

International Labour Office
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
(SIMPOC)

SIMPOC External Advisory
Committee on Child Labour Statistics (SEAC)

Advice Record of Second Meeting, 27-28 October 2003

The SIMPOC External Advisory Committee on Child Labour Statistics (SEAC) held its second meeting in Geneva on 27-28 October 2003. Twelve of the thirteen SEAC members were in attendance.¹ Some 50 persons participated in the meeting including observers, and representatives of donor countries and staff members of IPEC (attached roster). The Committee was chaired by Gareth Jones, completing the second part of his one-year mandate. Farhad Mehran continued to serve as facilitator to the Committee.

As part of his opening address, Frans Röselaers, Director of IPEC, expressed his appreciation for the valuable comments received by members of the Committee on the draft SIMPOC manuals on survey methodologies and data analysis, and welcomed any further written comments that might be received before November 15, 2003.

The meeting proceeded in line with the agreed agenda (an annex of the present report). Below are the records of the advice of the Committee and where appropriate highlights of the main discussion.

Follow up on advice made by the Committee at its April 2003 meeting

The Committee was informed of the activities undertaken by SIMPOC since its first meeting in April 2003, and how the advice given in that meeting were considered by SIMPOC for guiding its current and future work plan.

In particular, the Committee noted that SIMPOC will increasingly rely on linked surveys as a way of limiting survey cost and promoting the integration of child labour surveys into the national statistical programmes.

¹ Vijay Verma was unable to attend due to unexpected personal reason. Edith D. De Leeuw did not attend the first day of the meeting due to academic commitments.

The Committee also noted the various purposes that SIMPOC is envisaging to use administrative data, in particular, for the preparation of country profiles, the measurement of the worst forms of child labour, and the identification of key informants.

The Committee was further informed of the projects underway to review and revise the children's survey questionnaire and to prepare corresponding interviewers' training instructions.

The Committee was also informed of other projects under preparation for assessing the efficiency of the sample design of the SIMPOC national surveys, and for dealing with non-standard sampling units.

The Committee was also informed of the considerable increase in web postings of the national survey results and publications since its last meeting. Postings of survey reports from 17 countries and micro-data from 13 countries are expected by April 2004.

Follow-up issues with respect to the other specific advice of the Committee made at its first meeting are taken up below as part of the discussion of the present meeting.

Comments on the Global Evaluation of SIMPOC

The Committee noted the Executive Summary of the SIMPOC Independent Programme Evaluation (unedited final draft) and the presentation on its main recommendations. The Committee will provide its comments and advice to SIMPOC for the implementation of the recommendations when the full report of the Programme Evaluation will be made available to the members of the Committee.

SIMPOC Methodology Manual

The final draft of the SIMPOC Methodology Manual was presented and the views of the Committee sought on its structure and contents.

Various comments were made on the length of the Manual particularly in relation to those parts dealing with general issues not particular to the measurement of children's activity. At the same time, the Committee recognized the need for a self-contained Manual, given the difficulty in accessing to documents on general survey methodologies in some countries.

The Committee trusts that the text of the Manual will be thoroughly edited and the style of presentation of its headings, sub-headings, annexes, footnotes, citations, page referencing and other such physical aspects harmonized throughout the different chapters.

In addition, the Committee recommended the review of the Manual by a technical editor to ensure that a single voice is heard throughout the Manual. Particular proposals were made in connection with Chapters 1 to 3. It was suggested that Chapter 1 should clearly define the various target audiences of the Manual and how the Manual could serve

their different purposes. It should also explain the different parts of the Manual and in each case the rationale for the approach adopted in collecting information on child labour.

Chapter 2 would give a comprehensive view of child work, identifying child labour, as currently defined, as a subset of the wider concept of child work. The Chapter would also explain the steps SIMPOC is taking to develop a broader definition that will address general policy concerns, specifically, with respect to gender issues.

Chapter 3 would describe the different tools and methods learnt from national experiences, and explain how they complement or supplement each other. The Chapter would also explain the strengths and limitations of the various methods, and the conditions under which one method may be preferred to another.

Definitions of Child Labour

The Committee reiterated its concern expressed in its first meeting on the importance of a broad definition of child labour tied to the objectives of child labour measurement, not necessarily restricting itself to the objectives of the measurement of economic activity and employment, and its link to national income accounting.

The Committee suggested that the section on the statistical definitions of child labour (Section 2.4) be revised to begin with a broad definition of child work toward which measurement should in principle be targeted, turning then, for practical purposes, to the more restrictive definition of child labour in line with the present SIMPOC definition.

The Committee also suggested that the various issues concerning the extension of the definition of child labour to cover household chores and certain other non-economic activities already discussed in the Manual be brought under a separate section (Section 2.5) with its own heading. This section would also discuss the advantages and drawbacks of the extension of the definition, and the role of the length of the reference period and its impact on seasonal activities of children. It would also describe the on-going work of SIMPOC to develop statistical standards on children's non-economic activities and thresholds to define light work, outside as well as inside the production boundary, in particular, work in family enterprises including farms.

National Child Labour Survey

The Committee focused its discussion on particular issues of the household-based national child labour survey, leaving the technical aspects of sampling design and estimation procedure to outside expert evaluation.

The Committee emphasised the importance of describing in the Manual the existing knowledge on questionnaire design and specific interviewing techniques regarding children. The Committee recommended that the reproduction of selected

questionnaires of national child labour surveys be accompanied with some assessment of their strengths and weaknesses.

The Committee pointed to a number of omissions, in particular, the definition of household and the rules of household membership, the identification of the most knowledgeable respondent in terms of children's activities, the recording of the actual respondent and the person who may have been helping in the interview, provisions for organizing the data entry programme right from the start along with the questionnaire design.

The Committee suggested that the usefulness of the Manual may be enhanced by providing the reader with some numerical order of magnitude on key parameters of field operation and data processing, for example, the typical daily interviewing load experienced in selected national child labour surveys, or the volume of coding that can be expected from an average coder in a national child labour survey.

Another area identified by the Committee for further guidelines concerned the various trade offs that a survey designer would face in practice, for example, in terms of open versus closed questions, or in terms of adding questions against sample size possibilities.

Finally, the Committee expressed reservations on certain aspects of the Manual, in particular, the limited two-day training period recommended in Section 8.5, the combined treatment of editing and imputation in Chapter 11, and the statement in Chapter 5 on translation of questionnaires into local languages with no regard to its effects on the other aspects of survey operations, or questionnaire length versus quality of responses.

Rapid Assessment Methodology

After receiving clarification on the purpose of this chapter and its intended audience, the Committee supported the inclusion of the chapter in the Manual but suggested that explicit references be made at appropriate places to the latest version of the separate full Manual on Rapid Assessment where the reader can obtain detailed guidelines on this topic.

The Committee also strongly requested the revision of the language used in presenting the rapid assessment methodology, in particular, to avoid the use of terms such as "non-scientific" or "subjective," and instead to emphasise the positive role that rapid assessment methodologies can play to collect data on children's activities, particularly, in obtaining hard-to-find information on the worst forms of child labour.

The Committee provided a number of proposals for inclusion of further guidelines on specific topics, in particular, on the organization of the data collection programme including administration, finances and transport, on the selection of locations for rapid assessment, on procedures to identify key informants, on strategies for collecting sensitive information from reluctant children, hints for validating the responses and presenting the data.

Baseline Surveys

After examining the nature of the baseline surveys in relation to the other tools of data collection discussed in the Manual, the Committee suggested that this Chapter should be clearly demarcated from the other chapters, reflecting the generic nature of *baseline surveys*. This instrument may in fact refer to any of the particular survey tools mentioned in the Manual or a combination of them, with the purpose of establishing a baseline for program intervention. In order to emphasize this role of the baseline surveys, the Committee suggested that the Chapter be placed at the end of Part 3 or, preferably, be brought as a separate part of the Manual, such as Part 4.

The Committee also suggested that the text should clearly explain the various distinctions mentioned in the chapter, for example, targeting versus national estimation, qualitative versus quantitative techniques, household-based (or establishment-based) versus location-based sampling frames. The Committee also suggested the inclusion of more practical guidelines on some of the technical aspects of data collection, in particular, the minimum sample size required for base-line estimation at national level, the conditions under which a simple random sample as opposed a cluster sample should be used.

The Committee suggested that this Chapter should include a discussion of advantages and limitations of the use of control groups, but avoiding advocating their use in any circumstances. The text should provide the necessary background information so as to permit the researchers to decide on the use of control groups based on national experiences and the circumstances under which the survey is taking place. In surveys that cover a wide range of different types of child labour, one or more types may be used as control groups to gauge others against them.

Tabulation and data analysis

The Committee emphasised the importance of proper tabulation and careful analysis of the survey results. It recognized the need of national capacity building in this area and suggested means to promote it in the Manual, for example, by increasing the number of references to other documents providing guidelines on data analysis and report writing, in particular, the UN Statistics Division Manual on Household Surveys in Developing Countries, and the World Bank Methodological Manuals on Living Standard Measurement Studies. References could also be given to selected national publications where data on child labour data are well analysed. It was also recognized that capacity building for analysis of data requires training and this aspect should be referred to in the Manual.

The Committee noted that survey results are generally disseminated through a number of publications ranging from early releases with brief highlights to final tabulations with detailed analysis and extensive methodological descriptions. The Manual as it presently drafted focuses only on the more detailed reporting aspects.

The Committee suggested that the term “causes” should not be used where the variable is in fact a “correlate” or when the tabulation heading is in fact in terms of a “reason” for example “reason for child labour” or “reason for long hours of work.”

The Committee made a number of suggestions on improving the presentation of the tables: (a) provide for citation of sources and description of notes under each table and graph; (b) use the term “reference person” rather “head of household”; (c) ensure that the categories of each tabulated variable are exhaustive, for example, idle children or children looking for jobs are clearly treated in the tabulation of the activity status of children; (d) warn about the irrelevance of certain occupational categories in the case of children (for example, ISCO-88 Major Group 1 on Legislators, senior officials and managers); (e) make the lower limit of the first age groups (5-9 years) flexible so as to accommodate national circumstances where the official age of entry in school is above 5; (f) provide for the calculation of the average as well as the median where it is appropriate.

Staffing of future SIMPOC activities

Alice Ouedraogo, Director for Policy Development and Advocacy, IPEC, with responsibility for SIMPOC activities, presented her views on the major challenges facing SIMPOC and drew the attention of the Committee to the imbalance between the objectives of the donor countries that want speedier delivery and the decreasing capacity of SIMPOC. The staffing of SIMPOC is planned to be reduced by March 2004 to just 2.0 professional staff funded by donors and 0.5 professional staff funded by ILO regular budget.

The Committee recognised the difficulty that is facing SIMPOC and the virtual impossibility of meeting the increasing demand that is being made on its programme with such limited and diminishing staff. The Committee decided to prepare a statement on this issue, explaining SIMPOC achievements and the requirement for adequate resources for its future activities.

Next Committee meeting

The next Committee meeting was tentatively scheduled for 19-20 April 2004. Committee members who were absent or unable to confirm these dates at the meeting are requested to communicate their availability as soon as possible.

Following the end of the one-year mandate of Gareth Jones as Chair of SEAC, Kaushik Basu was elected as new Chair for the next two meetings of the Committee.

Committee members expressed their gratitude and applauded Gareth Jones for his contributions to the deliberations of the Committee and his cheerful and effective style of conducting the meetings.

**SIMPOC EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON CHILD LABOUR STATISTICS (SEAC)**

Geneva, 27-28 October 2003

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**International Labour Office
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC)**

**SIMPOC External Advisory
Committee on Child Labour Statistics (SEAC)**

**ILO Headquarters
Geneva
Salle I, R-3**

27-28 October 2003

Agenda

Monday, 27 October 2003

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|---------------|--|
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration of Participants and Refreshments |
| 09:30 – 09:45 | Official Welcome
Frans Roselaers, Director, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) |
| 09:45 – 10:00 | Introductions of Committee Members, Observers |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | Adoption of Agenda
Farhad Mehran, Senior Statistician, ILO Policy Integration Department, and Facilitator to the Committee |
| 10:15 – 10:45 | Highlights of on-going and planned SIMPOC activities
<i>Presenter:</i> Frank Hagemann, Senior Policy Analyst and SIMPOC Coordinator |
| | Questions from Committee |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Findings of Global Evaluation of SIMPOC
<i>Presenter:</i> Peter Wichmand, Head of Design, Evaluation and Documentation Unit, IPEC, on behalf of Pierre Spitz, External Evaluator |
| | Questions from Committee |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Coffee Break |

- 11:30 – 13:00 **National Child Labour Household Surveys: questionnaire design, sample selection, field work and main data items**
Presenter: Bijoy Raychaudhuri, Senior Statistician, SIMPOC
Discussant: Diane Steele, Committee Member
- Questions from and Discussion by Committee
- 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch Break
- 14:30 – 16:00 **Rapid assessment methodology: techniques, field work, main data items and lessons learned**
Presenter: Jennifer Fee, Researcher, SIMPOC
Discussant: Leith Dunn, Committee Member
- Questions from and Discussion by Committee
- 16:00 – 16:15 Coffee break
- 16:15 – 18:00 **Advice of the Committee**
Facilitator: Farhad Mehran
- Review of Advice of SEAC first meeting (14-15 April 2003)
 - Review of and recommendations on the SIMPOC Methodology Manual
 - Implementation of SIMPOC Evaluation recommendations
- 18:00 – 19:30 **Reception** (R-2 coffee room next to Cafeteria)

Tuesday, 28 October 2003

- 09:00 – 09:30 **Refreshments**
- 09:30 – 11:00 **Baseline surveys: approaches and the relationship between them, questionnaire design, sample selection, field work and main data items**
Presenter: Sanjukta Mukherjee, Baseline survey specialist, SIMPOC
Discussant: Muhammad Saifullah, National Programme Manager, IPEC
- Questions from and Discussion by Committee

- 11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break
- 11:15 – 12:45 **Standard tables and indicators**
Presenter: Astrid Marschatz, Data analyst, SIMPOC
Discussant: Furio Rosati, Committee Observer
- Questions from and Discussion by Committee
- 12:45 – 14:15 Lunch Break
- 14:15 – 15:15 **Major challenges of SIMPOC**
Presenter: Alice Ouédraogo, Director for Policy Development and Advocacy, IPEC
- Questions from Committee
- 15:15 – 15:30 Coffee Break
- 15:30 – 17:15 **Advice of the Committee**
 Facilitator: Farhad Mehran
- Review of Advice of SEAC first meeting (14-15 April 2003)
 - Review of and recommendations on the SIMPOC Methodology Manual (cont.)
 - Review of and recommendations on the SIMPOC Manual for Data Analysis and Report Writing
 - Future of SIMPOC activities
 - Next SEAC meeting
- 17:15 – 17:30 **Closing Remarks**
 Alice Ouédraogo, Director for Policy Development and Advocacy, IPEC