



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

Lessons Learned
when investigating the worst forms of child labour
using the rapid assessment methodology

- Based on experiences from selected rapid assessments carried out between 2000 – 2002 -

By
Jennifer Fee

Geneva, July 2004

Foreword

Throughout the duration of the IPEC/SIMPOC project to investigate worst forms of child labour I have had the pleasure of working with researchers from all around the world. Without their commitment to the research tasks at hand and their motivation and determination to help in the fight against child labour through the collection of new knowledge, this paper would not exist. The consolidated lessons it contains are a direct result of the many weeks they dedicated to implementing the Rapid Assessment methodology on child labour. A highlight of the project for me has been my communications – both in person and via email - with such hardworking and dedicated teams, and I would like to thank them for their patience as we problem solved and navigated the research grounds together. It has been an honour to learn so many lessons from them.

I am also very grateful to Casper Edmonds, Florencio Gudino, Astrid Marschatz, Yoshie Noguchi, Phan Thuy, Mayte Puertes, Sharaf Sultan, Bijoy Raychaudhuri, Silvana Vargas and Carolina Vizcaino for their valuable contributions and assistance. Finally, I would like to offer my utmost thanks to Angela Martins-Oliveira as project manager, for her constant and sound guidance and support, especially with this paper. She has been a true source of both knowledge and inspiration.

Jennifer Fee
ILO/IPEC

Preface

Unacceptable forms of exploitation of girls and boys at work exist and persist, but they are particularly difficult to research due to their hidden, sometimes illegal or even criminal nature. Although there is a body of knowledge, data, and documentation on child labour, there are also still considerable gaps in understanding the variety of forms and conditions in which children work. This is especially true of the worst forms of child labour, which by their very nature are often hidden from public view and scrutiny.

Slavery, debt bondage, trafficking, sexual exploitation, the use of children in the drug trade and in armed conflict, as well as hazardous work are all defined as Worst Forms of Child Labour. Promoting the Convention concerning the Prohibition and immediate action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182, 1999), is a high priority for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Paragraph 5 of Recommendation No. 190 accompanying ILO Convention No. 182 states that “detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labour should be compiled and kept up to date to serve as a basis for determining priorities for national action for the abolition of child labour, in particular for the prohibition and elimination of its worst forms, as a matter of urgency.”

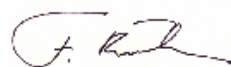
Against this background the ILO, through IPEC/SIMPOC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour), has implemented a programme comprised of 38 rapid assessments (RA) of the worst forms of child labour in 19 countries and one border area. The investigations have been made using a new rapid assessment methodology on child labour, elaborated jointly by the ILO and UNICEF¹. The programme was funded by the United States Department of Labor.

¹ ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual, January 2000, a draft to be finalized further to field tests, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simnoc/guides/index.htm>

The investigations on the worst forms of child labour have explored very sensitive areas including illegal, criminal or immoral activities. The forms of child labour and research locations were carefully chosen by IPEC staff in consultation with IPEC partners. The rapid assessment investigations focused on the following categories of worst forms of child labour: children in bondage; child domestic workers; child soldiers; child trafficking; drug trafficking; hazardous work in commercial agriculture, fishing, garbage dumps, mining and the urban environment; commercial sexual exploitation; and children working in the streets.

To the partners and IPEC colleagues who have contributed to the realization of this paper I should like to express our gratitude. The responsibility for opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the author - though it was built on the experiences and guidelines of many partner organizations - and does not imply endorsement by the ILO.

It is my belief that the breadth of research experiences and the depth of the lessons learned from the 38 rapid assessments meticulously carried out under this programme will benefit future research teams exploring child labour topics, and contribute to improving research design and implementation with the aim of gathering information to enhance the global knowledge on child labour, particularly in its worst forms.



Frans Röselaers
Director
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
International Labour Office
Geneva, 2004

Table of Contents

Lessons learned when investigating the worst forms of child labour using the rapid assessment methodology

Introduction	1
Background: key concepts	3
The RA methodology	3
Worst forms of child labour	3
Preparation and planning	5
1. Duration	5
2. Timing	5
3. Local and national support	6
4. Building a multi-disciplinary team	7
5. Culture and perceptions	8
6. Involvement of local key stakeholders	9
7. Gender mainstreaming	9
8. Security concerns	10
9. Age definitions	11
10. Inclusion of key common variables in instrument design	11
11. Design and testing of questionnaires	12
12. “Catching the moment”	12
Data collection	14
1. Accessing respondents	14
2. Estimating the magnitude	14
3. Building rapport with boys and girls	15
4. Interviewer-interviewee compatibility	16
5. Perspectives of boys and girls	16
6. Interview environment	16
7. Identifying best times to interview boys and girls	18
8. Schools as an entry point	19
9. The benefits of observation	19

10. Flexibility and creativity in data collection	20
11. Recording of data	20

Data analysis and report preparation	22
1. Data analysis and the tabulation of results	22
2. Consideration of misinformation and inaccuracies	22
3. Confidentiality and ethical issues	23
4. Considering the reader	24

Applying the lessons learned	25
-------------------------------------	----

Textboxes	
Preparation and planning: summary checklist	13
Data collection: summary checklist	21
Data analysis and report preparation: summary checklist	24

Bibliography	26
---------------------	----

LESSONS LEARNED WHEN INVESTIGATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR USING THE RAPID ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Since the year 2000, extensive research has been carried out using the Rapid Assessment (RA) methodology. IPEC/SIMPOC completed over 90 RAs between the years 2000-2004, 38 of which are part of a project to investigate the worst forms of child labour (WFCL)¹. These 38 RAs were meticulously carried out with the aim of meeting the following objectives: (i) to produce and make publicly available quantitative and qualitative information related to WFCL; (ii) to provide a clear description of the magnitude, character, causes and consequences of WFCL; and (iii) to further develop and validate the ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment methodology on child labour, specifically the Rapid Assessment ILO/UNICEF draft manual.² This paper consolidates lessons learned from the 38 RAs carried out as part of the above-mentioned project, and is a result of the work undertaken by many actors, in the field and at ILO headquarters to meet the above objectives. Although the examples presented in this document are project-specific, based on the broader IPEC/SIMPOC experiences with RAs it can be stated that similar circumstances face researchers worldwide. As such the lessons outlined will apply to any similar research situation.

The forms of child labour and research locations investigated for the RAs were carefully chosen by IPEC staff in consultation with IPEC

¹ Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Labor.

² ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment – A Field Manual, January 2000, a draft to be finalized further to field tests.

partners. The following table presents the RAs by topic and location.³

WFCL	Country/border area
Bonded child labour	Nepal
Child domestic work	El Salvador, Ethiopia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand
Children engaged in armed conflict	Philippines
Child trafficking	Mekong border area, Nepal
Children working in the streets	Romania, Turkey
Commercial agriculture	Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Lebanon, Tanzania (4)
Commercial sexual exploitation	Costa Rica, El Salvador, Jamaica, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Viet Nam
Drug trafficking	Brazil, Estonia, Philippines, Thailand
Fishing	El Salvador
Garbage dump scavenging	El Salvador, Guatemala
Mining	Tanzania
Portering	Nepal
Ragpicking	Nepal
Urban informal sector	El Salvador, Tanzania

The lessons consolidated in this paper were identified by reviewing specific sections in RA reports devoted to problems encountered and lessons learned; through a review of the RA reports for recurring problems and corrective actions; from meetings and communications with ILO-IPEC field staff and researchers; and from experiences coordinating the project from ILO-IPEC headquarters. The lessons are organized into three phases of RA research: (i) preparation and planning; (ii) data collection; and (iii) data analysis and report

³ The 38 RA reports are available online at <http://www.ilo.org/childlabour>. For complete references please see the bibliography.

preparation. At the end of each section is a summary checklist of key points.

Although there are many issues touched upon in this paper, there are two overarching themes to the lessons that follow: the importance of flexibility during RA research, and the need to respect the specific circumstances of each respondent, with particular reference to the boy and girl respondents. While rapid assessment guidelines can be presented in manual format, the ins and outs of carrying out the research rely heavily on the resourcefulness of the research team and the sensitivities and intuitions of its individual members. Thinking “outside the box” and taking into consideration the special needs of the target group at all stages of the RA are two key elements to producing sound outputs.

The purpose of presenting these lessons learned is to improve research on child labour, particularly WFCL, and more specifically, to improve the RA methodology. The dissemination of the lessons and their incorporation into training and technical support provided to researchers by IPEC staff and experienced researchers is a step towards improving the availability and quality of information on some of the world’s most exploited girls and boys and, in turn, to improve their circumstances.

Background: key concepts

This section provides background information on two key concepts that are central to a clear understanding of this paper, namely the Rapid Assessment (RA) methodology, and the worst forms of child labour (WFCL). The RA methodology has proven to be an effective way to investigate WFCL given its ability to collect information on “invisible” and hard-to-access child labour and to pave the way for more in-depth research as circumstances allow.

The RA methodology⁴

The rapid assessment methodology is an innovative and flexible methodology that utilizes several research strategies contemporaneously. Its goal is to achieve a relatively quick understanding of a specific issue in a relatively short period of time and at low-cost. It can be used in local or regional contexts or in parts of urban environments where populations faced with specific challenges are known to exist. RA is primarily a qualitative methodology, and emphasizes tools of observation and interviewing without the long-term participant engagement of anthropological fieldwork.

RA offers the possibility of looking at the causes of and pathways into child labour, the actual work that boys and girls do, their living and working conditions, and their perceptions of their situations. It includes the experiences and insights of working boys and girls themselves, during the course of the research and in the formulation

⁴ This summary of the RA methodology is based on the text in Part I of the ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual –revised, Forthcoming 2005. For extensive details on the methodology, please refer to this manual.

of action recommendations at the later stages. RA is a child-participatory approach to data collection with the targeted boys and girls contributing greatly to the building of knowledge about their exploitative circumstances, while other sources of data serve to complement and ensure the objective reliability of the information obtained.

Worst forms of child labour

Article 3 of the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182) defines the worst forms of child labour as follows:

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

According to the ILO global estimates released in 2002⁵, there are some 352 million economically active children between the ages of 5-17, of whom around 246 million are engaged in activities classified as child labour. Of these, 179 million are thought to be in the worst forms.

⁵ SIMPOC: Every Child Counts – New Global Estimates on Child Labour (ILO, Geneva, 2002).

Preparation and planning

In-depth preparation and planning for a rapid assessment is essential to producing high-quality research results with a far-reaching impact. The more informed and focused the research team is prior to the onset of the research, the better the design of the research instruments will be⁶. Among other tasks, RA teams are advised to undertake a comprehensive desk review, identify the types of variables they will later analyse, and outline the structure of the report (including drawing up dummy tables) in advance of data collection. Based on experiences from RA teams, the points listed below have emerged as some of the important factors to consider before embarking on RA fieldwork.

1. **Duration:** Based on experiences in the field and discussions amongst the programme team and field staff, a time period of six to seven months is recommended to successfully carry out an RA on a WFCL from the research planning stages through to the completion of the final report. While the timeframe for each activity will vary from RA to RA, generally two months to cover the planning details and designing the research will suffice, followed by two months of fieldwork and the final two months to analyse the data and prepare the report. More time may be required when investigating hard-to-access forms of child labour as, in these situations, it is likely to be more challenging to access respondents and to build a rapport.

⁶ Detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) are fundamental to developing the research and can be considered an invaluable “roadmap” to refer to throughout the RA process. Likewise, definitions of terms common to the child labour field should be clarified in advance of the research.

- ✓ The research on children involved in drug trafficking required longer preparation and data collection phases than some less hidden forms of child labour such as children working in the streets.

2. **Timing:** Timing can play an important part in the success of an RA. Due to both natural and social conditions, the results of the RAs can be affected depending on the time of year the investigation is carried out.

In terms of natural reasons for delay, some can be planned for (those of a seasonal nature) and some cannot (natural disasters). A number of countries mentioned seasonal weather as a concern (e.g. rainy season/monsoon which made roads impassable and limited access to study sites). In addition to weather patterns, the harvest season and peak production periods of certain work must be taken into account as, during these times, the demand for child labour is likely to be higher. In agriculture-related activities RA research will benefit from being carried out during the harvest season to increase the number of accessible children in this work and therefore to augment the amount of information that can be collected on the child labour circumstances.

- ✓ On sugar cane plantations in El Salvador and Bolivia, researchers conducted the interviews during the cane-cutting period.

- ✓ In the RA on fishing in El Salvador, researchers took the seasonal nature of the work into account prior to deciding when to undertake the research. It was not possible, however, to plan for the earthquakes that put a temporary halt to the RAs in El Salvador.

Similarly, regarding circumstances created or influenced by people, some can be planned for and some cannot.

- ✓ Certain studies faced obstacles in carrying out research due to the December holiday period which delayed research clearance from government officials and made it hard to access school children and teachers.
- ✓ The RA conducted in Ecuador discovered that the concentration of child labour on flower plantations was higher during Christmas as well as during other periods when girls and boys were not attending school.

Election periods are another timing consideration, though as such events do not always follow the expected timeline, plans should again include a level of adaptability. Similarly, some social conditions cannot be planned for, such as regional or national upheavals and riots.

- ✓ The Tanzania RA on commercial sexual exploitation was met with delays because it was carried out when the country's general elections had just ended and the government was in an interim period. The researchers had to wait until

the newly elected officers assumed their business in order to get research clearance.

- ✓ The RA in Madagascar experienced repeated delays when planning the seminar to present the findings of the investigation due to the dangerous and limiting political climate during the tail-end of the research which made it impossible to maintain the planned timeline.

3. **Local and national support:** It is essential to foster the right environment for effective and sustainable child labour action, including “favourable policies and law ‘at the top’; and an aware and concerned public” at the grassroots level (ILO/IPEC Good Practices synthesis report 2001).

Regarding RA research, it is crucial to obtain political support to allow the study to take place, and to increase the probability that action will be taken following the research.

- ✓ In two of the 38 RA investigations in particular, the delay in political approval of the RA research by specific actors at the country level in turn caused uncertainty and further delay in the launching and implementation stages.

At the grassroots level, when a lack of support is present it can often be attributed to both cultural perceptions and fear.

- ✓ Obstacles to the researchers' progress were present in RAs where members of the community did not

believe that the work of the boys and girls was a WFCL, or when they feared the consequences of revealing too much. Data collection through interviews and discussions, access to sites for observation, and interaction, was made more difficult under both these circumstances.

- ✓ In regards to cultural perceptions, as reported in the RA on child domestic workers in Nepal, “Hiring a live-in person to undertake domestic household chores is an integral part of South-Asian tradition” (Sharma, Thakurathi, Sapkota, Devkota and Rimal, 2001). The cultural view and history of the child domestic worker situation can make it difficult to rally support at the community level.
- ✓ The impact of fear was apparent in the Ecuador RA on child labour in the cut flower industry. In this case, not only the plantation owners but the vast majority of the villagers remained silent on the issue of girls and boys working due to the potential physical and financial consequences that could result from providing information on this topic.

Researchers who enter the RA process with knowledge of the national and local perceptions towards the target group as well as the expected reactions will be more successful in adapting the methodology to the actual circumstances and enhance the quality of the data collected. Additionally, they will be in a better position to clear any perceptions and fears that may exist.

4. **Building a multi-disciplinary team:** When planning for the 38 RAs it proved extremely important to include researchers on the team who had experience interacting with boys and girls, who were familiar with the children’s environment, or who the children held in high regard such as a media celebrity or athlete. An RA team should also possess strong analytical knowledge on how to research culture and gender issues. To address the cultural sensitivities of the boys and girls, it proved very helpful to have local members of the community - both males and females - participate on the research teams as interviewers or assistants. This not only served to put the girl and boy respondents at ease, but allowed for communication in the local language. This said, however, the team should include both local and non-local members to ensure the necessary balance for observation and interpretation (see point 5. following).

- ✓ In Jamaica one of the researchers who facilitated the Focus Group Discussions was a well-known actress, TV personality, child rights activist and social worker. Additionally she served as the Executive Director of an NGO working with street and working children. According to the report, her “public profile and her facilitation skills were distinct advantages for working with the children and she was quickly able to establish a rapport with them” (Dunn, 2001).

Research teams should also be comprised of experienced individuals with high-level technical and analytical capacities.

- ✓ In certain instances these attributes were found together in one individual, as in the case of the RA on drug trafficking in Brazil where the head researcher had lived for seven years in a “favela” (slum) where children’s involvement in drug trafficking was rampant. He knew the dynamics of the sector, the “codes” of the boys and girls, and the challenges facing the communities. He also ran an NGO related to children in drug trafficking which further eased his access to respondents (children and key informants). His technical experience rounded out this ideal profile for RA research. He worked, however, in a team to ensure high accuracy of data processing, tabulation and analysis.

Often these attributes were encompassed by multi-disciplinary research teams whose members represented a variety of disciplines such as statistics, sociology and child psychology. The range of expertise strengthened the research.

- ✓ The RA in Romania on children working in the street included a team member who was a child psychologist. She was able to evaluate the negative impact of the work on the girls and boys based on their mental capabilities when compared to standards and averages of non-working children.

5. **Culture and perceptions:** As mentioned in 4. above, familiarity of the research team with local culture and practices is essential to effectively carry out an RA. This

prior knowledge can improve the design of data collection tools and the approach of the methodology. It can also serve to explain why boys and girls enter into a WFCL, why a WFCL is accepted in a community, and the affects of WFCL on children. There is, however, a risk of local researches being “blind” to potentially significant details when collecting data, due to their familiarity with the surroundings and traditions. As detailed in 4. above, a mix of local and non-local researchers is recommended.

- ✓ As discussed in the RA on commercial sexual exploitation in Tanzania, once a girl or boy completes Standard VII (last year of primary school, approximately 12 years old) she/he is expected to take care of her/himself. During this time of early adolescence “girls attend initiation ceremonies which teach them how to maintain a house and perform sexual acts” (Kamala, Lusinde, Millinga and Mwaitula, 2001). Furthermore, in Tanzania there is a school of thought that believes that once a girl has engaged in sexual intercourse she is no longer considered a girl but a woman. As a result, it is not unacceptable for a child under 18 to be sexually exploited, despite her age, if she is sexually active.
- ✓ The RA on child labour on sugar cane plantations in El Salvador illustrates the importance of knowing as much as possible about how girls and boys are affected by their work: there, researchers observed that girls and boys were cut frequently by the sharp knives they used in their work, or by the plants themselves. To solve the problem of open wounds

bleeding, it is common practice for children to immediately fill their cuts with soil until the bleeding stops. An understanding of the health implications of both the initial cuts and the likelihood of infection and disease stemming from this temporary solution offers insight into another aspect of the plight of working children. Children's practices such as these must be taken into account in order to understand their circumstances.

6. **Involvement of local key stakeholders:** Involving key stakeholders during the planning stages of the research, and preparing them for the findings while carrying out the RA, increases the investment in the research by important players and contributes to the impact of the study findings.

- ✓ In the experience of the RAs carried out in Tanzania, researchers engaged the local community by informing them about the child labour situation in the country and the aim of the RAs. This exercise proved to be an effective means to ensure their active participation during the implementation of the research and in identifying ways to protect children involved in WFCL.
- ✓ Similarly in Guatemala, the RA provided the opportunity to approach local institutions that offer social care and assistance to the boys and girls involved in hazardous labour in garbage dumps. Approaching these institutions prior to the investigation was useful in creating a network

supported by the municipal authority. Following the RA, these institutions played a valuable role in identifying solutions and planning intervention programmes to eliminate this worst form.

7. **Gender mainstreaming:** It is important to consider the gender dimension of RA research in the planning stages in order to effectively collect data that considers both boys and girls and subsequently to be able to analyse and present this data meaningfully. Boys and girls may or may not carry out the same tasks, may or may not have similar attitudes towards and perceptions of their work and life circumstances, and though both sexes will be vulnerable at the hands of their employers/exploiters, these vulnerabilities will differ.

- ✓ The methodology of the RA on the urban informal sector in El Salvador was designed to identify the different perceptions of girls and boys regarding reasons for work.
- ✓ RAs undertaken on commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) were designed to uncover information on the circumstances of boy victims of CSE, even when background information pointed to CSE as a form of exploitation largely affecting girls.
- ✓ The planning of Focus Group Discussions organized by same-sex groups, as in the RA on sugar cane plantations in Bolivia, helped to gather information on perceptions of males and females without elements

of gender intimidation or unease stemming from any cultural gender implications.

8. **Security concerns:** All RA teams must address security concerns and prepare contingency plans for potentially risky situations in advance of the fieldwork. This is especially important when research is focused on activities such as children in armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation, and drug trafficking.

- ✓ The RA on children working at garbage dump sites in Guatemala was met with a setback at the first stage of data collection. When the research team went to the study site they learned that the dumps were controlled by violent youth gangs, information which had not been obtained from secondary sources. This prompted many of the researchers to resign from their role, and meetings ensued to discuss how to alter the approach of the research to capture the gang-related circumstances of the children. The questionnaire was adjusted in order to obtain information on drug addiction, gang affiliation, and other areas that had not been covered in the initial research plan. A new research team was recruited. They were made aware of the circumstances in advance and took the necessary precautions; fieldwork was successfully completed.

While researchers should do their best to identify security issues prior to conducting investigations, they should be

aware that they may still be surprised by unforeseen risks.

- ✓ Security issues were of top consideration in the Philippines. The experts researching the phenomenon of child soldiers in the Philippines faced challenges in securing the permission of the responsible person of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to conduct the interviews with the children. The enumerators had to wait for longer than anticipated before an explicit permission was granted in the form of a letter addressed to MILF commanders in the field. A related problem was encountered when the survey respondents and the commanders themselves questioned the technique of mapping the location of the households where surveys were conducted. The MILF had already been met with a bad experience after they allowed maps to be sketched of their major camps. According to the MILF Information Officer, this led to an assault on their camps by the forces of the Philippines military. Consequently, the survey team abandoned the idea of mapping the households of respondents.
- ✓ Researchers investigating sexually exploited children should note that high security risks are associated with data collection surrounding the illicit activities of commercial sexual exploitation, especially as most activities take place at night. “Researchers should work in pairs where possible and budget for increased costs associated with conducting research at night (e.g. higher transportation costs)” (Dunn 2001).

9. **Age definitions:** The definition of children, i.e. below 18 as per the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour 1999 (No. 182) must be clearly stated in the objectives of the research.⁷ As age definitions of children vary between countries and organizations, establishment of a common age set is essential to collecting useful data on child labour. This does not mean that young people 18 and over cannot be a part of the RAs if they have relevant information and/or experiences to complement the research, but the data collected on them must be tabulated separately, and the focus of the investigations must be on children below 18. Different cut-offs can then be established within the category of respondents below 18.

Researchers should try to verify the age of interviewees using more than one approach. Age verification can, however, be a challenge. The RAs on commercial sexual exploitation illustrated how many girl respondents used heavy makeup and clothing to appear older, and may have been administered false identification cards.

- ✓ The RA on commercial sexual exploitation in Jamaica reported that some girls use ‘chicken pills’⁸ to develop early and many appear older than their real age.

⁷ It should be noted that the upper age limit in the definition of a child is set in terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989; in addition, ILO Convention 182 on WFCL applies to **all** children under the age of 18.

⁸ “Chicken pills” are pills composed of hormones intended to enhance rapid growth in poultry. Girls and young women are reported to take these pills for fast body development, specifically to enhance their busts and hips to look more like an adult at a much shorter than normal growth rate.

- ✓ In El Salvador girls in commercial sexual exploitation were found to be in possession of inaccurate identification cards. Following the civil war in El Salvador (1981-1992), many people found themselves without official papers and identification cards. When registering for new ones it was commonplace for girls to increase their age on the cards. Researchers were thus met with a challenge in determining the children’s ages as their appearance was lower than 18 years old, but their official cards stated 18 or above.

10. **Inclusion of key common variables in instrument design:**

As draft reports, proposals and questionnaires were reviewed by the programme team, it became apparent that the data from the investigations varied widely. In response, to obtain standardized data on WFCL a smaller, standard table of indicators was developed, distributed to the field, filled out by researchers, and eventually included in the RA reports.

- ✓ The table was aimed at compiling a standard set of data that allowed for cross-country analysis and further research, and still gave the researchers flexibility to design their questionnaires and reports as best suited for their particular circumstances. The use of this table provided solid quantitative information that, when combined with the qualitative analyses in the report, offered a comprehensive and instructive picture of WFCL.

11. **Design and testing of questionnaire:** In certain instances, the posing of specific questions caused the boys and girls being interviewed to feel uncomfortable and embarrassed and, as a result, to close up.

- ✓ In El Salvador when conducting the investigation on child domestic workers the researchers reported that when asked where they slept and what they ate the children became reticent to answer and to complete the rest of the interview.

Questionnaires should be age-appropriate and the advice of a child communication specialist should be sought as necessary when designing them. Questions that cause the type of reaction described in the example above should be asked at the end of an interview when a girl or boy is more likely to feel comfortable with the process. This will better ensure that as much information as possible is collected while considering the feelings of the child. Better still, when testing the questionnaires, children's reactions should be noted and efforts made to figure out why certain questions may afford this reaction, and how the same information can be obtained through different approaches, language and sequence in a way that the boys and girls are comfortable.

12. **“Catching the Moment”:** It is important to stay tuned to public opportunities that can provide momentum to the RA. Making use of opportunities presented by the larger context is a way to promote awareness and action about the research at hand (ILO/IPEC Good Practices synthesis report 2001).

- ✓ During the preparation stages of the RA on child domestic workers in Thailand, the issue of child domestic workers was brought to the attention of the general public when charges were pressed against the wife of a prominent Thai public figure by three girl servants who reported being beaten by their employer. In an effort to capture this momentum and thus bring more attention to the findings of the rapid assessment, the consultants expanded the seminar which was planned to present the study's results, into a comprehensive workshop to capture the in-depth views of politicians as well as government, worker and employer representatives.

Preparation and planning: summary checklist

- ❑ Take into consideration – to the extent possible – the **natural and social conditions** of the research area.
- ❑ Assess both the **local and national support** when selecting RA target groups and locations.
- ❑ Build a research team that represents **varying disciplines and backgrounds** and that is **gender-balanced**.
- ❑ Ensure that the research team includes members who are familiar with the **local culture and practices**.
- ❑ **Involve key stakeholders** starting during the planning stages.
- ❑ **Mainstream gender into the research design** by seeking perspectives and experiences of both boys and girls, mothers and fathers, female and male community members, etc..
- ❑ Make necessary **provisions for potential security risks** and put **contingency plans** into place.
- ❑ Seek **clarity and consensus in key definitions**, with special attention to the age definition of the term “child” (below 18 years).
- ❑ Develop effective means of including **key common variables** in the instrument design.
- ❑ Consider the **comfort and age of the child respondents** when designing questionnaires; **pilot test questionnaires** and work with a **child communication specialist** as necessary.
- ❑ **Stay tuned to public opportunities** that can provide momentum to the research topic.

Data collection

As indicated in the Background section on key concepts, the RA methodology applies several research strategies contemporaneously. The approaches to obtaining information can be grouped broadly into the categories of observations and interviews and include informal conversations, drawing on key informants and running focus group discussions. Researchers must be creative and resourceful in order to identify the best way to conduct the fieldwork given the often hidden, ‘invisible’ and/or illicit nature of the target groups. Each target group and geographic and cultural environment requires special attention in terms of which data collection methods will work best and how they should be implemented. The following points provide valuable insight and perspective on effective ways to gather RA information.

1. **Accessing respondents:** When a committed core comprised of NGO workers, local experts, authorities, community members, etc. forms the springboard for RA research the collection of data is made easier and the likelihood of positive change surrounding a cause is enhanced.
 - ✓ The RAs in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Jamaica on commercial sexual exploitation illustrate the detailed information that can be collected when different constituents work together. Key informants included taxi operators, community development and health workers, journalists, security guards at hotels, agencies working with street children, community based organizations, as well as children exploited in

commercial sexual exploitation and related activities, and their families and friends. They played a critical role in contacting girls and boys for involvement in the studies.

- ✓ In the RA on child domestic workers in El Salvador key informants included residential security guards, community leaders, farmers, and municipal authorities responsible for social and health issues. Without the informants’ support it would have been almost impossible to reach the children. In addition, girls who were interviewed were also key informants and helped interviewers reach other child domestic workers.
2. **Estimating the magnitude:** As initially presented, the RA methodology collects primarily qualitative data. While this remains true, in some cases it is possible to enhance this data with quantitative data through combining RA with other methods.
 - ✓ The RA on child domestic workers in Nepal integrated a door-to-door household survey as one means of data collection. The survey proved to be a powerful tool to generate reliable qualitative data within a short period of time, and to complement the data collected by other means.
 - ✓ The Rapid Assessment/Capture-Recapture (RA-CR) methodology (Jensen and Pearson 2002) helped provide estimates on less hidden worst forms of child

labour such as porters and ragpicking in Nepal. For worst forms such as trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation the RA-CR proved to be less adequate.

Other means of estimating the magnitude of a particular population to obtain a more nuanced picture than qualitative data alone can provide, include the use of location-based (child porters, ragpickers, children working in the street) and establishment-based (children working in the automobile industry) sample surveys. Using a probability-based representative sample survey provides the research team with the ability to estimate the number of children in WFCL at the regional or national level by allowing for statistical inferences to be made about a larger population.⁹

3. **Building rapport with boys and girls:** Along with selecting a research team with the appropriate profile, it is equally important that the researchers develop a rapport with the children to improve data collection.

- ✓ The RA in Turkey used elements of sports and music as entry points to establishing a comfortable connection with children working in the streets, before collecting information about them.

- ✓ The researchers investigating children working in the streets in Romania found that some of the boys and girls had difficulties answering interview questions due to the length of the questionnaire and a lack of trust. In order to overcome this challenge the interviewers interacted with the children for a longer period of time - throughout several meetings - in order to create a climate of trust. These meetings consisted of spending time with the boys and girls: talking and playing together, going to the swimming pool and the cinema, or taking them for a snack. The questions were asked gradually, taking into account the child's mood at the time. The researchers believe that this personal approach provided more accurate and reliable data.
- ✓ Similarly, in Viet Nam, interviewers worked to gain the trust of the boys and girls by creating a friendly relationship that included participating in social activities together, such as going on picnics and to movies.

It should be noted that there are boundaries to respect when developing a rapport with children, especially children living under exploitative circumstances who may be particularly vulnerable when forming a relationship with a caring adult.¹⁰

⁹ For technical details and further examples on the methods mentioned above, please refer to the annexes on baseline surveys and the capture-recapture methodology: ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual – revised, Forthcoming 2005.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion on building rapport between researchers and children, see: Edmonds, C. (October 2003). Ethical Considerations When Conducting Research on Children in Worst Forms of Child Labour in Nepal, ILO, Geneva.

4. **Interviewer-interviewee compatibility:** The behaviour and responses of a child being interviewed can be greatly influenced by who interviews them and how they come into contact with this person. Interviews will likely be more successful if someone familiar to and respected by the children accompanies the researchers when approaching them.

- ✓ During the RA on child ragpickers in Nepal, the research team worked closely with local NGOs that had a good rapport with the boys and girls from the community/ethnic group targeted. This connection was crucial in facilitating the data collection.

Similarly, when selecting the interviewers it is essential to take into account issues such as gender, dialect, age, appearance and the form of child labour in question, with the aim of creating the best interviewer-interviewee match for the task at hand.¹¹

- ✓ For example, girls who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation should generally be interviewed by female interviewers.

5. **Perspectives of boys and girls:** RA is a child-focused participatory research approach, described as “research *with* children” as opposed to “research *about* children”. Boys and girls should thus not be overlooked as valuable informants. They will often tell a different and more accurate story of their circumstances than that of their mother and father, or

male or female employer/exploiter. However, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the situation and to be able to cross-check the information it is always worth collecting data from parents and employer/exploiters as well as other key informants.

- ✓ The RA on child trafficking in the Mekong border area exemplifies this. It found that the most reliable and accessible informants for this investigation were people with first hand experience of the trafficking process, i.e. minors who had been trafficked. The qualitative interviews with children provided a detailed picture of the process of transportation and recruitment from the minors’ perspective. In addition, the qualitative interviews provided a comparative understanding of the behaviour and experiences among the different social, gender and ethnic groups. In this specific RA children’s parents were not considered a good source of information. Access to parents was very limited because the target group (trafficked children) had left their homes, parents were rarely found in the border areas, and parents seem to be unaware of the trafficking process (Wille, 2001).

6. **Interview environment:** The location of RA interviews must be carefully selected as this can have a large impact on the data collection process. Furthermore the presence of other actors during the interview must be taken into consideration. The presence of male or female employers/exploiters in particular, as well as mothers, fathers or other adults or peers

¹¹ See also page 23: Confidentiality and ethical issues.

can influence the child's responses and keep them from speaking freely, either out of fear, intimidation, or the desire to impress. In some cases the presence of family and peers, however, will enhance the interviews. The following provides a series of examples of RA approaches taken and adaptations made towards creating a conducive interview environment:

- ✓ In the case of the RA on sexually exploited children in Viet Nam, interviews were conducted at the establishments (clubs) themselves when permitted by the manager. When the interviews were carried out without the manager's knowledge, the meeting often took place in a calm location to assure the privacy and comfort of the child – usually in apartments rented by the children, street cafés or quiet public places.
- ✓ In Madagascar, the majority of the interviews and focus group discussions with sexually exploited children were held outside their homes and neighbourhoods which proved successful in having the children express themselves without being influenced by their surroundings.
- ✓ In the RAs on commercial sexual exploitation and child domestic workers in El Salvador, girls revealed certain information during the focus group discussions that they had denied during the interviews and felt more at ease when talking about sensitive subjects such as drug use, eating habits, physical punishments, etc.
- ✓ In some RAs on child domestic workers the interviews were held in the household where the child worked, with the employer present. This was not an environment conducive to obtaining the information sought by the researchers but as child domestic work is a hidden WFCL it was a challenge to access boys and girls by other means. Children could not be open and were fearful of the way their employer would react once the researcher left. When this situation arose in Nepal, the researchers addressed it by holding two interviews at the same time. Enumerators approached households in pairs; the child and the employer could thus be interviewed at the same time in different parts of the home.
- ✓ In El Salvador, preliminary interviews demonstrated that the interviews should never be undertaken at the children's workplace as the presence of the employers created a tense environment. The employers clearly did not trust the boys and girls and the latter were very shy. Instead researchers opted to interview the children in parks, at church, and at other locations that children spent their non-working time. This is not possible, however, when boys and girls are working in a situation that does not allow them leisure time, or freedom of movement.

Other RA experiences illustrate that interviews at the workplace and/or in the presence of others can sometimes be the better approach.

- ✓ On sugar cane plantations in El Salvador and Bolivia interviewing at the workplace was an effective means of collecting information. In both cases, the researchers found the workplace to be a friendly environment in which girls and boys - surrounded by their working peers and family members involved in the same activity- felt supported and were able to respond unreservedly. Unlike in the cases of child domestic work, the employer was not present and thus did not inhibit the children's responses.

In some RAs, collecting data on child domestic workers (and other children who are living away from their homes) at places of origin or "sending communities" proved to be a successful approach, and easier than collecting data at their workplace. Researchers should examine whether there is a major event in the children's home area (for which they will return home) during the RA time span. When taking this approach, however, the children's leisure time and time with their families must be respected.

- ✓ As a result of the experiences of the RA on child domestic workers in Thailand, the researchers recommend that in the future such data collection take place in the children's home area during important festivals when the children return to visit their families, such as Song Kran Festival (April) and Chinese New Year.
- ✓ In Sri Lanka the sending communities were also one of the main sources of information on child domestic workers. In addition to easing access to the children,

interviewing at places of origin can enable researchers to better understand the push and pull factors of the WFCL in question and the migration process.

- ✓ In El Salvador, interviews at places of origin – in contrast to the situations in Thailand and Sri Lanka - were found unsuitable for interviewing for three reasons: large geographic distances; potential conflict with parents who decided to send their children to work; and the need to respect the limited time that children spend at home.

7. **Identifying best times to interview boys and girls:** The best times to interview children varied from study to study and between worst forms.

- ✓ In the case of the children working on sugar cane plantations in El Salvador, the best time proved to be first thing in the morning prior to work. Following their work hours, the children had other obligations; the boys attended school and the girls engaged in household chores. It was quickly realized by the researchers that the children were in a hurry at this time to get to school or return home; they did not want to interfere with this schedule.
- ✓ For sexually exploited girls, it was generally difficult to locate them during the daytime. The best times for interviews, therefore, were in the evenings and at night on Fridays and Saturdays, although special

attention was necessary regarding the reaction of the employers/exploiters and the interference with the clients/exploiters.

If the best times to conduct interviews can be assessed early on in the study, the investigation will proceed more efficiently. It is also true, however, that the researchers must be prepared for long waits and delays when conducting interviews.

- ✓ In one instance, in the RA on fishing in El Salvador, the interviewer spent many hours waiting while the child interviewee repeatedly delayed the encounter.

8. **Schools as an entry point:** The classroom should not be overlooked as a valuable source of data when conducting RAs, and sometimes the only means of obtaining information.

- ✓ As mentioned under the paragraph on local and national support in section one, the research team investigating child labour on flower plantations in Ecuador faced difficulties in obtaining information from the community. As a result, they identified schools and informal education institutions as an entry point. Acknowledging that the initial research plans were not going to provide the necessary data, the researchers found willing respondents in the frustrated teachers in the village schools where the drop out rates are very high. They were able to draw conclusions about the lives of the boys and girls when

they asked the students (during school hours) to draw something relevant to their lives, and the overwhelming number of illustrations included images of flower production and of the plantation.

- ✓ In the Sri Lanka RA on child domestic workers, school-going girls and boys (who were not child domestic workers) were given an assignment by their teacher on their perceptions of child domestic work to gain insight into the perceptions and circumstances of this work in the community. The school children tended to be of the middle-class and the insight gained by the researchers came through the children's descriptions of their household organization which included child domestic workers.

9. **The benefits of observation:** Observation played a large and important role in many of the RAs, serving as an effective source to complement data from interviews and focus group discussions.

- ✓ In the investigation on children working in the urban informal sector in El Salvador, the close observation of the work environment by the research team was fundamental to determining the dangers and risks that boys and girls face. Based on observation, the researchers could conclude that many times the hazards the children face are not associated with the work activities themselves but with the environment in which the work is undertaken. Such is the case of girls and boys working as street vendors where the

activity is not hazardous, though children are exposed to the risks of being hit by a car, being robbed, becoming part of a gang or being sexually exploited.

- ✓ The Lebanon RA investigating child labour on tobacco plantations also emphasized observation. Researchers were instructed to observe children in their work setting for at least one hour, repeated at different times of the day.

Observation should not be limited to the work environment.

- ✓ In the study on sugar cane plantations in Bolivia, valuable information was uncovered not only by observing boys and girls working on the plantations but also in their “non-working” lives. It became clear that children were also responsible for various domestic tasks including collecting water, looking after younger siblings and cooking.
- ✓ Observation was a crucial early step in the RAs on commercial sexual exploitation in Costa Rica and El Salvador; through observations researchers were able to overcome the difficulties involved in accessing children and to decide on the most appropriate way to approach them.

10. Flexibility and creativity in data collection: Flexibility and creativity are beneficial to researchers carrying out RAs that are often unpredictable in nature.

- ✓ During the Tanzania RA on commercial sexual exploitation the interviews were adjusted from the more formally planned ones to casual conversation given the noisy and busy environment at the establishments where they were carried out.
- ✓ In Ethiopia informal education centres were pinpointed as a location that could provide information through role play scenarios by child domestic workers about their daily lives.
- ✓ The RA on drug trafficking in the Philippines found there was not enough time to train the researchers on the psychology of drug dependants and what special approaches to take to interview them. To effectively adapt to the circumstances, social workers and NGO workers with background training on children involved in drugs were requested to carry out the interviews.
- ✓ The RA on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Costa Rica was met with an obstacle when, in the area of Limon, the girls selected for interviews were afraid of getting involved in the investigation because of threats made to their exploiters (pimps) who were also involved in drug trafficking. The researchers therefore decided to move their fieldwork to other areas of the province.

11. Recording of data: “Recording of data is critical though in some instances researchers should avoid using notebooks

when first making contact to put the interviewee at ease and avoid suspicion. Permission should be sought to tape interviews and discussions. Reports of observations should be completed as soon as possible after the event, as delays can result in lost and inaccurate information. To reduce or avoid suspicion, the dress and behaviour of researchers should ‘blend in’ to the dress code of locations being visited” (Dunn 2001). Still, the methods of recording data must remain flexible and be adjusted to the particular circumstances and comfort levels.

- ✓ During the RA on drug trafficking in Estonia, the interviewers decided to use pen and paper to record the interviews instead of a tape recorder in response to the fact that the girls and boys were more at ease with the former method, and afraid of the use of the recorder.

Data collection: summary checklist

- ❑ Work with **knowledgeable individuals** to assist in **accessing respondents** and gaining information.
- ❑ Examine the **possibilities of collecting quantitative data** to be able to **estimate the magnitude** of the child labour problem.
- ❑ Devote the necessary time and energy into **building a rapport** with the boy and girl respondents.
- ❑ Arrange for a **person familiar to the respondent** to introduce them to the interviewer; pay careful attention to **compatible interviewer-interviewee matches**.
- ❑ Do not overlook the **perspectives of boys and girls as valuable sources** of information.
- ❑ Facilitate an **interview environment** that puts boys, girls and other respondents at ease, both in terms of **location and other actors** present.
- ❑ Conduct interviews at **times conducive to the schedule of the respondent**; undertake the necessary background review to determine these times.
- ❑ Consider using the **classroom as an entry point** and a valuable source of data.
- ❑ **Observe girls and boys** at various stages of the research and **at worksites as well as in other aspects of their lives** to gain insights into their circumstances.
- ❑ Be **flexible and resourceful** when carrying out data collection, **ready to adapt to the circumstances** as necessary.
- ❑ **Record data discreetly** and **limit delays** between data collection and recording.

Data analysis and report preparation

Careful planning and data collection when conducting an RA should be followed by sound analysis and an accurate and high-quality report. Additionally, once data is gathered, and prior to processing and analysis, it is important that data are safely stored and that copies of the different data are made. Data should also be organized into broad categories, processed, cleaned and labelled in preparation for analysis and report writing.

RA reports are a succinct and accessible means of disseminating important research findings. Sometimes the RA is considered “finished” once the field work has been completed, with deadlines and financial constraints compromising the hard work that has been put into the RA at the final but crucial stages. The points in this section are intended to help RA research teams maximize their final efforts in terms of data analysis and report preparation and, in doing so, their final achievements.

1. **Data analysis and the tabulation of results:** “Analysis and tabulation from both quantitative and qualitative research have to be done carefully, extracting and cross-checking data several times. Presenting the findings in a responsible way that provides details of the experiences of boys and girls but does not sensationalize or trivialize the information is very important as well as very time consuming” (Dunn, 2001). RA reports should integrate the findings collected from focus group discussions, key informants and other means as well as the data obtained from the interview questionnaires.

- ✓ The programme team operating out of ILO headquarters was met with some obstacles when obtaining the RA data from the research teams, largely due to fact that the request for raw data sets from researchers as a separate output to the report, has not been common procedure in the past. Delays were also caused, in some cases, by lack of documentation of data processing by the research team. In other cases financial constraints played a role.

When conducting RAs, a research proposal that clearly outlines the data preparation and submission expectations – as well as a budget reflecting these tasks – will help produce high-quality results.

2. **Consideration of misinformation and inaccuracies provided by the respondents:** Misinformation can stem from both employer and child respondents.
 - ✓ In Ethiopia, when the employers of CDW were approached by the researchers they were cooperative and provided them with an appointment. They would then, however, show conditions and treatment that were judged as totally different from a “normal” day.
 - ✓ Also in Ethiopia, when observing the children’s appearance, the researchers noted that a number of children did not wear shoes, but that their feet did not show signs of being bare on a regular basis. The researchers suspected that the children may have heard rumours that the more destitute they look, the more likely they will receive support from NGOs.

Along these same lines, the researchers believed that some of the information provided by the children may have been exaggerated to a certain extent in the children's efforts to receive financial assistance. This was despite the researchers making it clear from the start what their aims were. The potential for misinformation was considered when analysing the data of the study.

- ✓ As previously mentioned, misinformation was provided to the researchers in the case of the RA on flower plantations in Ecuador. After the great challenges the researchers faced in being allowed to access the plantations, they did not observe any girls or boys working there. This did not coincide with the information they had collected directly from the children that demonstrated their involvement in their work on the plantation. As it turned out, the plantation owners were misrepresenting the circumstances.

Taking into account the above examples, it should be noted that there is value to instances when data obtained do *not* support each other, as new child labour knowledge can be gained. The interpretation of circumstances when data from various sources are not in agreement can provide researchers with important insight concerning the dynamics of the child labour situation.

3. **Confidentiality and ethical issues:** Careful attention must be paid to avoid publicizing the names of actual participants

and venues where boys and girls have been observed because of the security risks to which they can be exposed as well as the legal ramifications. This applies particularly to cases of illicit activities such as commercial sexual exploitation and drug trafficking. Along with issues of confidentiality, the RAs have reiterated the careful attention that must be paid to children and research team members when conducting research in terms of other ethical issues as well. Along these lines, a document has been prepared within the framework of the current IPEC/SIMPOC project to investigate worst forms of child labour, to address ethical issues when conducting research on children. Topics include informed consent, avoiding putting children at further risk, raising children's awareness of their rights, language and approach, trust, conditions of listening, coping strategies, compensation, the right to privacy and the sharing of research.¹²

- ✓ The RA on drug trafficking in Brazil illustrates some of the potential dangers of RA research and the importance of confidentiality, particularly involving illicit activities. As mentioned in section one, the researcher was a resident of a "favela" neighbourhood controlled by one drug gang. He worked with an NGO in this neighbourhood, and simultaneously carried out the RA research in a different neighbourhood close by, controlled by the opponent "favela". During the time of the RA he was interviewed by the media as a consequence of his work at the NGO. As part of the interview he

¹² For further details on confidentiality and other important ethical issues please see: Edmonds, C. (October 2003). Ethical Considerations When Conducting Research on Children in Worst Forms of Child Labour in Nepal, ILO, Geneva.

mentioned his RA work; further to this his wife was kidnapped for a number of hours. He was threatened with his life should he try to assist her. Fortunately, she was eventually released safely. Although the researcher was not endangered as a direct result of his involvement in the drug trafficking RA, this example serves to illustrate the great danger that can arise from working with children who are engaged in illicit activities. Acknowledging this, the researcher took extra precautions for himself and the RA team. Individual names were never mentioned in press releases or similar contexts as it was essential that confidentiality be maintained and a repeat episode like this one, or a more severe one, be avoided.

4. **Considering the reader:** The reports produced in the context of this project demonstrated a range of styles and approaches. The reports of highest quality were those in which the RA authors directed their texts to meet the readership needs of both generalists and specialists. Drawing on this, it is recommended that the language of RA reports be simple and easily understood rather than complex. The level of graphic detail should be balanced, taking into account the cultural and social attitudes and values of the majority of the readers. Additionally, to serve the expected local, national and international readership, and avoid potential misinterpretations of the results, it is recommended to include a glossary of terms as they are understood in the

report. As with any report, a clear outline prepared in advance is crucial to a high quality result.¹³

Data analysis and report preparation: summary checklist

- ❑ **Present qualitative and quantitative data accurately and responsibly;** budget the necessary time and financial support to be able to do so.
- ❑ **Weigh responses for misinformation** and discuss strategies to account for potential inaccuracies with the rest of the RA team.
- ❑ **Follow up on potential new knowledge** obtained when data from various sources do not support each other.
- ❑ **Ensure confidentiality and ethics** are taken into account throughout the research with special attention to the preparation of the final report.
- ❑ **Gear the text of the final report to both generalists and specialists,** using easily understood language; **consider the attitudes and values** of the majority of the readers and **include definitions of terms** as necessary.

¹³ For details on a suggested outline for an RA report including structure and length, see Part II of the ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual – revised, Forthcoming 2005.

Applying the lessons learned

The project to investigate the worst forms of child labour has been, to some extent, an experimental exercise to determine effective ways to conduct RAs in the context of many different forms of child labour. The project has brought the theory of the methodology into practice across countries and child labour sectors for close to 40 different research teams to adapt and apply. Each research team encountered its own share of challenges, whether due to weather conditions, difficulties in accessing respondents, unexpected circumstances necessitating adaptations to the research strategies, unsupportive contexts and time pressures. These challenges were overcome by the resourceful nature, persistence and expertise of the teams, and the lessons learned in the process have illustrated the extent to which each RA is unique.

There is no one recipe for carrying out an RA on child labour; likewise, there is no formula for a “perfect” research team nor a single means of accessing hidden girl and boy respondents. As those involved in the fight against child labour around the globe know, there is also not one solution to ending this form of exploitation. What has been established as a result of this project is that the RA methodology is very appropriate for investigating certain WFCL situations that traditional surveys are ill-equipped for probing. It is a flexible tool to generate new knowledge on the working and lifestyle conditions of child labourers, particularly those engaged in worst forms of child labour and, as proven by the 38 project research teams, RA is a methodology that works.

As research on child labour expands, there is a need to improve the information collection and analysis accordingly. Too often research projects come to a close without passing on the results of newly

acquired experience from the investigation methodology to those who could benefit from it. This paper has been prepared with the aim of preventing this lack of essential communication to researchers. The lessons learned from implementing this project offer a wealth of extremely useful information on how to effectively, efficiently and sensitively carry out RAs on WFCL.

These lessons have been incorporated into the revised Rapid Assessment Field Manual¹⁴. They will also be shared by means of training and as part of the technical support provided to researchers by those overseeing RA investigations. The dissemination of the lessons is a step towards improving the availability and quality of information on some of the world’s most exploited children and, in turn, to improve their circumstances.

It is the hope of the author that future research on child labour will take these lessons into account and benefit from the experiences of this extensive, challenging and information-rich project; and that in some way the boys and girls currently exploited in worst forms of child labour will be positively impacted by this sharing of knowledge.

¹⁴ ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual - revised, Forthcoming 2005.

Bibliography

Edmonds, C. (October 2003). *Ethical Considerations When Conducting Research on Children in Worst Forms of Child Labour in Nepal*, ILO, Geneva.

ILO/IPEC – SIMPOC(2002). *Every Child Counts – New Global Estimates on Child Labour*, ILO, Geneva.

ILO/IPEC (2001). *Good Practices in Action against Child Labour: A synthesis report of seven Country Studies, Brazil, Indonesia, Kenya, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey: 1997-98*.

ILO/IPEC. *Rapid Assessment Reports* series, 2001-2003. This series consists of 38 reports based on field research concerned primarily with the worst forms of child labour.

Aksit, B., Karanci, N. and Gündüz-Hoşgör, A. (November 2001). *Turkey, Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 7. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Alexandrescu, G. (March 2002). *Romania, Working Street Children in Bucharest*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 19. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Amarasinghe, S. W. (February 2002). *Sri Lanka, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 18. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Bal Kumar KC, Govind Subedi, Yogendra Bahadur Gurung, and Keshab Prasad Adhikari (November 2001). *Nepal, Trafficking in Girls with Special Reference to Prostitution: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 2. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Bal Kumar KC, Keshab Radad Adhikari, Govind Subedi, and Yongendra Bahadur Gurung (November 2001). *Nepal, Situation of Child Porters: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 6. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Bal Kumar KC, Yogendra Bahadur Gurung, Keshab Prasad Ahikari, and Govind Subedi (November 2001). *Nepal, Situation of Child Ragpickers: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 4. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Cagoco-Guiam, R. (February 2002). *Philippines, Child Soldiers in Central and Western Mindanao: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 21. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Carranza, A.C., Zelaya, L. and Iglesias, S. (March 2002). *El Salvador, Trabajo Infantil en los Basureros: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 32, ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Castelnuovo, C., Castelnuovo, A., Oviedo, J., Santacruz, X. (April 2000). *Ecuador, Trabajo Infantil en la Floricultura: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating

- the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 35. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Claramunt, M. C. (April 2002). *Costa Rica, Explotación Sexual Comercial de Personas Menores de Edad: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 33. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Consultation and Research Institute (May 2002). *Lebanon, Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 17. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Dávalos, G. (May 2002). *Bolivia, Trabajo Infantil en la Caña de Azúcar: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 36. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- De Souza e Silva, J. and Urani, A. (February 2002). *Brazil, Situation of Children in Drug Trafficking: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 20. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Dunn, L. (November 2001). *Jamaica, Situation of Children in Prostitution: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 8. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- García, F. and Duque, V. (May 2002). *Guatemala, Trabajo Infantil en los Basureros: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 34. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Godoy, G. (February 2002). *El Salvador, Trabajo Infantil Doméstico: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 29. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Godoy, O. (March 2002). *El Salvador, Trabajo Infantil en la Pesca: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 31. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Gonza, M.J. and Moshi, P. (January 2002). *Tanzania, Children Working in Commercial Agriculture – Tea: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 11. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- González de Innocenti, Z. and Innocenti, C. (March 2002). *El Salvador, La Explotación Sexual Comercial Infantil y Adolescente: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 30. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Kadonya, C., Madihi, M., Mtwana, S. (January 2002). *Tanzania, Child Labour in the Informal Sector: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 14. ILO/IPEC.
- Kalikova, N., Kurbatova, A., Talu, A. (June 2002). *Estonia, Children and Adolescents Involved in Drug Use and Trafficking: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 37. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

- Kamala, E., Lusinde, E., Millinga, J., Mwaitula, J. (November 2001). *Tanzania, Children in Prostitution: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 12. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Kannangara, N., de Silva, H. and Parndigamage, N. (September 2003). *Sri Lanka, Child Domestic Labour: A Rapid Assessment*. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Kifle, A. (July 2002). *Ethiopia, Child Domestic Workers in Addis Ababa: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 38. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Le Bach Duong (July 2002). *Vietnam, Children in Prostitution in Hanoi, Hai Phong, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 16. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Lepiten, M. (February 2002). *Philippines, Children's Involvement in the Production, Sale and Trafficking of Drugs in Cebu City: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 22. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Makame, V., Mariki, G., Mwinulla, J. (November 2001). *Tanzania, Child Labour in the Horticulture Sector in Arumeru District: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 10. ILO/IPEC.
- Masudi, A., Ishumi, A., Mbeo, F., Sambo, W. (November 2001). *Tanzania, Children Working in Commercial Agriculture – Tobacco: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 9. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Mwami, J.A., Sanga, A.J., Nyoni, J. (January 2002). *Tanzania, Child Labour in Mining: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 15. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Nchahaga, G. S. (January 2002). *Tanzania, Children Working in Commercial Agriculture – Coffee: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 13. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Phlainoi, N. (April 2002). *Thailand, Child Domestic Workers: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 23. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Quezada de Vargas, J. and Vargas Aguilar, A. (February 2002). *El Salvador, Trabajo Infantil en la Caña de Azúcar: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 27. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.
- Quiteño, H. and Rivas, W. (February 2002). *El Salvador, Trabajo Infantil Urbano: Una Evaluación Rápida*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 28, ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Ravaozanany, N., Razafindrabe, L., Rakotoniarivo, L. (June 2002). *Madagascar, Les Enfants Victimes de l'Exploitation Sexuelle à Antsiranana, Toliary, et Antananarivo: Une Evaluation Rapide*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 25. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Sharma, S., Basnyat, B., Ganesh G.C. (November 2001). *Nepal, Bonded Labour Among Child Workers of the Kamaiya System: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 5. ILO/IPEC.

Sharma, S., Thakurathi, M., Sapkota, K., Devkota, B. and Rimal, B. (November 2001). *Nepal, Situation of Domestic Child Labourers in Kathmandu: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 3. ILO/IPEC.

Sunthornkajit, V., Kaiyanunta, T., Varavarn, P., Varatechakongka, S. (August 2002). *Thailand, Child Labour in Illicit Drug Activities: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 24. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

Wille, C. (November 2001). *Thailand-Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand-Myanmar Border Areas, Trafficking in Children into the Worst Forms of Child Labour: A Rapid Assessment*, Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 1. ILO/IPEC, Geneva.

ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual - revised, Forthcoming 2005.

ILO/UNICEF, Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual, January 2000, a draft to be finalized further to field tests.

Jensen, R. and Pearson, M. (December 2002). *Rapid Assessment/Capture-Recapture (RA-CR), A Field Guide*, DRAFT.