



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation



International
Labour
Office



OUT OF WORK AND INTO SCHOOL

our development challenge





CHILD LABOUR SUSTAINS POVERTY. EDUCATION PROMOTES DEVELOPMENT.

Child labour can involve work that enslaves children, separates them from their families and condemns them and their families to a downward spiral of poverty and deprivation. It undermines sustainable development and deprives countries of one of their richest resources: human capital.

Child labour does not lift any child out of poverty. A good education does. A working child may earn a small wage and it may be enough to keep a family from falling apart. Still, a small wage cannot change their world the way an education can.

CHILD LABOUR KEEPS ECONOMIES FROM GROWING EQUITABLY. AN EDUCATED YOUTH HELPS ECONOMIES FLOURISH.

It is the opportunities and experiences during the most formative stages – childhood and youth – that shape people's access to decent work and enable them to enjoy security and protection for the rest of their lives. Education is the first step to decent work. Employment opportunities represent the next step. The school-to-work transition is very important for young women and men. How easily and effectively they make that leap depends on how well prepared they are for the labour market.

If nothing is done, child labourers become youth with poor employment prospects who cannot lift their own families out of a poverty trap, cannot become parents who give their children a better life, and cannot contribute effectively to national development.

More and more leaders within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) sphere understand the bigger picture for their countries – if a large segment of their populations remain unschooled or unskilled. This constitutes a major development challenge in an environment of increasing international competitiveness and interdependence.

Aside from the obvious benefits of education and training to a country's development efforts, universal primary education is a child's basic human right. The international community has consistently articulated and reiterated this right through national and international law. The importance of free basic education is central to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on child labour.

APEC leaders have responded to both the development challenges and human rights demands to work harder to remove anyone younger than 18 from the worst forms of labour. This, they recognize, means increasing access to educational and training opportunities among the Member Economies' poorest children.

OUT OF WORK AND INTO SCHOOL

APEC has consistently recognized this critical connection between education and economic growth. The region will not be able to sustain growth and development if a segment of its youth cannot achieve their full potential. Due to the demand within APEC to address the problem of the worst forms of child labour and the lack of educational opportunities for the poorest children in the relevant Member Economies, a regional initiative was launched in 2001. Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam were keen to join the initiative. The APEC Human Resources Development Working Group endorsed the project with the International Labour Organization as the executing agency and with financial support from the United States Department of Labor.

The initiative aims to increase public awareness and capacity for action in selected APEC economies on the importance of moving children out of hazardous work and into education. This is to be accomplished through alliance building at national and regional levels and engaging government authorities, employers' and workers' organizations, educators, civil society groups and children and families from the affected communities.



WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour in its worst forms is work that is hazardous and can damage young people psychologically or physically. It involves slavery, trafficking into exploitative situations, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment into armed conflicts, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities and hazardous labour. The ILO estimates that there are 218 million child labourers globally and 126 million of them are in the worst forms of child labour.

By ratifying the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), governments commit to taking immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. This Convention is enjoying the fastest pace of ratifications in the ILO's history since 1919. In parallel, the ILO Minimum Age Convention 1973 (No. 138) sets forth a larger framework for the longer-term objective of the effective abolition of child labour, and has also been receiving a surge in ratifications. The increase in ratification of these Conventions clearly demonstrates that support for the movement against child labour is growing very rapidly throughout the world.

In 1992, the ILO launched its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour to provide technical cooperation to member States in finding solutions to the problem of child labour. ILO-IPEC is the largest global technical cooperation programme on this issue. Its aim is the progressive elimination of child labour worldwide, emphasizing the eradication of the worst forms of child labour as rapidly as possible.

APEC STEPS INTO THE PICTURE

APEC was established in 1989 to further enhance economic growth and prosperity for the region and to strengthen the Asia-Pacific community. APEC's 21 Member Economies are Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; People's Republic of China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Republic of the Philippines; The Russian Federation; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; United States of America and Viet Nam. APEC's Human Resources Development Working Group was established in 1990 and conducts work programmes to develop human resources on issues ranging from education to labour to capacity building. The following landmark Joint Ministerial Statement was issued in 1999:

The Human Resources Development Working Group should be a forum to promote educational opportunities for youth in the region and should explore these and other ways of eliminating the worst forms of child labour. We direct the Working Group to give priority to this issue and to implement an activity in support of this work.

It was felt that if ignored, child labour could perpetuate poverty and stunt economic development in an environment of increasing international competitiveness and interdependence. The Ministers further developed a Plan of Action in which they instructed:

The HRD Working Group will develop a project to exchange information on best practices for eliminating the worst forms of child labour and promote educational opportunities for youth in the region. The work should use the collective experiences of APEC to consider regional perspectives on the issue and share experiences regarding successful approaches.



OUT OF WORK AND INTO SCHOOL:

THE FIRST PHASE

This innovative project encourages APEC Member Economies to use education to combat child labour as part of their overall growth and economic development strategy. The initiative has been instrumental in building alliances to promote awareness and action in the participating countries. The groundwork has also been set for a regional network to promote the sharing of good practices and lessons learned.

Achievements

- **Indonesia:** Efforts to promote greater synergies between national committees on the worst forms of child labour, Education For All and poverty alleviation have made significant inroads towards ensuring that national development frameworks including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and nine years basic education reach working children.
- **Mexico and Viet Nam:** For the first time, local authorities and communities have been sensitized to the risks of the worst forms of child labour and motivated to use education to combat this problem.
- **Peru:** A musical CD-ROM featuring 30 popular Peruvian singers was produced to reach non-literate communities where the worst forms of child labour practices are prevalent; a mayoral debate in Lima centred on the issue of child labour.
- **Philippines:** Building on previous work that used education to combat child labour at the national level, efforts have been made to reach local communities and affected districts.
- **Thailand:** The Employers' Confederation of Thailand and the National Council on Youth and Development have worked together to increase opportunities for decent and productive work for young people.

Materials developed in all countries include policy memoranda, teacher training materials, videos, media kits, informational CD-ROMs, musical CD-ROMs, posters, leaflets and T-shirts. All this has been achieved in collaboration with other child labour and education programmes in the countries.

THE SECOND PHASE

Based on these positive experiences to date, the United States Department of Labor has provided additional support to continue this regional initiative. While the overall objective remains the same, the second phase, which started in late 2004, focuses on strengthening the regional alliance and mobilizing key parties to initiate relevant activities that use basic education and skills development to combat child labour.

The regional framework includes:

- Development of a regional communication mechanism and web site
- Activities to engage APEC as a regional body
- Publication of project experiences including the documentation and sharing of good practices
- Research and mapping of opportunities on decent and productive work for young people above the minimum working age as a strategy against the worst forms of child labour

The project's second phase capitalizes on the raised awareness and alliances to push for policy development that centres on improving access and quality of education to combat the worst forms of child labour. Local and national authorities are being encouraged to take an integrated approach to combating child labour, promoting basic education and skills development as well as alleviating poverty. APEC representatives at country level are an important part of these efforts. Efforts to identify role model approaches and publicize them within APEC will be crucial to the project's success.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES, BY COUNTRY

Indonesia

Increased dialogue and sharing of experiences between key ministries, social partners, donors and other key parties is leading to the wide acceptance that the twin aims of Education For All and the elimination of child labour are crucial to national development. The State Planning Board organized a national conference on this theme. Following this, the publication of a new Medium-Term Development Plan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper both raised the need to tackle child labour. Provincial forums have been organized to build stronger links between local structures concerned with child labour and education which stimulated a range of local follow-up activity. In one area, the local education office and a community organization have launched a "Back to School" campaign for children who have dropped out. An innovative research survey is looking at some of the long-term implications for children who drop out of school at an early age to work.



Mexico

A movement is being created against the economic exploitation of children within the country's politically influential trade and teachers unions. Action on child labour and education is being placed high on the agenda in the union structures of at least 5 States through information sessions leading to a union declaration on this. A landmark national union seminar sensitized union members to the problem of child labour and importance of education. This led to the development of a plan of action to help make relevant national and international legislation into a reality. The Ministry of Labour, the Workers' Federation of Mexico (CTM), the Workers and Peasants Revolutionary Confederation (CROC), the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the ILO have collaborated on training on the causal factors leading to child labour. The CTM financed a regional seminar and the CROC presented a theatre production, both on child labour and education. A media information kit, pamphlets/posters and a radio spot has been developed to support this work. Unions at the local level are working with communities to motivate action against child labour and in favour of education.

Peru

Over half the problem of child labour in Peru is located in the urban areas. San Isidro, which is a major financial district has the highest percentage of children working on the streets with very low access to education and mostly from poor families. These children come from the municipality of Callao. Local authorities and municipalities are being motivated to invest in education to combat child labour in the pilot sites of San Isidro and Callao. A municipal action guide on this subject has been produced. A visual community-based campaign has been organized through the dissemination of a video by the Peruvian Cinema Association, brochures and posters. A web site has been created and the media is also being engaged to spread the project's message across the country. SCREAM (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) is being used to promote a child-friendly learning environment where teachers love to teach and children love to learn.

Philippines

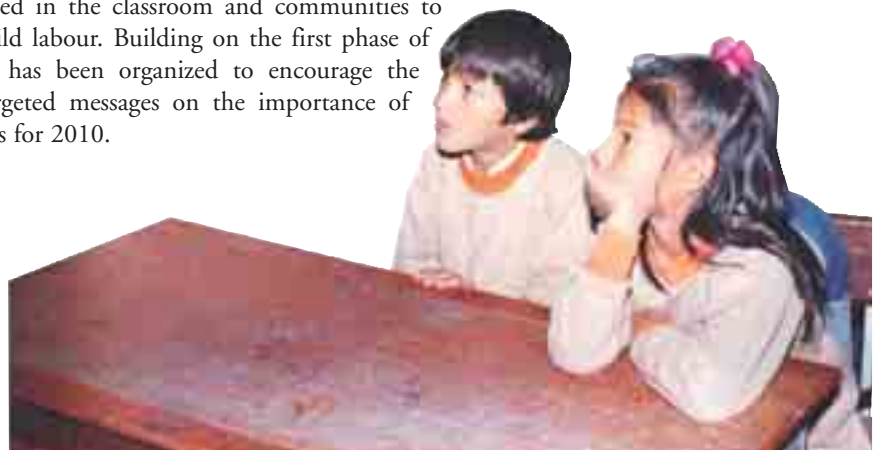
Capitalizing on the strength of the national child labour and education task force of the first phase, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers, Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation, and the Children's Laboratory for Drama in Education Foundation are working together to engage all the affected regions. The local child labour and education task forces developed in the first phase are being formally integrated into the legal structure of governance and service delivery. This has led to legislation and budget allocations which support investments in education to combat child labour. Community watch groups to monitor child labour cases and children's participation in schooling have also formed. ECOP is mobilizing employers to support skills training and apprenticeship for young people above the minimum working age.

Thailand

Research has been initiated to feed into education policy reform on how and what kind of education and skills training can best reach out-of-school children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour, including, in particular, hill tribe and migrant children. The recent Thai cabinet approval for migrant and stateless children's access to education makes the research on migrant children timely. The Office of the Education Council of the Ministry of Education has undertaken the research in Samutsakhon Province, which is also a project site of the ILO's Mekong Sub-Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children and Women. Research on hill tribe children has been undertaken by the National Council for Child and Youth Development (NCYD). NCYD also produced a model training curriculum for career counselling in rural schools to promote youth (self) – employment and motivate the government to replicate this on a wider scale. A national consultation will be organized to disseminate the key findings and thus contribute to the Thailand government's Education Reform Roadmap 2005 – 2008 and onwards.

Viet Nam

Research has been initiated on the main obstacles to the universalization of Lower Secondary Education (ULSE) for working children in 5 provinces of Hanoi (capital city), Long An (Mekong Delta), Lao Cai (mountainous province), Hue (central province) and Dac Lac (central high land). The report on research findings and recommendations for ULSE to be achieved by 2010 is being submitted to authorities for related policy and programme action. A teacher's guidebook on child-centred teaching methods has been developed as a tool to improve teaching methodology and to make lessons more attractive and practical so that they can draw more working children back to classes. SCREAM is being used in the classroom and communities to highlight the importance of learning and the risks of child labour. Building on the first phase of awareness-raising activities, a national advocacy forum has been organized to encourage the participants and especially the media to send more targeted messages on the importance of education in preventing child labour and the ULSE targets for 2010.



NO WAY
FOR A CHILD TO GROW

NO WAY
AN ECONOMY CAN GROW

Child labour sustains poverty
Education promotes development

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

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