

2) Techniques:

- Documentary analysis
- Field observation
- Semi-structured interviews (interview guides customized according to the informant will be prepared)
- Group interviews (when possible, group interviews will be organized in order to promote collective building of perspectives and opinions)

6. Timetable

Activities	I Ago	II Ago	III Ago	IV Ago	V Ago	I Set	II Set	III Set	IV Set	I Oct	II Oct	III Oct	IV Oct	I Nov	II Nov
a) Documentary review and design of tools	1 al 15														
b) Fieldwork Honduras and Panama (Montserrat Sagot)			15 al 21												
c) Fieldwork Guatemala and Nicaragua (Rosa Cheng)				22 al 28											
d) Work in Dominican Republic (Rosa Cheng)					5 al 9										
e) Fieldwork San José (Rosa Cheng and Montserrat Sagot)					30 al 3	13 al 17									
f) Preparation of the final report draft									20 set. al 22 oct.						
g) Presentation of findings											21 o 22				
h) Review of the final report draft												25 al 29			
i) Incorporation of modifications													1 al 5		
j) Delivery of final report															8



Appendix 3. List of individuals consulted



COSTA RICA

♦ Defensa de los Niños Internacional

Virginia Murillo, Executive Director
Nancy Torres

♦ ILO/IPEC

1. Rigoberto Astorga, Project Manager
2. Virginia Elizondo, Consultant Costa Rica

♦ Other players

3. Dehuel Pérez, Visión Mundial
4. Milena Grillo, Fundación Paniamor
5. Djenane Villanueva, Journalist
6. Lorena Chávez, Ministry of Labour



GUATEMALA

♦ Asociación Proyecto Conrado de la Cruz

7. Julián Oyales, Project Manager, Conrado de la Cruz
8. Miriam Noemí Yocuté (19 years), facilitator of Santa María Cauqué (6 months)
9. María Erminia Jolón Shiro (20 years), facilitator of Santiago Sacatepequez (9 months)
10. Sandra Virginia Sactic (16 years), Animator of Santiago Sacatepequez
11. Lorenza Yús Zil (17 years), teacher of Santa Isabel II level (teacher)
12. Aura Cristina Puac Jolón (16 years), facilitator of Parque Central (10 months)
13. Manuel de Jesús Sebegugue Choin (33 years), facilitator of Parque Central (12 months)

♦ Girls participating in the program

14. Parque Central Base: 3 girls (17, 11 and 9 years)
15. Santa María Cauqué Base: 30 girls (aged 7 -15 years)
16. Santiago de Sacatepequez Base: 30 girls (aged 9 to 15 years)

♦ OIT/IPEC

17. Berta Lidia Barco, Former national CDL consultant
18. Miriam de Celada, National Coordinator

♦ Other key players

19. Alejandro Argueta, Advisor to the Labour Cod Amendment
20. Angélica María Pérez Pérez, Ix'Qanil Palaq'Ja, Palín, Escuintla
21. Claudia Navas, LA NANA
22. Hortensia del CID, Head of Women's Promotion, Ministry of Labour
23. Margarita Olga López Coronado, Nan Ixin y Pachjal, Comitancillo, San Marcos
24. María Delfina Coj Guzmán, Ix'Qanil Palaq'Ja, Palín, Escuintla
25. Milsa Araceli Pérez Concagua, Ix'Qanil Palaq'Ja, Palín, Escuintla
26. Sandra Barrera, Former coordinator of Social Prevision, Ministry of Labour
27. Sergio Flores, Asociación Guatemalteca Pro-Naciones Unidas



HONDURAS

♦ Asociación Reyes Irene Valenzuela

28. Gerardo Rodríguez

♦ Girls participating in the program

29. Miriam Yolanda Cruz (15 years)

♦ ILO/IPEC

30. Rosa Corea, National Consultant
31. Paulino Isidoro Ramírez, Coordinator, IPEC Office

♦ Other players

32. Karla Cueva, Consultant, Legal framework study
33. Lourdes Almendárez, Deputy director of Social Prevision, Ministry of Labour
34. Griselda Zelaya, Coordinator, Elimination of Child Labour Program, Ministry of Labour
35. Jessica Sánchez, Consultora, San Pedro Sula
36. Javier Zelaya, Technical Assistant Boards of the National Commission on the Elimination of Child Labour
37. Telma Mejía, Consultant on communications



NICARAGUA

♦ Asociación Las Tías, León

38. Ampara Benavides, Manager
39. Cándida Alicia Méndez Tenorio, President of Asociación Las Tías and social worker, Coordinator of the Loan Fund
40. Corina Alvarez, Director of Asociación Las Tías
41. Ernesto Martínez, Teacher
42. Karla González, Coordinator of CDL program

♦ Instituto de Promoción de Humana, Attention program - Managua

43. Giselle Falcón. Facilitator of precesses, District 4
44. Marvin Gutiérrez Navarrete. Facilitator of psychological processes, District 3
45. Reina Elizabeth Loaiciga. Facilitator of District 4, Oriental
46. Rosa Argentina Campos. Program coordinator, District 5 and CDL facilitator

♦ Mothers of working children and adolescents, León

47. Angela Paula Rivera
48. Anita Rubí
49. Glenda Vanegas
50. Ileana Estrada Quezada
51. Lillia García
52. Lucía Pérez Castellón
53. María del Socorro Ocón
54. María Azucena Duarte

♦ Mothers of working children and adolescents, Managua

55. Angela Cabrera
56. Aura María Palacios
57. Rosa Nájeres
58. Leonida del Carmen Hernández
59. Sonia Isabel Larios



◆ **Childrens and adolescents, León**

60. Geoavana Aracelly Ramírez (15 years)
61. Mariela del Carmen Meza Roque (16 years)
62. Tereza Auxiliadora González González (15 years)
63. Johanna Vanesa Muñoz Zamora (14 years)
64. Marcelo Alexander Vanegas (10 years)
65. Eliécer Salomé Meza Roque (13 years)
66. Karen del Socorro Ramírez (14 years)
67. Balvina del Carmen Ramírez (13 years)
68. María Mercedes Pérez Centeno (14 years)
69. Mildred Maldonado Romero (15 years)
70. Mario René Espinoza (16 years)

◆ **Childrens and adolescents, Managua**

71. Luis Francisco Guevara Cabrera (18 years)
72. María del Carmen Guevara Cabrera (17 years)
73. Marjorie Lilieth Guevara Cabrera (15 years)
74. Elieth de los Angeles González Duarte (18 years)
75. Jérica Yádica Aragón (16 years)
76. Maryoris Flores (13 years)
77. Aura Lilliam Ruiz Hernández (16 years)
78. Rosibel Lizano Urbina (16 years)
79. Marjorie Mendieta Palacios (17 years)
80. Neydi Carolina Barrientos (12 years)
81. Flor de María Zamora Lizano (17 years)
82. Cristina Rivas Nájeres (14 years)

◆ **ILO/IPEC**

83. Berta Rosa Guerra, National Coordinator
84. Sonia Sevilla, National Consultant

◆ **Other players**

85. Carlos Adán Cheves Pérez, Executive Director, Comisión Coordinadora de Atención a la Niñez (CCAN), León
86. Carlos Emilio López, Childhood and Adolescence Ombudsman, Managua
87. Irene Caballero, Director of Mántica Berio territory, León, MINSA
88. Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez, President and CISAS Executive Director, León (Centro Integral de Atención en Salud)



PANAMA

◆ **CEPAS**

89. Mavis González, Official responsible for communications
90. Mayra Pérez, CEPAS

◆ **Working girls**

91. Carolina González (15 years)
92. Karla Barría (15 years)
93. Zoraida Carpintero (17 years)

◆ **ILO/IPEC**

94. Dayra Dawson, National Consultant

◆ **Other players**

95. Abigail b. De Pérez, Local transportation
96. Adelina de Ríos, Mesa

97. Arminta Figueroa, Ministry of Education, Veraguas

98. Berta Vargas, Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Mujer y la Infancia (IDEMI)

99. Denis de Amor, Ministry of Labour

100. Digna Cruz, Ministry of Youth, Childhood, Women and Family

101. Domitila Castillo, Cañazas Hospital, Veraguas

102. Irma de Matthiew, First Lady liaison.

103. Marta Correa, Office of the First Lady

104. Milka S. De Abrego, Cañazas Hospital, Veraguas

105. Pablo Castillo, SINAPROC

106. Rosa de Atencio, Ministry of Education, Veraguas

107. Ruth de Jaramillo, Ministry of Youth, Childhood, Women and Family

108. Vielka Vernaza, Ministry of Health, Veraguas

109. Yadira Samaniego, Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadoras de Servicios Múltiples



REPÚBLICA DOMINICANA

◆ **Acción Callejera:**

110. Raydiris Cruz, Executive Director, Acción Callejera, Santiago

◆ **ILO/IPEC:**

111. Ana Patricia Quezada, Technical assistant to the program
112. Dabeida Agramonte, National Consultant
113. Laetitia Dumas, ATP of the Time Bound Programme
114. Octavio Rivera, Official responsible for communications

◆ **Civil society organisations:**

115. Adalberto Grullón. Journalist and audiovisual producer.
116. Carmen Julia Gómez, Official in charge of research at Centro de Investigación para la Acción Femenina (CIPAF)
117. Darío García, Executive Coordinator, Instituto Dominicano de Apoyo a la Juventud (INDAJOVEN)
118. David Figueroa, Centro de Planificación y Acción Ecuémica (CEPAE)
119. Héctor Hurtado. Secretary of Juvenile Affairs, Confederación de Trabajadores Dominicanos. Consejo Nacional de Unidad Sindical (CNUS)
120. Hellen Azoury, Advisor of the Committee to Fight against Child Labour, Ministry of Labour
121. Isabel Tejada, CL Coordinator and Secretary, Central General de Trabajadores. Consejo Nacional de Unidad Sindical (CNUS)
122. José de los Santos. Secretary of Integration, Confederación de Trabajadores Unitaria. Consejo Nacional de Unidad Sindical (CNUS)
123. Mayra Minaya, Executive Director, Fundación Casa de la Mujer de Villa Altagracia.
124. Petroushka Muñoz, Deputy Councilwoman (Vicesíndica), Alcaldía de Santiago
125. Sor Aida, Responsible for the Hogar Teresa Valcé





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