



Summary Report on the *World Day Against Child Labour* launch of the report
“*The Twin Challenges of Child Labour and Educational Marginalization in the
Southeast and East Asia region*” and Panel Discussion

12th June, 2015 Landmark Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand

The event began with a video showing of a Thai cover of an English song that was composed exclusively for World Day Against Child Labour by popular Thai rock bands Bodyslam and Slot Machine as well as an interview with members of the bands. The Thai version of “[’til Everyone Can See](https://soundcloud.com/international-labour-organization/m3ovjilkfrgu)” is a free download from <https://soundcloud.com/international-labour-organization/m3ovjilkfrgu>

Introduction

On World Day Against Child Labour, the launch of the report “*The Twin Challenges of **Child Labour and Educational Marginalisation** in the Southeast and East Asia regions*” represented an occasion to discuss the child labour and education challenges in the ASEAN region, with particular emphasis on the issues of marginalization, out-of school children and the school to work transition.

The inter-agency Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) project has prepared an analysis titled “***The Twin Challenges of Child Labour and Educational Marginalisation in the East and South-East Asia regions***” looking at eight countries - Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam and Mongolia. Although the eight countries have collectively shown improvements in terms of child labour and primary school enrollment, child labour continues to be high in several of them and a significant number of primary school-aged children are out of school, often due to the demands of work. Both child labour and education marginalisation can lead to social vulnerability and societal marginalisation, permanently impairing productive potential and influencing lifetime patterns of employment and pay.

The aim of this event was to bring together policy influencers, advocates, and activists in the East and South-East Asia sub-region such as academics and students, specialists and development professionals especially from the UN and INGO family, to enhance cooperation and further the policy advocacy agenda around the twin issues of combating child labour and promoting quality education for all.

Part I: Opening Session

After a welcome note by Ms. Simrin Singh – Senior Child Labour specialist (ILO), opening remarks were delivered by high level representatives of ILO, UNICEF, and UNESCO.



Mr. Maurizio Bussi: Director, ILO Decent Work Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific - Bangkok



Maurizio Bussi began by thanking all those who were present there in various capacities. He further emphasized Kailash Satyarthi's contributions to end child labour including the landmark 'Global march against child labour' and echoed the sentiments from his speech delivered in front of an audience of labour

ministers. Quoting from the speech he said, 'I refuse to accept that we together cannot end child labour within this generation.' The abolishing of slavery is an essential issue that needs to be dealt with. There is also connectivity between child slavery, child labour and forced labour. Maurizio threw light on the normative part of the work that the ILO does with respect to- C-138 and C-182 and their near universal ratification. On the research front, there continue to be strides but even more needs to be done. On the technical cooperation front, the main vehicle in the eradication of child labour is the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) of the ILO in extending support to

the member states. Child labour concerns need to be mainstreamed in various elements of the global development agenda, which the ILO pursues with partners as part of its policy advocacy agenda. He highlighted the new global consensus about the need to ensure social protection floors, better school to work transition measures for youth, and that greater understanding that decent work for adults and youths are important. He noted that child labour hinders school attendance and educational achievement, leading these children to drop out of school before the end of compulsory schooling. As adults, former child labourers find themselves in poorly paid, unskilled and insecure work, and the vicious intergenerational cycle sadly repeats itself. He concluded his remarks by noting that all children have a right to receive a good quality education delivered by skilled and motivated teachers who can prepare young people for the world of work and to live a full life. Decent work for teachers is thus crucial in pursuit of this.

Chemba Raghavan: Education Specialist UNICEF & UNGEI Regional Chair



Highlighting the need to focus on education for girls and the gender analysis, Chemba Raghavan expressed her concern at the little that was being done in this regard. Education with equity has been at the heart of UNICEF's work through the life cycle of children, everywhere and across sectors. She reiterated that they have

been honoured to work with the ILO on education through the UNGEI initiative. Focusing attention on the 6 EFA goals, she stressed that much remains to be done. Along with that there is an importance of gender analysis in the child labour issue. Boys have been dropping out more than girls and often the work that girls do in the arena of household chores is not included in the statistics. There is a need to remember that gender parity does not mean equality. There are various other forms of discrimination that can hamper the well rounded growth of children and gender is an important aspect that needs to be integrated in the equity work. She ended by saying that it was heartening to see so many development partners at the event and going forward it was important to recognize that education and child labour are interrelated issues and need to be tackled together. She ended her remarks with three priority areas- 1.) Calling for free, compulsory and quality education for children at least till they reach an age where they are allowed to work 2.) New efforts to ensure national policies on child labour and education are consistent 3.) effective policies that ensure access to quality education and investment in the teaching profession

Mr. Danny Padilla: Chief of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Unit, UNESCO



On behalf of Dr. Gwang Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO, Mr. Padilla delivered the opening remarks and emphasized the importance of education in eradicating child labour. He spoke about the joint efforts of all the agencies in helping countries in the region in their work towards the achievement of Education for All. Despite significant progress, the Asia

Pacific region seems to be lagging behind on education targets. He drew the attention of the audience to the UNESCO commissioned 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report prepared by an independent team which states that the world has not achieved the six EFA goals it set for itself. He further reiterated the importance of education as a public good, a fundamental human right and a long term investment. For those who are outside the education system, the economic implications are heavy. Child labour is one of the main obstacles in the barriers to achieving EFA. Children without access to quality education have no choice but to enter the labour market. He very clearly articulated that child labour affects educational attainment in terms of outcomes and long term employment prospects. Finally he said that it is important to take cognizance of the gendered dimension of child labour where girls are often relegated to and mainly involved in household chores which are unaccounted for and interfere with their schooling. Ending his remarks with a quote from the Incheon Declaration he said, “Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.”

Part II: Presentation of the Report Session



In presenting the report, ***“The Twin Challenges of Child Labour and Educational Marginalisation in the Southeast and East Asia region”***

Professor Rosati mentioned some key highlights of the analysis in the region. He spoke about the high incidence of disability and its relation to work and

education among 15-17 year olds in the region. Hazardous work and children’s employment was another area of concern as was reflected in the data for the 8 countries in the ASEAN. The bulk of child labour is concentrated in the age group 15-17 years and the conditions in the labour market have a substantial bearing on the demand and supply of child labour. One of the key measures to deal with the issue of child labour in his opinion was the generation of employment opportunities for the youth.

Question and Answer Session



Professor Vittit Muntarbhorn (Professor of Law, Chulalongkorn University): Could you tell us the methodology for covering child labour and children in employment? In policy practice in some countries they don’t want to collect data because they think its illegal data. How do you convince national statistical offices o collect the data? Education needs to be seen as a continuum, which needs to begin early, and you then work your way upwards

through the life cycle of the child till employment and further.

Professor Rosati (UCW): Every child in economic activity is taken into account in this study. The main difference is the legal age at which children are allowed to begin work. In some countries they are allowed to begin work early (at age 12). The second point is essential as even in industrialized countries there is a denial about the existence of child labour on the whole, hence the reluctance to collect data. There has been more difficulty collecting data from high income countries in this regard.

Thetis Mangahas (ILO): I recall that in earlier data there was reference to children living and working away from home. I did not see that in this study. Has it been discontinued and is not available anymore?

Professor Rosati (UCW): A couple of the surveys have data of children not living in their own household. However it is extremely technical as the kinship relations are often unclear hence is the data collection especially with respect to the household head.

Simrin Singh (ILO): This is a pertinent issue especially as migration is such an important issue in this region. Going forward this needs to be kept in mind with respect to data collection.

Film Screening

An award winning short film called ‘Ma Nyien Chan’ produced by a group of Thai students from Rangsit University was screened. Ma Nyien Chan, aged 12, goes to school every day with her brother. She spends time after school peeling shrimp. The mother hopes to get a passport which would allow her to work in Thailand legally and free from the fear of being arrested by the police. The film captures the struggles and challenges that she faces when her brother is taken away by the police and she has to make a choice between quitting school or staying on. The film set the tone for the panel discussion that followed, bringing to light the multi-dimensional challenges that intersect and lead to child labour.

Part III: Panel Discussion Session

This session was moderated by Ms. Simrin Singh, Senior Child Labour Specialist, ILO.



Speakers on the panel included:

- o Sukti Dasgupta – Senior Economist and Head of the ILO’s Regional Economic and Social Analysis Unit (RESA), Bangkok
- o Dan Rono- Regional Child Protection Specialist in UNICEF EAPRO
- o Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch, Asia
- o Abigail Cuales Lanceta, Project Manager of SEAMEO College

Question 1: Why is the theme of this WDACL relevant to the work you do or to your policy advocacy agenda?

Phil Robertson: Speaking on behalf of Human Rights Watch, Phil said that the theme of this World Day Against Child Labor was still relevant as the issue was widely prevalent in the region, given that nothing much has changed for the migrant children whether that was for Lao girls in brothels or Burmese children in factories and farms. Immigration detention was also proving to be a serious issue with children ending up in juvenile detention.

Abigail Lanceta: Abigail stressed the importance of the **‘Reaching the Unreached Project’** which is a joint collaboration between UNICEF, UNESCO and SEAMEO. Children in child labor located in far flung communities have been identified under the banner of the project however there are many more such working poor, migrant children who are yet to be reached.

Dan Rono: Dan stressed the importance of working with the most vulnerable children – the ones not in school, hence with greater chances of being involved in hazardous labour. The key challenge is to increase the access to education for children. Such a multi-dimensional issue requires a holistic and cross-sectional approach.

Sukti Dasgupta: Education and child labor has been at the core of the decent work agenda at the ILO as Sukti emphasized with the focus on doing away with all forms of unacceptable work. There is overwhelming evidence which suggests that spending a childhood in labor has long term consequences for the future and for the economy. Addressing the 15-17 year olds as well as the gender dimensions are key challenges which need to be addressed. Most countries in the region have growth rates above the world average however the political will is lacking to combat these social challenges. Sukti stressed on the space occupied by child labour in the policy space and the larger narrative and the need for it to be tackled.

Question 2: What do you see as challenges and opportunities in pursuing the twin agenda?

Abigail Lanceta: From the perspective of the ASEAN and SEAMEO, Abigail perceived the twin agenda as a challenge, exacerbated by the Incheon Declaration and the indicators highlighted in that. However, AEC presented opportunities for the countries in the region to come together where the bigger countries would have to take the lead.

Sukti: In her opinion the big challenges were to do with growing inequality and the proliferation of low skills in the region. The opportunities were two fold- it is essential to look at new models of development and the shift to high skills based work in the AEC. The key measures will be to generate employment and increase productivity. The second opportunity lies in the demographic transition with an impending ageing population and the third is the trade agreements that are now being signed which have immense labour and political implications.

Dan Rono: For Dan, the globalization of the labour market and industry presents an opportunity with the increased scrutiny of the processes which enable the production of the commodities we use. The proliferation of social media has had an important impact in the kind of attention that is drawn and today there seems to be more space for child labour issues. The challenge is to identify the hidden children with the picture being even worse than has been presented in the report today. The other related and important issue is that of enforcement and the law. Who we hold accountable for the crimes that lead to child labour has implications for the future.

Phil Robertson: The main thrust of the issue according to Phil was the yawning gap between what the governments say they are going to do and what they actually end up doing. In most cases the governments are not getting to the harsher realities of the situation. The challenge is in closing the implementation gap.

Abigail Lanceta: According to her, globalization presented a challenge as well as an opportunity and it is up to us to negotiate the challenges associated with it.

Question 3: What concrete policy recommendations would you suggest should form part of the policy advocacy agenda as we enter the post 2015 era in this region? How can the Future of Work and the Future of Education agendas best align to serve the people of ASEAN+ a future without child labour?

Phil Robertson: There is a need to push for education as a fundamental right along with a framework for migrant workers in the ASEAN. This is essential as there is huge disagreement on who should be protected and who shouldn't. A greater push from donors and governments is needed to move the agenda forward.

Dan Rono: More than just universal free education there is a need to institutionalize 'catch up school' i.e. second chance measures for those who previously dropped out of school and want to join back. The other important recommendation in his opinion is the need for social protection programmes. Families that are vulnerable need to be protected under the law. Issues of social and political importance and those that also have economic implications like child labour need to be brought up bilaterally.

Abigail Lanceta: There is a need to take cognizance of the specific needs of the family and community and their specific contexts, institutionalizing alternative learning strategies, literacy and education along with skill development for parents. Abigail stressed that the paucity of leaders was not an issue; they existed in the system and just had to be found.

Sukti Dasgupta: For Sukti, the need of the hour is the integration of labour market policies with social policies and a wide gamut of policies to tackle the issue. ASEAN has several landmark declarations on many issues but the problem lies in the implementation or rather, the lack of it. There has been very little discussion and analysis on how the AEC will impact the labour markets and this is a loophole in terms of understanding the situation that this region will potentially face in the next few years. Sukti then divided the issue of child labour into the demand side factors (poverty, lack of interest in education, access to education and the school to work transition) and the supply side factors (unscrupulous employers, global supply chain, labour inspection and compliance issues). There is a need for coherence amongst various sectors of the economy, better data collection mechanisms, capacity building of national statistical offices. The kind of data generated influences and informs policy. There is also an urgent need to mainstream child labour models in labour force surveys in the ASEAN.

Question and Answer Session



1. **When it comes to the issue of education in Thailand, do you see any engagement from the Ministry of Education to tackle the issue of education for migrant children? (Programme officer for Thailand and Myanmar- Terres des Hommes)**

Phil Robertson: There is a need to manage budget and funding if these needs to be done with more effective planning for the same. Currently the policy is 'Education for all' but

this is met with resistance from the communities. Teachers and schools are reluctant to include migration in their scope of work. Even parents of other children don't want migrant children in schools. They are considered some sort of a security threat.

Chemba Raghavan: She stressed on the need to support the Thai government's initiative for out of school children. UNICEF has been supporting pilot initiatives in early childhood on quality education of young, migrant children.

2. **There is too much of an emphasis on schools as the most important institution for learning which places a great deal of pressure on parents and children to raise the resources to be able to afford an education. Is it not necessary to make sure that children aren't pushed into hazardous forms of labor and parents too in order to afford the education? (Claude Heyberger: ATD 4TH World Asia)**

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn (from the audience): In the case of Thailand, at least in principle there is a provision for compulsory schooling for everyone irrespective of nationality. The problem arises with respect to funding. Hence there is a need to monitor the implementation of the principle through dis-aggregation of data and more scholarships for children especially migrant children. How much access do the migrant children have to education? One of the ways of tackling the issue is to increase the number of scholarships for students. Health care should cover everyone including those who are undocumented. AEC 2015 is not about the movement of workers essentially, but about the services flow. There needs to be a certain mutual recognition between ASEAN countries to support teachers and students.

3. **In a concluding remark Sukti mentioned unscrupulous employers as a big part of the problem of child labour, can we realistically expect the trade unions to raise their voices against this issue? Are they doing enough on their part to push governments in the right direction? (Priyanjali Mitra : Intern -ILO)**

Phil Robertson: Trade unions generally do support ending child labour. There are however real challenges where children work to send their younger siblings to school. This issue is further, marginalized in the labour federation and in the list of priorities for them. The issue of organizing trade unions in education is a big challenge and in many countries it isn't permitted. But nonetheless it presents an important issue in making sure that teachers do their work to the best of their abilities without facing hindrances of this sort.

Simrin Singh: She stressed the crucial role that teachers have to play and their right to enjoy decent work and that the Incheon Declaration highlights decent work for teachers. Further, she drew attention to the crucial role played by Education International (Global Teachers Union) in highlighting the need for decent work for teachers and their rights,

which was also mentioned in the Declaration. There is a need to come together to strengthen their capacities and abilities in performing their work.

Session IV: Summary of Recommendations from the panel

Summary was presented by Chemba Raghavan – UNGEI Regional Chair and UNICEF Education Specialist

Chemba outlined three essential takeaways from the discussion which could move the agenda and advocacy forward on the issue:

1. Isolated sectorial responses will not be helpful in dealing with the issue. There is a need for a cross-sectorial approach which if not done will have serious economic and rights implications
2. There is a need to re look at the existing knowledge regarding education – where are the gaps with respect to flexible learning, non-formal education, second chance measures at school. This re-calibration will also help in broadening our understanding of child labour.
3. Evidence based interventions and strengthening of data systems will prove to be an important challenge going forward and there is a need to be involved in the discussions. Chemba reiterated the need to put serious thought into the processes governing the formulation and collection of data.

Session V: Closing Remarks by Ms (Thetis) Abrera Mangahas, Deputy Regional Director (ILO)

Ms. Mangahas reiterated the central messages that came out of the panel discussion and the various questions. Eliminating child labour requires a lot of interlink ages and while the larger picture is important, one cannot lose sight of the particular and specifics. There are a number of children who are in difficult situations and require help and those that are difficult to reach, more vulnerable and stateless are the ones who need the most assistance. However it is important to be aspirational as far as the elimination of child labor is concerned and as optimistic as ever.

Appendix 1: Programme of the event



Programme 12 June 2015

- **0830 - 0900** Registration
- **0900 – 0915** Opening Remarks:
 - Mr Maurizio Bussi, Director, ILO DWT-Bangkok
 - Dr Gwang-Jo Kim, Director UNESCO
 - Dr. Chemba Raghavan, Education Specialist UNICEF/UNGEI Regional Chair
- **0915 - 0945** UCW Presentation – Prof. Furio C. Rosati, UCW, University of Tor Vergata, Rome (30 min)
- **0945 - 1000** Coffee/Tea
- **1000 – 1045** Panel of Experts:
 - ILO: Dr Sukti Dasgupta
 - UNICEF: Mr Dan Rono
 - HRW: Mr Phil Robertson
 - SEAMEO: Ms Abigail C. Lanceta
- **1045 - 1130** Q & A with audience/discussion
- **1130 – 1200** (ILO): Summary Policy Recommendations
 - Ms Abrera Mangahas, Deputy Regional Director
- **1200 - 1300** Lunch



**World Day Against Child Labour Commemoration – Launch of UCW
Report
on “The Twin Challenges of Child Labour and Educational Marginalisation in the
East and Southeast Asia regions”**

12th June 2015, The Landmark Hotel, Bangkok

Participant List (Final)

No		Name	Title	Organisation
1	Ms	ABIGAIL C LANCETA	Project Manager	SEAMEO College
2	Ms	ABRERA MANGAHAS	Deputy Regional Director, Policy and Programmes	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
3	Ms	ALISA TANG	Correspondent	Thompson Reuters Foundation
4	Ms	AMPIKA SAIBOUYAI	Project Officer, APPEAL Unit	UNESCO
5	Ms	APHITCHAYA NGUANBANCHONG	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	ILO IPEC Thailand
6	Ms	BARKHA HENRY	Programme Manager	Leonard Cheshire Disability
7	Ms	BEVERLY JONES	Social Affairs Officer	UNESCAP
8	Ms	CARMELA TORRES	Sr. Skills & Employability Specialist	ILO DWT-Bangkok
9	Ms	CHANANTHORN THIUSATHIEN	Consultant	ILO IPEC Thailand
10	Ms	CHEANCHOM THONGJEN	Economic Specialist	U.S. Embassy (Bangkok)
11	Ms	CHELSEA SUAVE	Legal Consultant	ECPAT International
12	Ms	CHEMBA RAGHAVAN	Education Specialist - Gender and ECD	UNICEF EAPRO
13	Ms	CHITRAPON VANASPONG	Consultant	ILO IPEC Thailand
14	Ms	CHO NGE NGE THEIN	M.A. Student	Mahidol University
15	Ms	CLAUDE HEYBERGER	Regional Delegate	ATD Fourth World Regional Team in Asia
16	Mr	DAN RONO	Regional Child Protection specialist - Emergencies	UNICEF EAPRO
17	Mr	DANNY PADILLA	Chief, ESD Unit	UNESCO
18	Ms	DOUANGKAMOL SOMSINSAWAS	Chief Executive Officer	Plan International Inc. (Thailand Programme Office)
19	Ms	ELLEN BOCCUZZI	Assistant Director	Asia Foundation
20	Ms	EUNWOO KIM	Education Officer - Knowledge Management & Communication	UNICEF EAPRO

21	Prof	FURIO ROSATI	Project Manager and Professor	University of Tor Vergata/Understanding Children's Work (UCW)
22	Ms	GIULIA PATANE	Legal Consultant	ECPAT International
23	Ms	GRACE PULIYEL	Associate Social Affairs Officer	UNESCAP
24	Ms	JACQUELINE PAUL	Social Affairs Officer	UNESCAP
25	Mr	JOHN B. TREW	Youth Employment Specialist	Plan International in Asia
26	Ms	JONI SIMPSON	Senior Specialist on Gender, Equality and Non-Discrimination	ILO DWT-Bangkok
27	Ms	KAKKANANG GHETTALAE	Political Officer	EU Delegation to Thailand
28	Ms	KANCHANA BOONCHOM	Researcher	Dhurakij Pundit University
29	Ms	KANOKNIT TANKULRATANA	Migrant Working Group member	Migrant Working Group member
30	Ms	KARABI BARUAH	Gender & Development and HIV Specialist	UNESCO
31	Mr	LARS SONDERGAARD	Program Leader	World Bank
32	Ms	LAURA K. DEVOS	Education Consultant – Gender and Early Childhood	UNICEF-EAPRO
33	Ms	Liu Qing	Correspondent	CRI
34	Ms	LUCY TAN-ATICHAT	International Commissioner	Girl Guides (Girl Scouts) Association of Thailand
35	Ms	MALISA SANTIGUL	Programme Officer (EFA) APPEAL Unit	UNESCO
36	Ms	MAKIKO MATSUMOTO	Employment Specialist	ILO DWT-Bangkok
37	Ms	MARIA GABRIELLA BREGLIA	ILO Rome	ILO Rome
38	Ms	MARJA PAAVILAINEN	CTA of Regional Programme on Forced Labour	ILO DWT-Bangkok
39	Mr	MATTHIEU COGNAC	Youth Employment Specialist	ILO DWT-Bangkok
40	Mr	MAURIZIO BUSSI	Director	ILO DWT-Bangkok
41	Mr	MIN BISTA	Chief, APPEAL Unit	UNESCO
42	Ms	NANG SHAN AUNG	M.A. Student	Mahidol University
43	Dr	PATTAMA PUNTHAWANGKUL	Programme Officer	SEAMEO Secretariat
44	Mr	PHIL ROBERTSON	Deputy Director – Asia Division	Human Rights Watch
45	Mr	PONG-SUL ANH	Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities	ILO, DWT-Bangkok
46	Ms	PORNPIMON SINGHASEM	Researcher	Dhurakij Pundit University
47	Ms	PRIYANJALI MITRA	Intern	ILO DWT-Bangkok
48	Ms	SAN SAN HTET	M.A. Student	Mahidol University
49	Ms	SANGHEE BANG	Master's Candidate	Mahidol University

50	Ms	SARUNTORN KAEWVEANGCHAI	News Anchor/Reporter	Thai PBS
51	Ms	SIMRIN SINGH	Senior Specialist on Child Labour	ILO DWT-Bangkok
52	Ms	SUDTHIDA KEOPHAITHOOL	Child Rights/Child Protection and Gender Advisor	Plan International Inc. (Thailand Programme Office)
53	Ms	SUKTI DASGUPTA	Senior Economist, Head of RESA	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
54	Ms	SUPANIDA NGIWDEE	Researcher	Dhurakij Pundit University
55	Prof	VITIT MUNTABHORN	Professor of Law	Chulalongkorn University
56	Mr	WASIN PUNTHONG	Political Intern	EU Delegation to Thailand
57	Ms	WATCHARABHORN SA- NGUANSIN	Programme Officer Thailand/Myanmar	Terre des Hommes Netherlands in Thailand
58	Mr	WOLFGANG SCHIEFER	Chief, Regional Partnerships, Resource Mobilization and UN Reform	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
59	Mr	ZAU TU	Master's Candidate	Mahidol University