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The Dynamics
of Child Labour
in Tanzania

International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour

The Dynamics of Child Labour in the United Republic of Tanzania[†]

Yaw Ofosu
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ILO Geneva

1 Introduction

Despite recent efforts to estimate the extent of child labour in the United Republic of Tanzania, our knowledge remains fairly limited, especially with regard to the worst forms. Preliminary data from the first round of the 2000-2001 Child Labour Survey (CLS) suggest that 4.1 million out of an estimated 10.2 million children aged 5-14 years are not attending school, and that nearly 4 million of these were engaged in either economic activities or housekeeping. Only 40 per cent of children aged 5-9 years were attending school. For the age groups 10-14 and 15-17, the corresponding figures were 78 per cent and 59 per cent, respectively.¹ Overall, only 58 per cent of the estimated 12.4 million children aged 5-17 were at school, whilst 39 per cent were engaged in economic activity or in housekeeping without attending school. Moreover, 53 per cent of the 7.3 million school children aged 5-17 years also report being involved in economic activities, whilst 48 per cent of working children were enrolled at school. Like the CLS data, most of the Rapid Assessment studies report significant proportions of child workers as also attending school.² This situation has obvious impact on the academic performance of these children.

These figures are generally consistent with data from other sources cited in an IPEC-mandated study³ which provides estimates of trends in school enrolment. Whereas 98 per cent of school-age children were enrolled at school in 1977, by 1999 only 77 per cent were. In fact, the CLS data show that the vast majority of children not at school are engaged in some kind of work. Even if the exact numbers involved cannot be stated with certainty at this stage, these figures indicate a continuing deterioration of the child labour situation.

[†] This paper was originally prepared for presentation at the National Round Table, Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, 23-25 May 2001. The author wishes to thank Gek-Boo Ng and Guy Thijs for invaluable comments and suggestions on the original draft, and Margaret Mottaz for editorial assistance. The paper draws substantially on several papers prepared within the framework of the IPEC Time-Bound Programme, notably the methodological guide *Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour* (Geneva, ILO, April 2001), which has now been superseded by Guide Book II of the TBP MAP kit (*Time-Bound Programmes for Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour - An Introduction*, Geneva, ILO, 2003), as well as several country-level studies cited in the footnotes. Guide Book II is available from the TBP MAP website: www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/themes/timebound/index.htm.

¹ Among 5-9 year-olds, 56 per cent were not attending school, but were rather engaged in economic activities or in house keeping. For children aged 10-14 years, 21 per cent were in this category, while the corresponding figure for the 15-17 years age group was 39 per cent. The remaining children fall essentially under a category labelled "Idle".

² For example, 23 per cent in the Informal Sector study (C. Kadonya, M. Madihi and S. Mtwana, "Tanzania Child Labour in the Informal Sector: A Rapid Assessment" (Geneva, ILO, January 2002), p. 28, available from the SIMPOC website at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/tanzania/ra/infosec.pdf>. Note, however, that this lower figure may reflect the relatively low school enrolment rates found among children aged 14-17 years who, according to the study, constituted a large proportion of informal sector child workers.

³ J. Stephens, H. Amma, C. Minja-Trupin, M. Trupin, and M. Pejuan (Local Perspective Ltd.), "Institutional and Policy Study". Unpublished report to ILO/IPEC, January 2001.

The Rapid Assessment studies suggest the existence of significant amounts of the worst forms of child labour (WFCL). With the overall number of child labourers increasing, it is likely that the incidence of the worst forms has also been increasing. Child labour is known to be prevalent in smallholder and commercial agriculture, small-scale mining and quarrying, fishing, construction, informal economy activities and domestic work. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is also a serious concern. A number of hazards are associated with child labour in these different sectors. They include excessively long hours of work, bearing of heavy loads, exposure to dust and toxic chemicals, handling of tools designed for adults, often without adequate training or protective gear, and undue exposure to physical and sexual abuse. Further support regarding the existence of these hazards is provided by the results of the Rapid Assessment studies.

A complete picture of the regional patterns of child labour cannot be drawn on the basis of the available data. One can only look at the types of activities associated with different areas of the country; the Rapid Assessments having been conducted in purposively chosen localities, additional information is needed on the situation existing in the non-study areas. Moreover, the investigation of the WFCL was not systematic. However, it is probably valid to assume that child labour is a general problem across the country, and that only the incidence of particular forms varies, according to the predominance of specific kinds of economic activity. Furthermore, poverty patterns are likely to be also reflective of regional activity patterns. Some kinds of activities will tend to lend themselves to particular forms of child labour.

2 Poverty and child labour

It is almost conventional wisdom that poverty is at the core of the child labour problem. Not only is this the position taken traditionally in the international literature on the subject,⁴ but also the view expressed by the researchers and large proportions of respondents involved in the Rapid Assessment and institutional/policy review studies undertaken for this programme. Of course, there are other contributing factors, which help to explain why not all children from poor households engage in child labour, and why some poor societies manage to keep the incidence of child labour low.⁵ Nevertheless, the poor are more vulnerable to the kind of exploitation that is found in child labour, in part because poor households need the income earned by their children. In the Rapid Assessment study on the informal economy, for instance, more than two-thirds of the child labourers were found to be contributing to household budgets. Globally, it is thought that children commonly contribute about 20-25 per cent of family income.⁶ In general, child labour is more prevalent in poor households than in the better-off ones, and this relationship is reflected at the aggregate level: the incidence of child labour tends to be higher in poor countries than in rich ones.

The Tanzania Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)⁷ describes poverty in the country as “pervasive and deep”. Citing the 1991/92 Household Budget Survey (HBS), the document notes that 27 per cent of the population were in households where total expenditure was

⁴ See, for instance, R. Anker and H. Melkas, *Economic incentives for children and families to eliminate or reduce child labour*, (Geneva, ILO, 1996); *Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable*. International Labour Conference, 86th Session, 1998, Report VI(1). (Geneva, ILO, 1996).

⁵ An often-cited example is the Indian state of Kerala, noted for its persistent pursuit of social development goals.

⁶ Anker and Melkas, *op. cit.*

⁷ *The United Republic of Tanzania: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (October 2000), p. 6. The October 2000 version is available at <http://www.imf.org/external/NP/prsp/2000/tza/02/100100.pdf>.

insufficient to cover minimum nutritional requirements, while 48 per cent could not meet their food and non-food basic requirements. More recent estimates relating to the year 2000 suggest an increase in poverty levels, with more than 50 per cent of households classified as poor in mainland Tanzania.⁸

Poverty is widespread in rural areas. According to the HBS, the incidence of basic needs poverty in rural areas was 57 per cent in 1991/92, whilst that of food poverty was about 32 per cent. Again, available information for the year 2000 indicates that the situation may have deteriorated. Within rural areas, farmers are poorer than non-farmers.⁹ Moreover, farmers in subsistence agriculture are poorer than those who grow cash crops.

Among the factors contributing to the persistence of widespread rural poverty are limited human capital, inadequate investment in physical infrastructure and undeveloped financial services (including lack of access to credit), all of which contributes to low levels of rural productivity. In recent years, this situation has been compounded by deteriorating rural terms of trade, making increases in rural incomes lag behind that of the cost of agricultural inputs. In addition, many farm products lack reliable markets.

In the urban areas, the situation is nearly as precarious, especially outside of Dar es Salaam. The HBS reported the incidence of poverty as 5.6 per cent for the capital, but as high as 41 per cent for the other urban areas. As might be expected, the urban poor tend to be concentrated in the informal economy. Indeed, in both urban and rural areas, the poor tend to be concentrated in the least modern sectors of the economy.

Available data indicate that the incidence of poverty is higher among households with high dependency ratios. According to the HBS, the incidence of poverty among households with dependency ratios of under 0.25 was 32.1 per cent,¹⁰ compared to 55.8 per cent for households where the dependency ratio was between 0.75 and 1. This survey indicated that 44 per cent of the population was below age 15, while 4 per cent was aged 60 or more; hence the overall national dependency ratio was 0.92. Other data sources confirm the relationship between family size and poverty.

Understanding the links between fertility, poverty and child labour is important for the eradication of poverty in the long run. Other things being equal, not only do large families tend to be poorer, but younger children from large families are both more likely to work and less likely to attend school. When working rather than attending school, these children also tend to start childbearing at a young age. Subsequently, they are likely to send their own children out to work in turn, in order to supplement the low household income. In effect, they are caught in a vicious cycle.

As expected, the poor are more likely to be illiterate. According to the HBS, only 54.3 per cent of the rural poor were literate in 1991/92, compared to 61 per cent for the rural population as a whole. The inverse of this statement is equally true, that the illiterate are more likely to be poor. Hence, of greater concern, perhaps, was the finding that illiteracy among the poor increased between 1983 and 1991. Given the continuing decline in school

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 6, citing data from the 1993/94 Human Resource Development Survey (HRDS).

¹⁰ These are age dependency ratios, i.e., the ratio of persons aged 15-59 to those aged 0-14 or 60 and over. A dependency ratio of 0.25 means four persons in the economically active ages of 15-59 for each child or elderly person. In developing countries, the poor tend to have larger families and, hence, higher dependency ratios.

enrolment ratios (and probably school attendance), it is most likely that this negative trend has continued over the last decade. Declining levels of school attendance (and school quality) imply the continuing predominance of unskilled low-wage jobs in the economy, which is both a reflection of wide-scale poverty and, at the same time, a factor in the slow progress made in reducing poverty.

As noted by the Tanzania PRSP, the data from the HBS suggest that female-headed households may not be poorer than households headed by unmarried males. However, the situation of these two categories relative to households constituted by married couples is not known, although in general this latter category tends to be better off than the other two. Nevertheless, much of the available data indicate that women are poorer than men, at least on account of owning fewer assets (including land and livestock), being less educated, and having fewer opportunities for wage employment. Women also tend to be at a disadvantage regarding access to financial services, including credit. In the Zonal Workshops organized to discuss issues covered by the PRSP, many speakers cited gender inequality in the distribution and ownership of resources and in opportunities in education and employment as an important obstacle to poverty reduction.¹¹ On the whole, female-headed households are likely to be more vulnerable to child labour than households where children live with both parents.

Indeed, family break-up from divorce or from the death of one or both spouses appears to be an important factor associated with poverty. In the Rapid Assessment study on the informal economy, nearly a fifth (19 per cent) of the enumerated child labourers were living alone, while large proportions in the other studies were from female-headed households. As noted earlier, earnings from child labour often appear to be crucial for household survival.

Family break-up is just one of several events to which the poor tend to be more vulnerable than the non-poor. Others include protracted or severe illness, the vagaries of the weather (floods, drought), and war (e.g., refugees). All these events destabilize the household economy, as do negative changes in the macroeconomic environment, including rapid inflation, which often has the effect of a regressive tax with high incidence on the poor. Vulnerability arises mainly from the fact that poor families often lack savings or the ability to borrow. Child labour is often a means for the poor to cope with unexpected drops in income.

It is essential to note that poverty is characterized not only in terms of access to private goods and services, but also access to common goods and services. For example, households in villages where state-provided infrastructure includes potable water, electricity and roads are much better off economically than those from localities that lack such amenities. Thus, for example, even the urban-rural differentials in income poverty mentioned above understate disparities in well-being. Furthermore, other forms of deprivations suffered by rural areas, such as lack of financial services and reliable product markets, contribute to perpetuate rural poverty, for instance through the persistence of low productivity. Such conditions may lead to risky behaviour by parents and children from poor households, with regard to the WFCL.

3 Dynamics of the child labour market

As argued above, poverty is the predominant factor at the core of the child labour problem. In Tanzania, pervasive poverty has persisted on a wide scale after decades of poor economic

¹¹ Tanzania PRSP, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

performance, followed by a period of structural adjustment aimed largely at removing fiscal and trade imbalances and restoring macro-economic stability. Both periods have been associated with a lack of growth in productive employment, and in the deterioration of living conditions for large sections of the population. Persistent and even worsening poverty, then, forces some children to work in order to meet the subsistence needs of their households. Others work not because of absolute poverty but because they and their families perceive the benefits, both immediate and future, are greater than the benefits of education.

3.1 Macro-economic performance and child labour

Strong and sustained economic growth can facilitate the reduction of both poverty and child labour. For example, by increasing the taxable surplus, economic growth enables governments to raise funds for developing education and health infrastructure. Economic growth is often associated with technological change, employment growth and increased demand for skilled labour. These factors can have a negative impact on both the supply and the demand of child labour. The increase in the total demand for labour will tend to raise adult wage rates,¹² reducing the opportunity cost of schooling, while the increase in demand for skilled labour helps to increase private returns to education. Furthermore, the prosperity that tends to be associated with economic growth can contribute to changes in social norms in a way that withdraws socio-cultural support for child labour.¹³

The inverse is also true: long periods of economic difficulties or even stagnation may make it difficult to overcome the child labour problem, for instance through high unemployment, worsening poverty and greater constraints on the public provision of social services. In Tanzania, the long period of economic stagnation made it difficult to sustain earlier gains in sectors such as education, to develop economic infrastructure (especially in rural areas), or to generate sufficient growth in productive employment, in the face of rapid increases in the size of the labour force. It also contributed to the distortions that led to recent structural adjustment programmes, with painful measures such as formal sector retrenchment and cost recovery in education and health.

While economic growth has been inadequate to permit the accumulation of resources for investment in physical and human capital, the demand for basic services has grown rapidly in the face of high fertility and rapid population growth.¹⁴ The impact has been most evident in the education sector and on the labour market.

3.2 Education and child labour supply

Education is an area of great importance because it provides the counterpoint and a most desirable alternative to child labour in respect of the use of the child's time. In recent years, the basic education system has suffered from declining enrolment and retention rates. The 2000 PRSP Zonal Workshops provided a forum for participants to air complaints about

¹² A strong demand for labour may also lead to an increase in child labour if prevention measures are not implemented.

¹³ These points are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.3 of Guide Book II of the TBP MAP kit (*Time-Bound Programmes for Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour - An Introduction*, Op. Cit.). It must be noted, though, that while economic growth can facilitate the elimination of both poverty and child labour, it is not sufficient. Growth strategies need to address the needs of the poor.

¹⁴ The latest UN estimates give an average annual population growth rate of 2.6 per cent for the period 1995-2000 (UN Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision*. From the UN website, <http://www.un.org/esa/population/wpp2000.htm>)

several problems regarding basic education.¹⁵ A major issue of concern was limited access to primary education and high direct costs, including the barriers posed by the cost-sharing arrangements. Related to this were concerns about the “lack of transparency” in the use of funds contributed by parents (perhaps to be read as lack of visible impact by these payments on the quality of education). Another important issue raised was poor quality and lack of relevance to the needs and opportunities on the local labour market and indeed the local economy as a whole. These factors probably provide part of the explanation for the high dropout rates found in the system and the increasing level of illiteracy. The issue of quality is related to lack of furniture, textbooks and other materials, as well as inadequate numbers of teachers.¹⁶ It is also a reflection on the quality of teacher training, qualifications and teaching performance. Furthermore, it reflects the formidable problem of low salaries and low motivation among teachers.

Altogether, these problems point to a big failure on the part of the education system to satisfy the needs of children and their families. In particular, they indicate part of the reason why demand for education has been declining, as demonstrated by the declining enrolment and retention rates. The school system is not able to meet the needs of the poorest households that are most vulnerable to child labour, not only because the opportunity costs of schooling are high, but also because it appears even more unattractive in terms of expected future benefits, particularly considering that many poor families find direct costs unaffordable. What is more, it does not seem to be enjoyable for children (i.e., for many children, the current benefits of education are low¹⁷). Equally of concern, but not receiving much attention in the PRSP consultations, is the fact that alternative systems are also lacking when it comes to meeting the needs of those children who remain outside the formal education system or who drop out, such as the child labourers.

While much emphasis has rightly been placed on primary education, access to secondary education and vocational training has been even more limited, on account of the limited number of schools in many parts of the country, but also because direct costs are too high for many households. In the informal economy in Dar es Salaam, Arusha and Mwanza, for instance, Madihi et al. report the presence of large numbers of 14 – 17 year-olds, which they attribute to the existence of “few secondary schools and vocational training opportunities” after the completion of primary school.¹⁸ The authors of the Rapid Assessment study on mining made similar observations.¹⁹

¹⁵ Tanzania PRSP, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁶ In the tobacco growing areas of Iringa studied by the Rapid Assessment team on the tobacco plantations, for instance, pupil teacher ratios at the primary school level were found to range from 53 to 69 (A. Masudi, A. Ishumi, F. Mbeo and W. Sambo “Tanzania: Children Working in Commercial Agriculture – Tobacco: A Rapid Assessment” (Geneva, ILO, November 2001, p. 29. This document is available at the SIMPOC website: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/tanzania/ra/tobacco.pdf>). Citing Ministry of Education and Culture sources, the authors report a “standard” ratio of 48 for Tanzania, and an “ideal” ratio of 40, both of which are far higher than standards found in many developing countries. Although the authors found a more favourable average pupil teacher ratio of 35 in the areas studied in Urambo district, this may be partly due to declining enrolment rates.

¹⁷ See S. Bhalotra, “The Opportunity Cost of Child Labour” (paper prepared for ILO/IPEC, April 2001).

¹⁸ Kadonya *et al.*, *op. cit.*

¹⁹ J. A. Mwami, A. J. Sanga and J. Nyoni, “Tanzania: Child Labour in Mining: A Rapid Assessment” (Geneva, ILO, January 2002; go to <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/tanzania/ra/mining.pdf>).

3.3 Labour demand factors

On the demand side, employers make the decision to hire children rather than adult workers, or to use machines to do equivalent work. Some employers find child labour attractive because of lower (or no) wages, which reflects the undeveloped nature of the labour market as well as the low level of technology generally employed in production and, hence, the generally low level of labour productivity. A well-functioning labour market should equalize effective wages (wages adjusted for productivity), hence making child labour no cheaper than equivalent adult labour.²⁰ However, as indicated in several of the Rapid Assessment studies, child workers tend to be paid considerably less than adults. This is mainly because child workers tend to be easier to exploit than adult workers, they are more docile and/or have weak bargaining power (e.g., they are seldom unionized). Indeed, that child labour may be considered by some employers as more attractive than equivalent adult labour seems to be supported by the fact that children are employed in the midst of high adult unemployment. In some sectors, there may also be the often-wrong perception that children are more suitable than adults—e.g. mining through narrow shafts. This notion has been demonstrated to be lacking of empirical support, for example in studies carried out in a number of hazardous industries in India.²¹ In Tanzania, it is doubtful that any sector of the economy can make valid claims to the effect that children have irreplaceable skills.

The problem of underdeveloped labour markets is related to that of weak institutions, which result in the poor enforcement of relevant laws, even when minimum age and compulsory education legislation have been enacted. This seems to be the case regarding the Education Act and the 1998 ratification of ILO Convention No. 138. Thus, employers of child labourers do so, and probably benefit by paying low wages, because they can get away with it.²² Furthermore, even where the child worker may be above the minimum age, the issue of hazardous work arises because of the absence of adequate industrial safety measures, again a factor closely linked to the issue of weak enforcement.

Undeveloped labour markets also make it attractive for parents who own land (or other traditional assets such as livestock) to use children as unpaid family labour. In the rural sectors of the economy, other things being equal (e.g. household size), the more assets a household owns, the higher the marginal productivity of family labour. In the absence of a well-functioning labour market and reliable product markets, it may be difficult to substitute hired labour for family labour. This may be particularly true for parents who are asset rich but income poor and cannot envisage replacing unpaid family labour with hired wage labour.

A similar situation exists in the urban informal economy, where the use of unpaid family labour also tends to be frequent. As well, some forms of adult work (e.g. domestic work) tend to give rise to children, particularly girls, having to stay at home to undertake housekeeping duties in place of working adults. In all these cases, it must be recognized that a complex set of factors are involved: undeveloped labour markets, non-application of relevant minimum age and compulsory education legislation, and widespread income poverty.

²⁰ S. Bhalotra, “ Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in a Time-Bound Programme: A Conceptual Framework?”. Unpublished paper prepared for ILO/IPEC, September 2000.

²¹ Cf. ILO, *Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable*, op. cit. and references cited therein.

²² Note that, in the absence of universal birth registration, the determination of age in some borderline cases might itself be problematic. However, in most cases of child exploitation this is bound to be a rather minor excuse that, in any case, also relates to the issue of weak institutions.

An additional factor relevant to this discussion, with regard to both the supply and demand sides of the child labour market, is the value traditionally attached to child work in the process of socialization. This role, however, needs to be clarified against the priorities commanded by education and the private and social returns associated with it (once the quality issue is resolved), and against evidence regarding the consequences of the WFCL.

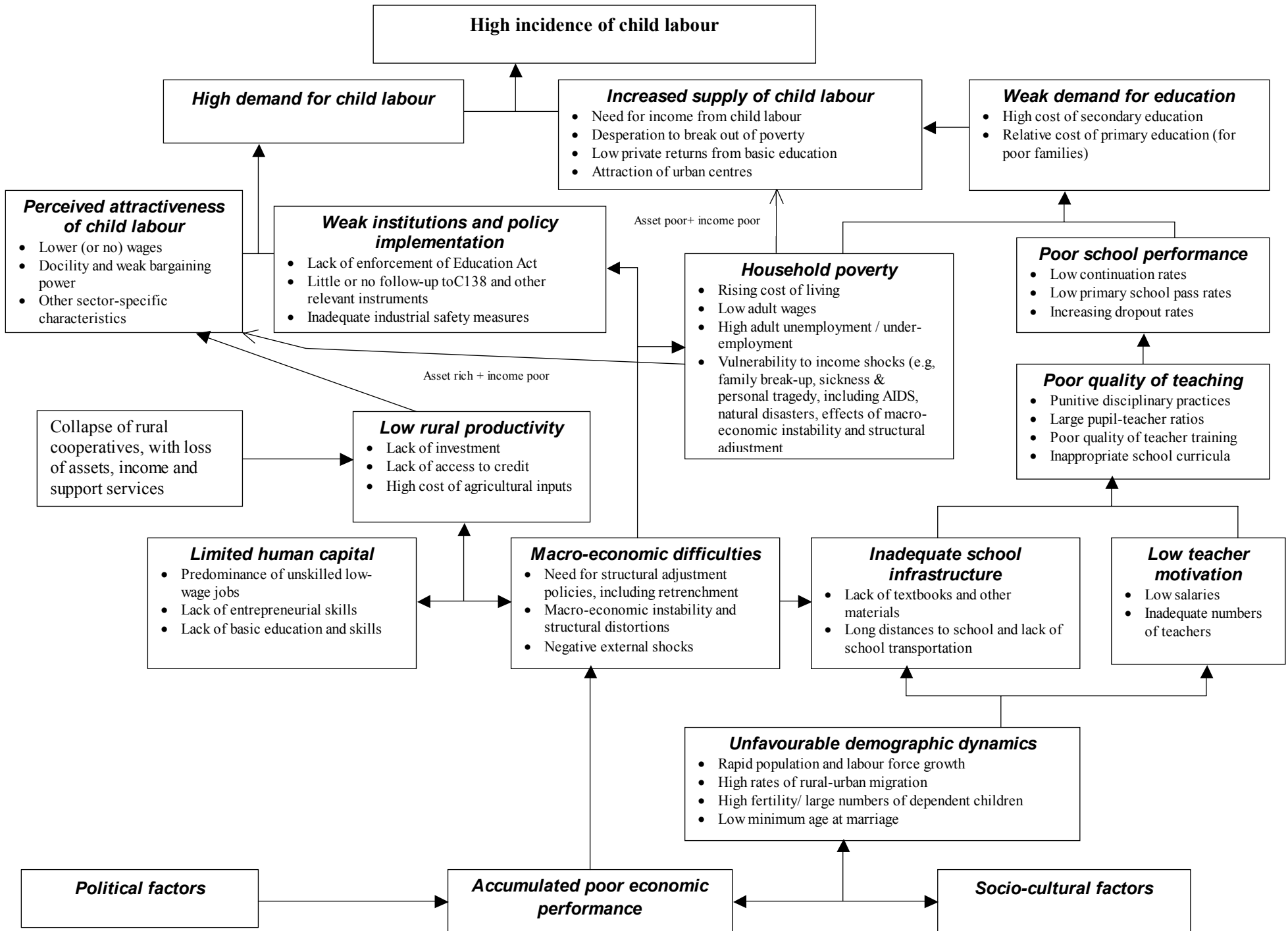
3.4 Schematic representation of child labour dynamics

The different supply and demand factors and their determinants can be represented in the form of a “problem tree” positing cause and effect relationships. Using such a scheme, Figure 1 provides a summary of the discussion contained in the preceding sections.

The main factors on the supply side are household poverty and the poor performance of the education sector. As discussed above, these two factors are related not only to one another, but also to economic performance and the demographic regime. Thus, for instance, the rapid growth of the school-going population combines with limited resources for investment in education, resulting in poor infrastructure, inadequate numbers of qualified teachers, and lack of textbooks and other learning materials. Similarly, weak or negative economic growth means an inadequate number of formal sector jobs for the rapidly growing labour force, leading to high levels of unemployment and underemployment. On the demand side, poor economic performance is again related to the underdevelopment of both factor and product markets, weak institutions and poor policy implementation that make child labour attractive.

Obviously, as is true of most analytical frameworks, this is a simplified representation, in terms of both the choice of factors and the positing of inter-linkages. For example, feedback relationships between child labour, education and poverty have been omitted. This issue is taken up in the next section.

Figure 1: Simplified Representation of the Dynamics of Child Labour in Tanzania



4 Socio-economic consequences of child labour

A major reason for focusing on the worst forms of child labour is the harmful effects they have on the health and development of children. Children are particularly vulnerable to the various hazards mentioned in Section 1. For example, longitudinal studies in India reported that children working in agriculture, small-scale industries and the service sector suffered from stunting and/or were underweight compared to school children.²³ Differences are not merely due to the latter living in generally better socio-economic circumstances, including better nutrition. Similar effects are reported from studies in several countries, including Tanzania.²⁴ Studies show that precocious entry into work, particularly various kinds of hazardous work, are associated with health problems such as muscular, chest and abdominal pain, headaches, dizziness, respiratory infections and diarrhoea.

Beyond personal health concerns, the fact that child labour interferes with education has significant implications for social and economic development, at individual, household and societal levels. Lack of education has damaging consequences because both individual and societal well-being increasingly depends on literacy, numeracy and intellectual competence.²⁵ Child labour limits human capital formation, a process that is at least as important to productivity and output growth as the accumulation of physical capital. Hence child labour reduces productivity and potential income at the individual level, while limiting the overall growth potential of the economy. Moreover, because education and health have intrinsic values (i.e. they are desirable in themselves, beyond their importance in the production of economic goods and services), child labour has the additional impact of further reducing long-term welfare at both individual and societal levels.

In the simplified schematic diagram provided in Figure 1, the impact of child labour at the household and societal levels can be pictured by considering feed-back from the top into the three boxes at the bottom (*political factors*, *economic performance*, and *socio-cultural factors*), along with feed-back into household poverty. As noted earlier, the key agency for change in these areas is education. Quality education offers an escape from the poverty trap through economic and social mobility, including better prospects for employment and improved wages. It enables parents to produce better outcomes for their own children, and yields important social returns that, among other things, contribute to effective political participation, efficient government and socio-cultural transformation.²⁶

To recap, an important consequence of child labour is that it denies significant proportions of the population the opportunity for personal development and gainful employment, besides posing immediate and long-term dangers to health. In this respect, child labour is a factor in the inter-generational transmission of poverty, with wide-ranging effects having social, economic, demographic and political dimensions. It is a factor that adds up at the aggregate level, in terms of the overall health burdens it brings on the population, for instance, as well as lost opportunities in eliminating poverty over the long run. In the context of current developments in technological change and its spread around the world, the persistence of

²³ ILO, *Child Labour: Targeting the intolerable*, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-14.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁶ For further discussion of this issue in the context of the fight against child labour, see Guide Book II of the TBP MAP kit (*Time-Bound Programmes for Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour - An Introduction*, Op. Cit.), Section 3.1.

child labour at the scale indicated by the CLS data also implies increasing marginalization of large proportions of the population, and widening inequality. Such persistent poverty, marginalization and vulnerability also represent a burden in a society seeking rapid economic growth. Equally important, increasing inequality and marginalization could have grave social and political consequences.

5 Conclusions and broad policy implications

An analysis of the supply and demand factors underlying child labour is essential for understanding the problem and for designing appropriate measures for its elimination. Child labour occurs because people (children, but often their parents or other adults, including, in some cases, agents such as traffickers) decide to provide labour against monetary wages or for payment in kind, and there are others willing to make use of such labour. The “transaction” occurs even though it may be against the law, because of one or more of the following:

- Income from the child’s work is deemed crucial for his/her own survival or that of the household; hence the opportunity cost of education is high. Given the widespread nature of absolute poverty, this may be a major cause of the high incidence of child labour in Tanzania.
- No worthwhile alternatives are seen for the child’s time, mainly because educational opportunities are limited, the quality of education is poor, and/or the private rate of return is perceived to be low. Again, popular assessments of the Tanzanian education system indicate that this is a real problem.
- Education may be considered worthwhile, but the direct costs are high and unaffordable. In fact, from the foregoing, it seems that basic education is not only unattractive in quality terms, but is also unaffordable for large sections of the population.
- Laws on compulsory education and/or minimum age at employment are not enforced.
- For some categories of work for which minimum age legislation could be met, there are no occupational safety and health measures, or existing measures are not adequately enforced.
- For a variety of reasons, including the predominance of low-skill production techniques, poorly functioning labour markets, lack of access to credit and other financial services in the rural and informal economy, the attraction of low wages for child labour, and the poor enforcement issues raised above, employers find child labour attractive.

These factors themselves suggest the broad policy approaches that are needed to address the problem. First, there is the need to increase the demand for education by addressing the access and quality issues raised earlier. Besides improving school infrastructure, the relevance of course content and the quality of teaching, the inability of many poor households to afford the direct and/or indirect costs of even basic education also needs to be addressed. Actions in this regard will modify the incentives for work, and it is encouraging that several of the relevant issues (infrastructure, quality, relevance, cost-recovery) will be addressed within the framework of the PRSP. Besides these, a programme of non-formal/transitional education and special vocational training schemes are needed to cater for the needs of child labourers and school dropouts in general.

Second, for many poor households the opportunity cost of education will have to be reduced by efficiently targeted poverty reduction interventions. A first step in this direction is the assessment of the nature of poverty among the most vulnerable groups and the identification of appropriate measures.

Poverty reduction measures, however, need to be designed and implemented within the framework of macroeconomic policies that are conducive to economic growth and equitable income distribution, along with complementary measures for rapid growth in productive (skill-based) employment. Again, it is encouraging that macro-economic stability features prominently among the goals identified in the Tanzania PRSP. However, it is essential to adequately recognize the centrality of child labour to the persistence and transmission of poverty, and see its elimination as a priority within the framework of the PRSP. This implies, among other things, considering the elimination of child labour as an important strategy, integrating it into the programme's indicators, and ensuring the inclusion of child labourers and their families as a major target group in poverty alleviation programmes.

Third, while making education attractive and enabling the poor to afford it, simultaneous efforts need to be put into place to protect the rights of the child by implementing the Education Act, minimum age legislation and measures regarding hazardous work, in line with Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 as well as broader occupational safety and health requirements. Policy reform and implementation also need to be complemented with awareness creation on the consequences of child labour, particularly the worst forms, and social mobilization in support of their elimination.

Fourth, regarding the more general forms of child work, such as work on household farms and small enterprises, it is essential to introduce measures to improve the functioning of labour markets, promote the use of new technologies (including improved access to knowledge, financial services, improved inputs, and infrastructure needed to support the development of product markets), and inter-generational occupational mobility through increased information about employment possibilities. Furthermore, and returning to the theme of educational quality, the specific needs of parents and children from (income-poor but) asset-rich households must be addressed. For such households, improving the expected benefits of schooling implies, among other things, the introduction of reforms that increase the relevance of curricula content for the local economy. For example, in rural areas, education needs to be seen as bringing about perceptible productivity increases in both farming and non-farm activities. Also relevant for large sections of this group is the issue of adapting the school calendar, to the extent that this is possible, to suit the needs of the local economy.

Finally, there is a need to address the socio-demographic and gender dimensions of the child labour problem, including family size issues and the implications of the increasing incidence of orphanhood due to AIDS. For instance, synergies between child labour interventions, primary health care programmes, and targeted initiatives in the education sector ought to be exploited.