



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Evaluation
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Dutch funded project to combat exploitation of child domestic workers (Cambodian component) - Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries:	<i>Cambodia</i>
Final Evaluation:	<i>April 2004</i>
Evaluation Mode:	<i>Independent</i>
Administrative Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Technical Office:	<i>IPEC</i>
Evaluation Manager:	<i>IPEC/DED</i>
Evaluation Consultant(s):	<i>June Kane</i>
Project Code:	<i>INT/02/66/NET</i>
Donor(s) & Budget:	<i>Netherlands (US\$ 2,000,000)</i>
Keywords:	<i>Child labour, domestic workers</i>

situation in most countries, in Cambodia there were almost as many boys in child domestic labour as girls (41.4 per cent boys; 58.6 per cent girls).

There is every reason to advocate that, by its very nature, child domestic labour should be considered a Worst Form of Child Labour. It is generally carried out behind closed doors and through a 'master/servant' relationship in which the child, whatever her/his age, is entirely subservient. The hidden, subservient nature of child domestic labour consequently carries a high risk of economic exploitation, hazardous conditions, physical and psychological violence, including sexual harassment and abuse, deprivation of freedom and denial of other rights such as the rights to education and healthcare.

Executive Summary from the full report

Child domestic labour is firmly rooted in Cambodian society at all levels. A survey undertaken in 2003 as part of the first phase of the ILO-IPEC Cambodia CDW project put the number of children aged seven to 17 in domestic service in Phnom Penh at 27,950. The report suggests that the numbers are growing. Of the estimated 205,042 households in Phnom Penh, 21,966 – more than one in ten -- are deemed to employ children in domestic service. Almost 20 per cent of these had two or three children in domestic labour in their household. Contrary to the

The first phase of IPEC's TCRAM Child Domestic Workers project began in 2002 and ended in March 2004. A second phase is about to be launched. The project is operational in three subregions: South-East Asia (Cambodia and Indonesia), South Asia (Sri Lanka) and Anglophone Africa (Uganda and Zambia). It aims to improve knowledge of the phenomenon of child domestic labour in these countries, explore policy and programme options and experience through cooperation with governments, authorities, implementing agencies, labour sector actors and communities and, on the basis of this expanded knowledge base, promote sharing of experiences and lessons and development of good practice in this field.

The present evaluation report relates to first-phase activity undertaken in Cambodia from 2002 to 2004. The evaluation, undertaken in April 2004, is based on:

- a comprehensive desk review of project- and programme-related documentation, outputs of the Action Programmes and other relevant materials (full list at Annex A);
- briefings with ILO-IPEC staff in Cambodia and regional office, Bangkok; and
- a field visit to Cambodia (5-11 April 2005).

The report raises concerns about the emphasis placed in Phase I of the project on responding to child domestic labour situations identified as exploitative and/or abusive without also acting firmly against child domestic labour *in all its forms*. Not only does this reinforce the attitude that child domestic labour is acceptable as long as the conditions are 'not too bad', it also leads to both policy and programme decisions and actions that see a relatively small number of children being helped to exit exploitation while a much larger number are provided with some services but are essentially left in a situation of child labour, and a high-risk one at that. In short, instead of leading to the prohibition and eventual elimination of child labour, it introduces the notion that child labour can be allowed to continue so long as something is done to improve the conditions under which it occurs.

The report suggests that there is an urgent need to ensure that all IPEC actions and IPEC-supported actions are based on a realistic but non-compromised balance between the situation and needs of the individual child and the longer-term goal of eliminating child labour, beginning with its worst forms, as stipulated in the international instruments that inform ILO's work, particularly the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182).

This is particularly important given the broad tolerance of child domestic labour in Cambodia. It is challenging but by no means impossible. The report attempts to suggest how currently

proposed programming in Cambodia might be modified to fit more appropriately into an 'eventual elimination' framework, and to propose some alternative programming options that might be considered to move more firmly towards meeting this challenge. These recommendations build upon the Action Programmes completed in Phase 1 of the project. The five Action Programmes and eight mini-programmes were all successfully completed. A small number of highly competent implementing partners not only fulfilled their commitments to the project but did so in a spirit of consultation and cooperation that resulted in important achievements in establishing grassroots protection groups as well as coordinating mechanisms such as a CDW Task Force in Phnom Penh. These should be reinforced in Phase 2 of the project.

The Action Programmes also included a number of awareness raising and social mobilization activities of various kinds. Most successful among these was a national youth conference, organized by an NGO run entirely by volunteer children. This, and efforts by IPEC and implementing partners, was instrumental in keeping the issue of child domestic labour high on the national agenda. The Cambodian Government has, during the lifetime of the project's first phase, taken bold and important steps to recognize child domestic labour as a worst form of child labour, to include it in the National Plan of Action on CDL and to move closer to ratification of Convention No.182, a national Time-Bound Programme against child labour and a ministerial decree (parkas) specifically targeting child domestic labour.

Despite these significant achievements of Phase I activity, there remains some important challenges in Phase 2. Most significant of these is the need to move beyond recognition of child domestic labour as a worst form of child labour to programming for this. This presumes a shift away from the 'improved services' model towards an 'eventual elimination' model that strategizes all actions within a protection/withdrawal framework.