



Activities for the elimination of child labour in Kyrgyzstan 2005-2010



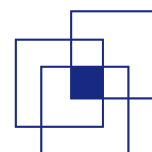
CHILD LABOUR IN KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan is among the countries in Central Asia seriously affected by the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL). Children work in almost all sectors of industry, as well as in cotton, tobacco, and rice plantations and in the provision of various services (car washing, shoes cleaning, transportation of carriages in the markets, etc). The prevalence of WFCL has disastrous consequences on the safety, education, health and overall well being of children.

According to the first National Child labour Survey in Kyrgyzstan conducted by the National Statistical Committee in 2007 with ILO technical and financial assistance, 592,000 children out of an estimated 672,000 children in employment are involved in work unsuitable for their capacities as children. Thus, child labourers account for 88.1 percent of children in employment and 40.3 percent of all children aged 5-17. In line with the high prevalence of the work among boys than girls, boys account for 57.9 percent of child labourers. The overwhelming majority of child labourers are employed as unpaid family

workers (95 percent). They are mostly involved in the sector of home production (76.4 percent), which usually involves agricultural work. Children mainly work together with other household members to sustain the household. An analysis of the work environment found that 21.3 percent of children in employment are exposed to different hazards at workplaces. Most of them (74.6 percent) are exposed to dust/fumes, 35.7 percent to extreme heat or cold and 15 percent to gas or open flames. Children were also found to work with dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, operate machinery or heavy equipment, etc.

An initial study undertaken by the ILO in 2001 and a recent Rapid Assessment Survey "Child Labour in agriculture and trade in Kyrgyzstan" (2006), identified less children involved in trade, services, housework, informal mining and constructions than in agriculture. Children are often employed to transport goods, load and unload goods and baggage, sell small items from portable stands, and collect bottles and empty boxes. Other children



performing household duties are in effect servants. They do the washing and cleaning, serve at the table, stock up on firewood and work in the garden. The specific feature of child domestic work is that the relationships of employer and employee overlap with family relationships. Parents often hire their children out to relatives living in urban areas, in order to protect them from harsh living conditions in the rural areas. These children are not paid, but as servants and baby-sitters are provided with food, clothing and money for school. Children also work in repair shops, bakeries, cafes and restaurants.

Increasing equal access to and opportunities for education are key steps in tackling child labour. According to ILO Global Jobs Pact,¹ part of the response to the crisis should be given to achieving basic education for all children. Even though the numerical or quantitative indicators of development of the country's education system are quite impressive, the qualitative indicators show a different story. According to a study on school non-attendance

undertaken by UNICEF in 2007,² the number of children not covered by elementary and secondary schools is about 38.2 thousand. The main reason of school non-attendance is family related (64 percent) and it includes lack of money to buy clothes and school supplies (22.5 percent), participation of children in agricultural work (20.5 percent) and other types of child labour (19 percent).

This is caused mainly by an increase in the expenses of the families for their children's education. Families cannot cover the costs related to secondary education and even less for higher education (textbooks and writing materials, Internet services, books, clothes, shoes, food, etc.). Lacking the necessary income, families have to refocus their efforts to meet their immediate needs, which often means giving less attention to educating their children. Moreover, most of the families do not understand the need for higher education, which is why they do not see the value in paying for an education that they can not even afford. At the same time, secondary schools

¹ ILO: *Recovery from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, Geneva, 2009.

² UNICEF; Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic: *Out of school children in the Kyrgyz Republic*, Bishkek, 2008.

NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Penal Code:	2007
Introduces clear sanctions for those who perpetrate different types of abuse against children including trafficking, involvement of children in illicit activities, pornography, prostitution	
Code on Children:	2006
Contains an article on prohibition of the WFCL	
Labour Code:	2004
- Prohibits employment for persons under 16 years of age - Chapter 23 provides that young persons under 18 cannot be employed in works likely to jeopardise their health, safety or morals	
Law on Labour Protection:	2003
Contains an article prohibiting involvement of women and children under the age of 18 years in hard work and work in harmful and hazardous conditions	
Law of Fundamentals of State Youth Policy:	2000
Contains articles on legal employment of young people (14-35 years of age)	

As a result of IPEC activities in Kyrgyzstan, **child labour has been mainstreamed into legislation, policies, national programmes, etc.**, as follows:

Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic:	2010
Includes a provision on prohibition to use child labour (Article 20)	
Country Development Strategy:	2008
State Programme of Actions by Social Partners on the Elimination the WFCL for 2008-2011	2008
has as objective to create interactions between social partners aimed at eliminating the WFCL by:	
- Preventing children's involvement in the WFCL - Undertaking measures to reduce the number of children working in hazardous conditions - Reducing the prevalence of child labour in general - Providing direct services to working children aiming at their withdrawal, rehabilitation and social integration.	
The implementation of the State Programme is guided by the ILO Global Action Plan and the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016 adopted at the Hague Global Child Labour Conference (2010).	
National Employment Policy:	2006
Includes article on combating child labour	

lack the capacity to provide children with quality extracurricular activities, supervision and awareness raising on social problems and risks. Lacking proper education, they join the rows of the unemployed or become child labourers for the sake of helping their parents to earn money.

RATIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND INSTRUMENTS

By ratifying ILO Conventions related to child labour along with a number of international instruments, the Government of Kyrgyzstan committed itself to take all necessary measures to address child labour at the national level, including legislative and policy measures. The relevant conventions and international instruments ratified by the Republic of Kyrgyzstan are presented below:

INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT	DATE OF RATIFICATION
ILO Convention No. 138 (1973) on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment	31 March 1992
ILO Convention No. 182 (1999) on the Worst Forms of Child Labour	10 May 2004
UN Convention of the Rights of the Child CRC (1989)	6 November 1994
UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)	2 October 2003

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

State institutions that deal with child protection issues, including child labour, as part of their mandates:

Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration:

- » Department on Children Protection
- » State Labour Inspection
- » Youth Labour Exchange
- » State Agency on Vocational Education and Training
- » Information and Resource Centre on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

Ministry of Interior:

- » Inspections on Minors Affairs

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Health

Ministry on Youth Affairs

State Agency on Local Self-Governance

STRATEGIC COMPONENTS

The ILO's **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)** has been working in Kyrgyzstan since 2005 with the purpose to provide technical and financial assistance to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and to implement the ILO's child labour conventions: Minimum Age Convention (1973) No. 138 and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) No. 182. IPEC activities in Kyrgyzstan were funded by the US Department of Labour and German Government under a common programming framework **Programme on Action against Child labour and Trafficking in children in the Central Asian Region (PROACT CAR)** that also includes Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.³



SPIF Workshop, November 2005.

In order to ensure a coherent approach and the ownership of the national stakeholders, the activities at country level have been defined in 2005 during a stakeholder driven planning exercise based on the Strategic Planning Impact Framework (SPIF) methodology.

Since December 2005, IPEC Kyrgyzstan has focused its activities on the following areas:

- » Building the knowledge base on the WFCL.
- » Awareness raising and dissemination of information on child labour.

³ Due to the international boycott of the Uzbek cotton as well as of the controversy in the position of Uzbekistan on child labour in cotton sector, IPEC suspended its activities in Uzbekistan in August 2008.

- » Enhancing the capacity of professionals and national institutions on the WFCL at all levels.
- » Advocacy to bring legislation, policy and institutional framework in line with international commitments on child labour.
- » Support to target interventions for prevention of children to enter child labour, withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labourers.
- » Creating linkages and networks to support prevention and elimination of child labour.
- » Promotion of youth and adult employment.

BUILDING THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

IPEC interventions in Kyrgyzstan have been based on the following research and studies:

Rapid Assessment Survey on child labour in agriculture and trade in Kyrgyzstan , Research and Consulting "SIAR-Bishkek" company	2006
Manual labour and children health status (medical examination of the children at the marketplace), Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, Department of Hospital Paediatrics	2006
Hygienic assessment of health status of children working at dumps of Kyrgyz Chemical and Metallurgical Factory , NGO "Positive Help"	2006
Baseline survey on child labour in tourism in Issykkul , Association of NGOs	2006
Baseline study of immigrant families , NGO "Intersheriktesh"	2006
Hygienic assessment of working conditions and health status of children working in tobacco, rice and cotton plantations , Ministry of Health and NGO "Positive Help"	2007
The worst forms of child labour: Assessment of involvement of children into illicit drug trafficking , NGO "Positive Help"	2007
Situational analysis on youth employment , Galina Voronina, Daud Adilbekov, IPEC consultants	2007
Review of the national legislation and enforcement mechanisms related to the WFCL in terms of compliance with the ILO Conventions Nos. 138 & 182 , Centre "Pravo"	2008
Working Children in Kyrgyzstan: Results of the 2007 Child Labour Survey , National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic	2007-2008

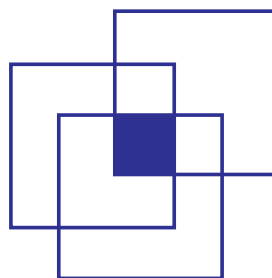
Hygiene assessment of the working conditions of child labourers at Osh city market , Kyrgyz State Medical Academy	2009
Review of the implementation status of the State Programme of actions by social partners on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour for 2008-2011 , Zaure Sydykova, IPEC consultant	2010

AWARENESS RAISING

IPEC Kyrgyzstan has conducted systematic and comprehensive awareness raising campaigns at national and local levels. The focus is on raising the awareness of government officials and institutions, social partners, parents, children and the general public. The project supports the production and free broadcasting of radio and TV programmes, documentaries on child labour, dissemination of booklets, leaflets, posters, etc. IPEC has supported the production of three documentaries on child labour.

World Day Against Child Labour – 12 June

At the national level, the World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) provides an opportunity to gain further support of the Government and that of the ILO social partners, civil society and others, such as schools, youth groups and the media, in the campaign against child labour. The idea of embarking on the World Day as an opportunity to raise the visibility of the child labour problem and to highlight the effort made in combating it first came out from the discussions held between IPEC and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2005. Since then, IPEC jointly with the partners use this opportunity to increase the awareness of the general public on child labour through creative initiatives targeting children and policy makers.





WDACL 2006 was dedicated to the launch of the second Global Child Labour Report, *The end of child labour: Within reach*. On 12 June, a concert “Stars of Kyrgyzstan against child labour” that lasted over three hours was organized in the main “Ala-Too” square of Bishkek with participation of Government representatives, and 13 local popular artists and bands. The representatives of the Secretariat of the National Council on Issues of Women, Family, Youth and Gender Development of the Kyrgyz Republic President’s Administration, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Municipality of Bishkek, State Labour Inspection had speeches in the opening of the concert.



World Day Against Child Labour activities.

On the occasion of the WDACL 2007, during a ten-day period, from 2-12 June, a branded bus with the slogan “Harvest for the future: Agriculture without child labour” has been running in four Oblasts (regions) of the Kyrgyz Republic visiting nine provinces, the areas where cotton, tobacco, rice and other crops are cultivated and provided information on child labour hazards. 31 picture-cards (figures) depicting children picking up cotton, threading tobacco leaves, loading cargos, selling goods, cleaning shoes were placed in the central crossroads and the busiest places (supermarkets, recreation areas, boulevards) in Bishkek, Talas, Osh and Jalalabat cities together with the inscription

“12 June. Coming soon...”. The “figures” were also placed in front of the main entrances of Regional State Administrations in Talas, Osh and Jalalabat Oblasts. Children have been sketched out and displayed from 27 May to 15 June. On 12 June, the inscription was changed into “12 June - The World Day Against Child Labour”. In addition, a campaign was covered by the media broadcasting a short video and radio jingles (20-30 seconds) on child labour.



Meeting with the Minister of Labour.

WDACL 2008 “Education: the right response to child labour” was marked by organizing an open doors day for working children in vocational education and training (VET) institutions in Bishkek and holding a press conference with the participation of the key stakeholders.

On 11-12 June 2009, working children with their parents visited several central and local authorities in order to remind them about the importance of education and the necessity to combat child labour. Children visited the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, State Agency on Vocational Education and Training, State Agency on Physical Development and Culture, Youth Policy and Children Protection, Bishkek Mayor’s Office, etc.

CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS

In order to effectively address child labour in Kyrgyzstan and ensure the sustainability of the efforts, IPEC contributed to strengthening the technical skills and capacity of the following institutions and groups of professionals:

- ▶ **160 staff members of Family and Children Support Department** trained on child labour related issues.
- ▶ **160 teachers of secondary schools** trained on combating child labour through education.



Training for teachers and educational officials, Osh region Kyrgyzstan, 2009.

- » **80 professionals (social workers, specialists from Social Protection Departments, local administrations and NGOs)** trained on the ways of undertaking social work with working children and their families.
- » **62 labour inspectors** trained on child labour legislation, identification of working children, risk assessment and referring children to relevant services.
- » **22 representatives of line ministries** trained on reporting on ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182.
- » **16 regional journalists** trained on the ways to properly cover child labour issues in the media.
- » **16 representatives of Youth labour Exchange** trained on providing life skills counselling and career guidance for working children.
- » **Chief Labour Inspectors of Kyrgyzstan** participated in the Sub-Regional Workshop on Labour Inspection Policies and Child Labour in Turkey (November 2006).
- » **34 officials of Youth Labour Exchange** trained on the Manual for practitioners on life skills development, counselling and career guidance for working children.
- » **55 representatives of the mayors' offices, Family and Children Support Departments, local authorities, employers, trade unions, territorial unions, NGOs and media** in Osh and Kara-Suu towns trained on the worst forms of child labour and ways of prevention.
- » **35 educational officials and teachers** in Osh and Kara-Suu towns trained on the role of education in combating child labour.
- » **15 social workers and representatives of Family and Children Support Departments** in Osh and Kara-Suu trained on ways of undertaking social work with working children and their families.
- » **9 representatives of the key stakeholders** participated in the Training Course on "Combating the worst forms of child labour in Central Asia: planning national actions", held at the ILO International Training Center, Turin, Italy.

ILO-IPEC PUBLICATIONS

- » *Physical labour and health status of children. Manual for parents and children*, Ministry of Health, Kyrgyz State Medical Academy, National Centre of Pediatrics and Pediatric Surgery, NGO "Positive Help", 2006
- » *Situational Analysis on youth employment*, 2007
- » *On some worst forms of child labour in Kyrgyzstan by the example of the assessment of working conditions at tailing dumps of the Kyrgyz chemical – metallurgical factory*, Ministry of Health and NGO "Positive Help", 2007
- » *Report on health examination of working children at tailing dumps of the Kyrgyz chemical – metallurgical factory*, Ministry of Health and NGO "Positive help", 2007
- » *The worst forms of child labour in Kyrgyzstan: the hygienic assessment of working conditions and health status of working children in tobacco, rice and cotton fields*, Ministry of Health and NGO "Positive Help", 2007
- » *Review of the national legislation and enforcement mechanisms related to the WFCL in terms of compliance with the ILO Conventions 138 & 182 in Kyrgyzstan*, 2008
- » *The worst forms of child labour: Assessment of children's involvement in illicit drug trafficking*, NGO "Positive Help", 2007
- » *Working children in Kyrgyzstan. Results of the 2007 Child Labour Survey*, National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic, 2009
- » *Manual for social workers on child labour*, Association of Social Workers, 2009

- » **Representatives of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration** participated in the Child Labour Monitoring Good Practice Sharing Workshop held in Kiev, Ukraine (September 2010), organized by IPEC Ukraine.



Provision of school supplies to a working child, Osh region, Kyrgyzstan 2009.

SOCIAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR

- » In cooperation with ILO/ACTRAV, the capacity of **40 representatives of sectoral unions** has been enhanced to play an active role in combating child labour at the local level and contributed to the development of a joint policy of trade unions on child labour (June 2009).
- » **Representatives of the National Confederation of the Employers** participated in the Inter-Regional Conference on Child Labour in Turkey (September 2007).
- » **Representatives of the Ministry of Labour, employers' and workers' organizations** participated in a study tour to Leningrad region to learn from the experience and best practices on combating the WFCL in the Leningrad region of Russia (November – December 2006).
- » **Representatives of the Federation of Trade Unions** participated in a TOT on child labour (June 2006).
- » **30 employers** were trained on the role of employers in combating the WFCL.
- » With IPEC support, **Issykkyl Regional Administration, Regional Council of Trade Unions and Regional Union of Employers** signed a tripartite Memorandum of Cooperation where child labour has been mainstreamed.

- » IPEC supported the National Confederation of the Employers in promoting social dialogue and mobilization of social partners to address child labour by strengthening the capacity of tripartite committees and mainstreaming child labour issues into local development plans. As a result of the programme, **154 representatives of rayon/village administrations, trade unions and employers** in Jalalabat region (eight rayons and six cities) have an increased capacity and their awareness raised on child labour and tripartite cooperation. **Partners signed a regional tripartite agreement for 2009-2011 and 14 bilateral agreements** between local authorities and employers that include child labour provisions.

- » **Regional Coordinators of the National Confederation of Employers** attended the round table organised as a follow-up of the Inter-Regional Workshop on Sharing Experiences and Taking Action in Combating Child Labour organised by ILO ACT/EMP and IPEC in Azerbaijan.

DIRECT SUPPORT TO CHILD LABOURERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

As a result of IPEC direct interventions during the period 2006-2010, **2,478 children and 241 families were provided with direct services** (health, nutrition, school supplies, vocational training and skills, medical and legal counselling) and **425 children were prevented or withdrawn from the WFCL** through provision of educational and training opportunities.



Official opening of Social Centre "Kelechek" in Karasu city, 2009.

NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

Line ministries and state agencies

- » Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration
- » Ministry of Education
- » Ministry of Health
- » Ministry of Interior
- » Ministry on Youth Affairs
- » State Agency on Local Self-Governance

Social partners

- » National Confederation of Employers
- » Federation of Trade Unions of Kyrgyzstan
- » Agro-Workers Unions
- » Federation of Employer's in industries
"Guild of Directors of Kyrgyzstan"

Media partners

- » Information and Creative Centre "DDD"
- » Creative Studio "MoBiUs"

NGOs

- » Save the Children UK
- » International NGO "EveryChild"
- » "Positive Help"
- » "Centre for the Protection of Children"
- » Public Fund "Pravo"
- » "Bishkek Business Club"
- » "Centre of Primary Vocational Education
Support and Development"
- » Crafts Council of the Kyrgyz Republic
- » Public Association "Inter-Cultural Education"
- » Association of Public Refugees, Migrants
and Ethnic Kyrgyz "Intersheriktesh"
- » Association of NGOs

International organizations

- » UNICEF
- » UNDP



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