



## Fact Sheet on



International  
Labour  
Organization

# Girl child Labour

**Girls**, alongside with boys, are often engaged in heavy work for long hours. Globally, 218 million children were trapped in child labour in 2004. Among those children aged 5-11, boys are 49% and girls 51%; among aged 12-14, boys are 55% and girls 45% (ILO 2006). Nationally, 0.4 million girls and 0.6 million boys among children aged 10-14 were working in 2007 (National Labour Force Survey, BPS). The incidence of boys in child labour is higher and Indonesian boys are involved in many worst forms of child labour such as informal footwear industry and mining sector, plantation, and offshore fishing.

However, due to socio-cultural prejudice and less attention to girls in this issue, the number of working girls is often underestimated by statistical surveys, which do not generally account for unpaid economic activities such as work in household enterprises, or hidden activities as prostitution, child trafficking and domestic work, in which large numbers of girls are involved. Girls are more likely to drop out of school than boys for many reasons. At primary school, out of 10 children who dropped out, six were girls, while at senior secondary school, seven girls for

*Give  
Girls a  
Chance*



every three boys (Ministry of National Education, 2002). These figures on the incidence and the type of child labour as well as enrolment rates and drop-out rates show considerable disparity across provinces.

**Child labour** is a work performed by children which causes physical or psychological damage. It hinders education as well as mental and physical development. In Indonesia, children under 15 years old, set by Law No. 20 of year 1999 on Ratification of ILO Convention No. 138, should not be involved in child labour. ILO Convention No. 182, that has been ratified by Indonesia by Law No. 1 of year 2000 defines the worst forms of child labour as below:



All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and force or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.



The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.



The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs.



Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

**The convention** mandates the urgent actions to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour for children under 18 years old. There are four major works that Indonesian girl child labourers are engaged:

- ♦ Child Domestic Workers;
- ♦ Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
- ♦ Child trafficking
- ♦ Street Children

**Child domestic workers:** It is domestic work undertaken by children often under slavery-like, hazardous or other exploitative conditions. Around 700,000 domestic workers are below the age of 18 in Indonesia. Some figures indicate at least 25% of domestic workers are under age 15. Nearly 20% of child domestic workers work longer than 15 hours a day, while 99% of them do not have even one day of weekly rest. Almost all are grossly underpaid, and some get no salary at all. In the worst cases, girls reported being physically, psychologically, and sexually abused.



I woke up at 4 a.m. I would then clean, warm leftovers, make the [11-yearold] child's lunch, clean the car, and prepare lunch for my employer for work. I had to wash the dishes. I cleaned the bathrooms. I never got a day off. **Dian, reminding her first job at age 15**

I felt uncomfortable when [my employer's husband] would be naked outside his bedroom. So I started getting really scared whenever the employer would leave, and I would be left alone with him. He'd ask me, 'Do you want to see [my penis]?' He would do this every day that we were left alone. I wanted to tell the employer but I was scared we would get in a fight. **Kartika\*\*, 17 years old**

One day, my parents came to the house. But the employer didn't allow my parents to meet me. So my parents stayed outside the house waiting all night. When I threw the garbage out, I saw my mother outside of the house. My mother was near the fence. The employer said "Your parents cannot pick you up until they go to the agent and get his permission." On the fence there's a wall with iron spikes on top, so I went down to the first floor. I had to leave my belongings in the house. I left my clothes, things for prayers, sandals.... There was no other choice. Because I didn't feel comfortable in the house, I was abused, [my employer] was violent, so I had to jump the fence. **Ratu\*\*, 15 years old**

## Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC):

These refer to the use of young people in sexual activities for profit. 40,000-70,000 children are estimated as victims of sexual exploitation and 21,000 prostituted children are estimated in whole Java Island. They are found in the street, in red light (*lokalisasi*), and in "hidden" prostitution places (beauty salons, discotheques, hotels, billiard halls, massage parlors, karaoke lounges & steam baths). A child victim of prostitution is susceptible to various diseases, particularly sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, to drug addiction, and a girl victim is often stigmatized by the community. They are often not paid as promised, abandoned in an isolated area, or forced to have sex with a number of clients (ILO 2004, UNICEF 2004).



### Victims of CSEC

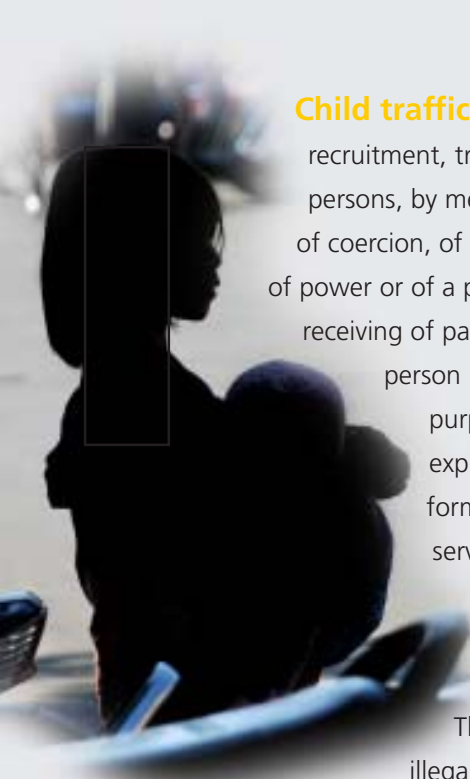
The working hours are very tight. You will be punished for going out during business hours. But we are given one day off each week, as long as it is not Saturday or Sunday. **Bimbim\*\*, 17 years old**

Once I got so upset because I was abandoned and unpaid in a hotel room the morning after. I felt so offended and humiliated being treated that way. **Dudi\*\*, 17 years old**

Once I was not feeling very well because I got my period. When a customer asked me for a date, politely I turned it down. But he got angry and mocked me and called me a whore. I felt embarrassed and felt so cheap because he did it in front of other customers. **Isti\*\*, 17 years old**

Child Trafficking for Prostitution, ILO

\*\* Note: children's names in the boxes are not their real names



**Child trafficking:** Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use by force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving and receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation include the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs (the UN Protocol 2000). An estimated 100,000 women and children trafficked every year in Indonesia.

Their jobs are undocumented, unprotected or illegal. Girls are more likely than boys to be the victims of trafficking and often trafficked into prostitution and sex exploitation. The number of children trafficked for prostitution is around 70,000 for the whole of Indonesia (ILO 2003).

### *Voice from trafficked girl*

I dropped out of school. I used to be a street hawker myself. When I was 10 years old, I met Pak Sadem who persuaded me to work as a (foreign) tourist guide. I started to take the foreigners to go around Bali. But, Pak Sadem took all the money I got. I continued guiding tourists and had to do what they wanted – including sex. According to other friends, Pak Sadem often looks for kids to be sold to the foreigners for sex. When I was 12 years old, I ran away from Pak Sadem. I followed a Japanese to Japan. But in Japan I had to do the same thing, shifted from one Japanese to another.

Finally, I could not stand and went home. I got sick for more than a month. According to the villagers, I looked pale, thin and very sorrowful. I was pregnant once and I had it aborted. Since I was 14 years old I did the same thing as Pak Sadem, looking for kids to be sold to the foreigners for sex. I took the kids from my village for the foreigner. Nowadays, I have been to Australia, Switzerland, and other places with foreigners. I do not care of myself. **Luh Wati\*\***, trafficked girl

Trafficking of Children in Indonesia, ILO

\*\* Note: children's names in the boxes are not their real names

A group of five children are sitting on a paved sidewalk. A large, colorful umbrella with segments of yellow, blue, green, and white is open over them. One girl in a grey t-shirt stands on the left, holding a small object. Three other children are sitting on the ground, and one boy is sitting on a low wall in the background. The scene is outdoors, likely on a street.

**Street children:** They are children who live on the street. They are either abandoned by their family or maintain occasional contacts with them. Girl street children bear extra risk of sexual harassment and unsafe sex that causes unwanted pregnancy. Girls are in a more difficult situation because they are more likely to be ‘harassed’.

Harassment towards girls might range from verbal to physical that might lead to rapes. Female street children are very much at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex exploitation. The ratio of girls to boys in street children is certainly increasing from 1:5 in 1999 to 1:2 in 2008 (ILO 2009).



**Girls' role** has been biased by male-centred curriculum and literature. Girl child labourers have been less measured in statistics, and thereby become invisible while girl child labour has multiplicate impacts by its nature and it aggravates the life of the girl once she is engaged in the worst forms of labour. Only 34% of the registered university students are girl (Ministry of Nat'l Education & of Religious Affairs) although girls often show better achievement (The Reading Literacy Study of IAEEA, 1985–1994). Girls are vulnerable, but dedicated to education. Educated girls are more likely to have better income as adults, marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and to ensure that their own children are educated, helping to avoid future child labour. **Give Girls a Chance** is a desirable and effective way to **End Child Labour** in the long run.

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## Useful sources:

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