



International
Labour
Organization

Child labour and education

Progress, challenges and future directions



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)
Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)

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International Labour Organization

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Introduction

The related problems of child labour and out of school children come under renewed scrutiny during 2015 as the international community considers the emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This review examines recent debates and developments concerning child labour and education to help identify a strategic focus for work post-2015.

Chapter 1 of the review begins by considering existing knowledge on the damaging impact of child labour on education access and attainment. It also considers recent data and estimates on both child labour and education, where progress has been made, and the nature of remaining challenges.

Chapter 2 briefly outlines the history of ILO work on child labour, in particular the organization's standard setting role and its longstanding concern to ensure that child labour should not be a barrier to children's access to education. It considers the development of efforts to highlight the child labour challenge, including recent international Conferences. It also considers the findings of a recent review on child labour and education from the UN Special Envoy on Global Education.

Chapter 3 explores the emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals that set targets for child labour elimination and universal education. Of strategic importance is the likely inclusion of a child labour target for the first time among the global development goals: a proposed target calls for an end to child labour by 2025. A proposed goal on education sets a target of 2030 to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. There is now therefore likely to be an explicit child labour target and a sequential and contingent relationship between the global educational and child labour targets – the education target will not be achieved if the child labour target is missed.

Chapter 4 elaborates the need for a strategic focus in the ILO's contribution to the global efforts on child labour and education post 2015. While the ILO is neither an education agency nor a major education player, its experience and mandate provides it with a unique role in the international effort to tackle child labour. The chapter identifies the need for a focus on three key areas which are strongly interconnected, intellectual leadership based on research and knowledge, targeted advocacy, and strengthening the role of the social partners.

CHAPTER 1:

Making

the connection

1.1 Child labour and education

It is widely recognised that the issues of child labour and out-of-school children are both significant global problems. The need for an integrated approach to these issues would appear obvious but in fact the two issues are often considered quite separately. There are still many national education sector strategy plans in which the issue of child labour is not mentioned. There are also programmes on child labour that fail to adequately reflect the central importance of children regularly attending school.

It is therefore useful to restate the reason that child labour is a major barrier to reaching education goals and the importance of policy and programme coherence on these two issues.

ILO national survey data from all over the world has documented the interconnection between child labour and education. The key findings from this ILO research indicate that child labour and the achievement of education goals are clearly and negatively correlated.¹ The findings indicate that:

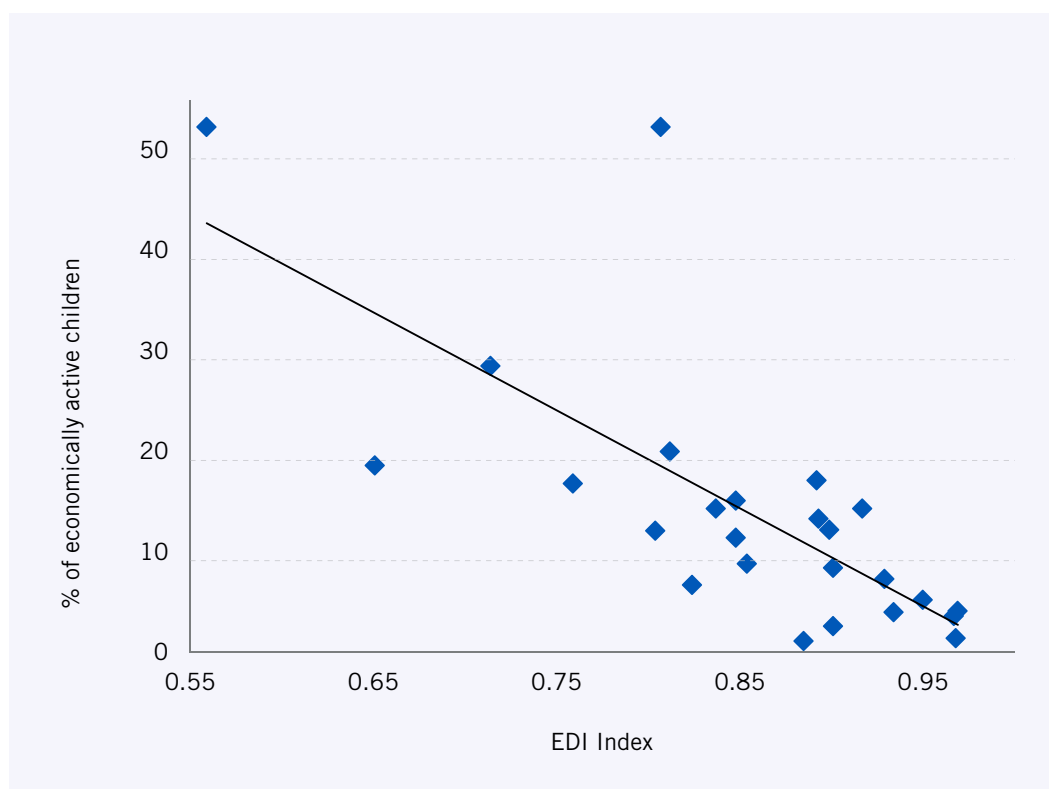
- child labour lowers net primary enrolment ratios;
- there is a strong negative effect of child labour on school attendance. In some countries school attendance rates of working children are only about half of those of non-working children;
- the length of a child's work day is negatively associated with his or her capacity to attend school. Long hours of work increase the school attendance gap. High levels of child labour are usually associated with low literacy rates;
- there is a significant negative correlation between levels of economic activity of children aged 7-14 years and youth literacy rates in the 15-24 age bracket;
- rural working children tend to be among the most disadvantaged. School attendance figures in rural areas differ considerably according to work status of a child;
- boys and girls often do different jobs. Employment patterns tend to be gender-specific. Girls, for instance, are usually overrepresented in non-economic activities such as work in their "own household". They also often bear the double burden of work outside and inside the house, often with little time left for schooling;
- for those children combining work and education, performance at school often suffers. The higher the prevalence of children's work, the more likely it is that children will be repeating grades and will drop out before finishing primary education.

¹ ILO-IPEC: Blanco, F. and Hagemann, F.: *Child labour and education: Evidence from SIMPOC surveys* (Geneva, ILO, 2008). Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_093987/lang-en/index.htm.

At the same time as child labour impacts on education, it is evident that the lack of accessible, affordable and good quality schooling can also act as a push factor for children to take up work. In many rural areas provision of education effectively stops at the primary level because of the absence of schools. Although many countries have removed direct fees for basic education, there often remain a range of costs associated with education that can be a significant barrier to poor families. Children also need a quality learning environment with trained teachers, but overcrowded and under resourced schools can lead to a high level of drop out.

At the national level, a higher incidence of child labour is generally associated with lower values in the Education Development Index (EDI), which is a yardstick used by UNESCO for measuring EFA progress.

Figure 1: Education Development Index and child labour, 7-14 years old

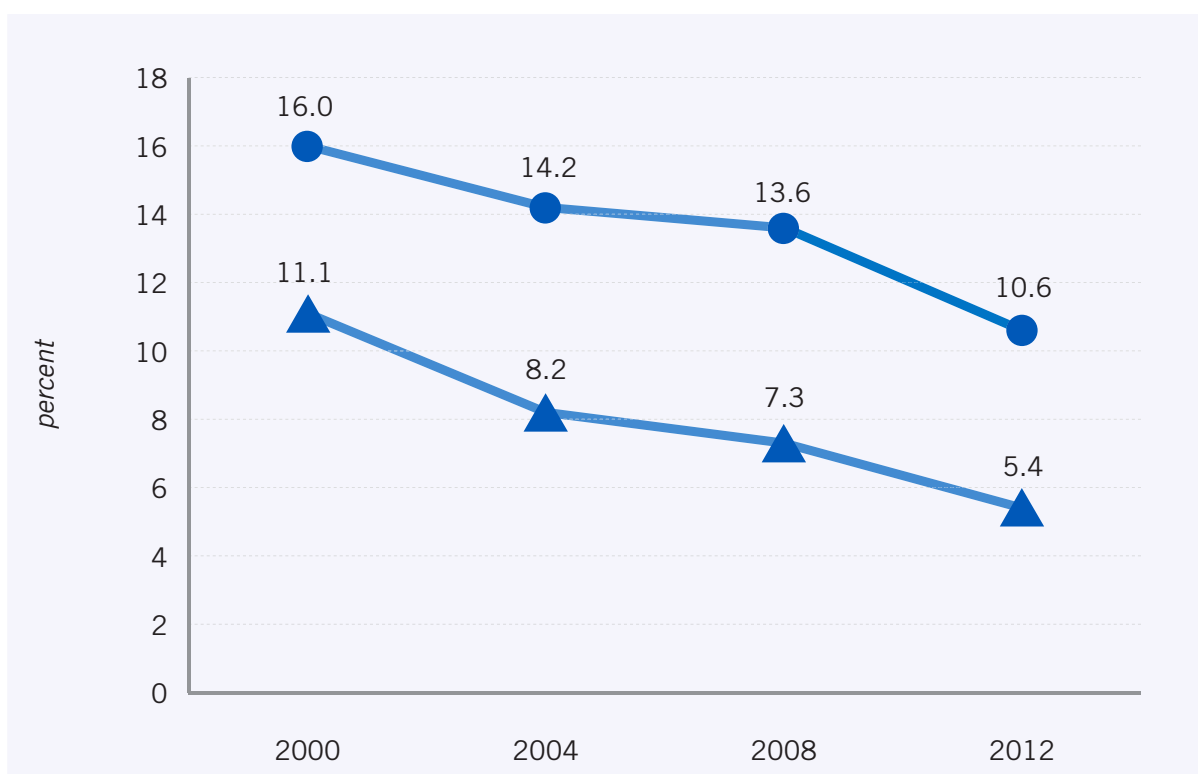


Source: ILO-IPEC: Blanco, F. and Hagemann, F.: *Child labour and education: Evidence from SIMPOC surveys* (Geneva, ILO, 2008). SIMPOC calculations based on SIMPOC national child labour surveys.

Marking progress against child labour

Since the late 1990s, the ILO has become the world's most important source of child labour-related statistical information. This capacity has been augmented by Understanding Children's Work (UCW) an inter-agency project (ILO, UNICEF and World Bank) launched in 2000 with support from donors and international partners.

Figure 2: Number of children in child labour 2000-2012



Source: ILO-IPEC: *Marking progress against child labour – Global estimates and trends 2000-2012* (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

As a result of statistical efforts over four rounds since 2000, the ILO has been able to track child labour trends and to periodically revise global estimates. For the 12 year period since 2000, the dynamic picture was one of important progress. There were almost 78 million fewer children aged 5-17 years in child labour at the end of this period than at the beginning, a reduction of almost one-third.

The fall in the number of girls in child labour was particularly pronounced – a reduction of 40 per cent compared to 25 per cent for boys. More boys than girls continue to work though girls' domestic work may be under-counted. The difference increases with age – while among those aged 5-14 the incidence of child labour among boys and girls is broadly similar, for the older age group of 15-17 significantly more boys than girls are involved.

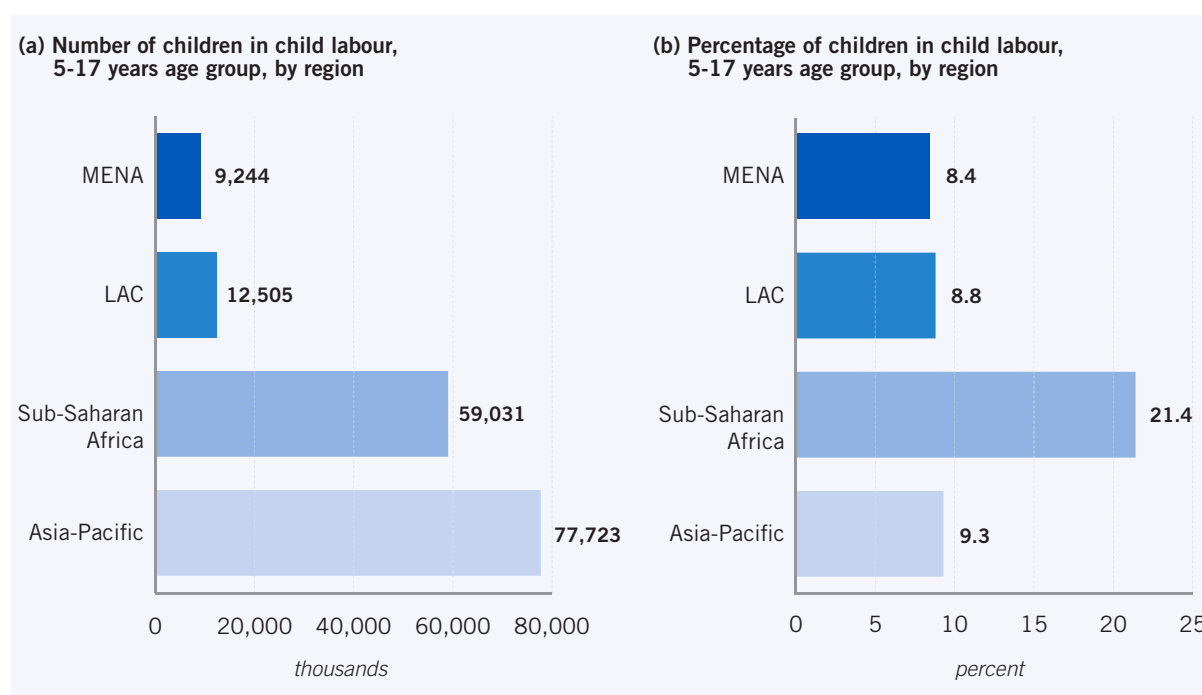
Despite the progress the new estimates indicate that 168 million children aged 5-17 years worldwide are still trapped in child labour, accounting for almost 11 per cent of the child population as a whole. The core school-aged group of 5-14 years comprises 120 million of this total. (Down from 186 million in 2000). The global estimates further reveal that children in the 5-11 age group account for by far the largest share of all child labourers: 73 million, or 44 per cent of the total. This group constitute a core policy concern as they are the most vulnerable to exploitation and compromised education. Sub Saharan Africa continues to have the highest incidence with 21 per cent of children in child labour. The Asia and Pacific region has by far the largest absolute numbers but also witnessed the largest absolute decline during 2008-2012.

The latest global estimates for the first time presented estimates of child labour for different levels of national income. Not surprisingly the incidence of child labour is highest in poorer countries. Twenty-three per cent of children in low-income countries are child labourers, compared to 9 per cent of children in lower middle-income countries and 6 per cent of children in upper middle-income countries. However when seen in absolute terms, middle-income countries, including as they do some high-population countries in South Asia and Africa, are host to the largest numbers of child labourers. Similarly, at the household level child labour is not limited to the poorer households – there are substantial numbers of child labourers from households in the higher income brackets in most developing countries.

The fight against child labour is therefore by no means limited only to the poorest countries, though they must be a priority target. And though income and poverty are important determinants of child labour, they are in no way the only reasons families send their children to work. This in turn indicates that though raising family income levels is important, it is not sufficient in and of itself to eliminate child labour. There is a need to address social and cultural factors, as well as ensuring the provision and quality of education.

In 2006 the ILO adopted a time-bound goal – *the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016*. Despite some positive progress, it is apparent that this goal will not be reached and there is a clear need to reenergise international and national efforts against child labour.

Figure 3: Child labour by region, 5-17 years age group, 2012



Source: ILO-IPEC: *Marking progress against child labour – Global estimates and trends 2000-2012* (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

1.2 Stalled progress on Education for All (EFA)

EFA out of reach by 2015

In the 1960s and 1970s education topped the development agenda. UNESCO set the first target date of 1980 to achieve targets on *education for all*. But populations surged and many countries faced a debt crisis making the 1980s the “lost decade” for development. The EFA conference held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 aimed to revive the cause. A new EFA goal was set for 2000. A Conference in Dakar and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framed in 2000 followed setting a new target for 2015 – ensuring that children everywhere, boys and girls alike would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

It is certain that the world will not reach the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015, the core goal of the EFA movement. In recent years global progress in reducing the number of out-of-school children has come virtually to a halt after rapid improvements after 2000. According to UNESCO nearly 58 million children of primary school age (typically between 6 and 11 years of age) were not enrolled in school in 2012. A further 69 million adolescents were also out-of-school.² Since 2007 the global out-of-school rate has been stuck at 9 per cent. In terms of gender parity in education, considerable progress has been made. However, only just over a fifth of low income countries have achieved parity. The poorest girls in the poorest countries continue to have the least chances in education.

Regional disparities and country concerns

A significant decline in out-of-school children in certain countries, due to important policy initiatives, such as those focused on removing school fees, has been counter-balanced by a rising school-age population in sub-Saharan Africa. Progress has stalled mainly because the number of out-of-school children in sub-Saharan Africa remained at around 30 million between 2007 and 2012. As a consequence, the share of the world’s out-of-school children living in that region has increased to more than one-half of the global total. By contrast, South and West Asia has made considerable gains, reducing the number of out-of-school children by two-thirds from 34 million in 2000 to 10 million in 2012. Some 14 countries are estimated to have more than one million children out of school comprising around two-thirds of the global out-of-school population.³

One half of the global population of out-of-school children live in conflict countries, many of these in Africa, and they also account for a significant share of child labourers. Such conflicts result in high levels of displacement and the destruction of educational

² UNESCO: *Progress in getting all children to school stalls but some countries show the way*. Policy paper 14/ Fact sheet 28 (Paris, June, 2014), p. 1. Available at: unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002281/228184E.pdf.

³ UNESCO: *Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all – EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/2014* (Paris, 2014). Available at: unesco.nl/sites/default/files/dossier/gmr_2013-4.pdf?download=1.

facilities that fuel the supply of child labour. A recent report on the impact of the Syrian crisis said that “The education crisis is fuelling an epidemic of child labour and early marriage.” It pointed to assessments which found that just under half of refugee children in Jordan were working. High levels of child labour among refugee children were also reported by humanitarian organizations in Lebanon and Turkey.⁴

It should be recalled that EFA represents a broad agenda at the core of which is Universal Primary Education. Progress in other areas of EFA such as towards the acquisition of youth skills has been harder to gauge due to a lack of consensus on the definition of learning needs and skills, on what indicators to use, and the absence of monitoring tools.

There has been a growing demand for secondary education as more countries approach Universal Primary Education (UPE). This is particularly important in the context of child labour as in most countries it is completion of junior secondary education that takes children through to the legal minimum age of employment.

The problem of resource allocations

The inadequacy of financial resources has seriously impeded progress towards EFA. The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) expected all countries to develop or strengthen national education plans that would lead to the prioritization of achieving EFA goals within the budget.

At the national level whilst over 60 per cent of low and middle income countries increased the share of national income going to education over the period 1999 to 2010, some countries have maintained very low levels of spending – less than 3 per cent of GNP, or half the globally recommended level. In 2011, 21 developing countries were spending more on arms than on primary schools.⁵

While the EFA Framework agreed at Dakar stipulated that no country with a credible plan would be held back due to lack of financing, no firm resource commitments were made. Despite increases, neither domestic financing nor aid to education was sufficient to ensure the six EFA goals would be achieved. After several years of increasing levels of aid, the post 2007 financial crisis put a halt to progress. Aid to basic education fell by 6 per cent between 2006 and 2011, its first decrease since 2002.⁶

⁴ Watkins, K. and Zyck, S.A.: *Living on hope, hoping for education - The failed response to the Syrian refugee crisis* (London, ODI, 2014), p. 1. Available at: www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9169.pdf.

⁵ UNESCO: *The hidden crisis: Armed conflict and education – EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011* (Paris, 2011). Available at: unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf.

⁶ UNESCO: *Teaching and learning...*, 2014, op. cit., p. 111.

CHAPTER 2:

The ILO's role and developments connecting child labour and education

2.1 The ILO's role

It is important to take a historical look at the linkage between child labour and education as it provides important perspectives for our understanding of how these twin global challenges intersect.

Efforts to build a connection between child labour elimination and universal education began in the nineteenth century with the first national and international campaigns against child labour. The early national and international campaigners recognized the important role of the state in providing education, and in time this duty was seen in terms of making education compulsory. Since that time what has stayed constant in debates about child labour interventions is the primacy accorded to education as a policy instrument.⁷

Education has always been part of the ILO's frame of reference. Article 427 of the Versailles Treaty of 1919 establishing the ILO, set as one of its major goals "the abolition of child labour and the imposition of such limitations on the labour of young persons as shall permit the continuation of their education".⁸ Additionally, the ILO's Constitution cites as one of its aims "the assurance of equality of educational and vocational opportunity".⁹ From the mid-1930s, ILO Recommendations and reports were calling for the harmonization of the legal minimum age for employment and the age of completion of compulsory schooling. Indeed the ILO has over the years worked closely with UNESCO and others on compulsory education, the status and conditions of teachers and vocational education. In 1966 the ILO and UNESCO adopted a Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers to ensure the goal of a high status teaching profession as central to good quality of education.

The link between minimum age and compulsory education had been implicit, if not explicit, in the framing of the ILO Conventions over the years. It became integrated into Convention 138 adopted in 1973 which established international law on the minimum age of employment or work. This specifies that the minimum age shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling. It also requires that any light work permitted before the minimum age is obtained should not prejudice attendance at school.

A Report to the International Labour Conference in 1983 was the first attempt to set out a comprehensive global picture of child labour with a policy framework. The Report made clear that child labour could not be approached in isolation, and its reduction would require both direct and indirect measures. Indirect interventions, such as

⁷ Fyfe, A.: "Child labour and education: Revisiting the policy debate", in *Child labour: Policy options*. Lieten and White (eds.), (Amsterdam, Aksant, 2001), p. 68.

⁸ ILO-IPEC: *The worldwide movement against child labour - Progress and future directions* (Geneva, ILO, 2007), p. 8. Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_092605/lang--en/index.htm.

⁹ ILO: *Constitution of the International Labour Organization and selected textes* (Geneva, 2010). Available at: www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/leg/download/constitution.pdf.

educational expansion, were viewed as central and would need the integrated efforts of the UN system. Moreover, education was one area identified in the Report that could provide a solid basis for inter-agency collaboration and joint programming.

At the start of the new decade (1991) an American academic Myron Weiner employed comparative historical analysis to assert that “Compulsory primary education is the policy instrument by which the state effectively removes children from the labour force”.¹⁰ At the same time a senior ILO official was also stating that education is “perhaps the single most powerful means of combating child labour”.¹¹ Though such claims may have sometimes been over-stated the primacy accorded to education as a policy instrument has been constant down the years.

In the early part of the 1990s the ILO acquired, through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the capacity to provide technical assistance to its constituents – to turn theory on tackling child labour into practice. From 1992 this has provided the ILO with significant outreach and experience in supporting educational interventions against child labour. To begin with this work was heavily focused on using non-formal education approaches to reach out of school children. However, work increasingly reflected the central importance of ensuring children’s access to the formal education system.

During the 1990s there were some high profile interventions which brought together work on child labour and education. An example was in Sialkot Pakistan, renowned for its sports and surgical goods industry. Monitoring of the sector found significant child labour in home based work. In response an alliance of organizations including the ILO, UNICEF and the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry agreed to work together to tackle the problem. Thousands of children were withdrawn from work and they and their siblings were enrolled in education centres or schools. Over time the initiatives were effectively integrated into the district government’s primary education plan.

A new ILO Convention concerning the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention No. 182) was adopted in 1999, and added to the policy framework of the ILO. It calls on member States to ensure access to free basic education and where possible and appropriate vocational and skills training for all children withdrawn from the worst forms of child labour.

From the mid-1990s child labour had moved up the international policy agenda as witnessed by the first high level international conferences held at Amsterdam and Oslo¹² in 1997 and with the passage of the new ILO Convention No. 182. The agenda-setting process became institutionalized through a series of Global Reports produced

¹⁰ Weiner, M.: *The child and the state in India: Child labor and education policy in comparative perspective* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 3.

¹¹ Fyfe, A.: “Child labour and education...”, 2001, op. cit., p. 74.

¹² The Oslo international conference of October 1997 was at that point, and for many years later, the highest level meeting ever held on child labour with 350 delegates from 40 countries.

by the ILO analysing strategies and progress. An important ILO study on costs and benefits of child labour elimination made the economic case for the elimination of child labour as a generational investment in children – our future. The study found that the elimination of child labour and its replacement by universal education would yield enormous economic benefits as against costs at a ratio of 6.7 to 1 over the period 2001 to 2020.¹³ This type of argument added impetus to advocacy efforts around the main human rights thrust.

In November 2003 the first Inter-Agency Round Table on Child Labour and Education was organized during the annual meeting of the UNESCO High-Level Group on EFA held at New Delhi. This led to the creation of a Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education for All (GTF). The core members comprised ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, Education International (EI) and the Global March Against Child labour. The EFA Global Monitoring Reports (GMR) began to identify the problem of child labour in their annual reports. However despite an apparent growing awareness of the inter-linkage between the issues, efforts to promote action where it really matters, at the national and sub-national level, proved elusive.

The Hague Roadmap

The government of the Netherlands has a long record of hosting international meetings on child labour – going back to 1989. In the latest iteration of this, representatives from government, employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs, and international agencies, gathered in The Hague on 10 and 11 May 2010 to discuss and adopt a roadmap to achieve the 2016 goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour.

The roadmap adopted by the Conference addressed in its outcome document the need for new and urgent momentum in the fight against the worst forms of child labour. A section of the roadmap was devoted to the importance of national policies on education and training under the rubric *Action by governments*. It said that government actions should be guided by the following policy priorities:

- extending and improving access to free, compulsory, quality education for all children, with a particular focus on girls, and ensuring that all children under the minimum age for employment are in full-time education, and including where appropriate and consistent with relevant international labour standards, in vocational or technical education;
- adopting strategies to remove costs that represent a barrier to education, in particular fees and school supplies;
- adopting strategies to (i) encourage and monitor school enrolment, attendance, retention and reintegration, through, for instance, scholarship and school meal programmes to help poor families reduce the costs of education, and (ii) create a

¹³ ILO-IPEC: *Investing in every child: An economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour* (Geneva, ILO, 2004), p. 4. Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_175/lang--en/index.htm.

- child-friendly learning environment, in which children are protected from abuse, violence and discrimination;
- developing concrete plans and mechanisms to meet the needs of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour as per ILO Convention No. 182 and support their transition into appropriate education or vocational training.¹⁴

The Brasilia Declaration

In October 2013 broadly the same constituents met to take stock of the progress made since The Hague Conference, to assess remaining obstacles and to agree measures to strengthen action towards the 2016 goal. Over 1,600 delegates from 156 countries participated. The Conference, which was attended by the President of Brazil and ILO Director General, adopted a Declaration on Child Labour which similarly highlighted the role of education, and public services more broadly, and the need to embed child labour elimination in the U.N. post-2015 development agenda.

Education First and the UN Special Envoy for Global Education

Faced with stalled progress on global education goals, in 2012 the UN Secretary-General established a new initiative – *Education First* – aimed at rallying a broad spectrum of actors to spur a global movement to achieve the internationally agreed education goals. Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Gordon Brown was also appointed as the UN Special Envoy for Global Education. The focus of the Special Envoy is on the most challenged countries with the aim to help bring change and generate additional resources and sufficient funding.

A Report by Gordon Brown *Child Labour & Educational Disadvantage*¹⁵ is one of a series aimed at supporting efforts to find solutions to the global education crisis. It is an analytical and history-inspired report on the link between child labour and educational disadvantage. It draws heavily on ILO data and research and is aimed at setting a future global agenda to end child labour. Given that the author is a former Prime Minister there is a strong and realistic assessment of the need for political will and leadership if global goals are to be achieved.

The Report draws lessons from history in making the case that compulsory education has a vital role to play in combating child labour and can provide an impetus for poverty reduction and the development of skills needed to boost growth and employment. It observes that the relationship between education and child labour is a complex one. Not all working children are out of school. In fact most are in school trying to balance

¹⁴ Government of the Netherlands: *Roadmap for achieving the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016*, The Hague, 10-11 May 2010 (The Hague, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2010). Available at: www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=13453.

¹⁵ Brown, G.: *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage: Breaking the Link, Building Opportunity – A review by Gordon Brown* (Office of the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, London, 2012). Available at: www.ungei.org/files/child_labor_and_education_US.pdf.

the competing demands of work and education. That said child labourers figure prominently in out-of-school populations in many countries and those in school are more likely to drop out. The Report affirms that “getting children into decent quality education is one of the most effective antidotes to endemic child labour”.¹⁶

The Report is strongest when examining what is needed to achieve a global breakthrough on child labour. The Report prefaces what it has to put forward by sharply observing:

“Over the past two decades there has been a proliferation of national and international commitments to eradicate child labour. Real change in the lives of the presumed beneficiaries – child labourers themselves – has lagged far behind the statements of intent”.¹⁷

The Report suggests that five fundamental requirements are necessary to make a breakthrough and to reverse this pattern. These are:

- a global road-map backed by multilateral financial commitments;
- real political leadership to project and protect child rights;
- strengthening the role of development and financial institutions;
- building a global campaign to raise awareness;
- making the link to compulsory education through national education plans.

Regarding the role of compulsory education, the Report draws on lessons from history before focusing on the need for governments to draw up national strategies for accelerating progress by extending opportunities to marginalized groups – with priority to child labourers. Based on existing plans, these strategies should set out clear policies and financing requirements for getting all primary aged children out of work and into school – and for extending second chance and vocational training options for adolescents and young adults.¹⁸

The Report suggests that education policy can be a driver for change if it focuses on extending and improving schooling – compulsory education has to be backed by policies that make education an accessible, affordable and relevant alternative to child labour.

¹⁶ Brown, G.: *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage*, 2012, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁷ Brown, G.: *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage*, 2012, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁸ Brown, G.: *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage*, 2012, op. cit., p. 49.

CHAPTER 3:
The Emerging
Post-2015
Development
Agenda:
From MDGs to SDGs

Several inter-linked processes have been launched aimed at shaping the post-2015 development agenda. After 16 months of deliberations, the Open Working Group (OWG) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by acclamation a set of 17 proposed goals that were submitted to the General Assembly in September 2014, and will jump start the final phase of negotiations before the adoption of a new UN development agenda at the UN General Assembly in September 2015.

The proposed SDGs are accompanied by targets, with indicators focused on measurable outcomes. They build on the foundations laid by the MDGs, seek to complete the unfinished business of the MDGs, and respond to additional challenges – including child labour. These goals constitute an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development. Targets are defined as aspirational global targets, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances.

Of great strategic importance is the inclusion of a child labour target (under goal 8) for the first time among the global development goals: “Take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, eradicate forced labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms”. Proposed goal 4 on education sets the target of 2030 to: “Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education...”¹⁹

If the proposals are adopted there will therefore be an explicit child labour target and a sequential and contingent relationship between the global education and child labour targets –the education targets will not be achieved if the child labour target is missed. This is an important policy message and potentially of considerable strategic consequence. The proposed SDGs also contain other targets relevant to achieving the inter-linked child labour and education goals. These include: the implementation of appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable (goal 1); by 2030 ensure universal access to quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) and increase the supply of qualified teachers (Goal 4); by 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training and by 2020 develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment (Goal 8).

¹⁹ This paper uses draft text under discussion in February 2015. It is possible that final text in the SDGs may be different.

3.1 Overcoming the barriers to achieving the Child Labour and Education Goals, 2025 and 2030

While child labour is one of the greatest of all barriers to meeting the 2015 goal of universal basic education, the connection between the issues is often weakly articulated where it matters most, at the national, sub-national and local level. Ministries of Education and Labour often fail to consider policy coherence.

This suggests underlying institutional and structural constraints at the country level which impacts on the design and implementation of national policies and programmes.

Translating international norms and goals into practical outcomes for children requires national legislation, backed by institutional capacity for enforcement, and political leadership to maintain a *sustained* effort.

Legislation is a good place to start. The ILO Conventions are now among the most ratified human rights instruments in the world. However, the qualitative picture reveals that one fifth of the world's population lives in countries that have not ratified Convention 182 and almost one-third in countries that have not ratified Convention 138. This shortfall from universal ratification of ILO Conventions is a significant weakening of the international architecture on child labour.

Moreover, ILO reviews of national policy have highlighted problems of inconsistency between child labour Conventions and national laws, with many national laws weakened by misalignment and ambiguity. Inconsistencies between the minimum age for admission to employment and the age set for compulsory schooling is a cause for concern.

In 2012 the ILOs Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations reported that of the countries that had ratified ILO Convention No. 138, nearly half (72) had set the general minimum age for admission to employment to work at 15 years of age. 49 countries had set a minimum age of 14, while 40 had set the minimum age at 16.²⁰

The Committee noted that if the legal minimum age for admission to work is lower than the school leaving age, children may be encouraged to leave school. If the end of compulsory schooling is below the minimum age of work, there may arise a vacuum in which children begin to work before they reach the minimum age.

Aligning these ages is an important precondition for making enforcement of compulsory schooling a more effective catalyst for change. However in many countries there is no coherence on these policies and indeed in many the need for coherence is not even discussed.

²⁰ ILO: *Giving globalization a human face - General survey on the fundamental Conventions concerning rights at work* (Geneva, 2012). Available at: www.ilo.org/washington/resources/selected-ilo-publications/WCMS_174846/lang--en/index.htm.

Table 1: Progress towards universal ratification of ILO child labour Conventions

Countries that have not yet ratified Conventions No. 138 and/or No. 182

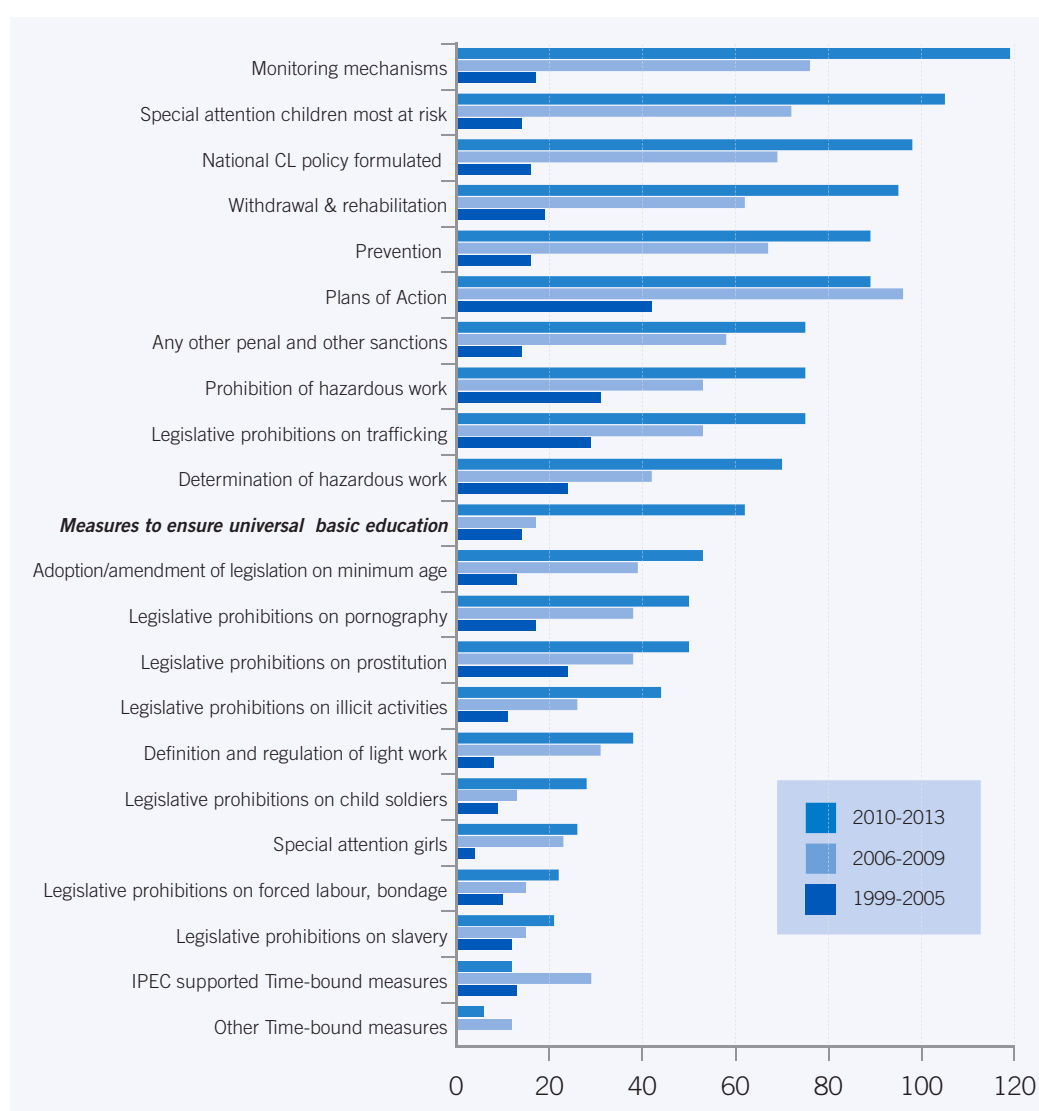
X: Not yet ratified - Country name in BOLD: Neither Convention No. 138 nor Convention No. 182 has been ratified

Country	Convention No. 138	Convention No. 182
AFRICA		
Eritrea	Ratified on 22.02.00 (Min. age: 14 years)	X
Liberia	X	Ratified on 02.06.03
Somalia	X	Ratified on 20.03.14
AMERICAS		
Canada	X	Ratified on 06.06.00
Cuba	Ratified on 07.03.75 (Min. age: 15 years)	X
Mexico	X	Ratified on 30.06.00
Saint Lucia	X	Ratified on 06.12.00
Suriname	X	Ratified on 12.04.06
United States	X	Ratified on 02.12.99
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC		
Australia	X	Ratified on 19.12.06
Bangladesh	X	Ratified on 12.03.01
India	X	X
Iran, Islamic Republic of	X	Ratified on 08.05.02
Marshall Islands	X	X
Myanmar	X	Ratified on 18.12.13
New Zealand	X	Ratified on 14.06.01
Palau	X	X
Timor-Leste	X	Ratified on 16.06.09
Tuvalu	X	X
Vanuatu	X	Ratified on 28.08.06

Moving from legislation to policy planning and implementation raises a wider set of constraints. Few countries in which child labour is endemic have established comprehensive monitoring systems enabling planners to identify, quantify and report with any accuracy on child labour and who comprise the out-of-school population. One problem is that countries with high levels of child labour tend to have low levels of birth registration – perhaps the first child right. Without this system of birth registration effective enforcement of compulsory education and employment laws is much more difficult.

National child labour plans at times reflect another weakness. There are now around 90 such plans. However many are aspirational rather than practical, have fragmented planning frameworks (reflecting poor inter-ministerial mechanisms), and attest to the limited role of ministries of education in the planning process. The marginal engagement

Figure 4: Number of actions reported under Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, by type (1999-2005, 2005-2009 and 2010-2013)



Source: ILO-IPEC: *Marking progress against child labour – Global estimates and trends 2000-2012* (Geneva, ILO, 2013).

of education ministries in national action plans for eradicating child labour means that few of these plans identify policy pathways and financing requirements for getting children out of work and into school. Ambitious plans for ending child labour are seldom backed by detailed proposals setting out strategies for absorbing more children, adolescents and young adults into the education system. Conversely, a survey conducted in 2009 of 44 national education plans found that only eight identified child labour as a constituency within the out-of-school population, and only four offered specific strategies to reach them.²¹

ILO analysis of the type of actions taken by governments pursuant to their ratification of ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 shows measures to ensure basic education some way down the list compared to other measures (Figure 4). This may be further evidence of a weak connection between child labour and education efforts at the national level. (Although perhaps encouragingly, recent years have seen an increase in the number of education measures reported).

3.2 Key policy steps needed

What are the policies that can unlock the potential to release children from child labour and put them into good quality education? This requires efforts to strengthen the policy environment to make education an accessible, affordable and quality-based alternative to child labour.

The following policy steps need to be considered by the international community:²²

National education strategies should incorporate time-bound targets on child labour. These targets should be in line with the proposed SDGs 2025 goal and viewed as a stepping stone to the 2030 universal education target.

National education plans should profile the out-of-school population along with a menu of policies and financing strategies for reaching categories of children, including child labourers, and provide them with opportunities for education and training. This will require closer co-ordination between Ministries of Education and Labour.

Make education free in practice, as well as in law. Making basic education free through the elimination of direct costs (school fees) and indirect costs (uniforms, books and transportation) is a vital component in any strategy for eradicating child labour. Cost barriers continue to keep many children out of school, even in countries where education is nominally free.

²¹ UNICEF: *Child labour and UNICEF in action: Children at the centre* (New York, 2014), p. 8. Available at: www.unicef.org/protection/files/Child_Labour_and_UNICEF_in_Action.pdf.

²² Derived from Brown, G.: *Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage*, 2012, op. cit., pp. 55-57; and ILO-IPEC: *Mainstreaming child labour concerns in education sector plans and programmes* (Geneva, ILO, 2011). Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/all-publications/WCMS_171033/lang--en/index.htm.

Ensure that education is accessible. Measures such as school construction and recruitment of teachers can help draw children away from work. Building school close to communities helps to reduce journey times, which is of particular benefit to girls. School distance can constitute an important barrier to school attendance, especially in rural areas, where over 80 per cent of all out-of-school children are to be found. Broader policy initiatives such as social protection programmes and school feeding initiatives can have a strong impact in increasing school attendance.

Raise quality and relevance. Once children are in school it is important that they learn effectively and develop, so that they are well prepared both for the world of work and life in general. Parents are more likely to send their children to school if they see that the education children receive is of good quality. This requires investment in teachers. Education is a local activity and may also need adapting to local conditions, particularly for marginalised groups including indigenous populations and migrant children.

Expand early childhood provision as this is both the right and smart thing to do.²³ Early childhood and pre-school programmes, usually for the 3-5 year age group can provide a double benefit in the campaign against child labour. Whilst promoting school readiness and increasing enrolment early childhood development programmes also have the potential to reduce labour demand on young girls who act as carers.

Properly manage the school-to-work transition. The move from education to work is a crucial phase in the lifecycle with long-term implications for the individual and of society as a whole. Expanding opportunities through provision of careers guidance, life-skills, and pre-vocational training can be important in preparing adolescents for entry to the world of work.

²³ See ILO: *Right beginnings: Early childhood education and educators*. Report for discussion at the Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education (22–23 February 2012) (Geneva, 2012). Available at: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_171717.pdf.

3.3 There are many good practices on which to build

Despite the challenges it is clear that many countries are implementing initiatives that are both reducing child labour and boosting the numbers in school. The global progress has been reflected in the periodic reports by the ILO and UNESCO, which cite many examples of good practice. During a recent project undertaken by the ILO which sought to improve links between work on child labour and education positive initiatives were seen in each of the four countries involved. Just a few examples are detailed below:

- Indonesia has made important progress in reducing child labour and extending education. Various social protection programmes have been implemented helping poor families keep children in school. In the most recent development the government is launching a “Smartcard” which children will be able to use to meet incidental school costs (eg books, uniforms etc.). Initiatives have also been taken to boost education in rural areas including expansion of *One Roof Schools* that provide junior secondary education in a school facility previously focussed only on primary education. The ILO recently partnered with the local education authorities and others to develop initiatives aimed at encouraging child labourers to re-enrol in *One Roof schools*.
- Uganda saw steps taken to strengthen coordination between the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and the Ministry of Education and Sports. A review was made of how the education sector could better respond to child labour issues. As a follow up a joint structure was established between the Ministries to see how coordination of work could be improved.
- Mali has one of the highest rates of child labour in the world. A large number of children enter child labour at an early age, many never having had any opportunity for education. The ILO worked together with local authorities to support a programme of “accelerated education” that provided opportunities for young children in child labour (those aged 8-12) to develop basic education skills to a level that would enable them to enter education in formal schools. Education partners and members of tripartite child labour committees including the national teachers’ trade union monitored the intervention with a view to scaling up similar interventions elsewhere.
- Bolivia has also implemented a large scale social protection programme aimed at helping families to keep children in school. The ILO has worked with a range of partners to help tackle local problems of child labour in both agricultural and urban settings. A particular focus has been on support for older children who need to develop skills in order to access decent work.

CHAPTER 4:
The contribution
of the ILO in
support of the
Post-2015 Agenda
on child labour and
education

4.1 Strategic considerations

The ILO is the recognized leading international agency on child labour. This reflects both its standard setting role and the fact that since 1992 it has managed the largest programme on child labour offering practical help to governments and the social partners in their efforts to address child labour. Early in 2015 the ILO identified its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour as one of its “Flagship Programmes” for purposes of future development cooperation efforts.

Whilst the ILO is neither an education agency nor a major education player, it has a mandate for education and training and a significant outreach to put at the disposal of global efforts to attain child labour and education goals.

However the ILO cannot and should not try to do everything on child labour and education, but rather utilize its comparative strengths. The ILO’s Global Child labour Report of 2010 remains relevant here. The Report called for greater strategic focussing by the ILO in its work on child labour. It affirmed the ILO’s key leadership role in the worldwide movement against child labour where it can act as a catalyst in many important areas to hasten the pace of progress. These key areas, which are strongly interconnected, comprise intellectual leadership based on its research and knowledge, support to the worldwide movement against child labour through targeted advocacy, and strengthening the role of the social partners.²⁴ Taken together these approaches can help inform and focus the ILO contribution to global efforts on child labour and education.

4.2 The ILO’s thematic priorities

Research and knowledge

The ILO has a comparative advantage through its accumulated experience of data collection on child labour, empirical and policy-orientated research, and the extensive practical experience from its field projects. This can be an important focus of the ILO’s child labour and education strategy and contribution to global efforts around the post-2015 goals.

A number of significant knowledge gaps remain in the child labour and education field. Key among these is the need to better identify which children are excluded from school and why. We know who the children in school are but often not who should be there. A global out-of-school initiative was launched in 2010 by UNICEF and UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics. It explored the compounding effects of disadvantage faced by children

²⁴ ILO: *Accelerating action against child labour – Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* (Geneva, 2010), p. 79. Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_13853/lang--en/index.htm.

with disabilities, minorities, working children and those affected by armed conflict.²⁵ A chapter of the report based on work by the interagency Understanding Childrens' Work project confirmed the negative impact of child labour on education. It also made a case for improving the evidence base to inform policy design and effective targeting of interventions. Further research was suggested in a range of areas including the impact on schooling of work setting, work intensity and type of work.²⁶

The ILO has the capacity to better examine the situation of working children to complement the efforts of those directly responsible for work in the education sector. Since its establishment within the child labour programme in 1998, a Statistical and Information Monitoring Programme (SIMPOC) has provided assistance for more than 100 household-based national child labour surveys (NCLS) conducted in more than 60 countries. SIMPOC's comprehensive database includes micro-level data and has been the main source of information used in the ILO's Global Estimates. This archive of surveys has considerable potential to shed further light on out-of-school children. In fact, no instrument is better positioned to explore the linkages between school and work than SIMPOC's NCLS. In addition to data on children's school attendance, the SIMPOC survey provides rich information on the socio-economic characteristics of household members that is crucially important, given that decisions concerning work and/or attending school are made at the household level.

On average, SIMPOC supports ten national surveys per year. These could be scaled-up in order to generate additional information, potentially through the forging of stronger links with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). On the ILO's part consideration could be given to modifying questionnaires to facilitate the collection of more comprehensive data on children's education. These changes could improve future data collection through national child labour surveys. More could also be done to analyse existing data-sets.

The Hague Conference called for the production of a series of World Reports on child labour. The aim of this thematic series is to be technical and evidence-based with each report designed to present current "state of the art" in terms of knowledge in a selected policy area related to child labour. The first report was launched in 2013 on the theme of *economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour*.²⁷ The report identified the important role that social protection can play as part of a broad policy approach and how it can mitigate against child labour and support education access.

²⁵ Visit: Out-of-School Children Initiative web page at: www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/out-of-school-children.aspx.

²⁶ UCW: *Child labour and out-of-school children: evidence from 25 developing countries* (Rome, 2014). Background paper for: UNESCO Institute for Statistics: *Fixing the broken promise of education for all - Findings from the Global Initiative on OUT-of-School Children* (Quebec, 2015).

²⁷ ILO: *World Report on Child Labour: Economic vulnerability, social protection and the fight against child labour* (Geneva, 2013). Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_178184/lang-en/index.htm.

The 2015 World Report on Child Labour will explore linkages between child labour, school to work transition, and youth employment issues using the ILO's school-to-work transition survey (SWTS) a unique survey instrument that generates labour market information on young people. The lack of decent work opportunities for youth is a growing political concern. ILO estimates for 2012 indicated that nearly 40 per cent of the world's estimated 197 million unemployed were between 15 and 24 years of age – about 73 million.²⁸ Work on the particular education and training needs of older children, those aged 14-17, is likely to be increasingly important for national governments. Through its knowledge base and hands on experience at country level, the ILO is well placed to support this work.

Advocacy and campaigning

The strongest lessons from history regarding combating child labour are in the areas of advocacy and social mobilization. In the nineteenth century, social reformers working for the eradication of child labour and universal education were confronted by strong political and economic vested interests and entrenched cultural views and social practices. These were overcome in time because campaigners were able to marshal strong evidence, including from surveys, and mobilize public support.

Today, despite the scale of the child labour problem, national coalitions and campaigns remain weakly developed in most countries. The same holds true at the international level, where the worldwide movement against child labour lacks the force that can engage governments, put child labour at the centre of the development agenda, and hold governments to the commitments they have made. There is still much work to be done to fully embed child labour on the education and development agenda.

Moreover, it has to be recognized that both child labour elimination and EFA have slipped down the overcrowded international development agenda in recent years. Both have a wide public recognition as compelling global problems but that has yet to translate into firm political commitment to take urgent action. In effect, child labour and education often appear as silent emergencies when placed alongside global health concerns.²⁹

However the decision by the Norwegian Committee to award the Nobel Peace prize for 2014 to Kailash Satyarthi and Malala Yousafzai has provided an important boost to highlighting the connected concerns of the right to education and the elimination of child labour. Kailash Satyarthi has for over two decades in his native India, led various forms of protests and demonstrations against child labour and also worked to free countless children held in bonded labour. His work has long been respected

²⁸ ILO: *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013 - A generation at risk*. Geneva, 2014, p. 2. Available at: www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/youth/2013/WCMS_212423/lang--en/index.htm.

²⁹ Brown, G.: *Education for All: beating poverty, unlocking prosperity - A review by Gordon Brown* (London, 2011), p. 31. Available at: campaignforeducation.org/docs/reports/brown/EFA%20Report_lores_FIN.pdf.

internationally for spotlighting the problem of child labour and its connection to the right to education.

Despite her youth, Malala Yousafzai has obtained global attention for the right of girls to education, and has demonstrated that children and young people can play an active role in improving their own situations. Through her own personal heroic struggle she has become a leading advocate for girls' right to education.

The two Nobel prize winners – from India and Pakistan – symbolize the connected nature of the education and child labour challenge and their compelling personal stories offer a significant opportunity to move these issues up the international agenda in the coming years.

It is however premature to conclude that the new Sustainable Development Goal target of 2025 for elimination of child labour and 2030 target for education for all will be viewed by policy makers as intimately connected and contingent. This connection will have to be explained and fought for during the consultative process and in the coming years. However, it is difficult to think of a policy area – or a cause – that merits more urgent action, or is more amenable to effective advocacy and the development of national alliances (Brown, 2012, p. 66).

Sustained advocacy is needed in critical areas of child labour and education to:

- ensure the universal ratification and implementation of ILO child labour Conventions;
- ensure policy coherence through harmonization and enforcement of laws on minimum working age and compulsory education;
- strengthen national data collection and policies, through stronger links between Ministries of Education and Labour;
- tackle discrimination in education particularly against marginalised groups;
- improve the supply and conditions of teachers as part of efforts to improve the quality of education;
- enhance the role of social protection to ensure its maximum impact on child labour;
- raise levels of financing globally, and nationally and ensure adequate financing for basic education.

Ambition is everything. We need to scale-up the level of ambition and aim to place child labour and education on the agenda of existing high-level meetings such as those of the G7-G20 or BRICS, ASEAN, OAU, etc. This will require mobilizing political support through, for example, "Champions" for the child labour and education targets. In Gordon Brown and Julia Gillard (Chair of the Global Partnership for Education) there are now two former Prime Ministers of significant OECD countries closely concerned

with ensuring progress in and tackling barriers to education access.

The ILO has an important advocacy platform in the World Day Against Child Labour marked annually on 12 June with activities in around 60 countries. The World Day theme for 2015 is *No to child labour – Yes to quality education*. This will afford an opportunity to attract the mass media and high-level figures, and reinvigorate the global ratification campaign and the worldwide movement against child labour.

Partnerships will be the key to moving forward. A recent ILO/UNESCO Memorandum of Understanding (July, 2014) called for further cooperation on child labour and education. Discussions have taken place between ILO and UNICEF on ways of extending cooperation on child labour issues and various joint initiatives are now underway. Though the ILO is not a member of the Global Partnership for Education, a mechanism could be arrived at that would allow the ILO to bring to the table, the knowledge on child labour to inform policy and strategies to deliver education to the poorest countries and the most marginalised groups. The ILO also works closely with Education International, the global Federation of education trade unions. These and other partnerships can provide a basis for extending work to the country level.

Engaging social partners

Teachers' organizations are a natural ILO constituency. In 1966, the ILO and UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Status of Teachers.³⁰ This provides the basis for the ILO's work on teacher issues. The Recommendations includes provisions on:

- Professionalism: teaching should be regarded as a profession which requires expert knowledge and specialized skills;
- consultation on policy issues between the authorities, teacher unions, employers, parents, etc. in order to define educational policy;
- teacher training should be carried out by teachers themselves qualified to teach at a level equivalent to higher education;
- right to negotiation salaries and conditions – social dialogue;
- salaries should reflect the importance to society of the teaching function.

The Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) regularly (every two years) evaluates progress in meeting these goals.

Quality education is inextricably linked to the existence of a sufficient body of quality teachers.³¹ Teacher shortages in many developing countries threaten the EFA agenda.

³⁰ Visit www.ilo.org/global/industries-and-sectors/education/WCMS_162256/lang--en/index.htm.

³¹ Education International: *Child labour and Education for All: A resource guide for trade unions* (Brussels, 2013), p. 32.

It is estimated that around 4 million new teachers need to be recruited if UPE is to be achieved.³² Of this total 2.6 million are needed to replace teachers who retire or leave the profession, and 1.4 million new positions will be needed to ensure there are not more than 40 students per teacher. The challenge of recruiting teachers becomes even greater when the needs of lower secondary education and Early Childhood Education (ECD) are taken into account. Many developing countries have resorted to short-cuts as for example through the use of contract teachers, with virtually no training, lacking necessary skills or professional support, and paid at substantially lower rates than regular teachers. This undermines the integrity and cohesion of the teaching force and institutes a pattern of second-best education for poorer children.

It is important to have teachers where they are needed. A study conducted for UNICEF into “Teachers of Marginalized Children”,³³ the first cross-national and most systematic of its kind into unequal teacher distribution, concluded that the most qualified or effective teachers are disproportionately concentrated in the schools and classrooms of wealthier children. Countries with large socioeconomic inequalities also have correspondingly large inequalities in the distribution of teachers. Moreover the disproportionate concentration of male teachers working with marginalized children, such as indigenous and tribal children, in remote and rural areas raises other concerns particularly concerning its potential negative effects on girls’ participation in education.

Teachers’ unions can exert great pressure to tackle inequalities and to obtain more funding to support child labour and education policies, or to amend legislation in favour of child protection. Teachers and their organizations have played an important role in advocacy and campaigning on child labour and education issues in particular through the Global Campaign for Education and the ILO’s World Day against Child Labour, in which Education International (EI) has been prominent.

EI has considerable potential leverage in global advocacy efforts with 30 million members, belonging to 400 affiliated organizations in more than 170 countries. It has developed good practice guides to assist teachers’ unions in their campaigning work on child labour at the union and school level.

Employers’ organizations have also been strong supporters of efforts to tackle child labour and improve education. Employers have a keen interest in seeing the development of effective education and training systems and in many countries they are involved in discussions on both child labour and education policies. Their understanding of labour market needs can be particularly valuable in development of initiatives aimed at helping effective school to work transition.

There is therefore the basis for broad agreement among the social partners on action in these areas and future work on child labour at global, national and local level should seek to fully engage these influential partners.

³² UNESCO Institute for Statistics: *Wanted: Trained teachers to ensure every child’s right to primary education*. Policy Paper 15/Fact Sheet 30 (Quebec, October 2014).

³³ The research study was conducted by Michigan State University and submitted to UNICEF in February 2013.

Summary comments

In the introduction it was pointed out that the global problems of child labour and out of school children will come under renewed scrutiny in 2015 as the international community considers the emerging post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper has argued that these two issues are intimately linked and that policy makers need to address the issues in an integrated way.

For those concerned with child labour and education policy, the key issue in the emerging SDG agenda is that there are now two sequential and related targets. The 2025 target for the elimination of all child labour must be achieved if the 2030 target for all children to complete primary and secondary education is to be achieved.

The damaging impact of child labour on education access and attainment is evident. If policy makers want to ensure that all children complete a course of quality education it is necessary to establish robust systems to ensure school enrolment and monitor attendance. The procedures established for the education system need to be reinforced by monitoring and enforcement of child labour laws in line with ILO Child Labour Conventions, which all member States should ratify.

It is encouraging that the UN Special Envoy on Global Education identified the need to tackle child labour as one of the crucial steps in addressing the major barriers to education access. In a world of many important and sometimes apparently competing development challenges there is a need for “champions” who will espouse the cause of those in child labour and the need for action to get all children into school and learning. The Special Envoy has led the way with his call for global attention to the child labour issue, and for national level action to integrate action on child labour within education policies.

In calling for a strategic focus in the ILO’s contribution to the global efforts on child labour and education post 2015 the paper restates the importance of the ILO adding value to broader efforts by other development partners. The ILO can lead the way on child labour research and knowledge, can be a global leader on advocacy efforts, and can use the ILOs unique contacts with the social partners to promote the case for ratification and effective implementation of the ILO’s child labour standards.

As we look ahead to the development agenda for the next 15 years it is a good time to refocus our efforts on the crucial links between tackling child labour and the promotion of education, two causes so crucial to social development and social justice.

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