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Time-Bound Programme

Manual for Action Planning

T B P

M A P



Using Networks
on Hazardous
Child Labour to
enhance Time-Bound
Programmes

International
Programme on
the Elimination
of Child Labour

Using Networks on Hazardous Child Labour to Enhance Time-Bound Programmes

**Technical Unit on Hazardous Child Labour & Child Labour
Monitoring
IPEC**

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1 Introduction

There never seems to be enough time, resources, or people to effectively address the problem of child labour, even in a Time-Bound Programme (TBP). But because the situation of children caught in the worst forms is so serious, we are compelled to find ways of moving faster. Networking is a strategy that is currently being explored as a way of taking child labour work to scale and of bringing it upstream to the policy level, which makes it an ideal mechanism for TBPs.

HCL	Hazardous Child Labour
ICOH	International Committee on Occupational Health
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
TBP	Time-Bound Programme

2 Why does a TBP need a network?

When it comes to identifying the particular forms of hazardous child labour (HCL) on which a TBP will take action, or later at the point of designing the appropriate type of action to take with regard to the hazards — the decision as to whether to remove the child, or to remove the hazard, for example — most countries do not have the resources they need. Many do not have much data on what types of HCL exist, how extensive they are, and where the hazardous forms are located. They may have few (if any) institutions specialized in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and may not be equipped to identify, assess and prioritize occupational hazards in general, and even less when it concerns children.

However, resources do exist either in the country or region or elsewhere in the world that are suitable for addressing whatever problem is at hand. The challenge is how to find them. The simplest use of the networks, then, is to link together those who are trying to identify or act on HCL with specialists or specialist institutions that can provide assistance.

A slightly more ambitious role for a network is to fill in crucial research and training gaps. Networks can expand the knowledge base necessary for the development of clear standards that will help employers, workers and governments to draw a line as to what is hazardous and what is not for specific occupational sectors and for children of different ages. This development process can also help produce evidence for compelling awareness-raising campaigns.

An even more strategic way in which the TBP can use networks is to expand and multiply action by enlisting new institutional partners in child labour work. This is best done by offering government agencies, research institutions, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), or others (which have previously not been involved in child labour) opportunities to become directly involved in research on hazardous activities and occupations. Once involved, these organizations often see better how their expertise can be useful, and their concern over the issue increases. Many then become involved in legal reform, processes related to

ratification and implementation of Convention No. 182 on the worstforms of child labour (1999), and sometimes even direct action to assist children in hazardous work (removal, rehabilitation, prevention and improvement of working conditions, removing hazards and skills development for older children).



3 Setting up networks for hazardous child labour

In general, the strategy of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has been to “piggy-back” on existing networks wherever possible instead of trying to create new ones. This reduces the staff time and need for specialist staff, and it takes advantage of an existing body of specialists or institutions that are already familiar with each other. A danger, of course, is that the goals of identifying and addressing HCL, can be subverted by existing agendas of the network.

3.1 Local level networks

At the country or local level, however, networking may need to start from scratch. In doing this, it is important to look beyond customary partners. Groups and organizations can be found which have some OSH experience — research institutes, universities, NGOs, or health professionals and their organizations. Although they may have never been engaged in child labour work before, they may have valuable experience and capacity to contribute. The crucial thing, here, is to link them together so that they can support and reinforce each other; one partner’s area of strength can counteract another’s area of weakness. For example, one partner may have experience with child labour but know nothing about occupational hazards, and vice versa. By linking them, sometimes in groups, you have a team that can handle HCL.

Network members will also benefit from being linked with national child labour structures and agencies that are already active in child labour work. In turn, these parties will benefit from the specialized knowledge and contributions of the Network members. The Network

members will also gain support and will more likely sustain their involvement by being linked to each other and to existing global networks and associations which are now incorporating child labour as one of their areas of action.

If there are not appropriate resources within a country, they can often be found nearby in countries with similar problems, culture, or population profile. In one example, an occupational health institute in Pakistan, having designed research materials (questionnaires, sample design, physical measurement techniques) and conducted a study of its own on carpet-weaving risks, assisted neighbouring Nepal in assessing hazards peculiar to its carpet sector. Thus a “re-inventing of the wheel” was avoided in the Nepalese project

3.2 Global level networks

IPEC participates in several global networks on HCL that can be tapped for information and technical resources. For example, IPEC is working with the “Collaborating Centre” network that was established about ten years ago by the World Health Organization. This network has a task force devoted exclusively to HCL (Task Force on Children and Adolescent Workers).¹ The sixteen institutions that make up this Task Force are undertaking their own projects on HCL, using their own funds. In addition to providing new data on the topic, the Task Force is a ready-made group of specialists to do peer review of materials for us to ensure that they are accurate.

¹ For a list of regional affiliates, as well as specialists on young people’s occupational health and safety, contact the IPEC Technical Unit on Hazardous Child Labour.

They are also a source of contacts as well as of information on topics within this field.

There are also other existing professional networks that can be used to assist the TBP team:

- One of the organizations that has shown most interest is the International Committee on Occupational Health (ICOH). It has
 - even included the topic on the agenda of the ICOH² global conference that took place in Feb 2003 in Brazil.
 - The International Occupational Hygiene Association has also expressed interest, and has indicated that they would be interested to adapt their 'control bending' methodology for the management and surveillance of chemical exposure to child labour.³
 - The International Ergonomics Association has expressed interest in work on the ergonomic aspect of HCL.
 - The Pediatrics Association has expressed interest in several areas relevant to TBP development.

² Contact person. President of ICOH Bengt Knave. Australia. Tore Larson.

³ Contact person. David Zalk (president) and Michel Guillermin (OH Institute Lausanne).

4 The IPEC HCL networks

In early 2002, the Department for International Development - funded global network project began to build on these existing networks and, where possible, to direct their attention to issues of specific concern to the IPEC projects, particularly TBPs. Network Coordinators were hired to support the Central and South American networks and the African network. The objectives of the network project, and of the Coordinators, are:

- to replicate and expand the scale of child labour action, e.g. research, evaluations, design of workplace improvement plans, technical support to other institutions by enlisting and training new institutional partners;
- to improve capacity of OSH institutes to act on child labour, e.g. through information-sharing and database development; and
- To increase the knowledge base on HCL and assure its quality and facilitate the sharing of information through linking institutions globally, regionally, and nationally.

To achieve this, the Hazardous Child Labour Networking initiative identified institutions and associations with the expertise, credibility, and connections to enable their findings to be taken up by decision-makers and translated into policy. Institutions which have network potential are those with an organizational identity such as OSH institutes, research institutes, think tanks, academic institutions, foundations, professional societies, specialized units within ministries, and workers' and employers' groups which have an interest in occupational health and/or HCL. Network members have been identified through regional preparatory meetings, questionnaires, and existing global networks.

The institutions were encouraged to undertake work related to HCL in their countries or region, to publish and present their findings at international meetings so as to gain recognition, and to participate in national planning seminars, training and other exposure opportunities. The project provided some funding for this work, contingent upon joint submissions by institutions with complementary expertise.

It makes sense, in the first instance, to construct regional networks, since the players in the field of OSH at national level are in general very few, with limited resources, and little experience in cooperation with each other. There are other advantages to networking at the regional level. One of the main advantages is that countries of a region may share the same language and a similar level of development. Although there are obviously many differences to be found, there are many similarities in the problems and possible solutions at regional level. Culture within a region may also be similar. While building the regional networks through network meetings, a fortunate side effect was that, in some of the countries where the circumstances were ripe, national networks have also been formed. This is the case of Central America, where four countries have formed a national network on HCL, and three others are in process of doing so. In many countries the OSH institutes have gotten in touch with the child labour and IPEC projects, and vice versa.