

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 First Meeting, 14-15 April 2003

The SIMPOC External Advisory Committee on Child Labour Statistics (SEAC) held its first meeting in Geneva on 14-15 April 2003. Eleven of the twelve SEAC members were in attendance.¹ About 25 other persons, comprising external observers and IPEC staff members, were in attendance at various sessions (see attached Roster). Gareth Jones was elected as Chair of the Committee for a one-year term. Farhad Mehran served as Facilitator to SEAC. The attached agenda was adopted without amendment. The results of the deliberations on five agenda topics follow.

Given the range and depth of the information provided by SIMPOC in this first meeting and the need for SEAC to analyse them adequately, SEAC regards that its initial advice documented here may need to be revisited in the future as more understanding of the SIMPOC process is gained.

Child labour data collection programme

SEAC was informed of the four main objectives of the SIMPOC data collection programme:

1. National estimation of the extent and evolution of child labour and its basic characteristics.
2. Identification of the causes and consequences of child labour and their relationships with other socio-economic characteristics.
3. Estimation of the incidence and nature of child labour in targetted sectors and activities.
4. Measurement of the magnitude of the worst forms of child labour and their composition.

¹ Gavin Jones was unable to attend due to ILO temporary regulations regarding travel from SARS affected areas. Further, Albert Motivans of UNESCO, listed as an observer, was given Committee member status for this and future meetings.

Objective 1 is met by administering a limited set of questions as part of a national household survey with a sufficiently large sample size. The survey may take the form of a special module attached to an on-going national household survey programme or an independent survey with its own design and field operation.

Objective 2 is met by supplementing the national survey with a series of coordinated specialised household surveys with appropriate questionnaire contents to be conducted on a less frequent basis using sub-samples of the national survey or complementary probability samples with restricted sample sizes.

Objective 3 is met by considering a range of different types of surveys appropriate to particular sectors or activities of child labour that are targetted. These surveys called base-line surveys may consist of general or targetted surveys of households or employers, as well as surveys of streets or other locations where the particular child labour activity is carried out, and surveys of schools or other institutions related to children.

Objective 4 is particularly met by a methodology called Rapid Assessment, developed by the ILO and UNICEF for obtaining in-depth qualitative data and limited quantitative data on the worst forms of child labour. The targetted surveys mentioned under Objective 3 are also used in connection with Objective 4 for the measurement of certain hazardous forms of child labour and other worst forms of child labour such as child carpet weavers, working street children, child porters, child rag pickers, and children excavating garbage dumps.

SEAC advises that:

- SIMPOC's data collection approach under Objectives 1 and 2 are in fact two extremes of a series of different possibilities. In between these two extremes, other types of linked surveys may be envisaged where the linkage with the national household survey programme may be at various levels and in different degrees in terms of frame construction, sample selection, field operation or other aspects.
- Further thought should be given to the development of appropriate methodologies regarding Objective 4. Targetted surveys designed to measure certain worst forms of child labour have their limits and may not be adequately able to measure some of the worst forms of child labour such as forced and bonded child labour, child prostitution and pornography, and the forced recruitment of children into armed conflicts.
- In addition to survey data, SIMPOC's data collection programme may include administrative data compiled and analysed from a child labour perspective. Such country profiles of child labour may be constructed on the basis of existing data in the areas of education and health, population and migration, as well as other relevant social and legal data reporting systems.
- The Rapid Assessment methodology may also be used for obtaining preliminary information on the situation of child labour which can then be used to design a child labour survey, as the basis for developing a programme or for validation of national survey results.

- All child labour survey instruments and data reporting systems should be designed and evaluated from a gender perspective.
- While the proposed data collection programme as described by SIMPOC is designed to collect data to fill the requirements of the ILO and UN Conventions, data collection should help to identify areas of improvement and rationalization. This is particularly important in view of SIMPOC's new strategic orientation on sustainability and national ownership.

Child labour concepts and definitions

SEAC recognized that the statistical definitions of child labour for abolition and its components must be formulated in accordance with the ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973) and the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999). One implication of these Conventions is that child labour is defined as "*activities which are prejudicial to a child's attendance at school, limit the capacity of the child to benefit from the instruction received, or adversely affect the child's health, safety or morals*"

Given the crucial role of definitions in data collection, SEAC agreed that the statistical definitions of child labour, hazardous work, non-hazardous child labour and each of the various components of the unconditional worst forms of child labour should be subjects of further review by the Committee in its future sessions.

Meanwhile, SEAC advises that:

- The statistical definitions of child labour and its components need not be subordinately tied to the statistical definition of economic activity based on production in the sense of national accounts. Certain non economic activities such as household chores under particular conditions may be considered as child labour. And vice versa, certain economic activities such as light work conducted by children 15 years old and over may be excluded from the scope of child labour. Possible criteria for defining in-scope household chores and out-of-scope light work for statistical purposes may be the length of work hours or the degree of exposure to risk. Appropriate national thresholds need to be determined. These should be related to (but should not exceed) the levels accepted for the adult population in the country.
- The statistical treatment of other activities such as begging and illegal activities be determined in a similar manner in line with the relevant ILO Conventions and not measures used for economic activity and the rules of national accounting.
- Data on household chores and other non economic activities considered as child work be labeled appropriately and classified separately from the set of economic activities classified as child labour.

Data requirement and uses

SEAC was informed of the funders' data requirements for global estimation of child labour. The Committee was also informed of the SIMPOC approach in disseminating the national child labour data.

SEAC advises that:

- SIMPOC present next SEAC meeting with a list of the principal data items used in baseline surveys for analysing the causes and consequences of child labour in different countries as well as data used in national labour force surveys where such surveys have been carried out.
- SIMPOC expedite the posting of micro-data and related materials on the website for use by researchers and committee members. To make the website serve as an archive of survey-related materials, the following priority items should be considered for prompt posting as they become available and these should not be held back until the formal release of the data: questionnaire in language(s) of country as well as the English translation; description of sampling procedures; interviewers training manual; response categories' codebook; documentation on the construction of sample-to-population weights and other weight adjustments; notes on data evaluation and field work experience such as rates of non-response or statements on why a question did not work well in the field; and finally the anonymised edited micro-data for public-use.

Questioning child labour in surveys

SEAC was informed of the cognitive and communicative differences that may exist between children and adults, and among children of different age groups. Also, proxy responses (e.g., parents) may not provide accurate data on some sensitive issues such as physical violence and sexual abuse at home, and therefore it is important that the questionnaire clearly identifies the respondent on each set of questions. SEAC was also informed of studies indicating the difficulty of younger children to process and respond to retrospective questions or questions involving the *either/or* injunction.

SEAC advises that:

- SIMPOC arrange for the Children's Questionnaire of the National Child Labour Survey to be the subject of an immediate expert review to ensure its suitability for obtaining reliable information directly from the children themselves.
- SIMPOC solicit comments from national statisticians involved in the execution of the child labour surveys, regarding the field experience in administering the different types of questionnaires and in particular the strengths and weaknesses of the principal questions of each of the questionnaires. SEAC members will also send their comments to George Okutho, focal point in SIMPOC on Child Labour Survey Questionnaire (okutho@ilo.org).

- SIMPOC ensure that any questionnaires to be in national child labour surveys, be adequately evaluated before national data collection. The evaluation should include a review on the cognitive aspects of the questions addressed to children and a field-test on a small but sufficiently disparate set of respondents.
- SIMPOC prepare training instructions regarding special issues on data collection from children and make them available for use in the national child labour survey.

Child labour survey design

SEAC advises that:

- In an effort to sustain national survey programmes and to achieve efficiency, SIMPOC give priority in collecting national data on child labour through existing household surveys. Special attention should be given to labour force surveys or other survey programmes concerned with social and economic characteristics of the population such as living standards and poverty surveys.
 - The sample design of stand-alone surveys take into account the seasonal activities of children, some governed by the very nature of the schooling system and some by the type of economic activities in which certain children are engaged, for example, in agriculture and tourism industries. Data collection would need to be staggered throughout the year as a preferred option to capture a wider range of child labour activities. If the survey is designed into survey rounds during the year, the sub-sample sizes must be adequate to produce not only reliable estimates of levels, but also estimates of distributions, especially where these are themselves seasonally dependent.
 - SIMPOC undertake a study of the efficiency of the sample designs of the national surveys it has undertaken to date, particularly, to assess the relationship between the design effect and the number and size of the clusters.
 - SIMPOC document the various statistical techniques used for sampling non-standard units in studies undertaken to date. These include sampling of streets to measure street children, or sampling bus stations to measure child porters, or sampling garbage dumps to measure children engaged in excavation there.
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**SIMPOC EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON CHILD LABOUR STATISTICS (SEAC)**

Geneva, 14-15 April 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**

14-15 April 2003

Agenda

Monday, 14 April 2003

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|---------------|---|
| 09:00 – 09:30 | Registration of Participants |
| 09:30 – 09:45 | Official Welcome Frans Roselaers, Director, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) |
| 09:45 – 10:15 | Introductions of Committee Members, Observers |
| 10:15 – 11:00 | Election of Chair, Adoption of Agenda, Role of Committee and Facilitator Farhad Mehran, Senior Statistician, ILO Policy Integration Department, and Facilitator to the Committee |
| 11:00 – 11:15 | Coffee Break |
| 11:15 – 12:45 | Introduction to the SIMPOC Approaches to Gathering Data
Frank Hagemann, Senior Policy Analyst and SIMPOC Coordinator and Angela Martins Oliveira, Senior Statistician, SIMPOC |
| | Questions from and Discussion by Committee |
| 12:45 – 14:15 | Lunch Break |
| 14:15 – 15:30 | Translating ILO Conventions into Measurable Definitions
George Okutho, Senior Statistician, SIMPOC with Yoshie Noguchi, Senior Legal Officer, IPEC |

Defining terms for statistical purposes: Child labour and its age limits; Children's non-economic work; Light work; The worst forms of child labour

Questions from and Discussion by Committee

15:30 – 16:15

Preliminary Findings: Global Evaluation of SIMPOC

Pierre Spitz, External Evaluator

Questions from Committee

16:15 – 16:30

Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00

Advice of the Committee, Facilitator: Farhad Mehran

Is the overall SIMPOC approach relevant and useful?

Is there anything missing from the SIMPOC toolkit? Are there any new tools to consider?

Are there any areas where SIMPOC measurement of child labour could be improved? If so, are there ways that the SIMPOC instruments could be enhanced to do this?

18:00 – 19:00

Reception (R-2 coffee room next to Cafeteria)

Tuesday, 15 April 2003

09:00 – 11:00

Data Requirements and Uses: Two Illustrations Frank

Hagemann and Maria Arteta, Senior Programme Officer, IPEC Operations (OPS) with Yaw Oforu, Senior Technical Adviser, IPEC Operations (OPS)

Questions from and Discussion by Committee

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:30

Questioning Children in Surveys Edith De Leeuw, Committee Member, and discussant: Deborah Levison, Committee Member

Questions from and Discussion by Committee

12:30 – 14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:15 **Sampling Design for Child Labour Surveys** Vijay Verma, Committee Member

Questions from and Discussion by Committee

15:15 – 15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:45 **Summary Advice of the Committee and Other Business**
Facilitator: Farhad Mehran

Summary Advice:

Revisit of first day's advice. Any changes?

Where should SIMPOC strengthen or focus the statistical work in the future?

Are there data that users need that SIMPOC has failed to provide?

Are there uses of the SIMPOC data that have not been exploited?

What can SIMPOC learn from Dr. De Leeuw's work in measuring child labor from the point of view of the children?

Are there additional sampling design methods/issues that should be included in the SIMPOC manual?

Other Business:

Core Planning Group

Schedule of meetings

Forum for communication

Next agenda

Assessment Form (at #8 in Binder – please fill out)

17:45 – 18:00 **Closing Remarks** Alice Ouedraogo, Director for Policy Development and Advocacy, IPEC