



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

International Programme on the Elimination
of Child Labour (IPEC)

The role of employers' and workers' organizations in combating child labour

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Employers' and workers' organizations are indispensable in the struggle against child labour. The recent ILO Global Report¹ on child labour emphasizes the strong role the social partners have in the worldwide movement against child labour that has emerged in the last decade. The Report puts a premium on revitalizing and strengthening the worldwide movement as a central strategy in achieving the global goal of the effective elimination of child labour. However, the Report recognizing that there are still some challenges to achieving this, calls on the social partners to deepen and widen their commitment to the elimination of child labour and for the ILO to enhance their capacity.²

The challenges are: first, improving the capacity of the social partners, particularly to operate within the informal economy where most child labour is found. Second, as the worldwide movement has grown in the last decade, it has attracted a diversity of actors leading to a danger of a duplication of efforts at all levels. In this context, employers' and workers' organizations have to rigorously define their role and comparative advantage. Third, IPEC itself has its own capacity constraints, particularly time pressure in delivering outputs and implementing and reporting on action programmes. Additionally, IPEC has to make difficult choices concerning the overall balance of interventions and partnerships within the Programme. IPEC's limited resources, particularly its limited regular budget base and reliance on extra budgetary resources, make it difficult to give complete attention to the full engagement of the social partners at all times.

Given the pressure on IPEC to deliver comprehensive programmes in a short time, with a priority on the worst forms of child labour in the informal economy, the Programme has inevitably drawn on non-traditional partners outside the constituents of the ILO. For example, the ILO has long recognized the positive role that NGOs can play in the fight against child labour.

This paper explores the extent and scope of the engagement between IPEC and employers' and workers' organizations with a particular focus on activities initiated over the last two years. A typology of social partner engagement with the Programme is presented. The paper argues that it is important to go beyond simple monetary indicators of engagement and look at more qualitative dimensions. IPEC provides a platform for the social partners to participate in policy debates as well as other important opportunities to respond to the child labour problem. Looked at in this way, IPEC's less traditional partnerships need not be seen by the social partners as a zero sum game of winners and losers.

From this stock taking, the paper goes on to highlight a number of issues concerning capacity, commitment, coherence and cooperation that need to be addressed if the social partners are to fully live up to their potential as central actors in the worldwide movement. Here the growing informal economy is seen as a particular challenge for the social partners and it is therefore a central theme throughout the paper.³ The paper concludes with an examination of how these challenges might be responded to – setting out an action plan that

¹ ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach*, Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILC, 95th Session, Report I (B), 2006.

² *ibid*, p. 87.

³ The ILO definition and perspective on the informal economy is derived from the *Conclusions concerning decent work and the Informal Economy* adopted by the ILC at its 90th Session, Geneva 2002. Child labour is an important theme in an evolving model of change for the informal economy being developed by the Office. Many have questioned how “informal” the informal economy really is.

identifies opportunities to improve the partnership between IPEC and employers' and workers' organizations to attain the common goal of the elimination of child labour.

1. The central role of employers' and workers' organizations in the worldwide movement against child labour

Employers' and workers' organizations have played a historic role in promoting international labour standards, including core standards prohibiting child labour. This engagement began in the nineteenth century and ultimately led to the formation of the ILO itself.

Historically, the elimination of child labour has been the result of the interaction of a number of factors: the reduction in poverty levels; developments in technology; legislation regulating child labour and making education compulsory; and finally changes in societal attitudes towards children. In the first industrial nations these factors, working in concert, took time to have their full effect. However, around a century ago, the extensive use of child labour was over in the first industrial nations.⁴

During this era, workers' organizations and enlightened employers were an important part of the process of transferring children from the workplace to the classroom. Following a number of national efforts to restrict child labour – as, for example, in Britain and Germany in the 1830s – the first International Workers Congress held at Geneva in September 1866 called for an international effort to regulate child labour.⁵

In the latter part of nineteenth century, trade unions were part of broad social movements in Europe and the United States calling for the abolition of child labour through domestic and international legislation. The idea of international standards to regulate child labour took an important step forward at the Berlin Conference held in March 1890 and with the establishment in May 1901 of the first International Labour Office, in Basel, Switzerland.⁶ This momentum created before the First World War, in which workers' organizations played a key role, led to the setting up of the ILO (on a tripartite basis) in 1919, and the adoption in the same year of Convention No. 5 the Minimum Age for Industrial Employment, and Convention No. 6 on Night Work for Young Persons. This standard setting work culminated in the adoption of Minimum Age Convention No. 138 (1973) that consolidated earlier child labour standards later becoming a core convention of the ILO.

Through participation in the ILO's standard setting activities, the labour movement continued to play a central role for the elimination of child labour in the twentieth century. That said the issue itself became marginal within the international community until there was a revival in interest in child labour during the International Year of the Child (IYC) held in 1979.

The international trade union movement once again took up the challenge in the 1980s⁷ and was influential in helping to push child labour towards the top of the international policy agenda in the 1990s. The trend in the 1990s towards

⁴ ILO: Global Report, op. cit., p. 20.

⁵ G. Myrstad: "From projects to social change" in Grimsrud, B (ed.): *The next steps: Experiences and analysis of how to eradicate child labour*. Oslo, Fafo, 2002, p. 85. The International Workers Congress also called for compulsory education.

⁶ ILO: *Trade unions and the ILO: A workers' education manual*. Geneva, 1988, pp. 8-9.

⁷ See ICFTU: *Breaking down the wall of silence*. Brussels, 1985.

corporate social responsibility (CRS) also saw employers' organizations take important initiatives to free supply chains of child labour leading to a number of sectoral agreements.⁸ This momentum behind the worldwide movement culminated in the adoption of Convention No. 182 (1999) on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

What do the social partners bring to the worldwide movement? To begin with both have a strong vested interest in combating child labour. For employers eliminating child labour from supply chains helps ensure continued market access and productivity. For trade unions, child labour flies in the face of their basic objectives - more jobs and rights at work - and opportunities for adult workers to take home a living wage. Both have an interest in better function labour markets⁹ that guarantee decent work.

As mass membership and vertically integrated organizations, trade unions and employers organizations¹⁰ bring considerable potential to the worldwide movement against child labour. The social partners share many child labour elimination strategies in common such as research, social dialogue and campaigning. Additionally, each constituent brings particular tools to bear in the fight against child labour, as for example, through the use of collective bargaining by trade unions and codes of conduct by employers' organizations.

Trade unions have been most effective in their efforts against child labour when they have been part of wider social movements fighting for democracy and social justice. This was the case at the end of the nineteenth century when the labour movement first emerged as an organized, independent and political mass movement.¹¹ At the end of the twentieth century this pattern remerged in contexts as diverse as Brazil¹², South Africa and many of the transition economies of central and eastern Europe.¹³

Trade unions have a special concern with the child labour problem and an important role to play in combating it.¹⁴ The most effective means of doing this is to be true to their comparative advantages and goals as workers' organizations. Indeed, it is the attainment of basic trade union objectives - jobs, increased wages and improved working conditions - that provides an organic and sustainable means to eliminate child labour.

Collective bargaining is a traditional tool of the trade union movement. It has proven effective in promoting decent work and must be seen as one of the main trade union strategies to combat child labour.¹⁵ Likewise, campaigning and lobbying are second nature to trade unions. As noted above, trade unions have

⁸ For example, in garments, tea, cocoa, tobacco and soccer ball stitching.

⁹ B. Grimsrud and T. Noonan: *The next steps*, in Grimsrud (ed.) op. cit., 2002, p. 123.

¹⁰ However outwardly similar in structure they might appear, employers' organizations at the national level can appear somewhat more consolidated in comparison to workers' organizations.

¹¹ E.J. Hobsbaum: *The age of capital 1848-1875*. London, Cardinal, 1989, p. 141.

¹² Trade unions in Brazil, such as the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG) that embraces 24 state federations and around 3,200 trade unions with more than 9 million members, have been particularly active over the years in mobilizing around the issue of child labour.

¹³ Where trade unions played an important role in the wider movements towards the transition to democracy.

¹⁴ See A. Fyfe and M. Jankanish: *Trade unions and child labour: A guide to action*. Geneva, pp. 61-64.

¹⁵ ILO/ACTRAV: *Trade unions and child labour*, Booklet 5. Geneva, 2000, p. 1.

been campaigning against child labour for more than 150 years. Today, trade unions can lobby governments for changes in public policy and spending – in education, for example – that are organic and sustainable responses to child labour. Additionally, trade unions are in the forefront of campaigns for the respect of international labour standards that governments have signed up to.

Trade unions have other important engagements with the child labour problem. They have traditionally played a watchdog role in exposing child labour. This monitoring role has been combined with other types of investigation. Finally, many trade unions have provided direct support to working children and their families and networked with other civil society actors as part of broad-based coalitions campaigning against child labour.

The capacity of trade unions to respond to the child labour problem depends on their level of organization. The priority of all trade unions is the extension and strengthening of collective bargaining. The diffusion of trade union organization into the mushrooming informal economy is a particular challenge but also essential in the fight against child labour and, indeed, for the future survival of trade unions.

Employers' organizations have also played an important role in developing international labour standards and in regulating child labour. As enterprises of various kinds may contribute to the demand for child labour by hiring children, they can play an obvious role in helping to eliminate it. Many local, national and international employers' groups have been set up to fight child labour. These are expressions of a more collective response to child labour and the growing movement towards CRS.

Enterprises, as corporate citizens, need to conduct themselves ethically. They have an obligation to respect the law of the land. CSR is a voluntary means at the disposal of enterprises to go beyond compliance with national law to make a positive contribution consistent with their role in society.¹⁶ Though CSR codes and initiatives have been largely generated in developed countries, there are positive signs that this is being increasingly taken up in developing countries consistent with ILO standards and in a spirit of social dialogue.

Perhaps the best-known business initiative in support of children's rights in the developing world is the *Abrinq* Foundation in Brazil, a group of nearly 2,000 firms formed in 1990. The *Abrinq* Foundation programmes of the "Child-friendly company" and "Child-friendly Mayor" demonstrate the extent to which the private sector can put something back into the communities where they do business and has been taken up as a model in other countries.

Both employers' and workers' organizations offer opportunities to benefit from their structures that link the local with the global. Indeed, there are comparative advantages at each level. IPEC has begun to utilize this opportunity based the concept of a division of labour. For example, sector trade unions and employers' groups are well placed to act at the grassroots level on specific forms of child labour that appear in their industries, while national trade union and employer centres are better positioned to play a convening role and act in policy arenas with governments. At the next level, the International Organization of Employers (IOE), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), The World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and Global Union Federations (GUFs), are strategically placed to provide support to their national affiliates and to

¹⁶ See ILO: *The evolving corporate social responsibility debate: Issues for employers and their organizations*, Symposium for employers organizations, 5-7 October. Geneva, 2005.

influence global debates concerning child labour, education, development, decent work and human rights.¹⁷

However, these comparative advantages and tools (largely focused on the demand side of child labour) are best deployed where they were first honed – in the formal economy. Today, the bulk of new employment¹⁸ and child labour, particularly its worst forms, occurs in the unregulated informal economy where the social partners are as yet weakly represented. It is in this environment that many NGOs are better placed to provide more short-term direct support to working children and their families.

¹⁷ Global Report, op. cit., 87.

¹⁸ In Africa, informal work accounts for almost 80 per cent of non-agricultural employment, over 60 per cent of urban employment and over 90 per cent of new jobs in the last 15 years. See IPEC: *Manual for training of artisans*. Geneva, 2006.

2. Types of engagement by employers' and workers' organizations

It is important to outline the evolution of IPEC before mapping the many opportunities the Programme offers the social partners for engagement with child labour elimination efforts.

IPEC was launched in 1992 with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labour, which was to be achieved through strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and promoting a worldwide movement as an enabling environment for national action.¹⁹

The Programme has evolved in a number of ways over the last fifteen years. The scale and scope of the Programme has grown enormously. The critical watershed in the Programme's evolution occurred around 2000, when resource support from the United States, gave IPEC an enormous boost. From a base of one donor and six programme countries, IPEC is now by far the largest technical co-operation programme of the ILO (IPEC's share of technical co-operation was 45.3 per cent in 2005²⁰) with programmes in some 86 countries, 30 donors and an estimated annual expenditure of around \$60 million. Over its lifetime the Programme has spent around \$350 million. Since 2002 IPEC's projects and programmes have benefited around five million children.²¹

IPEC has grown rapidly from the level of small-scale action programmes to larger, integrated, but highly focussed projects at the national and sub-regional levels. At the same time, there has been a shift in the balance between types of intervention, moving progressively from direct support activities to more policy-related activities. In keeping with the adoption in 1999²² of Convention 182, IPEC has also progressively focused its efforts on the worst forms of child labour²³. From 2001 IPEC launched Time-bound Programmes (TBPs) in support of government efforts to implement the Convention. In 2002 important shifts were identified in IPEC's future strategy. In particular, the intention was to move towards more tailor-made assistance to member States; greater focus on facilitation and technical policy support; and the encouragement of national ownership.²⁴

These shifts in the scale and scope of the Programme have implications for the social partners that continue to resonate. Pressures in the early years of the Programme to deliver direct services to working children and their families in a relatively short time-scale encouraged a reliance on NGO partners who had a proven commitment and an established track record in service delivery, and the flexibility to respond quickly. On the other hand donor requirements have

¹⁹ ILO: *IPEC action against child labour 2004-2005: Progress and future priorities*. Geneva, February 2006, p. 7.

²⁰ *ibid*, p. 26.

²¹ Global Report, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²² 1999 also saw the launch of the current InFocus programme on the elimination of child labour as part of Office restructuring aimed at better integrating the work on child labour.

²³ A Resolution adopted by the 1996 International Labour Conference (ILC) outlined the Organization's overall strategy for the elimination of all forms of child labour while giving priority to the rapid elimination of the worst forms. This continuing commitment to pursue the goal of the effective abolition of child labour is affirmed in the Global Report (2006).

²⁴ GB.285/TC/5. Geneva, Nov. 2002, paras. 13-15.

become progressively less flexible and the Programme has little in the way of regular budgetary resources to off set this constraint. The growing shift to more policy related activities is also less resource demanding. Finally, the focus since 1999 on the worst forms of child labour has put a premium on access to the informal economy.

Today, IPEC provides the following opportunities of partnership with employers' and workers' organizations, as:

- Implementing partners
- Direct beneficiaries
- Collaborating partners

Employers' and workers' organizations have through these partnership arrangements with IPEC entered into a broad range of engagements with the child labour problem. These can be examined in terms of the typology set out below:

- Lobbying/campaigning
- Social dialogue/sector alliances
- Capacity building
- Child labour monitoring
- National policy making
- Promotion of International Standards
- Participation in global task forces
- Work with regional bodies
- Direct support to working children and their families
- Networking with other civil society partners
- Research
- Meetings to share experience and develop policy
- Resource mobilization

Though there is inevitably a degree of overlap between these categories, the typology is nevertheless a useful device for exploring the multi-faceted engagements of the social partners under the Programme. The rest of this section is devoted to case examples under each major heading.

Lobbying/campaigning

Lobbying and campaigning is a key activity of the social partners in child labour elimination efforts. For example, campaigning to eliminate child domestic labour has become a growing target for trade unions around the world in recent years. This was acknowledged by the IPEC initiative to organize an interregional workshop for trade unions in February 2006.

In Tanzania, the Conservation Hotels and Domestic and Allied Workers' Union (CHODAWU) affiliated to the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) is committed to organizing workers in the informal economy to build membership and as means of tackling child domestic labour. The union has been active in the fight against child labour, specifically on child domestic labour, since 1996. In 2004 the union passed a resolution at its General Congress to earmark 25 per cent of its resources to fight child domestic labour. This went along with the establishment of a permanent department dealing with women and child labour issues. In Kenya, the Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Union (KUDHEIHA) has been campaigning against child

domestic labour since 2000. KUDHEIHA has worked with the local authorities in four towns to register adult domestic workers and monitor child domestic labour. The union has also lobbied the national government to ratify international standards, especially Convention 182.

In Peru the IPEC child domestic labour project has coordinated advocacy efforts with the Domestic Workers' Union to support the introduction of new legislation adopted on 3 June 2003 that regulated domestic labour. The campaign included daily radio programmes broadcast across the country. Similar lobbying activities on behalf of improved legislative protection of child domestic workers have been carried out in Costa Rica and Guatemala.

In Sri Lanka, the National Workers' Congress (NWC) has established a Domestic Workers' Desk that aims to organize domestic workers, including those under-18 years. The union believes that recognition by a trade union is an important element in the public campaign to have the domestic work sector legitimized and officially recognized as an employment sector subject to the regular protections in law and practice.

In a joint activity between IPEC and ACTRAV in Ghana, 20 smallholder farmers in the cocoa, oil palm, orange, rubber, maize, cotton, cassava, fishing and rice sectors signed up for the campaign "Make Your Farm A Child Labour Free Zone". The farmers also became members of the General Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana (GAWU).

Two IPEC action programmes support three major trade union confederations in Indonesia, (SBSI, KSPI and KSPSI) have joined together to survey the costs of basic education incurred by their members, and to advocate for access to free basic education. The results of the survey are to be included in an advocacy campaign.

Social dialogue/sector alliances

Child labour provides an excellent vehicle for social dialogue. A joint initiative by the Confederation of Turkish Employers' Unions (TSK) and the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS) in Adana Province is targeting child labour in the seasonal cotton sector and furniture production in the urban informal economy. Both sectors are defined in Turkey as the worst forms of child labour. This IPEC supported project, under the national time-bound programme, began in December 2005 with a strong emphasis on the use of advocacy and social mobilization to promote public awareness of the child labour problem in the targeted sectors and support to education and training services for working children.

In Ghana, GAWU, supported by IPEC and ACTRAV, negotiated a collective bargaining agreement with the Ghana Oil Palm Development Company, committing management and the union to work together to eradicate child labour in and around plantations. As a result, for example, farmers in the community of Akenkase, decided to stop using child labour. They have also formed a labour pool to assist each other with harvests and other tasks.²⁵

Since 2004, the Ghana Employers' Association (GEA) have moved ahead with their own project in commercial agriculture (oil palm and rubber) with a division

²⁵ IPEC: *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice*, Guidebook 4. Geneva, 2006, p. 16.

of labour with GAWU, in which the later focus on the out growers and communities, and GEA on the plantation owners.

There has been over a decade of experience of sector alliances against child labour. The first major initiative took place in the garment industry of Bangladesh with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between the ILO, UNICEF and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) in July 1995. This project served as an important model, and its major lessons have been applied in other export sectors over the years. The first example of this transfer was the soccer ball stitching industry in Sialkot, Pakistan (1997), followed by Tobacco (1999), cocoa (2001) and the small-scale mining sector (2005). In all of these IPEC and the social partners have been prominent.

These initiatives, by their very nature, provide a vehicle for corporate social responsibility and social dialogue. For example, the global programme: Minors out of Mining launched at the ILO Conference in 2005 is a collaborative model supported by the social partners in the mining industry – the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (ICEM) and the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM).²⁶

The aim of the programme is to eliminate child labour in small-scale mining within ten years, starting with countries where the problem is most serious. There are an estimated 1 million children in the industry. Already, Ghana and Peru have been identified as countries that have signed the "Call to Action" and where both employers and workers have significant activities and the governments are ready to move ahead.

The Foundation on the Elimination of Child Labour in Tobacco Growing is another interesting model. Founded in 2002, the Foundation is the outcome of a series of agreements between the International Tobacco Growers Association, British American Tobacco and IUFLA. The industry-funded Foundation, that the ILO helped to form, now includes most of the major tobacco manufacturers. The Foundation develops independent research, supports local projects and identifies and shares best practice and lessons learned.

The *Abrinq* Foundation initiative has been influential in promoting a child-friendly ethos within the business community in many countries. In the Philippines, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECP) as part of its CRS programme has launched a scheme to recognize and provide incentives to child labour-free and child-friendly enterprises.

In El Salvador, the National Sugar Association (NSA) has become an active participant in efforts to eliminate child labour in sugar cane harvesting. In 2002 the NSA signed an MOU with the Ministry of Labour and the ILO committing them to work to end child labour in the sector. Subsequently, this policy was communicated by the Association to its suppliers, mostly cooperatives, along with the provision of non-hazardous alternatives for working age adolescents. These actions, complemented by IPEC direct action programmes, resulted in an approximately 30 per cent decline in child labour from 2004 to 2005.

Teachers' trade unions in Albania have expressed a growing commitment to eradicate child labour since their third congress held in Tirana during 4-5 November 2004. This commitment has been translated into a new collective

²⁶ ILO: *Minors out of mining! Partnership for global action against child labour in small-scale mining*. Geneva, 2006.

agreement between the educational trade unions and the Ministry of Education and Science signed on 4 July 2006. Article 12 commits the central and regional education administration to engage in child labour elimination activities.

As a result of an IPEC action programme implemented by the Central Organization of Trade Unions in Kenya, three sectoral unions (the Kenya Union of Fishermen, the Quarry and Mine Workers Union, and the Kenyan Union of Commercial Food and Allied Workers Union) negotiated collective bargaining agreements with child labour clauses to prevent the recruitment of children.

Capacity building

Strengthening capacity of key actors has been a central part of IPEC's strategy. The ILO-Norway Framework Agreement signed at the end of 2003 gave a significant boost to the ILO's capacity building efforts with the social partners regarding promoting social dialogue and combating child labour. Joint and coordinated activities at the country level between IPEC, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP have been promoted under the Agreement. A major focus of activity has been in building capacity of the social partners in the agricultural sector to eliminate hazardous child labour.

Through the INDUS²⁷ project in India, IPEC has worked closely with the five central trade unions to mainstream child labour elimination into the work of its 400 sector affiliates. These central unions have established child labour focal points at the national, state and district levels in the four project states and 21 districts. With the active support of the INDUS project, the central unions established a coordinating committee at the national level and in three of the states. The central trade unions are implementing an agenda to strengthen the capacity of the sector trade unions, to raise their awareness on child labour, to reach out to informal sector workers and women workers and to effectively combat child labour in a sustained manner.

The biggest challenge to child labour elimination lies in the informal economy. IPEC's recent initiative to map the training needs of urban informal training providers among *Jua-Kali* artisans in Kenya²⁸ is an important development. A needs assessment was carried out in March 2006 that also underpins a training manual. A key finding was the need for the organizations of informal workers in the *Jua-Kali* sector in Kenya to be strengthened in order to increase their effectiveness to represent their members' interests and to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The development of training materials will be used to enhance the capacity of informal associations of small employers, craftsman and artisans to combat child labour. A module within the training package focuses on organizational strengthening since this promotes an enabling environment for the training of trainers and a more systematic approach to skills transfer. A further recommendation of the needs assessment was that the trainees should be selected from those *Jua-Kali* sectors that are organized and registered since they have the greatest multiplier potential and fit within the broader ILO strategy.

²⁷ INDUS is a partnership between the Government of India and the United States to eliminate child labour. Through the project, IPEC has a major opportunity to go-to-scale.

²⁸ It was in Kenya that the ILO first coined the term "informal sector" to describe the activities of poor working people who were not recognized, recorded, protected or regulated by public authorities. See ILO: *Employment, income and inequality: A strategy for increasing productive employment in Kenya*. Geneva, 1972.

Education has been central to the work of IPEC since its creation. Over the years, IPEC has demonstrated leadership and experience in using education to combat child labour in both formal and non-formal settings. Enlisting the support of teachers, educators and their organizations has been a key strategy of the Programme.

IPEC has developed a number of tools to assist this group of workers in the education field, particularly teachers' organizations.²⁹ Support under the ILO/Netherlands Partnership Programme (2002-2005) gave a considerable boost to this activity.³⁰ An important objective of the Partnership Programme was to build the capacity of teachers', employers' and workers' organizations to use education as a tool to combat child labour. A revised Teachers' Kit³¹ and education pack used in teacher training under the SCREAM³² (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media) were the main capacity-building tools refined under the Programme. A number of trade union entities were involved in the development of both resources including Educational International (EI) and the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO).

In the context of the child labour component of the ILO-Norway Framework Agreement, IPEC and ACTRAV have joined forces in conducting training of trainers' workshops for farmers on elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture. These began in Ghana in July 2004 in co-operation with GAWU. In October 2005 a similar exercise was conducted in Kenya with the Kenyan Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (KPAWU) and the Kenyan Organization of Trade Unions. In November 2005 the programme moved on to neighbouring Uganda supported by the Ugandan National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers (NUPAW). Finally, in December 2005 an inter-regional workshop was held in Romania in association with the Romanian national agricultural trade union (FSIA); and the Romanian national trade union centre (CSDR), and with participants from trade unions in Romania, Ukraine, Kosovo, Moldova, and Bulgaria.

In Ukraine, the MOU between ILO (IPEC/MIGRANT) and the International Organization on Migration (IOM), signed on October 5 2005, has resulted in joint activities aimed at raising the capacity of trade unions to respond to trafficking. A series of regional capacity building seminars for trade unions have been launched.

Child labour monitoring

IPEC's resource kit on Child Labour Monitoring (CLM) makes it plain that it involves the identification and referral of child labourers through the development of a framework of partnerships and coordinated multi-sector process.³³ Furthermore, an important consideration in the design and execution

²⁹ First begun in 1995 under a Norwegian funded project.

³⁰ Under the theme: *Including the excluded: Combating child labour through education*.

³¹ ILO: *Child labour-An information kit for teachers', educators and their organizations*. First appeared in 1998 and was last revised in November 2004.

³² Launched in June 2002 as a community-based education and social mobilization initiative that has helped educators promote awareness of child labour issues among youth. The project has produced an education pack of 14 modules available in seven languages.

³³ ILO: *Child labour monitoring resource kit, Guidelines for developing child labour monitoring processes*, 2005, p. 66.

of CLM in both the formal and informal economy is how to benefit from employers' and workers' organizations workplace-level experiences and knowledge.³⁴ Indeed, CLM is not possible without the active cooperation of employers' and workers' organizations.

A number of IPEC CLM research papers also provide examples of trade union participation in monitoring.³⁵

The ILO sub-regional workshop held at Blantyre, Malawi, 21-23 November 2005 on trade union strategies to combat child labour in commercial agriculture brought together representatives from 27 trade unions drawn from the nine countries of southern Africa. The main objectives were to review progress made under the campaign "Make your farm a child labour free zone", and map out strategies of how these agreements could be sustained through appropriate monitoring mechanisms. The workshop, which was a joint IPEC/ACTRAV endeavour, identified trade union capacities and challenges in terms of future action to build up the CLFZ concept, particularly in relation to developing a monitoring system that introduces on going observation and checking of child labour situations on farms. Important areas of follow-up were identified including developing a small capacity package to cover CLM as part of Decent Work country programmes.

In the Ukraine trade union "community inspectors" have access to informal economy workplaces. For example, in the Donetsk region, the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (ITUMU) first identified child labour in informal mines. Under an IPEC action programme, ITUMU leaders and social workers set up a network of community inspectors to increase outreach in the towns of Snizhne, Shakhtarsk and Torez. In addition, the trained ITUMU members carry out awareness-raising sessions for vulnerable children and parents on risks associated with child labour.

Under an IPEC action programme the Transport Union in North Sumatra has played an important role in awareness raising and monitoring the involvement of children in the offshore fishing sector. As a result the numbers of children involved in this sector has been reduced. In Nigeria industrial unions in footwear, rubber and leather industries have under an IPEC action programme established workplace monitoring committees against the worst forms of child labour.

In the Philippines, the Trade Union Congress (TUCP) embarked on an IPEC-supported action programme in December 2005 focused on workers' education and CLM. TUCP has organized the union child labour monitors. It is also a long-standing member of a multi-agency task force implementing a CLM-related national initiative called "Sagip-Batang Manggagawa" (Rescue Child Labourers). With IPEC support the union has strengthened its capacity in CLM, and to included this element in collective bargaining agreements.

National policy-making

The social partners are members of all IPEC National Steering Committees. This provides a major platform to influence the design of IPEC strategy at the country level and by extension national policy on child labour. Additionally, those countries that have ratified ILO Conventions 138 and 182 have to develop

³⁴ *ibid*, p.11.

³⁵ See ILO: *IPEC action against child labour 2004-2005: Progress and future priorities*. Geneva, p. 110.

national plans – this is another critical opportunity for the social partners to influence national policy.

In India a national child labour policy was adopted in 1987 and its implementation has been spearheaded through its flagship National Child Labour Projects (NCLP). This national programme is now being complemented by a comprehensive large-scale INDUS project with support from IPEC. This project has a strong partnership approach, involving the social partners in particular in policy dialogue. Trade unions in 15 INDUS project districts are represented at the policy level in the NCLP society. Certain models of good practice in involving both employers' and workers' organizations is being identified as capable of replication in all 250 NCLP societies.

In Tanzania, both the Trade Union Congress (TUCTA) and the Association of Tanzanian Employers (ATE) have participated in the social partner consultations leading to the finalization of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) document, and have successfully advocated for the adequate reflection of the concerns of employers and workers in the document, including targets and indicators on child labour.

Since November 2002, IPEC has helped to sensitize the leaders of all six workers' and farmer's unions in Honduras (CGT, CNC, COCOCH, COSIBAH, CTH, CUTH). During the next two years, joint awareness raising efforts were made at the grassroots level strengthening the bond between the unions. At the beginning of 2004, a Workers' Commission for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour was set up as a key input to national efforts to combat child labour in Honduras. In the same year, Honduras finally reached an agreement with donors for its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), but initially excluded child labour eradication from it. It was workers' representatives within the advisory council for the PRS that successively lobbied for the reinstatement of the National Plan for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child labour within the PRS. This marked the first occasion in which Honduran trade unions asserted their full political weight in a determined and coordinated way.

In a similar development, Mexico's leading trade unions (CTM and CROC), in May 2006, initiated a call for an official National Commission on Child Labour. This initiative derived from a dialogue over the last two years with IPEC, UNICEF and the relevant Ministries – Labour and Social Protection.

TBPs have facilitated the mainstreaming of child labour into regular national social and economic development frameworks, including poverty reduction, EFA and ILO decent work country programmes. National ownership and cooperation at all levels is key to the success of a TBP. Heavy emphasis is therefore placed on strong political support and empowering of key agencies and institutions, including the ILO's social partners.³⁶

Promotion of international standards

Both the trade union meetings held in Malawi (Nov. 2005) and Chennai (Dec. 2005) stressed the importance of linking child labour standards to other core labour standards, particularly Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining. To these might be added (in the context of agriculture), Convention No. 187 on Safety and Health in Agriculture and the Forced Labour Conventions (No. 29 and No.105) in

³⁶ See Global Report, op. cit., paras. 155-157.

particular for countries that have not ratified either of the major child labour conventions.

The recent ratification by Pakistan of Convention No. 138 was the outcome of the support and lobbying of ILO, the Pakistan Workers' Federation and the Employers Federation of Pakistan. Similarly, trade unions in South and Central America and the Dominican Republic have played a prominent role in promoting the ratification of Convention Nos. 138 and 182. Trade unions have also been active in revising the list of hazardous occupations already extant in the region.

The Asian Regional Tripartite Workshop on Resources and Processes for Implementing the Hazardous Child Labour Provisions of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, held at Phuket, Thailand, 11-13 July 2005 resulted in the identification of country work plans covering the period 2005-2007. The workshop affirmed that it was vital that the social partners participate in the adoption and implementation of hazardous child labour lists. The workshop also provided an opportunity to share country experience in involving the social partners. Sri Lanka has developed a technical subcommittee under the national IPEC steering committee to determine hazardous child labour in which employers' and workers' organizations are represented.³⁷

Participation in global task forces

In recent years IPEC has focused on international policy dialogue in two important thematic areas - Education and Agriculture - in which high-level meetings have led to the formation of Global Task Forces (GTFs). This initiative started in education in 2003 around the annual UNESCO High-Level Group on Education for All (EFA). After a series of annual round tables held at New Delhi (2003), and Brasilia (2004), a Global Task Force on Child Labour and EFA was set up at the third meeting held at Beijing in November 2005. Initial membership included ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Global March Against Child Labour. In July 2006 the GTF agreed joint initiatives covering the period October 2006 - July 2007 on child domestic labour and education and on mainstreaming child labour issues in EFA and EFA-supporting frameworks. Membership was also expanded to include Education International.

In May 2006, IPEC sponsored a policy consultation with five international organizations to discuss how the target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour in agriculture by 2016 can become a reality. The international organizations who attended were: the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP); the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) representing the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

The main focus of this initial meeting was on the need for policy coherence and mainstreaming. To move the agenda on, the participants agreed to hold a one-day meeting in Rome in September 2006 to arrive at an agenda to be launched at the World Day Against Child Labour, 2007.

³⁷ See ILO: *Step by step: Examples of how countries determine hazardous child labour*. Geneva, 2006.

Work with regional bodies

IPEC has promoted the sub-regional plan to eradicate child labour in Chile and the MERCOSUR³⁸ countries that was adopted in 2001. MERCOSUR is an important institution for shaping regional and national policies. In July 2002 the presidents of the member States declared child labour eradication one of the regions political priorities. Trade unions played a central role in gaining the political support of the regions presidents for the plan that includes strategies on strengthening the social partners.

Among the key initiatives in IPEC's work in recent years has been an innovative project with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum which has promoted alliance building at national and regional level engaging employers' and workers' organizations.³⁹ Starting in 2001 with participation from, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, the project aimed to increase awareness of the importance of moving children out of hazardous work and into education. This was to be accomplished through alliance building at national and regional levels and engaging government authorities, employers' and workers' organizations, educators and civil society groups. A second phase of the project was concluded in August 2006. It is expected that the benefits of the projects activities will be sustained through APEC networks dealing with labour, education and human resource development and various working groups, such as agriculture.

Direct support to working children and their families

Direct supporting to working children is the most immediate and tangible response to the problem of child labour and it is not surprising therefore that this is an area that has also attracted the involvement of the social partners. For example, in Pakistan, under the IPEC carpet project the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) established an NGO - Child Care Foundation- to provide non-formal education to working children involved in the industry. As a direct result more than 80 per cent of the children have been provided with NFE and mainstreamed into the formal education system. Additionally, the Skill Development Council (SDC), established and run by the Employers Federation of Pakistan, has provided pre-vocational education to working children enrolled in education centres, helping to reduce the rate of drop out from these centres.

Brick kiln employers associations in the state of Tamil Nadu, India, are through the INDUS project supporting the rehabilitation of child workers by offering non-formal (NFE), vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities.

In Nepal, IPEC has built on the ILO's close relationship with trade unions and employers associations, to develop an apprenticeship programme as an alternative to vocational training. The General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) has been the most proactive in support of these efforts in the Kathmandu valley.

The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is implementing pilot interventions in a number of sectors (sugarcane plantations, mining/

³⁸ MERCOSUR is an agreement promoting greater economic cooperation between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

³⁹ See ILO: *Out of work and into school: Our development challenge*. Bangkok, 2006.

quarrying, pyrotechnics and hotels/restaurants) that provide direct services to children such as education through a “return-to-school” programme and referral to health care service providers and institutions providing vocational skills training and alternative education.

In Tanzania CHODAWU has under an IPEC action programme within the TBP, targeted and successfully withdrawn/prevented 7,500 children from domestic labour in six districts and linked them to educational and training services.

Finally, the *Abring* Foundation in Brazil has led several initiatives with employers groups in five states for youth employment and income generation for families within the TBP.

Networking with other civil society partners

Child labour elimination is a collective not a singular endeavour. Many countries have established structures to facilitate a collective and integrated response to child labour elimination. The classic example is Brazil. After the adoption of a new constitution in 1988, Brazil established an enabling structure that emphasized the devolution of power from central to state, and from state to the country's 5,000 municipalities. Crucially, allowance was made for organized civil society to be directly involved in designing, executing and monitoring social policies. This structure facilitated the creation of a national forum (FNPETI) for developing national child labour policy and action involving the ILO's social partners and other key actors.⁴⁰

However, perhaps the first step to better alliances with others is more effective internal coalitions. A good example is the alliance among six trade unions in the state of Andhra Pradesh that IPEC helped to initiate in July 2001.⁴¹ The ILO facilitated the coming together of the six major trade unions in the State that had rarely collaborated in the past. This unique unity was a landmark in trade union history in India. The ILO strategy was to enthuse trade unions to become part of a wider coalition including other civil society partners. In the six focus districts of the action programme an important commitment made by the trade unions was the formation of child support cells and through them to reach out to civil society partners (including employers and NGOs) and the general public on the ILO's Convention No. 182.

A major success of the trade union programmes has been the extensive sensitization at the grassroots level that has been achieved across the state using a variety of communication strategies that has helped turn a programme into an emerging movement. The example from Andhra Pradesh presents an interesting and significantly important model of how workers' organizations can join forces with others in combating child labour and that this collaborative approach against child labour can be an excellent entry point to reach workers in the informal economy and address fundamental rights at work.

In post-tsunami Sri Lanka, the National Workers' Congress in the Galle District with IPEC support has formed a network called the “child labour monitoring unit” consisting of 17 members, including NGOs, CBOs, district

⁴⁰ IPEC is part of a network of social dialogue in Brazil operating at state and central level. Besides the national forum on child labour there are 27 state fora on child labour and 27 state committees on commercial sexual abuse, violence and exploitation. These bodies provide a network to promote policy planning, budget setting, monitoring and knowledge generation.

⁴¹ ILO: *Coming Together: From confrontation to collaboration*. Hyderabad, 2002.

administrators and educational institutions working with vulnerable communities. The unit operates as a watchdog to prevent trafficking of children into sex work.

Research

The social partners have an important role in research into the nature and magnitude of child labour. Employers' and workers' organizations can either sponsor research themselves or participate in the research activities of others. Over the last decade rapid assessment methodology has emerged as an important tool for gauging the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour that do not lend themselves to more traditional survey methods.⁴²

The recently produced manual on RA is seen as a primary tool for researchers affiliated with employers' and workers' organizations.⁴³ The social partners have been part of the process of refining the RAP methodology through a series of 38 national studies between 2001-03. In one RA,⁴⁴ the task of questionnaire administration was assigned in part to representatives of the national trade union, which had offices in all the districts selected for the investigation. They collaborated with both governmental agencies and NGOs in providing access to the respondents thereby demonstrating the comparative advantage trade unions have in opening the door for researchers examining child labour.

The ILO has supported child labour surveys carried out by employers' organizations in Azerbaijan and Mali (cotton sector), Ethiopia (coffee and tea plantations), Ghana (palm oil and rubber plantations), Malawi (tea sector), Republic of Moldova (horticulture) sector), Uganda (coffee sector) and Zimbabwe (tea sector) in 2004-05.

In Sialkot, Pakistan, the workers federation is currently planning to conduct a comprehensive survey of vendors working in the surgical industry as part of their programme "to organize the unorganized".

Meetings to share experience and develop policy

There were have been 16 tripartite meetings organized by IPEC in Africa, Asia and Latin America over the last three years. These meetings were aimed at sharing experience and promoting social dialogue on a range of child labour topics from hazardous work lists to child domestic work.

A sub regional workshop on Good Practices of Trade Unions in Combating Child Labour was held at Chennai, India, 14-16 December 2005. Trade unions in South and South East Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam) were invited to share their experiences in the form of emerging good practices and lessons learnt. The workshop was an opportunity to examine the central role of trade unions in linking the issue of child labour to the importance of freedom of association, collective bargaining on minimum wages and equal remuneration.

⁴² See ILO/UNICEF: *Manual on child labour rapid assessment methodology*. Geneva, 2005.

⁴³ *ibid*, p. 3.

⁴⁴ ILO: N. Kannanga; H.de Silva and N. Parndigamage: *Sri Lanka - Child domestic labour: A rapid assessment*. Investigating the worst forms of child labour No. 26. Geneva, 2003, pp. 44-45.

The workshop produced key points for follow-up action in terms of strategy development, studies and capacity building, which though confined to South Asia, have global significance in debates concerning the most effective role of trade unions in the elimination of child labour. Many are drawn on in formulating the agenda for action in the last section of the paper.

The IPEC Inter-regional workshop on child domestic labour and trade unions was held 1-3 February 2006. The workshop enabled participants to share experiences and information between trade unions from different countries on targeting child domestic workers. A key recommendation of the meeting was the need to organize adult domestic workers as a major link to child domestic workers. The meeting also provided an opportunity to make an input into the elaboration of an IPEC training manual for trade unions on child domestic labour.

Resource mobilization

IPEC receives contributions from employers' and workers' organizations. Some come to IPEC from organizations in developed countries and others are made at the national level by organizations in developing countries.

In a number of countries the business community has financially supported IPEC activities. The BGMEA example was one of the first such initiatives. In Pakistan, the PCMEA has contributed \$1.8 million to supporting the monitoring component of the carpet project. Also in Pakistan, the Surgical Manufacturers Association (SIMAP) underwrote a base-line survey of child labour in the industry and made a commitment of \$240,000.

The Italian Social Partners Initiative (ISPI) launched in 1998 is an important model from the North. The Italian trade unions in collaboration with the Confederation of Italian Industry (CONFINDUSTRIA) have raised over one million dollars and financed IPEC activities in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The Italian government has recently matched these funds and carried on the commitment to other countries. RENGO the Japanese trade union confederation has supported the translation of SCREAM materials for use in Albania, Cambodia, Indonesia and Nepal.

3. Challenges facing the social partners

The previous section examined the range of engagements of employers' and workers' organizations in child labour elimination efforts mediated through IPEC. This section explores some of the major strengths and weaknesses of these partnerships and the challenges and policy dilemmas facing the social partners as actors within the worldwide movement.

An important resource in gauging the extent to which IPEC has supported tripartite partnerships and used it strategically is the ILO programme evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour reported to the Governing Body in November 2004.⁴⁵ The evaluation study concluded that IPEC collaboration with the social partners in combating child labour was well established through support to capacity building and mainstreaming activities. However, the report states: "There is potential for greater involvement of social partners at national level through strategic and targeted actions".⁴⁶

The evaluation also examined the engagement of the social partners in child labour elimination and was somewhat concerned by an apparent lack of a comprehensive overview of social partner strategies and activities, particularly in the regions.⁴⁷

It is important to be clear about why the ILO created IPEC. IPEC was established in 1992 to enhance the ILO's response to its core goal of the effective abolition of child labour.⁴⁸ The ILO constituents share this goal. The Programme's ultimate beneficiaries are working children, their families and communities. Involving and supporting the child labour elimination efforts of the ILO constituents is a means to that end – not the end itself. Moreover, the Programme cannot be expected to compensate for particular institutional deficits be they lack of institutional capacity in areas such as financial management, or organizing and mobilizing within the informal economy.

It is clear from the previous section that IPEC acts as a catalyst and enabler⁴⁹ by providing the social partners with a wide range of opportunities to enhance their engagement in child labour elimination efforts, namely, inter alia, opportunities to:

- Promote social dialogue
- Build capacity
- Access intellectual capital such as technical tools
- Utilize policy platforms
- Network with others
- Provide resource support to programmes
- Access financial support

⁴⁵ See GB.291/PFA/11 291st Session, November 2004.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, para. 10.

⁴⁷ In the full report reference was made to the need for both workers' and employers' organizations at the global level to develop/consolidate a strategy for their efforts to eliminate child labour and provide an inventory of activities by their affiliates. See ILO: *Evaluation of the InFocus Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour*. Geneva, 2004, p. 43.

⁴⁸ ILO Global Report, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴⁹ For example, before IPEC started working in Sialkot, Pakistan, there were no trade unions represented, now there are over 40.

How well have these opportunities been utilized? Trade unions face a particular set of capacity constraints and policy dilemmas in responding effectively to these opportunities. Trade unions, unlike, for example, many NGOs are not single-issue organizations but have a range of concerns – child labour may appear as one of a host of issues, if at all. Moreover, child labour is concentrated in the rural and urban informal economy – typically non-traditional sectors of trade union mobilization. Organizing workers in both environments presents major challenges, including legal constraints in organizing young workers above the legal minimum age.⁵⁰

There is still a long way to go, therefore, in convincing many trade unions that combating child labour, particularly in the informal economy, is a way of building effective trade union structures for the future – that the issue of child labour needs to be a key part of the trade union agenda and is an important vehicle to promote social dialogue on core labour rights and is an entry point into the informal economy.⁵¹

Part of this awareness raising also has to do with the need to pay particular attention to the special vulnerability of girls and the need to organizing women (especially in the informal economy) as child labour and female adult labour are often linked. Developing a gender perspective on work and women's rights within trade unions can potentially help eradicate child labour and substitute it with adult labour as part of a decent work agenda.⁵²

Trade unions must also be made more aware of their special role in the fight against child labour and the need to avoid duplication (sometimes within the labour movement) and conflict with other actors, especially NGOs. Generally speaking, providing direct support services to working children and their families, attractive as it might appear, falls outside their comparative advantage. Forming alliances with actors outside (sadly, in many instances, also inside) of the labour movement remains a considerable challenge. These deficits boil down to the four "C's":

- Capacity
- Commitment
- Coherence
- Cooperation

IPEC has been part of recent discussions with international trade unions on how best to address these acknowledged gaps and how trade unions could improve their engagement with the Programme. In May 2005 FNV Mondiaal convened a workshop in Amsterdam for GUFs as a forum to exchange views and experiences between trade unions and like-minded NGOs as well as to generate ideas and visions on how trade unions could better integrate the elimination of child labour into their mainstream activities. The sub regional meeting in Chennai in December 2005 was particularly fruitful producing important ideas for future strategic directions. Finally, in May 2006, the ICFTU convened a workshop

⁵⁰ In Bangladesh, for example, to join a trade union you have to be over 18 years of age.

⁵¹ However, there may be many more trade unions operating in the informal economy than may appear at first sight. One estimate from the early 1990s suggested that more than 45 per cent of trade unions registered in India were in the informal economy. This proportion is likely to have grown.

⁵² See R. Kurian: *Trade unions and child labour: Challenges for the 21st century*. Amsterdam, FNV Mondiaal, 2006.

in Brussels to discuss the ILO Global Report and to bring together trade union organizations to share experiences as a means of charting a course for trade union strategy over the next three years.

In fact, there is a wealth of ideas concerning future directions for the trade union movement in combating child labour – the problem is turning thoughts into deeds.

Employers' organizations face the danger of being reactive rather than proactive in the face of public perception of child labour in supply chains. However, rushing to head-off negative publicity and possible buyer demands can lead to negative unintended consequences for working children and their families. It is important that child protection comes before short sighted attempts at industry protection. For example, the joint ILO/UNICEF evaluation⁵³ of the garment industry response to child labour in the early 1990's concluded that between 40,000 and 50,000 children were let go from the industry and much speculation at the time that many of these children ended up in more hazardous work situations in the informal economy.

As with trade unions, it is important that employers' organizations work with others and focus on their spheres of influence within their own workplaces but also beyond. However, given the variety of enterprises it is difficult to propose a single strategy against child labour – what is important is that they be guided by the principles outlined above and that they go beyond a minimalist option and have a substantive engagement in the response to child labour.

Finally, the InFocus evaluation drew attention to the lack of capacity within employers' and workers' organizations to monitor, report and apply lessons learned.⁵⁴

IPEC has to acknowledge its own capacity constraints in following-up activities with the social partners, and documenting and disseminating what it does with them. IPEC may well be underreporting its activities with the social partners. Problems of internal and external communication therefore need to be addressed. The training and briefing of IPEC staff regarding working with the social partners has begun and needs to intensify particularly given rapid staff turnover.

⁵³ ILO/UNICEF: *Addressing child labour in the Bangladesh garment industry 1995-2001: A synthesis of UNICEF and ILO evaluation studies of the Bangladesh garment sector projects*. New York and Geneva, August 2004.

⁵⁴ ILO, 2004, op. cit. p.72.

4. The social partners and the worldwide movement: Towards an action plan

The Global Report contains the pledge to involve the social partners more intensely and strategically against child labour. This is viewed as a priority for the ILO, but how best to do this is largely left open in the Report. This final section of the paper proposes an action plan - how best to both improve the tone of the discourse between the Programme and the social partners and move the relationship forward in practical ways.

The action plan adopts a two-tier approach. In putting forward proposals for discussion a distinction is made between general “housekeeping” issues relating, for example, to improving communication, strengthening capacity, and extending resource mobilization, with more substantive research and policy related issues.

Communication strategies

Despite the growing wealth of experience indicated in section II of this paper, IPEC may be (almost certainly is) under-reporting its activities with the social partners. There are issues of internal communication (e.g. between HQ and the field) that may be contributing to this that are to be expected in a large and diverse programme. However, IPEC could be more proactive in communicating with the social partners on a regular basis. For example, the new IPEC e-letter will offer a dedicated section to the social partners.

The 12 to 12 Community Portal, launched in October 2006, provides further outreach potential. The portal derives its name from 12 June, the World Day Against Child Labour and represents a community of people working together against child labour. The portal has been divided into sections including those dedicated to employers’ and workers’ organizations and provides a medium to see what others have done and an opportunity to add to the sum of experience.

Training/briefings/regular meetings

A start has been made in training and briefing of IPEC staff concerning working with the social partners. This needs to continue. In addition are opportunities to make better use of such regular meetings as the IPEC Steering Committee, the GB and the ILC. Following the meetings of 2005-06 with the GUFs, ICFTU and WCL, perhaps an annual meeting could be institutionalized at this level. Similar international meeting for employers also needs exploring particularly on the back of the launch of the forthcoming IOE resource kit. This regular involvement needs duplicating at the field level with IPEC staff participating in conferences and workshops with the social partners.

There has to be a strategic plan to build capacity of the social partners. What additional tools are needed? Clearly more training needs to be given on reporting, especially financial reporting; an issue that has constrained trade unions, for example, as implementing partners. Overall, more flexible funding arrangements, such as partnership agreements would also assist here.

Moreover, this paper has added to the process of identifying good practice in the engagement of the social partners in child labour elimination efforts through the Programme, that might be developed into a compendium for the future sharing of experience and training.

Advocacy

As suggested in the Global Report (para. 382) there is a need and an opportunity to work with the social partners in strengthening advocacy on neglected worst forms of child labour such as CDWs. The February 2006 trade union workshop on CDW (and forthcoming manual) provides both an agenda and resource to support future development work on CDWs.

Resource mobilization

New opportunities need exploring for resource mobilization from donors that have traditionally not worked closely with the social partners – this comes back to perceptions of commitment and capacity. Additionally, the potential shown by the social partners to financially contribute to IPEC activities needs further development. A start would be an inventory of social partner funding initiatives.

Developing policy coherence on young workers in the informal economy

The ILO's emerging model of change in the informal economy recognizes the need to address critical deficits, including to representation and voice, as part of a longer-term strategy to create protected, recognized and decent work for all workers. Part of the strategic response to the informal economy is the need to address vulnerabilities and worse forms of work represented by child labour.

In this context, and in relation to the key challenges noted above, it is important to explore and clarify with the social partners the continuum between the prohibition of child labour under Convention No. 138 (through conditions for staged entry into working life), to youth employment, as part of a life cycle approach of the Decent Work Agenda.⁵⁵ Moreover, the Chennai workshop (above) drew particular attention to the many legal and policy obstacles to organizing young workers in the informal economy and its negative impact on efforts to eliminate the high prevalence of child labour to be found there.

There is an urgent need therefore to examine the linkage between child labour and other core labour rights, particularly freedom of association. As the ILO continues to work to remove children from exploitative child labour, efforts also need to be made to protect the rights of young workers – if you are 16 and working in a non-hazardous sector you have the right to belong to a trade union. The Chennai workshop called for a coherent policy framework that aligns these objectives.

This initiative on conceptual and policy clarification by the social partners, supported by the ILO, regarding young workers in the informal economy, needs underpinning by research. As part of its own emerging research agenda, IPEC should examine the rights and needs of young workers in the informal economy, and the part employers' and workers' organizations can play in meeting these. For trade unions, the Chennai discussion identified key areas of study in relation to protecting the rights of young workers in the informal economy. Employers' organizations also need to identify their niche in child labour elimination posed by the growth of the informal economy.

⁵⁵ See Global Report, op.cit., para. 386.