

Guyana
The Situation of Children
in the Worst Forms of Child Labour:
A Rapid Assessment

by
George K. Danns Ph.D.

October 2002
ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean
Port of Spain, Trinidad

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Worst Forms of Child Labour: A Rapid Assessment*
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CHILD LABOURER

Do you know what I like about myself?

I'm invisible

Do you know what I don't like about myself?

I'm invisible.

You don't see me, yet I am there

My parents don't see me, and when they do it's as if they don't care.

I am a child labourer.

I ought to be in school as is the right of all children.

But I selling, I pushing, I repairing, I farming, I sawmilling, I fetching and carrying and I sexing!

Is work, I working.

I working for money, for food, for shelter

I working for my mother and my sister.

I working because I have no father.

You see me working here?

It's because adults like you don't care.

Maybe I am not invisible at all.

May be you blind.

Cause I working like an adult, being paid as a child and get treated like a dog.

You think you can see me now.

Look, Look, look!

I am everywhere,

Right before your eyes!

Ken Danns
AWE Society 13
October 2002

Preface

The unacceptable exploitation of children at work persists in many regions of the world including in the Caribbean. The ILO estimates that in 2000, there were approximately 246 million children in child labour worldwide with nearly 171 million in hazardous situations or conditions. This global plague continues to rob children of their health, their growth, their education and even their lives.

The world took a huge step forward in its fight against this scourge when the International Labour Conference reached a unanimous decision to adopt a new Convention and Recommendation banning the worst forms of child labour in June 1999. The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No.182 calls for “immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency”. It defines the worst forms of child labour as all forms of slavery including debt bondage, trafficking of children and their use in armed conflict, in illicit activities, such as prostitution, pornography and drug trafficking and their employment in hazardous work in mines, factories and other workplaces which could cause serious risks to their health, safety and moral well-being. The accompanying Recommendation calls for research and up-to-date statistics on the nature and extent of child labour to determine priorities for national action for the abolition of child labour, with urgent attention to the prohibition and elimination of its worst forms. To date, eleven of thirteen member States in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean sub-region have ratified Convention No. 182. The remaining two countries have indicated their intention to do so by June 2003.

The Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean is providing support to member States in their fight against child labour and in the effective implementation of Convention No.182 through technical assistance and capacity-building in the areas of child labour research, policy formulation and intervention strategies. One intervention geared to this purpose is a Sub-Regional Child Labour Project entitled *Identification, Elimination and Prevention of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Anglophone and Dutch-speaking Caribbean*, which was launched in October 2001 with financial assistance from the Canadian Government. This project, which is being undertaken in the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, has initiated rapid assessment research in all the countries but Belize, leading to the identification of vulnerable groups and the collection of information on the causes, manifestations and consequences of child labour in general and its worst forms in particular.

The current series of reports presents the findings of this research. They reveal the existence of the worst forms of child labour in the countries researched in areas such as scavenging, commercial sexual exploitation, construction, mining, and street work. It is hoped that the reports will serve as a means of drawing increasing attention to the plight of children in the Caribbean who are having their childhood snatched away by child labour, many under the most horrific of circumstances. But even more, that they will serve as a basis for designing

specific interventions to combat this scourge and to take measures for its prevention and for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of current child workers.

We wish to thank the Ministries of Labour, and other cooperating Ministries, and employers' and workers' organizations for their assistance and participation in the project; the many NGOs that have contributed to the research efforts and the researchers who were involved in the various national assessments. We also wish to thank the Canadian Government for its continued support for the project. The wealth of information contained in these reports provides a basis for concerted action by governments, trade unions, employers, NGOs and concerned citizens everywhere who are determined to stand in the defense of working children. One child in child labour is one child too many. This is a challenge to be urgently addressed by all, while at the same time providing more and better jobs for parents, more access to education for children and greater development possibilities for the countries in which they live.

Grace Strachan
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List of Terms and Acronyms

CARICOM	-	Caribbean Community
HIES	-	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
MICS	-	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
PAHO	-	Pan-American Health Organization
WHO	-	World Health Organization
NOC	-	New Opportunity Corp (formerly of the Guyana National Service, now an agency attached to the Ministry of Culture, Youth & Sports
GHRA	-	Guyana Human Rights Association
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
CIDA	-	Canadian International Development Agency
IPEC	-	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
SIMPOC	-	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children Fund
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
ROC	-	Rights of the Child
TUC	-	Trade Union Congress
UG	-	University of Guyana
IDS	-	Institute of Development Studies
CXC	-	Caribbean Examination Council
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
CRC	-	Convention on the Rights of the Child

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The Ministers of Education, Health, Labour and Human Services, and Culture, Youth and Sport took time off from their busy schedules to facilitate interviews. The Director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Guyana and the Secretary of the Red Cross-Guyana also provided helpful insights into the phenomenon of child labour in Guyana.

The numerous community leaders and officials in the eight communities studied were tremendous in facilitating the realization of the study objectives.

The children of Guyana, particularly those for whom fate and misfortune made them the subject of this study, deserve our deep gratitude. We interrupted their work and their hustle to ask them about themselves, their families, their employers and the work they do.

Thanks to the staff of CESRA, Marlon Mentore, Reshma Rampersaud, Sheama Daniels who worked selflessly in data collection, processing and in other numerous ways facilitated the completion of this report.

Prof. George K. Danns
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October 2002

Executive Summary

“Children must be protected from work which is harmful to their health and development, nor must such work interfere with their education”. *Article 32 Convention on the Rights of the Child.*

Child labour in Guyana is a pervasive, ubiquitous but largely unrecognized phenomenon. Children of all ethnic groups – East Indian, Black, Mixed Race and Amerindian - are driven by culture, parental neglect, family breakdown and economic necessity to work for their own upkeep or that of their family and relatives. They farm, fish, engage in vending, work as labourers, loggers, miners, domestics, sales clerks, apprentices, machine operators, guards or watchmen and as prostitutes.

Children in Guyana are required by law to attend school up to age 14 years. Above age 14, they can legally enter the labour force. The Bureau of Statistics found that 27% of children 14 years and under are child labourers (MICS Survey 2001). The working child was defined as “those who had done any paid or unpaid work for a non-household member or who did four or more hours housekeeping chores per day or who did other family work (2001:42). This ILO study covers all children below the age of 18 years because hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour are prohibited to all persons under the age of 18.

The problem with child labour in Guyana is that there is considerable cultural support sustaining it. Among the Amerindians and rural East Indians and Blacks, child labour is viewed as the socialization of children in preparation for adult role responsibilities. In such communities like Black Bush Polder and Amerindian settlements in the Pomeroon, real education is acquired not in schools but in the farms where families eke out a living.

Children can be found selling in stalls and walking around as itinerant vendors in the city, towns and villages during school hours. Adults purchase from them or ignore them and take their activity for granted. Working children are a normal part of the survival landscape within the society.

Most observers have seen poverty as a principal cause of child labour. Single parent families are seen as another factor responsible for child labour. The assumption is that homes without fathers tend to be poorer and children are relied upon to shoulder the economic responsibilities of absent fathers. Importantly too, parental irresponsibility, the absences of parenting skills and loose parental control have been blamed for children working. Communities report families where alcoholic parents rely on their working children. Similarly, pressure from peers who work and have access to money induces other children to participate in the labour force.

The majority of child labourers in Guyana either work with their families on farms or in other economic activities. Even when working children sell their labour to others, other family members such as siblings or other relatives may be working with them. A sizable percentage however, works alone.

Children work in the sun and the rain. They work in rice fields and farms filled with water and knee-deep mud. They are bitten by mosquitoes, snakes, fishes and wild animals. They operate agricultural and sawmill machinery without the necessary safety wear and protective environments. They work late into the nights. They drive, fish, cut logs, prospect for gold and prostitute their bodies to earn their keep. Some are physically and sexually-abused. Some never attend school and others do so infrequently. Most child labourers cannot read well or read at all. In their quest for economic survival for themselves and their families, they forfeit their childhood and compromise their health and well-being.

Ministers of Government in Guyana, while admitting to the existence of child labour, take the position that the worst forms of its existence are not as manifest in Guyana as in countries in Asia and Africa. They are largely correct in their comparison but seemingly do not recognize how widespread child labour is in Guyana and the negative effects it is having on the nation's children and their rights.

Child labour in Guyana is a serious social problem that impacts negatively on the educational development of children, their health and emotional well-being. Yet, the existing legislation and programmes are limited and do not go far enough to deal with this problem. Because child labour is not recognized as a serious problem, the administrative will and the resources necessary for its combat are not made available. It is hoped that this study can create the required awareness and influence public policies and programmes to save Guyanese children from precocious and dysfunctional adulthood.

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to ILO/IPEC/SIMPOC

The International Labour Organization (ILO), through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) has made a major commitment to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. In what has been considered to be one of the greatest successes of the ILO, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, together with Recommendation No. 190, was unanimously adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 1999. By May 2003, 138 countries had ratified Convention No. 182.

The mandate of ILO Convention No. 182 is clear. It requires ratifying countries to “take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.” ILO Recommendation No. 190 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, plans to undertake thirty eight Rapid Assessments of the worst forms of child labour in twenty countries and one border area. These investigations will be made through application of the rapid assessment methodology recently prepared by ILO/UNICEF. The overall objectives of the programme are that (i) quantitative and qualitative information related to the worst forms of child labour in the selected 38 investigations is produced and made publicly available (ii) the magnitude, character, causes and consequences are clearly described, and (iii) the body of methodologies – especially the ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment methodology on child labour – for investigating the worst forms of child labour is validated and further developed.

Rapid Assessments are uniquely suited to meet these objectives. Balancing statistical precision with qualitative analysis, rapid assessments provide policy makers with insights into the magnitude, character, causes and consequences of the worst forms of child labour quickly and cheaply. These insights can then be used to determine strategic objectives for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in each country or region, to design and target policy packages, and to implement, monitor and evaluate those programmes.

Based on "A Guide to Reporting on Rapid Assessments"

Robert Jensen and Meredith Pearson

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Investigating The Worst Forms of Child Labour

ILO/IPEC/SIMPOC (2001)

The promotion of the ratification and implementation of the new ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour is a high priority for the ILO. The ILO Recommendation No. 190 (Art. 5) accompanying the Convention states that detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labour should be compiled and kept up-to-date. These data should serve as bases 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.

The ILO, through its IPEC/SIMPOC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour), has commissioned rapid assessment studies of specified types of the worst forms of child labour in selected countries.

This rapid assessment of child labour in Guyana falls within the general framework of the IPEC/SIMPOC studies. It has been commissioned by the ILO/CIDA Child Labour Project for the Caribbean of the ILO Caribbean Office.

The study was conducted by the Centre for Economic and Social Research and Action (CESRA), Guyana between December 2001 and May 2002.

This study of Child Labour in Guyana has:

1. produced quantitative and particularly qualitative data related to child labour in targeted occupations;
2. assessed the nature and extent of child labour in fishing communities, the logging and sawmilling industry, the sex sector, the agricultural and mining sectors and in Amerindian communities;
3. characterized the working conditions (inclusive of income earned and related hazards) of child labourers;
4. characterized the child labourers (by age, sex, schooling, and racial background);
5. identified the socio-economic, cultural and family background of child labourers;
6. examined the impact and consequences of the occupations on child labourers;
7. identified perceptions and experiences of child labourers; and
8. identified and critically assessed Government, NGO and international agency interventions aimed at preventing and rehabilitating child labour;

Notwithstanding its broad objectives, this study must be understood against the background of limitations. First and importantly, this was intended to be a national study and the methodology and objectives were planned accordingly. The budget was cut by about 42%, which decidedly limited the scope of the study. An immediate casualty of the budgetary limitation was the de-emphasis of an initially-conceived, fuller sectoral approach. Thus, it was no longer feasible to investigate child labour strictly in the context of the six sectors originally earmarked:

- Fishing Communities
- The logging industry and especially sawmills
- The sex industry
- The agricultural sector (rice, sugar and other crops)
- Amerindian communities
- The Mining sector

Further, the notion of a sector has its utility more as an analytic tool. Child labour in Guyana largely operates in a community rather than strictly sectoral context. To engage exclusively in sectoral analysis would be to lift child labour out of the socio-cultural and other community structures that cradle it. It is also for this reason that the study was re-thematized to a “community approach” which facilitated the attainment of study objectives consistent with the reduced budget. The sectoral approach was used as a guide rather than a primary focus.

A number of study areas which was part of a national study design had to be eliminated. Communities from remote regions of Guyana, which would have entailed costly travel, were casualties of the financial constraints. Study of gold mining districts and remote Amerindian communities was largely not done. The study was conducted in eight selected communities across five of the 10 administrative regions of the country.

Notwithstanding such limitations, the use of official statistics and other secondary data, focus interviews and focus group discussions with national and regional functionaries provided broader insights into the child labour problem countrywide.

This report of a rapid assessment of child labour in Guyana provides an overall description and assessment of the child labour situation in the country. In addition, the study also outlines existing measures and programmes that address the phenomenon of child labour and makes policy recommendations in order to stimulate an exchange of views among potential partners and facilitate the development of a National Policy and Plan of Action on Child Labour. This study may be used for designing direct interventions, advocacy and awareness-raising activities, further research, training and other similar programme elements.

2. Background and Context - Guyana

2.1 Socio-Demographic Indicators

The Cooperative Republic of Guyana has a land area of 214,969 square kilometres and is the only English-speaking country located on the mainland of South America. It is bordered to the East by Suriname, the West by Venezuela, the Southwest by Brazil and to the North by the Atlantic Ocean. A former British colony, which obtained independence in May 26, 1966, this small nation has binding social, cultural, economic, and political ties to other CARICOM countries and is only weakly allied to other nations on the South American continent.

Guyana has a relatively small population of just under 724,000 with population density of 3.4 persons per sq. km. (Guyana Population and Housing Census 1999). The population comprises East Indians (49.49%), Blacks (35.63%), Mixed Race (7.05%), and Amerindians (6.81%). Other ethnic groups include Chinese and Portuguese each comprising less than one percent of the population. Population growth over the past few decades has been minimal and declining. From 1980 – 1991, there was a negative annual growth rate of (-0.4%) and 1991 – 2001 projections are minimum to zero growth. (HIES 1992-93)

According to the 1992-93 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) a majority (68.9%) of the population are classified as rural. The country is divided into 10 Administrative Regions (See Figure 1). Region 4 (41.4%) and Region 6 (19.9%) are the two most populated regions. The indigenous Amerindians numbering 49,713 live predominantly in the rural Regions 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9. The average household size in Guyana is 4.15 person with regions populated by Amerindians generally having larger households. (GSLC 1999)

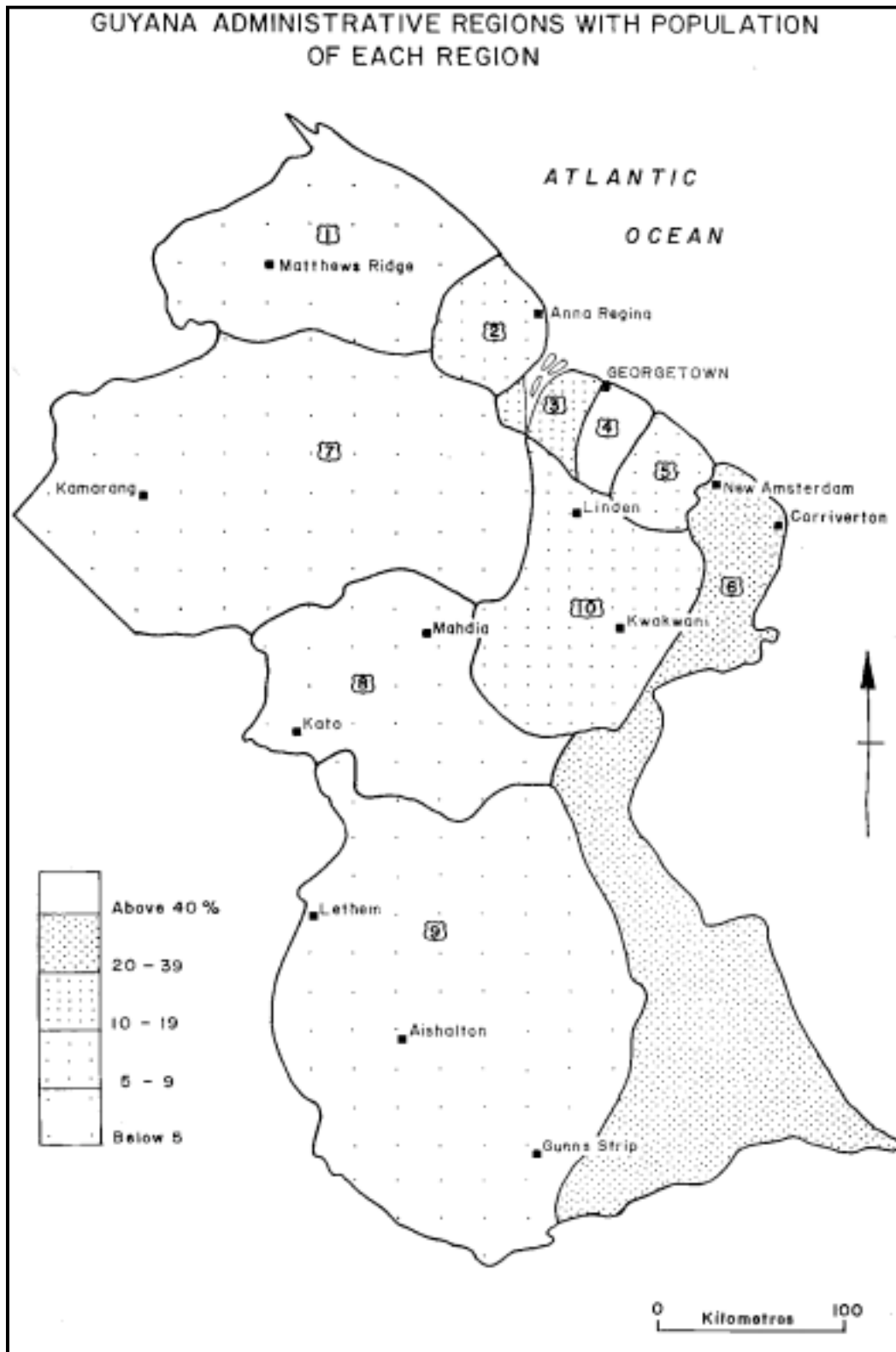
East Indians comprise over two thirds of the rural population and Blacks just over 50% of the urban population. Amerindians are 55% of the rural interior population.

Males comprise 49.6% of the population and females (50.3%).

The age distribution of the population reveals that 39.1% or 275,507 are persons below age 18. Of these 142,698 are males and 132,809 are females. Persons 14 years and under comprise 34.6% of the population or 243,871. (MICS Report, Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF July 2001)

The GUYREDEM Survey (1985) found that 823 out of 152,455 households in Guyana were headed by persons 14 years and under. Of these, 588 are males and 238 are females. Further, in the age group 15 – 19 years, 7419 persons were heads of households. Of these, 5597 were males and 1822 were females. In sum, 8242 persons 19 years and younger or 5.4% headed households in Guyana. This tendency for children to end up as household heads has implications not only for their education but their premature involvement in the world of work.

GUYANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS WITH POPULATION OF EACH REGION



2.2 Health

According to the Pan American Health Organization, life expectancy in Guyana was 64.9 years for males and 67.9 years for females in 1992. By 1994 it was 62.1 for males. The crude birth rate was 7.3 per 1,000 population in 1996. The Fertility rate was 2.8 children per woman in 1994. The infant mortality was 27.8 per 1000 live births in 1995 (PAHO, Washington DC 1998)

Ministry of Health Statistics Unit reported 18,360 live births in 1995. Of these 15.3% had low birth weight (<2,500 grams). Eighteen point two percent (18.2%) of 72,740 children who enrolled in clinics in 1996 were reported to be moderately malnourished. The number of severely malnourished children was 683 or less than 1%. (PAHO 1998:305)

The stillbirth rate in 1995 was 22.9 per 1000 total births; the perinatal mortality rate was 36.9 per 1000 births and the neonatal was 17.5 per 1000 live births. (PAHO 1998:305). The five leading causes of death for the 0-4 year old age group in 1996 were: acute respiratory infections (43.2%), worm infestation (11.7%), diarrhoeal diseases (9%), scabies (3.5%), accidents and injuries (2.8%). The five leading causes of death for the 5-9 year old age group: "other accidents" (17.1%), other violence (14.6%), congenital anomalies (9.8%), diseases of the nervous system (7.3%), accidental poisoning ((7.3%). The five leading causes of death among the 10-14 year old age group in 1995 were other accidents (17.2%), other violence (3.0%), traffic accidents (10.3%) infectious intestinal disease (6.9%), disease of pulmonary circulation 3.5%). For the 15-19 year old age group in 1995, the five leading causes of death were 'other violence' (16.5%), other accidents (14.4%), suicide and self inflicted injury (10.3%), transport accidents (7.2%), diseases of blood and blood forming organs (6.2%) (PAHO 1998: 305-306)

2.3 Education

The education system in Guyana provides for nursery school, six years of primary school, four to six years of secondary school, and between three and four years of higher academic or prevocational education. With schooling mandatory up to age 14 ½ all students should complete primary school and at least two years of secondary education. (World Bank 1994)

Among the main achievements of the education system is near universal access to primary education. Both boys and girls have equal access. Education is free and compulsory for children 6 ½ - 14 years. UNESCO reports very high literacy rates of 98.1%. Fairly high completion rates in Grade 4 were estimated at 88 percent in 1990. Primary school completion rates in the last decade increased from 83.6% in 1990 to 96% in 1996-97. (Keeping the Promise to Caribbean Children – Mobilization Kit for Action – UNICEF)

There are 386 nursery school/classes in Guyana, 200 of which are found in rural areas. There is an enrolment of 36,955 nursery students, 50.8% of which are males and 49.2% females. There are 1,978 nursery teachers giving a teacher to student rate of 1: 18.7. However, only 37% of nursery school teachers are trained.

Primary education in Guyana is compulsory and admission is from 5 years 9 months. It is at this level children are supposed to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills. In 2000 there were 105,790 students, 51.1% of which were males and 48.9% females. There were 5,388 teachers given a teacher to student ratio of 1: 19.6. A predominant majority of primary school teachers (81.8%) are females. That is, less than 2 out of every 10 teachers at this level are males. This imbalance has led to debate and concerns about the deprivation of male role models in school for boys to identify with.

Primary schools reportedly had an average percentage attendance in 1997/1998 of 86% for both males and females equally (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guyana 1999). This suggests that 21% or just over 2 out of every 10 children have not been attending school. The 1999 Guyana Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child concluded: "Many of these children have actually dropped out of the school system and even though under the age for employment (15 years) are generally employed in contravention of the law. This situation must be improved if children are to develop and realize their potential" (1999:58). Further, the report notes that dropouts at the Primary Education level were 27% of total enrolment and that the "wastage" at the secondary school level was 22% and for community high schools 11%. It stated "This situation is deemed to be unacceptably high. Some of the reasons advanced for the dropouts have been given as overcrowded classrooms and the general economic circumstances of some families, which adversely affect regular attendance. (1999:58).

Secondary education in Guyana is provided by 30 community high schools, 80 general secondary schools and 311 primary schools with secondary departments. There are 3,048 secondary level teachers, 55.5% of which are trained. In 1998 there were 62,495 secondary school students and a teacher student ratio of 1: 20.5.

A major challenge for secondary education is that less than 50% of all students gain entry to a secondary school. Further, even when children have access there is need to improve the quality of education offered at all levels. (Keeping the Promise to Caribbean Children – Mobilization Kit for Action. UNICEF). The 1999 Convention on the Rights of the Child Report prepared by the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security gave a teacher student ratio of 1: 55.

While access by Guyanese children to primary education is almost universal, approximately 60 percent of Guyanese children of secondary school age currently are attending schools. The non-attendance of others suggests that they may be at home, moved on to tertiary levels or else active in the world of work. In addition, drop out rates from these schools range from 6.2 percent to 18 percent with the highest dropout rates in the secondary departments of primary schools. (Gill-Marshall 2000). Further, during 1997-98 there was a student repeater rate of 3.9 percent – 16.5 percent in secondary schools with boys experiencing higher rates of repeating forms. Repetition is often attributed to poor attendance (Gill-Marshall 2000). Boys also have experienced higher dropout and truancy rates.

The Guyana Human Development Report concludes that the quality of secondary education is widely perceived as poor. In 1995 for example, CXC results for Guyana were the worst for the CARICOM Region with 2% passes in English, 7.8% in Social Studies (Human Development Report, UNDP 1996). National results at CXC levels fall well short of Caribbean norms at both the basic and general levels. Attainment is about 60 percent of

Caribbean averages and only about 55 percent of Guyanese children attempt these examinations. A 1994 World Bank Report concluded that the problem of performance in secondary school originates in poor primary education. The failure to learn basic skills at the primary level translates into poor preparation for secondary school (1994:72). Further, there is emerging evidence that children are coming out of secondary schools without having basic literacy and numeracy skills. The problem of functional literacy among both in school youth and out of school youth has been found by Prof. Jennings et al in a UNICEF report to be highest among Amerindian youth, followed by Black youth (Jennings 1999). Latchman P. Singh reports: "Despite what international databases say, there is a literacy problem in Guyana, as well as in all Caribbean countries, due in large measure to weaknesses in the educational system. Indeed, it is estimated that there is a 21 percent rate of absolute illiteracy in Guyana and an overall functional illiteracy rate in the lower 50s" (Guyana Review. Vol. 6 No 71, 1998). While spending on education has been increasing over the last decade particularly in the area of building and renovation of nursery, primary, and secondary schools, the quality of the output from the school system is still considered poor. Less than 15% of secondary school students obtain four CXC passes, three and above passes being the functional equivalent of a high school diploma insofar as procuring a job is concerned.

2.4 The Economy

Despite a decade of sound economic recovery, Guyana is still classified as a low-income country with a per capita income of close to US\$800. Ninety percent (90%) of the population lives on the narrow coastal plain estimated at 4% of the total land space. Guyana has vast, largely uninhabited hinterland areas and abounds with natural resources ranging from huge rivers and other waterways, dense forests and fertile agricultural lands, to gold, diamond, bauxite and other mineral deposits. Despite these endowments the country has remained poor. The economy is a primary producing one with sugarcane, paddy farming, other agriculture and fishery, bauxite and gold mining, and logging forming the core of economic activity. Secondary and tertiary industries are limited. Manufacturing and processing in the main comprise of sugar and rice production, sawmilling and alcohol and other beverage production. Economic and social infrastructures are underdeveloped or else dilapidated, a result of years of economic decline and deterioration.

Shortly after gaining independence from Britain in 1966, Guyana embraced the practice of "co-operative socialism", an economic form characterized by state ownership and control of the commanding sectors of the economy. By 1976 the government had embarked on a course of nationalization of major industries and by 1981, over 80% of economic activity was government-controlled. Foreign and other private investment was almost non-existent. Foreign-owned businesses (e.g. in the banking industry) that were not nationalized, sold or handed over their concerns to the government in an effort to abandon the economy.

Besides direct intervention into economic activity, other forms of control were exercised through monetary, credit, fiscal, exchange rate, trade and pricing policies and practices. Special entities were established to control trade and to oversee economic activity. Concurrently, the traditional public sector expanded to accommodate such policies as free education from nursery to university and resultant fiscal deficits were financed through money expansion. These policies and practices combined to stifle economic activity and the economy plunged into serious economic decline. According to the "interim poverty reduction

strategy paper (October 2000) GDP “declined cumulatively by 20.8% percent between 1975 and 1988. In addition to the internal economic shocks, Guyana’s economic problems were compounded by exogenous factors such as the oil shocks of the 1970s and 1980s; lower export prices for its primary commodities and general world economic decline.

Guyana’s economic contraction gave rise to a number of other economic ills and social problems. Among the economic problems were huge external and internal debt and a concomitant inability to service those debts, steep inflation and a significant decline in real wages, unemployment and underemployment, fiscal deficits and monetary expansion, declining exports and a total depletion of foreign reserves, shortage of foreign exchange for basic necessities and devaluation of the local currencies, shortages of foodstuff, drugs and other necessities, giving rise to a black market for both currencies and commodities. An underground economy and other coping strategies developed as the population circumvented restrictions and dealt with shortages. Skilled Guyanese sought alternatives in neighboring Caribbean countries as well as migrated to the USA and further afield.

As economic conditions worsened and the government and country became bankrupt both economic and social infrastructure could no longer be maintained. According to the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper “... schools, health and water services, sanitation, roads, sea defenses and drainage and irrigation facilities fell into a state of disrepair”.

Although child labour has always been evident in society, the environment of deep poverty and hardships has further spawned and nurtured it. During the period of economic decline there was a marked increase in children selling at street corners, in the market and elsewhere, and doing other jobs in an effort to supplement family income.

After the implementation of a series of failed band-aid measures and in an attempt to stem the economic decline, the government sought assistance from the IMF, World Bank, UNDP and other international agencies. With the help of the international community and commitment from friendly governments, an Economic Recovery Programme was implemented, taking a more holistic approach to economic growth and development. This far-reaching, structural reform programme implemented in 1989 sought to return the economy to a more market - oriented one and to provide a more conducive environment to investment. Among the salient features of the recovery programme were privatization and divestment, liberalization of the trade and exchange rate systems, removals of commodity prohibitions and price controls, removal of restrictions on capital flows and very importantly, the implementation of more appropriate fiscal and monetary policies. New regulatory powers of agencies like the Inland Revenue Authority, the Bank of Guyana and the Customs and Excise Department allowed economic activity to foster in a different environment.

With the implementation of new policies and practices, debt forgiveness and reduction, and injection of new foreign flows from international agencies and friendly governments, the economy showed some signs of recovery from about 1991. Key economic indicators are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Key Economic Indicators - Guyana

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Annual % change in GDP	6.0	7.8	8.2	8.5	5.0	7.9	6.2	-1.7	1.0	0.0
Public Sector Balance as a% of GDP	-5.9	-10.0	-7.9	-1.1	-2.1	1.2	-3.0	-4.8	-1.0	na
Gross Reserves in months of	3.4	4.1	4.9	5.1	4.6	5.2	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.8
External Public Debt in (US\$ Millions)	1,855	1,967	1,953	1,999	2,058	1,537	1,513	1,507	1,200	1,187

During the period 1991 to 1997, annual economic growth averaged 7.1%, indicating a real economic turnaround. However, in the three years to 2000, there was negative or slow growth due to weather conditions, political instability and other factors. Public sector deficit has been kept under control and the country's gross reserves remain at reasonable levels (See table above). The country has been classified as a "Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC)" and has earned significant debt relief from US\$2 billion in 1994 to a level of US\$1.2 billion in 2000. Notwithstanding the largely positive indications, the economy remains volatile and is vulnerable because of its narrow primary production base.

Despite recent economic growth, years of decline have taken its toll and have set the country back many years. Poverty is ever present and manifests itself in many ways. According to the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, poverty "manifests itself in low and uneven levels of income and consumption, physical insecurity, poor health, low levels of education, disempowerment, high levels of unemployment and social and geographical isolation." Further, the interim paper, in addressing the specifics of poverty in the Guyana society, points out that

"Households in the poorest quintile are likely to have two more people, both of them children, than in the other quintiles. This means that poor households are not only larger, but that each wage earner in a poor household supports a larger number of dependent children".

It is factors such as these that have given rise to and sustained child labour in Guyana. In order to survive and help support their families, many poor children sell their labour.

2.5 Political Environment

In 1992 Guyana rejoined the ranks of democratic developing western countries with the holding of free and fair elections. Since then, the fledgling democracy has had three turbulent elections characterized by ethnic voting, street protests and generalized unrest. Many initiatives are being undertaken to develop democratic institutions including parliamentary reform. Problems of race relations, allegations of widespread corruption, a lack of foreign investment and poor economic performance are exacerbated by the political gridlock between the government and the main opposition party. The upshot of these is the retardation of the

country's development and the sustaining of a climate inimical to growth and prosperity. Political conflicts have impacted on the nation's children. Children are kept at home from school when there are mass protests and rioting, particularly in urban centres. Also, children have been injured by tear smoke and police shootings. An emergent epidemic of blatant armed robberies has paralyzed citizens with terror and deprivation of their property and lives. The police and security forces seem unable to cope.

Guyana has been spared civil wars, wars with other countries but yet, its negative political climate poses a serious threat to its well-being and that of its children.

2.6 Legislation Pertaining To Child Labour

Among the legislation pertaining to child labour in Guyana is the "Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act: Chapter 99:01". In the Act a "child" means a person under the age of fourteen years. A young person means a person who has ceased to be a child and who is under the age of sixteen years. The Act precludes the employment of children "in any industrial undertaking" or "in any ship". Persons violating this law are liable for summary conviction and a fine of G\$30 for a first offence and G\$12 for any subsequent offence. Parents or guardians who contrive to have children below age 14 obtain employment through forged documents, etc are also liable to summary conviction and similar fines. The Act empowers a Justice of Peace to give a policeman authority to enter any industrial undertaking or ship to verify if a child or children are employed.

The Act authorizes the employment of so called "young persons" being those between 14 and 16 years. Employers are required to maintain registers of the date of birth and the dates on which young persons enter or leave their employment. Failure to conform to this law makes employers liable for summary conviction and a fine of G\$300. However, ILO Convention No. 138 requires such information concerning those under 18 years.

The Act does not apply to children who are employed in an industrial undertaking in which only members of the same family are employed. The ILO has pointed out the inconsistency of this provision with Convention No. 138, which covers all types of employment or work, and has asked the Government to bring its law into conformity with the Convention. The Act also does not apply to children employed in technical schools such as the New Opportunity Corp where the work of children is approved and supervised by public authority.

The Act further precludes young persons under 18 years being employed during the night in any public or private industrial undertaking other than one in which only members of the same family are employed. The Act defines night as "a period of at least eleven consecutive hours including the interval between ten o'clock in the evening and five o'clock in the morning. A waiver is granted in the care of "emergencies" which could not be controlled or foreseen which are not of a periodic character. The Act also varies the hours for persons employed in the baking industry and "lignite mines" work.

The importance of this Act is that it precludes children under 14 years from being employed outside the centre of the family and technical schools, and imposes conditions and restrictions on those employed between 14 to under 18 years of age.

The Education Act Chapter 39:01 also bears relevance to the situation of child labour in Guyana. This places a “duty of the parent of every child to cause the child to receive efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic and if a parent fails to perform that duty he shall be liable to the orders and penalties provided in this Act”. The Act states that if a parent habitually and without reasonable excuse omits to provide efficient elementary instruction for his child an attendance officer or other authorized person may proffer a complaint against the parent before a magistrate. The magistrate can compel the parent to have the child attend an elementary school.

Further, the Act makes provision for a child who is “found habitually wandering or not under proper control or in the company of rogues, vagabonds, disorderly persons, or reported criminals. He may be taken into custody by an attendance officer or other authorised persons or by any police constable authorized by the Chief Education Officer to detain children so found, until a complaint can be proffered against him and he can be brought before a magistrate”. The magistrate after inquiry may compel that the child attend an elementary school or be sent to an industrial school or the child be delivered to the parent if the parent is known and can be found. A parent not appearing before the court when summoned is liable for a fine of G\$6.

The Education Act, like the Employment of Women, Young persons and Children Act, also precludes the employment of a child under the age of 14 years. The Act allows children to work with their parents “being such service as is usually given by children to their parents” once such service does not constitute a breach of the Act by being rendered on a school day during school hours. The Education Act provides similar penalties to the Employment of Women, Young persons and Children Act for those who employ children or cause them to be employed.

The Education Act also provides for children to be sent to Industrial Schools. It also caters for the appointment of Attendance Officers. The Attendance Officer is:

- required to ascertain and report to the Chief Education Officer every parent of every child resident within his district who has failed or is omitting to cause his child to receive an efficient elementary education;
- required to enforce the provisions of this Act and to prosecute all those not complying therewith;
- is authorized to enter any yard, house, building or place between the hours of six o’clock in the morning and five o’clock in the afternoon of any day except Sunday and there make enquiries of any child residing or employed.

The Act penalizes anyone preventing an Attendance Officer from carrying out his or her duty. Persons who can be appointed Attendance Officers include, principals, ministers of religion, members of the police force, education officers, etc. The Ministry of Education appoints School Welfare Officers but it is not clear whether or not such appointments exercise the powers of Attendance Officers. Indeed, Welfare Officers lament their lack of authority to carry out their functions.

The Education Act and the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act are both dated pieces of legislation insofar as the provisions on child labour are concerned. They are out of kilter with the prevailing international standards on the rights of children. These acts do not effectively protect children below age 18, have negligible penalties for their violation and are generally rarely enforced in relation to working children.

In addition to the foregoing, the Guyana Government ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991.

“Prior to this, Guyana participated in the 1990 World Summit for Children at which a declaration on the Survival, Protection, and Development of children and a plan of action for its implementation were adopted. Guyana’s National Plan of Action was drafted in 1993 and finalized in 1995 by the National Commission for the Survival, Protection, and Development of Children and was approved by the Government in 1996. This document established a framework which gave direction to the formulation of policies and programmes aimed at addressing the rights of children” (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guyana 1999)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is specific in stating “a child means every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. The majority age in Guyana is 18 years and Guyana has been a signatory to this treaty for over a decade. Yet, the Guyana Laws governing the employment of children remains dated and explicitly permits the employment of children over 14 years to under 18 years. Article 32 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child stipulates:

“State parties recognize the rights of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual and moral or social development.”

In addition, the Convention requires that state parties:

“shall in particular

- a. provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment
- b. provide for appropriate regulation of laws and conditions of employment
- c. provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.”

These latter stipulations give state parties discretionary leeway to vary the age at which children can formally enter the labour force. All Anglophone Caribbean countries permit the legal entry to the labour force below age 18.

The ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour requires governments to take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour for all those under 18 years of age, which corresponds to the general definition of the “child” in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Even where national legislation defines childhood as ending earlier, everyone up to 18 must be protected.

The Guyana National Plan of Action for children to the year 2000 highlighted six major areas for specific actions. These are: the family, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, education and literacy, children at risk including children in especially difficult circumstances, legal and institutional rights of the child. The Plan also makes provisions for “promoting public education and awareness of the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure public support for the various implementation programmes.”

The Government also appointed a National Commission on the Rights of the Child which is “a Cabinet-appointed body based in the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security”. This body is still in the process of creating institutional mechanisms for monitoring and coordinating children’s rights. A Children’s Parliament was among the activities initiated and this forum focused on the rights of the child among which were Article 32 - Protection against Child Labour.

The 1999 Guyana Report on the Convention on the Rights of the Child notes that the Guyana Constitution (Chapter 3 Section 40) affords protection to the rights of the child against torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment through the provisions of fundamental rights and freedom of the individual. The Report notes that the Juvenile Offenders Act 10: 03 which defines a juvenile as “a person under the age of seventeen years” endeavours to make separate provisions for juveniles as opposed to adult offenders. (Guyana Report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child 1999:24)

Defining the Working Child

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Guyana 2000 defines the working child in Guyana as anyone 0-14 years who had done any “**paid or unpaid work for a non household member or who did four or more hours housekeeping chores per day or who did other family work**” (MICS 2001:42). This definition accords with that category of children that are not legally permitted to work in Guyana. Children 15 to under 18 years are not included. The definition sets the parameters for data collected by the MICS survey.

The definition used in the ILO study was similar with the exception that children under 18 were all included consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention No. 182 definitions.

A working child is defined as anyone 0 – under 18 years of age who had done any paid or unpaid work for a non-household member or who did four or more hours housekeeping chores per day or who did other family work.

The emphasis of this study is on children who are exposed to the worst forms of child labour and whose involvement in work not only puts them at physical, psychological and sexual risks but also hinders their attendance at school and/or affects their learning, deprives them of recreation and other rights of normal childhood and consistently exposes them to compete in environments or under conditions intended for adults.

2.7 Review of Existing Research, Documents and Publications on Child Labour in Guyana

Library and documentary research on child labour in Guyana yielded more information than it was thought existed. The issue of child labour has been addressed in one way or another by the Government, international organizations like UNICEF and NGOs like the Guyana Human Rights Association. This section of the report will review these accordingly. The available literature and research is of inestimable value to this study in :

1. Defining the working child
2. Providing estimates from a national survey on the incidence of child labour and its manifestation by selected categories.
3. Pinpointing the existence of several of the worst forms of child labour in Guyana
4. Describing conditions, which are conducive to the existence of the worst forms of child labour.
5. Identifying socio-cultural explanations for time use by children that drive their involvement in child labour.
6. Identifying Amerindian children as a special category of “Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances” most prone to the worst forms of child labour.

Incidence and Categories of Working Children in Guyana – MICS Survey

The most reliable estimate of child labour in Guyana was derived from the report on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Guyana 2000. The (MICS) report is the product of the Guyana Bureau of Statistics and is based on a nationally-representative household survey of 4747 households. The Bureau was provided technical assistance by UNICEF. “The main objectives of the survey were to provide up-to-date information for assessing the situation of children and women in Guyana at the end of the decade and to furnish data needed for monitoring progress towards goals established at the World Summit for children and as a basis for future action”. (July 2001:6)

In addressing the issue of child labour, the MICS survey found that 27% of children 0–14 years were classified as currently working, that is, nearly three out of every ten Guyanese children have been found to be child labourers by this survey. The survey found, inter alia:

- Boys had a slightly higher proportion (29%) among those currently working than girls (25%).
- The remote interior regions of the country had almost twice the proportion of currently working children (45%) compared with the urban coast (22%) and the rural coast

(26%). Amerindian children who are predominant in these regions are over represented among working children.

- Two percent (2%) of children were engaged in paid work.
- Thirteen percent (13%) participated in unpaid work for someone who was not a household member.
- One percent (1%) of children performed domestic work (cooking, shopping, cleaning, washing clothes, fetching water and caring for children) for more than four hours per day.
- Children from the interior had a lower proportion engaged in unpaid work (9%) compared with the urban and rural coast (13%).
- Children from the interior (39%) had higher proportions engaged in work on a family farm or business relative to their counterparts on the rural (11%) and urban (14%) coast.
- Older children (10 – 14 years) were more likely to be currently working than younger children (5 – 9 years)". (MICS Survey 2001:42)

This ILO study covers all children below the age of 18 years because hazardous and other worst forms of child labour are prohibited to all persons under the age of 18 years.

The MICS survey report asserted that it is important to monitor the extent to which children work and the type of work they participate in because:

- 1) children who are working are less likely to attend school and more likely to dropout;
- 2) this pattern can result in children being disadvantaged and entrapped in a cycle of poverty;
- 3) working conditions for children are often unregulated with few safeguards against potential abuse;
- 4) many types of work are intrinsically hazardous and carry grave risks to children's health, such as exposure to pesticides in agricultural work and the carrying of heavy loads (MICS Survey 2001:42).

Worst Forms of Child Labour

The ILO Convention No. 182 defines a 'child' consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and pinpoints the worst forms of child labour as follows:

- All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery.
- The use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution or pornography
- The use of children for illicit activities, particularly production and trafficking of drugs.
- Work which, by its nature and circumstances under which it is carried out, endangers the health, safety or morals of children.

In addition, the accompanying ILO Recommendation No.190 requires each country, after consulting with employers' and workers' organizations and other interested parties, to decide which types of work are harmful and need to be targeted as a matter of urgency by paying special attention to:

- work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces;

- work with dangerous machinery, equipment, tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- work in an unhealthy environment, which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels or vibrations hazardous to their health; and
- work under particularly difficult conditions, such as work for long hours or during the night where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

As will be shown in this study, qualitative and quantitative data reveal that children in Guyana are to be found who are exposed to the worst forms of child labour including work in unhealthy environments where they are exposed to toxic chemicals etc. sexual and physical abuse, work with dangerous machinery, fetching heavy loads, unreasonable confinement while working as domestics or in stores, etc.

1. Children in Prostitution¹

Child victims of prostitution is one of the worst forms of child labour identified by several studies in Guyana foremost among these is the 1996 UNICEF study by George Danns entitled “**Child Prostitution and Child Sexual Exploitation in Guyana.**” Danns asserts that child prostitution in Guyana is best understood if a distinction is made between “prostitution behaviour” by children and “child prostitutes.” According to Danns “the child prostitute is a female or male child who is involved in prostitution as a “career”. The child prostitutes are involved in providing sexual services frequently to multiple sexual partners both known and unknown to them. They work in a brothel, frequent ocean going vessels, bars and nightclubs, and walk streets with the specific purpose of engaging in prostitution. Children who are not child prostitutes may however engage in “prostitution behaviour” in the sense of having occasional or rare sexual encounters for monetary or other material reward” (Danns 1996:11). The range of sexual services provided by both child prostitutes and children engaged in prostitution behaviour include oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, allowing their bodies to be fondled and penetrated, striptease dancing and pornographic encounters.

The study found that child prostitutes are very often school dropouts and further that children who engage in prostitution behaviour are more likely to drop out of school or leave school earlier than other children.

A survey of 1024 children from 20 secondary schools across Guyana was among the methods employed to obtain data for this study. The study found 26% of respondents said they know female students who accept gifts and money in exchange for sexual favours. Seventeen percent (17%) of the sample knew male students who accept money and gifts for sexual favours.

¹ Terminology surrounding sexual exploitation used in this UNICEF study discussed differs from the ILO terminology on this topic.

In terms of the respondents' own prostitution behaviour, the study revealed that 43 respondents or 4.2% of respondents say that they have been given gifts and money in return for sexual favours. Of the 43 respondents, 24 are males and 19 are females. The study stated, "the conclusion can be drawn that there is alarming prostitution behaviour within the secondary school system" (1996:53)

The UNICEF study outlined a typology of child prostitutes in Guyana namely, "the cockle, the school girl prostitute, the bus rider or joy rider, the working girl prostitute, the drug addict, the neighbourhood nymph, the street child, the stripper, and the pornographic pickney" (1996:20). The cockle is a teenager who sells her body for monetary gain at bars and discotheques, on the streets or elsewhere where fun and profit can be obtained. The school girl prostitute refers to the school girl who while attending school trades sexual favours for money, food, transportation, jewels, clothing or other material goods. The bus rider is a school girl who rides around in minibuses and listens to dub or dancehall music played on elaborate sound systems. She and her friends have sex with the bus driver or conductor in exchange for cash, gifts and free rides. The working girl prostitute is the rural teenage girl employed in the city as a sales girl, domestic, restaurant hand or factory worker and who is paid low exploitative wages and coerced by employers and adult others into providing sexual favours for cash or kind. The drug addict is a teenage girl who sells her body to obtain means to sustain her habit. The neighbourhood nymph is a teenage girl who belongs to a home in which female adults are themselves prostitutes. The street child is a male or female child who lives on the streets, have weak or non-existent family ties and who is sexually abused and exploited for food or other favours. The stripper is a young girl recruited by sleazy joints to entertain dominantly male customers. The pornographic pickney refers to children who are video taped or filmed for commercial sex purposes (1996:20 – 27)

The study pinpoints several identifiable causes of child prostitution in Guyana as follows: poverty, socialization, cultural transmission, peer pressure, weak family structure and ties, family conflicts and coercion and trickery. Child prostitution and child sexual exploitation in Guyana are promoted by individuals and institutions as follows: brothels and "short time places", pornographic promoters, unscrupulous bosses and businessmen, hustling households, minibus, bush trucks and speedboat drivers, desperate mamas, and a permissive educational system. In relation to "a permissive educational system" the study notes that many schools are "somewhat lax and engender truancy and absenteeism among their charge." (1996: 64-68)

The UNICEF study concluded:

- Everything that adults experience and more is thrust on the child prostitute. Child prostitutes are prone victims and carriers of sexually-transmitted diseases in general and HIV in particular.
- The normal growth of children involved in prostitution is often arrested; their physical, educational, physiological and moral development are all negatively affected. Early death is often a consequence of their promiscuous encounters.
- As prostitutes, children are beaten, subject to gang rape and robbed.

- Some children who become child prostitutes are already children in especially difficult circumstances. They may gravitate to prostitution from being street children, teenage mothers, sexually-abused children, runaways and child labourers.
- It is estimated that just over one out of every ten prostitutes in Guyana are child prostitutes. However, far more children, while not being prostitutes per se, engage in prostitution behaviour. (1996:74)

In a report entitled “Concerns over Vulnerability of Minors at Corriverton Border” the Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA) shared the findings of investigations conducted in February 2000 into the trafficking of female minors between the Guyana border town of Corriverton and Nickerie/Paramaribo located across the Corentyne River in the Republic of Suriname. GHRA was drawn to this investigation because of repeated cases of a 14 and a 16-year-old who were encouraged in prostitution in Paramaribo. These teenage girls travelled “backtrack” or illegally across borders to ply their trade. The 14-year-old was allegedly beaten by a Surinamese businessman and had to be hospitalized.

The GHRA found no established sex trade of female minors between the two countries. They however reported conditions conducive to the developing of such trafficking. These conditions are:

- Bars and liquor restaurants run guest houses as an addition to their business where teenage girls who work as waitresses also provided sexual favours to older men for pay.
- Older men would bring school girls into the guest houses and no questions are asked by the proprietors. Young drivers and conductors of tapir vehicles also take school girls into the guest houses. Proprietors do not maintain records of customers using their guest houses.
- Backtracking to Nickerie is a continuous activity and no questions are asked of old or young customers seeking illegal crossings.

There are no official systems in place by agencies such as probation, police or welfare to monitor this type of activity that involves juveniles.

The sexual exploitation of the girl child in Guyana is a common, widespread and serious social problem that is not being addressed as a public issue.

2. Street Children and Children in Custodial Institutions

Street Children who must work to survive is another worst form of child labour identified in Guyana. UNICEF and the Government of Guyana commissioned a study on **Situational Analysis of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances in Guyana** in 1992. The study was conducted by George K. Danns and is a situation analysis of street children and children in institutions in Georgetown, the capital city, in addition to children in the New Opportunity Corp. This study found inter alia:

- Street children derive primarily from urban areas and Afro-Guyanese population with 3 out of every 10 street children originating from rural villages.

- Street children have developed a repertoire of survival strategies. They beg, steal, work, use indecent language, use drugs, are armed with sharpened spoons, forks and knives and move around in gangs numbering from 3 to 7.
- Street children earn money through working (60%), gambling (42.9%), and begging (36%). The work done by street children include sweeping, cleaning, pushing carts, fetching market bags, block making, horse cart work, mechanic, assistant labourers,, touts. They beg for money, food and other things.
- Economic benefits i.e. money and food are the main gains. Eight (8) out of every 10 street children report benefiting economically on the streets. Other benefits include clothes, the ability to beg and gamble, go to the cinema, “get shine” or develop street smarts, freedom and information on where to get jobs.
- The main problems street children encounter are being beaten and injured. Other problems include fighting, police harassment, having their money stolen, being disturbed when sleeping, getting sick, finding a place to sleep, falling out with friends and being taken advantage of.
- Nine (9) out of every 10 street children report being beaten. They report being beaten by the police, at home and at the Salvation Army Hostel.
- At least 15% of the respondents report being buggered or sexually assaulted.
- Prior to gravitating to the streets, street children in Guyana derive from homes characterized by paternal deprivation. Seven (7) out of every 10 street children derive from single parent families. Nine (9) out of every 10 street children have either or both parents alive. Seven (7) out of every 10 have weak or no ties with their homes.
- Nine (9) out of every 10 parents of street children know their children are on the streets but regard them as being wayward. Six (6) out of every 10 of these parents feel that nothing could be done to help their street children. Parents of street children need as much help and therapy as their children.
- Street children are illiterates and do not attend school (Danns 1992)

The study was based on surveys of 282 street children and children in institutions like the New Opportunity Corp. (NOC) and Camp House both of which are juvenile detention centres, homes and hostels for orphan children and the Sophia Special School for disadvantaged children.

The surveys of children in institutions found most of these children were engaged in survival strategies before committal. They were involved in working, begging, gambling or having sex for money. Children in institutions report being beaten and sexually abused by staff including police officials, by others and by their peers. Twelve percent (12%) of children in the NOC said they had sex for money. Children also report being poorly or inadequately fed and clothed. Many have poor living and sleeping accommodation. Children at the NOC are made to work since this institution advocates vocational training. The problem is however, that the staff of the NOC, as indeed the other custodial institutions, are predominantly untrained and do not effectively impart skills on other remedial behavioral transformation in their charge. (Danns 1992)

Although the situation analysis was conducted in 1992 and some remedial changes have been effected, most, if not all of these problems remain. Custodial institutions are still poorly staffed and administered and the problem of street children is still very much evident in the city of Georgetown and elsewhere. Many children “graduate” from these institutions on to the streets and many of these end up in prison. The study found that children who are currently in custodial institutions were either street children and/or working children. Many after their release return to the streets and to work, get involved in crime and graduate to adult prisons.

3. Worst Forms of Child Labour involving Amerindian Children

The indigenous Amerindian children who live primarily in the remote interior regions of Guyana have been categorized by international agencies such as UNICEF as “Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) because of limited access to education and health facilities and the existence of pervasive poverty. Already we have noted through the MICS Survey Report (2000) that Amerindian children are over- represented among child labourers in Guyana.

Considering the indigenous Amerindian children, the 1993 UNICEF Report found few Amerindian children complete secondary schools to “O” levels and virtually none living in the hinterland communities proceed to University. It was noted that the permanent withdrawal of Amerindian children from school to take up jobs, coupled with their recurrent withdrawal to assist in farming, fishing, hunting, or caring for their home contributes to their low level of formal education achievement (1993: 85-86).

In 1997, the National Commission on Women sponsored an issue paper on “**Indigenous Women**” authored by Laureen Pierre. This study reports that “Amerindian women display characteristics associated with a subsistence level lifestyle. Within their homes and communities they reflect signs of overwork, fatigue, poor nutrition and generally impoverished conditions”. Pierre notes that in terms of ethnicity Amerindians rank as the poorest of Guyanese people with 88 percent of Amerindian households falling below the poverty line. Seventy five percent of Amerindians are self-employed in hunting, fishing, farming, some timber, craft and small scale mining activities. The remainder seeks employment with large mining and timber companies such as OMAI and BARAMA. The average household size among Amerindians is 5.5% compared to 4.28 for the national average. Most households are de facto female headed since many adult males leave these homes to go and seek work far outside their communities. Amerindian women (56.2%) have a higher rate of illiteracy than men (43.8%). (Pierre 1997: 9-11)

This study on indigenous women points to the seminal and economic exploitation of Amerindian women, many of whom are teenage girls. These are particularly prone to exploitation as they seek employment outside their communities.

Pierre argues that women are the caregivers in Amerindian communities. As such, young girls are expected to assume domestic responsibilities at an early age.

Taxing domestic chores marks the childhood of Amerindian girls. They are normally required to assist their mothers with younger siblings, with preparing cassava for processing and even with the preparation of food. Most of their potential leisure time is also spent fetching water and firewood, washing clothes and helping on farms. By the time most Amerindian girls approach adolescence they have been fairly well prepared for facing the more rigorous aspects of homemaking and care-giving. (1997:12)

Pierre points to a high incidence of teenage pregnancy among Amerindian girls. “For young girls this often means that they have to leave school and even if they are already out of school, they have either to depend on their family and kin or seek some form of employment in order to provide for the child” (1997:16). Many of these young girls either become young wives or else seek employment outside their villages leaving the child to be raised by grandparents.

Tradition and economic stress are primary causes of child labour in Amerindian communities.

In a 1994 study on “**Amerindian Children and Human Rights in Guyana**” George Danns reported

Amerindian children are faced with the threat of sexual abuse both within and without their communities. In their communities, the Amerindian girl may be subjected to sexual abuse by miners and porkknockers, loggers and other coastlanders who work in the interior regions. Young girls are enticed with money and other gifts and lured into sexual activities. Prostitution is also a known feature among Amerindian adolescents. Among the consequences of such activity is reportedly high incidence of sexually-transmitted infections (STI) and HIV among interior residents. Teenage pregnancy is also a growing concern. Most Amerindian villages have at least one third of their residents being of mixed descent as a consequence of miscegenous unions between Amerindians and coastlanders. (Danns 1994)

This study found that child labour is a common feature with some Amerindian children being recruited as labourers and to work as domestics, etc. These young people are invariably paid low wages and physically and sexually abused. The study concludes: “the rights of Amerindian children in the society are reportedly more violated and/or unfulfilled, relative to other Guyanese children” (Danns 1994).

Conditions Conducive to the Worst Forms of Child Labour

Another dimension of available research is the identification of conditions conducive to the worst forms of child labour. Brenda Gill-Marshall in a 2000 Master’s Thesis entitled “**Child Abuse in Guyana: A Study of Teacher Abuse of Children in Secondary School in Guyana**” pinpointed such abuse as being not only widespread but also a contributory factor to school drop out and child labour. Marshall states “that a significant proportion of children at

school are abused by teachers in ways that violate the rights of the child, the policies of the Ministry of Education, and the laws of the state” (Gill 2000:162). She found that physical abuse is the most reported type of abuse in the secondary school system. From a survey of secondary school children, Gill-Marshall found children were made to kneel down (18.8%), were shaken (20.2%), slapped (26.3%), whipped (56.3%), stand on bench (21.8%), cursed (14.3%). Thirty eight point six percent (38.6%) were called derogatory names, 40.7% were insulted, 34.2% were put out of the classroom during instructions, 49.3% were neglected, 5.8% were kissed, 1.8% were fondled, 13.5% had sexual words and suggestions used to them. Children were whipped with pieces of wood, wild canes, broken furniture, metal strips, belts and other objects. Many children sustain injuries as a consequence of such abuse.

Thirty (30) out of 1200 children in the sample had sex with their teachers. Gill-Marshall concluded that 1 in every 40 secondary school students would have had sex with their teacher. This is equivalent to one student in each class in the school system. (2000:162)

The child abuse study was carried out in 24 secondary schools across 7 of the 10 administrative regions in Guyana. Gill-Marshall concluded, “Children who are abused at school tend to often lack motivation to do well in school. They lack interest in school work or any academic activity” (2000:163). Further, the school system is characterized by inadequate teachers, a large proportion of untrained teachers and teachers who neglect their charge by their absence or inattention. Gill-Marshall noted that “some children go to school but due not to having teachers end up on the road. The lack of adequate teachers leads to truancy and failure at school. (2000:164).

Abuse, coupled with neglect and other failures in the school system, propels children out of school and prematurely into the adult world of work. Indeed this ILO study has found that a majority of child labourers are school dropouts while others attend school infrequently.

A 1993 UNICEF Report on “Analysis of the Situation of Women and Children in Guyana” focused inter alia, on child labour and concluded that the Education Act is not only permissive of child labour but also contradicts other legislation governing work and the employment of children This report states:

It is against the law for employers to engage anyone under the age of 14. However, a child may render service to his or her parents on condition that such service is not rendered on a school day or during school hours (Education Act). The wording of this law leaves it wide open to interpretations: the only stipulation is that children not be inhibited from attending school. Infringements, if detected, may be pursued by school welfare officers. The custom is to warn the parents before initiating legal action. This provision is in conflict with several other statutes, which restrict the type of work hours, etc., that persons are permitted to be employed for (1993:63).

The problem with having children work with parents and other family members once it does not conflict with their school attendance is that such children may be made to work long hours

by day and night, denied opportunity for adequate rest and recreation and eventually be withdrawn or drop out from school altogether. Whether children work with family or with outsiders the fact is that they do work and such work may be oppressive to their beings and their rights as children. Child labour, whether within or without the family context, requires stricter regulation, greatly increased penalties and the institutionalization of an enforcement capacity.

In addressing the rights of children in especially difficult circumstances, the UNICEF report concluded that “the legal and human rights of children in especially difficult circumstances are essentially non-existent. Children in especially difficult circumstances include Amerindian children, disabled children, institutional children, street children, and working and abused children (1993:84). No data was provided on the incidence of categories of child labourers in this report.

Hunger stemming from familial poverty is yet another contributory factor to child labour in Guyana.

In a monitoring and evaluation study conducted by Prof. G. K. Dadds for the World Food Programme and the Government of Guyana in 1994, it was found that this programme which was geared to providing milk and biscuit snacks to over 100,000 nursery and primary school children had a general objective of supporting educational development in Guyana. The schools lacked the capacity to effectively administer the programme. Many could not readily access potable water and cooking and mixing utensils. Storage was a major problem and supplies sometimes go bad because of rodent and other pest infestation, leaking roofs and poor storage facilities. Supplies and utensils were often stolen and sometimes misused or even sold. Schools did not regard their feeding program as an integral aspect of their curricula and teachers who had to administer the programme saw it as an imposition and burden and were less than diligent in reporting use. Teachers notwithstanding, regarded the programme as essential for relieving hunger and providing a dietary supplement to children. “Teachers report that a sizable proportion of children, even in a so-called elite school, is very dependent on the snacks. Further, teachers opine that the programme is having a positive impact in general but particularly on the attendance and alleviation of hunger for children from very poor homes and those who have to travel or walk long distances to school” (WFP & GOG 1999)

A major finding of this report is that poverty and literal hunger keep many children not only from attending schools but also from not being able to pay attention to instruction whenever they do attend. The upshot of this is that many children drop out of school and seek employment to satisfy their basic needs. Parents not being able to provide adequately either encourage this trend or else cannot actively discourage it.

Time Use by Guyanese Children

Analysis of time use by children provides a useful indication of their involvement in child labour. Sybil Patterson (1993) conducted a study “into the ways boys and girls age 7 – 14 use their time”. The study investigated time use in the home, school and on the streets and how boys and girls from rural Indian and marginal urban zones use their time in these varying contexts of their lives. This study found, inter alia, that:

- the number of siblings in the home determined the way tasks were shared, the elder having to bear the greater burden; and
- the poor economic conditions in the homes required both parents to be away at work. The care of the younger siblings was left to the older ones. Both boys and girls shared this responsibility (Patterson 1993: 72).

The importance of this study is that it points to the traditional authoritarian control of the rural East Indian child by parents, grandparents and older siblings. Children are required to participate actively in domestic chores and to assist parents in domestic chores even to the point of staying away from school.

Conclusion

The review of existing research on or relating to child labour in Guyana has established that child labour does exist in Guyana and that it is a serious social problem. It was found that 27 percent of children in Guyana ages 0 – 14 years are child labourers. This study estimates that over 3 out of every ten children below age 18 years in Guyana are involved in child labour. The worst forms of child labour exist by way of children who are victims of prostitution, street children and Amerindian children. Further, children who work are exposed to hazardous risks in unregulated work environments. The studies show that most children are employed by or work with their families and the majority is not paid. Cultural traditions, familial poverty, hunger and abuse by teachers in schools are factors, which reportedly induce child labour.

3. Rapid Assessment Procedures

The ILO/UNICEF Rapid Assessment Methodology utilized for this study seeks to balance statistical precision with qualitative analysis in order to provide policymakers with base knowledge on the magnitude, character, cause and consequence of the worst forms of child labour quickly and with little expense.

3.1 Methodological Procedures

The study was conducted in eight (8) communities in Guyana. These are: Charity, Parika, Georgetown, St. Cuthbert's Mission, Corriverton, Black Bush Polder, Bartica and Linden. These communities were selected from six of the 10 administrative regions in Guyana. Charity and Parika are located in Region 2 and are mixed-ethnic areas and key port communities. Georgetown is located in Region 4 and is the capital city with a mixed ethnic population. St Cuthbert's Mission is a relatively remote Amerindian community located partly in Region 5 and partly in Region 10. Bartica is located in Region 7 and is a gateway port community to the interior regions and has a mixed ethnic population.

Black Bush Polder is a predominantly East Indian farming community located in Region 6. Corriverton is a border town (across the Corentyne River is the country of Suriname) of mixed ethnic population. Sugar cane cultivation and manufacture along with commerce, fishing, and sawmilling are the major economic activities here. Linden is located in Region 10 and is a bauxite mining community with a predominantly Black population.

These eight communities were selected with a view to capturing a cross section of ethnic, economic and socio-cultural flash points in the society where the worst forms of child labour are likely to exist. Further the sectors identified for study: fishing communities, the logging industry and especially sawmills, the sex sector, the agricultural sector (rice, sugar, and other crops) Amerindian communities and the mining sector were more or less covered in the eight study communities.

Data were collected through application of the rapid assessment methodology prepared by ILO/UNICEF. The methodology comprised a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods and were as follows:

- **Library and Documentary Research**
- **Mapping**
- **Sample Surveys**
- **Focus Interviews**
- **Focus group discussions**
- **Observations**

3.1.1 Library and Documentary Research

Published and unpublished reports, legal and official documents, reports of relevant studies and national statistics dealing with the general social and specific labour market situation of children and youths below the age of 18 were reviewed. Pertinent data on children in Guyana

on the issue of child labour were collected from communities visited as well as from several Georgetown-based national organizations. Sources for obtaining research literature and reports included the following government ministries and departments, international organizations, NGOs and academic institutions:

Government Ministries:

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security
- Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports
- Ministry of Legal Affairs

Other Government Institutions

- National Commission for Children
- Sophia Special School
- National AIDS Secretariat
- Bureau of Statistics

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

- Beacon Foundation
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Rights of the Child (ROC)
- Guyana Human Rights Commission
- Indigenous Organizations (Amerindians)
- Trades Union Council (TUC)
- Red Thread
- Guyana Human Rights Association (GHRA)

International Organizations

- UNICEF
- PAHO/WHO
- ILO

Academic Institutions

- University of Guyana (UG)
- Institute of Development Studies

3.1.2 Mapping

Through the assistance of key community informants, sketches of the communities visited were developed and maps prepared. Where actual maps were available, they were used as a base. The maps highlight, among other things, key locations where children can be found working in the various communities (See Section 4).

3.1.3 Sample Surveys

Two sample surveys were conducted in the 8 project sites.

Survey of Child Labourers

Interviews were conducted with a quota sample of 100 child labourers at various locations in the respective communities where they were found to be operating. Community informants functioned as guides to where the children could be found engaged in work-related activities. The snowball technique was used to locate some respondents. Some of the children interviewed were able to identify other children whom they knew were engaged in similar activities.

Budgetary constraints precluded the selection of a larger sample. Between 8 and 24 respondents were randomly selected and interviewed from across each of the eight communities. In the sampling process efforts were made to randomly select respondents based on criteria of age, gender and sectoral activities. Respondents were randomly intercepted in the context of their work and interviews were requested. Accessing and interviewing female child labourers involved in domestic duties at home and elsewhere and selling in stores, shops and restaurants proved difficult. Employers of such females refused to permit their charge to be interviewed. Homes were not visited to access respondents since this was not part of the study design.

The quota sample selected was not drawn in proportion to the population of the respective communities. Access to respondents coupled with the time available for study in the community influenced sample selection. The sample selection process was consistent with rapid assessment methodology, which is less concerned with strict conformity to the protocols of scientific sampling than fair and rapid procurement of data and insights on a study phenomenon.

An interview schedule (Appendix I) was used to obtain information from respondents. In all cases, trained interviewers administered the schedules.

A total of 100 interviews were completed in the eight communities as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: No. Of Respondents by Community, Administrative Region, Ethnic Composition and Major Economic Activity of the Community

Community	Admin. Region	Ethnic Composition	Major economic activity	No. Of Interviews
Charity	2	EI, BI, Am, MR	Other crops farming, commerce, services	10
Parika	2	EI, BI	Other crops farming, fishing, commerce	15
Georgetown	4	Mixed	Commerce, trade & distribution, Government, financial & other services	24
St.Cuthbert's Mission	5 & 10	Am	Other crops farming, fishing, craft	10
Corriverton	6	EI, BI	Sugar cultivation, commerce, fishing, sawmilling	11
Black Bush Polder	6	EI	Rice cultivation, other crops farming, fishing	8
Bartica	7	MR, BI, EI, Am	Gold mining, commerce	11
Linden	10	BI,	Bauxite mining	11

EI – East Indian; BI – Black; Am – Amerindian; MR- Mixed race; Mixed – Mixed population

Survey of Employers

A survey was conducted among 13 employers of children under age 18. A section of the interview schedule (Appendix I) used for child labourers contained questions intended for employers. There was a general reluctance on the part of some employers to be interviewed. A total of 13 employers were however interviewed in the communities indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Interviews of Employers Conducted by Community

Community	No. Of Interviews
Charity	1
Parika	4
Georgetown	3
Corriverton	2
Black Bush Polder	2
Linden	1
Total	13

The schedule contained questions pertaining to the characteristics of the employees, the terms and conditions of work and the employers' views and policies relating to employment of children. Many working children were self-employed and many worked at home or in farms with parents and relatives. Time did not permit accessing such employers for interviews.

3.1.4 Focus Interviews

Focus interviews were held with significant functionaries in the communities visited, including village leaders, youth leaders, police representatives, health personnel, school and Ministry of Education officials, social workers, welfare officers, local government administrators and NGO representatives. Focus interviews were also conducted with several Ministers of the Government. The focus interviews were intended to derive qualitative data from key informants, specifically their knowledge, opinions and perceptions as it pertained to the following aspects of the phenomenon of child labour:

- its prevalence
- the nature of child labour
- causes of child labour
- conditions under which children work in the respective communities
- the consequences of child labour
- measures for eliminating child labour
- current programmes run by organizations to deal with the problem.

A list of the persons with whom focus interviews were conducted is contained in Appendix IV.

3.1.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were not initially intended. Field visits presented opportunities for interviewing groups of head teachers, education officials, police, regional and governmental officials. These functionaries suspended meetings or other activities to accommodate interviews and share their knowledge and insights on child labour in the community, region or nationally.

3.1.6 Observations

This exercise was conducted by the interviewers at locations where children were employed and/or during the process of the interview. Interviewers observed the conditions under which children worked during the community field visits. Interviewers were provided with specific observation guidelines and recorded their observations of the children's physical appearance on the interview schedule. Observation also facilitated an understanding of community condonement and indifference to child labour as well as the socio-economic and cultural conditions that sustain it.

3.2 Design Of Research Instruments

An interview schedule was used to obtain information on children and households engaged in child labour. The instrument also included questions for the parents of child labourers and for the children's employers. The Consultant, following the guidelines set out by the ILO in its Rapid Assessment Guidelines, developed the instrument. The instrument was pre-tested in Georgetown among a group of child labourers. Modifications were made to the instrument based on the outcome of the pre-testing exercise. (See Appendix I)

4. Child Labour in Guyanese Communities: A Qualitative Analysis

As part of the rapid assessment methodology, qualitative studies were carried out in eight Guyanese communities across six out of the ten Administrative Regions. These communities were Charity, Parika, Georgetown, St. Cuthbert's Mission, Corriverton, Black Bush Polder, Bartica and Linden. These communities were selected to ensure ethnic, geographical and sectoral representation in accordance with study objectives.

Essentially, focus group discussions, focus interviews and the observation method were the qualitative methodological techniques employed to obtain data and information. These methods combined, yielded much insight into the child labour phenomenon not only in these communities but also in the country as a whole. Interviews with community leaders and government officials provided information also on communities other than the ones targeted. In fact, some officials addressed the problem in entire sub-regions and regions, rather than only the specific community. Government ministers provided responses at a national level.

A questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to allow unfettered expression by interviewees on particular child labour issues. In addition, observation of community activities and child labourers in their work settings served to complement interviews by community informants as well as deepen the understanding as to the nature, cause and consequences of the problem. Because children work in several sectors (for example, agriculture, commercial, sawmilling and logging) in the same community, reporting here is done on a community rather than sectoral basis.

4.1 Charity

4.1.1. Contextual Information

Charity, the last village on the 48-mile long Essequibo coast road is one of the busiest communities on the coast. It is the central entry to the Northwest, Port Kaituma, Mabaruma and other interior communities.

Charity has a nursery, a primary and a secondary school, the Sub Education Office for Region 2, the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC), an agricultural extension centre, a fishing complex, a police station, Customs Excise House, post office, Magistrate's court, cottage hospital, pharmacy, an Amerindian hostel, two hotels, a television station, the Pomeroun Oil Mill, numerous liquor shops, restaurants, a supermarket, a community centre ground, a marketing centre, and one of the three markets on the coast. The market day is usually Monday and this is the main day when some children earn a 'pocket piece' mainly by fetching person's grocery bags, fixing or dismantling stallholder's stalls, vending, or doing other odd jobs around the market.

Charity is bordered to the north by the Canal Drainage 1 (CD1), to the south by the Amazon creek, to the west by the Pomeroun River, and to the east by the village New Road. It is about one mile in length and is a predominantly mixed race community. In almost equal proportions, the three predominant races are Blacks, East Indians, and Amerindians. The

residential area of this village comprises a housing scheme and a squatter settlement. Residents have access to electric lighting, water and some homes have telephones.

Rapid Assessment methodology was employed to obtain qualitative data from this community through a combination of focus interviews and observation. Focus interviews were conducted with the police, the District Education Officer, the School Welfare Officer, Regional Public Health Officer and the proprietor of the popular Purple Heart Hotel and bar.

4.1.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Child labour is a visible, prevalent yet unacknowledged phenomenon in the Charity community. Community sources estimate that between 25 – 40% of children in Charity and other communities in the Pomeroun work. The police identified about 25 children selling in or around the Charity market on a Sunday. Children, who work, range in ages from 5 to 17 years.

Interviewees reported that children who work sell in stores, work as porters, farmhands, victims of prostitution, domestic servants, waitresses, and the use and trade in narcotics. Children from outlying areas are also involved in logging and mining.

Due to the fact that Charity is a port and gateway community, most of the child labourers found there do not derive from the community but live elsewhere in the riverain Pomeroun communities and along the Essequibo coast. Researchers were able to observe and in some instances interview many children vending in the community; selling at market stalls with and without adult supervision, working as porters, fetching heavy bags of copra or other farming produce on their shoulders or backs from boats to vehicles waiting on shore and working as waitresses in bars. Focus interviews also report teenage girls who are victims of prostitution being enticed by elder males to provide sexual favours for cash or other rewards. Interviewees also report that young boys would drop out of school to work in logging, sawmilling and mining enterprises in the interior regions. A few others in the community are known to be involved in the narcotics trade.

Amerindian children work as labourers on farms in the Pomeroun with their parents. These parents are often migrant farm workers. Their children invariably do not attend school. Despite an arrangement by Education authorities to permit children to attend the schools near to where their parents work, children still do not attend. Interventions by the Schools Welfare Officer often result in Amerindian children going to school for a few days and then dropping out to return to work alongside their parents. The District Education Officer confirmed that most children of migrant Amerindian workers do not get an education as in the case of a family with five children ages 8-14 who never attended school. They only began doing so after intervention by the welfare officer. In addition, Amerindian and Mixed race children are most affected when their entire families travel to Charity on Sunday for market day on Monday. These families derive from communities such as Jacklow, Kabakaburi, Wakapow, Moruca and Kanawab. They bring nibi furniture, handicraft and cassareep for sale. They sell and do shopping and return. While at Charity they sleep on stalls, in hammocks, or in their boats. Adults and older children 13-17 years would go to the bars and discotheques. Small

children are often left alone. When drunk, some Amerindians are subject to robbery, rape and other forms of abuse. This particularly affects Amerindian children.

4.1.3. Causes of Child Labour

Interviewees posit that child labour in Charity and environing communities is caused by:

- Poverty and the economic situation
- Peer pressure
- Broken homes
- Parents not being able to control their children; “children calling the shots”
- Single parenting
- Uneducated parents
- Culture

In relation to poverty and the economic situation, it was reported that farmers in the area are obtaining poor prices for agricultural produce such as oranges and copra. People are finding it difficult to make ends meet. The School Welfare Officer said parents are saying that the economic situation is keeping children at home.

Children would stay away from school on Mondays to “catch their hand” at the market. Monday is the main business day at Charity. Farmers and hucksters travel out from communities in the Pomeroon River and from along the coast to market their produce and wares. Many of these itinerant vendors arrive in Charity on Sunday evening and entertain themselves in bars. The lively economic activities, the blaring music from bars and discotheques, the drinking, the people and the atmosphere draw children. The schools in Charity are close to the market and bars, and have to compete to keep their charges. Schoolboys escape to play pools, drink and party. Parents are seemingly and reportedly losing control over their children. Children would tell parents “I am not going to school today”. Some parents by their own drinking and irresponsible behaviour lose the moral authority to parent their children. The Public Health Officer said parents make children and “loose them like water”. Parents’ attitude to providing for their children is a factor. Parents are not honouring their responsibilities.

Peer pressure includes children who see other children handling money and want to do the same. Some of these youngsters “are too big to be a child and too small to be an adult”. The allure of discotheques and bars with their entertainment encourage kids to work and earn in order to party.

Focus interviewees were of the view that culture plays a role in explaining the acceptance of child labour as normal and necessary particularly in Amerindian communities.

Interviewees report that children from broken homes are more likely to be the ones who are to be found working. Such homes are often characterized by paternal deprivation and single parent mothers are unable to provide adequately, leaving children with no option than to fend for themselves. The exception to this is where the family as a whole, as in the case of Amerindian families, deliberately involves children in their work lives.

The Chairman of the Charity Neighbourhood Democratic Council said “children working is part of the Amerindian way of life. Modern consumer society has not caught up with them. They live in little enclaves. Education is not seen as a vehicle for social success. Amerindians drink and eat out their money. They do not save for a rainy day.”

The Schools’ Welfare Officer also pointed to the role of culture and its impact on child labour. He noted that families not only work together but they “play” together thus exposing children to pernicious influences. He stated: “Amerindian families move together as a group. They go to a party and adults and children all drink and smoke. If you make a mistake to pass a pack of cigarettes to the father, he shares it with his wife and children. They do the same with alcohol”. This officer notes that drunken Amerindian girls when drunk are “gang raped” and the adults are robbed.

Many single parent mothers are themselves school dropouts and do not actively discourage their children from not attending school. Some parents do not see the relevance of formal education to theirs and their children’s existence. Other parents, particularly those in the riverain Pomeroun areas, cannot afford transportation for their children to attend school.

4.1.4. Consequences

The consequences of child labour in Charity and its environs are numerous and lasting. Interviewees report:

- Upsurge in crime. The Police report that 13-year-old boys were apprehended for breaking into market stalls. The trafficking and use of drugs by teenagers were on the increase.
- A high incidence and increase in teenage motherhood. Girls who drop out of school at 13 or 14 years of age soon become teenage mothers. Many of these work as waitresses, domestics, victims of prostitution, etc. and are subject to sexual and physical abuse.
- Employers exploit children at work. Some children who work with stallholders and other business proprietors receive some groceries as payment instead of cash. The employers determine what groceries and how much will be given. Many of the big farmers in the Pomeroun own shops and some employ children. The Public Health Officer said that Amerindian girls who work at restaurants are exploited and “left at the mercy of Tiberius”. He concluded that, “the main reason for child labour is that the employers cannot get adult labour. Also, they pay the children half what an adult would get. Yet, children do the same quantity and quality work”.
- Some children do not get an education or else have their educational development thwarted.
- School dropout and truancy rates are high. The School Welfare Officer provided current (2001) statistics on school attendance for 20 primary schools and 22 nursery schools in the education district. Attendance at nursery schools range from 32% at Abrams creek to 87% at Liberty with an average daily attendance of 56.6% per school. Attendance at primary schools ranged from 48% at Akawini and Friendship to 87% at

Better Hope with an average daily attendance of 61.4% per school. Attendance on Mondays is a mere 30% at some schools in the Pomeroon and at Charity. Children stay home to “watch house” or look after younger siblings. Parents go to market with the boat and kids are also unable to obtain transportation on Mondays to get to school. Most children drop out of school by Form 4 or by age 12. The fourth forms in the schools only have three or four students. Some schools such as those in Akawini and Wakapow have a 10 mile catchment area posing transportation and travelling difficulties for children who live away from the school. Many do not bother to attend or do so infrequently.

- Many schoolboys drink alcohol and curse and behave disorderly. They earn money from working to purchase alcohol and drugs. Boys were found taking high wine (a clear pure form of alcohol) in water bottles to school and drinking. The Headteacher of Charity Secondary School suspended five boys who came to school drunk.
- Early sexual activity. This is a consequence of the raunchy environments in which children are raised with constant drinking and partying. Headteachers have on several occasions gone to nearby brothels to bring out schoolboys and schoolgirls who go with adult partners or each other to have sex during school hours. Incest is also prevalent among rum drinking families.

The School Welfare Officer cites the case of a 12-year-old Amerindian girl who became pregnant for her 17-year-old brother. Another case involved a 13-year-old Amerindian girl whose uncle impregnated her and later left her aunt to live with the teenager. A pregnant 14-year-old works at a bar to support younger siblings. The child’s mother, a single parent does not want her. A 13-year-old girl became pregnant for a 14-year-old boy. The boy disowned the child. The girl was already the mother of another child for someone else and was not attending school.

- Exposure to agricultural chemicals on rice and other farms in the area. Children who work on sawmills are exposed to unprotected saws and other machinery and have to fetch/handle large logs and cut boards. Children working in the interior regions are exposed to malaria and typhoid.
- Children of migrant workers who labour alongside parents live in “logies” or little shacks and tents and are often exposed to the elements.

Children who work in Charity and surrounding communities face numerous threats. They are exposed to sex, alcohol and drugs, violence, chemicals from rice and other agricultural produce and farming environments, malaria and typhoid, injury from sawmills and agricultural machinery and bites from mosquitoes, and other insects and animals.

The Regional Public Health Officer noted that “children work in restaurants and sawmills under adverse conditions. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations Office does not function”. This officer also cited the case of a 14-year-old East Indian boy who died while working on a rice combine at Reliance, Essequibo Coast. The whirring blades of the machine he was trying to clear severed the child’s arm. An adult was operating the machine and the child was working with him but no charges were laid.

4.1.5. Preventative Measures

In dealing with the problems of child labour in Charity and its environs, the police said that when children under age are working at restaurants and the matter is reported, the police would talk to proprietors and bring in children and their parents for questioning.

The Schools' Welfare Officer would visit and talk to parents and sometimes employers. He said that quite a number of children would go to school after such interventions. He noted however, that parents report that hundreds of children leave school early to go to work in logging, farming and mining. Some children plainly refuse to go to school. The Schools' Welfare Officer explained that a leading businessman in the Pomeroun gave permission for him to round up 20 children working on his farm with their parents. The businessman even bought a boat so the kids can attend school but the parents are not sending them.

In sum, residents do not perceive child labour in Charity as a social problem but instead regard it as normal if not inevitable. Yet, it is pervasive, dangerous and destructive of the innocence and life chances of the youth in Charity and its environs.

4.2 PARIKA

4.2.1. Contextual Information

Parika is located six miles up the east bank of the Essequibo River and 22 miles from Vreed-en-Hoop. This rapidly growing community is bordered by the Essequibo River to the north east; Hydronie to the East; Hyde Park to the West and Parika Back Dam to the south. The population of this community is 2913 (1991 Census Report). Approximately 65 percent of the residents are East Indian; 30 percent are Black and five percent are of mixed race. A majority of villagers subscribe to Christianity as all races mainly attend churches. Hinduism has the second largest following and Muslims are in the minority. There are at least four churches in Parika, one mosque and one temple.

The community is run by the Mora/Parika Neighbourhood Democratic Council and comprises a Chairman, an Overseer and Councillors. Parika is an important port community, which while it still has the status as a village, is regarded as a secondary town and is soon to be upgraded to town status. Parika is the port linking Region 4 and Region 3 to Region 2 and Region 7. It is a relatively vibrant economic and trade centre with three commercial banks competing for patronage.

There are two nursery schools, one primary school and a computer college (Global Technology) in the village. There is also a Health Centre, Police Station, post office, Forest Ranger office and three commercial banks in Parika. There are three playgrounds in the community, where residents play mainly cricket. Parties and other social activities are held at the Beach in the area.

4.2.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Child Labour is visible and prevalent in the Parika and adjacent communities. According to a police official, an estimated 15 – 20 percent of children in the community are involved in child labour. A leading restaurant proprietor said between 200 – 300 children are involved. The Head of the Parika Market said that about 50 children work around the Parika township selling and as labourers, etc. Other children work on farms with their parents in the Parika back dam.

The child labourers in Parika work as vendors, hucksters, and porters. Some sell in shops and market stalls. Others of the itinerant variety move around hawking wares such as confectionery, fruits, green vegetables, toys, etc. Many children work with their parents on farms. Others, particularly girls, remain at home to perform domestic services or take care of younger siblings. These latter two categories of child labour are less visible. There is also some evidence of male and female prostitution involving children. Some children also work at sawmills and others are involved in fishing and logging.

Children from as young as 5 years were observed selling in stalls with their parents or other persons. It is mainly boys that are seen actively working around the township. East Indian boys are in the majority followed by Black, Amerindian and mixed race boys. The market head noted that some of the boys sleep around the market area and are stelling and appear to have tenuous ties with their homes and parents. Some of these youngsters allegedly indulge in buggery for money or other reward. Similarly, girls of Amerindian descent are reportedly involved in prostitution. These girls hang out around wharves where ship repairs are being done and are picked up by adult males.

The bulk of child labour in Parika involves children working with their parents on farms or selling in the market. While the majority of those children attend school many do so infrequently and some are dropouts. Attendance at schools in the area is particularly affected on Fridays and Mondays. On Fridays children are kept home from school to assist parents in reaping and purchasing produce for the market or else they substitute for parents in “keeping house” and taking care of younger siblings. The main market day in Parika is on Sunday. On Mondays clothes will be washed and children are prepared to return to school on Tuesday until Thursday and then the rhythm repeats itself. What is general to the various types of child labour in this community is that children are cast in adult roles, have to work with adults and as hard if not harder than adults. They are subject to the attendant risks of their occupation and are affected from attending school. Like Charity, some child labourers, who can be found in Parika do not live in Parika but come from environing communities. This busy port community serves as economic lighting rod for child labourers. Research team members were approached on numerous occasions by girls and boys selling market produce, and by boys offering to carry our luggage and that of other commuters.

4.2.3. Causes of Child Labour

Focus interviews identified causes of child labour. Poverty and illiteracy of parents were identified as major causes. Illiterate parents are reportedly not motivated to send their children to school and place a low premium on education as a value. Interviewees blamed parents and

said “neglectful parents”, “delinquent parents”, “rum drinking parents” were the cause. Another cause identified was “peer pressure”. Kids who work and acquire income become attractive to and encourage their peers. Children who work are seen as going after a “quick buck”.

4.2.4. Consequences

One consequence of child labour in Parika is that school attendance by children is seriously affected. Poor educational attainment is a result. Teen pregnancy is seen as a consequence. It was reported that every other home in the Parika Façade squatting area has a 12 – 14 year old girl who is pregnant. Young girls not only seek sex for love, but also for money. Adult males proffer presents and money in return for sexual favours from teenage girls. After becoming pregnant, girls would drop out of school.

Children who work are exposed to alcohol, sex, violence, drug abuse and pesticides from working on farms. They are also exposed to the elements while selling or working on farms. Snakes and wild animals pose a constant threat to kids working on farms.

4.2.5 Preventative Measures

There are no known programmes or measures to eliminate child labour in Parika. The Police report that they can only enforce existing laws if they are known to be broken.

4.3 Georgetown

4.3.1 Contextual Information

Georgetown is the capital city of Guyana and is situated on the east bank and at the mouth of the Demerara River. It was founded over 200 years ago and is the main commercial centre and principal port. Georgetown covers an area of 38km(squared) and has a population of approximately 167,078 (Guyana Telephone Directory, 2001). Like all capitals, the city is the centre of government administration and a wide range of economic activity.

4.3.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Child labour in Georgetown is visibly present in markets, stores, car parks, wharves and other commercial and transportation centres. One interviewee estimates that 30% of the children in Georgetown work. Child labour, however, is not seen as a problem in the city. Despite the existence of street children who are also child labourers, and who are seen as a social problem, child labourers in this capital city remain largely invisible.

Child labourers in Georgetown are of Black, East Indian, Mixed and Amerindian ethnic origins. Blacks and boys however, are predominant children of all ages that are involved. The activities are wide ranging and children work as vendors, labourers, shop assistants and store clerks, garbage scavengers, gardeners, handymen, domestics, male and female prostitutes and boat hands, mechanics, apprentices, etc.

4.3.3 Causes and Consequences

The main causes/reasons for child labour in Georgetown are:

- Poverty and financial problems
- Broken homes
- Single parents

Poverty is rampant particularly among the majority Black community in South Georgetown. A majority of homes are single-parent, female-headed and overcrowded. Several squatting communities have sprung up around the city where the overflow of homeless, and overcrowded households find tenuous refuge. Children from some of these households must work in order to eat and to live. Some sleep on the streets. Many are arrested and jailed by the police for stealing and in other ways getting into trouble. Like the port communities of Parika and Charity, many of the child labourers found in Georgetown came from other communities such as those along the East Coast and West Coast Demerara and the East Bank and West Bank Demerara. At nights, numerous children are found around the main municipal markets such as Stabroek Market and around popular eating and night spots selling, begging, watching cars or hanging out waiting for some manner of “manna” to fall their way. Some of these children would have run afoul of the law on several occasions and a few are street children with little or no ties to family.

The consequences of child labour include: sexual abuse, physical abuse, child molestation, children being exposed to and influenced by criminal elements, involvement in drugs, prostitution and other social ills.

Researchers visited a large municipal dump site located in La Penitence, Georgetown where at least two dozen children were observed scavenging in an environment filled with toxic and other chemical discharges, wood, metal, food and other decaying substances. Kids were involved in looking for things to sell.

Because Georgetown is the capital, programmes and policies aimed at curtailing child labour emanate from the seat of Government and from NGOs located in the city. In a later section of this report the opinions and insights of Government Ministers and NGOs will be presented.

4.4 Corriverton

4.4.1. Contextual Information

The township of Corriverton is located on Guyana’s coastland in Region 6, East Berbice–Corentyne. In 1970, the village district, incorporating the areas of No. 78, No. 79, Line Path, Kingston, Queenstown, Rampoor, Springlands, Princetown, Dukestown, No. 75, the entire Skeldon Estate Compound and sugar cultivation area and the Race Course, was declared the Town of Corriverton. Corriverton is approximately 28 square miles with a population of

13,429 (Guyana Census Report 1991). The population comprises a mix of both East Indians and Blacks with East Indians being in the majority.

Sugar cultivation, fishing, farming and sawmilling are some of the main economic activities in this area. As is characteristic of most towns, there is a significant amount of commercial activity. What adds to the character of this community is that it is a border town. The Corentyne River separates the town of Corriverton from the country of Suriname. Smuggling between borders is integral to the economic existence of Corriverton.

Child labour in Corriverton and its environs is both visible and pervasive. Qualitative data were obtained from focus interviews conducted with the Youth Sports and Culture Officer, Corriverton Town Council, Officer in Charge, Springlands Police Station, School Welfare Officer, Ministry of Education – New Amsterdam, Schools' Welfare Officer – Ministry of Education Central Corentyne, Schools' Welfare Officer – Ministry of Education Upper Corentyne (Corriverton).

4.4.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

The Welfare Officer estimates that between 10 – 15 percent of children on the Corentyne Coast, including Corriverton, are involved in child labour. These estimates were evidently based on a limited concept for what child labour is. Children working with parents and family members were not factored into the considerations of focus interviewees. They saw such involvement as normal and necessary. It is only when children work away from their families that it was seen as child labour. Yet, most children who work do so with their families.

According to the Officer in Charge of the Police at Springlands Police Station in Corriverton child labour does exist in the community and its environs but it is not perceived as a problem. Tapir bus owners employ children to work as conductors. Some children work with their parents on farms. In Crabwood Creek for example, there is extensive cash crop farming in the riverain areas where many children are employed. Children are also employed at the sawmills at Crabwood Creek and Corriverton. Children who complete primary school are taken out of school and put to work. Some parents also feel it is a waste of time to send their children on to the community high schools, which are justly stigmatized as providing inferior quality education.

The Youth and Sports Officer of the Corriverton Town Council reported that children could be found around the market selling all day long. Some children sell after school. In the markets, young children walk around selling fish, shrimps, and green vegetables. Some are stationary with parents selling in stalls during school hours. Most of the children are East Indian males. There are some Black males also. The Welfare Officer said that there are also cases of schoolgirls involved in prostitution. The Guyana Human Rights Association also investigated allegations of child prostitution both within and across national borders. The details were already reported in the review of research section of this document. Girl children work in stores as sales girls, in beer gardens as waitresses and as domestics to store owners. Boys also work as handymen and labourers.

School Welfare Officers cited several cases of child labourers they investigated in Corriverton and elsewhere. One involved a 13-year-old girl working as a domestic and who has to hand all her earnings to her parents. This child is reportedly sexually abused by her employer and his adult sons. A 6-year-old boy child in New Amsterdam takes care of two little brothers both of whom are under 3 years. The child's mother works as a maid at the New Amsterdam hospital. At Rose Hall Corentyne, a 12-year-old boy is working to support his 42-year-old mother who is sick. The child's older brother and sister have left the home.

4.4.3. Causes of Child Labour

Child labour in Corriverton and communities along the Corentyne coast is reported by interviewees to be caused by:

- People who have been accustomed to earning quick money through smuggling across the borders are now unable to do so. Smuggling has been reduced in enormity, but children are still involved as ever in seeking income from whatever sources at early ages.
- Single parenting is a major cause. Many single parents have to support their own families and rely on their eldest child to assist them in doing so. Many women are not well paid. Money is the bottom line. It is the survival of the fittest.
- “The attitude is to hell with social and religious values.” This is the case for many. Some say why bother get an education and work e.g. as a clerk with the government and still can’t live a decent life and pay bills.
- Poverty is the main cause. The children are primarily from the lower income groups. The labour is used to augment family income. Poverty is responsible for parents not being able to send their children to school.
- Migration leads to child labour. Children waiting to migrate from Guyana feel no need to go to school. Children are left with relatives who abuse them and sometimes they have to work to maintain their keep.
- Illiteracy of parents.
- Rum drinking by parents who neglect their children.
- Parents have a ‘don’t care a damn’ attitude. Parents see schooling as an expense to them.
- Women with children whose partners are not the fathers find that their partners do not support another man’s children. These stepchildren have to go and work since mothers want to please their partners.
- Broken homes

4.4.4. Consequences

Interviewees reported on the consequences for child labour in Corriverton and along the Corentyne Coast. The Schools’ Welfare Officer from Corriverton pointed to the dangerous conditions at sawmills where children work. They are exposed to tumbling logs, machines and saws. Researchers found that at least one out of every three workers at sawmills in Crabwood Creek and Corriverton were young boys between ages 10-16 who work in extremely dangerous industrial settings. Some kids were without shoes, others wore tattered sneakers and were exposed to wood splinters and mechanical saws and other present dangers. Interviewers were themselves at risk in accessing child labourers at one sawmill. The whirring blade of a partly hidden electrical saw could have easily been stepped on. Saw dust and jagged wood posed other threats to movement in the sawmill.

The School Welfare Officer of Central Corentyne said children work under rough conditions. They have no protection under the law as workers. They are exposed to waterways in the back dams. They work for long hours into the night. Small children are also employed or used to drive agricultural machinery.

4.4.5. Preventative Measures

The School Welfare Officer at New Amsterdam said working children experience heavy exploitation and are affected mentally and physically. The Officer in Charge of the Springlands Police Station said illiteracy is a consequence of child labour.

The Police reported working in collaboration with the Ministry of Education on their truancy campaign in East Berbice to arrest child labour. School Welfare Officers reported that they seek to remedy the problems parents allegedly face for not sending their children to school. The problems reported include: children not having birth certificates; fathers not supporting children; children not having clothes to attend school. Welfare Officers prevail on headteachers to permit children without uniforms to attend school. Second, they send letters to parents requiring that they send their children to school and stop them from working. This effort works in some instances. The Ministry of Education also supplies uniforms to such children. Letters are given to parents to assist them in obtaining birth certificates.

School Welfare Officers also carried out truancy campaigns. In one such campaign in 2002, eighty-three (83) children were picked up in New Amsterdam, thirty (30) in Albion/Rose Hall and forty-three (43) in Corriverton/Crabwood Creek.

The School Welfare Officer in Corriverton said he had no power under the law to stop employers of child labourers. Employers continue to employ children even after they are spoken to. Parents however, are more responsive when they come into contact with the School Welfare Officer. Also, residents from some communities visit the homes of children who do not attend school and “threaten” parents into making their children attend. School Welfare Officers also attend PTA meetings to persuade parents to keep their children in school.

4.5 Bartica

4.5.1. Contextual Information

Bartica is located in the Mazaruni / Cuyuni region (region 7) of Guyana. It is a major commercial and service community and focal point for the expansive mining, logging, sawmilling and quarrying activities of that region. Strategically located at the confluence of the Essequibo and Mazaruni rivers, the community forms a “gateway” to Region 7 and the interior as a whole.

Bartica is reached mainly by way of a 26-mile roadway to Parika and an hour of speedboat travel on the Essequibo River. There is no direct road from Georgetown to Bartica, but other popular routes include travelling from Linden by road, with a narrower river crossing at Sheriba on the Essequibo River then through trail/road to Bartica. Bartica is approximately 5 square miles in area. It is primarily laid out in streets and avenues running perpendicular to each other in almost garden-like form. It has a predominantly mixed race population of approximately six thousand persons representing the most populous community in region 7.

Bartica, because of its facilities and activities, can aptly be described as a secondary town and has the makings of a full-fledged one. Besides housing the regional Administration headquarters, Bartica has several schools (nursery, primary and secondary), a Magistrate

Court, Police Station, Post Office, several churches, a regional hospital, and other health care facilities, a community centre, and water treatment plant. It has offices of the Guyana Electricity Corporation (GEC), the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Co. (GT&T), the Transport and Harbours Dept, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Regional Education Department. Bartica has several shops, stores, groceries, restaurants, meat centres, hotels and guest houses, a community market, video stores, a T.V station, cinema and many other businesses.

Bartica has no major industry. The community thrives on trade and commerce, small-scale farming, some sawmilling, a small measure of manufacturing, a blossoming transportation industry and some measure of tourism. Other sources of income for Barticians include employment in offices, forms of self employment and employment outside of the community.

Child Labour in Bartica is a product of the culture, economic and social environment of the community. To obtain qualitative data for rapid assessment purposes two focus group discussions were held. One with five ranks ranging from sergeant to constable at the Bartica Police Station and the other with 18 education officials including the Regional Education Officer and headteachers of primary and secondary schools from the Region 7 Education District. In addition, focus interviews were conducted with the Manager, Bartica Business School; Social Worker and Coordinator of Canadian Crossroads International Cry for AIDS Project; Schools Welfare Officer, Ministry of Education; Overseer, Neighbourhood Democratic Council; and Captain of the Kaikan Amerindian village and the Regional Executive Officer, Region 7.

4.5.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Estimates of the numbers of children who work in Bartica ranged from 15 – 25 percent. Boys and girls of dominantly mixed descent along with Amerindian, Black and East Indian were found working. The police opine that most females below age 18 work.

Interviewees report and researchers observed that young girls are involved as victims of prostitution, selling in stores and on stalls and trays on the streets and in the markets, working as domestics and serving in restaurants and bars. Boys are involved in selling drugs, working on horse carts, working as porters and labourers, selling in the market and as itinerant street vendors hawking products such as parched nuts, mining, logging and agriculture. Mining and logging takes place outside of Bartica. Young girls are involved as victims of prostitution inside the community as well as in far-flung mining communities such as Mahdia, Kurupung, Issano, Paruni, Kamarang, and 77 miles Potaro.

The police focus group opined that young boys in the community are “limers”. While some seek employment by going into the interior to work in mining and logging, others walk around the community selling drugs. They opine further that some girls are “street girls” who lime on the streets, are sexually promiscuous but are not really prostitutes. The police are of the view that youth don’t like to work but they want quick money and to have fun.

It was reported that there are not too many avenues for employment in Bartica, which forces youth who are interested to seek work elsewhere, and young girls to become involved in prostitution.

4.5.3 Causes of Child Labour

Child Labour in the community is reportedly caused by:

- Youths who come from broken and/or single parent homes who strive to be independent at an early age and drop out of school.
- Unemployment and poverty
- Parents who lack the skills in parenting. The age of motherhood is decreasing and children who make children often produce a child labourer.
- Negligent and aggressive parents who do not help to keep their children in school.
- Children ages 13 – 14 who cannot cope with academic work in school drop out and seek employment. Parents cannot help them because “parents are at a loss and the children are at a loss”.
- Children who are kept home to look after siblings.
- Fathers do not support their children.

Children were observed selling food, nuts, etc late into the night on the streets unprotected by parents or guardians. In one instance, a six-year-old child was seen at 1:00 am in the

The School Welfare Officer cited a case of a 13 year old boy who is forced to work on a horse cart by his step father and was taken out of school to do so. Another case involved a mother who forced her 13 and 15 year old daughters to work as prostitutes. Both girls and parents were charged by the police. It was further reported that “big women” who own shops in the interior actively recruit young girls in Bartica to take them into the interior to work as prostitutes, “bush whores” or “piraii” (named after the flesh eating pirrhanna fish). Boys ages 10 – 15 years were observed working as porters on the transport and Harbours Department wharves unloading cargo.

morning selling cigarettes and confectionery from a tray while her mother sat playing cards and drinking alcohol with her friends.

Education officials report that some children from environing communities such as Agatash, Batavia, Kaow Island, Riverview, Batavia, Makouria, etc. are kept from going to school because parents say they have no food to give them. Other parents defend keeping their child home saying “He is not the only one absent”. It was also reported in some communities that children only go to school when fathers, who work outside the community return home after days or weeks. These children kept at home soon are caught up in domestic or other employment. Some children go fishing with parents all night and cannot stay awake in school next day.

Some officials view children working as cultural, necessary and inevitable. Citing the case of a 12-year-old boy working as a porter unloading the Transport and Harbours Department Steamer, the Regional Executive Officer said: “If a man doesn’t intend to steal he is going to work. Better they (children) work than steal”. Similarly, Amerindian Captain Richard Peters of Kaikan village firmly stated: “Children have to work to help themselves. They have to learn to plant from a young age so that when they grow up they wouldn’t be strangers”. The

Captain views child labour as a cultural prescription, and as socialization of children into developing adult roles, necessary for their current and later existence. Other interviewees said that the poor economic conditions of the Bartica community function as a push factor for children to seek employment when parents do not or cannot provide. The social milieu thrives on and fosters prostitution as a survival strategy for girls. Adult males actively seek sexual services from teenage girls. Some parents push their daughters into providing sex for money. Madams sustain the child prostitution sex trade by actively recruiting “girls of all ages, sizes and descriptions” to take to interior hot spots for sexual exploitation.

4.5.4 Consequences

Children who work in Bartica are exposed to alcohol, drugs, sex, violence, and the risks of drowning, being bitten or killed by wild animals and contracting malaria or typhoid.

The School Welfare officer reported generally relatively poor school attendance. For the month of November 2001 for example, 10.7% of children from Makouria Primary School and 41.66% from St. Mary’s Primary School were absent from school. Similarly, 22.7% of children from Bartica Secondary School were absent in November 2001.

Officials report a prevalence of incest in the Bartica community involving stepfathers and fathers with their young daughters. Some children are exposed to open sex and drinking and “sporting” in their homes. Some mothers take their teenage daughters to the discotheques and bars to fraternize with adult males. The Bartica community thrives on entertainment with its numerous bars and discotheques proffering an escapist’s lifestyle of wine, music and song coupled with drugs, sex and incest.

The consequences of child labour for Bartica is that children contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS through prostitution and unprotected sex. Children end up being illiterate, becoming teenage mothers and are subject to exploitation by employers. Children who work cannot concentrate in school and their normal growth is retarded.

4.5.5 Preventative Measures

In order to prevent child labour, the police in Bartica said they would launch campaigns to pick up children working on the streets from time to time. The School Welfare Officer launched a truancy campaign and sought the assistance of the police to pressure parents into sending their children to school. As part of this campaign, the police patrolled the market area, wharves and behind the secondary school to curb truancy. Other education officials lament that the School Welfare Officer is not trained to measure up to the task. The officer contends that she lacks the resources but is doing the best she can.

The Regional Executive Officer said the Region provides a boat to ferry children from outlying areas to and from school daily and at no cost to the children. The Region also purchases uniforms for children whose parents cannot afford.

Education officials who participated in the focus group discussion said there is need to develop laws to deal with child labour. Further, they said that Parent/Teachers Associations could play an active role in discouraging truancy and school dropout which result in child

labour. The Bartica Neighbourhood Democratic Council Overseer points to the need for added sports and recreational facilities to constructively engage the energies of youth.

4.6 Linden

4.6.1. Contextual Information

Linden is one of Guyana's six towns and is located in the Administrative Region of Upper Demerara-Berbice, Region 10. It is a mining town, which developed around Guyana's bauxite mining operations, LINMINE. LINMINE employs the majority of the working residents of this community. Linden is situated some sixty-five (65) miles from Georgetown up the Demerara River, which divides the township into two sections, Mackenzie on the East Bank and Wismar-Christianburg on the West Bank. According to the Guyana Census Report (1991) the population of Linden was recorded as 28,560. The population of this mining community is predominantly Black.

Much of the economic activity in Linden revolves around the bauxite industry, with some residents involved in small-scale farming and timber production. The bauxite industry has been on the decline for some time. This decline has triggered a corresponding deterioration in the social infrastructure and services in this community that historically possessed all the characteristics of a company town. This, coupled with increasing unemployment as a consequence of the retrenchment of LINMINE employees and lack of economic opportunities, is transforming Linden into an economically-depressed community. The attendant poverty and poor living conditions are now characteristic features of a once economically prosperous community.

To obtain information on child labour in Linden, both quantitative and qualitative rapid assessment procedures were employed. The quantitative method used was part of the broader sample survey of working children in Guyana. The qualitative method employed included a focus group discussion with four Education Supervisors at the Regional Education office Region 10 and focus interviews with the Chairperson of the Regional Democratic Council Welfare Committee, the Regional Health Officer and a community leader.

4.6.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Child labour in Linden and its environs exists and is widespread, but like other areas in Guyana is largely invisible. The Education Supervisors said they are aware of the existence of child labour in Linden but "it is difficult to put a finger on it". The officer said they knew more of its existence outside of Linden along the Berbice River in communities such as Kibiliburi, Maria Henrietta, Ibini, and Calcuni. Residents in these communities are mainly Black, Amerindian, and East Indian. Families in these communities do not see their children going to school beyond age 13 years. In Linden, however, it was reported that children who work sell around the markets, some "walk and sell" and some make brooms and sell them. Young children work in the McKenzie market selling at stalls. Some are involved in pornography and drugs in the market area. There is a farm at Kara Kara where it is known that young boys work and their parents are in agreement.

The Welfare Officer of the Regional Democratic Council said that child labour is widespread in Linden. Most children sell cigarettes and snacks. Some children vend with their parents. She knows of one child who works as a minibus conductor and another who does odd jobs for others around the community. The latter child, a 14 year old Black boy spent six years in school, has a visual problem and is not healthy. He works to provide for his siblings since his father lives elsewhere and his mother comes home every fortnight from her job outside the community. Neither parents support their children.

Generally, child labour in Linden largely involves Black boys between the ages 9-14 years and vending is its main form. The Welfare Officer reported that child prostitution also exist in the Rockstone area where Amerindians live. Parents are known to take their children to discos and encourage them to be involved in prostitution.

Child labour in Linden and environing communities are also involved in logging and farming.

4.6.3 Causes of Child Labour

Interviewees sees the causes for child labour as being “financial and the economic situation in Linden”. Parents cannot afford to take care of their children. A lot of persons in the community are unemployed. With pending retrenchment at the bauxite company – LINMINE, it was said that even more parents would be out of job.

4.6.4 Consequences

The consequences of child labour as reported by the focus group is that “it leads to abuse, lack of adequate education and erosion of the moral fabric of the society”. The officials said that they see it as child labour while parents see it as trying to survive. Child labour leads to indiscipline in the home and to abuse. Some parents encourage and support the activity. It was further reported that there are many cases of young men “sleeping” in the homes of young girls and providing them with financial support. The officials added that children who work do not attend school as often as they should and then many soon drop out.

4.6.5 Preventative Measures

The focus group recommended the following for coping with child labour in Linden:

- Counselling for both children and parents.
- Need for skills training programmes in the community so people can become self employed to better their economic situation.
- Parents need to be given assistance e.g. food and clothing.
- Need for re-education to help parents deal with their kids. That is, parent education to help them know their roles as parents.
- Authorities need to look after health needs of children in the community.

The Neighbourhood Democratic Council Welfare Committee Chairman said no programme is in place yet to deal with the child labour problem although it is recognized as a problem. The Committee is now trying to formulate a program. Pointing to the difficult nature of the problem, she said many fathers work out of Linden leaving mothers alone to fend for the kids. Many single parents, it was reported, do not know where the next meal is coming from.

4.7 St Cuthbert's Mission

4.7.1 Contextual Information

With a total area of 242 square miles, St Cuthbert's Mission is geographically situated in both Region Four (Demerara/Mahaica) and Region Five (Mahaica/Berbice). It is located 65 miles up the Mahaica River or 12 miles east from Linden Soesdyke Highway. This Mission can be accessed south via the Linden Soesdyke Highway from Georgetown, north from Linden and West from Mahaica River. St Cuthbert's Mission is bordered to the north by Kuraballi Creek; south by the source of the Moruni Creek; east by Maduni and Moruni Creeks; and to the west by the Linden Soesdyke Highway.

St Cuthbert's Mission is an Amerindian Settlement; thus the population is predominantly Amerindian. Mixed race persons and a few of other distinct ethnicities also make up the population. According to the 1991 Census Report the Mission has a population of 611 persons.

There are no paved roads leading to, or in the St Cuthbert's Mission. Instead there are multiple mud and sand trails and tracks. There is no electricity supply in St Cuthbert's Mission. There is one telephone in the community, which is located at the Health Centre.

Besides the Health Centre, there is a Village Office, Nursery School and Primary School (with secondary division). There are also three churches namely: The Anglican Church, Church of Christ and New Testament Fellowship. Most of St Cuthbert's residents subscribe to Christianity. The community also has a recreational or community centre, cultural centre and night pubs.

Potable water is obtained via a wind-powered mill. Otherwise they get water from the Creeks.

A Captain and nine Councillors manage the community.

To obtain qualitative data on child labourers in St Cuthbert's Mission, focus interviews were conducted with the Nurse Midwife and the Medex respectively of St. Cuthbert's Health Centre, the Headmistress of St Cuthbert's Primary School and the Deputy Captain. In Amerindian communities in Guyana the captain is the chief official.

4.7.2 Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Child labour is a problem that pervades the entire St. Cuthbert's community. According to the Nurse Midwife, everywhere you can see children working particularly in families with a lot of children since fathers cannot maintain all of them. She estimates that 50% of the children are so involved. Further, families in the community do not get potable water at this time so lots of

children are employed to fetch water from a creek more than one mile away. Children also take clothing and utensils to wash at the creek.

Because St Cuthbert's is an Amerindian community, child labourers are derived from this ethnic group. It is prevalent among children 8 years to less than 18 years. Both boys and girls are involved. Girls cook, fetch water and look after siblings and the boys do farming and other labourer work. Children are also required to fetch water, fish, and sell icicles, fruit and fish.

4.7.3 Causes of Child Labour

The main reasons for child labour in the community are:

- Lack of money. There are a lot of poor families in the community who cannot really support themselves. Parents do not work for enough money. They depend on craft work, which is a slow business so they send their children out to "do odd jobs and make small change".
- Parents in the community have too many children and can't afford to maintain them.

4.7.4 Consequences

The consequences of child labour are truancy and dropouts from school.

- Drop in education standard and increase in illiteracy.
- Children are being used and they lose the respect to make them better persons.
- Children are not physically developed to do strenuous work. This can cause physical and emotional damage to their normal development.
- Children who work are faced with income exploitation. People who employ them do not pay them much. Children do not work under harsh conditions in St Cuthbert's Mission according to the Medex of the Health Centre.

4.7.5 Preventative Measures

In terms of measures and programmes to prevent child labour, the midwife said she runs a dancing programme and students are said to learn. They are paid from a will left in England by an Englishman who had an interest in the restoration of Amerindian culture. There are no other programmes to prevent child labour in the community.

Interviewees said that government needs to provide employment and to make parents aware of the value of education. Interviewees were of the view that "From small we grow up knowing it is a normal thing for children to work. We don't consider it child labour".

4.8. Black Bush Polder

4.8.1. Contextual Information

Black Bush Polder is a predominant agricultural community in the Upper Berbice – Corentyne region of Guyana (region 6). It has four polders, namely: Lesbeholden, Mibicuri, Johanna, and Yakasari. These polders stretch along the 19-km long road that has its entry and exit at two points along the Corentyne public road.

The area is known for its large-scale production of rice and cash crops. Farming, whether employed or self-employed, is the main source of income in this community.

Black Bush Polder was opened as a living settlement and farming community in the 1960s by Paulin and Co. – an English firm that was contracted to develop the area into a living settlement.

Mibicuri is the central Polder in Black Bush mainly because it houses the main offices such as the police station, magistrate's court, the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC), the post office, the Cottage Hospital, and the Secondary school. In each Polder of this predominantly East Indian community, there is a nursery and a primary school, numerous rum and grocery shops, and a few churches. In Johanna, there are two privately-owned rice mills, namely: the Alesie Rice Milling Company and the Black Bush Rice Mill. These rice mills account for the employment of young boys especially during the rice harvesting time.

Residents do not have access to electricity, thus the use of battery-operated appliances are popular.

4.8.2. Incidence and Types of Child Labour

Black Bush Polder has one of the highest incidences of child labour in Guyana. According to teachers in the community, between 35 – 40 percent of children under 18 years in the community work. Another estimate is that 75 percent of children work since many work before and after school. Data on child labour for this community were obtained through a focus group discussion with three teachers of Lesbeholden Primary School, focus interviews with the Headmaster of Lesbeholden Primary School, Headmistress of Mibicuri Primary School, Officer-in-charge of Mibicuri Police Station, Medex of the Mibicuri Cottage Hospital, Headmistress of the Black Bush Secondary School, and Manager of the Alesie Rice Milling Company.

Interviewees stated that child labour in Black Bush Polder is widespread and exists in all polders. A lot of parents keep their children away from school to work on farms in particular parents who are low-income earners. The Headmistress at Mibicuri Primary said it is more prevalent in Johanna because of the rice mills in that area. Young boys are employed at these mills on a full time basis. The home however, is seen as the main source for employing child labour in this farming community.

Focus interviewees opined that child labour is a problem in the Black Bush Polder community. They argued that if children were in school their lives would have been better and there would be fewer suicides. The Headmistress of the Mibicuri Primary School said suicide is a serious problem in the community since children who drop out of school to work wouldn't have much education. These children have much social and later marital problems because of their lack of education. Further, school girls are taken out of school early and kept at home working until marriages are arranged for them by ages 14-15 years. The Medex at Mibicuri Cottage Hospital said that child labour leads to "early family responsibility" and children not being able to cope may commit suicide. Black Bush Polder has one of the highest suicide rates in all of Guyana. (Danns 2001)

It is predominantly East Indian children in this predominantly East Indian community who are child labourers. Children stay home from school as early as age 8 years to look after younger siblings whilst their parents labour on the family farm. More boys than girls work. It is between ages 12-18 years that child labour is most dominant. Children who fail the Secondary School Entrance Examination (SSEE) leave school to assist on family farms or seek employment elsewhere in the community. Farming and rearing cattle are the dominant economic activities. Because of the nature of available employment, boys are far more likely to be employed outside the home than girls.

Interviewees describe several cases of child labour.

One East Indian family took their five daughters out of school because their parents allegedly couldn't afford to send them anymore. The parents need their assistance on farms and to rear animals all day. This family depends on selling cash crops and milk for a living. They have no sons. When most girls reach adolescence in this area, parents take them out of school to sew, work as labourers and do domestic work.

Two boys ages 14 and 15 years would skip school at Yakasari Primary to work at picking vegetables and cleaning farm trenches. The trenches they had to clean were infested with huge alligators. The boys when asked by their headmistress "Aren't you afraid of the alligators?" said no.

There is a 13-14 year old East Indian youth whose father is an alcoholic and so he has to work to ensure the family's needs are met. He works in the family 2 ½ acre rice field alongside his mother. He feels good about being able to earn and because he does well, he is seen as the top man. This lad was trained to drive a tractor and usually operates it. In this community, boys from as young as 10 years are trained to operate tractors, rice combines and other agricultural equipment.

4.8.3. Causes of Child Labour

The main causes or reasons for child labour in Black Bush Polder were identified by interviewees. The Focus Group took the position that the economic situation was the main reason. Parents need the help of their children on their farms and rice fields. They feel their children would have to learn it someday so "the earlier the better." Most parents do not see the value of education to their family's existence. Other reasons for child labour as cited by the interviewees are:

- Irresponsible attitude of some parents who have no interest in and place no value on their children's schooling. Parents did not themselves attend school.
- "It is a traditional belief". It is a custom that young boys especially must work to help the family.
- Because parents and older siblings have to work on the farm the younger siblings have to take care of even younger ones.
- Early school drop out. The secondary department of Lesbeholden Primary is not functioning for lack of students.
- Domestic violence
- Alcoholism, mainly by fathers. The sons have to seek employment to provide for their family

Interviewees also examined the cultural factors influencing child labour. The focus group said that peer pressure plays a role in children leaving school. Some drop out of school to work and parents do not object to this because a lot of other children are working in the neighbourhood. Further, the community instills the value of hard work on children and emphasizes working over education. “It is what they are brought up to know” – work at an early age. There is usually a day called “picking day” when farmers recruit young boys once weekly during harvesting season to pick vegetables and cash crops. One parent said to the headmistress “Miss if that boy start working from now, he dey in 14 years when he reach 18 years, he could have his own house and everything.”

4.8.4. Consequences

The consequences of child labour in Black Bush Polder were identified.

- Absenteeism from schools on Fridays and afternoon sessions. Only 1/3 of all children in this community attend school on Fridays.
- Children start drinking at an early age.
- Children who work may also become frustrated if or when they are not earning and they commit suicide.
- Child labour leads to a lot of fighting, chopping and ignorant behaviours because of inadequate education.
- A high illiteracy rate in the community. Some young people don't even know their own date of birth. There was a case of a young girl who did not know her surname.
- Early marriages.

The conditions under which children work was examined. It was reported that:

- Child labourers spray rice fields with toxic substances (poison) and vapour is inhaled. There is no nose protection and a lot of them are hospitalised as a result.
- Children are exposed to the sun and rain working in rice fields and on farms.
- Young boys have to operate heavy agricultural machinery such as tractors and combines and face constant danger.
- Children whose families have no tractors have to fetch farm produce for long distances.
- Children are exposed to alligators and snakes while working.

4.8.5. Preventative Measures

To cope with the child labour problem, teachers said they send letters to parents or do home visits to households that keep their children away from school. Schools in the community also report working through PTAs and encouraging children to remain in school. Schools also claim they seek to educate children on the rights of children. Medical authorities in the community said their role is merely to treat injured child labourers. The Headmistress of Black Bush Secondary School said she holds classes for drop outs and illiterates twice weekly and she is paid by the Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE).

5. Perceptions of Government Ministers and Non-Governmental Leaders on Child Labour

This section of the report focuses on the perceptions and opinions of Ministers of Government and other non-governmental leaders on child labour in Guyana. Focus Interviews were conducted with the Senior Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security; Senior Minister of Education; Senior Minister of Health; Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security who has the responsibility for women, children and the elderly; Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport (the Director of Training and the Director of Youth Services were also present at the Interview); NGO Heads and other leaders including Chief of the Guyana Organization of Indigenous People (GOIP); Director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Guyana; and Secretary of the Guyana Red Cross. The views of these officials are reported here on the various issues of child labour investigated by this study.

5.1 Incidence of Child Labour

Interviewees all agree that child labour exists in Guyana but vary widely as to the incidence of it. Professor C.Y. Thomas of the Institute of Development Studies said;

“Child labour is very widespread in Guyana. At least 65% of households, which are absolutely poor with an average of 6 or more family members engage in some form of child labour, be it domestic or vending.”

The Senior Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security contends:

“In Guyana we do have an incidence of child labour, maybe not the worst forms as in Asia or Africa. They are not exposed to the hazards of the work place as children in these regions. One is aware that we do have child labour in this country. We do not have reliable statistics or say, the number. The assumption is that most children are in school from 3 years, 9 months, but the reality is that there are children who are not at school at such early ages even at later ages. Children are employed. At times it is not very obvious that they are. Children who are not at school are not necessarily at home. They are involved in some form of employment.”

The Minister of Education said that child labour is not a big problem in Guyana “It may be somewhat of a problem in the hinterland areas if child labour is meant to be full-time employment of children.”

The Minister of Health also took the position that child labour is not a major issue in Guyana as it is in some Asian and African countries. “I don’t think we have factories and so where large numbers of our children are there. So in that sense we do not have a major problem.’ He admits however, in rural areas, many children help their families on farms.

The Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security said: “ We do not have organized labour as in other countries where children work in garment factories. The Minister who has responsibility for children services stated that child labour may not be recognized because it is not organized but Guyana does have child labour because children are called upon to help in households and some earn income.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports stated:

“Child labour in the Guyanese context is hard to analyse because one has to be careful that when they see children working with their families to determine whether that is exploitation. In the context of the labour situation where someone hires children to do work for him or her, there appears to be little empirical evidence. In general, the level of child labour in Guyana is not as high as in other countries... say in Asia where children are used in factories, in sweatshops. In the American context children are employed to sell newspapers on the weekend. In the Guyanese context children are used to sell newspapers. In the US, children are encouraged to earn money on their own from a young age and that is not interpreted as child labour. In Guyana we have children doing a number of things that are clearly not exploitative.”

The Chief of the Guyana Organization of Indigenous People (GOIP) said that child labour is not widespread in Guyana. GOIP is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that represents Amerindians in Guyana. Similarly, the Secretary of the Guyana Red Cross also said that child labour is not widespread in Guyana.

5.2 Types of Child Labour

The Senior Minister, Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security said that girls are involved in household labour and boys are employed in rice farming and in subsistence farming in the hinterland. This Minister noted that sawmilling is one area that has a prevalence of child labourers and this area poses major occupational hazards. Children are also involved in fishing and as victims of prostitution, mainly in the towns. The Minister stated that girls are involved as victims of prostitution especially in the towns and there is also male prostitution. Boys are involved in fishing, sawmilling and agricultural work. Indian girls are more involved in household forms of child labour.

The Minister of Health noted that children are involved in helping their families on farms. They do home chores including helping with younger siblings. The Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security pinpointed children selling in the markets and many boys are involved in child labour especially working on farms.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports said children are involved in agriculture, planting and reaping such products as rice. Children are also to be found at the markets being used “to

fetch and carry load and they may be under 15, and out of school.” Children are also involved in selling newspapers, as victims of prostitution and as drug couriers, runners and pushers. “At the New Opportunity Corp the suspicion is that there are children there used as couriers, for drug barons and who are sexually exploited. The drug barons pay some families to maintain the connection with the child. This is a hidden area of child labour in Guyana. Always, where there are drugs, there is prostitution.” The Director of Training in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture who attended the interview said:

“The truancy campaign found girls at home and boys out at work. On the weekend in some areas you can see in the market, children ‘catching their hand’ for the family. Many are there with the sanction of parents. The children sometimes are there by choice. We are seeing NOC youngsters who are traveling between Suriname and Cayenne with drugs strapped to them. Some are missing school. It is much cheaper for the drug runners to employ children. The children are being exploited even if it is sanctioned by their parents”

The Minister further stated that girls are kept as housemaids and families see this as helping out.

“In Guyana people bring cousins and other relatives to work as housemaids, washers, etc. The same thing is seen among Amerindian girls. They are brought out and paid little money. In this sense of child labour in Guyana these are hidden areas. Unlike other countries where there are large areas of child labour and it is institutionalized, in Guyana it is hidden and related to cultural traditions and seasonal influences. It does not exist in the formal, private and government setting. This does not deny that it exists but to what extent is the issue.”

Other non government interviewees listed farming, logging, domestic work, victims of prostitution and fetching loads as areas where types of child labour exist.

5.3 Causes of Child Labour

The Senior Minister, Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security said that poverty is the main cause of child labour in Guyana. “The children are primarily from the lower income group. Their labour is used to augment family income. Poverty is responsible for parents not being able to send their children to school.” Secondly, the Senior Minister concluded that migration leads to child labour. “Children are left with relatives who abuse them and sometimes they have to work to maintain their keep. Also there is the situation of children waiting to migrate and feel no need to go to school.”

The Minister of Education also took the position that poverty is the cause of child labour. He added “There has been somewhat of an increase in it due to the breakdown in the economic system.”

The Minister of Health said that child labour is mainly but not exclusively an economic problem. “Where parents are involved in the farms, they need their children to help them at home with younger ones and to do some chores or in some cases help on the farms.” This Minister sees the mode of production as a determinant of child labour.

The Minister, within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security said, “the main reason for child labour is generally economic. This is to supplement the family’s income.” In the Minister’s view children are part of a family work force or the family as an independent economic unit.

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport attributes causation not only to the mode of production and the family as an economic unit but also to the cultural and historical traditions of the society: “for example, historically in Guyana people liked to have big families in farming communities because that is their way of subsidizing the labour needs of a farm. They do not see it as exploitation. The children go to school and they come home and work in the fields. At certain times they don’t go to school because they have to help harvest the rice or in the Amerindian areas that’s when they go up in the hills to tend their harvest.”

The Minister contends further that the child labour situation is directly related to children not going to school.

“Some parents don’t send their children to school for a variety of reasons. It is not all related to poverty. It was discovered that it sometimes has to do with the misapplication of the Education Act by teachers and head teachers. Children are denied admission to school because of a lack of a birth certificate. Ironically, it is a major factor, which led to some children not going to school. In some cases we can blame the parents for not trying hard enough. In other cases parents keep the older girl children at home and deny them the right to education. Parents keep them at home for domestic purposes while they (parents) go out to work. That is exploitation. A lot of child labour for girls is in the home. Boys are not kept at home to mind babies.”

The Minister further stated that because of poverty, families enlist their children to help. Further, the Minister added “The abuse in Guyana is not necessarily labour/work situations. Because of the economic necessity children are encouraged to beg and in some cases the families know they are being sexually abused and accept that. Sometimes the greatest abuse of children is in the home.”

The representative of the Guyana Organization of Indigenous People (GIOP) said the economic situation in the country induces child labour. “Cost of living too high; people can’t afford to look after their families... There are no job opportunities, parent’s income is not enough so their children have to go out and do odds and ends to help maintain the family.

The Director of the Institute of Development Studies also said the economic situation/problem is the main reason for child labour. Because of “low family income, families cannot afford to send their kids to school because of the opportunity costs. Their income needs to be supplemented so children are forced into the labour market. They (parents) view education as too long term to make results”.

The Director of the Guyana Red Cross also supported a poverty thesis as the main reason for child labour. “Guyana is a less developed country (LDC) and because of this at least half of the population lives in poverty. Children have to work to support themselves.”

The range of causes mentioned by these focus interviewees at the national level are identical to those reported by focus interviewees at the community level. The economic

situation/problem, poverty, cultural traditions, the family mode of production, children not being able to attend school, and absent/neglectful/indulgent parents are common causes identified at both levels of interviewees. The causes identified do not contradict each other but are somewhat interlinked and represent differential emphases and interpretations as to

why Guyanese children are involved in the labour force. Importantly, it highlights the fact that there is no single or simple explanation as to the causes of child labour in the country.

5.4 Consequences of Child Labour

The Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security said that child labour leads to the entire future of the child being jeopardized. The child does not get an education, is exposed to all sorts of risks (STIs, HIV/AIDS from being victims of prostitution) and his or her physical growth is hampered.

The Minister of Health looked for consequences in children who work on family farms.

“In rural areas, many children help family on farms. Although this is not wrong, the focus should be on children’s recreation and education to the extent that involvement in the family’s economic activity e.g. on farms affects their education. The priority in the family should be the child’s health and education. Part of education and health has to be the child having enough time to be involved in social activities and recreation and so on. I believe that is an integral part of a child’s development. They can’t be just going to school and coming home and sharing the chores of adults. And that in no way means that they should not share in these chores but there has to be a balance. Being too involved in adult chores doesn’t contribute to the growth of the child, i.e. their physical and mental health. So while Guyana doesn’t have the problem of India or Africa we do have problems that go back to our economic activity, to our historical roots and culture. Work needs to be done in those areas.”

The Minister within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security said, “Child labour deprives children of an education. It can lead the children to abuse their own children and partners later in life. They are most apt to abuse family members because their normal development was thwarted and they end up being unhappy adults regretting not going to school.”

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport gave the following as consequences of child labour.

“Because of poverty, families enlist their children to help. The abuse areas in Guyana are not necessarily labour-work situations. Because of economic necessity children are encouraged to beg and in some cases the families know they are being sexually abused and accept that. Sometimes the greatest abuse of children is in the home.”

The Chief of GOIP said, “because of child labour we have a lot of rum drinking, a lot of suicide cases and poor school attendance.”

The Director of IDS said, “children are crucial to the long term development of a country and once they are deprived of their normal development cycle it leads to an increase in drug use, crime, prostitution and other social ills.

The Director of the Red Cross said: “Children become delinquents, they are not given a chance to mature properly. Some of them are exploited, others abused and eventually we have lots of crimes, so the crime rate increases as a result.”

Respondents all agree that the normal development of the child is affected as a consequence of child labour. Non-attendance at school, crime, suicide, drug abuse and physical and sexual abuse are other concomitants.

5.5 Policies and Preventative Measures

The measures to prevent child labour in Guyana were addressed by national focus interviewees as follows:

Ministry of Labour

- The Government ratified the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The Minister of Labour stressed: “We are against it. It should not exist. Children should be in school.”
- When Labour Inspectors from the Ministry of Labour visit plants and other work places they look out for incidences of child labour to bring sanctions against those who flout the Convention. The Minister contended: “It is not usually the established businesses who practise child labour.”
- There is a plan to mount a series of education and awareness campaigns on labour to bring attention to the ratification of the Convention to the public. This will also be part of the drive against truancy.
- The Senior Minister of Labour provided insights on what else needs to be done to tackle child labour in Guyana:

In order to reduce or eliminate the problem of child labour, the Minister stated, “after ratification we need to act in conjunction with other agencies like the Ministry of Education to implement the Convention. We should draw up the regulations appropriate to child labour in Guyana. Things are already in place. It is a matter of monitoring the situation, having enough officers to implement e.g. the Education Act. We have to change the sanctions, make the penalties heavier. Fines for truancy are ridiculously low. What we can do is step up the sanctions for absence from school. We need a steep rise in the fines. Also we need to introduce sanctions and increase the size of the penalty against people who employ children in a systematic way. I think now our whole approach at this present time is rather haphazard. There is need for public education. Child labour is related to truancy. It has a strong emotive appeal. It sometimes has a stamp of approval but in terms of its impact on the child’s development I would rank it as No. 2 in terms of the social problems in Guyana and child abuse as the main problem. The employment of children is a serious form of abuse but it is not generally perceived that way in Guyana”.

Ministry of Education

- The Schools Welfare Department of the Ministry of Education has an ongoing truancy campaign to round up children who are not in school. The Minister added, “Most of the children who are not in school are not working, they are hanging out.”
- In terms of measures, which can be taken to eliminate or reduce child labour, the Minister said “get rid of poverty.” He also pointed to the need for “the inspectorate of labour to start checking places of employment.”

Ministry of Health

The Minister of Health said in terms of policies and programmes regarding child labour “We have collaboration with the Ministries of Labour and Education, the National Commission on the Rights of the Child. Other than these there is no specific program.”

The Minister noted further:

“There is need to heighten awareness about the requirements for healthy growth. A lot of the parents who use children to help in farms etc. do not have bad intentions. Some feel they are teaching them to be responsible. We need to let families know that the benefits of the child helping out do not compensate for the ill effects of the child growing dysfunctional and not having a proper education. Because economics is a major contributor, once the economic situation of the family improves that will too”.

Minister within the Ministry of Labour, Human Services & Social Securities

This Ministry looks at child abuse and exploitation and tries to work with parents and children to point out the need for education. The Ministry also has the services of welfare officers and probation officers and the Children Services Department, which can cater to the needs of children. The Minister further asserted that in order to eliminate or reduce child labour it is crucial that parents be educated. “We have to make parents aware that children should only help when they are not required at school. Legal action should be taken against employers for reemploying under-aged workers.”

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Minister said that the human rights chapter of the constitution reform for Guyana’s new constitution talks about “not exploiting children, not only in terms of labour but for all forms of abuse.” Further, this document also recommends that compulsory education be raised to age 16 or 17. This measure if adopted will also lead to an amendment of the Employment Act. Currently however, compulsory education is not for the secondary level, it is only for the primary level.

National NGOs

The Chief of the Guyana Organization of Indigenous People (GOIP) said that parents’ salaries should be increased so that they would not have to send their children to work. The Secretary of the Guyana Red Cross said that the government and relevant labour organizations need to

prosecute persons who employ children. Secondly, some sort of institution should be set up to help poor families.

The Director of the Institute of Development studies said:

More stringent policy measures need to be implemented and new laws introduced, ILO Convention needs to be adopted, and social institutions such as the churches, schools need to change their attitudes. Child development programmes need to be implemented; there should be a public sensitization program on the long-term costs of child labour to society. Parental workshops are needed so as to reach and educate the parents as to the end results of children working.

The responses of national interviewees reveal the absence of a centralized, or coordinated policies to deal with the problem of child labour. Child labour in Guyana was recognized as existing primarily in the informal economic sector and practised and protected by culture, community and family. While there is recognition that child labour is harmful, interviewees who are important decision makers voice the position that the worst forms of child labour does not really exist in Guyana and that the phenomenon is not institutionalized. The views expressed by most interviewees on the existence of child labour, by their own admission, were largely uninformed by empirical data. This study has found that some of the worst forms of child labour do exist in Guyana. Further, the laws of Guyana do not sufficiently protect all children from exploitation and need amending to be fully consistent with ILO Conventions that Guyana has ratified. The adoption of ILO child labour Conventions and other UN Conventions on the rights of children do not automatically transform into the implementation of measures to prevent child labour. Not being able to fathom or admit the scope and severity of this problem has led to it being largely ignored.

5. Analysis of Surveys of Child Labourers

The survey of child labourers was conducted across eight communities located in five of the 10 Administrative regions of Guyana as follows:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
<i>Charity – Region 2</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Parika - Region 2</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Georgetown – Region 4</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>St Cuthbert’s Mission – Regions 4 & 10</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Corriverton – Region 6</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Black Bush Polder – Region 6</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Bartica – Region 7</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Linden – Region 10</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100</i>

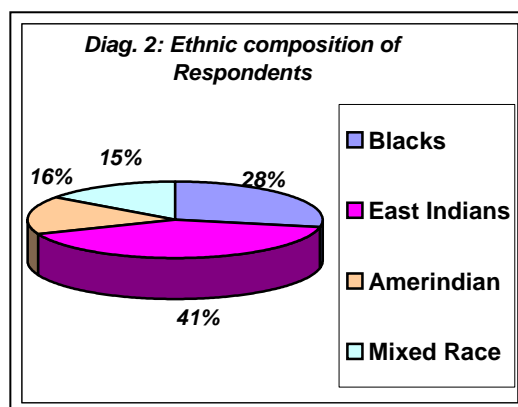
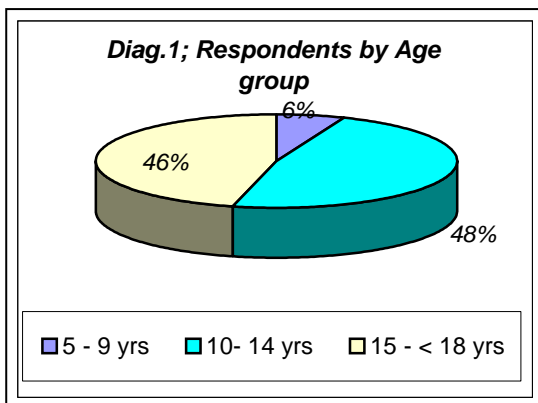
It must be reiterated that the sample is a quota sample limited by budgetary constraints. Interviews were conducted over two days of rapid assessment study in each area. The selection of respondents took consideration of their race, age, gender, type of economic activity in which they were involved and the children or their employers’ willingness to permit interviews. The sample drawn was by no means proportional to the population of child labourers in the respective communities. Rapid Assessment utilizes survey procedures not in service of scientific excellence but to enable swift yet practical understanding of a phenomenon as a starting point for policy intervention, urgent remedial action and further study. The understanding of child labour in this study relies not only on this quantitative methodology but also on qualitative techniques. The importance of this survey is that it presents the voices of the children themselves.

6.1 Social Background of Respondents

The survey communities were profiled in an earlier section of this study. A quota sample of 100 child labourer respondents was selected. Of these, 83 were males and 17 females. Selection was done on a random basis based on the availability of respondents at the time interviews were conducted. Interviewees were intercepted on the streets, in the market places, at their jobs, and other public forums where they were observed engaged in paid or unpaid labour. Over 80% of youngsters observed working were boys. The types of occupations girls were dominantly involved in such as victims of prostitution, as domestic servants and sales girls made them less accessible for interview in this rapid assessment study.

The ages of respondents ranged from 8 to 17 years. Six respondents were between 5-9 years; 48 respondents were 10 – 14 years and 46 respondents were 15 to under 18.

The ethnic composition of respondents comprised 28% - Blacks, 41% - East Indians, 16%- Amerindians, and 15% - Mixed race. No Chinese, Portuguese/White youngsters were found.



Sixty three respondents are Christians, 18 are Hindus, 10 Muslims and 9 did not belong to any religion. All Hindus in the sample were East Indians as well as 9 out of the 10 Muslims (the other being Black). The majority of the respondents (63%) were Christians.

All respondents were single and did not have any children of their own. One female was pregnant at the time of interview.

A predominant majority of respondents (76%) lived in the communities where they were interviewed. Others lived in nearby communities, often not more than 8 to 10 miles away and invariably returned home daily after working elsewhere. Further, the majority of respondents lived in the communities for all or most of their lives. Only eighteen (18) respondents resided in the target community less than five years.

Educational Attainment

Over 90% of children interviewed were of secondary school ages but only 32% reported receiving a secondary education. Almost 6 out of every 10 respondents (59%) had received primary education as the highest level of education and nine respondents received only nursery education. All youngsters in the sample reported having some level of formal education. These data indicate that child labourers in the sample in general have relatively low educational attainment.

A majority of respondents (55%) attend school at least once per week. Thirty eight percent (38%) attend five times weekly while 17% attend less than 5 times. Forty five percent (45%) of respondents do not attend school at all. Youngsters from the older age group (15 to under 18 years) are more likely not to attend school at all. Ten (10) out of 48 respondents 10 – 14 years compared to 35 out of 46 respondents 15 to under 18 years do not attend school at all. Slightly more males (45.9%) reported not attending school at all compared to females (41.2%). Compulsory education in Guyana extends only up to age 14 years.

The reasons youngsters gave for not attending school at all include: dropped out/chose to leave, lack of finance, parents/family members took them out, have to work, pregnant, expelled, no birth certificate, illness of mother, school relocated, lack of teacher’s attention, and completed school. The main reasons provided are the personal decision by the

respondents to leave school and financial pressures, which force them to leave or be taken out of school to work. Of interest is that some children can decide if and when to leave school suggesting a failure of family and community to ensure their rights to education. Just over 7 out of 10 respondents who dropped out said they would like to return to school.

Respondents who do not attend school regularly gave reasons such as: have to work, have to assist with housework or assist a parent, no uniform, mother do not send me, illness.

A predominant majority of respondents (80%), cannot read well (60%), or cannot read at all (20%).

Forty percent (40%) of mothers of respondents in the sample and 27% of fathers had received secondary education. Focus interviewees have cited low educational attainment of parents as a reason parents pull or allow their children to leave school and work.

Family Structure

A majority of respondents (60%) had parents who were not married or were separated, single (41%), or involved in a common law union (19%). Further, only 37% of respondents lived in a home with both mother and father. Forty one percent (41%) live with their mother alone, 4% lived by themselves and others live with other relatives, siblings and friends. Female-headed, single parent households and households characterized by unstable marital unions have been regarded by focus interviewees as spawning grounds for child labour. These data reveal that over 6 out of every 10 child labourers interviewed came from homes without fathers.

Working children generally live in larger households than the average Guyanese household. The average number of persons per household in Guyana is 4.15. (GSLC, UNDP 2000). The average number of persons per household in the sample is 5.7. Forty nine percent (49%) of respondents derive from households containing five to eleven persons. Large households proliferate among the poor in general and Amerindians in particular. Overcrowded households, particularly in urban areas are a contributory factor to children spending more time on the streets working or getting into trouble.

Parents' Occupation

Respondents were asked to state the occupations of their parents. The survey revealed that parents have low status occupations. The occupations stated for mothers are: housewife (34%), vendor (23%), domestic/cleaner/housekeeper (14%) policewoman (2%), farmer (2%), seamstress (2%), handicraft maker (3%), and guard (6%). Other occupations mentioned were cook, labourer, waitress, boat builder, and "drink rum". The occupations of fathers were: fisherman (3%), farmer (13%), labourer (12%), business owner (3%), welder, carpenter, electrician (11%), police (2%), guard (3%), unemployed (2%), miner/porkknocker (2%), boat operator (2%), chef/cook (2%). Some youngsters reported that they do not have a father (12%), don't know their father (1%), father in jail (1%) or father sells bottles and smokes weed (1%). Paternal deprivation is a contributory factor to children having to work.

Living Conditions and Health

Forty five percent (45%) of respondents said their present living conditions are not so good (39%) or not good at all (6%). Reasons they gave for not liking the present living conditions include fights, stealing quarrels, father drinks and curses, bad neighbours, dirty house, a lot of work to do, mother never comes home, lack of basic utilities. The data show that over 4 out of every 10 respondents came from unhappy and/or uncomfortable homes. Such environments can propel children prematurely into the world of work.

Twenty three percent (23%) of child labourers said that the food they eat is not so adequate (19%) or not adequate at all (4%). Thirty eight percent (38%) said the clothes they wear was not so adequate (31%) or not adequate at all (7%). Twenty seven percent of respondents said their sleeping conditions are not so comfortable (22%) or not comfortable at all (5%). Inadequate food, clothing and comfortable living conditions are factors that propel children prematurely into the world of work. Further, even though they work, these conditions are not effectively ameliorated. Children are poorly paid or not at all and have to give their earnings to parents and guardians.

A large majority of respondents (80%) said they enjoyed excellent (19%), or good health (61%). Fourteen percent (14%) enjoyed fair health and only 5% said their health was poor. Illnesses reported include asthma (9%), malaria (3%), nervous breakdown (2%), stroke (2%), pneumonia (1%), nose bleed (2%), ear problems (2%), flu, cold and fever (20%). Guyana's child labourers are reportedly largely youngsters with healthy bodies fit and able to work.

Drug Use

Thirty three percent (33%) of working children reported having used alcohol. Three percent used alcohol often. Only 2% of working children said they smoked and did so rarely. One child reported using marijuana sometimes. No respondent admitted to using cocaine or crack cocaine. The survey revealed that drug use is not pronounced among child labourers in the study, and that alcohol is the predominant substance used. Drug and alcohol use is regarded as a consequence of child labour. Children working occupy adult worlds and indulge in adult vices. Focus interviewees report narcotics use and trafficking among some child labourers.

6.2 Work Experience and Labour Conditions

Occupation and Work

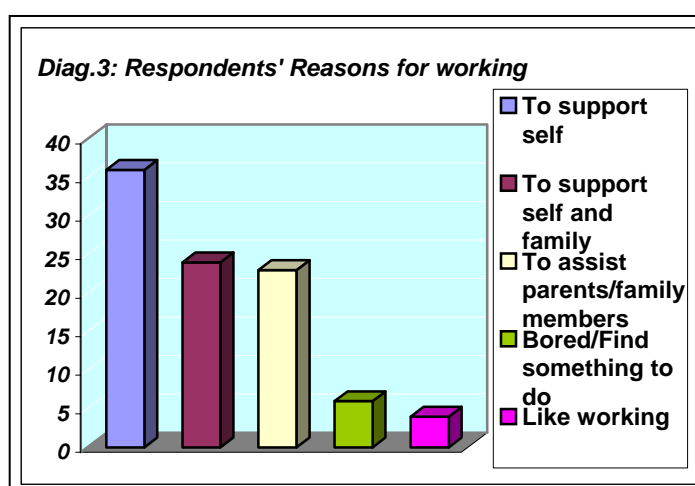
The occupations of child labourers in the survey are vendors/sales persons (47%); labourers/farmhands/farmers (30%), porters (10%), bus conductors (4%), sawmill operators (2%), vulcanizing assistants (2%), victims of prostitution (3%), gold miners (1%), domestics/waiter/waitress (4%), babysitter (1%), pump attendant (1%), cobbler assistant (3%), watchman/guards (3%). Female respondents work as vendors, sales girls, labourers, prostitutes, domestic servants and baby sitters. Male respondents work in all occupations except as domestics and babysitters, thus indicating gender stereotyping of these occupations.

The occupational profile reveal that almost one out of every two respondents (47%) in the survey are involved in vending or selling products. These are the most visible category of child labour in Guyana. They can be found in municipal markets, around shopping centers and some are itinerant vendors. Their young voices can be heard, calling, pleading, seeking patronage. “Ow Uncle come buy some banana” or “Get your cigarettes here.” Children who work fetching heavy bags and objects and pushing carts loaded with goods, wood or other objects are also quite visible. These porters/handyemen represent one out of every 10 child labourers interviewed.

It was neither intended nor possible to quantify for each community the various types of child labour identified since neither time nor available finances permitted. Access to children who work on farms with their families would have required travel to these farms. Access to girls working as domestics in homes would have required visits to these homes, etc. Researchers relied on focus interviews by community informants and visited as much of the community as time permitted to obtain descriptive profiles and estimates of child labour in the respective communities. This community approach was holistic by design and expedient, and sectoral focus was not overly emphasized.

Respondents described the work they do: - collecting fares in minibuses; selling confectionery, provisions, food items, fish meat; packing boards; fetching sawdust, cutting logs and operating the machine that shapes the logs in sawmills; assist in tire repairs, vulcanizing; stitch shoes; cutting and ironing pants in tailor shop; dig for gold; graze sheep, fetch water, fetch copra; fetch and pack stocks for shop; fetch bags for ferry passengers; have sex with multiple partners for money, weeding and planting, sells petrol, clears food and tables at restaurant, cleaning and scrubbing; fetching bags of paddy; babysitting; watch and wash cars outside of bars mainly at night; collect money from customers.

Eighty two percent (82%) of respondents said that there were other children who do similar or other work in their communities. The number of children they reported to be similarly involved range from one to 100.



A predominant majority (92%) of the children has only one job, while five children have two jobs. One child has more than three odd jobs. For most respondents (81%) the job they were doing at the time of interview was the only job they ever had. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents reported having had one other job and one each had two and three jobs respectively.

Reasons for Working

Respondents provided reasons for working: - to get money to support self (36%), to get money to support self and family (24%); assist parents/family members (23%); didn't have anything to do/bored (6%); and like working (4%). Other reasons which one respondent each provided are: - wants to learn skill, employer ask me, sister is ill, so when I marry I have a job, and to further my education. The primary reasons stem from an inability of families to maintain the child or itself without the child's assistance. This finding gives credence to poverty as a principal cause of child labour.

Payment

Sixty one percent (61%) of child labourers said they got paid for the work they do and 26% said they do not get paid. Further only 44 out of the 61 respondents who get paid said they receive regular wages. Five percent of respondents said they receive "in kind" payments only. Six percent (6%) of respondents are paid by "piece rate"; 10% are paid by job rate; 2% percent of respondents are paid by each client. These data indicate that 6 out of every 10 child labourers are paid in cash for the work they do and 1 out of every 4 perform unwaged labour.

When asked how often they are paid 16% said daily, 24% said weekly, 5% said fortnightly 7% said monthly and 12% said at the end of each task.

Those respondents (26%) who do not get paid for the work they do gave reasons such as: work with parents (14%), refuses money from parents (6%), assist neighbours (2%), mother does not have money (16%), mother uses money on drugs (1%), can't say (2%). Commitment and obligations to parents/family is the primary reason for just over 1 out of every 4 child labourers in Guyana not being paid for the work they do.

Child labourers who are paid provided information to enable computation of their monthly earnings. Seven percent (7%) earn G\$3,000 or less; 7% earn G\$3,001 - \$6,000, 3% earn \$6,001 - \$9,000, 8% earn G\$9,000 - \$12,000; 6% earn G\$12,001 - \$15,000; 5% earn G\$15,001 - \$18,000; 7% earn G\$18,001 - \$21,000; 7% earn over \$21,000; 2% could not disclose their incomes and 26% did not earn any income. Child labourers who were self employed reported earning between G\$500 - \$15,000 per day. Four out of 11 respondents

earned G\$3,000 or more per day. The national minimum wage is \$3,000 per day or between US\$15-US\$16 per day. (US\$1=G\$188). Indications are that child labourers in general receive much below this sum and are therefore legally and factually exploited.

Respondents who were paid at the end of each task reported receiving as little as G\$200 to just over G\$1,000.

Twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents said they pay or owe money to a family member; 3% said they owe an employer and 3% said they owe a friend. The three respondents who owe or pay money to an employer are all female and victims of prostitution, indicating their exploitation by their “pimp” or “madam”.

Number of Working Hours

The number of hours per day respondents work was determined. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents work one to three hours per day; 13% work 4 – 6 hours; 35% work 7 – 9 hours; 23% work 10 – 20 hours; 3% work 13 – 15 hours; 3% work 16 –18 hours and 6% can't say how many hours they work daily. The data reveal that sixty four percent (64%) of respondents work between seven to 18 hours per day. Seventy seven percent (77%) or almost 8 out of every 10 children in the survey work four or more hours daily. Both boys and girls have similar work hours for similar tasks and the data does not reveal that females work longer hours than males. Further, it found that older youth are in general more likely to work longer hours than their younger counterparts. Three youths 10 – 14 years were the only respondents in the survey who worked 16 – 18 hours per day. Youth 5 – 9 years worker 1 – 9 hours per day while those 15 – 18 worked 1 – 15 hours per day. The data reveal that a majority of child labourers work more than eight hours per day indicating some measure of exploitation.

Number of Persons Employed in Child Labourers' household

Respondents in the survey were asked how many persons work in their household. In 9% or 9 households the child was the only person who worked. In 29% of the households of child labourers, two persons work; in 31% of households three persons work; in 19% of households four persons work; and in 12% of households more than four persons work. The data reveal that in just under 1 out of every 10 cases the child was the only person in the household working.

The survey found that in 30% of households of child labourers, two or more persons below age 18 were working. Most of these households (80% of the 30) had one other child working while 20% had four or more members below age 18 working. These findings suggest that some families not only play a critical role in spawning child labour but that confronting this problem necessitates working with these families and addressing the conditionalities that impel them to propel their young prematurely into the labour market. The findings also reveal that 3 out of every 10 households had two to as much as four or more children working.

Ages Respondents started working and how long

Child labourers were asked what age they started to work. Seventeen percent (17%) of respondents started working from ages 1 – 9 years; 54% started working between 10 – 14 years and 29% started working between ages 15 – 18 years. The majority of child labourers in the survey commence their jobs between ages 10 – 14 years. The data reveal that the bulk of these youth commence work between ages 13 – 16 years, that is, youth who drop out of secondary school or fail to go on from primary school level are the main child labourers.

The survey also determined how long respondents have been working. Thirty six percent (36%) of respondents said they have been working for less than 12 months; 26% worked for 1-2 years; 30% worked for 2 – 4 years and 8% have been working for more than four years. Two out of every three respondents between ages 7 – 9 years have been working from one to two years.

Thirty nine percent (39%) of respondents have been working at their current job for less than one year; 27% have been working for 1 – 2 years; 27% have been working for 2 – 4 years and 7% have been working for more than 4 years. These data suggest that not only do child labourers work but that they engage in occupations with some sense of stability if not permanence.

Persons Respondents work with

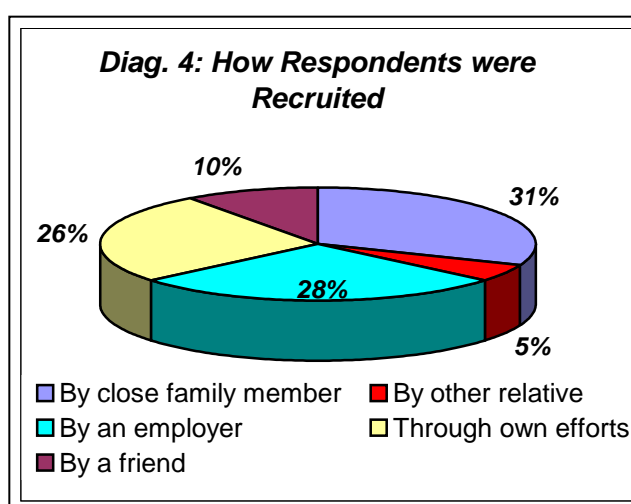
In 48% of the cases other relatives work with the respondent and in 52% of cases the respondent is employed on his or her own. In 12 cases the child works with a brother and in 8 cases the child works with a cousin. Children were also found working with grandparents, in-laws, uncles, other relatives and friends. The involvement of the relatives in the work context of child labourers is indicative of the impact of the family in fostering child labour. In 27 of these cases a mother or father works along with the child.

Recruitment of Child Labour

Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents were recruited by a close family member, and 5% by other relatives. Twenty eight percent (28%) of respondents were recruited by an employer; 26% were recruited through their own efforts and 10% were recruited by a friend. Again, the family and relatives (36%) are the single largest source for recruiting child labour in Guyana.

In almost all except one case child labourers in Guyana are recruited through verbal agreement.

Employers tend to shy away from formal contracts or any formal arrangements in recruiting



children. Children employed are however recorded on the payroll of some employers. No taxes or national insurance (social security) fees are deducted. Individuals below age 16 do not pay income taxes and national insurance (NIS).

Although nearly all child labourers in the survey were employed informally, that is, without a contract, only 75% of them said they are free to leave the job that they do. Twenty four percent said that they are not free to leave their employment, that is, almost one out of every four child labourers are reportedly powerless to leave their employment.

Consequences of Child Labour

Child labourers were asked what they liked about the work they do. They reported it is nice and easy (21%), likes everything (8%), likes to be with parents (5%), nothing (11%), being paid (7%), likes to work (4%), meeting people (4%), do not like the job but has to work (2%), sit and watch girls passing (2%), learning a skill (2%). Other reasons provided include – can get time to play, looking at sheep, can be promoted, handling money, at home earlier, playing with the baby.

Similarly, respondents were asked what they did not like about the job. They gave responses such as: -

- When boss quarrels
- Dangerous, could kill you
- Don't like type of work
- It can dirty my hands
- Wants to be paid
- Sell alone
- Have to work in sun and rain
- Noisy environment
- Salary is too small
- Out late at nights
- Customers abuse me sometimes
- Difficult co-workers
- Don't like when people rob me
- Fetching heavy commodities
- Work is too hard
- Walking in rice fields
- Don't like number of hours
- When people don't buy/slow business

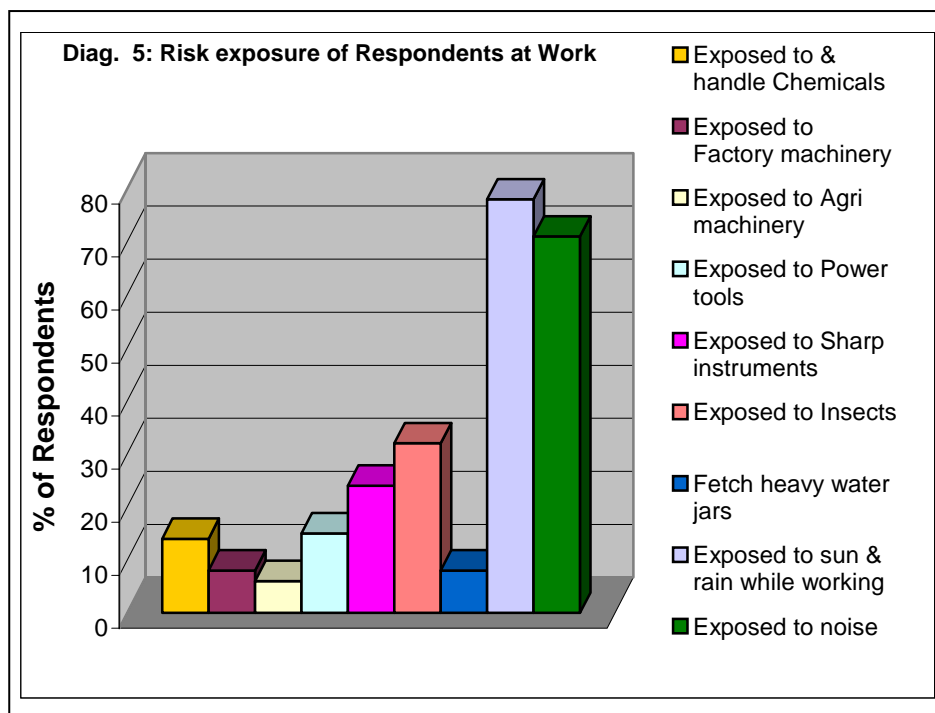
The range of responses indicates the hazardous, dangerous and difficult circumstances under which these children work. Seven out of every ten children in the survey reported one or other of the above as things they do not like about their jobs. In addition, 22% of the respondents reported experiencing verbal abuse on their jobs and 14% reported experiencing harassment.

Twenty two percent (22%) of these child labourers reported being injured on their job more than once and one respondent was injured more than six times. Cuts and bruises are the main

injuries experienced. In addition, youngsters reported being squeezed, chopped, suffering from electrical shock, being hit on the head and being in a car accident.

Further, one out of every ten respondents said they fell sick as a consequence of doing their work. A majority of these said they were sick two or more times. One respondent reported being sick more than six times as a consequence of doing his job.

Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents said they are exposed to or handle chemicals while at work. Eight percent (8%) said they are exposed to factory machinery. Six percent (6%) of the respondents are exposed to agricultural machinery. Fifteen percent (15%) are exposed to power tools. Twenty four percent (24%) are exposed to sharp instruments. Thirty two percent (32%) are exposed to insects while doing their work. Eight percent (8%) have to fetch heavy water jars. Industrial safety practices are seldom enforced and most employers subject their staff to unsafe working environments.



A large majority of respondents (78%) are exposed to the sun and rain and other elements while doing their work. Similarly, 71% of respondents are exposed to noise in their work environments.

Child labourers in the survey indicated to interviewers the kind of protective gear they needed to wear while doing their work which they did not have or which was not provided. Three

percent (3%) of the respondents said welding shields, 2% said life jackets, 25% said boots, 7% said glasses, 2% said hard hat, 18% said gloves, 5% said ear plugs, 2% said apron, 2% said nose mask and 1 respondent said condoms. These data suggest that respondents in the survey in general work for employers who do not provide a safe working environment.

By their own admissions, respondents reported the negative consequences indicative of the worst forms of child labour.

6.3 Emotional and Mental Risks

The survey sought to determine the emotional and mental risks faced by child labourers. A majority of respondents (57%) agree with the statement “sometimes people are not too friendly.”

Twenty percent (20%) of respondents disagree with the statement: “most work seems worthwhile and meaningful.”

Six out of every 10 respondents agree with the statement “Sometimes I feel uncertain about who I really am”. These data suggest that a majority of child labourers have doubts about their self identity, perhaps based on the fact that they are involved in the adult world of work while being children.

A majority of respondents (51%) agree with the statement: “My family is not as close to me as I would like.” The absence of family support, both financial and otherwise, is a principal cause of children becoming involved in the adult world of work.

Similarly, a majority of respondents (51%) agree with the statement: “I often wonder whether I am becoming the kind of person I want to.” Here respondents question their own life chances.

Fifty percent of respondents agree with the statement: “It is hard to know how to act most of the time since you can’t tell what others expect.” Fifty five percent of respondents said they “often feel left out of things others are doing.” Fifty five percent (55%) of respondents said they really could not count on other people when they have problems and /or need help. The respondents (59%) in the survey or almost 6 out of every 10 feel that when people they know are having problems it is their responsibility to help.

Sixty two percent (62%) of respondents said that “most people don’t seem to accept me when I am being myself.” Sixty percent (60%) of child labourers in the survey said, “I often find it difficult to feel involved in the things I am doing.” Fifty seven percent (57%) of respondents said that hardly anyone they know is interested in how they really feel inside. Fifty three percent (53%) of respondents said they often feel alone when they are with other people. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents said that they have a lot of interest in common with other people in the neighbourhood.

A large majority of respondents (67%) said that if they had a choice “I’d live my life in a very different way.”

These data suggest that a majority of respondents are alienated from the work they do, estranged from people around them and cannot count on others in their moments of need.

Evaluation of Work and Work Environment

When asked to evaluate the work they do 58% of respondents in the survey said the work they do was boring. Seventy two percent (72%) said the work they do was tiring; 68% said it was stressful and 56% said the work was difficult. These findings indicate that the majority of child labourers do not like the work they do, finding it an imposition on their being.

Fifty seven percent (57%) of respondents said they were satisfied with the payment they were receiving, 15% said they were not and 28% said they received no payment. Sixty two percent (62%) of respondents said they were comfortable with the way they are treated by employers/supervisors, 8% said they were not comfortable and 30% did not work with employers/supervisors.

Fifty eight percent (58%) of respondents said that they were comfortable with the way they are treated by co-workers, 3% said they are not comfortable and 39% said they do not work with co-workers.

A majority of child labourers (72%) said they are comfortable with the conditions under which they work while 26% or 1 out of every 4 said they are not comfortable with their working conditions.

Twenty six percent of respondents said that the work they do affect their attendance at school. Twenty nine percent (29%) said their work affect their health. Thirty five percent (35%) said their work affect the time to play with their friends and 32% said their work affect time they can spend with their families.

6.4 Physical Appearance of Child Labourers

Interviewers were asked to note the appearance of the children they interviewed. Interviewers found 31% of the youngsters had dirty torn clothing, 51% were dirty in appearance, 7% had visible untreated physical injuries (head and other body wounds); 6% were bare feet and 2% had excessive body odor.

6.5 Sexual History

The survey determined the sexual history of child labourers in Guyana. Twenty three percent (23%) of respondents said they had sex. Respondents reported having had sex from as early as age 8 up to age 17 years. Two percent (2%) of respondents had sex below age 10 years. Eleven percent (11%) had sex between ages 10 – 14 years and 10% had sex between the ages 15 – 17 years. The data indicate that a majority of these respondents would have had sex by age 14 years. Further over 70% or 7 out of every 10 respondents who said they have had sex had more than one sexual partner over the last month.

Sexually active child labourers put themselves at risk not only by having sex at young ages but also by having multiple sex partners. Four respondents said they were forced the first

time they had sex. Five respondents have performed sex for money and two of these do so often. No respondent admitted to contracting a sexually transmitted infection.

6.6 Concerns and Needs

Respondents in the survey were asked what they wanted to do when they grow up. Fifteen percent (15%) chose trades such as mechanic, carpenter, electrician, tailor and mason; 2% wanted to be labourers, 3% wanted to be farmers; 12% wanted to work in professions such as teacher, nurse, doctor; 10% wanted to be police, soldier or guard; 9% wanted to continue what they are doing. Seven percent (7%) wanted to be self employed or own a business, 3% wanted to be vendors, 3% wanted to migrate, 2% wanted to be cricketers, 2% wanted to be salesgirls. Other occupations mentioned include manager, lawyer, boat driver, rice mill operator, singer, accountant, barber, hairdresser, pharmacist. Other respondents wanted to “continue working and get married”, be in school or further studies.

A large majority of child labourers (68%) in the survey do not think it is right for children to work. Only 17% of the respondents felt it was right and 15% could not say. Three percent of respondents worry somewhat about their own drinking and drug use. Sixteen percent (16%) however worried about a friend's or relative's drug use. Twenty six percent (26%) of respondents in the survey worry about being physically abused. Four percent worry about being sexually abused. Six percent of respondents worry about getting or making someone pregnant. Three percent worry about contracting a sexually transmitted infection. Twelve percent of the youngsters worry about getting HIV/AIDS. Twenty two percent (22%) of respondents worry about getting a job. Although respondents do work, many of them are not in permanent employment, thus the source of their worry. One out of every four respondents worry about having to go hungry, because of no money to buy food.

7. Analysis of Survey of Employers

7.1 Characteristics of Employees

As part of the survey of child labourers in Guyana, a section of the interview schedule was devoted to interviewing employers of child labour. Twenty-five questions were included in the Employers' Section and thirteen (13) employers were interviewed. In some instances, parents were "employers" and a separate section of the questionnaire was devoted to interviewing parents and guardians. In many instances, neither the parent nor employer was available for the interview at the time interviews were conducted. In some instances, children were self-employed.

The thirteen employers, mainly small businesses, employed from one to 70 employees. Six respondents had between 1 to 7 employees and 7 had between 24 to 70 employees. Of the 13 employers, five employed one child labourer, four employed two child labourers, two employed three child labourers and one employed four and one other employed 25 child labourers.

Employers reported their youngest under 18 employees to be age 14 years and the oldest 17 years. Five employers reported having between one and four accidents at their business over the last year. None of the respondents reported having any deaths of their employees but five reported that between 1 to 12 employees were ill.

7.2 Terms and Conditions of Work

When asked who pays medical care for workers injured on the job, 9 out of 13 employers said the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and 4 employers said the employee or other persons. The majority of child workers who are employed are not and cannot by law be covered by NIS. Contributors to the NIS is from age 16 years. Further, many employers seek to avoid paying NIS Employer contributions for their staff. The reality is that child labourers are placed at a disadvantage insofar as they are denied worker compensation and medical benefits if injured on the job. Children between ages 14 to under 16 years are permitted by law to work but are discriminated by the National Insurance Act that only registers and recognizes claims of workers 16 years and older. Employers are free and encouraged to employ children below age 16 and do not have to pay any Employer's contribution to the National Insurance Scheme on their behalf.

The employers' survey revealed that most child labourers work less than a mile away from the nearest health facility. Eleven (11) employers provide clean drinking water; ten (10) provide toilet facilities and twelve (12) provide adequate lighting for their employees. Less than half the number of employers interviewed (6) provide a first aid kit for their employees and only two (2) have persons who are trained in first aid. These data suggest that child labourers are in general exposed to threats because of the absence of first aid kits and persons trained to use these.

Six (6) employers of child labourers operate power machinery in their businesses; four (4) use toxic chemicals; nine (9) generate noise in their work environment; six (6) have smoke fumes and polluted air; nine (9) have workers subject to varying temperatures and the elements; eight (8) have their employers carry/lift weights; and one employer subject his child employees to working with a dangerous animal.

The employers in the survey have their employees work between 8 and 12 ½ hours daily with the majority having to work over eight hours daily. Eight (8) employers pay their workers weekly and five (5) pay daily.

7.3 Views and Policy on Child Labour

When asked the question: "What is your policy in relation to recruiting workers under 18 years?" a majority of employers said they have no policy. Other employers recruited because: the child asked for work; parent abandoned child; employer obtained written permission from parent; parent in a difficult situation; can employ anyone at any age. Dysfunctionalities in families are a principal reason employers give for employing children. Employers never admit to gaining by employing and exploiting children.

Ten respondents said they were very satisfied (four) or satisfied (six) with the work performance of the children they employ. Three respondents said they were not so satisfied but none said they were not satisfied at all. These data suggest that child labourers are in general effective in the work they do.

A majority of respondents (7) when asked "how do you recruit employees under 18", said they asked for the job. Other answers employers provided are: through my children who help

me; know parents of my employees; spoke to guardian; neighbour. These data reveal that kids play an activist role in seeking jobs themselves from employers. Secondly, parents and guardians often influence the hiring of their children. Seven (7) employers reported having some contact with the parents of children they employ. Peers also play a role in getting their fellow children recruited.

Employers in the survey list the work children are assigned: cleaning and packing copra in bags; sells kerosene oil and refills bottles; sells clothes and shoes; handy boy and sales clerk, assist in cashing; packing and fetching; lift and fetch rum and soda cases, fetching and cutting wood; clean tractors; cleaning and factory work; pasting and stitching shoes; same work as others based on type of job.

Employers report that the children they employ are given from one to three breaks per day. These breaks range from half hour to one hour for lunch to lesser periods for rest breaks. Two out of the 13 employers in the survey provide sleeping/living accommodation for their child labourers.

Only 1 out of 13 employers in the survey said he was aware of the laws and Conventions covering the rights of children. When asked what these laws are, the respondent could not say. Not being aware of the Conventions, employers are seemingly unaware that they are violating them. This ignorance underlines the need for greater public education on the rights of the child.

When asked “Why do you employ persons under 18” employers responded:

- shortage of employees during production
- Family trying to help out
- They ask for work
- These workers are poor
- They need to earn
- School has been closed or finished school
- If person needs job or money badly
- He works well
- They are needed
- To assist and prevent them from getting into trouble

Four out of the 13 employers report that the children they employ still attend school.

The place of work of children in the survey of employers are the field, household, factory, market place, shop, supermarket, general store and the sawmill.

Many employers of children said they were too busy or else were reluctant to grant interviews to the research team. General store and haberdashery proprietors in particular took this position. Such employers also refused to permit their children employees to talk to interviewers. It was evident that the services of children were preferred because they could be paid less, made to work harder and to obey the employers’ demands. Further, children generally not having family responsibilities can be kept at work for longer hours than adults. Children also do the menial and demeaning work that employers cannot get adults to do. They do not go on strike or indulge in industrial action. They can be fired at whim because

employers know they ought not to be working in the first place. Children do not feel they have any recourse for injustices meted out to them at the workplace except to leave.

This rapid assessment study discovered no instances of slavery or enforced labour of children in Guyana. Children were largely free to work or not to work except those who work in family businesses. There is also a sense that children were willing to work perceiving economic or other gain from such activity. Many children work because of the absence of alternatives. They work to eat, to clothe, to live and to survive.

8. Summary and Recommendations

Child labour in Guyana is a pervasive, ubiquitous but largely unrecognized phenomenon. Children of all ethnic groups – East Indian, Black, Mixed Race and Amerindian - are driven by culture, parental neglect, family breakdown and economic necessity to work for their own upkeep or that of family and relatives. They farm, fish, engage in vending, work as labourers, loggers, miners, domestics, sales clerks, apprentices, machine operators, guards or watchmen and as prostitutes.

Children in Guyana are required by law to attend school up to age 14 years. Above age 14, they can legally enter the labour force. The Bureau of Statistics found that 27% of children 14 years and under are child labourers (MICS Survey 2001). The working child was defined as “those who had done any paid or unpaid work for a non-household member or who did four or more hours housekeeping chores per day or who did other family work. (2001:42). This ILO study covers all children below the age of 18 years because hazardous and other worst forms of child labour are prohibited to all persons under the age of 18 years.

The rapid assessment study of child labour in Guyana has determined from an abundance of qualitative and quantitative evidence that worst forms of child labour do exist, are fairly widespread and are largely sustained by poverty, cultural norms and practices and permissive national employment and educational statutes which are at variance with international conventions on child labour and the rights of children.

The worst forms of child labour exist among street children who are constrained to work for their own survival, child victims of prostitution, children from remote Amerindian communities and other children who work and are subject to negative working environments and consequences. The majority of child labourers in Guyana work with their families on farms and other businesses and in their homes. Others are self-employed or work for others. Working for families, which is permissible by law by day or night does not remove exploitation and the risks children face to their well being and normal development. The worst forms of family labour do inhere in the occupations of children “employed” by their families.

Child labour in Guyana principally exists in the informal sector of the economy. Formal private and public businesses do not generally employ children and largely conform to the law. In businesses such as sawmilling, logging, mining and commercial enterprises, rice and other crop farming, which are part of the formal private sector, children below age 18 years have been found employed as part of a subterranean workforce. They pay no taxes, do not obtain social security benefits, work for long hours and are paid exploitative wages.

It is the “hidden nature of child labour in Guyana that may have led national decision makers to erroneously conclude that child labour does not exist in the formal sector, it is not widespread, and that worst forms are manifest in Africa and Asia and not in their society. The worst forms of child labour in Guyana exist both in the formal and informal economic sectors largely as underground economic activities. Community decision makers and other community level focus interviews readily point to the involvement of children in the formal and informal economic sectors.

Incidence of Working Children

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted in 2000 by the Guyana Bureau of Statistics 27% of children 0-14 years were classified as working. **The working child was defined as one who had done paid or unpaid work for a non household member or who did four or more hours housekeeping chores per day or who did other family work.** The MICS found that children from the remote interior regions of Guyana had almost twice the proportion of currently working children (45%) compared with the urban coast (22%) and the rural coast (26%). Further, a higher proportion of boys (29%) than girls (25%) were found to be working. This survey did not take into account children from ages 14 years to below 18 years probably because the laws of Guyana permit children 14 years and over to enter the labour force. This ILO study found that older children were more likely to be working. Further child labour among girls remains largely “hidden” and much of it escapes official computations. It is quite likely that the incidence of working children below age 18 may be more than double that found by the MICS survey. It is therefore estimated at least 54% of children in Guyana are child labourers.

Community informants interviewed in the process of this study in Charity said 25-40 percent of children in Charity and its environs were child labourers. Parika interviewees gave an estimate of 15-20 percent but based on field observation, it was felt to be considerably higher. Estimates in Georgetown for child labour is 30%, Corriverton 15-20%, Bartica 15-25%, St. Cuthbert's Mission 50%, Black Bush Polder 35-75%.

Types of Child Labour

Guyanese children work as vendors, labourers, farm hands, domestics, shop and store attendants, guards, bus conductors and boat hands. They work as sawmill and agricultural machinery operators, miners and loggers. In some of these occupations they are exposed to the elements, chemicals, dangerous machinery and physical and sexual harassment. It is as prostitutes that Guyanese children are at greatest risk. Child prostitution was found to exist in 6 of the 8 communities studied namely: Corriverton, Bartica, Charity, Parika, Georgetown and Linden. In some instances mothers were instrumental in pushing their daughters into the profession. Pimps and Madams recruited young girls to “work”. Some schoolgirls sell their bodies for economic survival. Guyana has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the Anglophone Caribbean. There is evidence that many are infected as teenagers.

The Survey of Child Labourers

The predominant majority of child labourers available for interviewing were boys (83%) compared to girls (17%). This is not to suggest that girls in Guyana are less likely to be child labourers, but rather that girls were less accessible for interviewing because of the type of occupations in which they are dominantly involved. Forty one (41%) of the sample were East Indians, 28% Blacks, 16% Amerindians and 15% Mixed Race. Some of the findings of the survey of child labourers are:

- Child labourers in the sample in general have relatively low educational achievement. Over 90% of the children interviewed were of secondary school ages but only 32% reported receiving a secondary education. Eighty percent (80%) of child labourers

either cannot read well or cannot read at all. Fifty five percent (55%) attend school at least once per week and 45% do not attend school at all.

- Only 37% of respondents live in a home with both mother and father. Six out of every 10 child labourers had parents who were either single (41%) or involved in a common law union (19%).
- Working children generally derive from larger households than other Guyanese children.
- Forty five percent (45%) of working children said their present living conditions are not so good or not good at all.
- Drug use is not pronounced among child labourers and alcohol is the main substance used by 33% of respondents.
- Over 23% of child labourers said the food and clothing they get is not adequate.
- Child labourers in Guyana work as domestics, vendors, labourers, porters, salesgirls, bus conductors, sawmill operators, vulcanizing assistants, mechanics, prostitutes, porkknockers, goldminers, watchman or guard, cashier. Female respondents work mainly as vendors, salesgirls, domestic servants, prostitutes and baby sitters.
- Child labourers work mainly to support themselves and family.
- The absence of a father is a main contributory factor to children working.
- Six out of every 10 child labourers are paid in cash for the work they do. One out of every 4 performs unwaged labour.
- Child labourers receive much below the national minimum wage.
- Almost 8 out of every 10 children or 77% work 4 or more hours daily. Sixty four percent (64%) work between 7-18 hours per day.
- In 1 out of every 10 cases the child was the only breadwinner in the household.
- Three out of every 10 households had 2 to as much as 4 or more children working.
- The majority of child labourers commence working between ages 10-14 years. Children in the survey started working as young as 7 years old.
- A majority of respondents have been working from 1 to 4 or more years.
- Fifty two percent (52%) of the children who work, work on their own. Forty five percent (45%) of them work with parents, siblings or other relatives.
- A predominant majority of child labourers (92%) have only one job. The others report having two or three jobs.
- Thirty six percent (36%) of child labourers were recruited by family or relatives, 28% by employers, 26% through their own efforts and 10% by a friend. Family and peers play a crucial role in recruiting child labourers.
- Child labourers are recruited through informal verbal agreements. Employers tend to shy away from formal contracts and agreements in recruiting children.
- No income taxes are deducted from their wages and neither children nor their employers on their behalf contribute to the national insurance scheme. Individuals below age 16 do not pay taxes and NIS.
- Child labourers reported some of the things they do not like about the work they do such as: when boss quarrels; dangerous ... could kill you; do not like type of work; have to work in sun and rain; customers abuse me sometimes; out late at nights; fetching heavy commodities; do not like when people rob me; salary is too small; too long working hours; when people do not buy; having to sell alone.
- Twenty two percent (22%) of child labourers experience verbal abuse, 14% experience harassment, 22% report being injured on the job – cut, bruised, squeezed, chopped, hit on head etc.

- One out of every 10 said they got sick one or more times as a consequence of working.
- Fourteen percent (14%) of child labourers are exposed to or handle chemicals, 14% are exposed to factory (8%) or agricultural machinery (6%), 78% are exposed continuously to sun or rain, 71% are exposed to noisy work environments,
- Child labourers work without safety gear.
- Seventy seven percent (77%) of respondents said they have had sex. They reported having sex from ages 8 to 17 years. Seventy three percent (73%) of these who had sex had or have more than one sexual partner.
- Almost 7 out of every 10 child labourers do not think it is right for children to work.
- One out of every 4 child labourers worry about having to go hungry because of no money to buy food.
- A majority of child labourers have doubts about their self identity because they are involved in an adult world of work while being children.
- The absence of family support, financial and otherwise, is a principal cause of children becoming involved in the adult world of work.
- A majority of child labourers is alienated from the work they do, estranged from people around them and feel they cannot count on others in their moments of need.
- The majority of child labourers do not like the work they have to do seeing it as an imposition on their being. For over 1 out of every 4 child labourers, work affects their school attendance, their health, time to play with their friends and time they can spend with their families.
- The physical appearance of child labourers at the time of the interview revealed: 51% were dirty in appearance, 7% had visible physical injuries (head and other bodily wounds), 6% were bare feet and 2% had excessive body odour.
- Employers of child labourers never admit to gaining by employing and exploiting children.
- Child labourers are found to be effective at the work they do.

Legislation

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, Chapter 99:01 and the Education Act Chapter 39:01 are two pieces of legislation that pertain to child labour in Guyana. These Acts are both dated, do not effectively protect children below the age of 18, have negligible penalties for their violation and are generally rarely enforced as they relate to child labour provisions. These Acts permit children over age 17 to legally enter the labour force.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1991 has been ratified by the Guyana Government. The Guyana National Plan of Action for Children to the year 2000 was developed and a National Commission on the Rights of the Child established. The Commission is still in the process of creating institutional mechanisms for monitoring and coordinating children's rights. Poverty and a parlous economy have precluded the adequate provision of resources to protect the rights of children in Guyana.

Causes of Child Labour

Child labour in Guyana is reportedly caused by several factors but predominantly by :

- Poverty and the economic situation
- Single parenting
- Uneducated, negligent and irresponsible parents.
- Peer pressure
- Truancy and school dropouts

Consequences of Child Labour

Some of the consequence of child labour in Guyana are:

- Upsurge in juvenile crime
- Teenage motherhood
- Exploitation and abuse of children by employers, co-workers and the public
- Arrested educational development and increase in illiteracy
- Increase in school dropouts and truancy
- Early sexual activity
- Breakdown in parental control

Risks

- Children who are sex workers or sexually active with multiple partners risk contracting HIV/AIDS/STIs.
- Exposure to agricultural fertilisers, pesticides, weedicides that are often sprayed and used without proper precautions in farms and rice fields.
- Exposure to malaria and typhoid from working in remote interiors, forested and riverain areas.
- Injury from operating sawmill machinery and agricultural machinery without adequate training and protective gear.
- Children exposed to alcohol and drug use.

Recommendations

The first step in minimizing the occurrence of child labour in Guyana is the conscious recognition by Government and other decision makers that a problem exists that is institutionalized, widespread and growing. Further, the child labour problem must be seen as seriously undermining the normal development of the country's children.

A second step in resolving the child labour issue is the emergence of political and administrative will to dedicate studied effort and resources towards uprooting it from the communities in which it has taken hold. This would require an understanding of the causes of child labour and the adoption of workable solutions. No amount of governmental intervention would be effective unless families and communities work in partnership to eliminate the exploitation of children and affirm their rights.

Persistent poverty serves as a catalyst for child labour in Guyana. Measures to reduce poverty would have salutary effects in reducing child labour. Children who work are more likely to derive from poor homes. The existing system of public welfare is inadequate in dealing with destitute families. Improvement of the welfare system will also go a far way towards reducing child labour. Parents can be assisted in providing for their basic needs and their children without having to rely on the latter working.

The following recommendations emanate from national and community leaders on reducing or eliminating child labour.

- 1) Promulgating legislation on child labour consistent with ILO Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This measure would require the abandoning of existing legislation, which is outdated, and neither offers serious protection of children nor serious penalties for employers and other exploiters.
- 2) Conducting public relations and media campaigns to make the public and children aware of their rights and discouraging their premature involvement in the labour force.
- 3) Educating parents on their obligations to their children who are below age 18 years. Many communities complain that some parents are irresponsible and abandon their responsibilities to their children. Parenting skills training should be an integral element of adult and continuing education as well as public service media programmes.
- 4) Strengthening the institutional capacity of the Schools Welfare Service of the Ministry of Education through increased training of welfare officers, provision of operational resources, as well as a broadening of their legal authority to combat truancy and school dropouts. Many child labourers are school dropouts and truants.
- 5) Institutionalizing a national school feeding programme that provides a daily balanced nutritional meal for children in nursery, primary and secondary schools. Many children cannot attend school because of hunger.
- 6) Providing a school bus or school boat system to facilitate school attendance by Guyanese children.
- 7) Increase the age of compulsory education to 16 or 17 years.
- 8) Empowering the police to formally regard, as part of their duty, the arresting and prosecution of employers of child labourers.

In addition to the forgoing recommendations it is important that we see this rapid assessment study as a solid start towards understanding and dealing with child labour in Guyana. Because of its limited scope, additional work needs to be done in areas not covered. These areas include:

1. Survey of households in selected farming communities in particular, to ascertain the involvement of children in farming
2. Study of remote mining and logging communities where children are employed and exploited.
3. Study of commercial enterprises that employ child labour.

This rapid assessment study is not a national study of child labour in Guyana but it has nonetheless covered a sufficiently broad area and procured secondary quantitative and primary qualitative data to afford workable understanding of the phenomenon countrywide. As such, it has served its intended purpose.

Child labour in Guyana is a pervasive, ubiquitous but largely unrecognized phenomenon. Children of all ethnic groups – East Indian, Black, Mixed Race and Amerindian - are driven by culture, parental neglect, family breakdown and economic necessity to work for their own upkeep or that of their family and relatives. They farm, fish, engage in vending, work as labourers, loggers, miners, domestics, sales clerks, apprentices, machine operators, guards or watchmen and as prostitutes.

Ministers of Government in Guyana, while admitting to the existence of child labour, take the position that the worst forms of its existence are not as manifest in Guyana as in countries in Asia and Africa. They are largely correct in their comparison but seemingly do not recognize how widespread child labour is in Guyana and the negative effects it is having on the nation's children and their rights.

Child labour in Guyana is a serious social problem that impacts negatively on the educational development of children, their health and emotional well-being. Yet, the existing legislation and programmes are limited and do not go far enough to deal with this problem. Because child labour is not recognized as a serious problem, the administrative will and the resources necessary for its combat are not made available. It is hoped that this study can create the required awareness and influence public policies and programmes to save Guyanese children from precocious and dysfunctional adulthood.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I
Centre for Economic and Social Research and Action

**THE STUDY OF CHILD LABOUR IN GUYANA
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE SURVEY OF CHILD LABOURERS,
PARENTS AND EMPLOYERS
December 2001 – January 2002**

001 QUESTIONNAIRE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

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002 AREA

Charity	01
Parika	02
Georgetown	03
St. Cuthbert's Mission	04
Corriverton	05
Black Bush Polder	06
Bartica	07
Linden	08

My name is _____, and I am working for Centre for Economic and Social Research and Action (CESRA) which is conducting a study of children who work. You have been selected for interview on this subject. The answers you provide will be kept completely confidential.

INTERVIEWER'S VISIT

	Visit	Visit 2	Visit 3
Date			
Interviewer			
Result			

Result codes:	Completed	1
	Respondent Not available	2
	Refused	3
	Partially Completed	4
	Other	5

CHECKED BY SUPERVISOR: Signature _____ Date: _____

Comments of interviewer: _____

**SECTION 1
CHILD LABOURERS**

A. Social Background

1. Sex

Male	01
Female	02

2. How old are you? _____

--

3. Age Group

0-4	01
5-9	02
10-14	03
15-under 18	04

4. Race

Black	01
East Indian	02
Amerindian	03
Mixed	04
Portuguese/White	05
Chinese	06
Other	07

5. Religion

Christian	01
Muslim	02
Hindu	03
None	04
Other(state) _____	05

6. Marital Status

Single	01
Married	02
Common Law/Living home	03
Visiting relationship	04
Separated	05
Widowed	06
Divorced	07

7. How many children do you have?

None	01
One	02
Two	03
Three	04
Four	05
More than four	06

8. Where do you live?

In this community	01
Elsewhere (state)_____	02

9. If you reside in this community, how long have you been living here?

Less than 2 years	01
2-5 years	02
6-9 years	03
10-13 years	04
14 years or over	05
Not Applicable	99

B. Educational Attainment

10. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Nursery	01
Primary	02
Secondary	03
Commercial/Technical/Vocational	04
Never attended school	05

11. On the average, how often do you attend school?

Five times per week	01
Four times per week	02
Three times per week	03
Two times per week	04
Once per week	05
Don't attend school	06
Never attended school	07

12. Which school do you attend or are enrolled in?
Name of school

Not Applicable	99

13. If you attend school, what class/form are you in?

Prep	01
Standard 1	02
Standard 2	03
Standard 3	04
Standard 4	05
Form 1	06
Form 2	07
Form 3	08
Form 4	09
Form 5	10

Not Applicable	99
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14. If you do not attend school at all, give reasons. _____		
	Not applicable	99

15. If you do not attend school everyday give reasons. _____		
	Not applicable	99

16. If you are not attending school would you want to return?	Yes	01
	No	02
	Completed school	03
	Can't say	77
	Not Applicable	99

17. How well can you read?	Very well	01
	Well	02
	Not so well	03
	Not well at all	04

18. What is the highest level of education of your mother or female guardian?	Nursery	01
	Primary	02
	Secondary	03
	Technical/commercial/vocational	04
	University	05
	Never attended school	06
	Can't say	77

19. What is the highest level of education of your father or male guardian?	Nursery	01
	Primary	02
	Secondary	03
	Technical/commercial/vocational	04
	University	05
	Never attended school	06
	Can't say	77

Family Context

20. Are your parents?

Married, living together	01
Married, living apart	02
Single	03
Common law union, living together	04
Common law union, separated	05
Other (state) _____	06
Can't say	77

21. Who takes care of you?

Mother	01
Mother and father	02
Siblings	03
Other relatives	04
Self	05
Other (state) _____	06

21a. Including yourself, how many persons live in your household?

Can't say	77

22. Relation to respondent

Respondent	Under 18	Over 18	No. of persons
Father			
Mother			
Step father			
Step mother			
Grandmother			
Mother/step father			
Aunt			
Other/brother			
other male relative			
Other female relative			
Guardian			
Brother			
Sister			
Son			
Daughter			
Other			

23. What are some of the things you like about your family?

Can't say	77

24. What are some of the things you don't like about your family?

Can't say	77

25. What are some of the things you like about your life?

Can't say	77

26. What are some of the things you don't like about your life?

Can't say	77

27. Would you describe you and your family's financial situation as?

Very good	01
Good	02
Not so good	03
Bad	04
Very bad	05
Can't say	77

Present Living Situation

28. With whom do you currently live?

Alone	01
With partner	02
With parents or guardians	03
With male parent/guardian	04
With female parent/guardian	05
With grandmother	06
With grandfather	07
With both grandparents	08
With children	09
With other relatives	10
With peers/friends	11
Mother and Stepfather	12
Father and Stepmother	13
Others (state)	14

29. Who is the head of your household?

Father	01
Mother	02
Father and Mother	03
Self	04
Other relative(please state)	05
Other (please state)	06

30. Would you say your present living conditions are?

Very good	01
Good	02
Not so good	03
Not good at all	04

31. What are some of the things you like about your present living conditions?

Can't say	77

32. What are some of the things you don't like about your present living conditions?

Can't say	7

General Health

33. Do you consider your general health to be

Excellent	01
Good	02
Fair	03
Poor	04

34. From what illnesses do you suffer?

None	01
Can't say	77

35. Which of the following do you use?

	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never
a. alcohol (stout, beer, rum, wine, etc.	01	02	03	04
b. cigarettes	01	02	03	04
c. ganja/weed/marijuana	01	02	03	04
d. cocaine	01	02	03	04
e. crack	01	02	03	04
f. other (state)	01	02	03	04

36. Is the food you get to eat?

Adequate	01
Not so adequate	02
Not adequate at all	03

37.	Are the clothes you get to wear?	Adequate	01
		Not so adequate	02
		Not adequate at all	03

38.	Are your sleeping conditions?	Comfortable	01
		Not so comfortable	02
		Not comfortable at all	03

Work Patterns

39.	For whom do you work?	Self-employed	01
		Mother	02
		Father	03
		Both parents	04
		other family	05
		Other employer (state)_____	06

40.	What is your occupation? _____		
		Student	01
		Can't say	77
		No response	88

41.	Describe the work you do? _____		01
		Can't say	77
		No response	88

42.	For what reasons do you work? _____		
		Can't say	77
		No response	88

43.	Do other children in this community/setting do similar or other work?	Similar work	01
		Other work	02
		Both	03
		Can't say	77

44.	If yes, about how many? _____		
		Can't say	77
		No response	88

45. What is your mother's occupation?

Don't have a mother	01
Can't say	77
No response	88

46. What is your father's occupation?

Don't have a father	01
Can't say	77
No response	88

47. If you are self-employed, how much do you earn per day for the work you do?

Per Day _____ Per Week _____ Per Month _____

Can't say	77
Not Applicable	99

48. Where do you get your supplies?

Can't say	77
No response	88

Ask those who do not attend school

49. How many days per week do you work?

7 days per week	01
6 days per week	02
5 days per week	03
4 days per week	04
3 days per week	05
2 days per week	06
1 day per week	07
Can't say	77
No Response	88

Ask those who attend school

50. How many days per week do you work?

7 days per week	01
6 days per week	02
5 days per week	03
4 days per week	04
3 days per week	05
2 days per week	06
1 day per week	07
Can't say	77

No Response	88
-------------	----

51. How many hours per day do you work?

Can't say	77

52. What are your daily work hours?
From _____ To _____

--

53. If you work for someone else, do you get paid for the work you do?

Yes	01
No	02
Can't say	77
Not Applicable	99

53a. If yes, how are you paid?

	Yes	No	N.A
a. by wages	01	02	99
b. in kind	01	02	99
c. by piece rate	01	02	99
d. by job rate	01	02	99
e. paid by each client	01	02	99
f. other (state) _____	01	02	99

54. How often are you paid?

daily	01
weekly	02
fortnightly	03
monthly	04
at end of task performed	05
other(state) _____	06
Not applicable	99

55. How much are you paid?

Not paid	01
Not applicable	99

56. If you are not paid, why not?

Not Applicable	99

57. Do you have to pay money to/ or owe any of _____

	Yes	No
--	-----	----

the following?

a. family member	01	02
b. employer	01	02
c. other _____	01	02

58. How many persons work in your household?

One	01
Two	02
Three	03
Four	04
More than four	05
None	06

59. Including yourself, how many other persons who are below the age of 18 years work in your household ?

One	01
Two	02
Three	03
Four	04
More than four	05
None	06

60. At what age did you start to work for the first time?

Can't say	77

To be completed by interviewer
FOR OFFICIAL USE

61. How long has the respondent been working? (calculate period)

--

62. How long have you been working at your current job?

Can't say	77

63. Do any relatives work here with you?

Yes	01
No	02
Can't say	77

63a. If yes, who?

Can't say	77
Not Applicable	99

64. How many jobs do you currently have?

Can't say	77

65. How many jobs have you had prior to this one?

None	01

66.	What are these jobs? _____	Can't say	77
		Can't say	77
		Not Applicable	99
67.	How were you recruited for this job?	By family member	01
		By other relative	02
		By employer	03
		By own effort	04
		By friend	05
		other(state)_____	06
68.	How was your employment arranged?	through formal contract	01
		by verbal agreement	02
		other(state)_____	03
69.	Are you free to leave this job if you want to?	yes	01
		No	02
		Can't say	77
70.	What do you like about the work you do? _____	Can't say	77
71.	What don't you like about the work you do? _____	Can't say	77

Physical Risks

72. How often have you been beaten by the following?		Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	na
	a. Parents	01	02	03	04	99
	b. other relatives	01	02	03	04	99
	c. friends	01	02	03	04	99
	d. employer/supervisor	01	02	03	04	99
	e. partner	01	02	03	04	99
	f. co-workers	01	02	03	04	99
	g. other(state)	01	02	03	04	99

73. Do you experience any of the following while working?

	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never
a. verbal abuse by employers, supervisors, fellow workers, customers, other members of the public	01	02	03	04
b. Harassment by employers, supervisors, fellow workers, customers, other members of the public	01	02	03	04

74. How often have you been sexually abused by the following?

	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never	na
a. Parents	01	02	03	04	99
b. other relatives	01	02	03	04	99
c. friends	01	02	03	04	99
d. employer/supervisor	01	02	03	04	99
e. partner	01	02	03	04	99
f. co-workers	01	02	03	04	99
g. other (state)	01	02	03	04	99

75. How many times have you been injured while doing work?

One time	01
Two times	02
Three times	03
Four times	04
Five times	05
Six times	06
More than six times	07
Never been injured	08

76. If you have been injured, what is the nature of the injury?

Not Applicable	99

77. How many times have you become ill as a consequence of doing work?

One time	01
Two times	02
Three times	03
Four times	04
Five times	05
Six times	06
More than 6times	07
Never been ill	08
Can't say	77

78. Which of the following are you exposed to or have to handle/ use while doing work?

	Regula rly	Not so regularly	Not at all
a. chemicals	01	02	03
b. factory machinery	01	02	03
c. agricultural machinery	01	02	03
d. power tools	01	02	03
e. sharp instruments	01	02	03
f. animals/insects	01	02	03
g. elements (sun, rain, etc)	01	02	03
h. noise	01	02	03

79. What protective gear do you need to wear in doing your work that you do not currently use?

	Yes	No	Can't say	Don't Need
a. welding shields	01	02	03	04
b. life jacket	01	02	03	04
c. boots	01	02	03	04
d. glasses	01	02	03	04
e. hard hat	01	02	03	04
f. gloves	01	02	03	04
g. ear plugs	01	02	03	04
h. other	01	02	03	04

Sexual History

80. How many sex partners have you had over the last month?

None	01
Can't say	77

81. At what age did you first have sex?

Never had sex	01
Can't say	77

--	--

82. Were you forced the first time you had sex?

Yes	01
No	02
Never had sex	03

83. Have you ever been asked to perform sexual favours for money?

Often	01
Sometimes	02
Rarely	03
Never	04

84. Have you ever contracted an STI?

Yes	01
No	02
Can't say	77
Not applicable	99

Concerns And Needs

85. What do you want to do when you grow up?

Don't know	77

86. Do you think it is right for children your age to work?

Yes	01
No	02
Can't say	77

87. The next questions ask you how much you worry about different things that might happen in your life. For each thing, Please tell me how much you worry.

*[Code: L - A Lot;
S - Somewhat;
N - Not at all]*

	L	S	N
a. my own drinking and drug use	01	02	03
b. my friend or relative's drinking or drug use	01	02	03
c. being physically abused	01	02	03
d. being sexually abused	01	02	03
e. getting or making someone pregnant	01	02	03
j. getting an STI	01	02	03
k. getting HIV/ AIDS	01	02	03
l. getting a job	01	02	03
m. having to go hungry because I have no money	01	02	03

Emotional And Mental Risks

88. <i>Now I am going to read you some statements that look at yourself in relation to others, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.</i> [Code: SD – Strongly Disagree; D – Disagree; A – Agree; SA – Strongly Agree]	SD	D	A	SA
a. I sometimes feel that the people I know are not too friendly.	01	02	03	04
b. Most of my work seems worthwhile and meaningful to me.	01	02	03	04
c. I sometimes feel uncertain about who I really am.	01	02	03	04
d. I feel that my family is not as close to me as I would like.	01	02	03	04
e. I often wonder whether I'm becoming the kind of person I want to be	01	02	03	04
f. It's hard to know how to act most of the time since you can't tell what others expect.	01	02	03	04
g. I often feel left out of things that others are doing.	01	02	03	04
h. Nowadays you can't really count on other people when you have problems or need help.	01	02	03	04
i. When people I know are having problems, it's my responsibility to try to help.	01	02	03	04
j. Most people don't seem to accept me when I'm just being myself.	01	02	03	04
k. I often find it difficult to feel involved in the things I'm doing.	01	02	03	04
l. Hardly anyone I know is interested in how I really feel inside.	01	02	03	04
m. I generally feel that I have a lot of interests in common with the other people in my neighborhood).	01	02	03	04
n. I often feel alone when I'm with other people.	01	02	03	04
o. If I really had my choice, I'd live my life in a very different way than I do.	01	02	03	04

89. Do you see the work you do as?

	Always	Some times	Rarely	Never
a. Boring	01	02	03	04
b. Tiring	01	02	03	04
c. Stressful	01	02	03	04
d. Difficult	01	02	03	04

90. How satisfied are you with the payment you are receiving?

Very satisfied	01
Satisfied	02
Not so satisfied	03
Not satisfied at all	04

Don't receive payment	05
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91. How comfortable are you with the way you are treated by your employers/ supervisors?	Very comfortable	01
	Comfortable	02
	Not so comfortable	03
	Not comfortable at all	04
	Don't work with employer/supervisor	05

92. How comfortable are you with the way you are treated by your co-workers?	Very comfortable	01
	Comfortable	02
	Not so comfortable	03
	Not comfortable at all	04
	Don't work with co-workers	05

93. How comfortable are you with the conditions under which you have to work?	Very comfortable	01
	Comfortable	02
	Not so comfortable	03
	Not comfortable at all	04

94. In what ways does your work affect the following?		Affect a whole lot	Affect some what	Affect a little	Don't affect at all
	a. your attendance at school	01	02	03	04
	b. your health	01	02	03	04
	c. time to play with friends	01	02	03	04
	d. time to spend with family	01	02	03	04

Thank you very much for your time and the valuable information you provided?

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENT ON PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF CHILD

	Yes	No
a. Dirty torn clothing	01	02
b. physical injuries	01	02
c. tidy appearance	01	02
d. dirty appearance	01	02
e. other (state)	01	02

SECTION 2

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

1. Why is it necessary for your child to work?

Don't know	77

2. Are you able to provide adequately for the basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) of your child?

Adequately	01
Not so adequately	02
Not adequately at all	03
Can't provide basic needs	04

3. Would you be able to manage without your child working?

Manage very well	01
Manage fairly well	02
Manage not so well	03
Couldn't manage at all	04

4. Do you send your child to school

Regularly	01
Not so regularly	02
Not regularly at all	03
Don't send the child to school	04

5. Are you afraid of anything bad happening to the child as a consequence of his/her working?

Yes	01
No	02

**SECTION 3
EMPLOYERS**

A. Physical Risks

1. How many workers do you employ?

--

2. How many are below the age of 18?

3. How old is the youngest?

4. How many accidents/injuries to workers have occurred over the past year?

5. How many of your employees have fallen ill over the past year?

6. How many of your employees have died over the past year?

7. Who pays for medical care for workers who are Injured on the job?

Employer	01
Employee	02
Both	03
Other _____ (state)	04

8. How close is the nearest health facility to the work place?

9. What facilities are provided for workers?

	Yes	No
a. clean drinking water	01	02
b. toilet facilities	01	02
c. adequate lighting	01	02
d. First aid kit	01	02
e. persons trained in first aid	01	02

10. Do employees have to work among any of the following?

	Yes	No
a. power machinery	01	02
b. toxic chemicals	01	02
c. noise	01	02
d. air (smoke, fumes)	01	02
e. temperature and the elements	01	02

(sun, rain, etc.)		
f. weights carried/lifted	01	02
g. dangerous animals	01	02

11. On the average, how many hours per day do employees work?

12. How do you pay your workers?

	Yes	No
a. daily	01	02
b. weekly	01	02
c. fortnightly	01	02
d. monthly	01	02
e. piece rate	01	02
f. other (state) _____	01	02

13. What is your policy in relation to recruiting workers under 18?

14. How satisfied are you with the work performance of your workers under 18 years?

Very satisfied	01
Satisfied	02
Not so satisfied	03
Not satisfied at all	04

15. How do you recruit employees under age 18?

16. Do you have any contact with their parents?

Yes	01
No	02

17. What tasks are assigned to employees under 18 years?

18. How many rest breaks are they given?

19. If you provide living accommodation for employees under 18, where do they sleep?

20. Which of the following do you provide for employees?		Yes	No
a. sleeping/living accommodation		01	02
b. leisure time/time off		01	02
c. medical care facilities		01	02

21. Are you aware of the laws and conventions covering the rights of children?	Yes	01
	No	02

21a. If yes, what are they?

--

22. Why do you employ persons under 18?

--

23. Do such persons attend school?	Yes	01
	No	02
	Can't say	77

24. How many workers do you employ?

--

25. Location of work place?	Field	01
	Household	02
	Factory	03
	Market place	04
	Shop	05
	Other (state)_____	06

Thank you very much for your time and the valuable information you provided.

APPENDIX II

**CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ACTION
(CESRA)
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)
STUDY OF CHILD LABOUR IN GUYANA**

**KEY COMMUNITY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(For Police, Health Authorities, School Officials, Social Workers, Welfare
Officers, Youth Leaders, Local Govt. Administrators, etc.)**

My name is _____, and I am working for the Centre for Economic and Social Research and Action (CESRA) which is conducting a study of children who work. You have been selected for interview on this subject. The answers you provide will be kept completely confidential.

1. Name of Organization
2. Name of interviewee
3. Designation/ Occupation
4. No. of years in current position
5. Where in this community does child labour exist?
6. Do you see child labour as a problem in this community?
7. Give an average of the number of children who work in this community?
8. Among what age, sex and race of the population is child labour most prevalent in this community?
9. What types of child labour exist in this community? (domestic, prostitution, vending, agricultural)
10. Can you describe actual cases of child labour that you know of?
11. What are the main reasons/causes for child labour in this community?
12. What are some of the consequences of child labour in this community?
13. What are the consequences of child labour on school attendance? (obtain information on attendance, truancy, and dropouts from schools in community?)
14. Under what conditions children work in this community? (e.g. drinking, sex, violence, drug abuse, crime, exploitation)
15. In what ways are you and or your organization involved in eliminating or reducing child labour in this community?
16. What cultural factors influence child labour in this community?

Thank you very much for your time and the valuable information you provided.

APPENDIX III

CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ACTION (CESRA)

STUDY OF CHILD LABOUR IN GUYANA

FOCUS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(For Govt. Ministries and Institutions, International Organizations, NGOs, and Regional Officials)

My name is _____, and I am working for the Centre for Economic and Social Research and Action (CESRA) which is conducting a study of children who work. You have been selected for interview on this subject. The answers you provide will be kept completely confidential.

1. Name of Organization
2. Name of interviewee
3. Designation
4. No. of years in current position
5. How widespread is child labour in Guyana?
6. Describe what actual experiences your organization has in dealing with child labour?
7. Among what categories (age, sex, race) of the population is child labour most prevalent?
8. What types or categories of child labour exist in Guyana? (domestic, prostitution, vending, agricultural)
9. Among what sectors (fishing, mining, sex, logging, domestic, agriculture, Amerindians) is child labour most prevalent?
10. Where in Guyana and/or region does child labour exist?
11. What are the main reasons/causes for child labour in Guyana?
12. What policies does your institution have in place regarding child labour?
(Please describe policies. Obtain a copy of it.)
13. What programmes does your institution have in place regarding child labour?
(Please describe programmes. Obtain a copy of it)
14. What are some of the consequences of child labour in Guyana?
15. In what other ways is your organization involved in dealing with the child labour phenomenon?
16. What measures do you think should be implemented to reduce or eliminate the problem of child labour in Guyana?

17. Would you be kind enough to provide any copies or reports, publications, statistics or other documents that your organization may have pertaining to children in Guyana in general, and child labour in particular.

Appendix IV
LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - CHARITY

Entity	Designation	Name
Original Juice Center	Owner	Netram Ramdanan
Charity Neighbourhood Democratic Council	Chairman	Ayube Khan
Charity Secondary School	Headmaster	Kenneth Shamlall
Charity Primary School	Deputy Headmaster	M. Sukdeo
Pomeroon Oil Mill	Manager	Hansraj Harriprasad

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - PARIKA

Entity	Designation	Name
Parika Marketing Center	Assistant Manager	Roy Mohabir
Regional Education Office	Regional Education Officer	Youman Singh
Regional Education Office	District Schools Welfare Officer	Jillian Statia
Regional Education Office	District Schools Welfare Officer	Abu Khan
Regional Democratic Council	Regional Chairman	Esau Dooki
Regional Democratic Council	Deputy Regional Executive Officer	Mottie Persaud
Parika-Salem Secondary School	Deputy Headteacher (ag.)	Verna Johnson
Valza's Enterprises	Farmer/Community Leader	Mr. Charles

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - GEORGETOWN

Entity	Designation	Name
Sophia Special School	Headmistress	Pansy Aaron
Organisation of Indigenous Peoples	Chairman	Christine Lowe
Red Cross	Personnel Officer	Lydia Fraser
Salvation Army	Major	Mr. Jonas
Institute of Development Studies	Director	Prof. Clive Thomas
Trade Union Congress	President	Mr. Lincoln Lewis
Guyana Human Rights Association	Co-ordinator	Ms. Mendonca
GUM Clinic	Director	Dr. Michael Alli
Ministry of Education	Minister	Dr. Henry Jeffrey
Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security	Senior Minister	Dr. Dale Bisnauth
Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security	Minister	Ms. Bibi Shadeek
Ministry of Health	Minister	Dr. Leslie Ramsammy
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Minister	Ms. Gail Texeira
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Director, Training	Mr. Sydney Scott
Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	Director, Youth Services	Ms. Jacqueline Mounter

The focus interviews at the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports were conducted in a focus group setting.

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - CORRIVERTON/NEW AMSTERDAM

Entity	Designation	Name
Corriverton Mayor and Town Council	Youth, Sports and Culture Officer	Mr. Byron Duncan
Springlands Police Station	Officer in Charge	Mr. G. Fingall

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - BARTICA

Entity	Designation	Name
Neighbourhood Democratic Council	Overseer	Carol Elliot
Regional Democratic Council Region 7	Regional Executive Officer	Vishnu Nizir
Kaikan Village	Amerindian Captain	Capt. Richard Peters
Bartica Police Station	Interview conducted with five ranks	
Bartica Business School	Manager	Hardat Singh
Canadian Crossroads International Cry of AIDS Project	Social Worker/Coordinator	Rita Brouet
Dept. of Education Region 7	Schools Welfare Officer	Beverly Shewram

Focus group discussion was held with the regional Education Officer, other Regional education officials and head teachers

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES - LINDEN

Entity	Designation	Name
Mayor and Town Council	Town Clerk	Mr. Leroy Gillis
Regional Democratic Council	District Development Officer	Mr. Fitz Ralph
Children's Development Centre	Secretary	Ms. Gail Murray
McKenzie High School	Head Mistress	Ms. Janice Gibson
McKenzie Primary School	Head Mistress	Ms. Hycelyn Thompson
Totally Moulding Community Club	Club President	Ms. Marva Semple
Regional Democratic Council	Chairperson, Social Welfare Committee	Ms. Valerie Sharpe
*Regional Education Office	Education Officer	Mr. Lloyd McBean
	Education Supervisor	Ms. Evelyn David
	Education Supervisor	Mr. Eustace Johnson
	Education Supervisor	Ms. Ruth Mentore

* These focus interviews were conducted in a focus group setting.

ST. CUTHBERT'S MISSION

Entity	Designation	Name
St. Cuthbert's Mission Primary School	Head Mistress	Ms. Pamela Joseph
St. Cuthbert's Mission	Deputy Captain	Mr. Ernest Dundas
St. Cuthbert's Mission Health Centre	Midwife	Ms. Amanda Mahadeo
St. Cuthbert's Mission Health Centre	Medex	Imelda Williams

LIST OF FOCUS INTERVIEWEES – BLACK BUSH POLDER

Entity	Designation	Name
Mibicuri Police Station	Lieutenant	M. Ibaran
Lesbeholden Primary School	Senior Mistress	D. Ramanan
	Asst. Teacher	B. Sanichar
	Asst. Teacher	R. Baichan
Lesbeholden Primary School	Headmaster	Tanaraine Brijlall
Mibicuri Primary School	Headmistress	Ms. Deen
Black Bush Secondary School	Headmistress	Kumarie Ramsammy
Alesie Rice Milling Co.	Silo Manager	Shawn Winter

APPENDIX V

SCHEDULE OF FIELD ACTIVITIES

Following is a schedule of the activities involved in the conduct of the study of child labour in Guyana.

DATE	ACTIVITY	
16-17 December 2001 7 January 2002	1. Mapping 2. Focus Interviews with key community informants 3. Interviews with child labourers etc.	
Parika	1. Mapping 2. Focus Interviews with key community informants 3. Interviews with child labourers etc. 4. Collection of secondary data	16 December 2001 8 January 2002
Georgetown	1. Interviews with child labourers etc. 2. Focus interviews 3. Collection of secondary data 4. Mapping	13 December – 12 Feb.
Corriverton	1. Interviews with child labourers etc. 2. Focus interviews 3. Collection of secondary data 4. Mapping	20 December
Bartica	1. Interviews with child labourers etc. 2. Focus interviews 3. Collection of secondary data 4. Mapping	17-18 December
Linden	1. Interviews with child labourers 2. Focus interviews 3. Mapping 4. Collection of Secondary data	17-18 December 2001 9 January 2002
St. Cuthbert's Mission	1. Interviews with child labourers etc. 2. Focus interviews 3. Collection of secondary data 4. Mapping	16 January 2002
Black Bush Polder	1. Interviews with child labourers etc. 2. Focus interviews 3. Collection of secondary data 4. Mapping	10 January 2002

APPENDIX VI

CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND ACTION

OPERATIONS MANUAL FOR STUDY OF CHILD LABOUR IN GUYANA

The following are guidelines for conducting a Rapid Assessment Study in eight (8) target communities:

- ✓ On entering the community team members should conduct a mapping operation of the community seeking to identify in the process, areas and settings where child labourers can be found and pinpointing these on a sketch map
- ✓ Arrange and obtain interviews with key community informants on the child labour phenomenon.
- ✓ Such interviews should be conducted with:
 - health authorities
 - school officials
 - local government administrators
 - social workers
 - youth leaders
 - any other willing community leaders and informants
- ✓ Locate and conduct interviews with child labourers, their parents and their employers. Try as far as possible to conduct interviews in work settings. Try to at least interview the child if for any reason access to the parents/guardians or employer is not possible. The interview schedule for the study of child labour in Guyana will be used.
- ✓ In every setting where children are found engaged in the worst forms of labour researchers should, in addition to conducting interviews with the instruments provided, also carry out observation studies of the child and his/her work setting based on the following guidelines listed hereunder:
 - observe the physical appearance of the child
 - physical risks to which he/she is exposed.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Researchers are required to observe and describe the following?

Present Living Situation

- Conditions under which they sleep
- Conditions under which they eat
- Conditions under which they bathe

- Toilet conditions

Physical Risks

- Type of machinery in work place (if relevant)
- Exposure to toxic chemicals
- Noise
- Air (smoke, fumes)
- Exposure to sun, abnormal temperatures.
- Weights carried/ lifted
- Physical position while working
- Presence of dangerous animals
- Protective gear (welding shields, gloves, boots, glasses, hard hat, ear plugs)
- Isolated and unprotected workplace
- Perception of danger, threat, risk

The Work Environment

- Clean drinking water
- Acceptable toilet facilities
- Lighting
- First-Aid kit/ Trained person present
- Freedom of movement
- Power machinery (combine, tractor, cars, buses, agricultural machinery, factory equipment, power tools, speed boats)
- Toxic chemicals (Insecticides, pesticides, weedicides, etc.)
- Noise (loud music in buses, noise of factory, equipment)
- Temperature/ climate (outdoor work, exposure to sun, rain, water)
- Weights (fetching bags of rice, wood, pushing carts, fetching, etc)
- Dangerous animals (snakes, aggressive domestic animals like cows, dogs)