

Suriname
The Situation of Children
in Mining, Agriculture
and other Worst Forms of Child Labour:
A Rapid Assessment

by
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of Child Labour: A Rapid Assessment*
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Foreword

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 Subregional 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 Subregional 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 these 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.

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NGO Institute for Training and Research in Suriname (NIKOS)
Paramaribo, November 2002

Structure of the Report

This report is a first research attempt to give an indication of the extent of child labour in Suriname, especially its worst forms. The research followed a Rapid Assessment methodology and should not be seen as a definite statement on the problem, since that will require more in-depth research.

In chapter one of this study the concept of child labour is introduced against the background of the development of children living in difficult situations in Suriname. The second chapter gives an overview of the existing literature. The third chapter deals with the legal aspects of child labour and in the fourth chapter the methodology is outlined. The fifth chapter consists of the main research findings, while the sixth chapter reports the findings by geographical districts. The seventh chapter discusses the background and attitudes of the parents of the working children. The eighth chapter centres on the causes and other main issues. In the final chapter, the conclusions and recommendations are reported.

Executive Summary

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned the NGO Institute for Training and Research in Suriname (NIKOS) to conduct a Rapid Assessment on the worst forms of child labour in 2002. The fieldwork was done from April until July 2002. The focus was on children between 4 and 17 years.

The research was meant to develop an insight of the extent of child labour in Suriname and the working conditions of these children. Such an analysis is necessary for the development of policy programmes to eradicate the worst forms of child labour.

To provide an overview of the worst forms of child labour in Paramaribo and the districts, NIKOS conducted interviews with 142 key persons, 169 working children and 52 parents or guardians.

General aspects

Many key persons did not distinguish between child labour and work that would be permitted by children. Since not all work done by children can be considered as child labour, this author refers throughout this report to "child work" as distinct from child labour; child labour being work that is prohibited for children. Especially in the interior of the country, for example, children need to learn skills to survive as part of the daily process of living. These situations need to be assessed carefully to ensure that children are not exploited. Based on the fieldwork, the distinction between child work and child labour has been made mainly, but not only, on the basis of the number of working hours. We propose that:

Child work comprises all economic activities performed by children under 15 years, during less than 15 hours a week, which is not forbidden by international standards, law or custom, which consists primarily of non-dangerous and non-hazardous light types of work, and does not interfere with school hours and performance.

Child work is often not compensated financially and is seen as a normal contribution by a child to a household. With respect to child labour,

Child labour is work that becomes a necessity for the child, that deprives a child of their educational and social development, harms the child's safety and health and/or is likely to offend a child's morality and dignity.

Based on these descriptions, we considered in our rapid assessment survey that 46% of the children we interviewed were involved with child work while 54% were child labourers.

A national survey on working children conducted by the Ministry of Labour in 1998 found that 2% of the children between 4 and 14 years were economically active. This included both child work and child labour.

In Suriname we did not observe clear clusters of child labour, but rather an array of individual cases spread over different sectors and regions.

The largest group of the children worked in the production sector (i.e. 36.5% in agriculture, fisheries, timber, mining), trade (19.8% e.g. vending a variety of products), or the service sector (24.0% e.g. domestic work). Another 19.8% worked in a less defined sector, which often meant that they held several jobs in different sectors. Especially with regard to the production sector, children complained about the circumstances in this sector. For instance, of those that said they had to always lift heavy weight during work, 75% were active in this sector. Of those working with hazardous materials, 65% were active in the production sector.

Causes

About three quarters of the families of the working children were very poor. Since poverty is a main cause of child labour, eradication of poverty is an evident solution to this problem.

The average household size in Suriname consists of 4.1 persons, but the households with working children counted 6.7 members. The need for children to work seems evident as a survival mechanism for such large households. The size of the family is thus a second cause of child labour.

A third cause of child labour has to do with lack of educational opportunities. We found that overall 85% of the working children at least repeated a class once while in school. Moreover, 80% of those that were not in school were dropouts. Although repeating and dropping out is a general problem in Suriname, it tends to be higher with children from a disadvantaged background. The dropout rates, especially in rural areas, are also very high among the girls, who have to help their mothers at home, particularly looking after young children. The lack of educational opportunities and relevant education in the interior is particularly manifest.

Findings

Child labour in Suriname is a complex, socio-economic and demographic phenomenon with peculiar characteristics.

First of all, there is a gender bias. Predominantly boys were active as child labourers and had the highest chances to be involved with worst cases of child labour. Working girls were found less or were less visible, since a sizeable amount may be involved in difficult to trace sectors such as domestic work or sexual exploitation. The effect of so many working boys may be a low self-esteem.

Secondly, we found an ethnic bias. Among the child labourers the Maroons (or Bush negroes) were over-represented with 43%, while they make up about 10% of the population. Poverty is high among this group. Within this largely tribal community it is accepted that the children go to work and contribute to the income of the family. Children who live in a subsistence level economy also need to learn more skills to survive in this environment. The enduring presence of such a large group of child labourers among this group may cause social unrest in Suriname's plural society.

Thirdly, there was a geographic bias. There is a lack of educational opportunities in the interior districts. This may result in a large group of illiterates and unemployed who drift towards the capital.

Based on several indicators, it was estimated that about 300 children in Suriname are involved in the Worst Forms of child labour. The characteristics of this group are:

- 94% male
- mostly 12 years and older
- 52% Maroon
- they worked to support themselves rather than their family
- 58% were not in school
- 88% had repeated a class at least once
- 39% lived with one parent
- 87% had a lower class background
- 45% came from households with 5 to 7 members
- there was an over-representation from the districts of Brokopondo, Marowijne, Sipaliwini (all three interior districts) and Nickerie
- jobs they mainly did: gold mining, agriculture & fisheries, vending & hustling, construction work, transport and porter
- 94% earned more than U\$ 2.30 a day

Legislation

The Labour Laws in Suriname state that persons younger than 18 years should not do hazardous work or work night shifts. Children below 15 years should not work on Fishery boats. Children below 14 years should not work at all, except in a family agricultural setting, in special institutions, and for educational purposes (vocational training). The main law dates from 1963.

The Law on the minimum age of employment does not match with the often quoted Law on compulsory maximum school age of 12 years (Law on Elementary Education of 1960). This school age has actually been overtaken, however, by a new formulation in the Constitution (Article 39), and by the practice of the schools to write off children at the age of fifteen. The Constitution of 1987 imposes an obligation on the Government to ensure compulsory elementary education for all the citizens. This actually raises the school age from 12 years to the age upon which one has completed his/her elementary education.

1. Introduction, Background and Context

Suriname has a population of about 445,000 inhabitants and is one of the smaller nations in South America.¹ Compared with the Caribbean, however, it is one of the larger nations. The population is very plural with major ethnic groups being Creoles (or Afro-Surinamese), East Indians, Javanese (or Indonesians) and Maroons (or Bush Negroes). There are a number of smaller ethnic groups as well such as Amerindians and Chinese. Ethnic background, religion and culture play a crucial role in the life patterns and thinking of the population. This also goes for the issue of child labour. In some cultures, it is more common for children to assist their parents, while the age at which children begin to work also differs.

1.1 Situation of children

The population of Suriname is rather young with a mean age of 23.8 years in 1995.² Children up to the age of 14 years made up 32.9% of the population in that year. The share of children in the overall population will not have changed much in 2002. There are no exact statistics on the number of working children, but only estimates. One estimate is from an unpublished survey report by the Ministry of Labour and Environment (1998), which reports that about 2% of all children between ages 4 and 14 can be considered economically active.³ In many reports about child labour the family demographics and its social context play a role as causes of child labour and in Suriname this is no different.

Besides the volume of working children, little is known about the exact nature of child labour in Suriname. Some research into the conditions under which children work, and the sectors they work in, has been done, but these have been of a limited nature. This report that is based on a nationwide probe of child labour, will address the main issues with respect to this phenomenon in Suriname.

Suriname has a small open economy, which still depends heavily on its main export products, bauxite and aluminum. Other export products are gold, oil, rice, shrimps, and bananas. Due to high inflation and unstable exchange rates, the country has suffered from a declining macro-economic and monetary situation. The government has lost many revenues due to informal economic activities in sectors such as gold mining, timber, fisheries and trade. The vast natural resources triggered the World Bank at one point to consider Suriname as one of the 17 potentially richest countries in the world. This has remained an illusion, however, for most of the population.

According to the UNDP, about 63% of the urban population was living below the poverty line in 1993, while this was still 53% in 2000. The same report stated that 62% of the children between the age of 0 until 14 years old lived under the poverty line.⁴ Furthermore, data from the General Bureau of Statistics showed that families around the poverty line in 1999 could spend one fourth of what they could back in 1969.⁵ About half of the families of the working children, who were interviewed during this survey, dipped under the poverty line, while most of the rest hovered just above this line.⁶ Other indicators in the survey put

the percentage at 74%. Economic context and factors definitely are at work when it comes to child labour.

In Suriname, 62% of the children between the age of one and 14 years lived with both parents in one house. Almost 23% were living only with their mother and 7% lived without a mother and father. Only 3.5% of all children were orphans, but 10.8% did not stay with their biological parents (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2001).

Social problems faced by children in the interior areas where tribal Maroons and Amerindians live, are the lack of adequate housing, electricity or water. There is hardly any social infrastructure in these areas. Children in these areas also have little access to social and health services (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2002).

Some children are living in extreme stress situations such as poverty, unemployment of the mother and/or father, no adequate house to live in, bad health conditions, dangerous or sometimes criminal surrounding and the appearance of violence.⁷ Suriname has a relative high percentage of teenage pregnancy i.e. in 17% of all deliveries the mother was younger than 20 years.⁸ The report of the Ministry of Social Affairs (2001) also shows data of children who were punishable for criminal acts. In 1999, some 461 children between the age of ten and sixteen years were taken into custody for criminal acts as robbery and drug-related offences.

1.2 Education in Suriname

Compulsory education for children in Suriname was introduced in 1876. Parents and guardians were “obliged to their children and pupils in the ages between 7 and 12 to - wherever there was an opportunity to do so- provide for common primary education by persons who were qualified” (Article 18 of the original law).⁹ The sentence “wherever there was an opportunity” clearly had to do with the fact that schools and education were not present at every location.

In 1960, the Primary Education Law replaced the law of 1876. It used virtually the same wording, thus children between 7 and 12 years have to get an education, but technically do not have to attend school.¹⁰ The law stressed the education and not the physical location.

The Constitution of Suriname of 1987 acknowledged that “The State recognizes and guarantees the right of all citizens to be educated and gives them an equal chance” (39 sub 1). Despite the fact that no age limits are mentioned, this article also makes mention of the “.... plight of the State to ... ensure compulsory and free common primary education.” (39 sub 2a). Since primary education normally consists of six elementary grades, this is seen to correspond to ages 6 through 12 years. In practice, however, most primary schools will write off only children that have reached the age of 15 years. When we asked older children why they were not attending school anymore, many of them told us that they have been written off “due to age” (*wegens leeftijd*). This normally meant that they were not attending primary school anymore because they were considered too old.

Virtually all reports on children in Suriname refer to the 1877 or 1960 law which puts the compulsory education age between 7 and 12 years. Nevertheless the provision in the Constitution can be interpreted as such that any child that has not completed primary education (i.e. regardless of age) should be in school, since primary education is compulsory. The practice to write off children from primary school only when they have reached age 15 underlines this interpretation as a valid one and shifts the compulsory school age effectively towards 15 years rather than 12 years.

In our research we will refer often to the educational level of working children and it is therefore useful to state some of the characteristics of basic education in Suriname.

Children can start preschool, which is usually offered in primary school facilities, at age four. It is estimated that nearly 90% of all young children attend preschool. After this they automatically continue with primary school (GLO) which consists of six grades (grade 1 through 6). The report by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2001) concludes that 78% of all children in Suriname are attending school, with no important difference between girls and boys. Urban and rural areas close to Paramaribo have 82% attendance in primary school, while only 61% of all children in the interior attend school. The total amount of children attending primary school in Suriname in 2001 is 65.207.¹¹

The educational system at this level and also in general is characterized by group teaching in the classroom with a heavy accent on reproduction of the subject matter. “Junior secondary education ranges from two to four years, depending on which option the student pursues. General Junior Secondary Education (MULO), a four year program, is reserved for those with the highest sixth grade examination performance. Those with a lower score may continue to a four year General Vocational School (LBGO) or Technical School (LTO). Those with yet lower scores may enter four year programmes by going to a Vocational Home Economics School (LNO) or Elementary Vocational School (EBO) or Special Education School (VBO). These programmes do not generally lead to further educational options.” (Chapman & Levens 1997: 4). Students who have completed MULO can continue with senior secondary and tertiary education, while some of the others may continue with more vocational schooling.¹²

In the last twenty years two important developments have had a negative impact on the success of a child in school in Suriname. First of all, the Internal War, a conflict between the National Army and guerrilla groups in the interior, which struck Suriname briefly (1986/1987 but officially terminated in 1992), had severe consequences for the quality of education in the interior. During the war many schools were destroyed or damaged, while teachers fled and many schools closed down for years. Many families fled the interior either to the capital, to smaller towns or to French Guyana. Ten years after the Peace Treaty was signed, the consequences are still felt in the educational underdevelopment of many teenagers and young adults who were not able to attend school. Furthermore the educational system in the interior has not been completely rebuilt and also suffers from many years of economic decline of the country.¹³

Table 1.1 Repeating and dropout by district

<i>District</i>	<i>Percentage of pupils that entered first grade but did not complete 6 th grade including those that dropped out</i>
Paramaribo	30%
Wanica	16%
Para	34%
Commewijne	31%
Saramacca	36%
Coronie	49%
Nickerie	
Marowijne	62%
Brokopondo	60%
Sipaliwini	71%
Total	35%

Source: MINOV, examenbureau

A second negative development in the educational system is the high percentage of repeaters and dropouts. Ringeling (1999) using data on repeating over the period of 1980-1999, concluded that Suriname did worse than most Caribbean countries. Nationwide 84% of all children reached the fifth grade in primary school. In Paramaribo and the urban area the percentage was higher with 93%, but in the rural areas this was only 83%, and in the interior only 65% of the children reached the fifth grade. Inland children are clearly disadvantaged within the present educational system. Ringeling underlined the cultural gap between school and home. Children who experience a different culture in school, a different language or values, have less chance of success in school. The risk of repeating is much higher among this group of children e.g. those from the interior or those with deprived backgrounds. Repeating in primary school had direct effect for the school achievements. The risk of dropouts is high after repeating one or more classes, furthermore work becomes more attractive for a child or the parents if positive school achievements stay away.¹⁴ Ringeling (1999) also stressed the need of educational facilities e.g. a shortage of instructional and teaching materials, not enough books, or lack of programs for teachers. A shortage of qualified teachers in the interior and rural areas resulted in situations where some teachers have to work with two classes. In such situations the teacher is mainly giving instructions, while there is little time to ask questions or actually work in the class.

The Ministry of Education (2002) underlined the problems of badly maintained buildings, no books or materials, not enough chairs or tables, no access to water or ability to come by bus in the rural and interior areas. The overall curriculum of the school dates from 1965 and needs to be updated. Methods of teaching used in the classroom date from the eighties. Non attendance is a common problem, which makes it hard to be successful. If a child does not have adequate facilities he or she will achieve less in school, and again there is a high risk for repeating a class or to drop out of school.

The National Education Plan which was recently presented reports that only 4 out of 10 children who start with primary school are completing high school (2002:23).

Table 1.1 illustrates the high percentage of repeaters and dropouts by district. It signifies the percentage of those pupils that entered first grade in 1995 but who did not complete sixth grade in 2001, including those who dropped out.

Notes

¹*Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken: Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken. Demografische data Suriname 1998-1999, Paramaribo December 2000.*

²*General Bureau of Statistics: Suriname Demographic data up to 1997 (Paramaribo, May 1999).*

³*Ministerie van ATM, Onderdirectoraat arbeidsmarkt: Draft report of the survey on child labour in Suriname (unpublished, 1998).*

⁴*UNDP: Sustainable combat against poverty in Suriname (Paramaribo, March 2001).*

⁵*Algemeen Bureau Statistiek (2001), Huishoudbudget onderzoek in Suriname, 1999-2000, Paramaribo.*

⁶*We asked the parents if their income would be above or below Sf 300.000 (about US\$ 140) a month and used this as a poverty line. Dr. J. Menke, one of the experts on poverty measures in Suriname, used Sf 320.000 for July 2002 for a family of four per month. With this they could buy the minimum food items. He also mentioned that in May 2000 the poverty line stood at Sf 160.000, which gives an indication of the inflation that has been going on (interview on Radio ABC August 21, 2002).*

⁷*S. van den Berg, I. van Zon, (1994), Opvoeding in Suriname, Nijmegen, Katholieke Universiteit.*

⁸*G. Leckie en R. Pelsler, (1997), Als kleine kinderen groot worden, p 5. Paramaribo.*

⁹*The law with provisional regulations for primary education was published in the Government Gazette (G.B.) of 1877 nr. 10.*

¹⁰*J.H. Adhin: Honderd jaar Suriname (Paramaribo 1973, gedenkboek i.v.m. een eeuw immigratie).*

¹¹*Ministerie van Onderwijs en Volksontwikkeling: Concept Nationaal Educatief Plan, Paramaribo (2002).*

¹²*For a full discussion of Suriname's educational system see the quoted report by Chapman & Levens (1997).*

¹³*In December 1996 the Suriname Mission Aviation Fellowship (SZV) published a report of its findings on the situation in the villages on the Upper-Suriname River. It was estimated at that time that only 35% of the children in this region were able to attend primary school. The educational situation was considered 'miserable'. Since then schools have been rebuilt and attendance has improved, but based on our own recent observations the situation still is far from normal.*

¹⁴*Ringeling, C, (1999), Repeating and underachievement in Suriname elementary schools: a literature overview and empirical quantitative study and policy recommendations, Universiteit Anton de Kom, Suriname.*

2. Overview of Child Labour in Suriname

Child labour is certainly not a new phenomenon in Suriname. During the days of slavery many children worked alongside their parents on the plantations. Education was off limits to these kids, while separation between mothers and children clearly occurred, since in 1782 a special law was made to forbid such practice.¹ The children of slaves that had despised the colonial system and regrouped into proud tribal Maroon groups also had to work alongside their parents in order to ensure survival. The children of the Indigenous population who remained free probably had to do the same.

After Emancipation in 1863, child labour was one of the reasons that children stayed away from school. Gobardhan concludes that because many freed slaves struggled to make a living “the (children’s) labour was very much needed and it was common in those times that children would work, although there were also attempts to make laws against it.” When the contract labourers began to pour in from (then British) India, it was regulated that boys from the age of 10 years had to work. Between ages 10 and 16 these boys would get the same pay as women i.e. the minimum wage of 40 cents a day. The Annual Colonial Report of 1916 mentioned that many Javanese and East Indian children were absent from school. This was to a large extent due to agricultural activities, from which it can be inferred that these children were working (Gobardhan 2001:132, 133).

For many years in Suriname’s Colonial past child labour was the rule rather than the exception. This changed with the introduction of mass education by the Moravian and Catholic Missions, followed by the Public Schools and much later by other denominational schools. The opening up of society itself through a more vibrant Civil Society was also at the heart of this change.² It was a gradual change, however, and it is difficult to point at a date when child labour became the exception rather than the rule.

During the Second World War, Suriname had done relatively well and had smelled autonomy, since the Netherlands were surviving in war and had little means to monitor its colony properly. In 1946, the first political party was established and several others followed soon afterwards. In 1948 important steps were taken to decrease the power of the Governor and to open up the political system for party politics and mass democracy; the first general elections were held in 1949.³ With respect to education, the year 1948 was also a turning point, because the education system was reorganized to allow more children to participate. This was followed in 1960 with a special law on elementary education, which made it free to all citizens (Gobardhan 2001: 452, 486). Given these developments, it is safe to say that between 1948 and 1960 most children were beginning to attend school and the appreciation of children in society became more manifest.

The growing post-war economy added to an environment that was not in favor of child labour. It was only in the early 1980s that the economy began to contract and inequalities began to show more prominently. The economy became fairly stagnant since 1983, while high inflation eroded most salaries, savings and pensions.⁴ Thus the economic environment had changed for worse and child labour seemed to be on the rise again.

The Ministry of Labour and Environment (1999) found that 3.2% of all children had been working at some point, while 2% were still working. Activities were mainly in the informal sector, while children were not working in the formal sector. A recent report by the Ministry of Social Affairs (2001) indicated that there are hardly any street children in Suriname. The little group consists mainly of boys, who ended up on the streets for several reasons. They ran away from home, were not allowed to stay at home, or simply had no home anymore after a landlord kicked their family out. They worked on the streets, begged or sold fruit or newspapers.

2.1 Definition of the problem

There are a variety of definitions being used to describe child labour.

The Interagency Committee on Child Labour (1985), which was installed by the Ministry of Labour defined child labour as:

“all activities (werkzaamheden) that are performed by children under age 15 in whatever form and under whatever name, for which they may or may not receive pay, and which is performed during school hours outside the family with the goal to support oneself.”

Van den Berghe (1990) used the following description of the phenomenon and came up with the statement:

“Child labour consists of all activities that are done outside the household (as spatial entity), which may or may not involve a monetary compensation, and which are performed by persons who have not yet reached the age of 17 years.”

The earlier mentioned survey of the Ministry of Labour in Suriname (1998) used a different definition⁵:

“Child labour entails all activities (work or pursuits) done by a child not older than 14 years, where a monetary reward may or may not be given to provide in its own support or that of its family, and where the development of its abilities is restricted and thus diminishes the spiritual and physical (health) development of the child.”

These definitions illustrate the difficulty in defining the concept of child labour. There is no consensus within Suriname about the workplace of the child - whether activities within the household should be included or excluded. There is also a difference regarding the age limit, which varies from 14 to 17 years. The third difference has to do with the impact of labour on the child's development i.e. some definitions do not mention it, while it is stressed in another.

In Suriname more consensus is needed about the definition of child labour in order to develop insights about who are child labourers and what are the age limits. The definition matters because it sets the direction for policy and programmes to curb or eradicate child labour.

In our research we worked on the following description of child labour:

Child labour is work that becomes a necessity for the child, that deprives a child of educational and social development, harms the child's safety and health and/or is likely to offend a child's morality and dignity.

The ILO stresses the impact of labour on the chances in the life of a child and the quality of that child's life. This indeed is a crucial element and indicates that despite the form, a child who has to work may be harmed by that fact alone.

ILO Convention No. 138 and its accompanying Recommendation No. 146, provides for a minimum age of 15 years or fourteen years initially in developing countries. The minimum age should not be less than the age for compulsory schooling. In addition, work likely to jeopardize the health, safety and morals of children is prohibited until age 18. The convention allows basic lightwork down to age 12 or 13 and provides some exceptions. The survey by the Ministry of Labour in Suriname also employed an age limit of 15 years. In this survey, this age limit was used as a guideline as well, although young people up to 17 years were interviewed in order to get a broader picture and determine their exposure to hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour covered in the ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention.

2.2 Working children and child labourers

There is an important difference between allowable work done by children (*kinderwerk*), what we are referring to as "child work," and child labour (*kinderarbeid*). Some kinds of work at an appropriate age is generally accepted and has a positive impact on the development of the child. This kind of work takes place within normal family settings, contributes to the learning experience and improves social integration. It is often associated with a rewards system for the child. Such work consists of daily chores, simple (household) jobs and the passing on of family values and crafts.

In contrast to child work, there is child labour, which often is associated with exploitation, and has a detrimental effect on the child's development, often limiting the child's educational opportunities. Young age, long working hours, little compensation and hazardous working conditions are examples that point towards child labour. It is with this type of harmful work that the ILO is preoccupied.

The difference between these two phenomena cannot be underlined enough and has led to much confusion about the real child labour issues. We have encountered this also in our research and must conclude that for many people the differences are unclear. All work is often seen as child labour and many key persons have sent the team on a track that turned out not to involve child labour. The same problem is eminent in most of the literature on child labour in Suriname. It is therefore good to make a sustained effort to clarify this difference for the Surinamese readers in this report and moreover to give some guidance on where to draw the line between these two phenomena for future research.

2.3 Literature review of child labour in Suriname

At least eight documents were found that deal in some way with child labour in Suriname. The authors used several perspectives to address child labour and came up with different solutions. Basically they saw the phenomenon as a troublesome issue and made use of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, public administration, psychology and law. Several authors started out with important research questions, but came up very short of answers.

Defares' thesis (1981) started with cultural anthropology, but in the end was very macro-economic in scope. Wijntuin's paper (1996) treats child labour from a public administration angle by looking at the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Ferrier's research proposal (1997) starts from a psychological framework and promotes a holistic, integrated approach of youth care by means of counselling and peer group activities. There are two legal documents: The Interagency Committee on child labour (1985) and Dennen's research report (1990). They point to the discrepancy between national law and international treaties with respect to the legal school age and the minimum age for youngsters to enter the job market. Currently these two ages do not match. Finally, Orié's thesis (2002), the survey by the Ministry of Labour (1998) and van den Berghe's research report (1990) use a sociological perspective and are mainly interested in the description of the phenomenon and its causes.

There are several reports on Surinamese children in general that sometimes also deal with working children, but these will be referred to in other sections. One report, however, by Nancy Tai Apin (2002) is of major interest, since it deals exclusively with child labour with respect to ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age Convention). Since this topic is discussed in the next chapter, however, we will report the main findings at the end of the next chapter.

Before we review each of the documents briefly it is of relevance to point out four findings:

- 1. None of them gives a clear indication of the presence of the worst forms of child labour in Suriname.*
- 2. The documents are too diverse to agree on a single definition of child labour.*
- 3. The age limits for child labour also differ and vary between age 4 as the lower limit to age 17 as the upper limit.*
- 4. There are more young boys than young girls working in Suriname.*

2.3.1 A pilot study (1981)

Shirley Defares studied cultural anthropology in the Netherlands and did her practical research in Suriname in March through June 1981. This resulted in her thesis about child labour in Suriname. Her interest in child labour was raised when the United Nations declared 1979 the 'Year of the Child'. Her main research question was to develop insights on the nature, extent and types of child labour in Suriname, plus the factors that caused it. This was too ambitious and in the end she mainly did a review of general literature on the topic. Her practical work consisted of interviews with 20 working children in downtown Paramaribo, from ages 8 to 16 years; she had more extended interviews with just 5 of these. According to her, the children did not get a fair chance to finish school, which was due to their economic environment (poverty, low income, unemployment) and cultural environment (home and

school situation). Her solution: eliminate the causes of poverty and inequality in society, which is easier said than done.

Defares was not able to arrive at any good estimates of working children in Paramaribo at that time. Nevertheless she mentioned an activity by the Police and the Department of Child Protection of the Ministry of Justice. In 1977 the police held a raid in the vicinity of the Central Market during school hours and rounded up all the children of school age that were there. The raid was meant to establish the number of children that did not attend school and the number of working children, “During this raid slightly more than 100 children were rounded up and questioned” (1981:59). We will probably never know why all those children were there (although this was near the bus terminals) and how many children were actually working, because Defares tells us that even the Head of the Department of Child Protection did not see the report. In 1979 another raid was done, but again no report was filed. Defares was able to interview only a handful, which seems to indicate that the actual number of working children was much lower than the number of children caught in the raids suggest.

2.3.2 An Interagency view on child labour (1985)

In 1985, the Minister of Labour installed an Interagency Committee on child labour (*Interdepartementale Commissie Kinderarbeid*, ICK) to do a short inventory of two months and to write a report about the phenomenon of child labour. The ICK focused on legal and policy concepts about child labour. The ICK stated that Suriname’s Labour Law, which dated back to 1963, was in conflict with the ILO Convention No. 138. The law put the minimum age to perform any form of labour at 15 years. According to the ILO Convention, the age limit had to be connected with the legally established school age; it was not to be less than the age for compulsory schooling. In Suriname the compulsory school age still is 12 years. In 1983 the Labour Law was modified and the minimum labour age was put at 14 years, although for specific branches -such as fisheries- the minimum age was set at 15 years. The ICK recommended that the school age should be increased to 15 years.

The ICK also identified a number of organizations and individuals that were involved directly or indirectly with the phenomenon of child labour. Both the ICK (1985:4) and Ferrier (1997:1) assumed a causal relationship between problems associated with child labour and the socioeconomic problems in Suriname.

2.3.3 A legal perspective on child labour (1990)

Law student Kenneth Dennen (1990) of the University of Suriname wrote his thesis on the legal aspects of child labour. He also interviewed 60 working children in four low-income neighbourhoods. Dennen’s main research question was “what caused the presence of child labour in Paramaribo”.

Using the 1983 report of the Director General of the ILO, the thesis differentiates between five forms of child labour i.e.:

1. Labour within the household (e.g. cooking, washing, looking after siblings), which is not seen by the law as child labour.
2. Unpaid non-household labour (e.g. teaching a child hunting by a parent) as part of the socialization process.

3. Labour based on bondage (e.g. children that are 'bought' by intermediaries and where the child has to repay a debt to such an intermediary).
4. Paid labour.
5. Marginal labour, mostly activities that are of a short or irregular nature. This is often the case in the informal sector.

Dennen dwells on the age limits and discusses several ILO treaties, while pointing out the provisions in national laws as well. One of the recommendations in the thesis is to increase the compulsory school age from 12 to 15 years (1990:61), which was in conformity with the earlier recommendation by the Interagency Committee on child labour.

In mid-1989, Dennen interviewed 38 boys and 22 girls between the ages of 7 and 15 years. There were more boys than girls, because the girls had to stay home often to look after younger siblings (1990: 40, 41). The children who were interviewed were mainly active in the sale of newspapers and petty trade (*kramerijen*), while most were either Creoles (48%) or Maroons (32%). The neighbourhoods that were surveyed were Latour, Balona, Ephraimzegen, and Flora. The reason why he chose these neighborhoods is of interest (1990:42):

“In these areas the children have much freedom, because for most of the day they are without parental supervision; the father is often absent in the family, while the mother is working.”

2.3.4 Causes of child labour (1990)

Another thesis by L. van den Berghe, a Dutch student from the University of Amsterdam (1990) focused on the causes of child labour in Paramaribo. The definition he used has also been listed in paragraph 2.1.

In order to get at the causes of child labour he focused primarily on marginal activities outside the household for which a child would get paid. His data came from 81 interviews with working children (75 boys and 6 girls) from ages 8 to 16 years. He also conducted interviews with 131 pupils of the 5th and 6th grade of the primary school. Furthermore he asked pupils in the 3rd grade of the primary school to write an essay and asked the teacher to provide information on each pupil (gender, age, language, with whom the pupil lived).

In general he identified poverty as the most important factor in explaining the occurrence of child labour. Other factors at the macro level were:

- limited supply of labour at the job market, which triggered children to offer their labour;
- friction unemployment, which caused children to work in order to supplement the family income.

At the micro level, the factors identified were:

- poverty in the household;
- composition of the household, where matrifocal households had a greater chance to produce child labour;
- urbanization, where children have to work during the period of transition when parents are seeking employment;
- attitude of parents towards education;

- cultural factors e.g. in some cultures children have to work as part of their upbringing. Based on his research findings he furthermore drew the following conclusions⁶:

There is a relative bigger chance for child labour to be present when a child does not live with the parent(s). The size of the family also affects the occurrence of child labour. The correlation is particularly strong for families consisting of 9 or more people and especially among Bush Negroes and Creoles. A fourth contributing factor towards child labour is poverty.

A fifth factor has to do with the education level of the father of the child. The more education the father has the less chance for a child to be involved in child labour. Despite the fact that many women are working, there is only a weak correlation between the mothers' education and child labour. According to van den Berghe, this can be explained by the fact that most fathers are the main breadwinners even when the mother is also working. Children from a matrifocal household are more often involved with child labour than children from a household where both parents are present. In such households the children have to do more household work in order to allow the mother to earn a wage elsewhere.

In van den Berghe's research it is clear that gender and ethnicity are also important factors with respect to child labour. Most of the working children were males and two thirds of the working children he interviewed were Bush Negroes (Maroons).

Van den Berghe did important work, but his results cannot be generalized, because of his sampling method. He chose only children who worked outside their home, which left out many children who were working within a family setting. Another bias came with the restriction of paid work. It is known that child labour may also involve unpaid work.

2.3.5 A methodical paper (1996)

Patricia Wijntuin did research as a student from a Dutch University into the situation of street children in the period December 1995 through April 1996. She had no real name for her final report, but called it "A methodical paper". Her main research question was "What is the role of the Surinamese Government and Non-Governmental Organizations in solving the problem of street children and have they been successful in doing so". She had intended to do 50 interviews with street children, but after discussions with field workers she concluded that there were no street children as such at that time in Suriname.⁷ She therefore changed her research question into a description of three categories of children i.e.

1. Children who basically live on and from the streets (but do not sleep there).

She found ten children in the busiest streets of Paramaribo, ranging from 12 to 17 years

2. Children who do not attend school anymore and wander around the streets.

This part of the research she did in district Wanica and found 20 youngsters with ages 10 to 15 years in five poor neighbourhoods, mainly Maroon children.

3. Children who work at the Central Market

Here she reported that children between 10 and 15 years were economically active from 6 o'clock in the morning to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and mainly sold plastic bags.

Wijntuin remarked that her research may not have been completely reliable, because the children did not always speak the truth. Probably they were ashamed of their circumstances or thought that the researcher was working with the police or a government agency (1996:4). In the second part of her report Wijntuin mentions institutions and key persons that were actively taking care of street children. This information was used by us when we made our list of institutions and key persons.

2.3.6 A research proposal on street children (1997)

Lilian Ferrier is a psychologist and director of the Foundation for Human Development (*Bureau Kinderontwikkeling*). In 1997 she wrote “a research proposal to collect data on the nature and number of street children as well as initiating policy proposals to counsel this target group”. According to her, the economic crisis and the war in the interior could be seen as major causes of the phenomenon of street children. She also pointed out that the Emmaus children’s home was established to take care of former street children. She estimated that there were about 60 children between ages 10 and 18 that lived or had lived on the streets. These children could be found on the streets, in the Youth Correctional Centre (part of the prisoners complex at Santo Boma), in police cells, in Koela (a Youth Care Centre for difficult boys), the Emmaus Home, and the Foundation for the child (a home for sexually-abused children). The research had the intention to describe the experience of children and to come to an unambiguous definition of street children. This research proposal most probably was not implemented since we did not find the report on the matter.

2.3.7 A general survey on child labour (1999)

In June and July 1998 a major survey on child labour was commissioned by the Labor Market Department of the Ministry of Labour. The objective was “to develop insights into the size and nature of the socioeconomic problems of children who perform labour that can be defined as child labour”. The definition that was used has already been quoted in paragraph 2.1.

The Ministry took the age of 8 years as its lower age limit (1999:50). The survey was done in all of Suriname with the exception of the district Sipaliwini and the rural areas in Para, Saramacca, Marowijne and Brokopoondo. A sample of 2500 households was taken, but in the end 1660 interviews were done (1999:39), of which 50.4% confirmed the target population i.e. there were children present between age 4 to 15 (here the age limit of 8 years seemed to have been abandoned). The survey used the household as its initial interview unit, but added a child module for a secondary interview.

Of the children who were interviewed 3.6% of the boys answered to have worked at some point while 2.9% of the girls answered similarly. When the same question was asked about having current jobs 2.1% of the boys and 1.8% of the girls replied positively (1999:47). The report concluded that 2% of the children between ages 4 and 14 were economically active in Suriname.

Most of the jobs that were done by the children involved assisting at the family agricultural plot, helping carrying vegetables and bags, and looking after younger siblings. The report

also mentioned that in the districts Saramacca, Marowijne and Para relatively more children were working to help relieve the economic pressure on the family.

The researchers saw the need to contribute to the family income (1999:52) as the main reason why children worked. At that point, households with a net income of Sf 50.000 (about US\$ 90) or less were most at risk of having working children. More children were working from larger families (1999:63), and in single parent families (1999:25). We will report more relevant findings in chapter 5.

2.3.8 A Bachelor thesis on child labour (2002)

Asha Orié graduated in 2002 at the Academy of Arts and Culture in Suriname on a thesis titled “child labour, a survey into the care taking and counselling of children”. Her main research question dealt with the possible models that exist to care and counsel the victims of child labour. She notes that all research reports on child labour used the upper age limit of 15 years, while she used a lower age limit of 7 years. She also did a survey in two poor neighbourhoods in Paramaribo (notably Flora and Latour) to find working children. In each neighbourhood she interviewed 25 children. She reports the data in a descriptive manner and in fact her whole thesis is of a descriptive nature. Orié also compares child labour with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by Suriname in 1993, and concludes that the reality of children is not in agreement with their rights, as set out in the Convention. (2002: 16-24).

When the research team spoke with her about the children she had interviewed it turned out that she had not focused exclusively on child labourers, but on all children that reported to be somehow economically active.⁸ Thus she had a mix of what we will refer to as ‘working children’ and not only ‘child labourers’ which consists of a smaller group of these working children.

Notes

¹J.Th. de Smidt: *West Indisch Plakaatboek: plakaten, ordonnantien en andere wetten, uitgevaardigd in Suriname 1667-1816* (Amsterdam, S. Emmering, 1973).

²See chapter 7 and 8 on *Civil Society and the Body Politics in M. Schalkwijk: Colonial State Formation in Caribbean Plantation Societies, Structural analysis and changing elite networks in Suriname, 1650-1920* (Doctoral Thesis, Cornell University, 1994).

³*Encyclopie van Suriname* (1977): *Politieke ontwikkeling*.

⁴P. van Dijck (ed): *Suriname the Economy, prospects for sustainable development* (Ian Randle Publishers, Kingston, 2001), page 34-38.

⁵This survey was done among 2500 households in Suriname with exception to the district Sipaliwini and the rural areas in Para, Saramacca, Marowijne and Brokopondo. In the end 1660 households were reached.

⁶Van den Berghe used Kramer's V to test for association.

⁷*It is known from other research that children on the street are taken into custody and placed in a institution. See C. Kool en G. Paulissen, (1998) ,Straatkinderen in Suriname. Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit.*

⁸*NIKOS invited Mrs. Orië to join the research team, which she did, but to a limited extent due to her full-time job.*

2. Legal Aspects of Child Labour

3.1 Convention on the Rights of the Child

In the fight against the worst forms of child labour, international Conventions play an important role. In 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Many countries have ratified this Convention and Suriname did so in 1993. Article 32 of the Convention deals with child labour:

“States Parties recognize the right 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, moral or social development.”

Following ratification, the Surinamese Government appointed a “National Commission on the Rights of the Child” (NCRK) in January 1995. The NCRK has the job to report regularly about the state of the implementation of the Convention. Most of its activities and reports are financed by the local UNICEF office. In 1997 the NCRK issued its first report “Putting Surinamese children first” which identified national implementation strategies for different aspects of the Convention.

3.2 Conventions of the ILO

The ILO is a main force behind the attempts to eradicate child labour. In 1999, the ILO adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182. By August 2003, 143 countries had ratified the Convention. Suriname has not yet ratified this Convention, although the Government has stated that there are no obstacles to do so.¹ Article 3 of the Convention describes the following worst forms of child labour:

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

The ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age, which was adopted in 1973, is the most comprehensive Convention on child labour. As of August 2003, this Convention has been ratified by 130 countries, but not yet by Suriname (the request has been submitted to the National Assembly). It deals with the issue of the minimum age at which labour should be performed. The most relevant articles are 2, 3, 4 and 7.

Article 2:

(1) Each Member ... shall specify ... a minimum age for admission to employment or work within its territory no one under that age shall be admitted to employment or work in any occupation.

(3) The minimum age specified ... shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years.

Article 2 points out that there has to be an age limit for admission to work for a child. This can be, for example, sixteen years. No one under sixteen is then allowed to work in any occupation. This age must not be less than the age of completion of compulsory education. In Suriname there is a discrepancy in the law (see 3.4), so the age limit to work is two years more than the age of compulsory education, which is 12 years. There is thus a gap - children over 12 years are not obliged to attend school, but are also not allowed to work.

Article 3

(1) The minimum age for admission to any type of employment or work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons shall not be less than 18 years.

This article makes clear that children under the age of 18 years are not allowed to do dangerous and hazardous work.

Article 4:

(1) In so far as necessary, the competent authority ... may exclude ... limited categories of employment or work....

Thus a government is allowed to exclude a few categories from the general rules that are laid down for children to be employed.

Article 7:

(1) National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on light work which is

- (a) not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and
- (b) not such as to prejudice their attendance at school ...

(4) a Member ... (whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed)... may ... substitute the ages 12 and 14 for the ages 13 and 15 in paragraph 1 ...

Thus certain type of work may be performed by children between 13 and 15 years old, although this is conditioned. The ages may even be reduced downward to 12 and 14 years if need be.

In the ILO Recommendation No. 146, which accompanies ILO Convention No. 138, the ILO added the advice that it would be better to use 16 years as the minimum age for people to start working.

Thus the ILO position can be summarized as follows:

Children below 15 years should not work, and if possible they should rather start at a minimum age of 16 years. For light work, a minimum age of 13 years can be allowed, but for hazardous work, the minimum age should be 18 years. If need be, in developing countries the ages for light work can be adjusted downward to 12 years and for normal work to 14 years.

3.3 National law

The legal notion of child labour in Suriname starts with the Labour Law from 1963, which was amended in 1980 and 1983. This law makes a distinction between a child and a young person.

Labour Law (1963): Children are persons who have not yet reached the age of 14 years. Young people are persons who are 14 years or older, but have not yet reached the age of 18 years.

The Sea Fishery Decree of 1980 stated that with respect to labour on board fishing vessels, children are persons who have not yet reached the age of 15 years. Labour on board such vessels is not permitted by persons under 15 years. This modification was added to the Labour Law which meant that the child was now defined in general to be a maximum of 14 years but for the Fishing sector a maximum of 15 years.

The Labour Law has three articles that deal in particular with child labour i.e. Article 17, 18 and 19 and another three articles (20, 20a and 21) that have specific regulations for young people.

Article 17

- (1) It is forbidden for children to work, irrespective whether this involves a salary or compensation.
- (2) It is also forbidden for children to be employed in activities outside an enterprise, except
 - a. in the family where the child is being raised, in schools, workshops, day care centres, correctional facilities and similar facilities, provided that such activities are of an educational nature and not primarily meant to earn money;
 - b. in agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry geared towards the family where the child is raised, as long as the activities do not take place in factories or workshops or with machines powered by more than 2 horsepower.

The Labour Law clearly underlines that normally no child should be allowed to work for money. Only a limited number of cases are mentioned when a child may be allowed to perform activities, but these exclude the use of heavy machinery and equipment.

Article 18

Children who have passed the Compulsory Education Age may engage in certain activities as should be described in a special government decision, provided that these activities:

- a. are meant to be performed by children or are necessary for learning a trade;
- b. are not physically or mentally too demanding;
- c. are not of a hazardous nature.

Here the law permits children over 12 years to engage in activities that can be described as light work. Outside this limited scope work is seen as child labour and thus forbidden.

Article 19

In very special cases, that have to be in the interest of the child involved, and at the request of the head of the family in which the child is being raised, the Head of the Department of Labour Inspection can grant an exception to article 17. To this exception special conditions could be added.

Article 20

- (1) It is forbidden to employ young people, irrespective whether this involves a salary or compensation, in night shifts or in labour that is deemed hazardous for reasons of life, health, or morality.
- (2) A special government decision will describe which labour will be deemed hazardous.
- (3) With respect to the term 'night' this will be deemed to be the period between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Article 20a states that no employee can be forced or threatened to work, except in cases of war or national emergencies.

Article 21 mentions that in certain cases, under certain circumstances, in a limited number of enterprises -as the government will describe- exceptions can be made to allow young people to do night shifts. Enterprises need to file special requests for such cases.

The situation with respect to child labour in Suriname can be summarized as follows:

In Suriname persons younger than 18 years should not do hazardous work or work night shifts. Children below 15 years should not work on Fishery boats. Children below 14 years should not work at all, except in a family agricultural setting, in special institutions, and for educational purposes (vocational training).

Suriname differs from the ILO Convention No. 138 mainly with respect to the age limit of working children. Children are allowed to work at a younger age in Suriname in some situations than the Convention of the ILO suggests.

3.4 Discrepancies between national and international law

Recently Nancy Tai Apin was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs to report on "child labour, an investigation into probable obstacles to the ratification of ILO Convention No. 138 in the framework of Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of Child" (March 2002).² According to this report the biggest obstacle has to do with the minimum age for

labour in Suriname (14 years), which does not correspond with that of the ILO (15 years). In an interview she had with the Minister of Labour he indicated, however, that Suriname will not change its law at this point, since it does not obstruct ratification of ILO Convention No. 138. The Minister clearly pointed towards Article 7.4 of the Convention, which allows developing states to use the age limit of 14 years. According to Tai Apin, this is an exceptional clause for which Suriname would need to apply, and she recommends that the intention should be to apply the minimum age limit of 15 years or even 16 years.

Tai Apin also points toward the discrepancy with the Compulsory Education Age, which she derives to be 12 years, and proposes to change this at least to 14 years to be in conformity with the Labour Law and preferably to 15 years to conform to the ILO norm.

Furthermore Tai Apin proposes to forbid any overtime work for children, increase the number of free days from 18 days to 4 weeks per year, and improve regulations (notably minimum compensations) with respect to illness and accidents. She also recommends to give more priority to controls over child labour by Labour Inspectors, who should be trained in the stipulations of the Convention.

In February 2002, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing came out with a well-organized “Action Plan with respect to children”. With respect to child labour, the Action Plan recommends that research be done on how to make the Labour Law more congruent with international laws. Although this is a very limited solution to child labor many of the other proposed actions will benefit children in difficult socioeconomic circumstances, who are more inclined to work, as well. The Action Plan puts goals and formulated activities under the following topics:

1. Making children a policy priority.
2. Optimize legal protection of children.
3. Improve health of children.
4. Promote Early Childhood Development.
5. Improve Education for children.
6. Eliminate all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation of children.
7. Increase prevention against HIV/Aids.
8. Improve participation of children at different levels.

The Action Plan used another document “Situation analysis of children in Suriname” (2001), also commissioned by the Ministry, as its basis. The section on child labour dwells on the Labour Law and comments that the sanctions on violations of this law by employers are very low (Sf 1000 not even 50 dollar cents). It also has a short discussion on Suriname’s position with respect to the ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182. Furthermore it mentioned the survey on child labour which was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour in 1998.

The section ends with the following statement:

“In the street one can often observe children begging, attending to cars, selling newspapers or fruit. In the interior many children find their way to the gold mines or become involved in prostitution and the drugs trade. Although there are no children working in the formal labour market, they are on the increase in the informal sectors. Data on this is lacking however.” (page 53).

It is the lack of data that is hampering much of the debate and policy about child labour, while lack of data also leads to speculations about the presence and size of this phenomenon. It is to the results of our field work that we turn in the next chapters and come back to the policy implications in the last chapter.

Notes

¹ *Statement by the Surinamese delegation towards the ILO Caribbean Tripartite Meeting on the worst forms of child labour, which was held December 6 and 7 1999 in Kingston Jamaica (ILO 1999: 38).*

² *This investigation was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing, notably the Office for the “Rights of children”.*

4. Methodology

The objective of this research is to make an assessment of the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour in Suriname.

After analyzing data and information from other research (see Chapters 1 through 3) the research team first spoke with key persons, who were supposed to be knowledgeable about child labour. These interviews were meant to guide the research team towards different occupational sectors and geographic locations. The research team visited relevant locations and sectors throughout Suriname, and interviewed working children and some of their parents.

Suriname is divided into 10 administrative districts, including the capital Paramaribo. In addition, the districts are clustered into Greater Paramaribo (Paramaribo and Wanica), the coastal area (Nickerie, Coronie, Saramacca, Commewijne, Para) and the hinterland (Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, Marowijne). In the research proposal, the intention was to visit about 6 districts, but in the end nine of the districts were surveyed and only the smallest, Coronie with less than 3000 inhabitants, was left out since there were no indications of any worst forms of child labour there.

4.1 Strategy

The research strategy was focused on a Rapid Assessment approach i.e. to acquire within a short time span relevant information about the state of affairs with respect to the worst forms of child labour in order to be able to develop policy priorities.

This Rapid Assessment method is focused on:

- * An overview of situations where (the worst forms of) child labour is detected (locations, occupational categories)*
- * Description of the labour and working conditions from the perspective of the child*
- * Description of actors that are part of the 'solution' of the phenomenon of child labour.*

The accent in the research and in this report will be on a qualitative assessment. This was done for practical reasons. Relatively little is known about the daily world the working children are living in, while such children are often difficult to reach. It is also necessary to study the phenomenon of child labour within its context i.e. to give a detailed description of factual behaviour and background of child labourers. Since statistical sampling was not used, we cannot generalize the findings for the overall population. Instead the research focused on the discovery and description of locations and concentrations of working children. Thus in the end the report presents a more qualitative picture of the context, nature and conditions

within which children are working. Within these limits, however, we have reported also some more quantitative aspects of what was found.

In addition to the general strategy of the research the main research question can be stated as follows:

Main research question: What is the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour in different districts and sectors in Suriname?

In order to answer the main research question interviews with respondents have been conducted which focused on the following issues:

- * *The situation of child labour in Amerindian and Maroon communities with respect to mining, domestic work and prostitution.*
- * *Gender differences with respect to child labour.*
- * *The nature of child labour with respect to commercial sex, domestic work, drugs trade, agriculture, informal trade, gold mining and small industries.*
- * *The push and pull factors of child labour in the different occupational sectors.*
- * *Conditions and hazards under which children have to work.*
- * *Socioeconomic and cultural background of working children.*
- * *Historical and cultural contexts that are relevant in the sectors children are working in.*
- * *The impact and consequences of labour on the children.*
- * *Perceptions and experiences of children who are working.*
- * *Overview of policy measures and programs intended to deal with child labour.*

It should be pointed out that the researchers were mainly focusing on children below the age of 15 years. For heavier and more dangerous type of work, young people under 18 years were also brought into focus. When we use the term children this would normally mean boys and girls up to 14 years, while the term young people (young males or young females) will be used more specifically to describe the group from 15 to 17 years.

4.2 Research Methods

The research methods consisted mostly of structured interviews with key persons, children and parents. The interviews with key persons were meant to assist in finding occupational sectors and locations of working children. In addition, it was hoped that key persons would have knowledge about relevant reports and documentation. Other methods that were used were literature review, informal interviews, and non-participatory observation. In the research proposal the intention was stated to use focus group meetings with a number of people such as labour inspectors and educational inspectors. During preliminary interviews in preparation for the focus group meetings, it became evident that child labour was not a policy issue for these inspectors and that they had very limited knowledge about the phenomenon. These focus group meetings were therefore cancelled. In a number of instances, however, smaller focus group meetings were held when for instance the District Commissioner would round up his staff to speak with the researchers, or in schools when the headmaster would gather several teachers around him to discuss the issue, or in a village in a meeting with the captain and some of his assistants (elders).

4.3 Research Process

We had planned about 200 interviews in the research proposal i.e. 100 with key persons and 100 with working children. Later we added the parents. In the end we had a database with information processed for 320 interviews i.e. 169 children, 52 parents and 99 key persons. In reality we spoke with about 142 key persons (not counting those who sat in on small meetings), but most of the additional interviews were of a more unstructured and/or group nature and thus not recorded on questionnaires.

The fieldwork took 54 days, which was twice the amount we had anticipated. In addition there were also a number of telephone interviews with key persons who were difficult to reach, or whose opinion we needed before we could prepare a field visit to a certain district. The following table gives an overview of the children, parents and key persons that have been reached.

Table 4.1 Summary of interviews by district and respondents

Categories	Districts									Total
	Parbo	Wan	Com	Para	Mar	Bro	Sipa	Nick	Sara	
Working children	42	14	13	15	19	18	12	15	21	169
Parents & Guardians	8	7	3	8	5	2	3	8	8	52
Sub total	50	21	16	23	24	20	15	23	29	221
Key persons by district										
Principals & teachers	10	2	1	4	3	4	5	3	2	34
Village leaders	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Civil Servants	8	4	3	8	4	4	2	7	1	41
Education authorities	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	6
Health workers	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	6
Police officials	5	1	1	0	2	2	0	4	1	16
NGO's	16	0	0	0	1	0	4	2	0	23
Religious leaders	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	4
Youth workers	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Private workers	3	1	0	0	1	1	3	0	0	9
Sub total	47	8	7	12	14	14	17	18	5	142
Total	97	29	23	35	38	34	32	41	34	363

Notes:

1. A questionnaire was not filled out for all persons whom the researchers spoke to. For example, in Para a focus group meeting was held with local government officials. The District Commissioner, the District Secretary and the Superintendents of five resorts were present at that meeting.
2. Discussions were held with teachers, captains, basja's and village people in the interior. The information gathered has been recorded, but not by means of separate questionnaires.
3. Thus, the amount of respondents is not equal to the number of questionnaires.
4. Parbo = Paramaribo, Wan = Wanica, Com = Commewijne, Para = Para, Mar = Marowijne, Bro = Brokopondo, Sipa = Sipaliwini, Nick = Nickerie, Sara = Saramacca.

4.4 Reliability

In order to check the reliability we asked the interviewers to make their own assessment at the end of each interview with respect to the reliability of the information and the expertise (reliability) of the informant. We did not ask this information for the children, because we assumed that we had to develop a minimal trust first before interviewing a child and that an interview would be terminated -or at least not processed- when the interviewer got the impression that the child was unreliable. The same was true for the key persons actually, since a very doubtful interview would not be used or processed. Thus it was only with the parents that we encountered some situations where the interviewer would have doubts about the reliability of the information and/or the person.

The reliability level was not always as high as we would prefer, but most often reasonable enough (qualification 'positive') to be used (see Table 4.2). Since we had relatively few parents we processed the doubtful interviews also, because normally parts of the interviews could still be used. Finally it should be pointed out that virtually all people we approached during this survey were willing to cooperate, even if sometimes it took some pressure to get their cooperation. Surprisingly, most children had no problems to cooperate, while several parents were uncooperative at least in the beginning of an interview. This was because they were not sure why someone would come and ask them questions about their child. Most key persons were also quite willing to assist.

Table 4.2 Expertise of persons and reliability of information

	Expertise of the person			Reliability of the information		
	High	Positive	Doubtful	High	Positive	Doubtful
Parents	44%	46%	10%	56%	35%	9%
Key persons	62%	38%	0%	67%	33%	0%

During the meetings with many key persons it turned out that they could not distinguish between working children and worst forms of child labour. Thus when we were directed towards child labourers it often turned out that these were children that often went to school and did some light work at the side. Thus these were not the real child labourers we were looking for. We also found out that it seemed that there were no major concentrations of children who were being exploited in any location.

The consequence of a lack of major concentrations of child labourers in certain sectors or locations was that the research team had problems tracking such children. It was the old question of finding a needle in a pile of hay and the rapid assessment did not work very good in such a situation. With the child labourers spread out among all kinds of working children, we needed a finer comb to locate them. First we increased the number of interviews with key persons, hoping that others we had not approached would be able to give us better directions towards child labourers, but it was more of the same.

It was at this point that we had to adjust our research method. We realized that we would just have to locate concentrations of all kind of working children of which some would turn out to be child labourers. Thus we expanded the number of interviews with children. To do this we turned towards the schools, especially those in poor neighborhoods (at least in Paramaribo and Wanica). In schools you find concentrations of children, although you would not expect children involved in the worst forms of child labour to be in school. Still we had good reasons to ask the schools for assistance, since this would help us:

1. To identify the children at school (notably grade 4, 5 and 6) who were working and interviewing them, thereby hoping to learn from them more about the work scene and about other working children.
2. To identify children that were registered at school, but very infrequently showed up, thereby assuming and verifying if these were potential child labourers.
3. To identify children that had been registered but dropped out, thereby also assuming that these could be potential child labourers.
4. We assumed that teachers would know their pupils and that they and other children could assist us in tracing the exact locations of child labourers (addresses).

Thus from this point on we employed both key persons and schools to find child labourers. Because it was hard to find worst forms of child labour we also extended our search beyond the districts identified in the project proposal and added more interviews with children. This extended our field work with about two months, although part of this extension also had to do with bad weather and inaccessible roads in several districts. The field work was done during the months of April, May, June and July of 2002.

5. Main Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This and the next chapter mainly reports about the research findings of the interviews with working children. Before talking to the children, however, we spoke with key persons. Their views are integrated into these chapters as well. After we spoke with the children we tried to contact some of their parents, but only of those children that had no objections and were willing to give us the address of their parent(s). The tale of the parents is told in chapter seven.

In the next chapter we will report the main results by geographical area i.e. by district rather than by sector. This seemed the best way to process the information in a coherent matter. Most districts have their own ethnic and occupational mix and therefore this form of reporting also takes more into consideration than just a location. It also makes it easier for future researchers to duplicate the research or verify the results.

5.2 Sector

Although we assumed at the beginning of our research that there would be a number of sectors where child labour would be very prominent, this turned to be much less so. We found no major geographic clusters of child labour, nor occupational clusters, but rather a variety of jobs where children are employed. Most jobs are low-level jobs that require little education or skill, and even in sectors where more skills are required (e.g. auto mechanic, construction, rice mill, furniture production), the children mainly assist more skilled workers.

Table 5.1 Working children by Sector

Sector	Frequency	Percent
Production (agriculture, Mining, fishery, timber)	61	36.5
Trade (vending a variety of products in various places)	33	19.8
Service / domestic work	40	24.0
Other / several jobs	33	19.8
Total	167	100.0

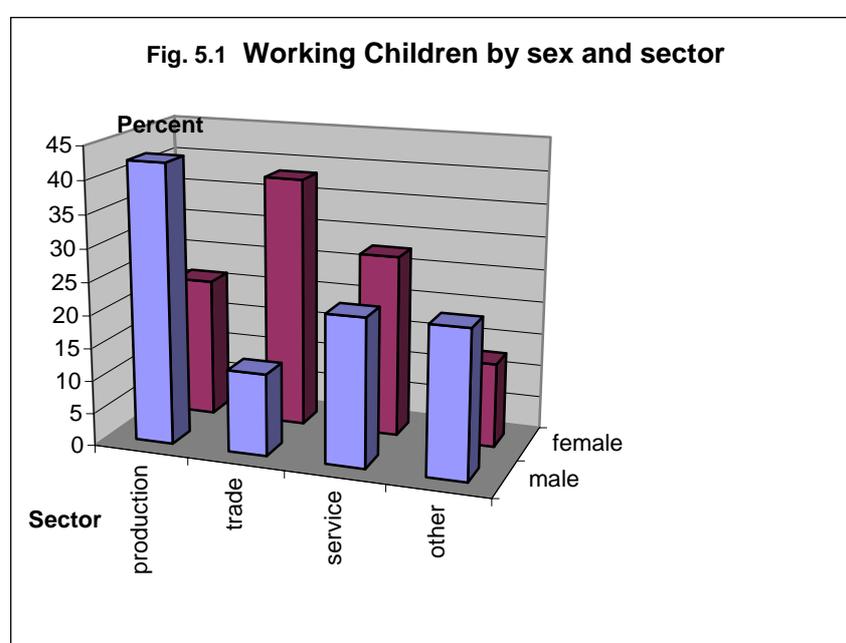
There is a clear correlation between sector and district, which means that in some districts children are found more active in certain sectors than in other districts (Table 5.2). Those

districts that were above the average distribution can be noticed. Thus it is clear that in Wanica, Brokopondo, Sipaliwini, Saramacca and Nickerie, children were working relatively more in production jobs.¹ Thus each district has its own blend of working children by sector.

Table 5.2 Working children by Sector and District ²

District	production	trade	service	other	Total
Paramaribo	17%	21%	26%	36%	100%
Wanica	50%		36%	14%	100%
Commewijne	31%	8%	31%	30%	100%
Marowijne	17%	28%	39%	16%	100%
Para	33%	60%	7%		100%
Brokopondo	61%	28%	11%		100%
Sipaliwini	50%		25%	25%	100%
Saramacca	52%	5%	33%	10%	100.0%
Nickerie	50%	21%		29%	100%
Total	36.5%	19.8%	24.0%	19.8%	100%

Although both girls and boys are found among working children, there is a clear gender difference, when we look at the different sectors (Figure 5.1). The distribution of boys is more biased towards the production sector, while the distribution of girls is biased towards trade.



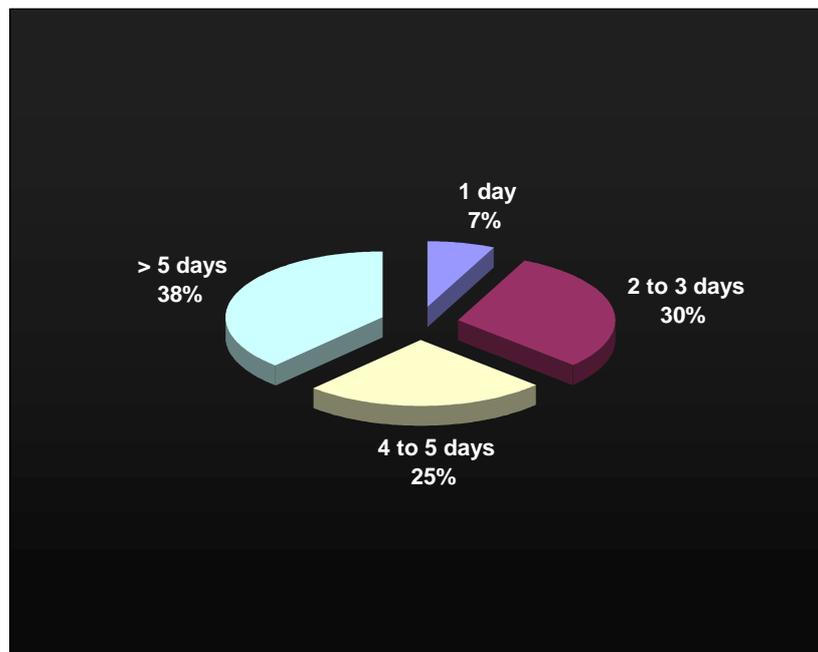
We will see later that the worst forms of child labour are found in the production sector and mostly in the districts Brokopondo, Marowijne and Nickerie; also mostly among boys.

Before we come to those conclusions, we first will analyze the data in general, and by looking into regional differences, gender differences and also ethnic differences.

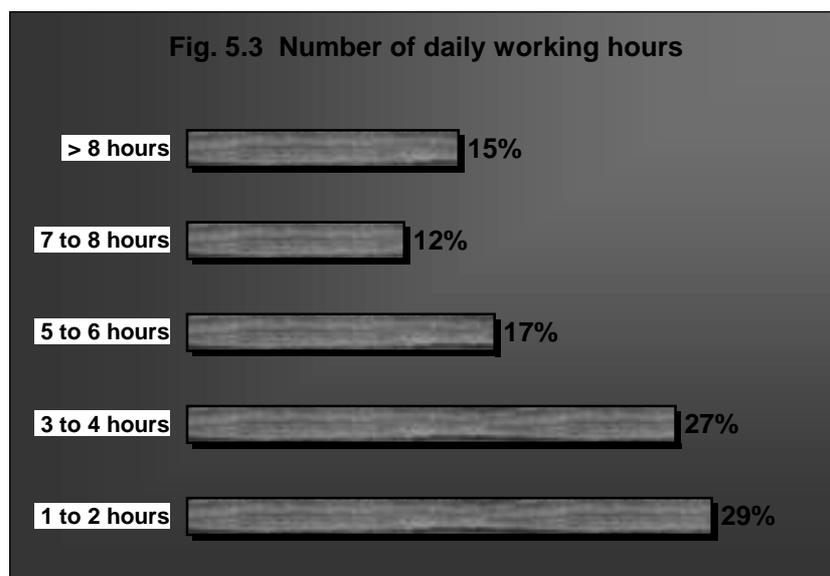
5.3 Working hours and days

It is not easy to establish the number of hours and days that a child works, since these vary e.g. a day may consist of 1 hour of work or 8 hours. Thus the number of days do not give a clear indication of the work load. We will come back to this in paragraph 8.1. For the time being, we just report the overall results in Figures 5.2 and 5.3. As can be seen 37% of the children work 1 to 3 days, while the remaining 63% work 4 days or more. If we look for child labour those children working 4 or more days seem to be the group where we need to take a closer look. In the survey of the Ministry of Labour it turned out that 14% of the children were working 4 or more days a week (1999:54).³ This again points out that the children interviewed during the Rapid Assessment survey were working longer than those in the general survey.

Figure 5.2 Numbers of days the children work



The number of working hours per day varied as well (Figure 5.3), but 44% of the children reported that they worked 5 or more hours a day, while 29% worked only 1 to 2 hours.



Actually this last group seems more to be doing light work rather than child labour (see discussion in 8.1). The survey of the Ministry of Labour reported that only 3.6% of the children worked 5 or more hours a day (1999:55), while 16% worked 1 to 2 hours.⁴ Again this illustrates that –as expected- the children who were picked up by the Rapid Assessment exercise were working longer hours.

5.4 Reasons for working, employer and earnings

The children were asked why they were working and a variety of reasons were given. We reduced the number of reasons to basically two categories i.e. self-centered reasons (to look after myself, buy clothes, save money for some specific goal, need some money, bored, like to work, etc.) and family-oriented reasons (help mother, father, parents, grandma, aunt, siblings, etc.). There were also children who cited reasons from both clusters, which we can add as a third (overlapping) category. As can be seen from Table 5.3 both main categories were about equally important, while the third category was smaller.

Table 5.3 Reasons for working

	Frequency	Percent
Own centered reasons	66	40.0%
- look after myself		- 15.7%
- to save money		- 5.4%
- other		- 18.9%
Own and family	27	16.4%
Family oriented reasons	72	43.6%
- help mother		- 18.1%
- help father		- 2.4%
- help parents		- 16.3%
- help other family		- 6.8%
Total	165	100%

The survey by the Ministry of Labour reported that the largest category of working children did so to assist their mother (43.8%) or father (9.4%), while only 11.3% of the children worked for themselves. Furthermore 3.2% worked to assist a non-family member, 1.2% were classified as ‘other’, while a large category (31.1%) were ‘unknown’ (1999:52). Despite this large category of probably missing cases the trend is clear. The trend with respect to parents, especially the distribution between assisting parents (i.e. mainly mother’s and less father’s) is also reflected in our survey. The main difference, however, is that in our survey a larger group of children was working for themselves rather than their family. This can be explained by the fact that many real child labourers had to fend for themselves rather than for their family, while many of those children that did some less intensive work often did so to assist the family income.

This difference can be further illustrated by looking at the ‘employer’ of the children. Those children that work longer hours and days tend to work much more for a real ‘employer’, while the children who work shorter hours tend to work more for parents (Table 5.4).

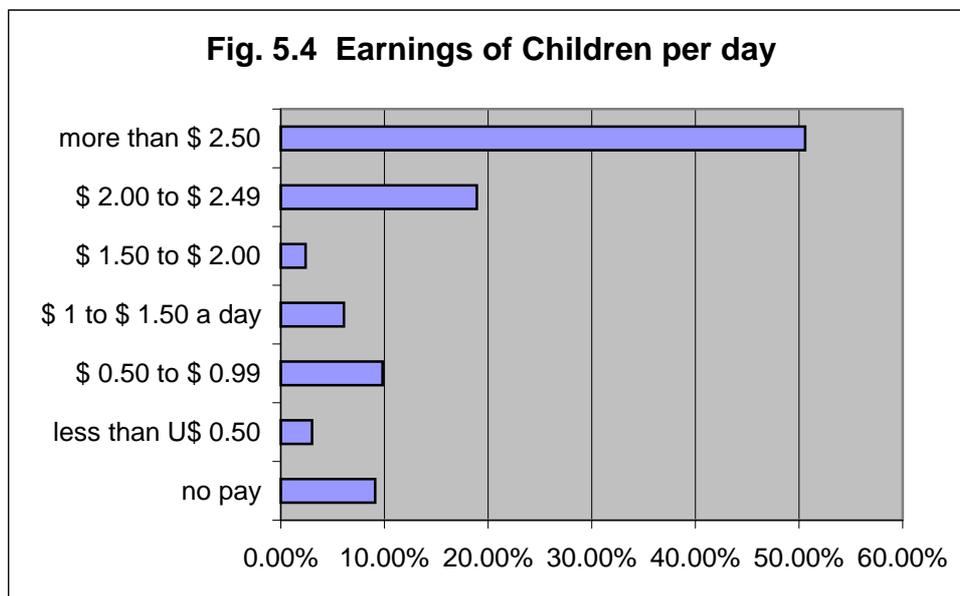
Table 5.4 Working hours and type of employer

	work load expressed by working hours per week⁵			All children
	Light work	Semi-light work	child labour	
Employer	28%	44%	63%	44%
Father	2%	5%	4%	4%
Mother	23%	18%	9%	17%
Parents	11%			4%
Uncle/aunt	11%	9%	6%	9%
Grandparent(s)	9%	8%	9%	8%
Neighbor	7%	3%		4%
Self-employed	7%	8%	9%	8%
Other family	2%	5%		2%
Total	100% (N = 56)	100% (N = 65)	100% (N = 46)	100% (N=167)

When we look at the earnings that were reported by the children during the interviews, it seems that there was a large group (51%) with reasonable earnings i.e more than US\$ 2.50 a day (Figure 5.4)⁶ This is reasonable within the current Surinamese context, as many adults would be happy to earn that amount. The group of children that earned less than one dollar a day made up 22% of those interviewed. This included the group of 9% which did not get any pay for their work. It should be pointed out, however, that since the working hours per day varied substantially per child the answer to the question “How much do you earn per day?” could mean that in fact some children earned more if one would calculate the earnings by the hour. On the other hand the earnings seemed quite high and it could be possible that some children reported their turnovers rather than their actual ‘salary’. An inspection of this possibility did not reveal such a bias, however.⁷

It turned out also that those who worked the longest hours –i.e. the group labeled child labour in Table 5.6- also earned most, since 74% of the children in this group earned more than U\$ 2.50 a day, while only 6% earned less than a dollar a day. Those who worked least hours also earned less (38% of this group earned less than one dollar and 34% more than \$ 2.50). We get a different angle on this, however, if we look at what happened to the income of these children. Of the working children 38% gave all their earnings to their family, while 44% gave part of their earnings, which leaves 18% who kept all of their income to themselves.⁸

Despite the fact that many children gave part or all of their income away still 62% of all the children reported that they were able to save regularly (27%) or sometimes (35%). The comprehension of saving often for many was that some money was kept to take care of oneself when such was needed. Another large group saved to buy clothes or specific items.



5.5 Working conditions

Since we tried to get to the worst forms of child labour we asked a number of questions with respect to the working environment and conditions. This included questions about supervision, tiredness, work pressure, monotonous work, lifting heavy items, hazardous materials, working with machines, and the perception of dangerous circumstances.

Many children (51%) work jobs where there is no supervision of an adult. Nevertheless this varies by sector (Table 5.5). In the primary sector, supervision is much higher (67%) than in all the other sectors.

Table 5.5 Supervision at work by sector ⁹

Sector	Is there an adult that supervises your work?		Total
	yes	no	
production (agr., mining, fishery, timber)	66.7%	33.3%	100.0% (N = 60)
trade (vending)	39.4%	60.6%	100.0% (N = 33)
service/domestic work	35.0%	65.0%	100.0% (N = 40)
other/several jobs	42.4%	57.6%	100.0% (N = 33)
Total	48.8%	51.2%	100.0% (N = 166)

When we look at the other factors that may determine potential worst forms of child labour we see the pattern as given in Table 5.6. There are seven variables listed. For most of these variables the question was asked with three answers e.g. “How often do you come home tired?” (answer could be: always, sometimes, never). In some instances the information was recoded into several categories e.g. we asked if the child worked with a machine at work and which machine. This was then recoded into potential dangerous machines (e.g. chain saw), not very dangerous machines (lawn mower, outboard), or no machines. The total of potential harmful cases is reported and indicates how important this category was overall e.g. only 9 children reportedly worked with a dangerous machine, which was only 5% compared to 16 other children that worked with non dangerous machines and 141 who were not working with machines at all.

Table 5.6 Assessment of potential harm at work by sector

	Production	Trade	Service	Other jobs	Total (potential harmful cases)	Light cases (some-times)	No potential harm registered
Always tired from work	48%	13%	13%	26%	100% (N = 23)	N = 85	N = 58
Always busy at work	49%	13%	23%	15%	100% (N = 47)	N = 86	N = 31
Always lift heavy weights at job	75%	0%	8%	17%	100% (N = 12)	N = 70	N = 84
Always bored at work	37%	21%	21%	21%	100% (N = 19)	N = 34	N = 113
works with (potential) hazardous material	65%	0%	18%	18%	100% (N = 17)	N = 71	N = 79
works with (potential) dangerous machine	56%	0%	11%	33%	100% (N = 9)	N = 16	N = 141
Finds job itself often dangerous	48%	8%	36%	8%	100% (N = 25)	N = 10	N = 129
Average percentages	54%	8%	18%	20%	100%		

Note: average percentages calculated by adding percentages of all categories and dividing by seven (no weights)

From the table it becomes clear that the production sector outscores all the other sectors in terms of potential harm at work. Thus it should be expected that the worst forms of child labour will occur mostly in this sector. On the other hand the indications point towards the trade sector as the least harmful, with the service and 'other' sector in between. The 'other' sector often contains children who may have several jobs e.g. one in the production area and another in the trade or service sector; thus it will partly pick up some harmful indications from the production sector.

5.6 Family background and education

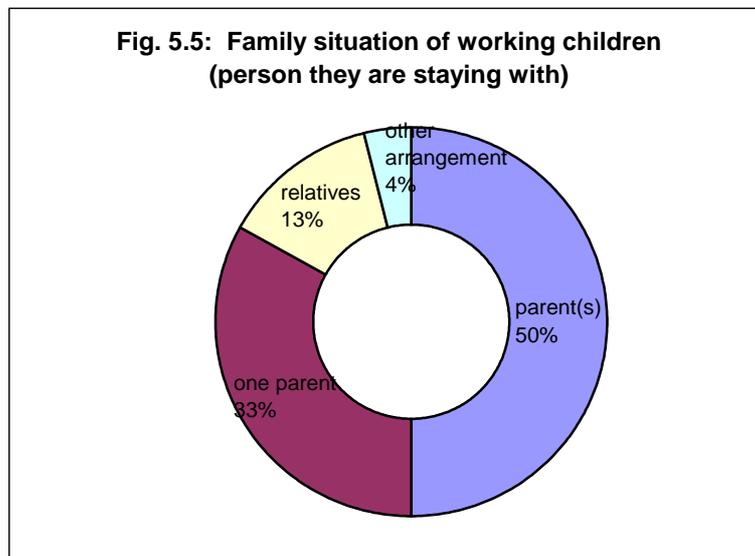
The social background of the children is often important, because it may determine which type of children are more apt to become child labourers. With respect to the family situation questions were asked about with whom the child was living, how many brothers and sisters were staying with him/her, and how many people were living in the same house. Furthermore how many siblings younger than 15 years were also working. The occupation of both parents was asked and the religious background of the family. Gender, age and ethnicity have been reported earlier in this chapter. The interviewers themselves had to assess at the end of the interview the social class of the child's family from all the information obtained. The parents of one third of the children were also interviewed and thus we will be able to derive additional information about their social background from those interviews (see Chapter 7).

According to the assessment of the interviewers, 81% of the children come from a lower class family, while 19% were seen to have a middle class background. Although this was a crude assessment it still gives a clear indication that most children came from poorer and less educated families and neighborhoods.

The social class was evident also from the type of jobs the parent(s) held. Of the mothers 44% were homemakers, while for another 12% their job could not be established since they lived elsewhere or so. Of the remaining women, 26% were coded as janitors (cleaning jobs) or vendors; 6% worked as employees, saleswomen in shops, guards or civil servants. Another 3% worked in the fishery sector, 5% as small business women and 5% held 'other' jobs.

The occupation could not be established for 35% of the fathers (unemployed, dead, abroad, don't know, etc.). A large group (18%) worked in the production sector as a lumberjack, gold digger, farmer or fisherman, while another sizeable group (12%) were active as security guards, employees or construction workers. 5% was coded as vendor, gardener, janitor or handyman and 4% as driver (bus or cab). Some 10% held jobs that required more education such as teachers, health workers, civil servants, military or police. 8% was listed as (mostly small) businessmen, while the remaining 8% held 'other' jobs.

Half of the children were living with both parents, another third with one parent, 13% with relatives (often grandparents or aunts) and a few lived on their own, with friends or with the employer (Figure 5.5.)¹⁰ The size of the household the children were part of varied from 2 to 16 persons. Nevertheless 41% of the households had 5 or less persons, while the rest was larger, with 18% even consisting of 10 or more persons.



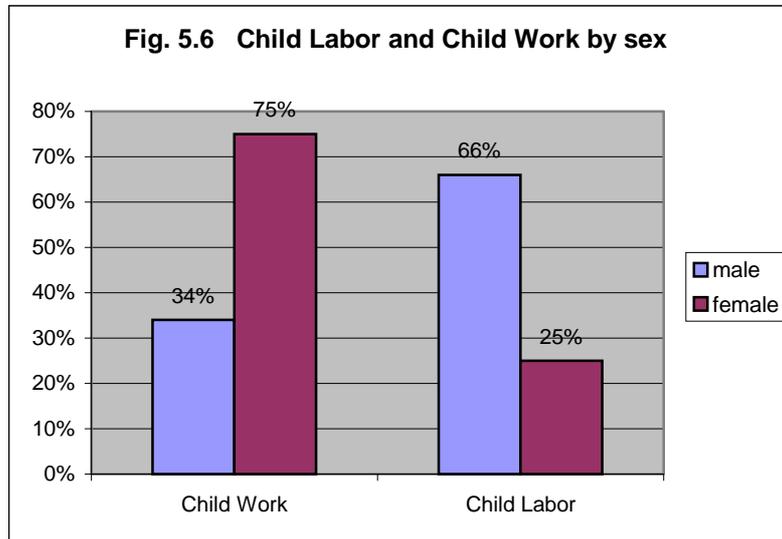
It was reported by 6% of the children who worked that none of their brothers or sisters under 15 years was working, while we did not have this information for 14% of the children. This still left 80% of the children who had at least one brother or sister under 15 years who was also a working child. This is a very high percentage and indicates a clear pattern i.e. if one child works in the family the chance of finding another working child in the same family is very high. In other words, certain families will have a much higher chance of having working children than other families (see Paragraph 8.4 for a further analysis).

From all the working children who were interviewed, it turned out that 76% attended school everyday, 6% went irregular, while 18% had left school. Only very few (4%) of all these children had gone beyond elementary school. Thus we deal with a population that in general had a very low level of education, which was partly caused by their age (43% were still at the age of elementary school which is normally seen as 12 years), but also by a high frequency of repeating classes (85% of those that answered this question had repeated a class) and high drop-out rates. Only 7% of those who had left school went beyond elementary school and of the others only 16% had completed elementary school.¹¹ Thus we may conclude that about 80% of the working children who were not attending school were dropouts.

5.7 Gender, Age and Ethnicity

We interviewed 167 children in various locations. The distribution of 120 boys (72%) and 47 girls (28%) indicates that more boys than girls are working. This result is consistent with the data that was presented in chapter two. Orié who did a survey of 50 working children in two poor neighbourhoods found 66% males and 34% females (2002:26). The general survey by the Ministry of Labor reported that “the degree of participation (of those who at some point were engaged in economic activity) of boys is on average slightly higher than that of girls i.e. 3.6% against 2.9%” (1999:45). This means that of those children that were working 55% consisted of boys and 45% of girls.¹² Since the Rapid Assessment survey was aimed at child labour rather than just economic activities the discrepancy with the overall picture is a first

indication that more boys than girls are involved in child labour. This becomes clearer in Figure 5.6.¹³



There was no significant difference between the ages at which boys and girls first began to work, nor with respect to their current age.

There is a gender difference in earnings, which means that boys get better paid for work than girls. When one analyzes the data further, however, this difference disappears when we keep working hours constant.¹⁴ Thus the difference is due to the fact that boys overall work longer than girls and therefore also earn more. On average boys work more days per week than girls. When we look at working hours, it turns out that 20% of the boys work just one or two hours a day, while this is 51% for the girls. For those who work 7 or more hours a day the percentages are 35% for the boys and 6% for the girls. This difference in working hours is very significant.

Table 5.7 Potential harmful aspects of work by sex

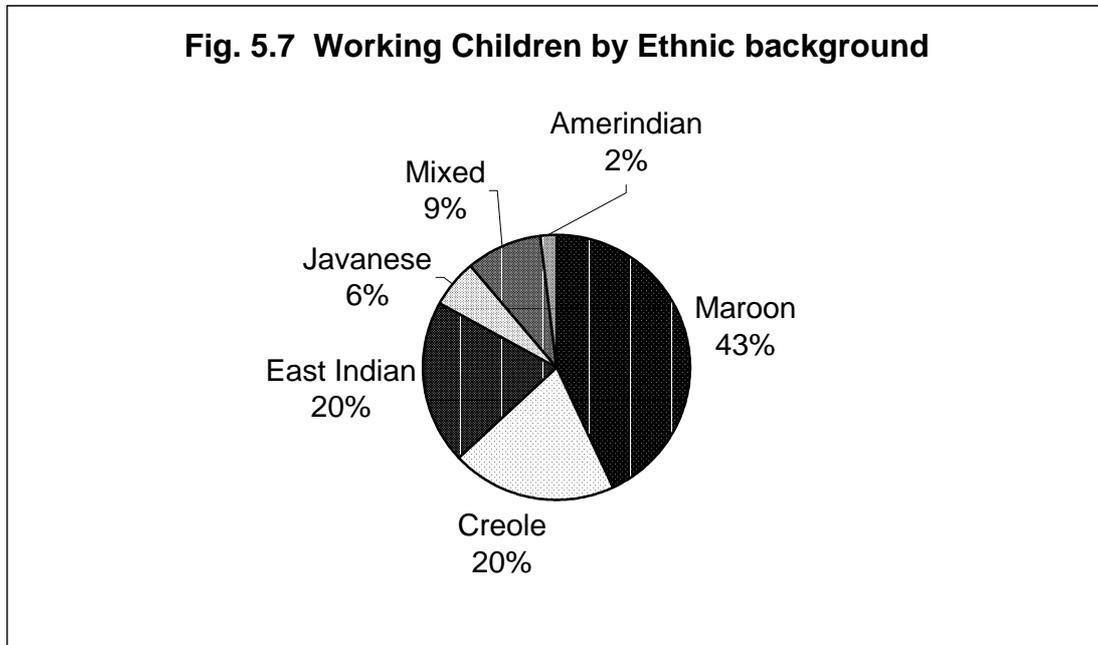
				Probability	
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	Boys	Girls	Total cases	of χ^2 distribution being result of chance factors	Significance of gender difference
Always tired from work	15%	11%	N = 23	p = 0,753	not significant
Sometimes tired	50%	53%	N = 85		
Never tired	<u>35%</u>	<u>36%</u>	N = 58		
	100% (N=119)	100% (N=47)	N = 166		
Always busy at work	33%	19%	N = 47	p = 0,212	not significant
Sometimes busy	50%	58%	N = 86		
Never busy	<u>17%</u>	<u>23%</u>	N = 31		
	100% (N=117)	100% (N=47)	N = 164		
Always lift heavy items	10%	0%	N = 12	p = 0,000	significant
Sometimes lift items	50%	23%	N = 70		
Never lift items	<u>40%</u>	<u>77%</u>	N = 84		
	100% (N=119)	100% (N=47)	N = 166		
Always bored at work	6%	26%	N = 19	p = 0,001	significant
Sometimes bored	24%	13%	N = 34		
Never bored	<u>70%</u>	<u>62%</u>	N = 113		
	100% (N=119)	100% (N=47)	N = 166		
Hazardous material at job	13%	2%	N = 17	p = 0,005	significant
	5%	2%	N = 7		
Less harmful material at job	43%	28%	N = 64		
Dust, sand, saw dust, cement	<u>39%</u>	<u>68%</u>	N = 79		
None	100% (N=120)	100% (N=47)	N = 167		
Dangerous machine at job	8%	0%	N = 9	p = 0,003	significant
	13%	0%	N = 16		
Non dangerous machine	<u>79%</u>	<u>100%</u>	N = 141		
No machine at all	100% (N=119)	100% (N=47)	N = 166		
Finds job itself dangerous	17%	11%	N = 25	p = 0,442	not significant
	7%	4%	N = 10		
Sometimes dangerous	76%	85%	N = 129		
Not dangerous	100% (N=117)	100% (N=47)	N = 164		
Worst forms of work ¹⁵	76%	4%	N = 31	P = 0,003	significant
Not worst form	24%	96%	N = 136		
	100% (N=120)	100% (N=47)	N = 167		

When we look at the potential harmful aspects of the jobs the working children perform (Table 5.7) then we see overall more boys are involved in potential worst forms of child labour.

There is also a significant gender difference for school attendance, with 98% of the working girls still attending school every day, while this was only 68% for the working boys.¹⁶

Finally it was found that girls tend to work more for their parents (40% against 18% for the boys), while boys work more for a non-family member (56% against 28% for the girls).¹⁷



Ethnicity in a plural society like Suriname is a variable that picks up a variety of cultural, religious, social, historical and environmental characteristics, and therefore remains of importance. When we look at the ethnic background of the children it becomes immediately very evident that Maroons (Bush Negroes) make up the largest group of working children (Figure 5.6). Since Maroons in the total population consist of about 15% it means that Maroon children are clearly over-represented among working children. This already points toward an evident ethnic bias among working children, but also towards a regional distribution since many Maroon children are still living in tribal settings in the Interior.¹⁸ This ethnic bias is consistent with Dennen (1990), who found that 32% of the children he interviewed were Maroons, and the Ministry of Labour (1998). Van den Berghe (1990) even reported that almost 66% of the children in his sample were Maroons.

The working children were asked what their age was and it turned that 7% were younger than 10 years, while the others were 10 years or older. Furthermore they were also asked at what age they had started working. The responses indicated that 26% had been younger than 10 years when they started working.

The survey by the Ministry of Labour reported that 25.9% of the economically active children were younger than 10 years (1999:50). This was very much in line with the age the children we interviewed reported for their first job. The fact that in the Rapid Assessment only 7% of the children were younger than 10 years already indicates that child labour in Suriname is found primarily among children of 10 years and older.

Notes

¹The selection of children was not done randomly, therefore some cells are empty, but nevertheless, with 167 children in the overall survey, it gives some rough comparative indications.

²The probability of the reported χ^2 (Chi Square) was 0,000 for this table, which means that the distribution is significant. By significant we mean significance of the distribution of two variables in a table which is tested by means of looking at the Chi Square distribution and notably the probability that the distribution which is found is due to non structural factors (i.e. due to chance rather than pattern). If this probability is very low –normally below 0.025 for a two tailed test- then we may assume that the distribution is significant i.e. it is due to structure rather than chance factors. In fact even higher probabilities can be allowed for this exercise, since we are dealing with social events where many other factors may also play a role and cause some less fine tuned measurement. If we reduce the districts to three regions (i.e. City, District, and Interior region than the probability for the reported χ^2 was 0,031).

³In the survey by the Ministry 42.2% of the children were categorized as ‘other’ and 12.3% as unknown, which makes up a substantial portion of the population.

⁴The Ministry report stated, however, that for the majority of children (31.4% ‘other’ and 44.6% ‘unknown’) the number of working hours could not be given.

⁵We combined information about working hours and days together. Basically the first group worked 2 hours or less a day, while the last group worked at least 20 hours a week, and the middle group was in between. See paragraph 8.1 for a further elaboration of the categories used. The probability of the χ^2 distribution was 0.021

⁶The children reported their earnings in Surinamese Guilders which at the period of the interviews stood at about Sf 2,150 for one American dollar. We worked with categories of Sf 1.000 each, which for convenience sake we report here as about US\$ 0.50 while the actual amount was US\$ 0.465.

⁷The verification was done by comparing the earnings per day with the sector and it should be expected that especially in the ‘trade’ sector earnings would turn out to be much higher (since here the total sales could be confused with earnings) than in other sectors. It turned out, however, that earnings in the trade sector were actually much lower e.g. 43% of the vendors earned less than one dollar against 15% in the service/domestic sector.

⁸We have included those who did not get any pay in the first place to the group who handed all their income over and left out 10 cases with missing values.

⁹The probability of the χ^2 distribution was 0.006, which means that there was a clear structure underlying this distribution.

¹⁰Eight cases where the child stayed with mother and stepfather were categorized as staying with both parents. With respect to one-parent arrangements it should be noted that in 51 cases the child stayed with the mother and in 4 cases with the father. We included two cases where a child lived with foster parents as staying with ‘others’.

¹¹Actually 6 out of 30 children who had left school reported to have been in 6th grade of elementary school (we did not ask if they had completed the school, but up to what grade they had attended school), including 2 who had been to secondary school (and thus obviously completed elementary school). We assume that all of the remaining 4 children had completed elementary school, which leads

to the calculation of 16% (but which could thus even be lower). Of 3 children this information was missing, which we left out of the calculation.

¹²On page 47 the survey reports that of those children interviewed with respect to current economic activities 2.1% of the boys were actively engaged in work and 1.8% of the girls i.e. 54% against 46%.

¹³The probability of this χ^2 distribution was 0.000, and remained very significant for all tables (= specifications) of working hours and working days we did.

¹⁴The probability of the χ^2 distribution for earnings per day and sex was 0.003. It was non significant, however, for 'Light work' ($p=0.055$), 'Semi Light work' ($p=0.664$) and 'child labour' ($p=0.838$).

¹⁵This is a summary of all indicators (see 8.3 for full explanation).

¹⁶We found that 8% of the boys went infrequent to school and 24% had left school. The probability of this χ^2 distribution was 0.000.

¹⁷The probability of this χ^2 distribution was 0.005.

¹⁸The survey of the Ministry of Labour noted that the economic activities of children are "strongly dependent of the ethno-cultural group" (1999:67), but is not very clear about this distribution. There is only an indication of religion, which nevertheless makes it very clear that Maroon children also dominate in the survey (35.9% tribal religion against 15.6% Muslims, 7.8% Hindus, 5.4% Christians, 12.9% other). Although this distribution is somewhat strange and does not add up to 100% it points out that the group of working Maroon children was at least twice larger than the next group and this despite the fact that Sipaliwini (a typical tribal region) was left out of the survey.

6. Research Findings by Districts

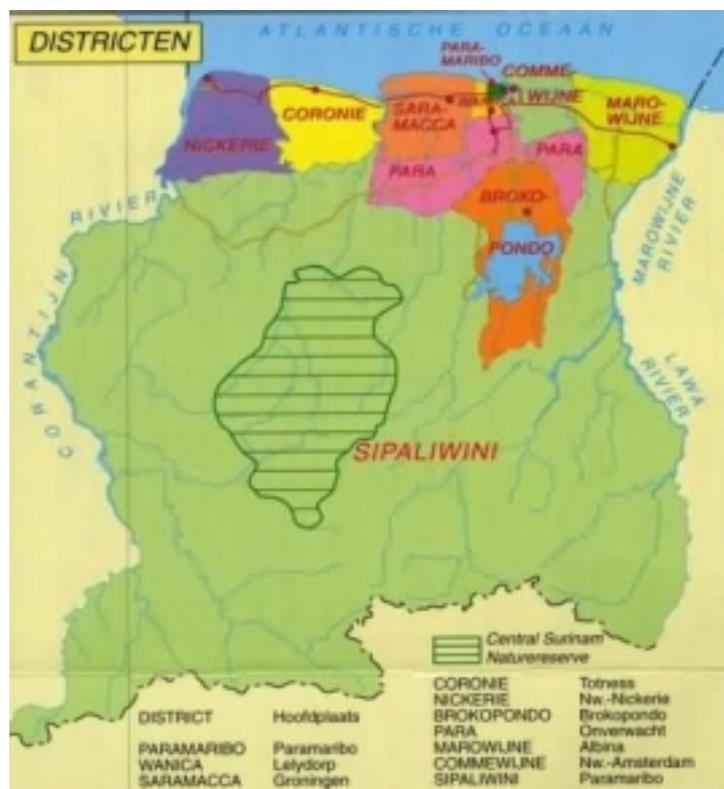
6.1 Regional characteristics

In this chapter we give a more specific overview of the results for each district, since each district has its own characteristics and forms of child labour.

The field work was primarily organized by district, and the results are also reported by district (in the next chapter). An overview of the significant overall results is given here, however. Before reporting those we should point out that there are 10 administrative districts in Suriname, which are often clustered into:

- the main urban area (Paramaribo or commonly known as the **City**),
- the –mainly coastal- **Districts** (Wanica, Commewijne, Para, Saramacca, Coronie, and Nickerie),
- and finally the **Interior** or Hinterland region with a more tribal population consisting primarily of Amerindian and Maroon peoples (Marowijne, Brokopondo, and Sipaliwini).

Fig. 6.1 Map of Suriname with administrative districts



Regional differences were statistically significant for the following variables:

- type of employer (who does the child work for?)
- income of child (how much do you earn?)
- assistance to family (do you give pay to family?)
- savings (do you save some of your income?)
- potential physical harm (do you carry heavy things at work?)
- hazardous environment (do you work with dangerous material?)
- work pressure (busy at work)
- monotonous work (bored at work)
- family size (number of brothers and sisters)
- social class

Much of this significance has to do with the fact that location (district) has a high correlation with ethnic and social background, culture and religion, but also with certain types of work and sectors.

6.2 Paramaribo

The capital Paramaribo is the most densely populated area in the country with an estimated 234.000 inhabitants.¹ The field work started in the capital, since as Suriname's governing centre it also contains offices of government agencies, private companies and NGO's that are operating nationwide. The researchers interviewed 47 key persons from several branches. Many of these (71%) worked more than four years in their job and were doing fieldwork as part of their job. Given these characteristics, most interviews were considered to be very reliable. The interviews were done in order to get a picture of the occupational sectors where children were working. The information was also used to get a qualitative picture of the living and working conditions of the children.

6.2.1 Opinions about child labour

Virtually all of the key persons in Paramaribo were of the opinion that it was bad for the country when children became economically active at a young age. One key person summed it up: by neglecting their schooling, these children had less opportunities in life and could easily fall victim to exploitation by employers. The key persons listed a number of solutions to prevent child labour and we have grouped these into socioeconomic, social-educational and legal measures.

Socioeconomic measures

- improving the socioeconomic situation of the parents by creating more employment.

Educational and Social measures

- providing information to parents and children
- taking action to track working children and get them into the school system
- improving education (instructional tools, infrastructure, teachers)
- better monitoring of existing laws
- creating a triangular relationship between Ministry of Education, school and homes
- more recreational facilities and opportunities for children
- caring and counseling system for working children

Legal measures

- improving the existing Labour laws and regulation

6.2.2 Economic activities

According to the key persons, children were active in selling newspapers, selling fruit, cleaning homes, as assistants in construction activities, and commercial sex. Most were not able to give reliable estimates, however, about the number of children that were employed in each sector. The field team looked into these sectors, but also used information obtained from the literature and through the schools.

Central Market

In several documents the Central Market is mentioned as one of the foremost locations where children are active. The field team visited the market four times at different hours and also interviewed the manager of the market. Before the visit to the market one key person - who was not working there himself- had pointed out that many children were hauling goods in the very early morning hours to the market stands. This could not be verified by the field team on several occasions. The team did not see any young children performing such jobs at those times. Only two to five children were found who sold goods after school. These children were interviewed. The market manager pointed out, however, that during the holidays the number of children that do some petty trade increases substantially.

Sale of fruits (genip, star-nut)²

During the months of August and September there is an increasing peddling on the street corners of fruits such as genip and star-nut. This can be labeled seasonal work where one may find clusters of three to six children. Sometimes the children work as a family unit with an older member present, while at some corners they peddle together with other children. One cluster of peddlers was interviewed together.

Along one of the busiest street in Paramaribo three women and five children are selling genips. We spoke with one of the women. She has five children ranging between one and twelve years. When asked why her children are not in school she answers that her son of 12 does not want to go to school anymore, while the others sometimes go late to school because of the work. Her house burned down and she was covered with burns on her feet; she is not able to work anymore, because she cannot stand for long periods. Her husband left after the event and now she lives in one room with all of her children. She also has to prepare meals in the same room. She gets an allowance from the government of Sf 50.000 a month (about US\$ 20) and child benefits of Sf 300 per child per year (US\$ 0.12). She is glad that her children are helping out with the peddling of genips. She herself sits on a case nearby to watch over the safety of the children. When the genip time is over she tries to find other ways to earn some money.

Newspapers

This is another traditional job that has been associated with child labour in several reports. It turns out, however, that most of these children sell newspapers before and after school, while virtually all attend school. They sell the newspapers on the street and quite a few are

accompanied or in the nearby presence of a parent. It is estimated that about 40 children are involved in the sales of newspapers. Some of these children were interviewed. One newspaper has shifted its distribution after midnight and told the team that previously (when the distribution was around 9 or 10 p.m.) they could see children among the clients who came to collect the newspapers, but currently there are none. Thus the parents or others collect the newspapers, while children help them to sell in the morning before going to school. The other daily newspaper distributes its papers in the afternoon and some children accompany their parents at the distribution point.³

Construction

A number of children were found to be active in the construction sector mostly as assistants (*handlangers*). Most of the young boys we interviewed would work after school and during the weekend. The research team suspects, however, that there are many more working full time, but could not verify this during observations in a number of construction firms and sites. There are no large concentrations of children or young people at any given site, since usually construction is done in teams, where most probably only the youngest member would be under age.

Timber and Furniture Industry

Several key persons directed the team towards the furniture industry. In several enterprises that were visited young males were found who were doing jobs such as carrying shelves. Overall it seemed, however, that there was not a large concentration of young people involved in this sector, while the jobs they performed were not of an hazardous nature and did not involve very demanding physical work.

Commercial sex

One of the worst forms of child labour is prostitution or commercial sex. Actually this should not be labeled child labour at all, since it is a type of exploitation of children that is and needs to be banned altogether. The field team did not trace any brothels that employed children or young women, nor did they find any concentration on the streets.⁴ This does not mean, however, that it is non-existent but only that these children are difficult to trace during a period of very limited fieldwork, especially if there is no manifest concentration.⁵ Thus we cannot report any first hand findings, but have to report from secondary sources and data.

Jason is a young Maroon boy of 14 years who sells his body to older men. He told a reporter: "I have five younger sisters. They go to school and that costs money. My father is a guard, but we can not live from his salary. My parents were of the opinion that I had to find work. They know what I do, but we never discuss it at home. It is a couple of years that I have left school. If possible I would like to have an ordinary job, but those jobs do not pay well. That is why I am working on the street. I don't like it, but it is important that my sisters can go to school and have food every day." (Leids Dagblad 18-6-2002)

The Maxi Linder Foundation which works with commercial sex workers, has reported on several occasions that children are involved in commercial sex, and moreover become victims of sexual exploitation. The estimates are that probably not more than 50 young women and young males are engaged in such activities. The girls are mostly offered by their mother,

often a prostitute herself, who refer clients to an address. This normally takes place at night. Some cases get a high profile since papers and readers have shown interest in such stories.⁶ There are young girls of school age, who have been reported to sell their body occasionally to earn some extra money for their own expenses. The Director of Maxi Linder reported at the meeting when the draft report of our assessment was presented, that she found that at least 29 commercial sex workers and mothers are exploiting their daughters. She added that it took her about two to three years to find these cases. This underlines that there are no clusters of such cases and that those cases are hard to find, and clearly too hard for a rapid assessment approach.

After the draft report was finished an interesting article appeared in a newspaper, which quoted two cases “from a recent study of child prostitution” The article was written to draw attention to this form of child abuse and asked for more legal protection of these children.⁷

12 year old M. does not attend school. “My mom uses drugs and hustles. Sometimes she arranges rich men to have sex with me. If a person has paid my mom he can take me along, but has to bring me back later.” The highest number of clients this girl had in one evening was four. “They were drunk and picked me up as a group. They had to pay in dollars.” M. wants to become a stewardess later. (De Ware Tijd 29-10-2002)

Drugs

Involvement of children in the drugs trade is another worse form of child labour. Interviews with the narcotics brigade of the police force did not reveal indications that children were involved in this trade in Suriname. We did not find evidence of their involvement during any of our field work either. The fact that children are talkative seems to be a factor why they are not involved in this trade. Nevertheless there may be individual cases of children involved in the drugs trade. According to the Maxi Linder Foundation they found some evidence that children who were being sexually exploited were also involved in drugs as runners or dealers.

Schools

Interviews with working children at schools revealed that they mostly worked to earn something extra. The kind of activities they were involved in included: weeding, cleaning, as an assistant to a mechanic or in construction work.

6.2.3 Working conditions

In Paramaribo 42 children were interviewed with ages varying from 8 to 15 years. With respect to ethnic background Creoles (41%) and Maroons (41%) stood out, while there also were those of a mixed background (12%) and East Indian background (7%). Although this was not a representative sample, it is nevertheless clear that, given the ethnic distribution of Paramaribo, Maroon children are over-represented. This group consists overall of recent urban dwellers and most of them live in poor neighbourhoods, have little or less education than other groups, and suffer from high unemployment.

For three quarters of the children, their current job was also their first job. Most children (60%) started to work between their 10th and 13th year. Two thirds of them (69%) work 4 to

5 days a week. Most children still go to school and work after school (50%) or during the weekend (19%). There were others, however, that had to work during school time (14%), while the rest of the children gave a combination of work periods.

One third of the children told us that they would normally work about 1 to 2 hours a day, while another 26% worked 3 to 4 hours. The other 41% worked 5 or more hours, which should be considered long hours.⁸ About 22% of the children worked before or during school hours, nearly half the children (49%) were busy after school, while 20% worked in the evening. The others (10%) worked the whole day or had two sets of hours.

Slightly more than half (55%) of the children said that they were working for a boss, while one quarter (24%) worked for their parent(s) and 12% for another family member. Only few (5%) worked for themselves or for a neighbour (5%).

The most cited reason for working (68%) was to contribute to the family income, often to assist a single mother.⁹ All other reasons (32%) were of a more personal nature e.g. take care of oneself, buy clothes, wanted to earn something extra, was bored, or enjoyed working.

About half (52%) of the children said that they earned more than Sf 5000 (US\$ 2.32) a day, while 21% earned nothing to less than a dollar, and the others were in between.¹⁰ In addition to their pay nearly one in three children mentioned that they would get a meal from their employer. Training and medical insurance were not mentioned as part of the extra benefits.

Of the 36 children that answered this question, 44% told us that they gave all their earnings to their family, while 36% kept part and 19% kept all to themselves. Of those 20 children who kept all or part of their earnings, 35% did not save any, while 45% saved sometimes and 20% even on a regular basis.

The majority (55%) of the children was not supervised during their job, while the others were supervised by an adult. The following illustration gives an idea of the kind of work some of these children did.

*- I turn mortar. The whole day I am busy carrying stones, cement and sand.
- In the morning I wake up and go to school. After school I eat and do some chores or play. After that I go and collect newspapers and they drop me off at a street to sell the newspapers. After I am finished they pick me up, I take a shower, eat and fall asleep.
- I go to the golf club. When people come to play I accompany them and search for the balls. I also push their golf cart.*

The majority (84%) of the children did not think their job was hazardous. Those who did say that it was dangerous (10%) or sometimes dangerous (7%) were working mainly in the construction sector, weeding, selling newspapers at night, or peddling.

With respect to hazardous materials, it turned out that very few children ever got into contact with chemicals (paint and chloride were mentioned each by 2%), but quite a few (38%) mentioned dust and sand (including sawdust) at their job. The rest did not complain.

To get a further indication of potential hard forms of labour, we also asked if they had to lift heavy things. About 44% said they (mostly sometimes) had to lift heavy bags, newspapers, stones, etc., while 56% replied that they never had to lift heavy things.

About 9% of the children said that they were always tired when they got home after their job, while 55% sometimes were tired, and 36% were never tired.

When asked if they were busy at their job 20% agreed, while 32% stated that it was sometimes busy, and 49% find their job not so demanding. When asked furthermore if they were ever bored at their job 69% said not, while 29% said they were bored sometimes.

In their free time children were mostly playing soccer, watching television, or fooling around with friends. When asked about their future 26% had not thought about it at all, while others frequently mentioned occupations such as a doctor, teacher, policeman, military, or mechanic.

6.2.4 The school and home environment

Most of the children (81%) that were interviewed still attended school daily i.e. primary school. Those that did not go to school anymore or infrequently mentioned causes such as lack of motivation, not being able to grasp the teaching materials, language problems, or they were written off.

Surprisingly, many children lived with both parents (29%) or their mother (45%), while the others lived with other relatives and only a few with non-relatives. Thus the family still is the most important factor for the housing of working children. Despite this fact, however, many working children came from large families and (52%) said that they had four or more siblings. Most of the children (64%) had a Christian religious background, while 14% adhered to a tribal religion.

Virtually all the children told us that they had siblings below the age of 15 who were also working. Those children we spoke with were often one of the eldest (either the oldest, second or third child) in the family.

The children were also asked about the occupations of their parents. The mother was often a cleaning woman, market woman, or stayed at home. The father would often work in the mining sector, as a cab- or bus driver, guard or civil servant, while 19% of the children did not know their father's occupation and 12% said that the father lived in another country.

6.2.5 Different types of child labour

In contrast to most districts where one type of occupation would dominate the 'job market' for children, the capital Paramaribo shows a variety of 'opportunities'. Children could be seen employed as fruit peddlers, selling newspapers, working in construction or in the

market, or could be victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Concentrations were never large in any of these sectors, but the sale of newspapers and fruits seemed to employ most children. Many children work to support their family, but only a very few would be the only source of income in the family. Pooling different incomes, however, is an important strategy to help poor families survive. This also means that there is some pressure from the family upon the child to work (pull factor).

The construction sector seems to be another sector where employers make use of child labour. Boys from age 11 were employed in this sector as assistants, but here it seems that especially young people (age 14 through 17) will work in this sector than younger children. Most of the work involves carrying stones, sand, mixing mortar, while the youngster has to deal with dust and sand. Since there are many small enterprises in this sector -e.g. a skilled labourer with his own team- it also seems that through family or neighbourhood networks children are recruited i.e. a parent would find a job for his son with a cousin or acquaintance. Family pressure thus may serve as a pull factor here.

Mainly young women will be involved in commercial sexual exploitation, although some boys are also involved, but few of them seem to be professional sex workers.

6.3 WANICA

6.3.1 General Information

Wanica is the second largest district in terms of population and has about 77.000 inhabitants. This district used to produce most of the agricultural products for the city, but it has become more urban, because many people only live there but work in the city. There is a large service sector, most of which caters to local residents, and some small industry.

Many of the key persons in Paramaribo would also speak for the urban parts of Wanica, but five local key persons were also interviewed, while a number of schools were visited. They mentioned children who mainly cleaned yards, while one of the key persons drew our attention to the furniture industry, where quite some children would be working. Various sawmills, shops and wholesale businesses were visited by the field team, but they found no children when they visited and thus could not endorse the statement by that key person. Later some individual cases were discovered.

Two schools were visited; one at Houttuin and one at Leidingen. What the team found was that many children assist in agricultural activities, in the household or vending agricultural products (such as milk). Most children work after school.

The key persons in Wanica did not think child labour to be a healthy development since children have the right to be educated. People should become more aware of the fact that schools offer education and development; the educational system should be adjusted and more stringent measures should be taken by the government to prevent children from partaking in the labour market at an early age.

6.3.2. The work environment

The researchers interviewed 14 children in Wanica, 10 boys and 4 girls. The age varied between 11 and 14 years. More than half (57%) were East Indians and 21% Maroons.

About 43% has been working five years on average. For 43% this was their first job and for 29% their second. Many of the children (57%) started working from their 9th, 10th, 11th year and they work four or five times a week after school or during the weekends. Most of them (36%) worked more than 8 hours a day, whereas others (29%) worked a maximum of 2 hours per day, while the working hours of the others where in between.

The children who were interviewed mostly helped in agriculture (29%), others were assistants in construction or in a furniture industry (29%) and some as maids (14%). More than half of these children (57%) had an employer; others worked for neighbours (21%) or family (14%).

Some children help their mothers or parents with the costs of living (28%), for self-maintenance (21%), or to save money for a specific purpose (14%). Half of the children (50%) earned more than Sf 5000 a day whereas others did not get any pay (14%), Sf 1000 to Sf 2000 a day (14%), or between Sf 2000 and Sf 4000 (21%). Of those who got paid, two thirds gave a share of their earnings to their parents, while 17% handed all their earnings over, and another 17% kept it all to themselves.

There is a lack of medical services, and no adequate schooling on the job. More than half of the children were supervised by an adult, while the rest was not.

Below is an excerpt of an interview regarding a normal workday:

- I go to the market in the morning. The employer arrives with a car loaded with vegetables and I have to make sure all the vegetables are sold by the end of the day. (13 year old East Indian boy, who has dropped out of school)

- After school I take the goats, and tie them so they can graze. Then I rake the yard after which I tie the cows and goats at another spot. At the end of the day I wash the dishes. (11 year old East Indian boy, who had started working at age 5, attends school irregularly)

Hardly any of these children (93%) found their work dangerous, though 43% admitted to coming home tired some of the time. Asked if they had to lift and carry heavy loads, 36% answered sometimes. About 14% said it was always busy at their job, while 7% got bored at work.

Sand and dust were mostly (41%) mentioned by the children as potential hazardous material they came in contact with, while 7% came in contact with pesticides, 8% with cement and 7% with paint.

When the children were asked about their future 36% had no idea yet. The others' answers varied: some want to become nurses, others police officers, others stewardesses, construction workers, doctors, agricultural specialists and computer experts. In their spare time, the children mainly do their homework and study, play soccer or go for walks with friends.

6.3.3 School and home

The answer to the question, "Do you go to school every day" was affirmed by 57% of the children. The other answers were evenly split between those who went occasionally and those who did not attend school at all. Language problems and conflicts with teachers were the main factors why these children between the ages 9 and 12 dropped out of school. Those children still attending school are mostly in elementary school. 75% of them have failed classes at least once as a result of a lack of motivation or the inability to comprehend what they were being taught.

Many of these children live with both parents (64%), mother and stepfather (14%), mother alone (14%) or grandparents (14%). Half of the children have just 1 or 2 siblings, 33% have 3 to 4 brothers or sisters, and 17% share a home with 5 or more siblings. The majority of the children (79%) says that younger brothers or sisters are also working.

The occupation of the parents was also discussed. The mother is mainly a housewife (43%), a maid (14%) or vendor at the market (14%). 43% indicated that the father was dead, without a job or they did not know what he did. The other fathers worked as public servant, gold digger, construction worker, military/police, handyman, bus driver or did weeding.

Half of the children came from a Hindu background, 22% were Christian and 14% adhered to a tribal religion.

6.4 SARAMACCA

6.4.1 General overview

Saramacca has a population of about 14,000. Until recently, Saramacca was the cradle for the banana sector, but because of internal problems, Surland, a state-owned company, along with its many jobs, is in danger. Another important company in this district is Staatsolie (State Oil). This company, which is owned by the government, exploits crude oil. These companies do not provide labour to children and very young people, however. Agriculture is the dominant sector in this district, with livestock, rice and vegetables as the most common products. Located at the western border of Saramacca is the fishing village of Boskamp. Most of the population is spread out along parts of the main road and often on their own agricultural plots of land.

The researchers have paid four visits to Saramacca. The first was for orientation purposes. The headmaster and teachers were asked to make an inventory of the children that were working and to check also which children were often absent. Four key persons were interviewed in Saramacca. According to these key persons a number of children were working in construction and agriculture. According to the key persons the children are hired because they are sources of cheap labour. Besides these key persons the following also acted

as informants: teachers, an education inspector, local government officials, public servants of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (LVV) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (SOZAVO). The interviews indicated that the children attended school, but help out on their parents' land after school.

6.4.2 Working conditions

In Saramacca eight schools were approached. Researchers interviewed the working children at three of these schools. At the other schools, there appeared to be few or no working children. In these three schools about fifty working children were found. The field team also found some young people working in a small fishery village, Boskamp, and looked for others elsewhere but hardly found any, since there are just a few concentrations of populations and given the distances, few opportunities for children to work beyond their own family plots. The team interviewed 21 children, 14 boys and 7 girls ranging in age from 11 to 14 years. Ethnically one third (33%) was East Indian and almost a fourth (24%) Javanese.

The jobs of these children varied a lot. Common activities are: catching and processing fish, cleaning houses and working in agriculture, on a plot or in the garden. For most children, one of the above jobs is the current job that they have and have had for the past one to three years.

More than half (52%) of the children say they work two to three days a week. Usually after school, on the weekends and during vacations. Most of them (57%) work between one and four hours a day. Work is usually provided by an employer (48%) or a relative (33%).

The children were asked why they worked. 29% said to help their parents and 24% said to take care of themselves. Other reasons included saving money to buy candy, clothes, a watch or a bicycle. One teacher gave the following reasons why these children worked:

Because bridges were built and renovated there now is a better connection with the city. The children visit Paramaribo more often and want to have the stuff that their peers in the city have like Nike shoes. For an average parent, a pair of sport shoes can easily cost half a month's salary. So the kids then go work for it. Friends and advertising pressure them into being "cool", which stimulates child labour.

Almost half (48%) of the children said they earned between Sf 4000 and Sf 5000 per day and a little less than a quarter (24%) said they earned more than Sf 5000 per day. Part of the earned money is given to parents and the rest is saved.

Half said an adult guided them during work. The supervising adult is either the employer, a parent of the child or a relative. The other half said they work alone. The following account illustrates a typical workday of two children.

*- I throw out the nets and have to wait for about six hours, then the nets are pulled in and the fish we catch is delivered to the customers.
(Javanese boy of 17 years, who started working at age 14, does not go to school).*

*- In the morning I feed the chickens and tie up the cows. After school I help my dad with farming, harvesting and planting.
(East Indian boy, age 11 who does this work since he was 7).*

Medical provisions and training are absent. 40% of the children say they have to lift and carry heavy loads and one third say they come in contact with sand and dust, yet most (81%) do not think their jobs are dangerous. In agriculture, machines may be a risk for working children, but few machines are being employed, while these are mostly handled by adults. Chemicals may provide another risk, but here no real assessment could be made since agricultural plots are spread out. Again the indications are that adults rather than children are involved in spraying vegetables with chemicals. The Fishery sector seemed to harbour another potential danger, especially operating at sea with small vessels. The adults the team spoke to stressed, however, that children were not allowed to go to sea, while they normally did not do any preparation for fishing either. Nevertheless the team found three boys over 15 years who were involved in fishing and preparation. Children who had told the team at school that they helped with fishing after school, were not found at the village to do so. They probably assisted with some minor work and sales.

6.4.3 The school and home situation

A relatively high percentage of the children (81%) say they attend school daily. Most of the children attend elementary school in Calcutta and Groningen. The children we interviewed were living in Boskamp, Calcutta and Groningen. About 38% of the children live with both parents, while 29% were living only with their mother. Furthermore, 24% of the children were living with relatives (aunt/uncle/grandmother/grandfather) for quite some time.

Almost 20% said they had no other family members, while about a quarter (28%) had 1 or 2 siblings. One third of the children said they had 3 or 4 siblings, and almost 10% lived with 5 or more siblings. Interestingly, is that the children claim that siblings younger than 15 also work. 76.2% of the children say that they have one or more younger siblings that work. The children themselves claim to be the first or second child of their parents.

Christians (38%), Hindus (29%) and Muslims (24%) make up 91% of the religious background of the families of the children.

The father's occupation seems to be versatile. Out of an inventory it appears that the fathers commonly work as farmer, fisherman or public servant. About 20% do not know what their father's occupation was. The mothers often work as a cleaning woman (33%), market or street vendor (19%) or housewife (10%).

6.4.4 The agricultural sector

A major source of employment in Saramacca is the agricultural sector. Children are used for various tasks like harvesting oranges and black-eyed peas and preparing vegetables.

These tasks are carried out as a family and the children help out after school. The influence of parents on the children forms a pull-factor of child labour in this sector. Helping out with tasks after school is a part of the family's life pattern and not directly an option for the children. Because of work after school there is less time for the children to do their homework, and thus, may have detrimental effects on their school performance. When the children get older and do poorly in school, the parents seem to push the priority from school to work (during school times), based on the reasoning that their children will not make it through the school system.

6.5 NICKERIE

6.5.1 General Overview

Nickerie is known as the rice district. The cultivation of rice forms the most important means of subsistence, but there are other means of income as well, such as trade and services, banana export (currently suffering), fisheries, livestock and others. The district consists of 34.500 inhabitants.

The field team spent two days in Nickerie. Prior to their visit, 12 schools were contacted by phone, of which 9 indicated that there were hardly any working children present. The 3 other schools were visited and several children were interviewed. Most children work after school. The investigators also spoke to 15 key persons. According to these key persons, there were concentrations of children working as assistants in the rice and agricultural sector, as gardeners, fishermen, newspaper vendors, babysitters, cleaners, hucksters and assistants in building activities. The key persons estimated the number of working children to be between 100 and 300. They were worried about this development. Information, supervision, rules and sanctions against those who stimulate child labour, were mentioned to resist this trend in child labour. With regard to the prevention of the worst forms of child labour, interviews were held with the police of Paradise and Waldeck, and with a social official.

Drugs

The police of Paradise explained that much drug trafficking was done. The team afterwards spoke with two young males aged 14 and 17 years respectively from this area, who were arrested on drug charges. According to these boys, chiefly adults were active in this sector, while no children were involved. The two youngsters said they were drug users, but not traders. The police of Waldeck explained that in the drug trafficking circuit youngsters were not used, because they are usually indiscreet and can disclose possible activities of the drug dealers.

Commercial sexual exploitation

Four of the 15 key persons said that sexual exploitation of children was present in Nickerie. Only one person, however, could point out a location where the children could be found. According to this person, about 6 young girls are involved. During an unannounced visit to that location, however, no children were encountered. Nevertheless the key person seemed

very reliable, because she herself had spoken to these children as representative of the Justice Department.

6.5.2 Working circumstances

The field team interviewed 15 children between the ages of 10 to 15 years. Almost all the children (87%) were East Indians and the others were of a mixed background. The majority of the children (73%) were Hindu.

In general the children worked most of the week i.e. 43 % of the children said they worked 5 days or more and an equal percentage worked 4 to 5 days. One third worked 1 to 2 hours a day, while 27% worked 8 or more hours, and the rest was in between. Two thirds of the children did their work after school and during vacations. Nearly half (47%) of the children we interviewed worked in agriculture, notably the cultivation and processing of rice, while one third were involved in peddling, mostly of agricultural products.

The majority of the children worked for an employer (73%). The most important reasons why the children worked was to contribute financially to the income of their parents (33%), or to provide for their own needs (20%). Other children worked because of negative school results, to save for a special purpose, just to earn something extra or out of boredom (47%).

The following is an excerpt from one interview:

We spoke with a boy at his work in a rice mill. He was not a bright student at school and at age 13 was still in the second grade of elementary school. His father does not live at home anymore, but once had set fire to the house when he was drunk. Within a month the police released him. The mother is jobless. Therefore the boy has to work to support his mother and two sisters. At the rice mill he has to sweep, but it is very dusty there. This is so because of the padi. According to his mother, the boy coughs a lot, but he has no other choice than to work for a starvation wage.

Most children (80%) earned more than Sf 5000 a day. Nearly a half (40 %) gave part of their income to the family, an equal percentage kept it for themselves, while 20% gave all their earnings to their family. More than half (53%) of the children save a part of their earnings. Approximately half are supervised by an adult during work, while the other half gets no supervision. The children told us what happens during their workday.

*- At 5 o'clock in the afternoon I drive with my bike along the houses and shout "Pepper, Pepper" till everything is sold. (East Indian boy of 13 years, who works for his uncle, but still goes to school).
- I work in the rice fields. My work consists of weeding and digging gutters. I also assist at harvest time. With the combine we gather in the harvest.(11 year old East Indian boy, who was 9 when he began to work, but still goes to school).*

A high percentage (73%) do not find their work dangerous. Some children get home tired everyday (27%), and others sometimes (40%). Daily heavy lifting was experienced by 20%, while another 20% said they sometimes had to lift heavy things. Asked if their work is very demanding 27% agreed, while 7% sometimes felt pressure. Only 7% were bored at work, and 20% reported that they were bored sometimes. Only 7% came in contact with pesticides during their job, but 53% complained about sand and dust.

When asked about their future 27% of the children had no idea yet. The rest of the children would like to become a teacher, police officer, soldier, electrician, mechanic, engineer, lawyer, manager of a bank or a businessman.

6.5.3 The school and the home situation of the working children

Two thirds of the children go to the primary school every day, while one third dropped out of school. The field team visited 3 schools, all were public schools. They were located at Paradise, Groot-Henar and Bacovendam.

Paradise

In this school, the team found 12 working children, most of them sold agricultural products in the afternoon. A few children helped in the stores or were busy with fishery on a small scale.

Groot Henar

The working children in these schools were all boys. They assisted with building activities, or worked in the rice fields and did things such as cleaning and oiling the tractors.

Bacovendam

At this school there were only 5 working children. They had no permanent job, but they now and then weed for someone. A boy of six years had to take care of his younger sisters of four and of one and a half years when his mother is at work.

We spoke with a boy of six years in the presence of his teacher. The school management has adopted the boy. At school he is given a sandwich and every now and then he gets some clothes. He told us that he often stayed home to take care of his sisters of 4 and 1 ½ years old, when his mother has to work somewhere. His parents have no permanent job. According to the teachers, the parents are very poor.

Approximately 60% of the pupils repeat a class, mostly because of difficulties with learning or because of lack of motivation.

Most children live with both parents (80%) or stay with their single mother (20%). The families seem relatively small. Only 20% of the children had more than 5 siblings, while 40% had 3 or 4 brothers and sisters, and an equal percentage lived with one or two siblings in the same house. Nearly three quarters of the children said that at least one of their brothers or sisters under 15 years also work.

The fathers had jobs as farmers, labourers in construction and private companies, guards, and fishermen. Most women (80%) did not have a job outside their home, but would normally also maintain a garden. The few mothers with outside jobs worked as a cleaning lady, labourer or had their own small enterprise.

A boy of 14 years goes to school, but his grades are poor. He already repeated a class three times. After school time, he works in the rice sector. His father is a farmer and his mother is a housewife. In the rice fields he drives along with his employer on the tractor to plough the rice fields. If the tractor gets stuck in the mud, he has to help fasten the chains, so that the tractor can be torn loose. After the ploughing, he washes the tractor and takes all the mud from it. After this the tractor is completely oiled. Sometimes he also helps to change the tires of the truck tires. He earns Sf 10,000 a day. With his money he has bought a bike. In his spare time he repairs bicycles, plays soccer and goes out with his friends.

6.5.4 Rice sector

The rice sector remains an important occupational sector in Nickerie. Children and young people are employed in this sector. Most of the sector is mechanized, but children are used to maintain equipment (e.g. cleaning tractors). Furthermore, the children go in the fields after the harvest to gather the leftovers of the rice-crop. In Nickerie four rice mills were visited, where only two boys were found. The field team interviewed six children who were traced through the schools and the mills. This method resulted in a small number of children. One manager of a rice mill said that there was no production at the moment because it was not harvest time. During the harvest period they work in shifts. Thus the chance to find children and young people in these mills, and in the sector, will be higher.

6.6 COMMEWIJNE

6.6.1 General overview

In the past Commewijne was a cradle for plantations, which produced coffee, sugar and cacao. The plantations are nowadays as good as gone; the land has been divided up and is now used by the residents, who use it for small-scale agriculture. The district has a population of about 22.000. Although Commewijne is adjacent to Paramaribo, it was relatively isolated because of the Suriname river, which had to be crossed by ferry. Still quite a few of its residents commuted to work in the capital city. Since the opening of a bridge in 2000, Commewijne has been virtually connected to Paramaribo and is reorienting itself more towards the capital. In addition to small scale agriculture the fishing sector is a main source of employment. In the near future the expansion of Paramaribo will continue eastwards into Commewijne and its population will most probably grow substantially due to increasing numbers of commuters.

The research team paid six visits to Commewijne, one of which was to a fishing village. Thirteen children and two key persons were interviewed. Other informants included the school inspector of the district, local government officials, the police, teachers and an employee of a local agricultural organization. According to them, there is limited economic

activity in Commewijne, because many residents work in Paramaribo. They pointed towards the construction and furniture industry, which would employ quite a few child labourers, but the field team did not find proof of those suggestions. No child labourers were found in construction and a few children older than 15 were found in the furniture industry.

The key persons also warned about the negative aspects of child labour, specifically that young child labourers have less chances of developing themselves. Informing the parents about child labour, measures to improve the social-economic situation, and after school programmes were mentioned as suggestions to curb child labour.

6.6.2 Working conditions

In Commewijne twelve schools were contacted. Researchers interviewed boys and girls, of four of those schools. The other schools reported few or no working children. Most of the working children in this district were between 12 and 14 years old.

Overall, 13 children were interviewed in this district, 10 boys and 3 girls. The children were 31% Maroon and 31% East Indian, with smaller percentages of Mixed background (23%), Creoles (8%) and Javanese (8%). This was surprising, since most residents of Commewijne are Javanese, which may indicate that Javanese children seem less likely to be working.

The children said they have been working for a few years, mostly since they were 10 or 11 years old. About 70% said they work more than 5 days a week, after school and on weekends. Some work 3 to 4 hours a day, but almost a quarter usually work 8 or more hours a day. The three girls, ages 10 to 14, are all employed as maids for other people. Sweeping and mopping the floor, cleaning windows, washing dishes and clothes, hanging the clothes to dry and folding the clothes are the tasks they carry out.

The boy's duties vary from catching fish, processing shrimp, assisting a mechanic, and producing charcoal. In most cases, either an employer or a relative employs them.

The children say they work to support their parents (or relatives). Some say they work to support themselves; they save up their earned money to buy such things as candy, a bicycle or a watch.

The daily earnings were reported by 46% to be between Sf 4000 and Sf 5000, while the rest received more than Sf 5000. Nearly one third (31%) gave all their earnings to their parents/relatives, while 61% gave only part and 8% kept it all to themselves.

Medical provisions, education and training during work are nonexistent. More than half (54%) of the children say an adult does not guide them during work.

With respect to the way the children perceive their work, the following can be reported. One quarter found their job dangerous, while 15% came in contact with (potentially) hazardous materials and 8% with (potentially) dangerous machines. Only 8% reported that they were always tired when they came home from work and 46% were sometimes tired. In 23% of the cases, the children reported the job to be busy, while only 8% sometimes got bored at work.

Furthermore 31% said they sometimes had to carry heavy items during work hours. Overall, however, most children seemed to have a relatively safe and not too demanding job.

6.6.3 The school and the working child

Besides work, a high percentage (69%) also goes to school. About 23% say they do not attend school, while another 8% say they sometimes go to school.

The reason some children leave elementary school early is usually motivation (they did not learn their lessons) or social (their father left the family).

Most children do follow primary education (GLO) at schools in Mariënborg and Nieuw-Amsterdam. Also interesting to note is that almost 70% of the children said they have failed a grade, usually first, second or third. But failing two consecutive grades is no exception.

6.6.4 The home situation

Most (54%) of the interviewed children live with both parents. The others live with relatives or foster parents, often for the past ten years or more.

When asked about their siblings it turned out that half the children had 3 or more siblings and the other half just 1 or 2 or even none. Still 62% of the children lived in households of 6 or more people.

According to age the interviewed children were either the first or second in their family. They also noted that siblings younger than 15 are involved in the work process. The father usually works as a gardener or (small) businessman, but also as a farmer, fisherman, bus driver and civil servant. Some children (15%) do not know what their father does for a living. About half of the mothers were housewives (46%), while others worked as cleaning ladies (23%), in fish processing (15%) or as employees in a private company (8%). One child did not know what the mother was doing.

6.6.5 The fishing sector

No evidence has been found of child labour in the fishing sector. Some pupils did say that they commuted daily from the fishing village of Pomona to the public school in Nieuw-Amsterdam by boat. So the field team went to Pomona during school hours to see if there were any children that did not go to school and instead stayed to work. No children were found; they had all gone to school. One mother said that the children could not help the parents after school, because of the way the shrimp industry works. In the early morning the fish and shrimp are caught and laid to dry in the sun. This takes two to four days and after that the fish/shrimp are put in big bags. Suppliers from Paramaribo then pick up the bags and further process the shrimp/fish and sell them in smaller bags to customers. This process leaves little room for the children of Pomona to help out.

This analysis shows that the use of child labour in the fishing sector is minimal. The school is the most important push factor, because most parents give it a high priority and would rather have their kids attend school than process shrimp during school hours.

6.7 PARA

6.7.1 General Information

Para is situated to the south of Paramaribo and has about 15.500 inhabitants. The primary economic activity of this district is mining of bauxite which is done by Suralco and BHP Billiton. Those residents that live in the regions of Para not too far from Paramaribo are commuting to the city. The presence of the International airport also generates some local economic activity e.g. porters and vendors (sales of beverages and cassava bread plus *dosi* i.e. cassava bread filled with ginger or pineapple). Furthermore, Suriname's major local tourist resorts –which also generate work for locals- are situated in Para e.g. Cola Creek, Republiek, Bersaba, Carolina, Berlijn. In this district there is also a concentration of Amerindian villages, many of which still depend on subsistence agriculture supplemented by some market products (e.g. pineapple). Along the road to the airport there are many Creoles and Maroons who live from selling agricultural products to passers-by and a number of Maroon artists who sell wood carvings.

Field researchers went to the district four times and spoke to several key persons. Contact persons were the district commissioner and the secretary of the district, the regional overseers (*bestuursopzichters*) and principals of the schools. The administrative executives were from the resorts/areas North and South Para, Bigi Poika and Carolina. According to the district commissioner, child labour does not exist in Para. The overall impression from the interviews with these key persons was that only a limited number of children are involved in vending of *dosi* and cassava bread. These were often linked to international flights at the airport, which are limited and thus were not full-time labour.

6.7.2 The work environment

Ten schools were approached in the initial phase but the researchers only visited four schools. The other schools were not visited as there were hardly any working children reported in these schools. At the four schools about 100 working children were counted. The researchers spoke to a group of 11 children, who assisted in the production of *pemba-doti* (white clay), used by inhabitants of the interior for various rituals. *Pemba* is extracted from rocks in the bauxite mines. This group consisted of both boys and girls who then sell *pemba* in the marketplace on Saturdays. Another group of children sold *dosi* en cassava bread near the airport after having assisted in the production of these goods.

In total 11 boys and 4 girls between the ages 9 and 14 were interviewed. Most children were Creoles (47%) and Maroons (33%). Child labourers in Para either sell food products (*dosi*, cassava), or *pemba* in the marketplace, or they assist in a construction business or help the family on agricultural plots. Most of these children (71%) worked in their first job and often at irregular hours.

Many children (60%) work for their parents or a relative, while 27% have an employer and 13% work on their own. Also 60 % of the children reported that an adult was supervising their work, while the remainder lacked supervision.

The children work mostly (54%) to support their parent(s) in the costs of living, while 20% said they had to support themselves. The earnings varied. One tenth (13%) of the children did not receive any pay for their work, while 20% earned Sf 1000 to Sf 2000 a day. Another 27% received between Sf 2000 and Sf 5000, while the remaining 40% earned more than Sf 5000 a day. The fact that 40% of the children handed over their entire income to their parents and another 40% gave part of their earnings to them, underlines that the children supported the family. These working children lack medical care, adequate education and training on their job.

Though most of the children (87%) do not report their jobs as being dangerous, they do complain about exhaustion (20% were always tired after work and 40% sometimes), the demands of the job (53%), lifting heavy equipment (13% always and 27% sometimes) and boredom (7% were always bored at work and 27% sometimes). Only 7% work with (potentially) dangerous machines, while another 7% mentioned work with (potentially) hazardous materials.

In their spare time, the children mainly play soccer or *slagbal* (kind of soft ball), swim or do their homework. When asked what they would like to be in the future, some answers were a teacher, policeman, firefighter, pilot and stewardess.

6.7.3 School and the working child

All the interviewed children attend school daily. Many of the respondents are in the upper classes of the elementary school at Zanderij, Bersaba and Onverwacht. Many of the children have failed some grades several times. The reasons cited are lack of motivation and the inability to comprehend the lessons.

Many of the children (40%) lived with single mothers and a third (33%) with both parents. Some stayed with their father (7%), mother and stepfather (7%) or other relatives (13%). The children in Para come from large families, because 40% have more than 5 brothers or sisters. 27% have 3 or 4 brothers or sisters and 27% have 1 or 2 siblings. A very high percentage (87%) confirm that other brothers and sisters younger than 15 years of age were also working. Many of these children are Christians (60%) and 20% indicated no religious background (but most probably were affiliated with a tribal religion).

About 40% of the mothers were housewives, while the rest were working as maids, small business women, vendors, employees, or in fisheries. The occupations of the fathers varied more and included a farmer, gold digger, watchman, construction worker, employee, teacher and policeman. It is noteworthy to mention that 20% of the children said that their fathers were dead or in foreign countries, while another 20% did not know their father's occupation.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with a principal in Para:

I have been working in this school for 9 years now. During classes these children write labels to stick them on the packets with dosi. Their grades are low. After school parents pick up these children, especially when there is activity at the airport. Many times these children spend the whole day at the airport from 15.00-20.00 p.m. These children take along their notebooks and do their work on the spot. During the lessons they fall asleep since the preparation for the dosi continues up to late in the night. The children help with the grating of the coconuts and labeling the packets. This is a family business and the children are not paid. The parents buy them shoes and clothes and they earn an allowance. For the greater part, this situation occurs in single parent homes where the mother has many children from different fathers. This is the reason why the children have become child labourers.

6.7.4 Mining

The primary economic activity in Para is bauxite mining. There are no indications, however, of child labour in this sector. The fact that we do not encounter child labour in mining is due to a high degree of professionalism at Suralco and BHP Billiton, which requires substantial training, while these companies also follow the local Labour Laws.

6.8 MAROWIJNE

6.8.1 General profile

In the district of Marowijne there are about 13.500 inhabitants. The district is bounded on the north by the Atlantic Ocean and in the east by neighbouring French Guyana. The Marowijne river is a boundary-river between both countries. Important economic activities in Marowijne are the mining of bauxite, forestry and subsistence agriculture. Several villages and centres in the district were destroyed during the Internal War (1986-1992) between the National Army and the Jungle Commando.

The researchers visited the district of Marowijne on three successive days. The most important towns, Moengo and Albina, were visited. In Marowijne, the field team spoke to seven key persons. These persons were the commander of police, an inspector of the Ministry of Education, a pastor of the Moravian Church, the head of the department of Social Affairs at Albina, a medical doctor of the Regional Health Organization (RGD), the district secretary of Moengo and a member of Parliament. From the conversations (interviews) with the key persons it appears that many children are involved in activities in the informal or honsel sector.¹¹ Due to the illegal trade between Albina and St Laurent-du Maroni (French-Guiana) many children quit school and choose to work to earn some money. The estimates by the key persons with regard to the number of working children are in the range of 10 to 300 children, mostly from the Maroon communities. Most key persons did not endorse child labour, since it has negative consequences for the full development of the children. One key person saw child labour as a characteristic of the poor development of the country. Only one key person found the participation of young children in the labour process not a bad thing, but pointed out that it should not interfere with school attendance. Instructions, measures to improve the

economic situation in the country and more control by the local police force were mentioned as measures to counteract the labour of young children. The interviews directed the research team towards the border region and notably the waterfront in Albina.

There are 4 schools in Albina and the researchers visited two schools. In these schools they found 75 working children. In one school there were even 63 children. Moengo has 6 schools, of which 3 schools are visited. In the 3 schools of Moengo, 82 working children were found. In the other schools there were no working children present or the population of the group was too small.

6.8.2 The waterfront in Albina

During the field work we found 7 boys in the age group of 9 to 14 years at the riverside during school hours. They did not go to school anymore and carried mostly cargo with wheelbarrows as the following excerpt illustrates:

In Albina we met 7 boys between 9 and 14 years of age. To be specific: 2 boys of 14 years, 2 of 12 years and one of 9, 10 and 13 years. These boys do not attend school. They work from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. With their wheelbarrows they transport cargo and luggage for persons who travel to Saint Laurent or those who travel to the interior to villages along the Marowijne river. The boys earn daily between Sf 25,000 and Sf 30,000. For one ride they charge Sf 2,000.- . The cargo varied from gas cylinders, sacks with fruits, produce, rice and barrels of petrol.

From the stories of the boys it appeared that the parents also work as peddlers. They did not tell why they quit school. A grandmother of one of the boys told the field team that the boy stayed with her, but misbehaved. He did not want to go to school and was not polite towards her. His mother lived in the interior. The grandmother did everything to put him in school again, but he also misbehaved in school. Now she has decided to send him back to his mother. He did not support his grandmother financially, so she does not know how he spend his money.

During school hours the field team also visited all shops and supermarkets in Albina, but found no working children during those hours. It was remarkable, however, that many children came to the waterfront after school. It seemed as if most school children went home to pick up their vending items and baskets and went to the waterfront, which suddenly changed into a hustling crowd of young people.

6.8.3 Working environment

The field team conducted interviews with 19 children, of which 10 boys and 9 girls were in the age group, 7 to 14 years. The children were from Maroon (67%) and Creole (33%) background. The children work in general after school, some one to six hours per day. The majority of the children (61%) work more than five days per week.

The activities of the children consist mostly of vending agricultural products, sweets and petrol. Petrol is smuggled into French Guyana, where prices are higher. From the survey at the schools, 78 children sold products after school hours and on the weekend, notably 50 girls and 28 boys. Most children were working for their mother or both parents, while some worked for themselves.

Besides the trading of products on the streets, the girls are also active as babysitters or do cleaning jobs. Fourteen children -11 girls and 3 boys- worked as babysitters. Most of the time they took care of their little brothers and sisters when the mother was absent. One mother left home around 01:00 a.m. for St. Laurent. In some cases the children did not attend school because they had to babysit.

The boys transport cargo in wheelbarrows and load the cargo in boats or work in the garden. These are the most important activities of children who are hustling. For most of the children (70%) it is their first job, which they worked at for 1 to 5 years.

The number of children with other activities is substantially less, notably:

Type of Labour	Number
Gardening	12 boys
Loading of cargo	10 boys
Production of Podosiri	3 girls and 1 boy
Shop assistant	1 girl and 4 boys
Fisherman	2 boys
Labourer at an agriculture plot	4 boys and 2 girls
Labourer in a furnishing firm	2 boys

More than one-third of the interviewed children (39%) worked for an employer, while 28% worked for their mother, and another 22% for a family member. The remaining children were self-employed.

Many children work to help their mother (44%), parents (17%), another relative (11%), to take care of one self (17%) or just to earn some money (11%).

Half of the youngsters earned more than Sf 5,000 per day, 17 % received less than Sf 1,000 while 11% reported that they did not earn any money. The rest got irregular payments or got amounts between Sf 1,000 and Sf 5,000. Half of the children gave all their income to their family and 22% gave part of it. The rest either did not get any pay or kept it to themselves (17%). Those with some money spent it mainly to buy things for themselves. Most children (78%) work without the supervision of an adult.

The children do not receive medical services or any specialized training on their jobs. In this district the children are more exposed to risks at work, since 41% of the children qualified their job as dangerous. On the other hand, no child was working with (potentially) dangerous machines, while 11% was exposed to (potentially) hazardous materials. Many children experienced feelings of tiredness (6% always and 61% sometimes), were bored (33% always

and another 33% sometimes), had to lift heavy weight (6% always and 61% sometimes), or complained that their working environment was noisy (63%).

A Maroon boy of 12 year, does not attend school anymore. He lives with his uncle in Albina . His mother does not want to take care of him anymore. His father died and his mother has another husband, with whom she has other children. The boy attended school when he lived in Paramaribo. His uncle sent him to look for a job. He wants to go back to school.

The question about their leisure activities, was answered differently. Children used their time to play, do homework, to sleep and to watch television. The researchers also asked about their ideas of future professions. The professions that were mentioned were teacher (33%), medical doctor/nurse (28%), police/military (17%), journalist, boss at Suralco mining, or custom agent. Some of these professions were typical for the region.

6.8.4 The school and the working child

A large percentage (83%) of the working children reported that they attend school daily, while some children (11%) do not go on a daily basis. The majority of the children repeated classes. Reasons mentioned why they repeated were: the lack of motivation, the difficulty to combine work and school, or the distance between home and school. The main religious background of the children is Christian (89%) and tribal religion (11%).

O. is a Maroon girl of 9 years, and is often absent from school. She is a babysitter. The headmaster said that the mother often reports that she is sick, while in reality she is baby-sitting her little brother. The mother works as a janitor. O. is a pupil of the first grade.

Most children said that their younger brothers and sisters of less than 15 years were working also. The children were also questioned about the profession of their mother and father. With regards to mothers, they work as housewives, (street and market) vendors, small entrepreneurs or janitors. Also, some of the children mentioned that the mother works in French-Guyana. Some 44% of the children did not know the occupation of their father (he lived elsewhere or was dead) against only 17% for the mothers. The other fathers were gold diggers, drivers, worked in construction, were gardeners, employees, or small entrepreneurs.

6.8.5 The home situation of the working child

Most children lived with both parents or foster parents (55%), with one parent (28%), while the rest (17%) stayed with other relatives. The houses where they stayed were crowded with 83% having 7 or more persons living in the same place. Most children were part of large families which is illustrated by the fact that 61% mentioned that they have 5 or more brothers and sisters. A mere 6% reported that they were the only child.

6.8.6 Peddlers

In the district of Marowijne, the researchers met children who work as *hosselaars* (peddlers). They met the children at the waterfront of Albina and at schools. The children worked without the supervision of adults. They rented wheelbarrows or sometimes these were owned by their parents. Most children mentioned that their parents were also peddlers. Interviews indicated that several children from one family were involved in the same peddling activities, for example transportation of cargo with wheelbarrows.

The employment of the children in peddling activities resulted in poor school performance. These children repeated a class more often or arrive late at school. Also the children assisted their parents in the agriculture plots and functioned as babysitters for the younger children. Some helped with the selling of products when the family went across French-Guiana. We conclude that the pull-factors for child labour in peddling activities are working in a team as a family as well as the role of children as babysitters.

The researchers also had a meeting with the local police to discuss the role of this institution with regards to child labour. The policeman in office stated that they condone child labour, because they do not have the means to counteract the problem. He mentioned also that activities in the past to enroll children in school resulted in resistance from the community. The policeman wished that the Police Force will open a youth department in Albina to counteract the present situation of child labour. The police office at Albina has only two policemen on duty, while they received on a weekly basis some support from Paramaribo. Sometimes they also receive support from the police office in Moengo. But in the present situation they are understaffed, which has been reported to the office in Paramaribo.

6.9 BROKOPONDO

6.9.1. General overview

Brokopondo is a thinly populated district with 8,000 inhabitants. It is ethnically a rather homogenous district since the vast majority of the population consists of Maroons or Bush Negroes.

The field team visited Brokopondo three days in July 2002. Prior to the visit some key persons had been contacted by phone. Ten key persons were interviewed. They mentioned a concentration of working children in the gold sector, but noticed at the same time a decline in the number of children in this sector. Furthermore, children would be working on family agricultural plots, in fisheries, freight and timber.

The opinions of key persons with respect to the employment of children varied. Some disapproved of this development and stated that the children could not develop themselves in this way. Others neither condemned nor approved of child labour, since the Maroon and Amerindian communities are arranged in this fashion, while there are no other possibilities for employment. Finally some key persons considered child labour a good alternative when the children did not go to school anymore.

In the district, the field research workers visited 6 schools on Klaaskreek, Brokopondo, Nieuw Koffiekamp, Brownsweg and Lebi Doti. Observation and interviews pointed towards a high dropout percentage on the schools. The premature dropouts did not have many possibilities in the district. At the school at Lebi Doti many boys who left the school prematurely went to work in the gold sector.

The bauxite sector is basically limited to the hydro-electric dam and its operations, while the mines are located in other districts. This sector will not make use of child labour, although it may employ some young people as assistants to more experienced workers. There are timber activities in the district, but in this industry one will not find children either, because of the heavy equipment involved, but one may find young males to assist. The field team did not find any during the field trips, because the wood-cutting is often isolated in hard to reach places, while there certainly are no concentrations of young people to be found according to key persons. There is a small gravel sector, but it experiences difficult times. Previously one could see family type gravel enterprises where a woman with several children would select gravel by using an old iron bed frame and throw scoops of sand and stones against it. The sand and very small pebbles would pass through the frame, while the gravel would stay behind and be collected into buckets and put on a heap. Truck drivers would then buy and transport the gravel. We were told that in the dry season one may still see some of this family business, but overall less gravel is collected in this way. We saw a few larger companies that were active. The team did not observe any children in these companies, but saw older males and several foreigners (Guyanese divers). The gravel was collected from the river with pontoons and large hoses. Those that distributed the gravel piles were robust males around 20 years old. The gold sector was flourishing in this district and we will discuss this separately. Agricultural products are of limited meaning in terms of marketing, but still important for many families as a survival mechanism. One mostly finds the agricultural activities on a small-scale where it is done primarily for self-consumption.

Brokopondo, and especially Brownsweg, is often mentioned as a place where marihuana is traded from. Interviews with the District authorities and several key persons did not point toward any major drugs scene. There is no police force in Brownsweg, however, and it was mentioned that there had been a number of incidents where mopeds that had been stolen in Paramaribo had turned up in Brownsweg. In the past there had been some highly publicized raids on marihuana fields, but in the past years not much was heard of such raids. The police force was understaffed and did not have enough transport facilities to patrol the whole district on a more regular basis. Most informants denied, however, that any children would be involved in the drugs trade, since Brownsweg was seen more as a trans-shipment point for the marihuana and thus had not much local trade. The field team could not get any positive feedback about the drugs scene in Brownsweg and was not able to verify the stories about drugs.

6.9.2 Working conditions

The field workers interviewed 18 respondents, 11 boys and 7 girls, mainly between 8 and 15 years. All children were Maroons. The children worked two to three days per week (33%) while an equal number worked more than five days a week. Many worked after school (44%) and on the weekend (28%).

One third of the children worked three to four hours a day, almost a quarter (22%) worked one to two hours and another quarter of the children more than eight hours.

The activities of the children that were interviewed in this district consist mainly of gold extraction (39%), work on the family agriculture plots (17%), sale of icicle (17%) and peddling (11%). Most of the children are active in the gold sector.

In the village Lebi Doti the research team spoke with three boys, two were 19 and one was 17 years old. The boys said that they had been active in the gold sector ever since they were about 14 years old. The experience of these young man were taken into account since it helps us to describe the situation younger boys were now in.

One third of the children were employed by their mother and 11% by their father, while 17% worked for an employer. Most children (39%) worked to help their family earn some income for the daily needs, for personal reasons (17%), or for themselves (11%).¹² Personal reasons mean mostly children who work because of boredom or because they like to work.

The majority of the children (61%) earned more than Sf 5000 a day. Almost a quarter (22%) earned between 1000 and 2000 Surinam guilders on a working day. More than a quarter of the children (28%) gave their money entirely to their family, while others (22%) gave only a part, and some kept all of their earnings for themselves (17%).

Most children who earned money themselves saved to provide for their own needs or for a certain goal. Half of the children were accompanied by an adult during their work, while the other half does not receive supervision.

A high percentage of 79% of the children come in contact with substances such as mercury (22%), dust (17%), a selection of mercury and dust (17%), a selection of dust and sand (17%) and gas (6%). Children complained about lifting heavy things (83%), tiredness (67%), being busy at work (67%) and boredom at the job (33%). In spite of the many dangers, almost three quarters of the children did not find their work dangerous.

When asked what the children do in their free time, it turned out that many played soccer, slept and learned lessons. The children also reflected on their future profession. Most of the children (40%) aspired to a job as a teacher, while the remaining children wanted to become a nurse, driver or police agent. A small part of the children (17%) had no clear idea.

6.9.3 The school and working children

There is only one secondary school (MULO) in all of Brokopondo although this district has probably about 200 kilometres of roads along which villages can be found. All these children have to attend either the secondary school in the district capital, also named Brokopondo, or have to leave Brokopondo and stay with relatives in Paramaribo to attend school there. The District Commissioner was very concerned about the school performance, since only 12 children in 2002 had passed the final exams of the MULO. The year before only 8 children had participated in the exam of whom 4 graduated. This was a very poor result for the whole district.

Thus given the limited educational opportunities, primary school is the limit of the education for most children who remain in Brokopondo. Of those interviewed the majority (78%) attended primary school daily. A small percentage (5%) visited the school four days in a week. The remaining 17% of the children did not attend school anymore since they were written off from the school. A remarkably high percentage (94%) of the children said that they repeated a class one or more times because of lack of motivation, difficult lessons or sickness.

The research workers visited six primary schools in Brokopondo, Klaaskreek, Lebi-doti, Nieuw Koffiekamp and Brownsweg (two schools) and did a few interviews with children in each school.

Brokopondo

In Brokopondo the team spoke with several schoolteachers. The school principal said that most of children in the school did not work for people. Some go to family agricultural plots with their parents. He also said that the dropouts cannot find work in most cases. Girls that get pregnant stay at home to look after the baby, while boys who leave the school often move to the city. In some cases, these young males become involved in criminal activities, since they lack the education that is needed to get most jobs and thus find themselves marginalized. In Brokopondo, however, job opportunities are very limited and thus Paramaribo still looks more promising to most.

Klaaskreek

The school principal of the school told the research workers that there were no working children in the school. She said that there is no employment in the village. Most of the women in Klaaskreek do not even have a family agricultural plot any more. The bus connection with Paramaribo is improved -takes just more than an hour- so that the people do their shopping in the city. Furthermore, she said that women of Klaaskreek buy agricultural products of women from other villages. In the village there are no males that go to the gold fields. Most men, who formerly worked in this sector have now found work at the ministry of public works e.g. working on the local roads. Because of a lack of employment opportunities and the drift towards the city, there is no commitment of young children to employment in Klaaskreek.

Lebi Doti

There are three villages on islands about an hour travel into the artificial lake Blommenstein. Together they have about 1000 inhabitants and Lebi-doti is the largest village. The school in Lebi Doti has 280 pupils, but the headmaster complained that at the beginning of the school year there were only three teachers. It is clear that with so few teachers the children would get an education below normal standards. In the end, however, the pupils of 6th grade will still have to do the same exams as all other children in Suriname. For children from Lebi Doti it is even harder to get to the secondary school in Brokopondo, because they first would have to take a boat and then travel by bus. So only those that can live with relatives off the lake or in Paramaribo can continue their education, if they ever pass the final exams. It is therefore not surprising that the headmaster told us that there were about 100 pupils in first grade, but only a few in 6th grade. The dropout rate was very high, while incentives to stay in school were very low. In order to get a better picture of how many children dropped out and what happened to them afterwards, we asked him to check how many children that had been in 4th,

5th and 6th grade three years ago had dropped out and what they were doing. After a week he came into town and dropped off a list with 26 names of children who had dropped out. The ages of these children -after dropping out of school in any of the past three years- were now on average 17 years old, which indicates that there are many older children and most probably repeaters in the higher grades of primary school. Unfortunately, we were not given the size of the classes from which the children dropped out so we could not calculate the percentage, but a rough estimate may be around 35%. In any case, it turned out that all of the 14 girls that dropped out were now registered as housewives i.e. none of them had an outside job, but probably followed the traditional road in subsistence level agriculture. Four of them, however, were listed as being without a husband (probably single mothers). Of the 12 boys, five had no jobs, while three were involved in water transport, two were active in the gold sector, one was a lumberjack and another one helped in the bakery.

Brownsweg

Brownsweg has the largest density of people in Brokopondo with about 3000 people. Actually it consists of about 7 villages that were relocated after a dam was built in the Suriname river in 1964, which would flood the original villages. There are two schools in Brownsweg.

At the Catholic school, no working children were found by the field workers, who spoke to children in four classrooms. This seemed strange. According to the school principal, the gold sector had been less lucrative and was on a decline in this area. Some pupils, however, knew children who still went to the gold fields. According to them, the girls worked as kitchen help, while the boys helped with gold extraction. They could not exactly indicate where we could find these working children. At the Moravian school, there were several children who were working and some also knew other children who did not attend school but worked. In one 3rd grade alone, 14 out of about 25 children were working. One boy worked in the gold fields, but the rest were peddling vegetables, oranges, cookies, ice lolly, bananas and craft. In another 3rd grade, two children were working, one boy was carrying gas cylinders for a shopkeeper, while a girl was peddling vegetables.

Yvonne, a Maroon girl of 13 years is still in 3rd grade. She began peddling shrimps when she was 10 years old. Now she sells vegetables from her mother's plot on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. She does so by going house to house and it takes about two hours. She gets home tired of carrying the heavy bag around. She also assists her mother with planting. She gives all her money to her mother, but gets every now and then Sf 1000 to Sf 2000 to spend. She would like to sell popsicles instead, because she could sit and sell. Eventually she would like to become a teacher. Her mother does traditional agriculture, while her stepfather is working in the gold fields.

Nieuw Koffiekamp

The village of Nieuw Koffiekamp, also known as Kilometer 106, is located near the camp of Golden Star, a Canadian company which holds a large gold concession in the area. During a survey in 1994, this town had about 500 residents and was booming because of the gold rush. There were about 400 gold diggers active in the vicinity of the town, but this later grew to about 1000. The local people at that point were digging mainly by hand and only a few were working with machines. Since then the gold rush has subsided, while the gold company has

protected its concession with guards and road levers. The company has not yet invested in a mine, however, but announced plans to do it within a year. Still there was some gold digging by locals, but we were told that many young males had once again left the village. In 1994 there were 119 children in the school and more than half were working in the gold fields after school.¹³ This time the school counted 115 pupils. In the school only 5 children were found who went to the fields to seek gold, although the 6th graders were not at school during the inquiry.

6.9.4 The home situation and working children

The children were asked a number of questions with respect to their home situation. More than half of the children (61%) lived with both parents (including 6% mother and stepfather), while 28% lived only with their mother. The remaining children (11%) stayed with their employer or with friends.

The children came from large families. Nearly half (46%) had 5 or more siblings, while a quarter (24%) lived together with 3 to 4 siblings in home, and the rest (30%) mentioned that just 1 or 2 siblings were also home. The children that were interviewed were mostly the second or third child of their family. In most families (87%) there were brothers or sisters younger than 15 years who also worked.

The religious background of the children was mainly Christian (83%), while the others followed the rites of their tribe.

The father's occupation was mainly cited to be gold digger, policeman/soldier, employee of a private company, or health worker. In 29% of the cases the father had already died, lived in another country or the child did not know his occupation. Half of the mothers were housewives, but some also worked as a cleaning woman or vendor.

6.9.5 The gold sector

Despite its overall decline, the gold sector still seems the most important occupational sector in the district of Brokopondo. There is a small concentration of children and moreover of young persons economically active in this sector. In Nieuw Koffiekamp children processed the precious metal by swinging the traditional *batée*. The sand flies away because of the twisting swings while the gold remains and is bound by mercury in the cone of the *batee*. In a later phase the concentration is heated, the mercury evaporates and the gold remains.

The field team went to visit one gold area which was about two hours by boat from the Afobakka dam, called Tjilip Pasi. We were escorted by a local guide. Upon our unannounced arrival we saw two main camps near the shore, but both were occupied by Brazilians. We did not see any children or young people, mostly men over 20 years. There were three women probably in their thirties in the camp, but these looked and acted more like cooks than prostitutes. Upon our request, the Brazilians -who did not speak much Sranan Tongo, pointed out where a Surinamese team would be working. After a one and a half hour walk, we found it. The team consisted of eight men, half Brazilians and half Maroons. The youngest one was 17 years and was the cook of this camp. He was from Lebi Doti and we interviewed him. We also spoke with the leader of the camp, another Maroon. They worked for a boss in town.

Once they had prospected and decided on a spot, they would clear the largest trees with a Stihl chainsaw. Strong water pumps (old car engines) were used to clear the rest and to get to the ore, which was sucked up as mud and directed through hoses to a sluice (long tom) that had a mat with mercury to bind the gold particles. Once a week they would clear the mat and check the gold by burning it. This was a dangerous job since the mercury vapor could do damage to one's system if inhaled. Other dangerous aspects of the job were the felling of the trees and the work in the mud (which could slide if one did not separate the different streams carefully). The young cook was not involved in any of these parts of the job, but would go hunting when he was not preparing meals. He mentioned that he got malaria three times already. Asked about women and prostitution the men pointed out that there were other places about 3 to 4 hours walk away where they had bars and brothels. The women would be either Brazilian or Dominican and hardly any Surinamese. They also had not seen very young girls as prostitutes. Sometimes some Brazilian ladies would even visit their camp. This story was confirmed by our guide. The young cook told us that they would stay in a camp for one to two months until they relocated to the next spot and at that time they would go home for a break.

Darinho is 8 years old and in the second year in 1st grade. On Sundays between 12:30 and 19:30 he does some gold digging. He goes with two friends of 9 and 11 years. They go by themselves with their batee (gold pan) and find about 1 gram of gold during such a day (about Sf 23.000 or US\$ 10). Each one works for himself and keeps the gold. They could go with the batee or without. If they go without the batee, they dig up rocks and check if they contain samples of gold. Those that they suspect to have gold are taken home and crushed and mercury to used to bind the gold. When they burn the mercury they keep the gold dust in a paper and later sell it. It is heavy work because of the digging and carrying, but they do not get tired easily and do not consider it really dangerous. Darinho likes the job and it helps the family and himself to earn extra income. His father works in the gold fields, while his mother is a cleaning woman. He lives with them and five siblings. He wants to become a teacher when he grows up.

There is a relationship between the school situation in the district and the participation of children in employment. The bad school situation in Brokopondo is a result of a lack of classes, good sanitary conditions, furniture, educational tools, and competent teachers.¹⁴ Together with the pressure on the children to assist in generating income for the daily needs of the family, this can be considered a pull-factor to let the children work in gold extraction. However, there is not enough hard data to support a thesis that there are any large concentrations of children working in the gold fields. The manual labour is hard, but most gold mines that now operate are exploited by machinery. In the beginning of the 1990s there were many young males active in the manual gold digger teams. With the shift towards more machinery the young males are less present, since there are less people employed in the branch, while Brazilians have taken over substantial parts of the gold activities.

The gold areas in the district Brokopondo have been given mostly as a concession to outsiders, who then sublet them in parts to Brazilians. The Brazilians often have their own teams that do the work and are efficient at it. The village is loosing control over its territory, while local people have a hard time to dig for gold themselves. Otherwise they have to lease a

concession. This, however, also means that less locals and subsequently less children and young people are involved in gold mining.

Children and young people in this sector have no medical insurance and do not get specific training, while they can be exposed to mercury vapor. We were surprised how little people involved knew about the dangers of mercury when we spoke with them, both the young and old.

6.10 SIPALIWINI

6.10.1 General overview

The district Sipaliwini makes up about 80% of Suriname's land area, but is sparsely populated with about 50.000 inhabitants. Most inhabitants (79%) are Maroons, while a smaller part (11%) consists of Amerindians.¹⁵ Most people in this district still live in tribal groups and villages. The highest population concentrations are along the upper Suriname river and the Tapanahony river. The Amerindian villages are spread out and there are hardly any major population concentrations, except for one or two larger villages near the Brazilian border. These villages -such as Kwamelasemutu- do not have employment for children beyond the traditional agricultural type.

The research team decided to visit two locations in Sipaliwini and choose one location in the upper Saramacca river, where there was still a gold rush and a populated area on the upper Suriname river, with many children but few schools. Both were locations in Maroon areas. The field team went by airplane to the locations and spend three days in the villages. This meant that we did not visit any Amerindian location. During interviews with several knowledgeable Amerindian key persons, they were not aware of any forms of child labour apart from traditional agricultural work. Stories about sexual exploitation and maids seemed to be based upon incidents rather than any structural patterns.

In total, 17 key persons were interviewed, which included representatives of the Ministry for Regional Affairs, Ministry of Education, Primary Health Care Suriname (*Medische Zending*), the Organization of Indigenous Village Leaders (VIDS), an influential Indigenous Women Organization, a gold company, several NGO's, and local village councils (Captains and *Basjas*), health workers and teachers. According to these informants, children worked in fisheries, gold mining, freight and transport, and on family plots (*kostgrond*).

A number of key persons did not oppose that children were engaged in work, since they pointed out that according to cultural traditions the children had to help their parents. Other key persons, however, did not agree since child labour interfered with schoolwork and more and more children were in danger of becoming illiterate as a consequence. Measures to decrease child labour were: information to the parents, improvement of the socioeconomic situation, and improvement of education by sending more qualified teachers to the district.

It should be pointed out that there is no secondary school of any kind in the more than 100 villages of Sipaliwini. Some villages have become small towns with a couple of thousand residents. The region depends mainly on its own internal authority rather than any central

government authority. Life in most parts is very traditional and incomes are well below the national average, but there are exceptions.

6.10.2 Education in the Djumu region

The upper-Suriname region is the most populated river with about 50 villages. The Maroon people here are of the Saramaka tribe. The team spend two days in the Djumu region which has a concentration of 7 villages: Godo, Solang, Bendekondre, Asidohopo (residence of the tribal chief), Akisiamaw, Dangogo I and Dangogo II. The regional population is estimated to be around 3000 and the number of children of school age around 1000.

Djumu itself is not a village, but a medical post that once also had a hospital. There are no hospitals left in the interior, only basic clinics. The clinics are run by health assistants, while three trained doctors from the Primary Health Care Center in Paramaribo have to cover all of Sipaliwini. The doctor visits about once a month, while very ill patients are flown by Mission Aviation Fellowship to a hospital in Paramaribo.

In Djumu there is one Moravian school with 165 registered children, including an annex in Asidohopo with 26 children. The annex at Asidohopo consists of three classrooms for kindergarten and first grade, but there was only one teacher. The school at Djumu had no teachers for third and fifth grade. This meant that these children remained home all year long, which once more underlines the problems with education in the interior. The headmaster explained that the place was seen as isolated (no newspapers, no television, no radio, etc.), salaries were too low (especially for transport), while medical facilities were deemed below average by many teachers, and who therefore would rather to remain in the capital. He had reported that some teachers did not come and requested others, but none had arrived, so he was forced to close the 3rd and 5th grade classes. The attitude of parents had changed towards education and many did not bother to send their children to school.

We heard that many parents did not want to send their children to school, however, because they found it too far away. Many key persons and parents told us that and we decided to verify this ourselves, by visiting Dangogo I and Dangogo II, which were the furthest villages away from school. We spoke with the captains and some elders of these villages and they had the same complaints. There was a school boat, but the boatman was not being paid and could not use his boat. The distance between Dangogo and Djumu by boat is approximately 10 to 15 minutes. According to the captains, there were about 150 children in their villages, while we estimated from school records at Djumu and guessing for Asidohopo that not more than 30 of these children attended school. Thus 80% of these children stayed home or worked which is an incredibly high percentage even for the interior.

Parents were afraid to send their children to school, especially the young ones, because the distance by foot was too long and they were afraid of snakes and other dangers. We decided to walk the distance ourselves to see what the path looked like and how long it took. It took us as adults approximately 45 minutes to get to Asidohopo and another 45 minutes to walk to the school in Djumu and thus it would take the children probably somewhat longer, while they also had to return the same distance. The path crossed six creeks and it could be seen that in the rainy season these would overflow so that the children would get wet, since there

were no real bridges to go across. We thought that the parents were right not to send their young children along this path.

The people of Dangogo had asked the school to establish an annex in their village and the captain showed us a spot along the river they had already cleared for this purpose four years ago. The School Board in town first had reacted positive, but for years they had not heard anything. The spot was kept clean by one villager.

6.10.3 Child labour on the upper Suriname river

With so few educational opportunities the children of this region have to do other things. At the school in Djumu we spoke with 11 working children (5 girls and 6 boys) in the age between 10 and 14 years. These children were all working on the agricultural plots with their parents. The plots are often at some distance from the village and the whole day you see small boats with women and children either going to these plots or returning with cassava and other products. Many women would sleep in camps at their plots with their children. The husbands normally do not go to these plots and only are involved when they have to clear a new plot for their wife. Many males are not even in the villages, but seek work in other places or even in French Guyana. We visited one plot where we found two women and three little girls. The smallest girl of 7 years was busy preparing the meal for the others, who were harvesting rice with little knives. The other girls were 9 and 10 years. None of the girls ever went to school, but the mothers gave no particular reason why they did not send the children to school. One of the women only told us that the little girl had to learn to cook and she gave her instructions every now and then. The girls that were harvesting would work about three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon.

In the village Dangogo II, the field team walked around during school hours and spoke with six boys, varying between 10 and 14 years and who were officially in grades 2, 3 and 5. The boys said that they were free, because there was no teacher for the 3rd and 5th grade (which was true), while the other boy had no excuse. When we spoke to them many other children were peeking out of their homes. One of the boys gave us a description of his average day.

I wake up between 7:00 and 8:00 o'clock and go swim in the river. Afterwards I have breakfast and go to play, generally with a katapult to shoot birds. If my parents cooked, I eat and afterwards, I play soccer. Than I take a bath and go to sleep.

The boys also told us that from time to time they did some activities for others. For instance they could be asked to carry shelves or sand to build homes, assist when a new agricultural plot needed to be cleared, and catch fish mainly for personal use. For the small jobs they would get paid between Sf 5000 and Sf 7000 a day (between two and three dollars a day).

When we spoke with the captains of Dangogo they mentioned that many children did not go to school, but also did not go to work on the family plot. The boys should learn to make boats or to carve wood, but they did not seem to be interested. Many children went with their mother to the family plot, but rather played than work.

According to some key persons, marihuana was being planted and smoked in the vicinity. These activities took place on a small scale and for local consumption. Most elderly people did not notice it. We could not establish if children were involved.

6.10.4 Gold rush in Njun Jacob Kondre

Njun Jacobkondre is situated on the upper Saramacca river and is a community of the small Matawai tribe. Njun Jacobkondre consists of a core of four villages: Njun Jacobkondre, Baling, Mi Sa Libi and Bilawatra. The population probably is around 300 inhabitants. The research team had heard of the thriving gold business in the area and rumors of all kinds of child labour, including sexual exploitation.

Upon arrival by airplane two young boys with a wheelbarrow came to the plane to check if we needed to transport any luggage to the river. For such a job they asked Sf 5,000 (about US\$ 2) for a trip of probably less than 10 minutes. So you knew you were in a town with different prices.

The team spoke with the captain of the village, who described daily life and told us that many young boys would work rather than attend school. The authority of the captain was clearly less than in other Maroon villages, since two young boys whom he called just walked by. This also seemed to be the case with another traditional institute, the school. Several children in school uniforms just walked around in the village even when the school had started.

The Moravian primary school had (another) difficult year. Kindergarten had started in February, while the 1st and 2nd grade had started their first lessons on 11 March 2002. This was because the teachers had arrived very late, because there was no money for their air transport. Many children go to school at a late age and are written off at the maximum age of 14 years, which means that they may not have completed school. There were only 55 students registered, while the dropout rate was high. During a conversation with students in third grade, it showed that a quarter of these were living with a granny or aunt, because the mother was living in Paramaribo. Despite the expensive air transport, it turned out that the villagers traveled a lot to town. Some even had homes in both places and shuttled between them.

The team visited a camp in the gold fields, about 30 minutes by boat from Njun Jacobkondre. Upon arrival they had to walk for about one and a half hours to reach the camp. This was a large camp which held about 300 people, most of whom had gone to the mines. Half the population was Brazilian and half was Maroon, but they lived peaceful together according to most persons interviewed. Adjacent to the camp there were two deep mines where Brazilian drivers operated heavy machinery (two large excavators). Other mines were further away. There were distinct Brazilian camps and Surinamese camps, but the bars and shops were all operated by Surinamese.

No children were seen in the mines although some young people wandered around. According to some key persons the work on the gold fields was too heavy for children and therefore you would not find them there. We interviewed a boy of 14 years, who was working as an assistant to a shopkeeper. Another boy of 14 years was working as a cook for some gold

diggers. One boy of 16 years was helping out with freight and water transport. One boy had worked as an ATV driver (All Terrain Vehicle), which was owned by his mother, since he was 17 years. We were interested in some of the young girls we saw, but these turned out to be cousins of shopkeepers, who also assisted in the shop. Several young people from the village came to visit relatives as well. As far as we could determine on commercial sex workers, they were not so young and were more foreigners. Thus we could not support the rumors that young girls were involved in commercial sexual exploitation. Actually this would not be easy for local girls, since the village was rather nearby and small i.e. everyone would know who was involved. At the same time, however, the distance was too far to come for really young girls from Paramaribo. None of the people we spoke to could verify such claims either. Overall young people in this vicinity earned a lot, although prices were also sky high.

6.10.5 Main findings Upper-Suriname river and Upper-Saramacca river region

Overall 12 children were interviewed, nine boys and three girls. The ages varied between 10 and 15 years. All were tribal Maroons. Three quarters of the children were working one to four years. Most were only in their first job. Half of the children were either 9, 10 or 11 years old when they started working, while the others started at a later age.

Two thirds of the children were working 4 or more days a week, and the rest worked less. Many (42%) worked more than 8 hours a day, whereas (33%) would work one or two hours a day, and the others fell in between these two categories.

The largest activity (42%) performed by the children was to work on the family plot, while other types of activities included peddling (17%), gold mining (8%) and gardening (8%). Most of the children (83%) were employed by their parents or a relative, while only (8%) worked for an employer and another 8% was self-employed.

The most important reason to work was to help the parent(s) (51%) or to maintain oneself (42%), while several other reasons were hardly mentioned (8%). There was a clear gap between those who did not get any pay from their work (42%) and those that earned more than Sf 5000 a day (also 42%). The rest earned between Sf 2000 and Sf 5000 a day. The majority of the children (67%) worked under supervision of their parents.

About 17% of the children found their job to be quite dangerous, while another 17% found it sometimes dangerous, while the rest thought it was not dangerous. Children complained of being tired when they came home from their job (17% was always tired and 58% sometimes), but one quarter was never tired. Only 8% often had to lift heavy things at the job, while 50% had to lift things sometimes, while the other 42% did not complain. According to a quarter of the children, they were always busy at their job, while another quarter were sometimes busy and the rest was not so busy. Actually 17% said they were sometimes bored at the job. Half the children were confronted with different substances during their work, notably sand (42%), but also mercury and gas (8%).

In their free time many children enjoyed playing, especially soccer, while some others went hunting or fishing. The children also reflected on their future and although 42% did not know what they would like to do later, a quarter mentioned teacher, while mechanic, policeman, military and carpenter were also mentioned.

It is clear that the school has a limited meaning in Sipaliwini, since only half of the children attend it daily. The reasons not to go included lack of finances, distance to school, and being too old. About three quarters of the children had at least repeated a class once. They cited lack of motivation, illness and not being able to comprehend the teaching materials.

Most children (42%) lived with their mother or even with both parents (33%), while the rest (17%) stayed with their grandparents. About 58% of the children had five or more siblings. Virtually all the children mentioned that one of their brothers or sisters younger than 15 years were also working. The mother of most children (75%) was housewife, which normally meant that she worked on the family plot. When present, the fathers worked in agriculture, timber, as health workers, were self-employed, or in transport. Three quarters of the children were Christian, while the other quarter adhered to a tribal religion.

6.10.6 Subsistence level agriculture as a way of life

Most people in Sipaliwini still live a tribal and traditional way of life in which subsistence level agriculture is a main means of survival. Education does not land many jobs in the village society, since there are just a few bureaucratic jobs and even less companies to reward education. The gold sector does not require much education and neither do many self-employed jobs such as water transport. Thus it is of utmost importance for children to learn to survive, which they normally do when they learn to plant cassava, bananas and rice at the family plot. Or for the boys when they learn how to handle a boat and freight, clear a piece of forest, and know where to make some cash. Thus work is a matter of survival rather than a point of real concern. It seems that the school system is not functioning properly, but seems merely an institute to keep boys and girls off the land and waters. There are not many that even complete primary school and there does not seem to be much of a future even for those that do. Nevertheless it will not stay like this and many young people aspire to leave their village, but are very ill equipped to enter a modern city environment. This remains a dilemma for the educational system, since it does not seem to perform for any of these environments.

Notes

¹*According to the Central Bureau of Civil Affairs (1998-1999). From this publication we will also use the figures for the other districts. The last census dates back to 1980.*

²*Wim Veer mentions the scientific names of awara or star-nut (*astrocaryum segregatum*) and knippa or genip (*melicocca bijuga*) in his beautiful edition on Surinamese fruits (*Vruchten in Suriname*, Paramaribo, 2001).*

³*By the end of the field work another daily newspaper was established, which was not taken into consideration.*

⁴*The field team went to one major location that is known for prostitution and went at several hours during the evening and night. They also asked the guards of businesses in the neighbourhood whether they had seen any young children operating in that neighbourhood.*

⁵During the presentation of the results of this report at an ILO workshop in Trinidad (October 2002) it became evident that most researchers in other countries encountered the same problem of this fairly invisible sector.

⁶*Leids Dagblad*, 18 juni 2002, “Steeds meer Surinaamse tieners in de prostitutie” (“More and more teenagers enter prostitution” was the title of an article in a local Dutch newspaper).

⁷This article appeared in the daily newspaper *De Ware Tijd* of October 29, 2002. We immediately emailed the source of this paper, informed her that we were completing our report and were very interested to refer to this study. We got a quick reply that she was quite busy, but that we would get a full answer later, but after a month still had not heard from this source. We could not wait longer and had to submit our final report to the ILO.

⁸This 41% was divided into 16.7% who worked 5 to 6 hours, 14.3% who worked 7 to 8 hours and 9.5% who worked more than 8 hours a day.

⁹Several combinations were given e.g. help parent and could not learn in school; in such cases we have included this combination in contribution to the family income.

¹⁰It was not clear afterwards if this was their net earnings or their turnover, since several children who sold newspapers estimated their ‘earnings’ by way of multiplying the number of papers they sold by the price of the paper. Only 3 children did not earn anything.

¹¹*Hosselen* is a Suriname word for informal jobs which have mostly an incidental character. With the income of several hustling jobs one can survive.

¹²Of these, 22% put their money in the household of a single mother and 17% in a household run by both parents.

¹³M. Schalkwijk & W. Sumter: *Socioeconomic aspects of the Environmental Baseline Study and Impact Assessment in the Gros-Rosebel Gold Concession* (Environmental Research Group, University of Suriname, 1994).

¹⁴See also *National Education Plan 2002*, page 21 (Ministry of Education).

¹⁵The official statistics estimate the population for Sipaliwini around 25,000, but this is probably too low. We therefore used the statistics of the *Medische Zending* (Primary Health Care Suriname) used in their annual report 2000/2001. They listed 48,771 persons as registered patients in the interior, which includes 9,083 patients in the Brokopondo area. For a discussion on demographics and population estimates for the interior see M. Schalkwijk (1996:7-9).

7. Background and Attitudes of Parents

7.1. Main characteristics of the Parent(s) and Guardian(s)

In the period April through July 2002, some 52 parents and guardians of working children were interviewed. The respondents were traced by the address given by the children. This was done only after the children gave permission to interview their parents/guardians.¹ Of course this creates a selection bias, since children who had bad relationships with their parents would not be expected to endorse such an interview.

Parents in all the districts that were visited were interviewed i.e. Paramaribo, Wanica, Saramacca, Commewijne, Marowijne, Para, Brokopondo, Sipaliwini and Nickerie.

Most of the parents that were interviewed were women 79%, and only 21% were men. The largest segment of respondents consisted of Maroons (39%), which was also the largest ethnic group which was found among the children (Table 7.1). Among the other ethnic groups there was some discrepancy between the relative size of the sample of children and parents, which was due to the fact that we did not select parents by ethnicity, while we also did relatively more interviews with parents in the districts than in the city and interior. The coastal districts have larger populations of East Indians and Indonesians, while Creoles make up a larger segment of the urban population.

Table 7.1 Ethnicity of Parents/Guardians and working children

Ethnicity	Parents/ Guardians	children
Maroon	38.5	42.8
East Indian	26.9	20.5
Creole	13.5	20.5
Indonesian	7.7	3.4
Mixed	7.7	9.0
Amerindian	5.8	1.8
Total	100% (N = 52)	100% (N = 166)

The majority (60%) of the parents of working children that were interviewed had a job. The five jobs that were most frequently mentioned: cleaner/janitor, vendor, civil servant, bus-driver, taxi-driver. Nearly 60% mentioned that they worked daily in a full-time job, while the remaining 40% were unemployed. Lack of employment and child care facilities, plus the obligation towards the other partner to stay home, were mentioned as the most important reasons for not working outside the home. This does not mean, however, that unemployment stood at 40%, since in cases where there was a partner he/she could have

been employed. Unemployment of the household could nevertheless be assessed to be at least 18%, which is still higher than the overall average for Suriname which stands at about 11%.²

From the research data we conclude that the parents or guardians often have informal jobs which require low or no formal education.

Family size, housing, education level of the parent and income are the indicators of the socio-economic environment of the working child.

The question “How many people live in this house?” indicated that 67% of the households consisted of 5 to 9 persons. A household size of 10-16 people was confirmed by 14% of the respondents, while 19% lived in small households of 3 to 4 persons.

More than half of the parents (54%) live in their own home. One-fourth (25%) of the respondents stayed in a house of relatives, or in a house owned by a company (6%). A minority (13%) are tenants. According to the assessment of the research team, 19% of the houses were in a good condition, 54% were in a reasonable state, and 23% in bad shape.³ If we compare these statistics with those of a major household survey which was done for Paramaribo in 1992, then we have less ownership among the parents (was 64%), more parents in houses that belonged to relatives (12%), less tenants (22%) and more other arrangements (3%).⁴ The data for Paramaribo were for all social classes and covered only the city. Nevertheless it gives some idea, notably the fact that a sizeable number of parents lived in a house of a relative indicating that networking seemed important in this area, and probably led to cheaper arrangements for low budget families.

When we look at the educational level of the parents we see that 63% do not have formal education or only primary education, while 31% had maximum secondary school and only 6% went to a tertiary institution.

Table 7.2 Education level of Parents/Guardians

Education level of the parents	Frequency	Percentage
No formal education	9	17%
Primary education	24	46%
Secondary Technical vocational school	2	4%
Secondary school	14	27%
College	1	2%
Tertiary technical training college	1	2%
Teachers Training College	1	2%
Total	52	100%

Half of the respondents earned less than the poverty income of Sf 300,000 (about US\$ 140) per month and half earned (often not much) more than that.⁵ In two thirds of the households, there was just one adult earning an income and in the other third two or more

adults. 13% of the respondents worked extra side jobs. 19% received direct financial support from the government, which would be given only to very poor families.

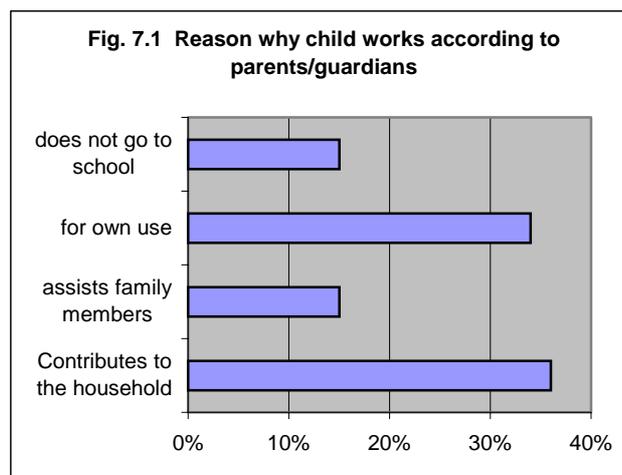
Of the families, 81% said they had some form of medical insurance, while 19% had no insurance at all. Of those with medical insurance it turned out that many (68%) had a medical card from the Ministry of Social Affairs, which is also an indication that these were fairly poor families. Overall 37 of the 52 respondents (= 71%) either had a medical card for poor people or no insurance at all.

If we look at the classification by socio-economic class, then 61% of the parents/guardians were classified as lower social class, 35% as middle class and 4% as higher class. This was the classification by the field researchers and compared to the medical information, it seemed probably still optimistic. The researchers who interviewed the children made the assessment that 81% came from lower class families and 19% from a middle class background. If one takes the average of all these assessments then an estimate of 70% lower class families seems a fair statement to describe the background of most working children.

We can conclude this section by stating that there was a need for extra income in many of the households and that the contribution by working children was either urgently needed or in any case welcomed.

7.2. Opinions of Parents

Most parents know that their child is working, because only 15% reported that they were not aware that their child was working at the time of the interview. About three-fourth (77%) of the respondents saw their child's working status as positive, while the others (22%) thought that a minor should not work and would prefer that the child would finish school. The most important reasons the parents gave for a child to work is illustrated in Figure 7.1. According to the parents, their children worked to support the family income, assist family members, to earn money for their own use, or because they just had to earn some money since they were not going to school anymore.



Most parents (69%) mentioned that their children were attending school, while the remaining 31% confirmed that their children were not going to school anymore. The reasons that were given for those that did not go to school were: the child cannot learn (5x), child does not want to go to school (4x), child has been sent off from school (2x), not possible to enter school (2x), and the child has to help the family out financially (1x).

The parents were asked what future they saw for their child. About 42% of the parents were of the opinion that the future of their child would be more secure if the child would stay in school and perform well. Some 23% saw a good future through a good job, while 8% stressed that the child would have to learn a specific vocation to make it. Another 8% was optimistic in a fairly general but unspecified way, why the same percentage was less optimistic, and 11% had no opinion or no answer.

We asked the parents whether they knew any other working children in their neighbourhood, of which 27% answered positively, 63% negatively and 10% gave no answer or did not know.

7.3 Matching children and parents

Finally we tried to match the information provided by the child with that of the parent/guardian in order to get some feedback about their knowledge about each other and the reliability of the information.

Table 7.3 Matching information of Parents and children

	work parent	work child	Ethnicity	Social Class	Family size*
Perfect match	73%	42%	90%	73%	40%
Partial match	8%	27%	n.a.	n.a.	21%
No match	15%	23%	6%	21%	35%
Unknown	4%	7%	4%	6%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* for the family size one person difference was considered a partial match

The information in Table 7.3 reveals first of all that with social surveys one has to be cautious, because if you ask two persons the same thing the answers can differ substantially, even with respect to the simplest facts. The best match was between the ethnicity of the child and the parent/guardian, but this information was not asked but jotted down at the end of the interview by the researcher. The 10% discrepancy can be explained by the fact that in 4% of the cases, the data was missing for one of the respondents (not taken down by the researchers), while in 6% the child and the parent/guardian had different ethnic backgrounds. The difference could be because of foster parents, mixed marriages, or a possible mistake by the researcher or with coding.

Social class was also assessed in both instances by the researcher, but based on the information provided by the respondents. Here the researchers made different assessments in 21% of the cases, which could be retraced most probably to the different kind of information given by the child about his/her background and that of the parent/guardian given about the same background. Visiting a home and asking the parent specific questions about their education and income, resulted in different assessments than the more scanty information provided by the child.

A more marked difference was the information given about the family size. One would assume that this would match very close, because both parent/guardian and child –who lived in the same house- would be able to do this very simple calculation. There was also no need to assume any intentional misinformation. The discrepancies therefore seemed to be the result of estimates rather than precise calculation.

Interesting are the matching differences between the work of the parent and the job of the child. Here we see that the child is better informed about the work of his/her parent (73% full matches) than the other way around (only 42% full matches). On the other hand, this is to be expected since the parent will probably be much longer in his/her job, while the child often has held the job for a much shorter time. It may, however, also indicate a lack of interest by many parents.

Notes

¹*We will use the term parents instead of parents/guardians to make the text more readable.*

²*The assessment was made by looking at single parent households where the parent was not working with 18% of all parents/guardians falling in this category. In cases of two-parent households, however, it could be that the other partner was also unemployed, but this was not asked. So the unemployment rate could be higher than 18%.*

³*Of 4% the condition was not assessed.*

⁴*Data taken from Schalkwijk & de Bruijne 1997: 44.*

⁵*The question about income was asked to the respondent only and thus in cases where two persons were working the combined income was higher (but not registered).*

8. Main Issues

So far we have presented the results of the interviews with children, parents and key persons, at the district and national level. We need a more comprehensive view before we can go to the conclusions and recommendations. There are a number of issues that can now be addressed and which are of major relevance for policy purposes.

8.1 Child labour and child work

In Suriname there has been a confusion about whether all the work that children are performing should also be seen as child labour and thus prohibited (see paragraph 2.2). In this survey we were not able to differentiate between these two types from the outset either. Therefore we have interviewed all kinds of working children that we encountered, but we hoped that through our methods we would eventually get more children who could be qualified as child labourers. This was also the main reason why we interviewed more children (169) than we had intended (100). In order to differentiate between different forms of work we asked the children how many days in a week they worked and how many hours in a day. It is clear that there is a difference between a child that works one day a week for 1 hour and another that labours for 8 hours a day and 5 days a week. Some might consider the first case a form of very light work (even if the job was difficult), while the other could be considered child labour (even if the job was not difficult).

This approach loses sight of overestimating working hours and underestimating the intensity or harm that can be done in even short periods e.g. one hour of severe exploitation, or only one day of bonded labour, can harm a child's development. One hour of working with dangerous machines can be enough to trigger a real accident. One hour of commercial sexual exploitation can be very traumatic. Therefore we looked at other aspects such as the workload, possible dangers at work, earnings and feelings of tiredness of the child. But the most important variables were 'working hours' and 'working days' and for a first attempt to differentiate between allowable work and child labour we used a combination of these two variables. The extremes are normally easy to decide on, but the problem is where to draw the line between the two categories? It should be clear that there probably will be a gray zone between the two types of working children, but nevertheless we tried to establish a borderline. This we did by means of reasoning, analyzing the data and experimenting with different borders.

Light work

Every child in a family would normally have to do some chores. No harm is done, it is not dangerous for his/her safety and most of the time it is positive in building self-esteem and trust. These chores would take up about 1 to a maximum of 2 hours e.g. sweeping the house or raking yard, baby sitting, washing dishes, etc. Children working 1 to 2 hours a day can be considered to do allowable child work, even if they had to do it everyday. Whenever a child would work more than 2 hours a day this would therefore go in the direction of labour rather than chores. This would not be true, however if this happened only occasionally i.e. on Saturday or Sunday where a child could be expected to work longer e.g. weeding the yard,

repairing some tools, cleaning the house, buying goods at the store, etc. Or the child would go with the father and/or mother to some family plot outside the house and work longer hours and maybe even stay overnight. Therefore, we drew a line for light work if a child was also working longer hours, but only one day a week. These children would work a maximum of 14 hours a week, but half of them would work only 6 hours or less in a week. This resulted in a group of children that made up 33.5% of all interviews.

Child labour

The children who worked 4 days or more in a week and who were also working at least 5 hours a day were considered to be engaged in child labour. This would mean that the children in this group worked at least 20 hours a week. For our purpose these were considered to be those who might be engaged in the worst forms of child labour. This group made up 27.5% of all interviews.

Gray zone between light work and child labour

Then there was a middle group who worked 3 to 4 hours a day for at least two days a week, or who worked only 2 or 3 days but 5 or more hours during those days. Most of these children would work between 10 and 30 hours, which we labeled ‘Semi-light work’. This group made up 38.9% of all interviews.

Table 8.1 Working children by district and type of labour

District	Light work	Semi-Light work	child labour	Total
Paramaribo	38.1%	35.7%	26.2%	100% (N = 42)
Wanica	35.7%	28.6%	35.7%	100% (N = 14)
Commewijne	30.8%	38.5%	30.8%	100% (N = 13)
Marowijne	22.2%	61.1%	16.7%	100% (N = 18)
Para	33.3%	53.3%	13.3%	100% (N = 15)
Brokopondo	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%	100% (N = 18)
Sipaliwini	33.3%	16.7%	50.0%	100% (N = 12)
Saramacca	33.3%	38.1%	28.6%	100% (N = 21)
Nickerie	35.7%	21.4%	42.9%	100% (N = 14)
Total	33.5% (N = 56)	38.9% (N = 65)	27.5% (N = 46)	100% (N = 167)

If members of the “Semi-light work” group had to be added to either the light work or child labour category, we would add those making on average over 15 hours a week to the child labourers (i.e. those working 3 to 4 hours a day but more than 4 days a week, plus those who worked only 2 or 3 days but at least 7 hours a day), while the remaining cases would be joined with the Light work group. This last group could then be labeled the ‘Child Work’ group. If we thus had only two groups those involved in child labour would make up 54% of all the working children, while those involved in other work would consist of 46% of the children that were interviewed.

Thus all said and done we could now distinguish between child work and child labour by drawing a line between those children that worked less than 15 hours or 15 hours or more a week.¹ We will modify this distinction later by adding more variables.

8.2 Estimated number of child labourers

There are no real estimates of the actual number of child labourers in Suriname or even in Paramaribo. We will make an attempt to estimate this as follows.

- a. There are about 25,000 children in Paramaribo between 10 and 14 years, which is about 10.7% of the population in the capital. We use this age category because we have at least this data, while most working children are in this age group.²
- b. According to the 1998 survey by the Ministry of Labour 1.8% of the children in Paramaribo were economically active. Using only the age group 10 to 14 years we can estimate that 4% of this age group would be working children (high estimate). If we now take 4% of 25,000, we arrive at about 1,000 working children in Paramaribo.
- c. According to the 1998 survey, however, only 15% of all the children were working 5 or more hours, which we could use as a proxy for child labour, and thus can estimate that only about 150 of the 1,000 children would be involved in child labour.³
- d. The next step is to use our own survey to arrive at another estimate for the number of child labourers in Paramaribo. According to our data, 27.5% of the children we interviewed were involved in child labour (which we expanded to 54% by dividing up the gray zone as well i.e. using a wider definition). If we use these percentages, we arrive at a number of 275 child laborers (or even 540) for Paramaribo.
- e. Since we were aiming our interviews primarily at children that were suspected to be child labourers, while the 1998 survey had a much wider range of children, the actual number of child labourers probably will be somewhere in between i.e. around 200 (or 250 if we use the wider definition).
- f. Since the population of Paramaribo is roughly half that of Suriname we can now put the number of child labourers in all of Suriname around 400 children (or 500 if we use the wider definition).
- g. Not all these child labourers will be involved in the worst forms of child labour and thus that number will be lower and probably much lower. In the next paragraph we find an estimate of 18.5% of the children to be involved in the worst forms of child labour, which means that we may estimate the total number of this type of child labourers in Suriname to be roughly around 270 (or 335 if we use the wider definition); thus we may say about 300.⁴

It should be clear that these are not definite numbers, but estimates based on several indications rather than on reliable hard evidence.

8.3 Worst forms of child labour

The Rapid Assessment was primarily meant to find the worst forms of child labour and it is time to give an indication of the occurrence of such forms in Suriname. We can now look at different indicators to differentiate between child labour and the 'worst forms'. Indicators that we have used in the questionnaire to track potential worst forms of child labour were:

- 1) amount of work (hours and days)
- 2) level of tiredness (fatigue)
- 3) lifting of heavy materials
- 4) exposure to hazardous material
- 5) perceived danger/risk of the job
- 6) working with machinery
- 7) pressure of the job
- 8) level of boredom (possible monotonous job)

We will discuss each of these indicators by itself and then add them together into a composite indicator to measure the worst forms of child labour.

8.3.1 Amount of work

We have already dwelt on the number of working hours to delineate the concept of child labour. With respect to working hours, we start with the narrower definition of child labour i.e. those 27.5% of all working children that were classified as such. It should be clear, however, that children who work the longest hours will be more likely to be part of the worst form of child labour. According to our survey, 16% of the children who were interviewed worked for more than 35 hours a week. These children were all 12 years or older and actually 85% of these were 14 years and older. This then means that younger children would be at a lower risk to be involved with more intensive child labour. This group is overwhelmingly male (96%), while two thirds of the children that work less than 35 hours were female.

The largest ethnic group of children in this category were Maroons (44%), followed by East Indians (30%), Javanese (11%) and Creoles plus Mixed (both 7%).⁵

The type of jobs that were done did not distinguish themselves from those that other children spent less time in e.g. gold digging, fisheries/shrimp, rice production/processing, hustling (vending), construction, boat transport. Two thirds (67%) of the youngsters in this category, however, worked for an employer, while this was the case with only 39% of the other working children.

The vast majority of children (89%) that worked long hours were among the best paid (over Sf 5,000 per day i.e. more than US\$ 2 a day), while in the other group of children only 42% earned that kind of money.⁶ A quarter (24%) of these children gave all their earnings to their family, while another 60% gave part of their income. For the other group this was respectively, 28% and 39%. Nevertheless, many youngsters said that they saved part of their income regularly (33%) or every now and then (48%), which was higher than for the group that worked less hours (respectively 26% and 33%).

Half of those that made long hours said that their job was (sometimes) dangerous, while only 16% of the other group made a similar statement. Those that worked over 35 hours were

mostly working full-time, because 89% did not attend school anymore, while this was only 4% for the other working children. Moreover 38% of them did not even get halfway through elementary school.

8.3.2 Level of tiredness

If we look at the level of tiredness 24% of the child labour group said they were always tired, while only 4% of the child work group were always tired.

8.3.3 Lifting heavy stuff

When asked if they had to carry or lift heavy things, 12% of the child labour group said this was always part of their job, while only 1% of the child work group stated that they always had to lift heavy things.

8.3.4 Exposure to hazardous material

In 15% of the jobs that were done by the child labour group there was exposure to potential hazardous materials, while this was only 4% for the child work group. This would include materials such as mercury, oil, butane gas and paint. In addition, 48% of the children in the child labour group complained about less hazardous materials such as dust and sand against 35% in the child work group.

8.3.5 Perceived danger of job

Of the child labour group, 22% perceived their job as dangerous or risky, while only 7% of the child work group did so. From both groups 6% found their jobs sometimes dangerous/risky, while the rest did not consider their work dangerous or risky.

8.3.6 Dangerous machinery

Just a few children were operating machinery that could be deemed dangerous such as heavy equipment during construction, agriculture or gold digging i.e. 6% of the child labour group and 4% of the child work group. There were others that dealt with light machinery such as lawn mowers or outboard motors (14% of child labour group and 9% of the child work group). The difference between the two groups was not significant however.

8.3.7 Work pressure

The child labour group experienced more pressure at their job (always 28%) than the child work group (15%), while 21% of the child labour group found it sometimes demanding (against 18% of the child work group).

8.3.8 Monotonous work

The level of boredom at the job did not seem a good indicator of child labour, since the pattern was not significantly different between the child work and child labour group.⁷

From these criteria we should leave out number 6 and 8, but use the others to arrive at a more limited group of child labourers, which can then be designed as those who would be prone to be involved in the worst forms of child labour. We may define such a group as those that would have experienced extreme positions on three out of the six indicators.⁸ By this method we selected a group of 31 children (19% of all our interviews) that were suffering from several extremes in their job. This group can now be described more fully.

This group is overwhelmingly male (94%), and except for one case of a 7-year-old boy, all of the children were 12 years or older. Ethnically, Maroons dominated this group (52%). The religious affiliation of the children was largely Christian (42%), Tribal rituals (26%), Hindu or Muslim (each 13%), or none (6%).

This group did not work primarily to support their parents, but rather to support themselves. The group seemed to earn a decent wage (94% earned more than Sf 5,000 or U\$ 2 per day, while none earned less than Sf 3,000 a day. Their spending and saving pattern was not significantly different from other working children.

For most of these children it was either their first job (62%) or their second job (31%). Of this category 58% had left school, while the rest still were in school. Their school career was clearly below average, since 88% had repeated at least one class.

More than a third (36%) lived with both parents, while 39% lived with one parent. Of the remaining children, 16% stayed with relatives, while the other 9% lived with non-relatives. The households the children stayed in were for 36% small (2 to 4 persons in total), 45% medium (5 to 7 persons) and for 19% large (8 or more people). There was no indication that these children were the eldest or so in their family. Most of them had brothers and sisters under age 15 who also worked, but this did not differ significantly from the other group of working children.

They came mainly (87%) from a lower class background. In 52% of the cases the father was living far away from home (in the interior or in another country), had passed away or was very sick or the child did not know what his/her father was doing. Those that knew the occupation of their father mentioned that he was a farmer, lumberjack, fisherman, gold digger, boatman, construction worker, janitor, porter, policeman/military, small entrepreneur. Of the mothers 58% were listed as housewife (who often maintained a plot), others were cleaning ladies, market vendors, labourers in a company, one was a small entrepreneur, and another one a cook.

The type of work these children did were: gold mining (6), hustlers/vendors (6), construction work (6), transport/porter (8), agriculture/fisheries (6). Several children were juggling different jobs e.g. some were also selling newspapers, weeding.

We could further fine tune this method of arriving at the 'worst forms' of child labour, but we will probably need more discussion about its underpinnings. Nevertheless, this is another kind of approach to get to the 'worst forms' than through the field approach where one looks for concentrations of children involved in a very serious situation of child labour. In a country like Suriname where such concentrations have not been found, however, one will probably need another systematic approach to find the worst forms' of child labour.

8.4 Causes of child labour

One of the main interests in doing research on child labour is to find the underlying causes. It should not be expected, however, that a Rapid Assessment method will be sufficiently sophisticated in its design and depth to make any sort of thorough causal analysis of child

labour. Such causal testing requires other more sophisticated research designs and tests. Nevertheless, the Rapid Assessment approach aims to explore the issues at hand to such an extent that at least superficial causes (i.e. what children themselves and their parents state to be causes) can be identified, although most probably also underlying causes will be revealed.

8.4.1 International recognized causes of child labour

In the literature and documentation about child labour there are some generally recognized causes for this phenomenon. According to the ILO “Poverty is the greatest single force which creates the flow of children into the workplace. It forces many children to work full time for their own and their families’ survival”. (ILO 1996: 34).⁹

In the same document, the ILO also mentions lack of educational opportunities and the fact that “most ‘free’ public education is in fact very expensive to a poor family” (cost of school supplies, uniforms, transportation), especially if they have more than one child in school. “Many children live in communities that do not have adequate school facilities, so they work”. Even if they are in school many children drop out because of the low quality of the education (which discourages them) or the lack of chances for improved upward mobility after graduation (ILO 1996: 35, 36).

Furthermore, the ILO stated that “Large family size has been statistically shown to be associated not only with the higher likelihood that children will work, but also lower school attendance and completion.” (ILO 1996: 38).

A fourth major factor has to do with the demand for child work. This demand may originate within the family e.g. in family farms, shops, and other endeavors “...that depend on family labour for their economic viability.” The other source of demand is by the market. “It is generally considered that children are most likely to be employed when their labour is less expensive or less troublesome than that of adults, when other labour is scarce, and when they are considered irreplaceable by reason of their size or perceived dexterity.” (ILO 1996: 39 through 45).

In an IPEC documentation folder on child labour in Nepal, poverty was identified as the main causal factor, but in addition the following contributing factors were listed:

- * lack of access to education for children
- * employer-worker relationships in rural areas
- * rural-urban migration
- * family problems such as violence
- * inadequate enforcement of labour and criminal laws
- * social customs, values and attitudes that attribute a very low status to children
- * lack of education of parents

Thus the main factors identified are: poverty, lack of or poor education, family size, and demand for labour. Other factors may also contribute to the phenomenon.

8.4.2 Causes given in Surinamese Reports

In the literature and research on Suriname (see 2.3) a number of causes were also mentioned by the different authors. Some of them came up with causes that they assumed to be there i.e. not based on hard research facts and analysis, but more on other literature and intuition. The following causes were listed:

- Defares (1981): Economic environment (poverty, low income, unemployment) and cultural environment (home situation, school situation).
- Both the ICK (1985) and Ferrier (1997) saw the socioeconomic problems as a major cause, while Ferrier also added the Internal War as a main cause.
- Dennen (1990), who did a survey, assumed primarily that the absence of a father in the family would lead to more child labour.
- Orié (2002), who interviewed 50 working children did not identify any causes.

Two sources reported more empirical based causal relationships i.e.:

- Van den Berghe (1990) identified poverty (both at the macro and micro level) as the most important factor, but also scarcity of labour, friction unemployment, composition of the household (notably matrifocal households), urbanization, attitude of parents towards education, and cultural factors (acquiring skills).
- The Ministry of Labour survey (1999) brought 3 causes to the attention i.e. low income, large families and single parent families.

If we compare these findings with those of the ILO we notice that poverty, family size, and demand for labour came out of the research in Suriname. In addition these authors mentioned single parent families and especially single mothers. Friction unemployment was also a new factor, as was the Internal War. Lack of educational opportunities was not mentioned by these authors, but have been recognized by Ringeling (1999), the Ministry of Social Affairs (2001) and the Ministry of Education (2002). Our survey confirmed the relation between drop outs and lack of education, and child labour.

8.4.3 Reasons stated by Children, Parents and Key-Persons

If we look at the reasons the children gave during interviews of why they were working, then we must conclude that these often were of a superficial nature e.g. “to help my mother”, “because I cannot learn in school”, “I need money”, “I want to buy some clothes”, etc. We condensed them into three categories: “self-centered reasons” (40%), “family oriented reasons” (44%), and a combination of both (16%), but this was not very edifying in terms of getting to the real causes of the problem (see 5.4). The limited setting of an interview was not enough to get to the underlying causes.

The interviews with the parents were somewhat more instructive, but also not enough to get to the underlying causes (see 7.2). The parents/guardians gave the following reasons why their child was working: “contributes to the household” (36%), “assists family members” (15%), “for own use” (34%), “does not go to school” (15%).

The key persons were asked why they thought the children were hired to work and they came up with the following answers: “They are cheap labourers” (37%), “the parents stimulate it”

(12%), “the children themselves want to work” (11%), “Other reasons” (21%, which were often a combination of the three earlier reasons given), or they did not know or did not answer (18%). They shed some new light on the probable causes, but still did not go to the underlying causes.

What we see in terms of causal reasoning in the three different groups mentioned, is at least that their perspectives varied depending on their position. The parents did not tell us that sometimes they send the children to work (as many key persons assumed), but on the other hand, the key-persons missed the fact that many children simply have to look after themselves.

If we compare the reasons given by the children, parents and key-persons, there still are enough indications to link them with the four main causes reported by the ILO. We see the following pattern:

- Poverty was not mentioned directly, but could be inferred from several statements by both parents and children e.g. to help parents, to contribute to the household, etc.
- The parents and children did not mention the demand for the child’s labour (although there were a few that actually did), while the key-persons focused in on this aspect.
- Lack of education, motivation or poor performance at school was mentioned by some of the children and by 15% of the parents (“child does not go to school”).
- Family size was not mentioned at all by either group, although family pressure (by parents) was one of the causes given by the key-persons.

This section shows that direct questions in an interview are not enough to get at the causes of child labour and that it will be useful to add more causal inferences from the acquired data itself to enrich the analysis on the situation in Suriname.

8.5 Causes inferred from survey variables

We will confront the data first with the four major causes –poverty, lack of education, family size, and demand for child labour- and see if these are also confirmed by the data. We will also include a special analysis of the group of working children that we have found to be involved in the “worst forms” of child labour in Suriname.

8.5.1 Poverty

Indicators of poverty were primarily included in the survey of the parents and in paragraph 7.1 the results were reported. We will focus here on unemployment, income and health insurance.

We estimated that unemployment among the parents/guardians was at least 18%, which was higher than the 11% average for Suriname. Unemployment normally corresponds highly with poverty.

The information gathered on income is too scant to draw major conclusions, although we can say that about half of the parents seemed to be living below the poverty line, which was about the same as the average in Suriname.¹⁰ We could not analyze the other half further, but expected most of them to be just over the poverty line.

One indirect indication of low income is the fact that we found a clear overrepresentation of Maroons among the working children and parents. According to a household survey by the Statistical Office in 1999/2000 the ethnic distribution of incomes was clearly unfavorable for Maroons. They earned 57% of the average income of all Surinamese in that survey, while all other ethnic groups stood at 89% of this average or higher (ABS 2001).¹¹

Table 8.2 Health insurance by household

Type of medical insurance	Household Survey ABS	Child Labour Survey NIKOS
No insurance	12%	20%
Social card	34%	54%
SZF	43%	20%
Private insurance	10%	6%
	100% (N=1255)	100% (N=50)

The best indicator of poverty that we have reliable data on is the type of health insurance, since those with no health insurance or with a medical card from the Ministry of Social Affairs normally would qualify only if they were well below the poverty line.¹² The main health insurance in Suriname is from the State Health Insurance Fund (SZF), which covers virtually all civil servants and many businesses as well. There are private insurance companies where businesses can insure their employees or private citizens can take insurance. When we compare the situation of the parents/guardians of working children with those of the overall situation in Suriname (Table 8.2), it becomes evident that most probably at least 74% of the parents were below the poverty line, which was much higher than the 46% in the household survey. This is when we categorize those without insurance and those with a social card as poor people.

Summarizing the evidence so far we can state that the information of the child labour survey confirms the fact that at least three quarters of the families of the working children were very poor.

Surprisingly, however, we should add that when we made a distinction between parents of children who were labeled to be involved with child work and those who were involved in child labour we did not get significant differences for our indicators on poverty. The same was true for the group of parents whose children were involved in the worst forms of child labour.¹³ What this probably says is that most parents of working children were overall quite poor, so that there was not much room too differentiate between them. It also could be that we did not have enough detailed information to make a further differentiation possible.

8.5.2 Family size and background

In the literature on child labour one of the main causes why children began to work is found in the family situation. The ILO stresses the size of the family, while Surinamese sources also point towards the composition of the family and notably towards single parent families with a mother as head of the household. We will focus on these two aspects of family background.

Table 8.3 Household size by ethnicity

Ethnic group	Household Survey ABS i.e. average household	child labour Survey NIKOS i.e. poor household	Ratio of poor households to average households
Maroon	5.4	7.1	1.3
Amerindian	5.3	4.7	0.9
East Indian	4.2	5.8	1.4
Indonesian	4.1	4.9	1.2
Creoles	3.9	7.6	1.9
Mixed	3.6	6.1	1.7
Total Average	4.1	6.7	1.6

The average household size in Suriname is 4.1 according to the last household survey (ABS 2001), but it varied substantially across ethnic lines. The average size of the households where the working children stayed was 6.7, which speaks for itself. Table 8.3 gives a further breakdown of the household size by ethnic group. This only confirms the pattern for each group separately, except for the Amerindians which most probably was due to their small numbers in the child labour survey. The household survey shows a clear difference between the households from ethnic groups with a tribal background (Maroons and Amerindians) and the other ethnic groups. The Asian households (East Indian and Indonesian) are also slightly larger than those of the Creoles and Mixed population. In the child labour survey, which targeted mostly poor households, we see that the households of the poor Creoles nearly twice the average of all Creole households and even larger than that of poor Maroons. This discrepancy was less marked for the other ethnic groups.

The large size of the household of the working children is also underlined by the fact that 18,0% of these households consisted of 10 or more people, while only 2,5% of the households in general were so large.¹⁴ Interesting enough the household size of working children were even larger than those in two of the poorest neighborhoods in the urban fringe around Paramaribo.¹⁵ In these two neighbourhoods (Pontbuiten and Sophia's Lust) NIKOS had done a survey of all households. It turned out that 39% of the households consisted of 6 to 9 persons and 13% of 10 or more people (NIKOS 1998).

If we look at the composition of the families then the indications are that the households were very representative of those of Pontbuiten and Sophia's Lust. In these two poor neighbourhoods respectively, 34% and 32% of the families were single parent families, while 33% of the working children in the survey lived with only one parent.¹⁶

When we tried to differentiate further between the families of working children it became evident that there were no significant differences between those involved in child work and those involved in child labour, or even those involved in the worst forms of child labour. Only one relationship proved significant i.e. children that were involved in the worst forms of child labour came more often from single parent families than those that were involved in the less demanding forms of child work or child labour. More stable families (two parent families) shielded children from the worst forms of child labour.

Given the above-mentioned facts we can confirm that the working children came from large families and a substantial number also from single parent households. This confirms earlier findings (see chapter one and two).

8.5.3 Lack of education

The situation with respect to education is not very favourable for working children as the following statements will reveal.

About 80% of the working children that had left school were dropouts for some reason. They themselves often mentioned their age and lack of motivation as reasons.

Some 85% of the working children had at least once repeated a class and thus although 76% of the working children still went daily to school, there is a very high chance that they would not go beyond elementary school. Only 4% of the working children actually were or had been in a secondary school.

In most of the three interior districts there is a lack of educational opportunities, combined with the poor quality of the education that is provided. In all of Sipaliwini there are only elementary schools and not a single secondary school. In Brokopondo there is only one secondary school, but school transport is a problem. In Marowijne there are several secondary schools in Moengo and Albina, while children from other villages have to get to these schools. In Sipaliwini there are not enough schools for all the children and at least in the upper-Suriname river region probably more than one third of the children still cannot go to school. School attendance is also hampered by poor arrangements for school transport and long distances to school, especially for the very young. Many –if not most- of the teachers and the schools in the interior are poorly equipped (both in qualifications as in material) to do their job. The question for the children deep in the jungle even is whether children who successfully completed elementary school will get any opportunity to continue their education or use their acquired knowledge in any meaningful way in their own environment.

Lack of educational opportunity and poor quality affects primarily the interior districts, where the inhabitants are mainly Maroons. Given the high rate of repeaters and dropouts poor quality may also affect other districts.

8.5.4 Demand for child labour

It is difficult to address the issue of demand for child labour, because we did not find any major concentrations of child labour in any particular type of economic activity or sector. Thus it is not so that a particular type of activity would come to a standstill if all children

suddenly stopped working tomorrow. Still there probably is a demand for child work at the local level, since Suriname's labour market is not so flexible that any employer can attract labor from anywhere. Large companies may be able to do so, but clearly not small and marginal enterprises. The need for child labour also seems largest in the production sector, which may have more problems to attract labour.

We cannot say much either about the cost of child labour as compared to adult labour, since this was hardly mentioned by children and parents and probably only assumed by key-persons. It seems evident that marginal enterprises would rather have cheap labour to survive and to make some profit, but this is mere speculation and needs more inquiry. On the other hand, the reasonable earnings of children who worked long hours seems to indicate that –at least in several locations- it is not so much the cost of labour as the scarcity of labour that may lead to demand for child labour.

There is evidence to state that family enterprises –especially in the agricultural sector- require some cheap child labour in order to survive. Much of the agricultural sector involved family plots, and in the interior shifting cultivation. In the interior child work was seen as part of the tradition to grow up, but also as a necessity to learn enough agricultural skills to survive later in life. Much of Sipaliwini still knows a subsistence type of economy where one has to look after himself/herself.

8.6 Definitions

One of the issues that have to be resolved in the Surinamese situation concerns the definition of child labour. As stated before there is a lingering confusion among many –if not most- key persons between child work and child labour, which needs clarification. In order to do so we will revisit the literature on Suriname (see chapter 2), assess the existing definitions in the light of our research findings, and work our way towards an acceptable definition, which of course, needs to be consistent with ILO standards and principles once Suriname has ratified the Conventions.¹⁷

The Labour Law of 1963 describes child labour as:

“...labour which is performed by persons below the age of 14 years”.

It is clear that this is a very limited definition, since it only defines an age limit, but not the type of labor performed, nor its effects. In other articles (17 through 21), however, there is a further elaboration of the type of work children may be engaged in. Below 18 years no child should do any type of hazardous work, below 15 years no child should work on a fisher boat and below 14 years children should only work in family agricultural settings, in special institutions and for educational purposes. We may infer from this that work of children below 14 years is seen as legal child work rather than child labour, but that such activities should be restricted to an educational and family setting, and definitely should not involve any work of an hazardous nature. Since children in practice perform many other activities –while not all family related work is innocent- this definition falls short of the reality.

Defares (1981) defined child labour as:

“- all activities that children have to perform for the survival of their household, but which at the same time limits their mental development and their prospects;

- all activities that children have to perform to provide in their daily livelihood.”

In the view of Defares, child labour is framed mainly in terms of direct and indirect income, since it is related to the child's own survival or to that of the household he/she lives in. Inferring from this, work that is not of consequence for these types of survival and does not limit their prospects and development of the child would not be labeled child labour. Defares does not put any age limit on child labour, while it is problematic in reality to make a proper assessment whether a certain type of activity is necessary for the survival of the child or the household.

The Interagency Committee on child labour (1985:8) defined child labour as:

“all activities that are performed by children under age 15 in whatever form and under whatever name, for which they may or may not receive pay, and which is performed during school hours outside the family with the goal to support oneself”

This definition probably would see child work as those activities performed outside the school hours, both within the family or outside of it, which are not primarily meant to support oneself. This again is not in line with reality, since many children who are involved in child labour still go to school, but work long hours outside school, and sometimes even within the family.

Dennen (1990: 8,9) came up with the following definition of child labour:

“Labour performed by persons under 14 years, which requires much mental and physical effort, and where the activities performed are not connected at all to education and the well-being of the child.”

The problem with this definition is that labour which is not seen as physical or mentally demanding –of which most work that children do may well be- will fall outside this definition, which is not in line with reality.

Van den Berghe's (1990: 10) attempt at a definition reads as follows:

“Child labour consists of all activities that are done outside the household (as spatial entity), which may or may not involve a monetary compensation, and which are performed by persons who have not yet reached the age of 17 years.”

This definition puts child labour squarely outside the household, and therefore child work can be assumed to consist of all those activities which are done within the household. Again this is a limited distinction, since child labour may well take place within the setting of the household itself.

The Ministry of Labour survey (1999: 9) used another definition:

“Child labour entails all activities (work or pursuits) done by a child not older than 14 years, where a monetary reward may or may not be given to provide in its own support or that of its family, and where the development of its abilities is restricted and thus diminishes the spiritual and physical (health) development of the child.”

This definition stresses the harmful effect of labour on the child's development, which implies hazardous types of work and working during school hours. At the same time by doing so it also implies that work that is not hazardous or harmful may qualify as child labour, which again is not necessarily true, especially if a child may have to work long hours.

So far the different definitions have primarily tried to describe child labour, but not allowable child work. Nevertheless, we get from them the following indications for inclusion in a description of allowable child work:

- it will be found more in agricultural settings
- less of an economic necessity for the child and household
- work performed outside school hours
- work done primarily within households
- less demanding types of work
- less harmful and non-hazardous types of work

Some of these elements we have found to be less typical of child work than child labour e.g. child labour may be performed after school hours, within a household and may involve all kinds of work. A major element that has to be added has to do with the working hours per day and per week.

The ILO recognizes that not all work children are performing is labeled child labour as the following statement illustrates (2002:9):

“The term child labour does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18. Millions of young people legitimately undertake work, paid, or unpaid, that is appropriate for their age and level of maturity. By so doing, they learn to take responsibility, they gain skills and add to their families’ and their own well-being and income, and they contribute to their countries’ economy. Child labour does not include activities such as helping out after school is over and schoolwork has been done, with light household or garden chores, childcare or other light work.”

The ILO does not define child work, but nevertheless indicates some useful elements i.e. legitimate work (not forbidden by law or custom), after school work, light types of work (household, childcare, chores), work done as part of a socialization process (gain skills, learn responsibility).

If we now add the working hours to the above mentioned elements, a working definition of child work may read as follows:

Child work comprises all economic activities performed by children under 15 years, during less than 15 hours a week, which is not forbidden by international standards, law or custom, which consists primarily of non-dangerous and non-hazardous light types of work, and does not interfere with school hours and performance.

The inclusion of economic activities differentiates child work from most ordinary chores that a child performs at home as part of his/her participation in the family or household unit.¹⁸ Our research has indicated about 15 hours of work per week as a rough demarcation line between child work and child labour. We have found support for this in ILO Convention No. 60 on the minimum wage in non-industrial employment, which stipulated in Article 3 that “no child under fourteen years of age shall (a) be employed on light work for more than two hours per day whether that day be a school day or a holiday”, and “(b) spend at school and on light work a total number of hours exceeding seven a day”.¹⁹ Much damage can be done to a child in a short period of work (e.g. sexual exploitation), therefore the working hours should not be seen as the main part of the definition, but as a contributing part e.g. sexual exploitation of children is forbidden by law. The other parts of the definition thus make sure that hazardous

and harmful types of work are not part of child work. Even child work, however, will not always be light, since occasionally some more intense work may be required e.g. a boy who is helping a few hours in a shop may be required to help move some furniture.

Having defined child work we now turn to the definition of child labour. We have set out above the provisions of ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182. There is also international consensus expressed in Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (a child is defined as a person under 18 unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier):

“States Parties recognize the right 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, moral or social development.”

ILO Convention No. 138 calls for a minimum age consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons and prohibits all work that is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons. Further, ILO Convention No. 182 elaborates on the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Definitions of child labour point toward negative effects on the children, and this may involve one or more of the following elements (Anker & Meldas 1996):

- work by very young children
- long hours of work on a regular full-time basis
- hazardous work conditions (physically or mentally)
- no or insufficient access, attendance or progress in school
- abusive treatment by the employer
- work in slave-like arrangements (bonded labor)

We want to add to these that for Suriname work by children involving 15 or more hours a week should be considered child labour.

With these definitions in place we hope that the confusion about child labour and child work will diminish in the near future.

Notes

¹Unfortunately we could not check our results against those of the household survey which was done by the Ministry of Labour in 1998, since that report did not give the actual numbers (only percentages). Moreover the data with respect to number of working days were distorted because 42.2% of the respondents answered ‘other’, while 12.3% did not answer at all (unknown). For working hours per day the category ‘other’ made up 31.4% and the unknown category 44.6% (Survey 1998 page 54 and 55). Nevertheless we will still attempt to use some of the information.

²The survey of 1998 found 74% of the working to be in this age group, while we found 77%.

³The survey actually states that 16% of the children worked 1 to 2 hours a day, 4.4% worked 3 to 4 hours, another 1.3% worked 5 to 6 hours, 0% worked 7 to 8 hours, and 2.3% worked 8 hours or longer. In addition there were 31.4% categorized as ‘other’, while 44.6% were unknown (probably not asked by the interviewer). So we know that 20.4% of the children worked at least less than 5 hours and 3.6% worked 5 hours or longer than we know the working hours of at least 24% of the children. If we

now assume that this pattern would be the same for the category 'unknown' and 'other' (which probably would be a category with irregular working hours) than we can multiply those that worked 5 hours or longer (i.e. 3.6%) by a factor of 4,17 to get an estimate for the whole sample, which gives us the estimate of 15%. We are a little bit on shaky ground with these assumptions since these categories are so large, but for lack of other estimates we use it.

⁴We have to divide 18.5% over 27.5% (the percentage of estimated child labourers in our survey) which is 0.673 and multiply it with either 400 or 500.

⁵This distribution may be biased, since Paramaribo where Creoles make up nearly half of the population was somewhat underrepresented and the districts were over-represented. Nevertheless the presence of so many Maroon children cannot be denied.

⁶This was our highest category in the questionnaire, but in fact many children earned more than Sf 10.000 a day.

⁷We checked the Chi Square of the distribution in cross tables. In all previous cases these were significant at a standard range of 0.025 for a two sided test, which meant that the probability that the observed distributions were only due to a chance factor was very small. Thus a more meaningful correlation between the two variables could be assumed.

⁸We counted two positions that were in between as one e.g. sometimes dangerous and sometimes tired.

⁹ "Child Labour: What's to be done?" Document for discussion at the Informal Tripartite Meeting at the Ministerial Level, International Labour Office, Geneva , 1996.

¹⁰Our research experience is that questions on income are often not answered properly and tend to create unnecessary tensions during interviews. We therefore put in only one direct question on income towards the end of the interview i.e. "do you earn more or less than Sf 300.000" (the poverty line at the time), which was broad enough to be answered without problems by the respondents.

¹¹Actually this household survey was done in three districts, covering 79% of the population.

¹²There are frequent reports that many other people –who actually can afford to pay their own health insurance have such cards- but given the population we worked with (parents/guardians of working children) we can safely assume that most people with such cards would get them because they qualified for it according to the rules i.e. mainly by being poor.

¹³We tested the following variables on these different groups: type of medical insurance, financial support from Government, income, unemployment, and social class.

¹⁴According to the ABS survey furthermore 19.1% of the households had 6 to 9 people, while in the NIKOS survey this was 40.8%.

¹⁵These were two government housing projects Pontbuiten and Sophia's Lust. Many of the houses had been occupied before they were even finished, by desperate families, many of whom had fled the Internal War. Both projects had large concentrations of Maroons and Creoles.

¹⁶In these neighbourhoods respectively 46% and 45% of the families were two parent families, while 20% and 23% were made up differently (e.g. just one person, some friends, or more generations without a family pattern). In the child labour survey 50% of the children lived with both parents, while 17% lived in households with other arrangements.

¹⁷All definitions in the original documents are in Dutch; the translation provided here is our own. Wijntuin (1996), Ferrier (1997), and Orié (2002) did not come up with an own definition.

¹⁸The ILO described 'economic activity' as a broad concept that encompasses most productive activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal; it excludes chores undertaken in the child's own household and schooling. To be counted as economically active, a child must have worked for at least one hour on any day during a seven-day reference period (ILO 2002:15).

¹⁹This Convention was shelved and absorbed by Convention 138, although the number of hours mentioned were not incorporated in Convention 138. Convention 60 actually arrived at a maximum of 14 hours of work a week if we multiply 2 hours per day by 7 days. We arrived at 15 hours by allowing a longer working day in the weekend and 1 to 2 hours during the week. Still this is a rough estimate rather than a clear cut-off point.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Conclusions

The main research question in our investigation was to find the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour in different districts and sectors in Suriname. To give an answer to this question we sketched a picture of the international conventions and national laws aimed at regulating child labour. In addition, we reviewed the major existing Surinamese literature and reports about this issue.

To provide a more pragmatic picture of the extent and nature of child labour we spoke with 142 key persons, interviewed 169 working children, and 52 parents, spread out over 9 districts in Suriname. The proposed method by the ILO of a Rapid Assessment was new and innovative and differed from previous methods. Instead of using a structured questionnaire on a sample which was pooled out of a national population, the accent of the Rapid Assessment is on more in-depth interviews, observation and gathering of background information from different sources. This relative fast and goal oriented method of gathering data resulted in a fairly well-organized presentation of the current situation with respect to child labour in a country. The results of this method may lead to the initiation and implementation of policy programmes, follow-up research, or comparative research between countries.

The core of the research had to do with an assessment of the worst forms of child labour as mentioned in Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182. The worst forms of child labour comprise (a) all forms of slavery and bondage, (b) the use, procurement or offering of a child for prostitution and pornography, (c) the use, procurement or offering of a child for illicit activities such as the trafficking of drugs, (d) work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

1. With respect to the **presence of the worst forms of child labour** the researchers have to conclude:

a) That we did not find any sustained indications for the use of children in forms of slavery or bondage. The Interagency Committee on child labour already had concluded in 1985 that this form has not been reported in Suriname.

b) With respect to the use of child labour in the production and sales of illicit drugs we have to conclude that even though we did not encounter any such activities, there may be some incidental cases.

c) There have been reports about the exploitation of children in commercial sex (estimates by the Maxi Linder Foundation speak about 50 cases), but we have not been able to verify this independently, nor have we been able to track any concentrations of such victims of sexual exploitation. From our research the occurrence of such activities by children seem to be limited. It is not unthinkable, however, that a further decline of Suriname's economy may

trigger more activities by children in this sector. Since these cases were hard to get by with a rapid assessment approach it should also be helpful to design a special study for this sector and make a more careful assessment of the problem.

d) There are cases where children's health, safety or morals are being harmed by the kind of work they do. But the research team did not find any major concentration of such cases in any specific sector or location. These cases are spread out instead over different sectors and geographic locations.

2. The severe cases of child labour that have been found –and which may involve around 300 children in all in Suriname- probably compare positively with many other countries in terms of their level of exploitation. Thus what is considered a 'worst form' of child labour in Suriname may be considered a normal case in India. This means that one probably needs to either adjust the definition to the local context or has to decide that what the ILO describes as 'worst forms' of child labour hardly occurs in Suriname. We have already tried in this report to **define worst forms of child labour in a local context.**

3. The **main causes** why children work in Suriname are: poverty, family size, single parent families, and lack of educational opportunities. In the interior the Internal War (1986-1992) had destroyed much of the limited educational facilities and added to the level of poverty. Even though most schools have been rebuilt, it took nearly ten years to do so, which undermined the educational environment.

There are a number of important issues that need to be reported in these conclusions and that need to be addressed at the policy level, because if they are not taken up they may result in worst forms of child labour over time.

4. Child labour and moreover the more severe forms of it in Suriname has a clear **gender bias** i.e. boys are much more likely to be involved in such forms than girls. Overall we interviewed 72% males and 28% females, while the incidence of males in the most severe forms of child labour was 94%.

5. Child labour in Suriname also has an **ethnic bias**, because young Maroons are much more likely to become involved in it. For a multi-ethnic society such as Suriname such a bias may cause social unrest in time and therefore there is a need to develop policies to stem this trend.

6. Child labour also is closely connected to **lack of development**, notably limited educational opportunities. This factor is highly correlated with the ethnic factor, since it became very evident during the research that districts such as Brokopondo, Sipaliwini and Marowijne, with a high ratio of Maroons, provided the least educational opportunities to its young citizens. This observation is fully supported by the Ministry of Education itself who reported in July 2001 that in these three districts only 60% (Brokopondo), 62% (Marowijne) and 71% (Sipaliwini) of the children did not finish elementary school within a reasonable time period. In certain areas that we visited there were probably much higher percentages that did not finish the school. Despite these limited educational opportunities the researchers have observed that many children still attend school and often only work after school is finished. Gradually, however, they part with school, especially when they have become repeaters and have experienced that the school system is not assisting them in their opportunities.

7. Suriname's **plural cultural background** makes it necessary to deal cautiously with the work children are doing. Parts of society see work that children do as a precondition for their survival, especially in the interior, while in other agricultural settings their labour is also expected and needed. In the past there has been little **differentiation between types of work**. One way to start with more differentiation is to distinguish more clearly between child labour (with its more negative connotation) and child work (with a more positive connotation). Our research has tried to draw the line at 15 hours of work a week, with the general observation that families should be able to expect about 1 or 2 hours of work from a child per day. Policy makers and legal departments should not be inclined to confuse child work with child labour.

There are also a number of important **legal issues** that need attention.

8. The Constitution of Suriname of 1987 has put an obligation on the Government to provide and ensure compulsory elementary education. This means that the Government has to see to it that every young boy and young girl has a chance and a right to complete elementary school. The Government does not exert enough control over this **constitutional duty**, because many children abandon elementary school without completing it.

9. There is a **discrepancy in the national laws**, which on the one side obliges children to stay in school until age 12, but allow them to work only at a minimum age of 14. This often repeated notion that children have an obligation to attend school until age 12 seems to be overtaken by the constitutional provision, which puts no age limit, but actually introduced a minimum performance limit. The practice by many schools to write off children at age 15 is also a sign that the age limit of 12 years is redundant.

10. There is also a discrepancy between the **national laws and the ILO Conventions** in that the ILO puts the basic minimum age of work at age 15 and preferably even 16, while national law works with the minimum age of 12 years (school age) or 14 years (work age). Recommendation No. 146 suggest raising the minimum age to 16. Convention No. 138 allows the basic minimum age to be set initially at age 14 in countries whose economies and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.

11. Suriname has **not yet ratified** the ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and ILO Convention No. 182 on the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. It does not seem that there are major problems, but the legal system is sometimes slow with ratification.

12. Suriname has ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. Article 32 of this Convention obliges States to undertake a number of tasks: minimum age, appropriate regulation of hours and conditions, penalties and sanctions. This means that even in the absence of ratification of ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182, Suriname has to take actions against the worst forms of child labour.

13. The existing **Labour Law** of 1963 seems to be well written with respect to dangerous work for young people (age 15 through 17), but needs further operationalization.

14. The main problem with the worst forms of child labour is that it falls outside the scope of many labor laws, since the children are often employed by the informal sector. The **informal sector is not regulated** and thus formal laws are less effective to deal with this problem.

9.2 Recommendations

The recommendations specify measures in several areas. The first four deal with the legal framework and labour provisions, the next two with education, the next five with provisions and institutions for special programmes, and the last two with specific topics.

1. Suriname should **ratify** the ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and ILO Convention No. 182 on the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

2. The Law on Elementary Education of 1960 needs to be amended with respect to the compulsory educational age for children and be brought in line with the Constitution of 1987. Such an amendment would also operationalize Article 39 sub 2a of the Constitution towards a more pragmatic interpretation of its current phrasing. The **compulsory school age limit should be increased to 15 years**, which would be more in conformity with current educational practices in Suriname and with international conventions.

3. The Labor Law of 1963 should be amended by **increasing the minimum age of employment to 15 years**, which would then conform also more with educational practices and international Conventions.

4. The Ministry of Labour should appoint a **child labour inspector**. This inspector should make sure that the Ministry is actively pursuing programmes to prevent and eliminate child labour and especially the worst forms of child labour. Since child labour is more of a problem in the informal sector, the child labour inspector should expand his/her work beyond the traditional realm of labor inspectors.

5. The Government should build and/or properly subsidize schools wherever there is an evident lack of such schools, and/or facilities, and/or teachers. **Improvement of educational opportunities** in terms of secondary schools, teaching materials, qualified teachers, and infrastructure, is of eminent value to prevent children from a life that is marked by poverty. This is especially relevant for the interior districts.

6. The Government should be more effective in exerting control over children who are not attending school in order to improve their educational and employment opportunities. The Ministry of Education should appoint a **truant officer** (*spijbelambtenaar*) for this purpose to improve school attendance. Such officers are already employed in other countries. The truant officer should also be the person who will be in charge of developing special programmes against child labour within the Ministry of Education.

7. The Judiciary, Social and Labour sector should develop a more coherent notion about working children and should introduce a marked **distinction between child labour and child work**. We propose adoption of the following definition of child work:

Child work comprises all economic activities performed by children under 15 years, during less than 15 hours a week, which is not forbidden by international standards, law or custom, which consists primarily of non-dangerous and non-hazardous light types of work, and does not interfere with school hours and performance.

With respect to child labour, we offer this definition:

Child labour is work that becomes a necessity for the child, that deprives a child of educational and social development, harms the child's safety and health and/or is likely to offend a child's morality and dignity.

8. Special programmes are needed to prevent the development of severe forms of child labour. Such programmes should target those ethnic and gender categories that are more prone to child labour. Policy proposals that deal with child labour should moreover focus on prevention of

- long hours of work on a regular full-time basis i.e. a child should not work more than 15 hours per week
- hazardous work conditions (physically or mentally)
- no or insufficient access, attendance or progress in school
- abusive treatment by the employer
- work in slave-like arrangements (bonded labour)

9. A Committee on the Prevention of Child Labour should be established to develop and monitor special programmes in this area. Through these programmes awareness of the problem and public support to eliminate it should be raised, while special measures to prevent and eliminate child labour should be developed and implemented. The Committee should consist of representatives of the Government, Employers, Labour and NGO's. The representatives of the Government on the Committee should include the truant officer, the child labour inspector and an officer from the Ministry of Social Affairs who is involved with the work on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

10. The Committee mentioned above should inform itself of the work already done by the ILO and the **International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**, especially with respect to policy recommendations, programmes and materials that have been developed. It should also inform itself of the work already done with respect to the implementation of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

11. The Committee should be aware that child labour is difficult to regulate by formal laws and should therefore focus on **regulations by other means** such as improving educational opportunities and working through the social sector.

12. It is recommended that the **Census** that will be held in 2003 in Suriname should include some questions on child labour in order to get proper indications of the extent of child labour on a national level.

13. With respect to the elimination of the **sexual exploitation of children**, it is advisable that this be dealt with separately, since this will involve different agencies and regulations. A

special and coherent programme should be established to deal with this problem, which should include gathering of reliable data, proper analysis, development of projects and legal measures.

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APPENDIX 1

Overview Field work

Period	Interview	Place
15 April - 7 May 2002	Key persons	Paramaribo/ Wanica
	Field / by telephone	Brokopondo / Nickerie
	By telephone	Saramacca / Commewijne
	Field / by telephone	Marowijne / Para

Field work

Period	Place	Interviews
April 15 - 30	Paramaribo / Wanica / Commewijne	children/ parents
May 4, 6, 8, 9 en 29	Paramaribo	children/ parents
May 9	Commewijne	children
May 15	Saramacca	Orientation visit / interviews
June 4 + 7	Paramaribo	children/ parents
June 10, 11 + 12	Wanica	children
June 14	Saramacca	children
June 19	Commewijne	children
June 20	Para	children
June 25	Para	children
June 26 , 27, 28	Marowijne	children/ parents
July 04	Commewijne	children
July 10, 12 , 18, 29	Commewijne/ Par'bo/ Wanica	children/ parents
July 11	Commewijne / Pomona	None / conversation adults (fishery)
July 17 - 19	Brokopondo	children/ parents
July 22	Commewijne	Parents
July 23	Wanica	Parents
July 23	Boven- Saramacca	Key persons
July 24 - 26	Nickerie	children / parents
July 30	Para	Parents
July 31	Saramacca	Parents
July 31 - August 01	Boven- Suriname	children / parents / key persons
August 01	Leiding	Parents