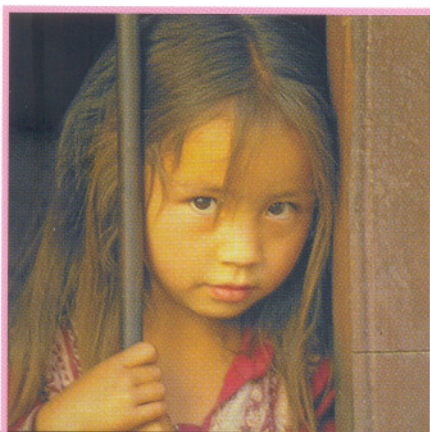




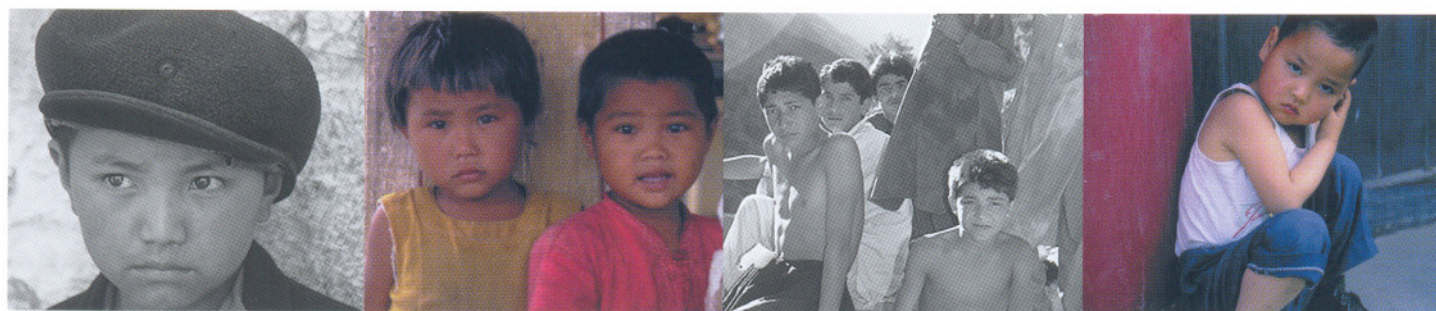
International
Labour
Organization

CHILD LABOUR IN TOBACCO AND COTTON GROWING IN KAZAKHSTAN



INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR (IPEC)
CENTER FOR STUDY OF PUBLIC OPINION (CSPO)

RAPID ASSESSMENT REPORT



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO)
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

Center for study of public opinion (CSPO)

Child labour in tobacco and cotton growing in Kazakhstan

Rapid assessment report

Almaty
2006

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Picture 1. Children working in the cotton fields, 11 years old (left) and 15 years old (right)



This study has been conducted by the Center for study of public opinion for the International Labour Organization within the framework of the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour. The report presents the findings of the rapid assessment on the problem of child labour in agriculture (tobacco and cotton growing sectors) in Almaty oblast and South-Kazakhstan oblast of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AO – Almaty oblast

WFCL – worst forms of child labour

CL – child labour

GDP – gross domestic product

ILO – International Labour Organization

IPEC – International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

NGO – non-governmental organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

RAS – rapid assessment

MoLSP – Ministry of labour and social protection

RK – Republic of Kazakhstan

UKO – South Kazakhstan oblast (Yuzhno-Kazakhstanskaya oblast)

UN – United Nations

KEY DEFINITIONS

Akimat – local authorities in Kazakhstan (village, rayon, municipal, oblast levels).

Akim – head of local authorities in Kazakhstan (village, rayon, municipal, oblast levels).

Aul – village in Kazakhstan.

Guzapaya - the stalk of the cotton bush or what is left of the bush, which should be removed from the field after the harvest. Used in furniture making and as amber.

Rayon – territorial unit in Kazakhstan.

Oblast – territorial unit in Kazakhstan.

Child labour – those kinds and circumstances of work that could be detrimental to children.

Child refers to a person under the age of eighteen years (the Law of the rights of the child of the Republic of Kazakhstan).

Labour migrants refer to a temporary movement of the physical persons from other countries to the Republic of Kazakhstan and from the Republic of Kazakhstan and within the country to carry out labour activity.

Worst forms of the child labour include as follows¹ (ILO Convention #182):

- (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 for pornographic performances;
- (c) 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 that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Picking in tobacco growing means gathering of the ripe tobacco leaves by breaking the leaf at its base.

Sorting out in tobacco growing means separation of the tobacco leaves according to their quality.

Stringing in tobacco growing means stringing of the tobacco leaves.

Pressing in tobacco growing means compressing the sorted tobacco leaves by means of special equipment – presses - into bales weighing 22-23 kg.

Tenge (KZT) – national currency of Kazakhstan (exchange rate at the end of 2004 was approximately 130 tenge per 1 USD).

¹ ILO Convention #182, Article 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

In 2003 Kazakhstan's Ministry of labour and social protection initiated ratification of ILO Convention #182 concerning prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Having ratified this document, Kazakhstan has accepted responsibility for the development and implementation of national policy and effective programs to combat the worst forms of child labour. There is a clear lack of data on the magnitude and features of child labour in Kazakhstan. This is an obstacle to the development of comprehensive and targeted national strategies on the worst forms of child labour. This study, undertaken by ILO-IPEC through the Center for study of public opinion with support from the Ministry of labour and social protection, is one of the initial steps in the establishment of a knowledge base on child labour in Kazakhstan.

Overview of the socioeconomic situation in rural areas

It has been generally recognized that compared to the undoubted successes in the country's economy, the development of agriculture and, consequently, of rural areas has so far lagged behind considerably. Although 43% of the country's total population lives in rural areas, agriculture accounts for only 8.5% of GDP. One third of the rural population have incomes below the national minimum living standard. Moreover, there is a significant degree of regional inequality in the features and productivity of agriculture. It has been recognized by the Government that the development of Kazakhstan's agriculture is currently considerably behind urban economies and this risks jeopardizing overall economic development. The proportion of large families with many children is also higher in rural areas, which contributes to rural poverty. Moreover, seasonal labour migration from neighboring countries to Almaty and South Kazakhstan oblasts adds to the social complexity of the region.

There is an array of factors contributing to the use of child labour in agriculture, such as: rural poverty; many large families; wide use of manual unskilled work in tobacco and cotton growing; absence/lack of preschool child care facilities; lack or absence of alternatives for rural children and youth (education, vocational training, career guidance, sports, recreational events, etc.).

STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Goal of the RAS:

To collect qualitative data on child labour in agriculture, namely in tobacco and cotton growing, in selected regions of Kazakhstan to support the formulation of national policies and strategies in combating the worst forms of child labour and to shape pilot projects targeting child labourers, their families, and communities.

RAS objectives:

- to assess the qualitative aspects of child labour in agriculture in selected regions of Kazakhstan, namely in tobacco and cotton growing;
- to identify the socio-demographic characteristics of working children;
- to describe working conditions, including hours, hazards, remuneration, relations with employers, etc.;
- to examine family situations and relationships within the family - factors that force families to use child labour and conditions which could stop them from using child labour;
- to find out if there is access to education, health care, recreational services and other alternatives for working children; to assess relationships between work and existing alternatives, if any;
- to identify gender discrepancies with regard to child labour;
- to describe the communities in which child labour exists, as well as the economic and social support resources/services available to families and working children;
- to picture the socioeconomic context in which child labour exists at the level of community and region (village, rayon, oblast, country);
- to develop recommendations for policy reform and interventions to address the issue of child labour, based on identified gaps and existing resources.

Research methods

A combination of research methods and techniques was used in the study:

- Structured interviews with working children (survey of children).
- In-depth interviews with key informants (government officials, school teachers, NGO representatives, health care practitioners, employers, workers, parents).
- Direct observation of working children and their working conditions.
- Desk research - collection and analysis of existing information.

The study's participants were children aged 5 to 17 years working in the cotton/tobacco fields in 2004. No more than one child from one family was interviewed. 40 working children were interviewed in each selected village. The sample size was 160 children. Next, 40 in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants residing in the selected villages (10 informants from each village). The study was carried out from October through December 2004.

Study geography

The study was carried out in tobacco and cotton growing villages in Almaty and South Kazakhstan oblasts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

FINDINGS

Child labour in tobacco and cotton growing

1. Assessment of the number of children involved in tobacco and cotton agriculture is challenging due to the absence of monitoring/reporting mechanisms on child labour. Consequently, child labour, for the most part, is a phenomenon hidden from the public. Data on the child labour use in tobacco and cotton were gathered from direct observations and interviews with key informants: therefore, the data are subjective and should be treated with caution. On the basis of key informants' guesses and direct observations, it was concluded that children may have constituted up to 50-60% of the total workforce in tobacco and cotton fields in the selected villages (the guesses ranged from 20 to 80%). These figures cannot serve as quantitative indicators at any rate but rather should prove how serious the issue of child labour is. The working children came mainly from large, low-income families or migrant families from neighboring poorer countries.
2. The influx of seasonal labour migrants from neighboring countries to Kazakhstan also contributes to the incidence of child labour in tobacco and cotton growing. According to estimates of local residents, during the work season (May–November), migrant children may have amounted up to 70-80% of the total number of working children.
3. The working children had the following social and demographic characteristics:
 - the majority of the children working in tobacco were aged from 13 to 16 years; children working in cotton were aged from 10 to 16;
 - most of the children started working in the tobacco fields aged 9-13 years; in the cotton fields, at the age of 7-10;
 - the proportion of boys and girls were almost equal among the working children;
 - most working children were from families with many children and low income families. The average working child's family size was five siblings.
4. In both tobacco and cotton growing, children did all types of work. In tobacco, children were involved in tobacco sowing, irrigation, weeding, picking, sorting, stringing and pressing; in cotton, children did weeding, worm collection and cotton gathering.
5. The average length of the working day in the tobacco fields for children under 10 was about 5 hours (35 hours a week); for children aged 11-15 years it was 6 hours (42 hours a week), while 16-17 year-olds were working for 8 hours per day (56 hours a week).
In cotton, it was also found out that the length of the working day varied by the child's age: children under 10 worked on average 8 hours a day (56 hours a week), with a maximum of 10 hours a day (70 hours a week), while children aged 11 and over worked on average 10 hours a day (70 hours a week) and up to 12 hours a day (84 hours a week).
6. The employers of child labourers are farmers, owners of the tobacco and cotton fields. Often, a small farm of a few hectares is run by one family. In this case the children's work in the tobacco/cotton field is considered 'natural', like any other domestic work. However, large farms hire adult or child workers. Formal labour contracts with minors can not be signed, so the children work unofficially.
Philip Morris Kazakhstan is the key buyer for local tobacco farmers in Almaty oblast. Payments are usually made at the end of the season (November–December) when the farmers deliver the finished bales of pressed tobacco leaves to "Philip Morris Kazakhstan". The children's remuneration contributes to the family's entire annual income from tobacco. In the cotton fields of UKO, workers get paid daily.
7. Children's working conditions did not comply with national labour law². Data from direct observation of children's work describe their working conditions as follows:
 - absence of special clothes, respiratory masks and other means of protection against unfavorable weather conditions, agricultural chemicals and the hazardous components in tobacco leaves;
 - absence of sources of drinking water;
 - absence of toilets;
 - absence of places for having meals and rest;
 - absence of first aid equipment;
 - high humidity, dirt, poor ventilation and lighting; low temperatures in tobacco processing facilities;
 - carrying heavy weights;
 - long working hours and lack of time for rest;
 - unbalanced and insufficient nutrition.
8. The attitudes of the children to their work were diverse. The majority (64%) of interviewed children did not like working in the tobacco/cotton fields as it was hard physical work; other children found their work interesting and appreciated the opportunity to earn money.
9. Children were motivated to work for predominantly economic reasons: to earn money for the family (50%) or for themselves (33%), or to help their parents (37%).
10. According to the key informants and from observation, the health of working children may be assessed as poor. Physically demanding work, inadequate rest, malnutrition, unsanitary working conditions, exposure to chemicals and hazardous components of tobacco leaves inevitably combine to affect the children's health. Access to health care for working children is limited because low income families cannot afford health care services and medication.

² Article 169 of the draft labour code of Kazakhstan.

11. The study showed that the working children and their families had limited access to education and other alternatives to child labour (extracurricular activities, vocational training, career guidance, recreational events, sports, etc.). Children from low-income families could not attend school because they did not have appropriate clothes or money to buy books and cover all school-related expenses. Children working in tobacco had to combine work and study; many child workers in cotton growing did not attend school during the work season. Many children from migrant families could not attend school because they did not have legal status in Kazakhstan and had to work.
12. According to the key informants, families of working children had limited access to state social assistance and benefits.
13. The study showed that the causes of child labour are to a large extent related to socioeconomic problems in rural areas and agriculture. In addition, the sector specifics – wide use of unskilled manual labour – makes it possible to use child labour.
14. Attitudes of adults toward child labour were diverse. Most key informants were aware of the harmful impact child labour has on children's health and education and supposed that the use of child labour should be reduced or eliminated. Some respondents believed that children's work in the fields has educational value and helps keep children occupied. In addition, it is worth noting that adult respondents often felt helpless about child labour and perceived it as something inevitable: this could be an obstacle to taking action against child labour.
15. The study revealed a lack or absence of effective mechanisms to control child labour in tobacco and cotton growing. The key informants' interviews showed that although local authorities were completely aware of the scale of child labour use in tobacco/cotton, they did not have effective mechanisms to systematically control and limit child labour. The key informants believed that local authorities and governmental organizations have not taken effective action to control child labour in tobacco and cotton growing, as the problem has not been recognized as a priority.

Interviews with key informants showed that they did not know anything regarding the activities of trade unions and farmers/employers organizations in their villages. Furthermore, in the villages targeted by the study no NGO or any other civic organization had visible activities related to the provision of social, educational or vocational services for working children and their families.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The problem of child labour in Kazakhstan

Child labour is a global phenomenon which can be found in both developed and developing countries. International experience has proved that child labour is detrimental to the child's physical and psychosocial development. Child labourers are most often recruited from vulnerable groups in society such as poor rural and urban families with limited access to education, health services and little, if any, disposable income. These children are forced to work in risky or hazardous environments in search of income. A vicious circle develops because child labour worsens the child's educational and job prospects. Therefore in the long run child labour has a negative impact on a country's economic development and its human resources.

Over the past fifteen years, Kazakhstan has made its way from a republic with a socialist economy and centralized governance within the Soviet Union to an independent state with the most dynamic economy in Central Asia. The transformation of the economic structure in the past decade has precipitated the emergence of a large shadow economy in which child labour can be used. As social benefits and state social programs have declined, the hardships of the transitional economy have left many children unprotected, particularly in relation to their employers. The absence of legal and administrative control and lack of adequate regulations, or of their reliable enforcement, leaves children at risk of becoming objects of manipulation and exploitation.

With the development of the economy, the country has an increasingly formalized labour market. This is leading to the disappearance of some typical forms of urban child labour (e.g. petty trade, newspaper vending) and a concentration on two types of child labour, namely agriculture and the carrying of heavy goods in markets and bazaars. Rapidly changing lifestyles and the widening income gap between the very rich and very poor makes new and illicit forms of child labour particularly widespread and hazardous, as children are increasingly used in activities such as prostitution and drug trafficking. Kazakhstan is also a receiving country of (child) labour migration from neighboring less developed states, primarily Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

In 1996, the Kazakh research institute for labour and employment, with support from ILO-IPEC, carried out an assessment³ which was the first attempt to get a picture of the character and scope of child labour in Kazakhstan. The study revealed widespread incidence of child labour in various sectors of the rural and urban economy, resulting from the emerging market and collapse of the state welfare system. The study's findings were presented to Parliament in 1997. It was recommended that ILO's Conventions #138 and 182 should be ratified. The authors of the report acknowledged that the country at that moment did not have the resources or capacity to solve the problem of child labour because of "major problems in the economy and

social sector". They therefore suggested focusing on intolerable forms of child labour.

In 2001 Kazakhstan ratified ILO Convention #138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment (1973). In 2003 the Ministry of labour and social protection initiated ratification of ILO Convention #182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Having ratified these documents, Kazakhstan has accepted responsibility for the development and implementation of national policy and effective programs to combat the worst forms of child labour. There is a clear lack of data on the magnitude and features of child labour in Kazakhstan, which is an obstacle to the development of comprehensive and targeted national strategies on worst forms of child labour. This study, undertaken by ILO-IPEC through the Center for study of public opinion, with the support from the MoLSP, is an initial step in the establishment of a knowledge base on child labour in Kazakhstan.

1.2. Key concepts: definition of child labour and worst forms of child labour

Child labour refers to those kinds and circumstances of work that:

- (a) are detrimental to the child's psychological, physical, and social development and morale, and
- (b) affect schooling in various ways. For instance, working children might have limited access to education, are more likely to drop out and have lower school attendance and performance.

The ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour (1999) helped to focus the spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate, as a priority, the worst forms of child labour, which it defines as follows⁴:

- (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 for pornographic performances;
- (c) 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 that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

For the purpose of definition, the Convention regards as a child any person less than 18 years of age.

³ Bereshev S., J.Windell Child labour in Kazakhstan.. Report for ILO-IPEC. September 1997. Almaty.

⁴ ILO Convention # 182, Article 3

1.3. Current legislation in Kazakhstan related to child labour

Kazakhstan's legislation on the rights of the child includes a number of laws and regulations adopted before ratification of the Convention on the rights of the child by Kazakhstan or derived from soviet laws, as well as new laws and regulations aimed at bringing national legislation into conformity with international standards and provisions of international treaties. Selected articles and provisions regulate the economic activities of minors and aim to protect children from exploitation and engagement in activities detrimental to their health, safety or morale, that is, worst forms of child labour.

These laws regulate the relationships arising in connection with realization of the principal rights and interests of the child guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This is based on the principles of priority for children to be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, develop socially important and creative activity, bring them up in the spirit of high moral qualities, patriotism and civic consciousness, to form their national morale on the basis of common human values of world civilization.

Law #345 of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On the rights of the child in the Republic of Kazakhstan" of August 8, 2000 claims that every child has the right to freedom of labour, the right to a free choice of occupation and profession. Children over the age of fourteen have the right, upon their parents consent and during out-of-school time to participate in socially beneficial activities, appropriate for their age and health and safe in terms of the child's physical and mental development and morale. Children of fourteen and above also have the right to acquire a profession. It is prohibited to employ or engage children in hard physical work or in hazardous working conditions (Article 16).

Issues related to the labour of minors are discussed in the Law on labour of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 10 December 1999 #493-1 with amendments introduced by the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan #260-II of 06.12.01, #484-II of 25.09.03 and #20-III of 23.12.04, as well as in the draft Labour code which is currently underway. Farther in this section references are made to the relevant articles in the draft Labour code and to the respective articles in the Law on labour. There are minor alterations related to the labour of persons under 18 years of age in the articles of the draft Labour Code as compared to the Law on Labour (please see specifics below).

Article 23 of the draft Labour code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Article 11 of the Law on labour) says that it shall be prohibited to sign a labour contract with:

- a) a person under the age of fourteen;
- b) a person under the age of eighteen for work in hazardous and dangerous work conditions;
- c) a person under the age of eighteen for work stipulating full responsibility of the worker for security of the employer's property and other assets.

Article 28 of the Labour code (Article 11 of the Law on labour) covers the minimum age at which the worker is eligible to sign a labour contract (minimum age of employment):

1. Signing a labour contract shall be allowed with those citizens that have reached the age of sixteen years.
2. If a person has a secondary education or has left a secondary education institution, he/she shall be able to sign a labour contract having reached the age of fifteen years, provided that the consent of the parent or guardian is available.
3. By consent of one of the parents or guardian, a labour contract may be signed with a school student who has reached the age of fourteen to carry out work during out-of-school time, which is not harmful to his/her health and does not interfere with the educational process.

Neither the draft Labour code nor the current legislation makes provision for the exceptions allowed by Article 8 of the Convention # 138 on artistic performances.

Article 81 of this code says that engagement of minors in night work is allowed only by the children's written consent. The respective article 48 of the Law on labour prohibits night work for people under 18.

Article 169 of the code (Article 11.5 of the Law on labour) lists the occupations prohibited for persons under the age of eighteen:

1. Work with severe (very severe), hazardous (very hazardous) and (or) dangerous labour conditions.
2. Work requiring carrying or moving weights exceeding the maximum weight limits determined for them.
3. The list of occupations that are not allowed to be performed by persons under the age of eighteen and maximum weights allowed to be carried and moved by persons under the age of eighteen shall be determined by the authorized governmental body in charge of labour issues.

The list of occupations prohibited for engagement of minors was recently updated (Order by the interim Minister of labour and social protection as of 15 February 2005 # 45).

Article 170 of the Code deals with obligatory medical examinations of workers under the age of eighteen. Labour contracts with people under the age of eighteen shall be signed only after they have been through obligatory entry medical examination. Furthermore, upon reaching the age of eighteen, these workers shall be subject to mandatory annual medical examinations.

Working hours for workers under the age of eighteen are specified in Article 171 of the Labour code (Article 46 of the Law on labour). Reduced working hours are defined for workers under the age of eighteen:

1. not more than 24 hours a week for workers under the age of fourteen;
2. not more than 36 hours a week for workers aged sixteen to eighteen years.

Article 172 of the Labour code (Article 75 of the Law on labour) says that:

1. labour remuneration for workers under the age of eighteen, for fewer working hours, shall be equal to that for full-time workers of respective categories;
2. performance norms for workers under the age of eighteen shall be calculated on the basis of general performance rates decreased proportionately for reduced working hours.

In addition to the articles directly related to the work of minors, both the Law on labour and the draft Labour code state that “international agreements ratified by Kazakhstan have priority over this Law and other legislative acts on labour and have the direct application, unless the international agreement says that for its application a relevant law shall be adopted in Kazakhstan”. Therefore, the Conventions #138 and 182 which have been both ratified by Kazakhstan have direct application and provide legal base to control child labour.

1.4. Socioeconomic situation in rural areas

It is generally recognized that against a background of overall economic success in Kazakhstan, the development of agriculture and, consequently, of rural areas lags far behind. Although 43% of the total population live in rural areas, agriculture accounts for only 8.5% of GDP and agriculture remains a relatively high-risk and low-profit sector of the economy. In addition, there is a significant degree of regional inequality in the structure and productivity of agriculture. Moreover, ongoing reforms in the agricultural sector aiming to support market reforms in agriculture and rural areas have revealed a ‘surplus’ of rural population.

There is also a growing gap between the living standards of rural and urban populations. Almost one third (30.9% in 2003) of the rural population have incomes below the national minimum living standard, compared to only 10.8% in urban areas⁵. The average monthly nominal wage of worker in agriculture, forestry and fisheries in 2002 amounted to 8,174 tenge, i.e. just 40% of the national average wage. Furthermore, the rural population has a lower educational level than people in cities: for instance, in 2002 the proportion of the economically active population with higher, incomplete higher and professional secondary education equaled 29.8% in rural areas, compared to some 61% in cities. Though the official unemployment rate among the rural population has been steadily decreasing, and stood at 7.4% in 2002 (compared to 10.9% in urban areas), income levels in villages are increasing very slowly, resulting in a high percentage of rural working poor.

Existing demographic trends have an additional impact on rural development. The rural population is on average almost four years younger than the urban citizenry (27.8 and 31.6 years, respectively)⁶. The proportion of children under 15 years was 8.5% in villages, which is more than in cities. Children and youth from 0 to 19 years accounted for 40% of the rural population at the beginning of 2004, compared to 32% in the cities. The proportion of families with many children is also higher

in rural areas, which increases the burden on parents to provide for dependent family members and also contributes to rural poverty. Thus, according to the household survey, in 2003 households with five or more members accounted for 42% in the countryside and only 15% in urban areas; households with 3-4 or more children accounted for 31% in villages but only 11% in cities. Meanwhile, 42% of large families (those with 5 or more members) have incomes below the poverty line.

Seasonal labour migration and immigration also impact on the socioeconomic situation in rural areas. Every year numerous seasonal labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan come to work on the tobacco plantations of Almaty oblast, while migrants from Uzbekistan join workers in the cotton fields in South Kazakhstan oblast. Increased immigration to the rural areas of Kazakhstan has also been observed. From 2000 to 2002 some 46,140 people immigrated to Kazakhstan’s rural areas, predominantly to the southern regions: South Kazakhstan oblast (10,737 people), Almaty oblast (7,370) and Zhambyl oblast (6,537). In search of better options, meanwhile, people move from villages to cities. From 1995 through 2000, 714,489 villagers moved to urban areas: 61.3% of them moved to the cities and towns of their own oblast (intra-oblast migration), while 38.7% moved to urban areas in other oblasts (inter-oblast migration).

Access to social infrastructures

The UNDP Human Development Report “Rural development in Kazakhstan: Challenges and prospects.” (2002) noted significant deterioration of rural social infrastructures over recent years. This situation has also been recognized by the Government (see the National program for the development of rural territories of RK 2004-2010).

Health care system. Analysis of health care facility distribution shows that these were available only in 82.1% of rural settlements; in 400 rural settlements medical facilities did not meet state standards⁷. The volume and quality of health care services has so far been insufficient. E.g., one third of the interviewed low-income rural households reported that they could not afford the medical services they needed. Only 3.2% of the rural population reported having received full spectrum of health care⁸. In addition, deterioration of the environment and limited access to clean water may further jeopardize the health of rural residents.

Education. As noted in the UNDP national Human Development Report “Education for all: key goal for the new millennium” (2004), “the opportunity to acquire quality education remains the prerogative of the urban population while the rural population is restricted by lack of money. In some cases rural schools can only provide primary or incomplete secondary education, which is one of the reasons that an increasing number of rural children do not complete their secondary education”. To illustrate, assessment of school availability showed that only 5,575 (72.8%) of rural settlements met state standards, while in 479 (6.2%) of rural settlements schools did not comply with re-

5 People’s living standards. Statistics digest. Agency on statistics of the RK. Almaty, 2004. (From now forth the data are quoted from this Digest).

6 Census returns - 1979, 1989, 1999.

7 National program for the development of rural territories of the RK in 2004-2010.

8 UNDP. Human Development Report “Rural development in Kazakhstan: challenges and prospects.” (2002)

quirements. In addition, 1,606 (21%) of rural settlements had no schools at all, including 458 (6%) that should have schools in accordance with the national standards (quoted from the State program for development of rural territories of RK for 2004-2100). In 2003 the proportion of children aged 7-17 years from low-income families that did not attend school amounted to 2.6% in rural areas (against 1.4% among the urban population); the main reason was lack of money to cover expenses related to schooling. Lastly, the primary cause of non-attendance of pre-school child care facilities by children from low-income families was the unavailability of such facilities in the countryside.

Culture, sports and recreational activities. Recreational amenities in rural areas have also been deteriorating. The regional (oblast) departments of culture responsible for organizing recreational activities for village residents have been abolished; cultural facilities in rural areas have been either privatized or closed; the book collections of libraries have been lost. Cultural institutions are often located in the unsuitable premises such as schools and akimats. Out of 1,822 rural clubs included in the governmental network, only 519 have standard buildings required for the Houses of Culture and clubs; 1,303 are housed in premises suited for such institutions; more than 600 clubs need capital repair; 130 are unsafe structures; 172 clubs have no heating in winter (taken from the State program for development of the rural territories of the RK for 2004-2100.)

The number of movie theatres has dropped from 994 to 64 (including 43 public cinema theatres), while the number of movable equipment for screening movies has decreased from 2,320 to 543, or by 60-85% in some rural areas. The situation with fitness and sports in rural areas has also worsened. There are 17,134 sports facilities (stadiums, swimming pools, gyms, tennis courts, etc.) in rural areas but most of them are not functioning. Only 37.7% of rural districts have committees for physical culture and sport. There is a shortage of fitness instructors in rural areas, with only 279 rural instructor/trainers for the entire country.

Government programs

The Government of Kazakhstan recognizes that the development of agriculture in the country currently trails considerably behind urban economies and this jeopardizes overall economic development. The Government has taken a number of measures to address this situation. In the President's message to the nation, the problems of rural areas were identified as a strategic priority for the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2003-2005. In June 2002, a National agro-food program for the same period was approved by an Edict of the President. This program includes measures aimed at enhancement of the effectiveness of the agro-food sector. The rural education system up to 2005 will be developed within the framework of the state program "Auyl mektebi" (rural school) approved by Decree No. 128 of February 4, 2003 of the Government of Kazakhstan.

Another key step was the National program for the development of rural areas of the RK in 2004-2010 developed by the Ministry of agriculture and approved by edict of the President of the

Republic of Kazakhstan of July 10, 2003. It is aimed "to support rural life on the basis of optimization of the rural settlement". The program's priorities include support for economic and social development in rural areas; development of standards for the provision of social and engineering infrastructures for village residents; design of models for efficient rural resettlement and implementation of measures to encourage migration of villagers.

Finally, the political reform initiated by Edict No.1483 of December 6, 2004 of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On elections of akims of auls (country), districts and villages in the Republic of Kazakhstan" introduces elections of akims in rural districts. This will promote responsibility and accountability of the akims to the residents of the respective villages and reflects the social orientation of state policy at local and national level.

Tobacco and cotton growing in Kazakhstan⁹

Tobacco cultivation in Kazakhstan is concentrated in Almaty Oblast where this crop covers 6,300 hectares out of a national total of 7,400 hectares. In 2003 the tobacco croppage totalled 15,800 tons, worth over 2.38 billion tenge. Tobacco cultivation accounts for 0.4% of Kazakhstan's total volume of agricultural production.

According to employers, a family of five members can cultivate one hectare of tobacco a year and earn about 2,000 USD. The market price of tobacco in 2004 amounted to 140-150 KZT per kilo. Tobacco cultivation requires painstaking manual labour. No machinery is used as it is not available. The tobacco cultivation season lasts from March till October. Tobacco is cultivated by local farmers who often hire migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Among the 10 private tobacco companies in Kazakhstan, the leading tobacco producer is Philip Morris Kazakhstan, whose share of the domestic market is about 70%.

The total area of fields allotted for cotton growing in Kazakhstan was 223,500 hectares in 2004. Raw cotton accounts for 4.9% of total agricultural output. Kazakhstan's main cotton-growing area is in Makhtaaral district of South Kazakhstan oblast, where more than 54% (121,000 hectares) of the oblast's irrigated lands are concentrated. In addition, cotton is grown in Shardarinsky district (15% of the cultivated area), Turkestansky rayon (10% of cultivated area) and Ordabasinsky rayon (6% of cultivated area). In 2003 the total croppage of raw cotton amounted to 324,000 tons. Cotton products in the agricultural sector of South Kazakhstan oblast accounted for 34.5%, worth 29.6 billion tenge.

The cotton growing season in South Kazakhstan oblast starts in March and includes tilling and sowing of cottonseeds. These are the most mechanized activities for which farmers rent combines from the cotton gin plants or large farms. Manual labour is used, beginning in May when the weeding phase starts, through to the end of the season. Primary processing of the raw cotton is carried out by 19 operating ginneries with a total annual capacity of 250,000 tons of cotton fiber.

⁹ According to the agency on statistics of the RK and Ministry of agriculture of the RK.

Conclusion

To conclude, the assessment of the rural situation based on existing data reveals the socioeconomic context in which child labour is rooted. Currently, no precise figures on child labour in agriculture are available. However, preliminary assessments made by national and international experts indicate a rather high prevalence of child labour in this sector¹⁰. Traditionally, child labour plays an important role in those sectors of agriculture where manual unskilled labour prevails – for instance tobacco and cotton growing. With the reforms in agriculture including land privatization and development of market relations in rural areas, family farms have emerged where all family members, including children, work together. Furthermore, larger farms hire external workers, including minors. The complex interplay of variables such as rural poverty, higher proportion of families with many children, lack of economic alternatives, absence of pre-school child care facilities, absence or unavailability of alternatives for children and youth related to education, vocational training, career guidance, sports and recreational activities creates conditions predisposed for the use of child labour in rural areas.

¹⁰ Report of the IPEC initial appraisal mission on child labour in Kazakhstan.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1. UNICEF/ILO approach to RAS on child labour

The study followed UNICEF-ILO's guidelines on rapid assessment on child labour¹¹. Rapid assessment is a research methodology that uses several data-collecting strategies simultaneously in order to achieve an understanding of a specific social reality or situation in a particular sociocultural context. It is usually done with the objective of formulating a project or some other kind of intervention. Its methods may be a blend of the quantitative and qualitative, and its findings may be partly descriptive, partly analytical and partly statistical, depending upon the particular aims of the given investigation. RAS does not have the validity of scientific inquiry, however. The method is called rapid assessment because it is expected to last no more than three months from beginning to end. RAS researches populations by observing or interviewing small groups of individuals; it does not employ scientific sampling methods or use control groups. The RAS has proven an effective and relatively low cost methodology, and if the research has been done well, the findings will be reasonably accurate and representative of the issue that was investigated.

2.2. Study goals and objectives

Goal of the RAS:

To collect qualitative data on child labour in agriculture, namely in tobacco and cotton growing, in selected regions of Kazakhstan to support the formulation of national policies and strategies in combating worst forms of child labour and to shape pilot projects targeting child labourers, their families, and communities.

RAS objectives:

- To assess the qualitative aspects of child labour in agriculture in select regions of Kazakhstan, namely in tobacco and cotton growing.
- To identify sociodemographic characteristics of working children.
- To describe working conditions, including hours, hazards, remuneration, relations with employers, etc.
- To examine family situations and relationships within the family; factors that force families to use child labour and conditions which could stop them from using child labour.
- To find out if there is access to education, health care, recreational services and other alternatives for working children; to assess relationships between work and existing alternatives, if any.
- To identify gender discrepancies with regard to child labour.
- To describe the communities in which child labour exists, economic and social support resources/services available to families and working children.

- To picture the socioeconomic context in which child labour exists at the level of community and region (village, rayon, oblast, country).
- To develop recommendations for policy reform and interventions to address the issue of child labour, based on identified gaps and existing resources.

2.3. Study methodology

2.3.1. Study objects

The object of this study covers the children working in tobacco/cotton fields during 2004.

The subject of this study is the child labour used on plantations and in other agricultural enterprises producing output for commercial purposes, with the exception of family farms or small farms whose products are for their own consumption.

2.3.2. Research methods

A combination of research methods and techniques was applied in the study:

- Structured interviews with working children (children survey).
- In-depth interviews with key informants (governmental officials, school teachers, NGO representatives, health care practitioners, employers, workers, parents).
- Direct observation of working children and their working conditions.
- Desk research – collection and analysis of existing information.

1. Children survey

Sampling

The study's participants were children aged from 5 to 17 years working in cotton/tobacco fields in 2004. No more than one child per family was interviewed. 40 working children were interviewed in each selected village.

Quota sampling of children based on sex, age and migration status in the following proportion (for each village) was used to select children:

Age-specific children's quota:

From 4 to 10 years of age – 4 children
 From 11 to 13 years of age – 12 children
 From 14 to 15 years of age – 12 children
 From 16 to 17 years of age – 12 children

Sex-specific children's quota:

Boys – 15
 Girls – 15

Children's quota based on the migration status

Migrants – 25
 Locals – 20

Sample size – 160 children

11 UNICEF-ILO. Investigating child labour: guidelines for rapid assessment. A field manual (2000)

Table 1. The number of children surveyed by age, sex, residence status and location

Village	Age		Sex		Residence status	
Shelek (AO)	5-10 years old	4	Boys	25	Migrants	20
	11-13 years old	12				
	14-15 years old	12	Girls	15	Local children	20
	16-17 years old	12				
Teskensu (AO)	5-10 years old	4	Boys	25	Migrants	20
	11-13 years old	12				
	14-15 years old	12	Girls	15	Local children	20
	16-17 years old	12				
Asykata (UKO)	5-10 years old	4	Boys	25	Migrants	20
	11-13 years old	12				
	14-15 years old	12	Girls	15	Local children	20
	16-17 years old	12				
Ilyich (UKO)	5-10 years old	4	Boys	25	Migrants	20
	11-13 years old	12				
	14-15 years old	12	Girls	15	Local children	20
	16-17 years old	12				
Total		160		160		160

Questionnaire structure and content

The questionnaire for interviewing children included the following sets of questions:

- Demographic information.
- Education.
- Nutrition and living conditions.
- Daily routine and working hours.
- Earnings.
- Health and labour safety.

Interview duration was 30-40 minutes.

II. Interviews with key informants**Sampling**

There were conducted 40 in-depth interviews with key informants residing in the selected villages (10 informants from each village). The following subcategories of key informants were interviewed:

- Representatives of local authorities.
- School teachers/educators.
- Health care practitioners.
- Parents of working children.
- NGO representatives.
- Workers.
- Other local residents.

Structure and content of the guidelines for interviewing

The guidelines for conducting in-depth interviews with key informants included the following sets of questions:

- Attitudes toward child labour in tobacco/cotton growing.

- The situation of children and village residents in general; situation of vulnerable groups.
- Measures aiming to improve the social situation of the rural population in general and of children in particular.

The duration of the in-depth interview was 40-60 minutes.

III. Direct observation**Sites for observation**

During the fieldwork three observations were held at different times of day in each of the selected villages. This allowed evaluation of general working conditions, work hazards and dangers for children, children's behavior at work, their attitude towards the work, relations between children and employers, and the proportion of children and adults among all those working on the site.

Due to the fact that the fieldwork was conducted at a later stage of tobacco/cotton growing, the observation sites were selected based on the availability of children at the site.

The following rules were applied when observing children at work:

- Observation was carried out implicitly or explicitly. All records were made after the observations;
- Observation lasted for at least one hour; and
- Observation was repeated at different times of day.

Structure and content of the observation checklist

The checklist for carrying out direct observation covered the following themes:

- Share of child labourers among all those working on the site and the types of work children do.
- Number of children on the site and the sociodemographic profile of the working children.
- Clothing.
- Physical access to the workplace.
- Work description (nature of work).
- General description of the working environment and working conditions.
- Tools and equipment in terms of potential danger associated with their use.
- Relations with the employer.
- Hazards and dangers associated with work for children.

IV. Data collection and analysis

The following sources of secondary (existing) information were used:

- report documentation for villages provided by the village akimats (this information was used to fill in a checklist for each village);
- general statistical information on Kazakhstan;

- international legal documents and national legislative documents related to child labour;
- UNDP. Poverty in Kazakhstan: causes and cures (2002);
- UNDP. Human Development Report 2002. Rural development in Kazakhstan: challenges and prospects.
- UNDP. Human Development Report 2004. Education for all: the key goal for a new Millennium.
- publications of the agency on statistics of RK.
- national program for the development of rural territories in 2004-2010.

2.3.3. Study phases and timeframe

The study was carried out from October through December 2004.

- Preparatory stage: identifying study sites, training for the research team and collecting existing information, 22-26 October 2004;
- Fieldwork (data collection): interviewing children, in-depth interviews with key informants, direct observation of working children, collection of general statistical information on the villages, 27 October – 17 November 2004;
- Data processing and analysis, writing up the report, 18 November 2004 – 31 January 2005.

2.3.4. Study geography

The study was carried out in selected tobacco-growing villages of Almaty oblast and cotton-growing villages of South Kazakhstan oblast of Kazakhstan. The two villages out of few predominantly tobacco-growing (in Enbekshikazakh rayon of the AO) and cotton-growing (in Makhtaaral rayon of the UKO) villages in each oblast were randomly selected.

In Almaty oblast, the villages of Shelek and Teskensu were selected for the study on child labour in tobacco because tobacco growing is the major activity in these locations. In South Kazakhstan oblast (UKO), the study was conducted in the villages of Ilyich and Asykata for the following reasons:

- cotton is the primary agricultural product in these villages;
- cotton was being harvested in these villages at the time of the fieldwork.

Shelek Village in Almaty oblast is 110 km from Almaty city; its population is 23,600.

Population distribution by sex and age:

Males	10 380
Females	13 220
0-6 years	2736
7-11 years	2284
12-14 years	1368
15-17 years	1147
18- 20 years	1080
20-39 years	5980
60 years and older	3280

Population distribution by size of household and number of workers in the family: total 6,300 households, large families – 243; families with no workers – 69.

Poverty: 280 households living below the poverty line – 2,047 tenge per month.

Unemployment: 260 registered unemployed; 850 unregistered¹².

- the main occupations are agriculture and entrepreneurship;
- cultivated agricultural crops include tobacco (principal crop), vegetables, corn and wheat;
- the area under tobacco amounts to 800 hectares;
- distribution of the tobacco plantations by size is as follows: minimum size 0.5 hectare; maximum size 8-10 ha; average size 2-5 hectares;
- the number of farm(er)s engaged in tobacco growing: 509 farms and 3800 farmers; income from tobacco-cultivation is 140,000 tenge per hectare (exchange rate at end of 2004 was 130 KZT per 1 USD);
- distribution of tobacco plantations by form of ownership: 30% land lease; 70% of private shares; no cooperatives.

Teskensu Village in Almaty oblast is located 80 km from Almaty and has 4,357 inhabitants.

Population distribution by sex and age:

Males	2150
Females	2207
0-14 years	1221
15-17 years	87
18 years and older	3049

In total, 987 households, of which 49 live below the poverty line.

- principal activities include agriculture and entrepreneurship;
- cultivated agricultural crops are tobacco (principal crop), vegetables, corn;
- the area under tobacco is 350 hectares;
- distribution of tobacco plantations according to size: minimum 0.5 hectare; maximum 8-15 ha; average size 2-6 hectares;
- there are 250 farms engaged in tobacco growing; income from tobacco cultivation stands at 257,143 tenge per hectare;
- ownership relations to the land cultivated: the land cultivated by private farmers 3,335 hectares; leased land amounts to 1000 hectares.

Asykata Village in UKO is located 250 km from Shymkent, with 10 866 inhabitants.

Population distribution according to sex and age:

Males	5370
Females	5755
0-16 years	4660
17 years and older	6206

¹² These data were obtained from the local authorities. The subcategories of "registered" and "non-registered" unemployed are not official. The "registered" unemployed are those who received state unemployment benefits at the beginning on 2004.

Population distribution by size of household: total, 2,066 households including 386 large families, while 79 families live below the poverty line.

- principal activities include agriculture and entrepreneurship;
- the primary cultivated agricultural crop is cotton;
- the area under cotton is 5,984 hectares;
- distribution of cotton fields by size: minimum 0.5 hectare; maximum 14-20 ha; average size 5-6 hectares; 975 farmers are engaged in cotton growing; cotton yield is 18 centners per hectare.

Ilyich Village in UKO is located 25 km from Zhetysai and 225 km from Shymkent and has 13 788 inhabitants.

Population by sex and age:

Males	6789
Females	6999
0-17 years	3137
18-59 years	9920
60 years and older	731

Population distribution by size of households: total, 2,435 households including 652 large families.

In terms of poverty, 31 families receive targeted social benefits.

- principal activities include agriculture and entrepreneurship;
- cultivated agricultural crops are cotton (principal crop), alfalfa, corn and cucurbits crops;
- the area under cotton is 9,340 hectares;
- distribution of cotton fields according to size: minimum 0.5-2.0 hectares; maximum more than 300 hectares, with average size 5-15 hectares;
- there are 1270 kolkhoz farms engaged in cotton and average yield is 22.5 centners per hectare.

2.3.5. Study limitations and obstacles encountered in the course of the study

- (1) The RAS methodology requires that the entire duration of the research should not exceed three months. Meanwhile, agriculture is a dynamic sector where work activities change according to season. Moreover, there are seasonal fluctuations of labour migration streams and seasonal changes in the structure of the workforce, including the proportion of children. For instance, at the peak of seasonal agricultural activities the proportion of labour migrants is at its highest in summer, while the number of working children also increases. To observe such seasonal dynamics of child labour in agriculture, the study would require up to a year. Because of time limits, the seasonal characteristics of child labour in tobacco and cotton growing were obtained retrospectively.
- (2) The fieldwork in villages of Almaty oblast took place towards the end of tobacco cultivation and included sorting, stringing and pressing tobacco leaves. The research group was

therefore unable to observe children in the fields picking tobacco. All research activities were carried out in special premises where tobacco leaves are dried and processed and access to working children was partly limited.

- (3) Data collection for the study on child labour in cotton growing coincided with gathering of the third cotton crop in UKO. The majority of the labour migrants engaged in seasonal agricultural work in the fields had already left the villages, and interviewers had certain difficulties in selecting children to meet sample quotas.
- (4) Furthermore, the study's findings cannot be used to illustrate the situation of child labour in rural areas throughout the entire country. The RAS methodology has limitations related to the nature of qualitative research instruments, which can lead to some bias in the assessment of the situation by key informants and researchers. The study was conducted in selected villages of Almaty oblast and UKO and the findings cannot be extrapolated to other geographical areas or agricultural sectors of Kazakhstan.
- (5) Finally, the issue of child labour is a sensitive and contradictory one in Kazakhstani society, while use of child labour itself is illegal. Therefore key informants were often reluctant to speak about child labour, and their responses might not have always been frank, especially in cases when they themselves were benefiting from child labour.

3. FINDINGS: child labour in tobacco and cotton growing

3.1. Child labour in tobacco growing

Working children and their sociodemographic characteristics

Estimation of the number of children working in tobacco is challenging due to the absence of monitoring/reporting mechanisms on child labour. Signing labour contracts with minors is not legitimate, while working children do not get registered, and official bodies do not have reliable data on the number of children working in tobacco farms. Consequently, child labour is a phenomenon mostly hidden from the public and official sources do not provide reliable information on the number of working children. Data on the nature of children's work and the guesses about the incidence of child labour use in tobacco were gathered from direct observations and interviews with key informants. Therefore the data are subjective and should be treated with caution. In addition, there are seasonal fluctuations in the share of working children and the nature of work in tobacco fields. This helps explain key informants' wide range of guesses (from 15%-80%) about the share of child labour in the total number of workers in tobacco fields.

Responses to the question "What is your guess about the proportion of children among all workers in the tobacco fields?":

"I would say that there are more children working than parents, 60-70%" (Parent, AO).

Direct observation showed that children constituted up to 60% of the total workforce in tobacco. At the time of the fieldwork, the proportion of migrant child workers to local child workers was 1:2, i.e. 33% of the working children were migrants, while 67% were local children. It should, however, be taken into account that at that time many migrants had already left Kazakhstan, so the proportion of migrant children working in the tobacco fields was not constant. According to the guesses of local residents, during the peak season (March–October), migrant children represent up to 75% of the total number of working children.

Some 70% of key informants believed that in the last ten years child labour occurrence has decreased. They associate this with a decrease in seasonal labour migrants from Kyrgyzstan. Some experts thought that child labour has decreased due to improvements in people's living standards, so that local farmers can now employ more adult workers. In addition, according to the key informants, the policy of "Philip Morris Kazakhstan" to prohibit child labour in tobacco fields has substantially contributed to the reduction of child labour use in tobacco.

A third of the key informants believed that child labour use has increased over the last ten years due to the expansion of tobacco plantations, as well as labour shortages and lack of alternatives for children. In addition, many informants noted that the soviet practice of mass mobilization of school and university students to work in the tobacco fields no longer exists. However, as they said, in the soviet past the use of child labour was controlled and limited by the state (limits on working hours, medical examinations etc). Nowadays, however, state regulation is limited as child labour be-

longs to the private farm sector. In farm families, particularly in large low income and migrant families, children work alongside adults. Although adults know that use of child labour in tobacco is prohibited by law, and this is articulated in the agreement between the tobacco farmers and "Philip Morris" (the major buyer and employer), children's work is driven by the economic needs of the farm family and is part of its so-called 'survival strategy'.

"Child labour has decreased because living standards in the village have increased and many [farmers] can afford to hire adult workers." (Representative of local authorities, AO)

"Child labour has decreased because of Philip Morris." (Parent, AO)

"Child labour has increased because of expansion of tobacco plantations". (Parent, AO)

"Nowadays children work more than ten years ago. In the past, adults had salaries sufficient to provide for the family; now the family cannot manage its land share without children. In addition, in the past children could go to pioneer camps, where they could rest and entertain themselves". (Parent, AO)

"In the past, there was mass mobilization of school students to work in the fields, but working hours were limited to 4 hours per day. Children were happy to earn some pocket money. There is no longer any state mass mobilization, but in farm families everybody works". (Parent, AO)

Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of working children, the key informants also had diverse opinions. The majority of them believed that working children were mainly from large low-income families or migrant families. Other informants supposed that all children, without exception, work in tobacco.

"Local children do not work, only migrant children work". (Parent, AO)

"All children work". (Representative of local authorities, AO)

"Those children work who are from families with many children and low-income families, as well as children whose parents have contracts with "Phillip Morris". (Representative of local authorities, AO)

"All children work". (Parent, AO)

Based on the information obtained from interviews with children and key informants as well as from direct observation, the working children had the following social and demographic characteristics:

- the majority of the working children were aged from 13 to 16 years;
- most of the children started working in the fields at the age of 9-13 years;
- during the working season, migrant children represented up to 75% of all working children. Migrant families come primarily from Kyrgyzstan (80%) and Uzbekistan (20%);
- the number of boys and girls were almost equal among the working children;
- most working children were from families with many children and low income families. The average working children's family size was 5 family members ranging from 2 to 9.

Table 2. The number of children surveyed by age, sex, residence status and location

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		All types of works	Tobacco stringing	Weeding	Picking	Sorting	Pressing	Total
Sex	Boys	25	17	5	6	7		45
		55,6%	37,8%	11,1%	13,3%	15,6%		100%
	Girls	20	11	2	4	6	1	35
		57,1%	31,4%	5,7%	11,4%	17,1%	2,9%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	2	7	1	2	2		11
		18,2%	63,6%	9,1%	18,2%	18,2%		100%
	11-13 years old	10	11	3	4	6		24
		41,7%	45,8%	12,5%	16,7%	25,0%		100%
	14-15 years old	15	7	1	3	2		23
		65,2%	30,4%	4,3%	13,0%	8,7%		100%
	16-17 years old	18	3	2	1	3	1	22
		81,8%	13,6%	9,1%	4,5%	13,6%	4,5%	100%
Residence status	Local children	27	21	6	9	11		55
		49,1%	38,2%	10,9%	16,4%	20,0%		100%
	Migrants	18	7	1	1	2	1	25
		72,0%	28,0%	4,0%	4,0%	8,0%	4,0%	100%
Village	Shelek	23	15	3	2	3	1	40
		57,5%	37,5%	7,5%	5,0%	7,5%	2,5%	100%
	Teskensu	22	13	4	8	10		40
		55,0%	32,5%	10,0%	20,0%	25,0%		100%
Total	Number	45	28	7	10	13	1	80
	%	56,3	35,0	8,8	12,5	16,3	1,3	100

Nature of work children do and their working conditions

Types of work children do

Most of the key informants said that children perform practically all types of work in the tobacco fields, including sowing, irrigation, weeding, picking, sorting, stringing and pressing of tobacco leaves.

Responses to the question “What types of work do children do?”:

“Children do all types of work”. (Parent, AO)

“Children do sowing, weeding, picking, stringing and sorting”. (Agricultural worker, AO)

“Children do all types of work in the fields and in premises”. (Agricultural worker, AO)

“They do sowing, weeding, stringing and picking”. (Agricultural worker, AO)

The types of work children are engaged in vary depending on their age. Children aged from 5 to 10 years primarily do less physical work such as tobacco stringing and sorting. Older children perform a wider range of tasks.

Some key informants pointed out gender differences in the types of work: boys do more physical work, while girls perform tasks which require more caution and diligence.

“Hard work is performed by boys, while girls do stringing and manual ‘small’ tasks”. (Health care practitioner, AO)

However, the responses of working children themselves showed no significant differences between boys and girls in the nature of work.

Working hours

Working hours vary by season and seasonal activity. At the time of the fieldwork, children worked ‘indoors’ stringing, sorting and pressing tobacco leaves. The researchers observed that the working day started at 8-9 am. Children under the age of 10 years worked until 7 pm, while older children worked until 10 – 11 pm.

The key informants also pointed out that working hours depend on the seasonal activity and the type of work. In summer children usually start working in fields at 6-7 am and work until 10 pm. When temperatures rise to intolerable levels, there is a break from 1 pm till 4 pm, followed by work until 10 pm.

“Weeding starts at 7 am, sometimes at 6 am; the break is until 4 pm because of the heat. Stringing starts at 4 pm and continues until 9 - 10 pm”. (Representative of local authorities, AO)

“Children start working in the field at 6.00 am in summer and at 9.00 am in autumn and winter. They usually finish at 10 - 12 pm”. (Employer, AO)

“Children start at 8 am and work until 10 pm”. (Agricultural worker, AO)

The children surveyed say that their working day starts at 9 am and ends at 6 pm. On average, children said they work in the field about 6 hours a day (42 hours a week) with a maximum of 8 hours a day (56 hours a week).

Migrant children appear to work longer than local children, as their primary goal is to earn money and they do not attend school, while local children work in the fields before and after school. Local children work approximately from 9 am till 5 pm and would leave the workplace when they had to go to school. The length of the working day for local children is about

Table 3. Distribution of answers to the questions regarding working hours

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		How many hours a day, on average, did you work in the fields?		How many hours, at most, do you work in the fields?		How many hours, on average, did you work last week?	
		Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents	Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents	Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents
Sex	Boys	5,9	43	7,9	43	6,0	29
	Girls	7,1	35	9,1	35	7,7	26
Age	5-10 years old	5,3	11	6,6	11	6,0	7
	11-13 years old	5,7	24	7,2	24	5,8	11
	14-15 years old	5,9	21	8,4	21	6,1	19
	16-17 years old	8,4	22	10,6	22	8,4	18
Residence status	Local children	5,0	54	6,9	54	5,1	36
	Migrants	9,7	24	11,9	24	10,1	19
Village	Shelek	7,8	38	9,8	38	9,4	25
	Teskensu	5,1	40	7,1	40	4,6	30
Total		6,4	78	8,4	78	6,8	55

5 hours. Migrant children work twice as long: their working day lasts from 9 am till 9-10 pm (10 hours).

The length of the working day also depends on the children's age. Children under 10 years work, on average, 5 hours a day (35 hours a week); children aged 11-15 years work 6 hours a day (48 hours a week) and those aged 16-17 years work 8 hours a day (56 hours a week).

According to the survey of children, the average working day was one hour longer for girls than for boys, as the girls' work tends to require more attention and diligence. At the time of the study these kinds of tasks (e.g. sorting and stringing) were prominent, so girls tended to be working a little longer.

90% of the child respondents said that they had breaks during the working day, lasting from 30 minutes to two hours; 63% of the children said they could leave the place of work.

Children's work by season

The workload and nature of children's work in tobacco growing vary depending on the season.

The majority of key informants said that children work in the fields only during school summer break, while the other informants believe that children work during the entire work season, i.e. from April-May through November-December.

"Children start working in the tobacco fields as soon as the school year ends – from June – and work until September". (Parent, AO)

"Children work during the summer holidays". (Representative of local authorities, AO)

"Children work from the sowing period till harvesting". (Agricultural worker, AO)

"They work from May till December". (Employer, AO)

The children indicated that the summer months (June, July and August) were the hardest for them, as summer seasonal activities in tobacco, such as weeding and picking are the most intense. Children have to work the whole day, bent down under the burning sun. In the summer break, children usually work a full working day, which at that time starts at 6 – 7 in the morning and lasts until 10 pm.

Table 4. Distribution of the working children's answers to the question "Which month did you work most in the tobacco fields?"

Month	Number	%
May	4	5
June	38	48
July	48	60
August	45	56
September	15	19
October	2	3
Total	80	190

Remuneration for children's work

Payments are usually made at the end of the season (November-December) when the farmers deliver the finished bales of pressed tobacco leaves to Philip Morris Kazakhstan. As a rule, the parents receive the money. Both the key informants and the children were unsure of their answers to the questions related to payment for children's work as these payments are tied up with overall family income earned during the whole season.

"In the past we worked together with schoolchildren in the fields and got paid in cash. That is not the case now. Now children's earnings contribute to the family income. I don't know how much the children earned and how much the adults earned." (Teacher, AO)

"Payments are made at the end of the season. There is no difference in payment (for children vs. adults, local children vs. migrant children and boys vs. girls)." (Health care practitioner, AO)

"The children, as a rule, do not get cash. At the end of the season parents buy them clothes and other things." (Representative of local authorities, AO)

"Parents get the money." (Health care practitioner, AO)

The study shows that migrants are more vulnerable than local workers due to the fact that they are completely dependent on their employers. They complained that often the employers refuse to pay them on the grounds that the costs of migrants' meals and subsistence incurred on the employer exceeded their earnings.

“There are differences in labour remuneration. Migrant children earn less. There is no gender difference in children’s work remuneration”. (Teacher, AO)

“Often labour relations between the employer and the migrant worker are not formalized. Migrants are not aware of the official rules and regulations applied to the residents of other states entering Kazakhstan for seasonal work. They do not register themselves because they don’t have cash to pay the official fee and hand over their IDs to the employer (local farmer). Migrants earn 1.5-2 times less than local workers. People become slaves because of their illiteracy and ignorance, dooming not only themselves but also their children”. (The research group’s field report.)

Only 10% of the eighty interviewed children claimed that they received money for their work. Their earnings were as follows: 150-250 tenge a day for stringing (10 tenge per string); 3000-7000 tenge a month or 15 000 tenge per season (exchange rate at the end of 2004 was approximately 130 tenge per 1 USD). Most children confirmed that in most cases their parents received the money so they did not know how their labour was remunerated.

Table 5. Distribution of working children’s answers to the question “In what form do you get payment for your work?”

Answer	Number	%
No answer	7	9
I get the money myself	7	9
Parents (relatives) get the money and give me a part of the amount	17	21
Parents (relatives) get the money	48	60
Parents (relatives) get food products (goods)	1	1
Total	80	100

Children’s working conditions

Working conditions of children in tobacco vary depending on the season and activity. The work is carried out from March until November, i.e. in spring, summer and autumn, both in the tobacco fields and inside premises.

In spring, during sowing and irrigation, the fields are covered with water and children have to work in mud and water in the cold spring weather.

“There is dirt and knee-high water on the plantations”. (Representative of local authorities, AO)

In summer, according to agricultural workers, heat and the burning sun are the most serious difficulties. Tobacco picking, which takes place in summer, is not only the most difficult work; it also leads to skin complaints: *“When tobacco leaves are picked, juice pours from the leaves and sticks to the sweaty body. Even a small scratch results in spots and itching”*. In the absence of any special clothes and protection, children and adult workers are vulnerable to adverse weather conditions and/or hazardous work factors.

Such types of work as sorting, stringing and pressing of tobacco leaves are performed indoors. The observers found that the working rooms were small, dirty and dusty, poorly ventilated

and dark. The stringed tobacco leaves are hung on the walls of the rooms and are generously watered, making the rooms very humid and cold. In rooms of average size (4x5m) about 8-10 people work in unsanitary conditions. Presses are the only equipment installed in these rooms. Children work without gloves, respiratory masks or special clothes and have no protection against the hazardous substances in the tobacco leaves. Children of 13-14+ years carry heavy bales of pressed tobacco leaves of 22-23 kg.

Children’s attitudes toward work

The children were ambivalent about the work in tobacco. Half of the interviewed children gave an affirmative answer to the question, “Do you like working in the tobacco fields?”, as they found the work interesting and appreciate the opportunity to earn money. Other surveyed children consider the work in the tobacco fields very hard and despite the fact they earn money and help their families, they do not like this work.

Table 6. Attitudes of working children to the work (responses to the question “Do you like working in the fields?”)

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Yes	No	Total
Sex	Boys	23	22	45
		51,1%	48,9%	100%
	Girls	17	18	35
		48,6%	51,4%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	8	3	11
		72,7%	27,3%	100%
	11-13 years old	12	12	24
		50,0%	50,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	12	11	23
		52,2%	47,8%	100%
	16-17 years old	8	14	22
		36,4%	63,6%	100%
Residence status	Local children	35	20	55
		63,6%	36,4%	100%
	Migrants	5	20	25
		20,0%	80,0%	100%
village	Shelek	13	27	40
		32,5%	67,5%	100%
	Teskensu	27	13	40
		67,5%	32,5%	100%
Total	Number	40	40	80
	%	50	50	100

Table 7. Attitudes of working children to the work (responses to the question “Why do or don’t you like working in the fields?”)

Do you like working?	Reasons	
Yes (50%)	It is interesting	73%
	I earn money	33%
	I like working outdoors	3%
No (50%)	The work is hard	90%
	No proper labour conditions	3%
	Nasty job	5%
	Harmful	3%
	Tobacco stinks	5%
	I want to play instead of working	5%

58% of the children said that the work affected their leisure as they got tired and could not have good rest (40%), did not get enough sleep or time to read books (13%), to play or have fun or meet friends (11%).

If not for the necessity to work in the tobacco fields, they would choose to watch TV (46%), have more time to walk and meet friends (43%), read books/magazines/newspapers (20%), study at school/vocational schools/high educational institutions (19%) and spend more time on home assignments (14%) (Table 8).

Impact of child labour on the children

Working children's health

Physically demanding work, inadequate rest, malnutrition, unsanitary working conditions, and the hazardous components of tobacco leaves altogether cannot but affect the children's health.

In order to get the full picture of the health status of working children a comprehensive medical examination would be required, which was beyond the scope of the study. The health status of the working children was assessed based on visual information. Data regarding the working children's health status were also obtained from key informants and self-assessments by the children themselves.

Key informants reported that the work children do in the tobacco fields is physically demanding and negatively affects their health, while the tobacco itself is harmful. Working children lack balanced nutrition and adequate rest and it is therefore believed necessary to decrease the use of child labour.

"It is very harmful for children to work in the tobacco fields." (Employer, AO)

"The work is hard and harmful for the health." (Parent, AO)

"The work is hard. Children get sick." (Agricultural worker, AO)

"(Children face such problems as) malnutrition, physically demanding work and no rest." (Teacher, AO)

The children themselves are not aware of the work hazards or of possible means of protection. Their only concern appears to be earning money and helping their parents. Yet, 16% of children surveyed reported having had injuries working in the tobacco fields.

From visual assessment, the health status of migrant children was worse than that of local children.

Compared to the local children, the migrant children looked pale, lean, and tired. Because of lengthy physical work, the children's hands roughened and skin became wrinkled. Labour

Table 8. Distribution of answers to the questions regarding alternatives to the work in the fields by age, sex, residence status and location (responses to the question "If not for the necessity to work in the fields, what would you choose to do?").

Socio-demografic characteristics and location		Have more time to walk and meet friends	Have more time to do homework	Study at school/professional school/college	Read books/magazines/newspapers	Watch TV	Listen to the music	Play computer games	To choose another job	To tend a herd	To go in for sport	Total
Sex	Boys	19	7	5	6	21	1	1	1	1	1	44
		43,2%	15,9%	11,4%	13,6%	47,7%	2,3%	2,3%	2,3%	2,3%	2,3%	100%
	Girls	15	4	10	10	15	1					35
		42,9%	11,4%	28,6%	28,6%	42,9%	2,9%					100%
Age	5-10 years old	6	2	1	2	7						11
		54,5%	18,2%	9,1%	18,2%	63,6%						100%
	11-13 years old	10	4	5	4	8		1			1	24
		41,7%	16,7%	20,8%	16,7%	33,3%		4,2%			4,2%	100%
	14-15 years old	9	4	3	4	10			1			22
		40,9%	18,2%	13,6%	18,2%	45,5%			4,5%			100%
	16-17 years old	9	1	6	6	11	2			1		22
		40,9%	4,5%	27,3%	27,3%	50,0%	9,1%			4,5%		100%
Residence status	Local children	21	10	8	10	20	1				1	55
		38,2%	18,2%	14,5%	18,2%	36,4%	1,8%				1,8%	100%
	Migrants	13	1	7	6	16	1	1	1	1		24
		54,2%	4,2%	29,2%	25,0%	66,7%	4,2%	4,2%	4,2%	4,2%		100%
Village	Shelek	16	6	11	8	19	2	1	1	1	1	39
		41,0%	15,4%	28,2%	20,5%	48,7%	5,1%	2,6%	2,6%	2,6%	2,6%	100%
	Teskensu	18	5	4	8	17						40
		45,0%	12,5%	10,0%	20,0%	42,5%						100%
Total	number	34	11	15	16	36	2	1	1	1	1	79
	%	43.0	13.9	19.0	20.3	45.6	2.5	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	100

migrant families live in poor conditions, work long hours without rest and have inadequate nutrition. Because many of the migrants do not have legal status they lack access to public health services and cannot afford paid medical services.

Table 9. Distribution of answers to the question “Have you had any injuries while working at the tobacco fields?”

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Yes	No	Total
Sex	Boys	6	39	45
		13,3%	86,7%	100%
	Girls	7	28	35
		20,0%	80,0%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	2	9	11
		18,2%	81,8%	100%
	11-13 years old	2	22	24
		8,3%	91,7%	100%
	14-15 years old	5	18	23
		21,7%	78,3%	100%
	16-17 years old	4	18	22
		18,2%	81,8%	100%
Residence status	Local children	8	47	55
		14,5%	85,5%	100%
	Migrants	5	20	25
		20,0%	80,0%	100%
Village	Shelek	6	34	40
		15,0%	85,0%	100%
	Teskensu	7	33	40
		17,5%	82,5%	100%
Total	Number	13	67	80
	%	16,3	83,8	100

“Migrants live in disused houses, in old abandoned constructions bought by the employer, or rent a room also at the expense of the employer (with further deduction of rent from their wage). There are 2-3 rooms in such houses, one room per family. The walls are dirty and damaged; floors usually bare timber; at best there are iron beds and home-maid couches with old blankets and mattresses; no kitchen, 4 people live in a room of 4x5m. The state of the outdoors is unacceptable in terms of hygiene: no baths, cold water source is in the street, no hot water. Cooking is done using the so called russian-type stoves, almost no utensils: old dishes are in awful condition; all stuff is dirty, everything is covered with soot, smelly, rooms are not ventilated and are heated by electric stoves or furnaces.

People are dressed poorly: old, dirty and torn clothes and light shoes that do not fit the season: sandshoes, galoshes and shabby boots.

The health status of children and adults is unsatisfactory: pale wrinkled skin, roughened hands, and very thin. Many of them have with skin spots and rashes and complain of frequent colds and kidney diseases.

Children look depressed, weary, tired, apathetic, fearful, unconfident, and timid.” (The research group’s field report).

Access to health care services

Local residents, including children, have access to local public health services provided by hospitals, rural physician clinics and nurse posts (basic primary health care and maternity care facilities). The level of coverage by health care facilities in the villages targeted by the study meets state standards. In accordance with the Government Order “Defining the guaranteed amount of free public health care”, the citizens of Kazakhstan have the right to utilize a number of free health care services. The key informants confirmed that children undergo annual medical examinations at school and receive free medical treatment when needed.

“Every year doctors come, providing school children dental services, health examinations and vaccination. Immunization starts in the maternity hospital. Children’s medical records are kept, starting from the maternity hospitals.” (Parent, AO)

“Public health care services for children are provided free of charge and there are certain social benefits on the part of the Government.” (Employer, AO)

“We organize leisure activities during the school breaks. We have a recreational anti-TB health care facility where children with TB get free treatment.” (Teacher, AO)

Official Kazakhstan residents have the right to public health care. Public funds for health care are calculated and allocated on a per capita basis, i.e. only those registered in the given location are taken into consideration. Many seasonal labour migrants do not have official registration, so have no access to free health care, and nor can they afford chargeable services. During the working season, the migrant family’s living expenses are covered by the employer, which should be deducted from the workers’ wages at the end of the season. However, in most cases employers do not pay for medical services. Migrant children go to work regardless of their health condition.

“(Migrant) children and adults suffer from flu; they never go to a doctor because they cannot pay for services. The question, “Who do you go to when you get hurt or sick?” causes them to get lost because they just do not get medical aid.” (The research group’s field report.)

Access to education

Formally, all local children have access to general secondary education in rural schools. However, according to the key informants, children from low-income families often do not attend school because their parents cannot bear the expenses related to schooling such as school books, clothes, etc. even if they are exempt from paying contributions to school renovation and maintenance.

Responses to the question, “In your opinion, do all children from the village have equal opportunity to receive education?”:

“All children go to school.” (Representative of local authorities, AO)

“No, families with many children cannot pay for studies.” (Parent, AO)

FINDINGS: child labour in tobacco and cotton growing

Table 10. Working children's affiliation with school.

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Do you study at the present time?			If yes, where do you study?	
		Yes	No	Total	Secondary school	Total
Sex	Boys	31	14	45	31	45
		68,9%	31,1%	100%	100%	100%
	Girls	19	16	35	19	35
		54,3%	45,7%	100%	100%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	8	3	11	8	11
		72,7%	27,3%	100%	100%	100%
	11-13 years old	16	8	24	16	24
		66,7%	33,3%	100%	100%	100%
	14-15 years old	17	6	23	17	23
		73,9%	26,1%	100%	100%	100%
	16-17 years old	9	13	22	9	22
		40,9%	59,1%	100%	100%	100%
Residence status	Local children	49	6	55	49	55
		89,1%	10,9%	100%	100%	100%
	Migrants	1	24	25	1	25
		4,0%	96,0%	100%	100%	100%
Village	Shelek	15	25	40	15	40
		37,5%	62,5%	100%	100%	100%
	Teskensu	35	5	40	35	40
		87,5%	12,5%	100%	100%	100%
Total	Number	50	30	80	50	80
	%	62,5	37,5	100	100	100

Table 11. Reasons for non-attending school for working children

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Responses						
		I work	Have no records	Finished the school	I work with my parents	Have no opportunities	Child pre-school age	Total
Sex	Boys	10	1	2			1	14
		71,4%	7,1%	14,3%			7,1%	100%
	Girls	13		1	1	1		16
		81,3%		6,3%	6,3%	6,3%		100%
Age	5-10 years old	1			1		1	3
		33,3%			33,3%		33,3%	100%
	11-13 years old	8						8
		100,0%						100%
	14-15 years old	5	1					6
		83,3%	16,7%					100%
	16-17 years old	9		3		1		13
		69,2%		23,1%		7,7%		100%
Residence status	Local children	4		2				6
		66,7%		33,3%				100%
	Migrants	19	1	1	1	1	1	24
		79,2%	4,2%	4,2%	4,2%	4,2%	4,2%	100%
Village	Shelek	20	1	1	1	1	1	25
		80,0%	4,0%	4,0%	4,0%	4,0%	4,0%	100%
	Teskensu	3		2				5
		60,0%		40,0%				100%
Total	Number	23	1	3	1	1	1	30
	%	76,7	3,3	10,0	3,3	3,3	3,3	100

"No. Families with many children, disabled and broken families do not pay contributions [to cover building renovation, purchase of school materials]." (Teacher, AO)

11 percent of the working local children interviewed did not attend any educational institution at the time of the study because

they had finished school (2 children) or worked in the tobacco fields (4 children). While nearly all migrant children did not attend school because they had to work (79%).

According to local authorities, in the past migrant children did not have access to local schools. In 2004, after the signing of

an intergovernmental agreement between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, children from Kyrgyzstan may attend local schools in Kazakhstan. The survey of migrant children, however, showed that many of them do not attend school for various reasons: they do not have legal status; they lack knowledge of local languages; or they have to work in the tobacco fields to earn money. The educational level of the migrant children is very low. Many children cannot read and write, while their parents hardly have general secondary or incomplete secondary education.

“The migrant families are poor, with many children. The educational level of the migrant children is very low - often they illiterate. They do not attend school. Their children do not have even primary education, so they cannot read and write. The children start working at the age of 5 alongside their parents. Their parents have either secondary education or incomplete secondary education.” (The research group’s field report)

The educational prospects of working children after finishing general secondary school are also poor. Many families cannot afford to educate their children in private universities, while the low level of performance and generally low quality of education for rural children reduces their chances of getting state educational grants.

“All rural children have equal opportunity to have [secondary] education, but not all the children have the chance to obtain higher education. The costs are too high.” (Parent, AO)

“Now everything should be paid for and for me the most burning problem is whether I’ll be able to give them [my children] an education.” (Parent, AO)

Access to alternatives

Considering data from interviews with the key informants, it is possible to conclude that local schools and colleges are the only entities that organize recreational activities and after-school education for children. At schools, there are music classes, sports and extracurricular classes.

“There are thematic groups on different subjects at schools. These are in charge of organizing leisure activities for children and youth.” (Representative of local authorities, AO)

“There are vocational skills training classes for schoolchildren, driving classes, computer courses. There is also a specialized vocational training school.” (Employer, AO)

“There are extracurricular activities and thematic classes, etc in each school.” (Teacher, AO)

However, the children interviewed reported that they spend all their out-of-school time in the tobacco fields and do not attend after-school educational classes, vocational skills training, sports or recreational activities.

Causes of and factors contributing to child labour

Child labour is a complex issue which is interrelated with an array of socioeconomic factors such as the economic situation in the country and neighboring states; the existing legislative and regulatory framework related to child protection, including legal

enforcement of child labour laws; the effectiveness of the state social protection system; access to alternatives to child labour (educational programmes, recreational activities, vocational skills training, career guidance) and culture and traditional attitudes toward child labour in society.

Interviews with the key informants showed that the primary factors contributing to the use of child labour in rural areas are considered to be poverty of the rural population; lack of employment opportunities for rural workers; lack of income generation alternatives; poverty of large families, as well as lack of or inadequate social assistance measures. All these factors cause rural families to employ ‘any’ income generation strategies, including the use of child labour. The key informants listed the following causes of child labour in tobacco growing:

- poverty of rural population;
- poverty of populations in neighboring countries, which supply migrant labourers to Kazakhstan (from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan);
- absence of other sources of income apart from tobacco growing;
- low cost and availability of child labour;
- tradition of participation of rural children in work in the fields;
- shortage of labour force

Responses to the question “What are the reasons for the use of child labour in tobacco fields?”:

“Shortage of labour force is the main reason.” (Representative of local authorities, AO)

“Not all the children work, only children from low-income families.” (Teacher, AO)

“Children work because of lack of income. [other reasons include] Hardship in Kyrgyzstan. 50% of young people from Kyrgyzstan are working abroad, mainly in Russia.” (Parent, AO)

“[There is] material benefit (it is profitable). Child labour is cheap.” (Teacher, AO)

In tobacco growing, basically in all processes manual labour is heavily used. Moreover, the nature of the work does not require any sophisticated skills, which makes it possible for children to work alongside adults. As the income from tobacco cultivation increases significantly with minimization of labour costs, all employers are interested in using a cheap labour force e.g. poor local residents and migrants from less developed neighboring countries. Labour migrants bring their families and all family members work in the fields, including children, starting from the age of 4-5 years. Parents have to force their children to work so that a certain amount of work is done. In this case the earned income allows the families to survive till the beginning of the next tobacco season. Children often work voluntarily to earn money and help their families.

“Parents are interested [in their children’s work] because of low family incomes. Children also want to earn money for themselves.” (Health care practitioner, AO)

Table 12. Responses to the question “Who influenced your decision to start working in the tobacco fields?”

Socio-demographic characteristics and location	Responses					Total
		Parents	Elder brothers/sisters	Other relatives	Nobody, I made the decision myself	
Sex	Boys	29		2	14	45
		64,4%		4,4%	31,1%	100%
	Girls	23	2		10	35
		65,7%	5,7%		28,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	9			2	11
		81,8%			18,2%	100%
	11-13 years old	16		1	7	24
		66,7%		4,2%	29,2%	100%
	14-15 years old	12		1	10	23
		52,2%		4,3%	43,5%	100%
	16-17 years old	15	2		5	22
		68,2%	9,1%		22,7%	100%
Residence status	Local children	32		1	22	55
		58,2%		1,8%	40,0%	100%
	Migrants	20	2	1	2	25
		80,0%	8,0%	4,0%	8,0%	100%
Village	Shelek	26	2	2	10	40
		65,0%	5,0%	5,0%	25,0%	100%
	Teskensu	26			14	40
		65,0%			35,0%	100%
Total	number	52	2	2	24	80
	%	65,0	2,5	2,5	30,0	100

“We cannot feed our children in our own country! So we come to Kazakhstan with our children and they help us.” (Agricultural worker, AO)

“I have 6 children and do not get any social benefits. We are 11 in the family and have no support from the government. I spent 25 years in the tobacco fields. My children want to have nice clothes. “I’ll earn money and buy the things other children have, I am none the worse,” this is how the children think.”. (Parent, AO)

The information obtained from key informants was consistent with data from children’s survey. Tables below show that: (a) in 65% cases children started working in the fields influenced by their parents (table 12); (b) 80% of working children started to work in order to earn money for themselves or to contribute to their families’ incomes (table 13); and (c) most children work along with their family members – parents and siblings (table 14).

Another important factor contributing to the use of child labour in tobacco is the tradition of children’s participation in agricultural activities in rural life. This tradition existed even in the soviet era, with its practice of mass child mobilization for work in tobacco fields. In poor families, parents engage their children in work because it is ‘natural’ for them.

Attitudes of adults towards child labour were diverse. Some respondents realized that work in the tobacco fields deprives children of recreation, studies or other alternatives.

“It is necessary to reduce use of child labour; at their age children should have more rest - instead they work the whole summer and do not have time to play.” (Parent, AO)

“It’s necessary to reduce child labour use. It is harmful for health as the job is very hard.” (Parent, AO)

“Work [in tobacco] is hellish labour. Parents who are better off do not get their children to work in tobacco.” (Employer, AO)

However, some key informants still thought that children should work in the tobacco fields because there are no alternatives available to children and working children are not only occupied but also helping adults.

“It’s necessary that children work. Hard work will prevent them from drug or alcohol use.” (Health care practitioner, AO)

“During their summer break, children should work so that they are under their parents’ supervision.” (Employer, AO)

“Children should be busy with work so as not to have time to fool around.” (Health care practitioner, AO)

“Children should be more involved, provided the job is not hard.” (Agricultural worker, AO)

According to 85% of the children surveyed, their parents approve their work in the fields (Table 15).

Although the use of child labour is prohibited by law and many respondents were aware of this, most of the key informants believe that prohibitive and law enforcement measures alone would not be effective in combating child labour because “in rural areas, there are no other jobs, and as long as parents of working children do not have salaries sufficient to provide for their family, their children will work.” Therefore the key informants suggested that the following measures should be taken by the government:

Table 13. Responses to the question “Why did you start to work?”

Socio-demographic characteristics and location	Responses							
		It was interesting	To earn money for myself	To earn money for my family	To help my parents	Everybody works	I like working	Total
Sex	Boys	15	7	9	18	1	1	45
		33,3%	15,6%	20,0%	40,0%	2,2%	2,2%	100%
	Girls	9	5	10	15			35
		25,7%	14,3%	28,6%	42,9%			100%
Age	5-10 years old	8		3	2			11
		72,7%		27,3%	18,2%			100%
	11-13 years old	8	4	5	10	1	1	24
		33,3%	16,7%	20,8%	41,7%	4,2%	4,2%	100%
	14-15 years old	8	3	5	8			23
		34,8%	13,0%	21,7%	34,8%			100%
	16-17 years old		5	6	13			22
			22,7%	27,3%	59,1%			100%
Residence status	Local children	21	5	10	25			55
		38,2%	9,1%	18,2%	45,5%			100%
	Migrants	3	7	9	8	1	1	25
		12,0%	28,0%	36,0%	32,0%	4,0%	4,0%	100%
Village	Shelek	14	10	14	8	1	1	40
		35,0%	25,0%	35,0%	20,0%	2,5%	2,5%	100%
	Teskensu	10	2	5	25			40
		25,0%	5,0%	12,5%	62,5%			100%
Total	Number	24	12	19	33	1	1	80
	%	30,0	15,0	23,8	41,3	1,3	1,3	100

Table 14. Responses to the question “Who else works with you in the fields?”

Socio-demographic characteristics and location	Responses								
		Parents	Elder brothers/sisters	Other relatives	Child labourers-smates	Neighbours	Kyrgyz-migrants	Hired workers	Total
Sex	Boys	32	13	8	1	1	3	1	44
		72,7%	29,5%	18,2%	2,3%	2,3%	6,8%	2,3%	100%
	Girls	30	14	2		1	1		35
		85,7%	40,0%	5,7%		2,9%	2,9%		100%
Age	5-10 years old	10	2	1		1			11
		90,9%	18,2%	9,1%		9,1%			100%
	11-13 years old	19	8	5		1	1		23
		82,6%	34,8%	21,7%		4,3%	4,3%		100%
	14-15 years old	15	8	2	1		3		23
		65,2%	34,8%	8,7%	4,3%		13,0%		100%
	16-17 years old	18	9	2				1	22
		81,8%	40,9%	9,1%				4,5%	100%
Residence status	Local children	42	14	3	1	1	4	1	54
		77,8%	25,9%	5,6%	1,9%	1,9%	7,4%	1,9%	100%
	Migrants	20	13	7		1			25
		80,0%	52,0%	28,0%		4,0%			100%
Village	Shelek	25	16	10	1	2	3	1	39
		64,1%	41,0%	25,6%	2,6%	5,1%	7,7%	2,6%	100%
	Teskensu	37	11				1		40
		92,5%	27,5%				2,5%		100%
Total	Number	62	27	10	1	2	4	1	79
	%	78,5	34,2	12,7	1,3	2,5	5,1	1,3	100

Table 15. Responses to the question “What do your parents think of your working in the tobacco fields?”

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Responses							Total
		It's all right	They're indifferent	They don't like it but it is necessary	They understand that I earn money	Positively	Negatively	Do not know/difficult to answer	
Sex	Boys	18		1		22	1	2	44
		40,9%		2,3%		50,0%	2,3%	4,5%	100%
	Girls	11	1	2	1	16	2	2	35
		31,4%	2,9%	5,7%	2,9%	45,7%	5,7%	5,7%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	5				6			11
		45,5%				54,5%			100%
	11-13 years old	9	1			12	1	1	24
		37,5%	4,2%			50,0%	4,2%	4,2%	100%
	14-15 years old	8		2		10	2		22
		36,4%		9,1%		45,5%	9,1%		100%
	16-17 years old	7		1	1	10		3	22
		31,8%		4,5%	4,5%	45,5%		13,6%	100%
Residence status	Local children	19				29	3	4	55
		34,5%				52,7%	5,5%	7,3%	100%
	Migrants	10	1	3	1	9			24
		41,7%	4,2%	12,5%	4,2%	37,5%			100%
Village	Shelek	16	1	3	1	16	2		39
		41,0%	2,6%	7,7%	2,6%	41,0%	5,1%		100,0%
	Teskensu	13				22	1	4	40
		32,5%				55,0%	2,5%	10,0%	100%
Total	number	29	1	3	1	38	3	4	79
	%	36,7	1,3	3,8	1,3	48,1	3,8	5,1	100

- to address the issue of unemployment in rural areas: to decrease unemployment and to provide employment alternatives through local economic development;
- to increase salaries and wages in agriculture, so that parents can provide for family members;
- to support small businesses in rural areas, to assist farmers in purchasing agricultural equipment and to support the application of up-to-date technologies in agriculture (mechanization of labour);
- to alleviate taxation on the agricultural sector;
- to provide legal and social support to migrants.

Mechanisms to control child labour

Role of local authorities

The key informants' interview provides an opportunity to: (a) assess the level of awareness of the general public of the state social and economic policy and reforms; (b) discover opinions of rural residents about the effectiveness of the measures taken; and (c) help identify gaps in the implementation of national policies in local communities. Governmental bodies are represented in rural areas by local authorities (akimats), health care facilities, educational entities and social protection services. All these entities can directly or indirectly address child labour issues through law enforcement regarding child labour; provision of social support to local low income and large families; ensuring access to education, health care and alternatives for children. Local authorities represented by village akimats are in charge of law enforcement measures, including

actual execution of laws and regulations related to child protection, provision of social protection for eligible families and the development of social infrastructure in the village.

The key informants' interviews showed that although local authorities were completely aware of the scale of child labour use in tobacco, they did not have effective mechanisms/levers to systematically control and limit child labour. Some key informants mentioned that the local authorities prohibited the use of child labour and imposed penalty sanctions when children are found working in the fields.

Responses to the question “What is the attitude of the local authorities to the child labour problem?”:

“Indifferent”. (Parent, AO)

“I don't know”. (Employer, AO)

“They do not allow engaging children in work.” (Teacher, AO)

“Control is rather tight at the farmers' expense.” (Representative of local authorities, AO)

The key informants believed that the local authorities and governmental organizations have not taken effective action to control child labour, or to change the situation of working children or improve working conditions for children. Some respondents reported that village residents receive social assistance (unemployment benefit, cash benefits for large and poor families) and children have access to free health care. Nevertheless, the social support available is not sufficient. In addition, migrant families including children who are the most vulnerable and

make up a large share of the total rural labour force in tobacco, cannot access social assistance, health care and education.

“Parliament said this and that but we have never seen implementation of their decisions. They must do something. Five years ago they at least organized holidays – now they do nothing.” (Parent, AO)

“Nothing has been done on the part of the government. Private businessmen make presents to the children, e.g. clothes.” (Representative of local authorities, AO)

“No assistance. They [children] rely only on themselves.” (Parent, AO)

“Nothing.” (responding to the question, “What has been done to improve the working conditions for children in the fields?”) (Agricultural worker, AO)

“There are social support services in Kyrgyzstan but we are in Kazakhstan and do not receive any benefits.” (Agricultural worker, AO)

The key informants indicated that the bodies with the key roles to play in addressing the issue of child labour in these villages are the government, akimats, schools and employers (e.g. Philip Morris Kazakhstan).

Role of employers

Philip Morris Kazakhstan is the key buyer for local tobacco farmers. The company and farmers sign an agreement, including the following section:

“If the Buyer subcontracts workers to grow and process the Raw Material, the Buyer shall act in strict compliance with the articles of the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including the legislative provisions that prohibit using the forced labour and engaging persons under the age of eighteen in works related to tobacco growing and tobacco leaves processing (Extract from a standard contract between “Phillip Morris” and the tobacco growing farmers.)

Managers of Philip Morris Kazakhstan make regular site visits to check on the children working in the tobacco fields; if the farmer engages children in tobacco growing, the company can terminate the contract with the farmer. Such policy, according to the key informants, puts some limits on the use of child labour in tobacco fields. When signing contracts with Philip Morris Kazakhstan, farmers familiarise themselves with relevant legislation and their responsibilities and commit themselves not to engage children under the age of eighteen in tobacco growing and processing. However, this point of the contract is often violated.

Role of trade unions and workers organizations

The key informants' interviews showed that local farmers do not belong to any trade unions. Moreover, local residents knew nothing regarding activities of trade unions in agriculture and in their villages. This is why trade unions and workers' organizations were not identified by key informants as key actors in combating child labour in tobacco.

Role of NGOs

According to the key informants, in the villages targeted by the study no NGO or any other civic organization had visible activities related to the provision of social, educational or vocational services to working children or their families.

Case studies

Dana is a 14 year old girl. She lives in Teskensu village, Almaty oblast. She is ethnic Kazakh. She lives with her parents, two brothers and grandmother. Her father is 39 years old. He is a builder. Her mother is a 40 year old nurse. Her elder brother is a 15 year old schoolboy. The younger brother is 5 years old. Her grandmother is a pensioner of 80 years.

The family lives in a 6-room wooden house. Similar to practically all other houses in the village, the cold water supply pipe is the only available public facility and is located in the yard. There is no hot water in the house. The toilet is outside the house and there is no bathroom. In winter, the house is heated by a stove, which is also used for cooking.

Dana is in the 8th grade of the local school, located about 300 m from her house. She walks to school. Classes at school take 5-6 hours a day, plus Dana spends two hours on her homework. She started working on the tobacco plantations at the age of eleven under her parents' influence. Dana works in the tobacco fields from May till November and does all types of work. She works mostly in summer when she does not go to school and works in the fields all day. When attending school she works on average 3 hours a day after school, while in summer she works from 9.00 a.m. till 7.00 p.m. In summer, when the working day lasts about 10 hours, Dana has the chance to rest at lunch-time. She has her lunch in the fields because she cannot leave the workplace. At that time she has a hot meal, usually bread, macaroni and tea. Dana says that she doesn't like working in tobacco because the work is hard and she gets tired but she has to help her parents. Her parents see nothing bad in the fact that their child is working on the plantations. Dana says that they are positive about her work. Dana receives money herself and gives it to her parents. Sometimes she buys some clothes. Dana's dream is to become a journalist in future.

Timur is a 15 year old boy. He lives in the village of Shelek, Almaty oblast. He is a Kyrgyz national. Timur and his family came to Shelek from the village of Naukat, Osh oblast of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Timur's family is large: two parents, plus 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Timur's parents, his elder sister, elder brother and himself work in the tobacco plantations. The family lives in a brick house where there is only one room and a kitchen. A stove is used to heat the house. There is no hot water: only cold water is supplied. The toilet is outside and there is no bathroom. The family is poor. They live mainly on bread and water: they can afford meat once a week or even less often, and do not eat fish, butter or dairy products.

Timur has been working in the tobacco fields from the age of eleven: as soon as the family moved to Shelek his parents started taking him to the fields. Timur does not attend school because he has no documents – his previous employer took the documents and didn't give them back. Timur works from March till December, i.e. all the seasons, and does all types of work. He says that he doesn't like the work as it is hard, he gets tired, doesn't get enough sleep and has no time to spend with his friends but he understands that it helps his family. Timur usually gets up at 06.00. The working day starts at 7-8 in the morning and lasts up to 9.00 p.m. When there is a lot of work to do Timur sometimes works until midnight or 1 a.m. For him, the summer months – June, July and August – are the hardest. During this period the working day lasts up to 18 hours. When working in the fields Timur has his lunch at his workplace. Usually he has hot meal for lunch. Timur says that if it wasn't for the need to work in the tobacco fields he would like to have more time to spend with his friends. Timur himself does not receive the money for his work. His parents get the payment once at the end of the season. They buy some things and food with this money. Timur has poor health and suffers from a gastric ulcer. He had surgery at the beginning of October in the Shelek rayon hospital but at the beginning of November he returned to work. In future, he wants to become a driver.

3.2. Child labour in cotton growing

Working children and their sociodemographic characteristics

Assessment of the number of children in cotton growing is challenging due to the absence of monitoring and reporting mechanisms on child labour. Signing labour contracts with minors is not legitimate, working children do not get registered, and official bodies do not have reliable data on the number of children working in cotton fields. Consequently, child labour, for the most part, is a phenomenon hidden from the public and official sources do not provide reliable information about the number of working children. Data on the nature of children's work and the guesses about the share of child labour use in cotton were gathered from direct observations and interviews with key informants; so the data are subjective and should be treated with caution. In addition, there are seasonal fluctuations in the number of working children in the cotton fields. These explain the wide range of guesses by key informants about the children's share of the total number of workers in the cotton fields, ranging from 20% to 80%. Half of the key informants believe that children make up 60-80% of the cotton field workforce, while the other half of respondents suppose that the proportion is less than 50 per cent.

Direct observation indicated that children constituted up to 60% of the total workforce in cotton. At the time of the fieldwork, the proportion of migrant child workers to local child workers was 1:5, i.e. 16% of the working children were migrants, while 84% were local children. It should be noted, however, that at that time many migrants had already left Kazakhstan, so the proportion of migrant children working in the fields was not constant. According to estimates of local residents, during the peak sea-

son (May–October), migrant children make up 70-80% of the working children.

Almost all key informants believed that child labour use in cotton has increased over the past ten years for the following reasons: rural poverty and migration influx from neighboring countries, predominantly from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

"For instance, a farmer family has 3 hectares of land. There is weeding 3 times – that will be done by the wife and children, who else? This is family labour; that's why it is hard to prohibit." (Representative of local authorities, UKO)

"Child labour use has increased. There are many migrants." (Agricultural worker, UKO)

"Child labour use has increased - migrant children are working [primarily]." (Parent, UKO)

"Child labour has increased. There are many migrants from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan." (Parent, UKO)

Regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of working children, the key informants also had diverse opinions. The majority of them believe that working children are mainly from low-income families with many children, or are migrant families. Other informants thought that all children – without exception – work, or only children from better-off families do not work.

"All children work." (Teacher, UKO)

"Not all children work. If a family has enough income, the children do not work." (Parent, UKO)

"Not all children work, mainly those from poor and migrant families." (Parent, UKO)

"Not all children work, mainly those from families with many children and migrant families." (Employer, UKO)

The key informants reported that most children start working in the cotton fields aged 7-10 years, but some of them as young as six years.

Based on the information obtained from interviews with children and key informants as well as from direct observation, the working children had the following socio-demographic characteristics:

- the majority of the working children are aged from 10 to 16 years;
- most children start working in the fields at 7-10 years;
- during the peak season migrant children account for 70-80% of all the working children. Migrant families come primarily from Uzbekistan, with a much smaller portion of migrants from Tajikistan;
- the share of boys and girls are almost equal among the working children;
- families of working children are predominantly large (with many children) and poor. The average family size is five (from 2 to 9 people in a family).

Nature of the work children do and their working conditions

Types of work children do

Work in the cotton fields of UKO starts in March. This includes tilling and cotton seeding, which is generally mechanized: farmers rent machines from cotton-producing factories or large farms. Starting in May, when weeding begins, and up to the end of the working season in the cotton fields, manual labour, including child labour, is used. Most of the key informants stated that the work children do includes weeding, collection of worms, and snapping.

“Children do weeding, worm collection and snapping; they also gather cotton bushes (guzapaya) for their master (employer) and for themselves.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“Children do all types of work, including weeding and snapping.” (Parent, UKO)

No differences were identified in the types of work children do in different age groups. Children aged 5-10 years and 16-17 years do all types of work, with snapping being the main task.

However, some key informants said that older children do weeding.

“Older children are engaged in weeding.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

No gender differences were identified in the types of work carried out by the children in the cotton fields.

Working hours

The length of the working day for children ranges from 10 to 12 hours. The key informants pointed out that the children's working hours vary by season and seasonal activity. In summer, children start working in the fields at 7-8 am and work until 10 pm; in autumn they start at 9 am and stay in the fields until to 8-10 pm.

“They start at 7 am in summer and at 8.30-9.00 am in autumn. They finish at 9-10 pm.” (Parent, UKO)

“Children start working at 9 am, earlier in summer, and finish at 10-12 pm.” (Health care practitioner, UKO)

“Children work from 8 am until 10-11 pm.” (Representative of local authorities, UKO)

Children reported that their working day starts at 9 am and ends at 7-8 pm. On average, children work in the cotton fields for about 10 hours a day (70 hours a week) with a maximum of 12 hours a day (84 hours a week).

Unlike data on child labour in tobacco growing, no difference was found between local children and migrant children in terms of the length of their working day; working hours for boys and girls were also the same, as the work in the cotton fields is paid on a daily basis for the work done. All workers, including adults and children, local children from poor families and migrant children, are interested in earning as much as they can, so all of them work about 10 hours a day.

There was an association found between the length of the working day and the child's age. Children under the age of ten work on average 8 hours a day (56 hours a week), with a maximum of 10 hours a day (70 hours a week), while children aged 11 and

Table 16. Distribution of answers to the question “What type of work do you do?”

Socio-demographic characteristics	and location	All types of work	Weeding	Snapping	Worms collection	Total
Sex	Boys	31	2	10		41
		75,6%	4,9%	24,4%		100%
	Girls	26	3	13	1	39
		66,7%	7,7%	33,3%	2,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	7	1	4		11
		63,6%	9,1%	36,4%		100%
	11-13 years old	19	1	6	1	25
		76,0%	4,0%	24,0%	4,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	14		9		23
		60,9%		39,1%		100%
	16-17 years old	17	3	4		21
		81,0%	14,3%	19,0%		100%
Residence status	Local children	46	5	21	1	67
		68,7%	7,5%	31,3%	1,5%	100%
	Migrants	11		2		13
		84,6%		15,4%		100%
Village	Asykata	22	5	18	1	40
		55,0%	12,5%	45,0%	2,5%	100%
	Ilyich	35		5		40
		87,5%		12,5%		100%
Total	Number	57	5	23	1	80
	%	71,3	6,3	28,8	1,3	100

Table 17. Distribution of answers to the questions regarding working hours

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		How many hours a day, on average, did you work in the fields?		How many hours, at most, do you work in the fields?		How many hours, on average, did you work last week?	
		Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents	Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents	Mean (hrs)	Number of respondents
Sex	Boys	9,6	40	11,5	41	9,2	35
	Girls	10,1	39	11,8	38	9,4	36
Age	5-10 years old	8,0	11	9,9	11	7,3	10
	11-13 years old	10,2	24	12,0	25	10,0	23
	14-15 years old	10,0	23	11,6	22	9,3	18
	16-17 years old	10,2	21	12,3	21	9,6	20
Residence status	Local children	9,8	66	11,6	66	9,2	58
	Migrants	10,2	13	12,2	13	9,9	13
Village	Asykata	9,3	39	10,7	40	8,3	34
	Ilyich	10,3	40	12,7	39	10,3	37
Total		9,8	79	11,7	79	9,3	71

older work on average 10 hours a day (70 hours a week), with a maximum 12 hours a day (84 hours a week).

According to the key informants, the children have a one hour break for lunch. For lunch, they have mainly bread and tea. However, some children do not have a lunch break at all.

Response to the question “When do children have rest? For how long? What meals do they have while working?”:

“Children have lunch in the fields, lunch break lasts one hour. They have bread and tea for lunch.” (Teacher, UKO)

“Children do not eat and do not have rest.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“Children have a 30-minute lunch break. They usually have bread and tea, in summer – vegetables.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“Sometimes children do not have any break. They have a bite and keep working.” (Parent, UKO)

95% of the interviewed children reported that they usually had a one hour break for lunch. However, only 3% of children said they could leave the workplace.

Children's work by season

The majority of the key informants stated that children work in the cotton fields starting April-May through to November, i.e. the whole season.

“Children work from May till November.” (Health care practitioner, UKO)

“Children work from April till November-December.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“Children work from May till the end of the season.” (Parent, UKO)

The children said that the workload was stable during the entire cotton growing season. Responding to the question “Which months did you work most in the cotton fields?”, the children

named all months of the working season, from May through November.

Remuneration for children's work

In the cotton fields, both adults and children got paid on a daily basis for the piece(s) of work done, and this served as a primary incentive for workers. From interviews with local residents, the piece-rate payments in the cotton fields were as follows: weeding, 800-1000 tenge per hectare; worm collection, 1 tenge per worm; cotton harvesting, 3-4 tenge per kilo of lint during the first harvest; 5-7 tenge per kg of lint during the second harvest; 8-10 tenge per kilo of lint during the third harvest. Every day children picked about 20-50 kg of lint and earned 100-300 tenge (exchange rate at the time of the study was about 130 tenge per USD).

Considering the piecework payment system in cotton, there was no discrimination in labour remuneration by age or gender. Some key informants, however, mentioned that migrants' earnings were less than those of local residents because the employer covers costs of migrants' meals by deducting money from their earnings.

“There is no difference in payment because it is a piecework payment system.” (Parent, UKO)

“It is a piecework payment system. Migrant children earn less but their employer pays for their meals.” (Parent, UKO)

“Children are paid the same as adults. There is no difference between adult and child workers due to the piecework payment system. They [children] earn according to the amount of lint they gather.” (Employer, UKO)

Half of the interviewed children receive money themselves, while parents or relatives receive money for the other children. All children stated that they were paid 100-400 tenge per day.

Children's working conditions

All work activities in cotton growing are carried out in the fields, so working children are exposed to potentially harmful conditions such as long hours of hard physical work, malnutrition, lack of rest, and prolonged exposure to the elements without adequate protective clothing. In spring and autumn it is humid and muddy in the fields while children usually wear too light clothing. In summer it is very hot and dusty. The nature of the work requires that children spend hours in a bent-down position and carry heavy cotton bales.

According to the key informants, there are no sources of drinking water, toilets or rest areas in the workplaces.

"No place to have a rest." (Parent, UKO)

"No places to have meals, no drinking water." (Teacher, UKO)

"No drinking water, no toilets, no places to rest." (Parent, UKO)

Labour migrant families from Uzbekistan live near the cotton fields. Their living conditions are very poor: they reside in temporary sheds or houses made of concrete slabs with 2-3 rooms in each house and 10-15 people living in each room. The walls of the rooms are dirty and cracked and floors are also dirty. People sleep on wooden plank-beds covered with old blankets and mattresses. There is no kitchen, so they cook outside on an open fire. There is no toilet or bath/shower and no water sources. Kitchenware and dishes are old, dirty, and covered with soot. The rooms are heated using the remains of cotton stalks (guzapaya) but it remains very cold inside. Oil lamps are used for lighting. Their main food is bread they bake themselves, with tea, macaroni and potatoes; they almost never have meat.

Children's attitudes toward work

78% of the children interviewed said they did not like working in the cotton fields because they found this work hard and tiresome, while 22% of them liked working and appreciated the opportunity to earn money (Tables 18-20).

79% of working children thought that the work deprived them of their leisure time, caused them to feel tired (70%), stole time for walks and playing games (23%) or their sleeping time (10%) (Table 20). Moreover, 90% of children interviewed would rather study at school or other educational institution if not working in the fields (Table 21).

Table 18. Attitudes of working children to the work (responses to the question "Do you like working in the fields?")

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Yes	No	Total
Sex	Boys	12	29	41
		29,3%	70,7%	100%
	Girls	6	33	39
		15,4%	84,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	4	7	11
		36,4%	63,6%	100%
	11-13 years old	3	22	25
		12,0%	88,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	5	18	23
		21,7%	78,3%	100%
	16-17 years old	6	15	21
		28,6%	71,4%	100%
Residence status	Local children	16	51	67
		23,9%	76,1%	100%
	Migrants	2	11	13
		15,4%	84,6%	100%
Village	Asykata	16	24	40
		40,0%	60,0%	100%
	Ilyich	2	38	40
		5,0%	95,0%	100%
Total	Number	18	62	80
	%	22,5	77,5	100

Table 19. Attitudes of working children to the work (responses to the question "Why do you like working in the fields?")

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		it's interesting	I earn money	Total
Sex	Boys		12	12
			100,0%	100%
	Girls	1	5	6
		16,7%	83,3%	100%
Age	5-10 years old		4	4
			100,0%	100%
	11-13 years old		3	3
			100,0%	100%
	14-15 years old		5	5
			100,0%	100%
	16-17 years old	1	5	6
		16,7%	83,3%	100%
Residence status	Local children	1	15	16
		6,3%	93,8%	100%
	Migrants		2	2
			100,0%	100%
Village	Asykata	1	15	16
		6,3%	93,8%	100%
	Ilyich		2	2
			100,0%	100%
Total	Number	1	17	18
	%	5,6	94,4	100

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Table 20. Attitudes of working children to the work (responses to the question “Why do you not like working in the fields?”)

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		The work is hard	Have no time to sleep	Feel hungry	I want to study instead of working	Total
Sex	Boys	29				29
		100,0%				100%
	Girls	33	1	1	1	33
		100,0%	3,0%	3,0%	3,0%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	7				7
		100,0%				100%
	11-13 years old	22			1	22
		100,0%			4,5%	100%
	14-15 years old	18				18
		100,0%				100%
	16-17 years old	15	1	1		15
		100,0%	6,7%	6,7%		100%
Residence status	Local children	51	1	1	1	51
		100,0%	2,0%	2,0%	2,0%	100%
	Migrants	11				11
		100,0%				100%
Village	Asykata	24				24
		100,0%				100%
	Ilyich	38	1	1	1	38
		100,0%	2,6%	2,6%	2,6%	100%
Total	Number	62	1	1	1	62
	%	100	1,6	1,6	1,6	100

Table 21. Distribution of answers to the questions regarding alternatives to the work in the fields (responses to the question “If not for the necessity to work in the fields, what would you choose to do?”)

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Have more time to have fun and meet friends	Have more time to do homework	Study at school/ professional school/college	Read books/ magazine/ newspapers	Watch TV	To choose another job	Total
Sex	Boys	26	4	34	8	9		41
		63,4%	9,8%	82,9%	19,5%	22,0%		100%
	Girls	21	5	38	11	1	1	39
		53,8%	12,8%	97,4%	28,2%	2,6%	2,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	9		8	2	3		11
		81,8%		72,7%	18,2%	27,3%		100%
	11-13 years old	20	1	23	4	3		25
		80,0%	4,0%	92,0%	16,0%	12,0%		100%
	14-15 years old	13	6	20	4	2	1	23
		56,5%	26,1%	87,0%	17,4%	8,7%	4,3%	100%
	16-17 years old	5	2	21	9	2		21
		23,8%	9,5%	100,0%	42,9%	9,5%		100%
Residence status	Local children	37	9	60	18	9	1	67
		55,2%	13,4%	89,6%	26,9%	13,4%	1,5%	100%
	Migrants	10		12	1	1		13
		76,9%		92,3%	7,7%	7,7%		100%
Village	Asykata	20	7	35	15	6		40
		50,0%	17,5%	87,5%	37,5%	15,0%		100%
	Ilyich	27	2	37	4	4	1	40
		67,5%	5,0%	92,5%	10,0%	10,0%	2,5%	100%
Total	Number	47	9	72	19	10	1	80
	%	58,8	11,3	90,0	23,8	12,5	1,3	100

Impact of child labour on children

Children's health

In order to get a full picture of the health status of working children, a comprehensive medical examination would be required, which was beyond the scope of the study. The health status of the working children was assessed based on visual information. Data regarding the working children's health status were also obtained from key informants and self-assessments by the children themselves.

From direct observation and information from key informants, the health status of the working children was assessed as unsatisfactory. Physically demanding work along with inadequate rest, malnutrition, unsanitary working conditions, and inappropriate child labour clothes are all harmful for the children's health. The experts mentioned that children suffered frequent colds, rheumatism (arthritis), anemia and tooth decay.

"Children often get sick because of hard work. They do not have normal rest." (Teacher, UKO)

"Children do not go to school and often catch colds." (Parent, UKO)

"Children are often sick, they suffer anemia and rheumatism. They have bad teeth. They do not study and do not have meals on time." (Health care practitioner, UKO)

"They spend all day in the fields, hungry, and we force them to work. We have meat once a month. We eat mostly potatoes, bread, sugar and cannot afford other foods. Sweets are only for visitors, I can just give candy to a child. We do not have milk." (Parent, UKO)

Table 22 . Distribution of answers to the question, "Have you had any injuries while working in the cotton fields? "

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Yes	No	Total
Sex	Boys	24	17	41
		58,5%	41,5%	100%
	Girls	22	17	39
		56,4%	43,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	8	3	11
		72,7%	27,3%	100%
	11-13 years old	17	8	25
		68,0%	32,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	10	13	23
		43,5%	56,5%	100%
Residence status	Local children	11	10	21
		52,4%	47,6%	100%
	Migrants	36	31	67
		53,7%	46,3%	100%
Village	Asykata	10	3	13
		76,9%	23,1%	100%
	Ilyich	25	15	40
		62,5%	37,5%	100%
Total	Number	46	34	80
	%	57,5	42,5	100

"There are no clothes for children, no shoes, no food." (Agricultural worker, UKO).

More than half working children surveyed reported having had injuries working in the cotton fields.

It is known that conditions such as anemia and tooth decay are related to malnutrition. The working children reported that while working in the cotton fields they had only cold food for lunch, and 4% of children had no lunch at all. Assessment of the meals of working children showed that more than 50% of the children almost never had meat, fish, milk or dairy products.

Absence of adequate rest for the working children causes them to feel constantly tired and depressed and makes them more susceptible to infection.

"Children look older than their age because of poverty and poor working conditions. Their mental state is characterized by despair, fear of authority, helplessness and hopelessness. They do not know how to improve their lives. The children are illiterate, lack energy and ambition; they suffer permanent weariness and their physical and mental development seems to be somewhat retarded." (The research group's field report.)

Access to health care services

Local residents, including children, have access to local public health services. The level of coverage by health care facilities in the villages studied did not meet state standards. Considering the size of the population in these villages, rural hospitals should exist but do not; local residents get health care from rural physician's clinics and nurse posts (basic primary health care & maternity care facilities). To get specialized care, residents have to go to the hospital in the rayon center.

In accordance with the Government Order "Defining the guaranteed amount of free public health care", the citizens of Kazakhstan have the right to utilize a number of free health care services. However, the key informants reported that people have to pay for many medical services that should be provided free of charge.

"The biggest problem is that we cannot get health care and treatment. My sister-in-law with her baby was discharged yesterday from the maternity hospital; we had to pay 500 tenge to cashier, and for blood 300 tenge, to the nurse 200 tenge, to a doctor 1000 tenge. What if I don't have money to pay?" (Agricultural worker, UKO)

Apparently, working children and their families - predominantly poor - cannot afford paid-for medical care and the purchase of medication.

Official Kazakhstan residents have the right to public health care. Public funds for health care are calculated and allocated on a per capita basis, i.e. only those registered in the given location are taken into consideration. Many seasonal labour migrants are not officially registered and have no access to free health care. Nor can they afford chargeable services and therefore never go to a doctor.

Table 23. Working children's affiliation with school

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Do you study at the present time?			If yes, where do you study?	
		Yes	No	Total	Secondary school	Total
Sex	Boys	12	29	41	12	12
		29,3%	70,7%	100%	100%	100%
	Girls	8	31	39	8	8
		20,5%	79,5%	100%	100%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	5	6	11	5	5
		45,5%	54,5%	100%	100%	100%
	11-13 years old	5	20	25	5	5
		20,0%	80,0%	100%	100%	100%
	14-15 years old	7	16	23	7	7
		30,4%	69,6%	100%	100%	100%
	16-17 years old	3	18	21	3	3
		14,3%	85,7%	100%	100%	100%
Residence status	Local children	19	48	67	19	19
		28,4%	71,6%	100%	100%	100%
	Migrants	1	12	13	1	1
		7,7%	92,3%	100%	100%	100%
Village	Asykata	15	25	40	15	15
		37,5%	62,5%	100%	100%	100%
	Ilyich	5	35	40	5	5
		12,5%	87,5%	100%	100%	100%
Total	Number	20	60	80	20	20
	%	25	75	100	100	100

Access to education

Though a minority of the key informants believed that all the rural children had equal access to education and that basically all children attend school, most respondents pointed out that children from low-income families could not attend school because they did not have appropriate clothes and money to buy books and cover all school-related expenses.

"All children go to school." (Representative of local authorities, UKO)

"Not all children attend school. Poor children do not go, as they do not have clothes and shoes. Migrant children do not go to school because they do not have documents." (Parent, UKO)

"My children do not have warm clothes; when it is cold or when it rains, I don't let them go to school. They do not have trousers, boots or sneakers. I cannot send them to school in such clothes." (Parent, UKO)

Children from migrant families do not attend local schools because they do not have legal status/documents and have to work in the cotton fields. Even local children do not attend school during the working season and this certainly affects their school performance.

"Children cannot go to school. When they work, they miss 2-3 months of studies." (Agricultural worker, UKO)

"Children do not study for 2-3 months. Then it is very difficult to return to their studies." (Parent, UKO)

"Children are ignorant, they have poor school performance." (Parent, UKO)

The study of working children showed that 72% of local children and almost all migrant children did not attend any educa-

Table 24. Reasons for non-attending school for working children

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		What were the reasons for your not attending school/college?			
		I work	Have no clothes	Can't pay for books and make other payments	Total
Sex	Boys	29	2	1	29
		100,0%	6,9%	3,4%	100%
	Girls	31	2		31
		100,0%	6,5%		100%
Age	5-10 years old	6			6
		100,0%			100%
	11-13 years old	20	1		20
		100,0%	5,0%		100%
	14-15 years old	17	1		16
		106,3%	6,3%		100%
	16-17 years old	17	2	1	18
		94,4%	11,1%	5,6%	100%
Residence status	Local children	47	2	1	48
		97,9%	4,2%	2,1%	100%
	Migrants	13	2		12
		108,3%	16,7%		100%
Village	Asykata	25			25
		100,0%			100%
	Ilyich	35	4	1	35
		100,0%	11,4%	2,9%	100%
Total	Number	60	4	1	60
	%	100	6,7	1,7	100

tional institution at the time the study was conducted because they worked in the cotton fields (Tables 23 and 24).

Access to alternatives

More than fifty per cent of the key informants – parents, workers and employers – did not know of any organizations providing recreational and vocational services to children and youth. Only teachers reported that at school there were after-school classes, sports clubs and music classes. Extracurricular education at general secondary schools and vocational schools were chargeable, so one can assume that working children from poor families cannot afford them. To provide effective social support for working children, it will be necessary to make such services accessible and affordable.

Considering data from the interviews with key informants, it is possible to conclude that local schools and colleges are the only entities that organize recreational activities and after-school education for children. At school, there are music classes, sports sections, and extracurricular classes.

Responses to the question “Are there any organizations that provide recreational/vocational services for children? What are they? What do they do?”:

“No. There are sections and groups at school but it is necessary to pay for them.” (Parent, UKO)

“Technical colleges, specialized vocational technical schools. They teach new professions. But not everybody can pay for it.” (Teacher, UKO)

“There are sections (thematic classes) at schools; music school; they cost 100 tenge a day.” (Health care practitioner, UKO)

Causes and factors contributing to child labour

Child labour is a complex issue which is interrelated with an array of socioeconomic factors such as the economic situation in the country and neighboring states; the existing legislative and regulatory framework related to child protection, including legal enforcement of laws on child labour; effectiveness of the state social protection system; access to alternatives to child labour (educational programmes, recreational activities, vocational skills training, career guidance) as well as culture and traditional attitudes toward child labour in society.

Interviews with the key informants showed that the primary factors contributing to the use of child labour in rural areas are considered to be poverty of the rural population, along with lack of employment opportunities for rural workers, lack of income generation alternatives, poverty of large families and the lack or insufficiency of social assistance measures. All these cause rural families to employ ‘any’ income generation strategies, including engagement of their children in work. The key informants listed the following causes of child labour in cotton growing:

- poverty of the rural population;
- poverty in neighboring countries, causing influx of migrant labour to Kazakhstan (predominantly from Uzbekistan);
- absence of other sources of income, apart from cotton growing;
- low wages in agriculture;

- the availability and low cost of child labour;
- the tradition of participation of rural children in work in the fields;
- shortage of labour.

Responses to the question “What are the reasons for the use of child labour in cotton fields?”:

“How should we survive? Just think yourself, there is no other job. The work is seasonal. For instance, in this family, the husband is a [self-employed] construction worker and the wife has no job. If there is a job he works, if there is no job he doesn’t work. The family works in the cotton fields.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“Many children. Poverty. Cheap labour.” (Parent, UKO)

“Children are forced to work because their parents cannot provide for them. For instance, my daughter helps me out. It is necessary to buy her stuff for school and clothes so that she can go to school. We contribute to school renovation.” (Parent, UKO)

“Large cotton fields force the employer to engage children and adults; poor parents have to make their children work for the family.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

The magnitude of child labour in cotton growing is to a large extent relating to the heavy use of manual labour in the cotton fields. The quality of hand-picked lint is much higher than that of cotton harvested by machines and requires additional cleaning. Moreover, the manual work of adults and children is affordable, and farmers are interested in it, while low-income rural families and labour migrants need any source of income. Another important factor contributing to the use of child labour in cotton is the tradition of children’s participation in agricultural activities in rural life. This tradition existed even in the soviet state with its practice of mass child mobilization for work in cotton fields.

Parents, because of poverty and inability to provide for their children, have their children work in the cotton fields. Tables below show that: (a) 70% of children surveyed started working in the fields influenced by their parents, while only 8% of the children stated that it was their own decision to work and help their families. (Table 25); (b) 76% of working children started to work in order to contribute to their families’ incomes (Table 26); and (c) most children work along with their family members – parents and siblings (Table 25).

Attitudes of adults towards child labour varied. Most adult respondents were aware of the negative affects that child labour has on children’s health and education and believed that children’s work in cotton growing should be reduced.

“It is necessary to reduce child labour. Children should study. My children get sick very often.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

“It is necessary to reduce child labour as the work is very hard. Children should study instead.” (Parent, UKO)

“It is necessary to reduce child labour because children do not go to school and often get sick.” (Agricultural worker, UKO)

Table 25. Distribution of working children's answers to the question "Who influenced your decision to start working in the cotton fields?"

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Responses						
		Parents	Elder brothers/sisters	Other relatives	Nobody, I made the decision myself	Friends	Neighbours	Total
Sex	Boys	26	3	3	6	3		41
		63,4%	7,3%	7,3%	14,6%	7,3%		100%
	Girls	31	4			3	1	39
		79,5%	10,3%			7,7%	2,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	9				2		11
		81,8%				18,2%		100%
	11-13 years old	21	1	1	1	1		25
		84,0%	4,0%	4,0%	4,0%	4,0%		100%
	14-15 years old	13	1	1	4	3	1	23
		56,5%	4,3%	4,3%	17,4%	13,0%	4,3%	100%
	16-17 years old	14	5	1	1			21
		66,7%	23,8%	4,8%	4,8%			100%
Residence status	Local children	44	7	3	6	6	1	67
		65,7%	10,4%	4,5%	9,0%	9,0%	1,5%	100%
	Migrants	13						13
		100,0%						100%
Village	Asykata	20	6	2	5	6	1	40
		50,0%	15,0%	5,0%	12,5%	15,0%	2,5%	100%
	Ilyich	37	1	1	1			40
		92,5%	2,5%	2,5%	2,5%			100%
Total	Number	57	7	3	6	6	1	80
	%	71,3	8,8	3,8	7,5	7,5	1,3	100

At the same time, it is worth noting that adult respondents often felt helpless about child labour and perceived it as something inevitable which might be an obstacle to taking actions against child labour.

"It is not possible to stop the use of child labour in cotton because it belongs to the sphere of family business and has economic roots. The state has few levers." (Representative of local authorities, UKO.)

"It is impossible to stop child labour." (Parent, UKO)

70% of working children surveyed believed that their parents approve their work in the fields (Table 28).

Instead of prohibitive measures, the key informants suggested that the following measures should be taken by the government to combat child labour in cotton:

- to address the issue of unemployment in rural areas: to decrease unemployment, to provide employment alternatives through local economic development;
- to mechanize work in the cotton fields and to substitute machines for manual work as much as possible;
- to fairly provide rural residents with plots of land;
- to eliminate the monopoly on purchasing prices for agricultural products;
- to increase salaries and wages in agriculture, so that parents can provide for their families;
- to provide sufficient benefits, pensions and social assistance to poor families;
- to provide legal and social support to labour migrants.

Table 26. Distribution of working children's answers to the question "Why did you start to work?"

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Responses				Total
		It was interesting	To earn money for myself	To earn money for my family	To help my parents	
Sex	Boys	4	20	31	13	41
		9,8%	48,8%	75,6%	31,7%	100%
	Girls	3	20	30	12	39
		7,7%	51,3%	76,9%	30,8%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	2	3	8	3	11
		18,2%	27,3%	72,7%	27,3%	100%
	11-13 years old	3	9	21	8	25
		12,0%	36,0%	84,0%	32,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	2	14	16	8	23
		8,7%	60,9%	69,6%	34,8%	100%
	16-17 years old		14	16	6	21
			66,7%	76,2%	28,6%	100%
Residence status	Local children	7	35	50	21	67
		10,4%	52,2%	74,6%	31,3%	100%
	Migrants		5	11	4	13
			38,5%	84,6%	30,8%	100%
Village	Asykata	7	30	30	9	40
		17,5%	75,0%	75,0%	22,5%	100%
	Ilyich		10	31	16	40
			25,0%	77,5%	40,0%	100%
Total	Number	7	40	61	25	80
	%	8,8	50,0	76,3	31,3	100

Table 27. Distribution of working children's answers to the question "Who else works with you at the fields?"

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		Responses					
		Parents	Elder brothers/sisters	Other relatives	Classmates	Neighbours	Total
Sex	Boys	26	19	4	7	1	41
		63,4%	46,3%	9,8%	17,1%	2,4%	100%
	Girls	25	26	3	7		39
		64,1%	66,7%	7,7%	17,9%		100%
Age	5-10 years old	8	2	1	3		11
		72,7%	18,2%	9,1%	27,3%		100%
	11-13 years old	20	15	1	3	1	25
		80,0%	60,0%	4,0%	12,0%	4,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	12	11	2	8		23
		52,2%	47,8%	8,7%	34,8%		100%
	16-17 years old	11	17	3			21
		52,4%	81,0%	14,3%			100%
Residence status	Local children	41	36	5	13	1	67
		61,2%	53,7%	7,5%	19,4%	1,5%	100%
	Migrants	10	9	2	1		13
		76,9%	69,2%	15,4%	7,7%		100%
Village	Asykata	14	18	3	12	1	40
		35,0%	45,0%	7,5%	30,0%	2,5%	100%
	Ilyich	37	27	4	2		40
		92,5%	67,5%	10,0%	5,0%		100%
Total	Number	51	45	7	14	1	80
	%	63,8	56,3	8,8	17,5	1,3	100

Table 28. Distribution of working children's answers to the question "What do your parents think of your working in the cotton fields?"

Socio-demographic characteristics and location		It's all right	They're indifferent	They don't like it, but it is necessary	They understand, that I earn money	Positively	Negatively	Do not know/difficult to answer	Total
Sex	Boys	26	1	1		3	1	9	41
		63,4%	2,4%	2,4%		7,3%	2,4%	22,0%	100%
	Girls	29	1	2	2	3		1	38
		76,3%	2,6%	5,3%	5,3%	7,9%		2,6%	100%
Age	5-10 years old	10					1		11
		90,9%					9,1%		100%
	11-13 years old	17	1	3	1	1		2	25
		68,0%	4,0%	12,0%	4,0%	4,0%		8,0%	100%
	14-15 years old	16						6	22
		72,7%						27,3%	100%
	16-17 years old	12	1		1	5		2	21
		57,1%	4,8%		4,8%	23,8%		9,5%	100%
Residence status	Local children	43	2	3	2	5	1	10	66
		65,2%	3,0%	4,5%	3,0%	7,6%	1,5%	15,2%	100%
	Migrants	12				1			13
		92,3%				7,7%			100%
Village	Asykata	22	2		1	6		9	40
		55,0%	5,0%		2,5%	15,0%		22,5%	100%
	Ilyich	33		3	1		1	1	39
		84,6%		7,7%	2,6%		2,6%	2,6%	100%
Total	Number	55	2	3	2	6	1	10	79
	%	69,6	2,5	3,8	2,5	7,6	1,3	12,7	100

Mechanisms to control child labour

Role of local authorities

The key informants' interview provides an opportunity to: (a) assess the level of awareness of the general public of state social and economic policy and reforms; (b) discover opinions of rural residents about the effectiveness of measures taken; and (c) help identify gaps in the implementation of national policies in local communities. Governmental bodies in rural areas include local authorities (akimats), health care facilities, educational entities and social protection services. All these entities can directly or indirectly address child labour issues through, for example, law enforcement regarding child labour; provision of social support to low income and large families; ensuring access to education, health care and alternatives for children. Local authorities represented by village akimats are in charge of law enforcement measures, including actual execution of laws and regulations related to child protection, provision of social protection to eligible families and the development of social infrastructure in the village.

The key informants' interviews showed that although local authorities were fully aware of the scale of child labour use in cotton, they did not have effective mechanisms/levers to systematically control and limit child labour. The key informants believe that local authorities do not take action to combat or reduce child labour in the cotton fields because they simply do not see it as a priority problem.

Responses to the question "What is the attitude of the local authorities to the child labour problem?":

"Indifferent". (Employer, UKO)

"I don't know". (Health care practitioner, UKO)

"They take it easy; they see nothing because they don't want to see anything." (Agricultural worker, UKO)

Role of employers

The employers are the owners of the land. Often a small farm of a few hectares of land is run by a large family with many children, and all of them work. In this case the children's work in the cotton fields is considered rather 'natural', like any other domestic work.

However, larger farms hire workers. In this case employers are guided only by the principle of minimization of labour costs, regardless of who the worker is: a child or adult, local resident or migrant. Labour migrants who come over and bring their families accept almost any terms and work for even lower payments. It is not fair to say that the child labour in cotton is imposed by employers; rather, children and their parents come to work in the cotton fields as it is the only source of income available to them. If employers were to stop hiring children but no other measures were taken to eliminate poverty and improve the lives of rural populations, this might cause children to become even worse off.

"It is impossible to prohibit the use of child labour. There are too many poor people. Who will help them? So all the family works. They have no other job, and the work in cotton growing is seasonal. If the family doesn't earn enough money during the summer period, then our children will have nothing to eat in winter. If there was some other work, would we force our children to do that? They see with their own eyes how hard we work and they help us." (Parent, UKO)

Role of trade unions and workers organizations

The key informants indicated that local farmers do not belong to any trade unions. Moreover, local residents knew nothing regarding trade union activity in agriculture and in their villages. This is why trade unions and workers' organizations were not identified by the key informants as key actors in combating child labour in cotton.

Role of NGOs

According to the key informants, in the villages studied no NGO or any other civic organization had visible activities related to provision of social, educational or vocational services for working children and their families.

Case studies

Dinara is a 14 year-old girl. She lives in one of the villages of South Kazakhstan oblast. Her family has 8 members: her father (39 years old, a driver); her mother (34 years old, works in the cotton fields) and five younger sisters. They live in a house made of adobe bricks. The family has a low standard of living. They do not have enough money even to buy food. In fact, they do not eat meat, butter, fruit, cheese or milk.

Dinara started working in the cotton fields at the age of 10 year, influenced by her parents. When asked "Why did you start working?", Dinara answered, "To help my parents." She does not go to school because of the work. She works in the fields from April till early December, from 9.00 a.m. until 8.00 p.m. and does all types of work. Dinara says that she does not like the work in the cotton fields because it is hard and she gets tired. Dinara's parents work in the cotton fields as well, so they think it normal that their children help them. The work affects her leisure: Dinara says that she has no time to read books. If it wasn't for the work, Dinara would like to have more time to entertain, be with her friends and go to school. Dinara earns 150 tenge a day and gives all the money to her parents. She has not made her mind up yet about her future career.

Ergaly is a boy of 15 years. He lives in one of the villages of South Kazakhstan oblast. He is ethnic Kazakh. His family arrived from a village in Dzhizak oblast of Uzbekistan a year ago to make money. Ergaly lives with his father, mother, younger brother (13 years old) and younger sister (10 years old). The whole family works in the cotton fields. Ergaly's family lives in a wooden house with only one room. The house is heated by a stove. There is no hot water, only cold water is available. The toilet is outside the house and there is no bathroom. The family is very poor.

Ergaly has been working in the cotton fields from the age of twelve. He does not attend school because the family has no money to buy clothes, shoes and school accessories and because he has to work. Ergaly usually gets up at 7.00 a.m. and starts working from 9.00. Usually he works 10 hours a day in the fields: from 9.00 a.m. until 8.00 p.m. with a one-hour break for lunch. He has his lunch at the workplace. He usually has only bread and tea for lunch. Ergaly works in the fields the whole season: from April-May until November-December and does all types of work. He says that does not like the work because it is very hard; he gets tired and does not get enough sleep. If not for the need to work he would like to have more time to spend with his friends and go to school. Ergaly does not get the money he earns himself. His parents receive the money he earns.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Summary of findings

1. Assessment of the number of children involved in tobacco and cotton agriculture is challenging, due to the absence of monitoring/reporting mechanisms on child labour. Consequently, child labour, for the most part, is a phenomenon hidden from the public. Data on the child labour use in tobacco and cotton were gathered from direct observations and interviews with key informants. Therefore, the data are subjective and should be treated with caution. On the basis of key informants' guesses and direct observations, it was concluded that children may constitute up to 50-60% of the total workforce in tobacco and cotton fields in select villages (the guesses range from 20 to 80%). These figures cannot serve as quantitative indicators per se but rather should prove how serious the issue of child labour is. Working children come mainly from low-income families with many children or migrant families from neighboring poorer countries.
2. The influx of seasonal labour migrants from neighboring countries to Kazakhstan also contributes to the incidence of child labour in tobacco and cotton growing. Residents of Kyrgyzstan come to Almaty oblast, and during the work season (March-November) the proportion of migrant child workers to local child workers could be as high as 3:1, i.e. 75% of the working children being migrants, while 25% are local children. In UKO the majority of migrants come from Uzbekistan. According to the estimates of local residents, during the work season (May-November), migrant children may account for up to 70-80% of the total number of working children.
3. The working children surveyed had the following social and demographic characteristics:
 - the majority of the working children in tobacco were aged from 13 to 16 years; in cotton working children were aged from 10 to 16;
 - most of the children started working in the tobacco fields at the age of 9-13 years; in the cotton fields from the ages of 7-10;
 - the proportions of boys and girls were almost equal among the working children;
 - most working children were from large, low income families. The average working children's family size was 5, ranging from 2 to 9 people (5 being the median).
4. In both tobacco and cotton growing, children did all types of work. In tobacco, children were involved in tobacco sowing, irrigation, weeding, picking, sorting, stringing and pressing; in cotton children did weeding, worm collection and cotton gathering. The hardest activities for children were weeding and picking of tobacco, and the hardest months for them in terms of workload were the summer months. In cotton, the workload for children was equally high throughout the working season. The key informants mentioned gender differences in child labour in tobacco: girls are more involved

in work that requires accuracy and diligence such as tobacco sorting and stringing, while boys do more physical and endurance work, such as weeding and pressing. Differences in the workload of different tasks in tobacco affects the age of children engaged. Children aged from 5-10 years do mainly the relatively easy work (tobacco sorting and stringing), but as children grow up they become involved in all types of work. No gender or age differences in child labour in cotton growing were identified.

5. The average length of the working day in the tobacco fields for children under the age of ten was about 5 hours (35 hours a week), for the children aged 11-15 years, 6 hours (42 hours a week), while 16-17 year-olds worked for 8 hours (56 hours a week). There were seasonal fluctuations: in summer children work from 6-7 am until 10-11 pm, while in autumn they worked from 9 am until 8-9 pm. Working hours for local and migrant children were different. Migrant children worked from morning until evening – on average about 10 hours a day – as they did not attend school, while local children tended to work before or after school, for about 5 hours a day.

In cotton, it was found out that the length of the working day varied according to the child's age: children under 10 years worked, on average, 8 hours a day (56 hours a week), with a maximum of 10 hours a day (70 hours a week), while children aged 11 and over worked on average 10 hours a day (70 hours a week) and up to 12 hours a day (84 hours a week). Both local and migrant children worked all day and did not go to school. On average, children worked in the cotton fields two hours longer than children in tobacco growing because work in cotton was paid daily, giving an incentive to work more. To conclude, the length of the children's working day was 2 or 3 times more than the limits defined by national labour law (reduced working hours are defined for workers under the age of fourteen not more than 24 hours a week and for workers aged sixteen to eighteen year not more than 36 hours a week. See Section 1.3 of this report).

6. The employers are the owners of the land, i.e. tobacco and cotton fields. Often a small farm of a few hectares of land is run by one family. In this case the children's work in the tobacco/cotton field is considered 'natural', like any other domestic work. Large farms hire adult and/or child workers. Formal labour contracts with minors could not be signed, and children work unofficially.

Philip Morris Kazakhstan as a major tobacco buyer is the key employer of local tobacco farmers in Almaty oblast. Payments are usually made at the end of the season (November-December) when the farmers deliver the finished bales of pressed tobacco leaves to Philip Morris Kazakhstan. The children's remuneration contributes to the entire family's annual income from tobacco.

In the cotton fields of UKO, workers are paid daily. From interviews with local residents, the piece-rate payments in the cotton fields were as follows: weeding, 800-1000 tenge per hectare; collection of worms, 1 tenge per worm; cotton harvesting, 3-4 tenge per kilo of lint during the first harvest;

5-7 tenge per kg during the second harvest; 8-10 tenge per kilo during the third harvest. Every day children picked about 20-50 kg of lint and earned 100-300 tenge (exchange rate at the time of the study was about 130 tenge per USD). There was no discrimination by age or gender in remuneration of work in cotton.

However, payments to local and migrant workers differed because the employer deducted subsistence costs from payments to migrant workers. Labour migrants, especially illegal migrants, are often subjected to human rights violations due to their illegal status, dependence on the employer, and their own ignorance of their human and workers' rights.

7. Children's working conditions did not comply with national labour law. Data from direct observation of children's work describe their working conditions as follows:
 - absence of special clothes, respiratory masks and other means of protection against unfavorable weather conditions, agricultural chemicals and hazardous components in tobacco leaves;
 - absence of sources of drinking water;
 - absence of toilets;
 - absence of places to have meals and rest;
 - absence of first aid equipment;
 - high humidity, dirt, poor ventilation and lighting, and low temperatures in the facilities for tobacco processing;
 - carrying of heavy weights by children;
 - long working hours and lack of time for rest;
 - unbalanced and insufficient nutrition.
8. The attitudes of the working children to their work varied. The majority of the interviewed children (64%) did not like working in the tobacco/cotton fields as it was hard physical work; other children found their work interesting and appreciated the opportunity to earn money. If the children did not have to work, they would like to study (56%), entertain themselves and meet their friends (51%), watch TV (29%) and read books/magazines/newspapers (22%).
9. Children were motivated to work for predominantly economic reasons: to earn money for the family (50%) or for themselves (33%), to help parents (37%). Only 19% of the children initiated their work in the cotton/tobacco fields themselves; the majority of children did so due to the influence of their parents (68%), other relatives (9%) or friends (4%).
10. According to the key informants and from visual assessment, the health of working children may be described as poor. Physically demanding work, inadequate rest, malnutrition, unsanitary working conditions, exposure to chemicals and hazardous components cannot but affect the children's health. According to the key informants, working children suffer frequent colds, skin diseases, anemia, rheumatism (arthritis) and tooth decay.
11. The study showed that the working children and their families had limited access to education, health care services and other alternatives to child labour, such as extracurricular activities, vocational training, career guidance, recreational events, sports, etc. Children from low-income families could not attend school because they did not have appropriate clothes and money to buy books and other school-related expenses. Children working in tobacco had to combine work and studies; many child workers in cotton growing did not attend school during the work season. Many children from migrant families could not attend school because they did not have legal status and had to work. Moreover, some migrant children had never been exposed to schooling and were illiterate.
12. According to the key informants, families of working children had limited access to state social assistance and benefits. Based on data from key informants' interviews, it appears that the social assistance system works more effectively in Almaty oblast where residents are more aware of targeted social assistance, employment benefits, assistance to large families, public health care, and charity activities of Philip Morris Kazakhstan. In UKO, representatives of vulnerable groups identified obstacles in receiving social assistance and cases of mistreatment by local authorities. Labour migrants who make up the majority of the total workforce in tobacco and cotton in Kazakhstan are not eligible for social assistance here because they are citizens of other countries.
13. The study showed that the causes of child labour are to a large extent related to socioeconomic problems in rural areas and agriculture. In addition, the sector specifics – wide use of manual unskilled work – makes it possible to use child labour. The key informants listed the following factors that contribute to the use of child labour in tobacco and cotton growing:
 - poverty of the rural population;
 - poverty of populations in neighboring countries, which supply migrant labour to Kazakhstan (e.g. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan);
 - absence/lack of other sources of income for rural families, apart from tobacco/cotton growing;
 - low wages in the agricultural sector;
 - low cost and availability of child labour;
 - tradition of participation of rural children in work in the fields;
 - shortage of labour force;
 - low level of labour mechanization in agriculture, specifically in tobacco and cotton;
 - lack of alternatives or limited access to alternatives for children (e.g. education, informal education, vocational training, career guidance, recreational activities).
14. Attitudes of adults toward child labour were varied. Most key informants were aware of the harm child labour can do to children's health and education and they believed that the use of child labour should be reduced/eliminated. Some

respondents believed that children's work in the fields has educational value and helps keep children occupied. It is also worth noting that adult respondents often felt helpless about child labour and perceived it as something inevitable, and this may be an obstacle to taking actions against child labour.

15. The study revealed a lack or absence of effective mechanisms to control child labour in tobacco and cotton growing.

Role of local authorities

The key informants' interview provided an opportunity to: (a) assess the level of awareness of the general public of state social and economic policy and reforms; (b) discover opinions of rural residents about the effectiveness of measures taken; and (c) help identify gaps in the implementation of national policies in local communities. The governmental bodies are represented in rural areas by local authorities (akimats), health care facilities, educational entities, social protection services. All these entities can directly or indirectly address child labour issues through, for example, law enforcement regarding child labour; provision of social support to low income and large families; ensuring access to education, health care and alternatives for children. Local authorities, represented by village akimats, are in charge of law enforcement measures, including actual execution of laws and regulations related to child protection, provision of social protection to eligible families and development of social infrastructure in the village.

The key informants' interviews showed that although local authorities were fully aware of the scale of child labour use in tobacco/cotton, they did not have effective mechanisms/levers to systematically control and limit child labour. The key informants believed that the local authorities and the governmental organizations have not taken effective action to control child labour in tobacco or cotton growing, as the problem has not been recognised as a top priority.

Role of employers

Philip Morris Kazakhstan is the key employer for local tobacco farmers. When entering into contracts with Philip Morris Kazakhstan, farmers are briefed on relevant legislation and their responsibilities, and commit themselves not to engage children under the age of eighteen in tobacco growing and processing; however, this article of the contract is often violated.

Role of trade unions and workers' organizations

The key informants' interviews showed that local farmers do not belong to any trade unions. Moreover, local residents knew nothing regarding activities of trade unions in agriculture and in their villages. This is why trade unions and workers' organizations were not identified by the key informants as key actors in combating child labour in tobacco.

Role of NGOs

According to the key informants, in the villages studied no NGO or any other civic organization had visible activities related to

the provision of social, educational or vocational services for working children and their families.

4.2. Recommendations

Child labour is a complex phenomenon which is influenced by an array of socio-economic factors such as the economic situation in the country and neighboring countries; the existing legislative framework related to child protection and its implementation, including measures to monitor and control child labour; the effectiveness of the state social protection system; the availability of alternatives to child labour such as educational and vocational training programs, recreational activities, career guidance, sports and culture, as well as the traditions and prevailing attitudes toward child labour in society.

Therefore, to effectively address child labour issues, all elements of society should be involved and activities should be carried out at all levels, from national policy to the level of the local community. Also, comprehensive interventions should be undertaken on a regular basis. Based on the key findings of this study, the following recommended interventions have been developed towards elimination of child labour:

1. National socio-economic policies for the development of agriculture and rural areas contribute to the eradication of child labour by changing the socioeconomic context in which child labour exists. These include: state development and social programs in rural areas and agriculture, including those aimed at improving access to and effectiveness of social protection measures for poor and large families; introduction of up-to-date technologies in agriculture, including mechanization and substitutes for manual labour; measures to increase the effectiveness and productivity of agriculture; state and legal regulation of market relations in the agricultural sector and the development of social infrastructure in rural areas. It is important to 'mainstream' child labour issues into general rural development strategies and programs and include child labour in the list of key development indicators, so that improvement of the socioeconomic situation in rural areas goes together with the elimination of child labour.
2. It is necessary to improve the mechanisms controlling the observance of national child labour legislation. Not only local authorities and appointed governmental bodies (labour inspection) but also buyers (e.g. activity of Philip Morris Kazakhstan), trade unions, and civic organizations could contribute to better control of child labour. For instance, there could be regular community inspections carried out to identify the worst cases of child labour. Other activities may include actions aimed at increasing the awareness of employers, parents and their children regarding current child labour legislation in the Republic of Kazakhstan.
3. Currently, no mechanism to detect and monitor child labour in rural areas exists. One of the recommendations could therefore be the creation of an independent group of experts to conduct regular monitoring of child labour and assessment of children's working conditions in order to gen-

erate relevant data to inform the authorities and the public, so that relevant action can be taken.

4. Lack of awareness and underestimation of the significance of the worst forms of child labour problem and its implications for the children and society is an obstacle to taking action against child labour. Therefore, activities are recommended aimed at increasing awareness of the child labour problem and its implications, targeting local authorities, employers, parents, children, teachers and auls' residents.
 5. Measures should be taken to improve working children's accommodation and working conditions such as clean water supply, toilets, bathrooms, lunch tables, first aid kits, etc. at workplace. Employers, trade unions, local authorities and communities should be encouraged to take actions to create the safe and hygienic working environment.
 6. Working children have limited access to education resulting from the poverty of their families and their inability to cover school expenses. Moreover, the need to work often makes it impossible for these children to attend school. It is recommended that supportive measures be taken to improve access to education for children from low-income families e.g. assistance with purchase of textbooks, school accessories, and clothes; small stipends for pupils to substitute for their foregone child labour earnings etc.
 7. Compared to towns and cities, rural areas have a limited number of alternative educational programs, after-school programs, vocational training options and recreational activities for children. Even if some of these programs exist, children from low-income families tend to find them unaffordable. It is therefore suggested to create in rural areas alternative education programs accessible for children from poor families; illiteracy-eliminating programs (where required); vocational skills training; and economic literacy classes (for teenagers). In addition, working children need to be educated in how to protect their health and protect themselves from hazardous working conditions. They should be provided with means of protection – special clothes, gloves, respirators and shoes to protect them from injury, tobacco components and toxic chemicals, as it is unlikely that all children will actually stop working in harmful conditions. Stipends, supplementary meals and vitamins may serve as additional incentives for working children to participate in alternatives to child labour.
 8. Considering the generally poor health and psychological status of working children, it is recommended to introduce health and psychosocial rehabilitation programs for them.
- Working children, regardless of their residence status, need to have regular medical examinations and receive necessary medical treatment.
9. Given the magnitude of seasonal labour migration to Kazakhstan from neighboring countries, it is suggested to implement regional programs targeting labour migrants with the involvement of all interested countries and local and international organizations. These programs should include legal counselling, assistance in obtaining official status and papers, facilitating access to health care and school or educational/social/recreational and other alternative programs. Besides, it is important that quotas for receiving labour migrants meet economic needs. This will help give the majority of currently illegal migrants legal status as well as increased control over migrants' employment, work conditions and related social issues.
 10. Assistance provided to the families of working children should include facilitation of eligible low-income and/or large families in accessing state social benefits (targeted social assistance) in accordance with the law. In addition, it is recommended to implement programs which promote initiative and responsibility among adult family members for their own sustainability: economic literacy training, small business and income-generation skills training, access to loans and micro-credit programs, etc.
 11. Currently, rural areas lag behind Kazakhstan's towns and cities in terms of the number and level of activity of civic organizations. In the villages targeted by the study, action against worst forms of child labour is hampered by the lack or absence of NGOs, trade unions, farmers associations, women's and youth unions, as well as an apparent tolerance of schools, public health providers and local communities toward child labour. It is necessary to increase the role and engagement of civic organizations and local communities in activities against worst forms of child labour. Perhaps the first initiative may be made from outside by other NGOs with experience and expertise in local community/ NGO development and in working in rural areas. Local school teachers have an important role to play in the elimination of child labour by thorough monitoring of children's school attendance and performance. Meanwhile, employers and trade unions may be involved in the implementation of free vocational education programs for senior schoolchildren, based on market demand for labour and skills, and could provide further employment assistance to rural youth.

5. ANNEXES

5.1. Research Tools

Questionnaire for children's interviews

Date / ____ / ____ 2004

Oblast _____ Rayon _____

Village _____

SECTION 1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Age: _____ years old

2. Sex

1 – male

2 – female

3. Nationality (ethnicity)

1 – Kazakh

2 – Russian

3 – Other (please, specify) _____

4. How long have you been living in this location?

_____ years

0 – life-time → *refer the question 7*

5. Where were you born?

Country _____ Oblast _____

1 – oblast center

2 – other city (town)/urban village

3 – aul/village

6. Where did you come from?

Country _____ Oblast _____

1 – oblast center

2 – other city (town)/urban village

3 – aul/village

7. Who are your siblings?

Family member	Relationship	Age	Education	Occupation

SECTION 2. EDUCATION

8. Do you study at the present time?

1 – yes

2 – no (then refer to question 18)

9. Where do you study?

1 – secondary school (grade _____)

2 – vocational technical school/college (year _____)

3 – technical school / lyceum (year _____)

4 – higher education institution (full-time or evening attendance)

5 – higher education institution (learning via correspondence)

6 – other (please, specify) _____

10. How far is the educational institution (school, lyceum, higher education institution) from your house?

_____ km

11. How do you usually get to the educational institution (school...)?

1 – afoot

2 – by bicycle

3 – by bus

4 – by car

5 – other (please, specify) _____

12. How many hours a day do you usually spend at school / technical school / higher educational institution?

Number of hours _____

13. How many hours a day do you usually spend on homework?

Number of hours _____

14. How many school days did you miss in the last four weeks?

Number of days _____

15. Within the last 30 days have you done any agricultural work or other work to execute an order of the school's /any other education institution's administration?

1 – yes

2 – not → *proceed to question 19*

16. If yes, what kind of work did you do?

17. How many days within the last 30 days did you do this work?

Number of days _____

Questions refers only to those who do not study

18. If you do not attend school /lyceum /higher education institution, then why?

Specify the reason _____

SECTION 3. NUTRITION AND LIVING CONDITIONS

19. How many meals a day do you have?

_____ time(s)

20. How often do you eat the following foods?

	Every day	2-3 times a week	Once a week	Never
Meat	1	2	3	4
Fish	1	2	3	4
Fresh vegetables, except potatoes	1	2	3	4
Fruit	1	2	3	4
Butter	1	2	3	4
Cheese	1	2	3	4
Milk	1	2	3	4
Cream, sour cream	1	2	3	4
Sugar	1	2	3	4

21. Where is the

	In the house, apartment	Outside (for example, in the yard or in the street)	We do not have it in our place
Cold water pipeline	1	2	3
Hot water pipeline, boiler	1	2	3
Toilet	1	2	3
Bath	1	2	3
Kitchen	1	2	3

22. What kind of heating system is there in your house/ apartment?

- 1 – centralized heating
- 2 – coal/gas heater
- 3 – other (please, specify) _____
- 4 – no heating

23. How many rooms are there in your place?

Number of rooms _____

24. Where do you live?

- 1 – in a brick house
- 2 – in an adobe brick house
- 3 – in a wooden house
- 4 – in a temporary shed
- 5 – in apartment

6 – other (please, specify) _____

Section 4. Daily routine and working hours

25. When do you usually get up? _____

26. When do you usually go to bed? _____

27. At what age did you start working in the tobacco/cotton fields? _____

28. Who influenced your decision to start working?

- 1 – parents
- 2 – elder brother/sisters
- 3 – other relatives
- 4 – teachers/professors
- 5 – others (please, specify) _____

29. Why did you start working?

- 1 – it was interesting
- 2 – to earn money for myself
- 3 – to earn money for the family
- 4 – to help the parents
- 5 – because everybody works
- 6 – other reasons (please, specify) _____

30. Who works together with you in the fields?

- 1 – parents
- 2 – brothers/sisters
- 3 – other relatives
- 4 – classmates
- 5 – others (please, specify) _____

31. What kind of work do you do?

32. Do you like working in the tobacco/cotton fields?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – not

33. If yes, then why? _____

34. If not, then why? _____

35. Do you have another job in addition to work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

- 1 – yes (please, specify the place) _____
- 2 – no

36. When have you started working in the tobacco/cotton fields this year? (indicate month)

CONCLUSIONS

37. When have you finished or you are going to finish the works in the tobacco/cotton fields this year? (indicate month)

38. Please indicate in which months you have worked most in the tobacco/cotton fields?

- 1 – March
- 2 – April
- 3 – May
- 4 – June
- 5 – July
- 6 – August
- 7 – September
- 8 – October
- 9 – November

39. How many hours on average did you work in the fields?

40. How many hours a day at maximum did you work in the fields? _____

41. How many hours on average did you work last week? _____

42. What would you do if you didn't have to work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

- 1 – spend more time with the friends
- 2 – spend more time on my homework
- 3 – go to school/vocational training school/higher education institution
- 4 – read books/magazines/newspapers
- 5 – watch TV
- 6 – other _____

43. When does your working day start? _____

44. When do you finish your work? _____

45. Do you have breaks during the working day?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – no → proceed to the question 47

46. How many breaks do you have during the working day? What is the total length of breaks?

Number of breaks _____
Total length of breaks _____

47. Where do you usually have launch while working in the fields?

- 1 – in the field
- 2 – at home
- 3 – I do not have lunch → *proceed to the question 49*
- 4 – other (please, specify) _____

48. Do you have hot or cold meals while working in the fields?

- 1 – hot meal
- 2 – cold meal

49. Can you leave the workplace?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – no

50. What is your parents' attitude to the fact that you work?

51. Does the work in the fields influence your leisure/spare time?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – no

If yes, then how _____

SECTION 5. EARNINGS

52. Do you get money for working in the fields?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – no

53. In what form do you get payment for your work?

- 1 – I get money myself
- 2 – I get food products/goods myself
- 3 – my parents (relatives) get the money and then give me a part
- 4 – my parents(relatives) get the money
- 5 – my parents (relatives) get food products/goods
- 6 – other (please, specify) _____

54. How much do you get for...

Interviewer Specify the period (day/month/season/year)? _____

55. How often do you get paid?

Once per _____ (day/month/season/year)?

56. What months did you earn the most?

57. What do you do with the money earned or goods/products received? _____

SECTION 6. HEALTH AND LABOUR SAFETY

58. Have you had any injuries (cuts, traumas, poisoning, etc.) during the work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

- 1 – yes
- 2 – no → *proceed to the question 63*

59. What injuries, diseases or accidents have happened to you at work?

60. How many times have you got injuries this year?

_____ times

61. When did you have your last injury (cut, poisoning, etc.)?

Year _____ month _____

62. Who helped you when you got injuries? What kind of help have you been rendered?

Who rendered help _____

What kind of help _____

63. What would you like to be in future? _____

Guidelines for the key informants' interview

Date / ____ / _____ 2004

Oblast _____ Rayon _____

Village _____

1. Sex

1 – male

2 – female

2. Nationality /Ethnicity _____

3. Education _____

4. Category of the key informant:

1 – representative of local state authorities

2 – teacher

3 – health care practitioner

4 – employer

5 – parents of working children

6 – NGO representatives

7 – workers

8 – other local residents _____

SECTION 1. ATTITUDE TOWARD CHILD LABOUR IN THE TOBACCO/COTTON GROWING

5. Who owns tobacco/cotton fields in your village?

It is evident that there are children under the age of eighteen in your village that work in the tobacco/cotton fields.

6. What kind of work do children do in the tobacco/cotton fields?

7. When (at what time of the year) do children work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

8. At what age do the children start working in the tobacco/cotton fields?

9. Do all the children in this village work in the tobacco/cotton fields? If not all children, then what category of children works there? Is there any difference between boys' and girls' involvement in work in the fields?

10. When (at what time of the day) do children start working?

11. When (at what time of the day) do children finish working?

12. When do they have rest? For how long? What meals do they have while working?

13. What is the estimated proportion of children among all workers in the tobacco/cotton fields? _____%

14. How much do the children working in the tobacco/cotton fields usually get for their work? Is there difference in the labour remuneration for the children and adults; for local children and migrant children; for boys and girls?

15. What are the reasons for the use of child labour in tobacco/cotton fields (when I say children I mean people under eighteen years of age):

Why do employers use child labour in the fields?

Why do parents let their children work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

Why do children agree to work in the tobacco/cotton fields?

16. What problems do you see in the use of child labour in tobacco/cotton fields?

17. What issues do working children encounter?

CONCLUSIONS

18. Do you think for the last ten years the use of child labour in your village increased, remained unchanged or reduced? Why?

19. Do you think the involvement of children in the work in tobacco/cotton fields should be increased or reduced? Why?

20. What is the common pathway of the children from your aul after they reach the age of eighteen (do they continue working in the fields, continue education, stay with their family, leave the village)?

SECTION 2. SITUATION WITH CHILDREN AND OTHER LOCAL RESIDENTS, SITUATION WITH VULNERABLE GROUPS.

21. How would you assess the people's living standards in your village?

22. What groups of people are the most vulnerable?

23. Do all the children from your village attend school? If not, what category of children do not attend school? Why?

24. In your opinion, do all children from the village have equal opportunity to receive education? If no, what are the reasons for unequal access to education?

25. Do the parents have to contribute to school renovation, buying training materials, etc.?

26. Do all parents have to make contributions? What happens if some parents are unable to make contributions?

SECTION 3. SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

27. Are there any social support and health care services in your village?

28. Is there any state support for low-income families?

29. Are there any organizations that provide recreational services for children? What are they? What do they do?

30. Are there any organizations that provide vocational services for children? What are they? What do they do?

31. Do you think the use of child labour is prohibited by the law? What do you think about that?

32. What is the attitude of the local authorities to the child labour problem?

33. What has been done to improve children's working conditions in the fields?

34. Is it possible to prohibit the use of child labour in the fields? Justify your answer, please.

35. What organizations can play an important role in the effective elimination of the child labour problem in your aul?

36. What actions should the Government undertake to solve the child labour problem?

37. What should be done in order to reduce the use of child labor? What can do families, organizations, the Government, akimats, etc. do for that?

38. What can you do to help solve this problem?

Checklist for the aul (village)

1. Geographical location and history
2. Number of residents
3. Summer and winter (seasonal) variations of the population
4. Number of residents that have returned back
5. Dynamics in the number of residents
6. Migration (to and from)
7. People's mobility
8. Distribution of the population by sex and age:
9. Children under the age of 18 years (broken into the following age groups: 0-6 years, 7-11 years, 12-14 years and 15-17 years); people 18-20 years, 20-39 years, 40-59 years, 60 years and older.
10. Distribution of the population by size of households and number of workers in the family.

11. Average monthly income of a household (less than 5000 tenge, 5000-10000, 10000-20000, 20000+ tenge).
12. Primary sources of income (wages, sales of products, stipends, pensions and social assistance/benefits)
13. Poverty (proportion of population living under the poverty line)
14. Number of houses
15. Estimated costs of houses
16. Condition of houses (number of houses that require renovation)
17. Working people
18. Employed people
19. Percentage of working population
20. Age- and sex-specific distribution of the working population
21. Primary activities
22. Unemployment
23. Basic services: water supply, sewage system, power supply, telecommunications, roads, basic agricultural infrastructure)
24. Basic social services: schools (type, number of students); medical centers (number and type); recreation centers, clubs
25. Administrative buildings
26. Type and number of economically active enterprises
27. Arable land
28. Irrigated land
29. Cultivated agricultural products
30. Number of livestock
31. The land under pastures
32. The land under tobacco /cotton
33. Ownership of the cultivated land (share of land cultivated by private owners, share of the leased land broken by the type of land: arable and irrigated land, pastures)
34. Distribution of tobacco plantations by size (number of plantations, the smallest and the largest size, average size)
35. Distribution of tobacco /cotton plantations by the type of ownership (cooperatives, lease, private share, etc.)
36. Sources of invested capital (bank loans, buyers' credit, advance payments, etc.)
37. Number of tobacco/ cotton farmers
38. Sex distribution of the tobacco/cotton farmers
39. Number of children working in the tobacco/cotton fields
40. Common problems that tobacco /cotton farmers encounter
41. Other agricultural crops
42. Proximity of agricultural markets
43. Income from tobacco /cotton cultivation

Observation Checklist

Date _____

Time _____

Place of work (location of the observation site) _____

Village _____

Target sector of the economy: tobacco or cotton growing (please underline)

Size of the field under tobacco/cotton _____

Share of child labourers among all those working on the site and the types of work children do

Who are the children working on the site?

Number of the children working on the site

The sociodemographic profile of the working children (age, gender, ethnicity, nationality)

(Observable) physical and psychosocial status – health status, psychological condition, behavioral problems)

Clothing (clothes/shoes/boots suitable or not for the weather and working conditions, means of protection, if any)

Physical access to the workplace (distance from home to the workplace; road conditions; means of transportation; time spent to get to work);

General description of the working environment and working conditions

1. Facility (description, size)
2. Hygiene
3. Dirt, equipment
4. Conditions of the walls, ceiling and floor
5. Presence of dangerous mechanisms
6. Bare cables
7. Flammable surfaces
8. High temperature, humidity
9. Low temperature
10. Poor ventilation
11. Dust, gases, smell
12. Noise, vibration
13. Poor or improper lighting
14. Slippery floor
15. Exposure to pesticides and other chemicals

Tools and equipment in terms of potential danger associated with their use

1. Ill-fitted tools
2. Precaution measures when using the tools/ equipment
3. Electric equipment ;
4. Tractors
5. Stoves
6. Hot iron, welding instruments
7. Presses

CONCLUSIONS

8. Freezing chambers
9. Other

General conditions

1. Availability of drinking water
2. Availability of food
3. Availability of toilets
4. Availability of the first aid items
5. Availability of the place for having meals
6. Availability of protection means/ fire extinguishers

Work description (nature of work)

1. Time when the work starts
2. Working hours: < 5 hours per day; 5-8 hours; 8-10 hours; 10+ hours;
3. Time for rest including the possibility to leave the work place and time of absence/ break
4. Work monitoring and control
5. Qualification and skills required
6. Weight lifting and carrying
7. Hazards
8. Payment

Relations with the employer

1. Restrictions and abusive treatment
2. Isolation
3. Locking the door
4. Debts
5. Illegal exploitation
6. Sexual harassment
7. Beating
8. Abusive language
9. Penalties

Protection from hazards and dangers associated with work for children

1. opportunities to improve the working conditions or protect children from such conditions;
2. proposed work safety measures, risks and hazards, weight pickup and carrying;
3. existing or needed social protection and health care