

Child Labor & Educational Disadvantage – Breaking the Link, Building Opportunity

**A Review by
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Foreword

Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education



All of us were children once. And as parents we want our children to grow up in a world that provides them with security, joy, and a chance to develop their potential. The idea that children should be forced into exploitative or dangerous employment or into activities that compromise their safety, their security and their dreams is one that most of us would view with horror.

That is why the evidence set out in this report on child labor is both a shocking indictment of the world we live in and a call to action. Child labor is the new slavery of our age.

The indictment is partially captured in the headline numbers. There are 215 million children aged 5-17 years old involved in child labor. Over half of these children are under the age of 15. Some 91 million are under 12. Bluntly stated, all of them have a right to

expect something better of us. Wherever they live, children have a claim on our care – and the international community has a responsibility to protect their right to a childhood. Yet efforts to combat child labor are failing in the face of inertia, indifference and an indefensible willingness on the part of too many governments, international agencies, and aid donors to turn a blind eye.

Statistics alone can never capture the suffering, the fear and the loss of human potential that comes with child labor. Reading this report called to my mind a poem written in 1843 by Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

**“Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years....
They are weeping in the playtime of the others
In the country of the free...
“How long”, they say, “how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child’s heart?”**

That poem, *The Cry of the Children*, was a visceral reaction to the exploitation of children in the factories, workshops and mines that fuelled the industrial revolution. Browning saw the evidence produced by reports investigating the conditions facing children in the workplace, and she used her art to break through public indifferences, galvanize action, and support the social reformers working for change.

Yet even the hardened social reformers in Britain of the 1840s would have been shocked by the conditions facing children today in the world’s poorest countries. In West Africa, children as young as 12 are working in narrow tunnels down the shifts of artisanal gold mines. In India, children are trafficked and traded as bonded laborers to work in agriculture, manufacture and domestic services. In Bolivia, young children are working long hours with machetes to cut sugar cane on commercial farming estates. Meanwhile, an untold number are trapped in the worst forms of child labor, including child prostitution and forced recruitment into armed groups.

As the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Global Education I was particularly concerned to investigate the impact of child labor on opportunities for education. Working with the Centre for Understanding Child Work in Rome, we looked in some detail at the available evidence. Incomplete and partial as the data may be, the results point in what can only be described as a very distressing direction. Some 15 million children of around primary school age are working rather than attending school. That figure represents fully one-quarter of all out of school children. An obvious conclusion to be drawn is that the international development target of achieving universal primary education by 2015 will not be achieved without a concerted global drive to eradicate child labor.

But this is an issue that goes beyond school attendance. For every primary school age child that is out of school and working there are another ten struggling to combine education with employment. These children are more likely to drop out, to complete fewer years in school, and to achieve lower test scores. The evidence that is available suggests that child laborers may suffer a 17 per cent achievement gap with other children in language and maths. And because children who face restricted opportunities for education will receive lower wages as adults, child labor is one of the most powerful motors transmitting poverty across generations.

In this report we set out an ambitious but achievable agenda for change. The starting point is an international summit not to adopt yet more resolutions, but to agree a global road map for the elimination of child labor by 2020. That road map will have to be translated into credible national action plans setting out the policies, financial requirements and regulatory measures needed deliver results, and it will have to be backed by additional multilateral financing. Many of the institutional mechanisms required for delivery are already in place. The Global Task Force on Child Labor and Education already brings together the major UN agencies, the World Bank and civil society groups with high-level political leadership it could deliver results.

Compulsory education has the potential to provide a powerful impetus towards the eradication of child labor – just as it did in 19th century Britain. There is disturbing evidence, underlined in UNESCO's most recent Education for All Global Monitoring Report, that progress towards universal primary education has slowed. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, out of school numbers are rising. It is surely not coincidental that, despite a decade of higher growth, the region has also seen an increase in the number of child laborers. Elsewhere, I have called on governments to develop national action plans setting out strategies for getting all children into school by 2015 – and for donors, UN agencies, the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education to provide support. These plans could identify sectors, regions and social groups characterized by high levels of child labor, along with the measures needed to support a transition from work to school.

Even without understating the complexity of the forces trapping children in employment and deny them education, we know how to spring the trap. Ensuring that education is free and accessible is a starting point. More has to be done to raise standards because children who drop out of school as a result of low learning achievement are more vulnerable to child labor. Beyond the education system itself, social protection programs, cash transfers and stipends for vulnerable students can all help poor households cope with the shocks – the droughts, sickness episodes, crop failures and unemployment – that force so many parents to take their children out of school and draw on their labor. As Brazil has demonstrated through its drive to eradicate child labor, making education a key element in integrated national strategies delivers results.

None of this is to suggest that education is a stand-alone strategy. Governments need to demonstrate that they are serious about eradicating child labor by identifying and penalizing those responsible. International organizations and donors need to start treating child labor as an urgent priority. Perhaps most important of all, we need to do what successive generations of anti-child labor activists did so successfully in Europe and North America in the 19th and 20th centuries - namely, build the coalitions, partnerships and alliances that can mobilize public opinion as a force for change.

This paper would not have been possible without the generous support, advice and guidance of a number of people and organizations. Research for this report was led by Kevin Watkins of the Brookings Institution, with support from David Taylor. I would also like to thank the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School, Gabirele Bregle, Lorenzo Guarcello and Furio Rosati at Understanding Child Work, Sudhanshu Joshi, Patrick Quinn at the International Labor Organisation and Katie Smith at the Brookings Institution. Thanks too go to Alex Canfor-Dumas, Charlie King and everyone at The Office of Gordon and Sarah Brown and PiggyBankKids for their ongoing support for Education for All.

Over the years I have had the fortune to work with many inspirational figures working to protect the rights of children. None of them is more inspirational than Kailash Satyarthi. His organization, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), has freed over 80,000 child laborers in India, providing them with rehabilitation and education. The lives of these children have been transformed. Kailash also leads the world's largest ever global campaign against child labor – the Global March Against Child Labor – helping to push the issue onto the international development agenda. I would like to dedicate this report to him and to the children whose lives he is helping to rebuild.



Gordon Brown
UN Special Envoy for Global Education

Child labor and educational disadvantage – breaking the link, building opportunity

Executive Summary

During the nineteenth century successive generations of social reformers mobilized to combat child labor – a practice that they cast as the moral equivalent of slavery. Their campaigns brought together political leaders, philanthropists, social movements and literary figures motivated by a simple but compelling goal: getting vulnerable children out of exploitative employment and into education. In large measure, they succeeded in consigning child labor to the history books of their nations. Yet across the world poorest countries millions of children continue to see their hopes, ambitions and talents blighted by child labor. Their human rights to dignity, education and a childhood free of exploitation are being systematically violated on a daily basis. As we approach the 2015 deadline for the international development goals, it is time for governments around the world to rekindle the spirit and the ambition of the great campaigns against child labor in the nineteenth century, and to consign the modern slavery of child labor to history.

Compulsory education has a vital role to play in eradicating child labor. Getting children out of work and into school could provide an impetus for poverty reduction and the development of skills needed to boost growth, generate jobs and create more inclusive societies. However, the linkages between child labor and educational disadvantage are two-way. Poverty forces many households to withdraw children from school and send them to work. But many children are working at least in part because education is unaffordable, inaccessible, or seen as irrelevant. Put differently, failures in education policy can increase the number of children drawn into labor markets. It follows that strategies for the eradication of child labor have to tackle the underlying source of the problem in an integrated fashion, combining more stringent enforcement of rules and incentives to combat poverty with improved education provision.

This report, the fourth in a series identifying strategies for accelerated progress towards the 2015 international development goals, maps the scale of the child labor problem, explores its impact on education, and sets an agenda for reform. At the heart of that agenda are five priorities:

- Information on the scale, extent and pattern of child labor across countries.
- Enforcement of international human rights laws and national legislation outlawing child labor
- Incentives and integrated poverty reduction measures to empower poor households to choose education over employment
- Accelerated national action plans in education, with governments identifying the policies, financing requirements, and priority areas for facilitating the transition from work to school
- International action through a sharper focus on child labor in development assistance, increased aid for education, and early funding for credible national action plans

While child labor is a problem deeply embedded in underlying structures of poverty, powerlessness and educational disadvantage, it is a malaise amenable to effective antidotes. There is a great deal of evidence available on policies that work and deliver early results. However, change will not be achieved by compelling evidence and policy analysis alone. Political leadership backed by campaigns that mobilize public opinion, hold governments to account and enable parents and children to chart a different future is a critical element in any strategy – and that leadership has been conspicuous by its absence, both nationally and internationally.

The scale of crisis

The sheer scale of child labor is not widely recognized. Worldwide some 215 million children are involved in child labor. The incidence of child labor is highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where one-quarter of 5-17 year old children are affected. Around half of child laborers – 115 million children in total - are engaged in hazardous employment. Many of these children are working in conditions that would have shocked social reformers in nineteenth century Europe. Deprived of a nurturing and protective environment, they are risking their health, losing their only opportunity for an education, and suffering emotional stress and trauma, in order to generate small amounts of income or to provide labor for their households.

Very young children figure prominently in the child labor work force. There are 152 million child laborers aged less than 15 years old – one-third of them involved in hazardous labor; and 91 million aged less than 12. Once again, sub-Saharan Africa stands out as a cause of special concern. Around 13 per cent of the region's primary school age population are involved in hazardous work.

Current trends are a source of great concern. Child labor is falling, but overall numbers are coming down far more slowly than might have been anticipated in the light of the stronger economic growth performance of poor countries. On a business-as-usual pathway we predict that there will be 170-190 million child laborers in 2020. The data from sub-Saharan Africa is particularly worrying. With one quarter of the region's children already involved in child labor, labor market participation by children has been rising. Our trend analysis suggests the number of child laborers in sub-Saharan Africa could rise by around 15 million over the next decade, reaching reach 65 million by 2020.

Child labor takes many forms. Agriculture is by far the largest sector employing children, with unpaid family farm work dominating. Some 60 million children are involved. Young girls who should be in school are collecting water and firewood, or caring for siblings. In West Africa, an estimated 2 million children are involved in cultivating cocoa, while some 400,000 children are working on India's cotton seed farms.

Mining and quarrying is another magnet for child labor. In Mali, children as young as six are involved in digging shafts for artisanal gold mining, working in tunnels, hauling rock, and using toxic chemicals to separate gold and ore. From the Philippines, across sub-Saharan Africa to Bolivia and Peru, as many as 2 million children worldwide are working in small scale mines. Another 14 million child laborers are involved in manufacturing, many of them working in small sweatshops, home industries and brick kilns. On one estimate, around half of the workforce in Afghanistan's brick kilns is aged less than 14.

Domestic service is one of the least visible and most hazardous forms of child labor. The International Labor Organisation (ILO) estimates that nearly 30 per cent of the 50-100 million people employed as domestic workers worldwide are children. In countries as diverse as Indonesia, Morocco, India and Nigeria, it is not uncommon for young girls to be working more than twelve hours a day for less than the minimum wage. Many of these girls are facing acute risks. One survey in Bangladesh found that almost 70 per cent of girls involved in domestic service experienced physical abuse and systematic beatings.

While household poverty is the primary driver of child labor other forces are also at play. The ILO estimates that around 5.7 million children are forced into employment through bonded labor. On a conservative estimate, some 1.2 million children are trafficked each year for forced labor. All too often, children drawn into the world of work are drawn also into a world dominated by criminal networks. Children in conflict-affected countries face distinctive problems. Many are forced into child labor by poverty and the absence of educational opportunities. Others are forcibly recruited into armed militia or workforces used to exploit natural resources. Credible estimates put the number of child soldiers worldwide at between 250-300,000.

Impacts on education

Education is part of the cycle of deprivation facing child laborers. Excessive involvement in the world of work traps millions of children into a cycle of poverty, vulnerability and diminished opportunity.

Research carried out by the Rome-based Centre for Understanding Child Work (UCW) has highlighted the damaging interaction between child labor and education. While the data is patchy, UCW estimates that around one-quarter of the world's out-of-school primary age population – 15 million in total – is involved in child labor. In sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the largest out-of-school population, 10 million children are working. It should be noted that these estimates err on the side of understatement because they do not include household chores.

Establishing the precise relationship between education and child employment is difficult. Association cannot be treated as causation: children may well be working in many countries because they are excluded from educational opportunities. What is clear is that child labor exacerbates the risk of being out of school. In India, non-attendance rates for child laborers are twice the level for children not involved in child labor. For countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, child laborers are more than four times less likely to be in school. In Zambia, where an estimated 1.3 million children aged 5-14 are involved in child labor, children working by the age of 8 can expect to spend one year less in school; and at the age of 15 there is a 17 percentage point gap in school attendance.

The time-intensity of employment has a critical bearing on education prospects. Through a series of detailed national surveys, the UCW has documented an inverse relationship between hours worked and school attendance. While the first 20 hours of weekly employment has a limited impact on school attendance, there is a marked risk-escalation beyond this point. Children working 38 hours are 40 per cent more likely to be out of school than those working an extra 0-5 hours.

Poverty, child labor and educational deprivation produce a self-reinforcing cycle of disadvantage. It is not just that children from wealthier homes with better-educated parents are less likely to be working as child laborers, but that even when they are working they are less likely to be out of school. In Nigeria, a child-laborer in a home where the mother has no schooling is ten times more likely to be out-of-school than a child laborer in a home where the mother has a secondary education, pointing to differences in hours worked. In India, child laborers in the poorest 20 per cent of households are four times more likely to be out-of-school than those in the richest 20 per cent, rising to fifteen times more likely in Ghana.

Access to school is one element in a wider pattern of disadvantage. There is also evidence that child labor has adverse effects on learning outcomes for children in school. Research in Pakistan and Nicaragua has found that an additional hour per day worked by children attending school has a non-trivial influence on grade repetition and learning outcomes. Evidence from eleven countries in Latin America points to a test score disadvantage for child laborers of around 16 per cent in language skills in third and fourth grades. Similar losses were reported for maths.

What are the transmission mechanisms from child labor to lower attendance and poorer learning outcomes? The answer to that question varies across countries. For young girls, sibling care represents a major barrier to education. In most cultures across South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, girls traditionally provide a greater share of sibling care than boys. When the time demands of that care collide with the time demands of education, all too often the latter loses out. There is also evidence that the 15 million predominantly female children involved in domestic service have particularly low school attendance rates. In Bangladesh, just 11 per cent of domestic laborers reported attending school at the time of a 2006 survey.

The long hours worked by children in hazardous labor activities are another barrier to education. Some 40 per cent of children working in Cote d'Ivoire's cocoa sector were not attending school in 2010. There are no reliable estimates for the number of children engaged in artisanal mining who are out of school. But one survey covering children working in Mali's artisanal gold mines puts the figure at 50 per cent.

Some of the most damaging effects of child labor are not captured by the data that is available. Millions of children are forced into more intensive labor as a result of external shocks – such as droughts, floods, rising food prices, or sickness episodes – as households seek to counteract losses of income and assets. In some cases, child labor patterns disrupt education on a systemic basis. For example, in northern Kenya primary school age and adolescent boys are required to walk long distances with herds during the dry season.

The consequences of child labor for the life-chances of those affected are also difficult to measure. No price can be placed on the cost of a lost childhood, or on the psychological and emotional damage suffered by young children trapped in hazardous employment and the worst forms of child labor. What can be measured is the narrower impact on future income levels. Research evidence from Latin America suggests that young children entering the labor force before the age of 12 can anticipate earning some 20 per cent less as adults than those entering after that age. While considerable caution has to be exercised in extrapolating from one regional study, there is compelling evidence that the curtailed educational opportunities that come with child labor play a significant role in locking children into a life-time of low-pay and vulnerability, transmitting poverty across generations in the process.

Tackling the child labor scourge

There is no silver-bullet solution to the child labor problem. Every country faces different challenges – and within each country there are many faces of child labor. The circumstances faced by children carrying out unpaid chores on family farms are very different to those faced by working in hazardous manufacturing industries, bonded laborers, and girls in domestic service. Policy responses have to be tailored to these circumstances.

The starting point for progress towards the eradication of child labor is political leadership. Far too many governments sign-up to the letter of international conventions and human rights provisions on child labor, only to neglect the practical measures needed to translate principle into practice. The international community has allowed child labor to drift off the international development agenda. With some notable exceptions, civil society organizations have also failed to make child labor a focal point for popular mobilization and campaigning activity.

International human rights provisions provide a starting point for a concerted drive to eradicate child labor. While there are some gaps, most governments have signed ILO conventions and other treaties proscribing forms of child labor that pose a threat to children or interfere with schooling. The principles underpinning these treaties have been adopted on a voluntary basis by multinational companies. Yet coverage remains partial, and enforcement and compliance is weak.

Part of the problem is legislative. The ILO major conventions on child labor are now among the most widely ratified. Even so, one-fifth of the world's population lives in countries that have not ratified Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, and one-third in countries that have not ratified the Minimum Age Convention 138.

Ratification is not the only problem. Many countries create a child labor loophole by establishing a compulsory education age that is inconsistent with the minimum employment age. The upshot is that it is both illegal for children to be out of school and legal for them to work. Similarly, many countries have failed to stipulate 'hazardous industries', or allow children to carry out work in these industries. Cutting across all of these concerns is the poor coordination evident in many countries between ministries of labor, education, social welfare and child protection, coupled with

derisory efforts at enforcement. Successful prosecutions against employers are rare – there have been just 4,000 in India over the past twenty-five years – and fines are typically so small as to have a limited disincentive effect.

One country that has developed a more integrated structure for combating child labor is Brazil. The National Council for the Elimination of Child Labor has provided a strong institutional focal point for the implementation of a national strategy that has simultaneously strengthened legal codes, enhanced monitoring and enforcement capacity, enforced punitive measures against companies responsible for employing children, and provided cash transfers to poor households conditional on children attending school. The strength of Brazil's approach is that it combines regulation, enforcement and anti-poverty measures in an integrated framework. To its credit, India has now adopted a more stringent and better coordinated set of anti-child labor measures. Yet questions remain over the level of political commitment to enforce the new code – and over the degree to which new laws will be supported by measures aimed at extending education opportunities to disadvantaged groups.

Education could be a far more powerful force in combating child labor. Among the measures required:

- **A global road-map for the eradication of child labor by 2020.** The world does not need another summit to adopt yet more high-sounding principles. But an anti-child labor summit that brings governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations together around practical strategies and financing commitments could provide a powerful impetus to change. The critical ingredients required for success are political leadership, multilateral funding and a strong link to national strategies and capacity-building.
- **National plans for accelerated progress towards the 2015 goals in education.** Child labor is one of the greatest barriers holding back progress towards the international development goal of universal primary education. Removing that barrier would unlock education opportunities not just for the 15 million children now out-of-school and working, but for the countless millions waging a losing struggle to combine employment and education. As part of a wider strategy to achieve the 2015 goal of universal basic education, every developing country should be urged to draw up plans for reaching children who have been left behind. Child laborers, especially those involved in hazardous employment and the worst forms of child labor, should figure prominently in these plans, with a clear focus on the policies, the regulatory framework, and the financing requirements for combating child labor in different sectors. The plans should also include expanded provision of non-formal and second chance opportunities for adolescent and teenage children who have missed out on their education. Currently, education ministries play a peripheral role in guiding policy formulation and implementation, undermining the effectiveness of wider national strategies.
- **International action in support of national plans.** While the impetus for action must come from nationally-owned education strategies, international cooperation has a vital role to play to strengthening the role of education as a force for eradicating child labor. The Global Partnership for Education (the major multilateral partnership for promoting education for all), UN agencies and the World Bank could all support the development of national strategies, with UCW providing technical expertise. Both the GPE and the wider donor community could incentivise action by signalling that credible plans will attract increased development assistance – an option that would be enhanced by donors providing another \$12-13 billion annually in aid for basic education by 2015.

- **Removing education barriers.** Many children are forced out of school and into labor markets by failures in education provision. When the direct and indirect costs of schooling limit demand for education, there is a danger that children will be drawn into labor markets. When classrooms are too far from homes, distance from school can make parents less willing to send their children – especially girls – to school. And when the quality of education is so poor that parents can see little value in what their children learn, the risks of children being transferred from school to work increase.
- **Providing cash transfers and stipends.** Parents do not send their children into paid employment out of a selfish preference for greater leisure on their part. In the vast majority of cases, children are driven into work by poverty, vulnerability and the inability of poor households to manage external shocks. Social protection programmes can strongly mitigate the poverty effects that drive children out of school and into labor markets. In Brazil, the Bolsa Familia programme, which provides cash transfers to some 820,000 children aged 7-14, is estimated to have increased school attendance by 4 per cent nationally, but 9 per cent and 12 per cent respectively in rural regions and the north-east (the poorest part of the country). There is now a growing body of evidence that both conditional and unconditional cash transfers in the range 0.5 per cent to 2 per cent of GDP can play a role in supporting a transition from employment to education. The same is true of stipend programs targeting vulnerable groups, as witnessed by the success of initiatives in Bangladesh and Cambodia.
- **Early childhood provision.** Ensuring that children have access to adequate nutrition, a supportive home environment, and a chance to develop their cognitive skills is important in its own right, and a vital investment for education. Early childhood care and development facilities can also play a pivotal role in combating child labor, reducing the sibling care burden on girls in particular. It follows that early childhood provision should be an integral part of any strategy for facilitating the transition from employment to education.
- **Action by multinational companies.** While the underlying drivers of child labor are predominantly local, some of the actors implicated in the activity are global. The multinational companies that dominate world trade in cocoa link farms that employ child laborers in West Africa to consumers in Europe and North America. Under a voluntary arrangement, US cocoa and chocolate companies committed to provide expanded educational opportunities across all of the cocoa growing regions of Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana by the end of 2010 - in the event, they reached just 4 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. New legislation in the United States under the Dodd-Frank Act could strengthen reporting on the child labor in corporate supply chains, especially in mining activity in conflict-affected states. Ultimately, however, governments may need to step in and require companies to play a more constructive role in supporting the letter and spirit of ILO conventions.

These are some of the specific measures that are required. Yet it has to be acknowledged that the child labor crisis will not be resolved by measuring the scale of the problem, identifying good policies, and signing declarations of intent. In the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, social reformers in Europe and the United States succeeded in combating child labor by mobilising a wave of public concern, and by building political coalitions for change. These vital ingredients are missing today.

There are signs of hope. Across the developing world, civil society organizations are doing extraordinary work to enhance the rights of children. In India, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save the Childhood Movement) has freed thousands of children from bonded labor and campaigned to secure national legislation that will materially address past failures to act on national legislation. The Global March Against Child Labor, an international movement of NGOs, has done much to raise the profile of child labor as a concern. Yet the fact remains that child labor has gradually slipped down the international development agenda as a campaigning issue.

The same is true of many international agencies. The ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor has built up an impressive portfolio of project experience identifying best practice, but the projects concerned are of insufficient scale to facilitate a national breakthrough and funding is inadequate. UNICEF continues to provide international leadership through its projects. Yet here too scale and resources are insufficient. That is why we emphasize the need for a concerted global plan of action bringing together national governments, UN agencies, the business community and NGOs.

Governments and international agencies should urgently seek to puncture the political vacuum surrounding child labor. The world does not need more high-level summits to reaffirm past commitments. But a joint summit of the G8 and the G20, informed by the best practices of countries like Brazil, could play a role in pushing child labor up the international agenda and mobilising resources. Similarly, the Education for All agencies and the ILO could develop an action-oriented strategy geared towards strengthening the role of education as a force for combating child labor.

Introduction

“These sad evils will require the vigorous and immediate [action] of the legislature. That [action] is demanded by public reason, by public virtue, by the public honour, and (...) by the public sympathy: for never...has there existed so universal a feeling on any one subject in this country, as that which now pervades the length and breadth of the land in abhorrence and disgust of this monstrous oppression.”

Earl of Shaftesbury, June 1842, United Kingdom Parliament ¹

These words are from a speech made over 170 years ago. They introduced into the United Kingdom's Parliament legislation limiting the employment of children in coalmines – one of the first steps towards the abolition of child labor in the country. The language captures the sense of outrage that motivated reformers who saw the degradation, exploitation, and brutal treatment of young children as the moral equivalent of slavery, to which it was frequently compared. This was one early episode in the long struggle against child labor in the industrialized world – a struggle that united successive generations of reformers committed to challenging the vested interests, economic arguments, and political indifference that sustained child labor.

Largely consigned to the history books of the rich world, the ‘monstrous oppression’ of children forced into employment continues unabated across the world's poorest countries. In the midst of a global economy that is generating unparalleled prosperity, millions of children are working to survive, often in conditions that would shock social reformers from nineteenth-century Europe and the United States. Children who should be in school nourishing their minds, building their dreams, and developing the skills that they, and their countries, need to create the jobs of the future, are instead working in factories and fields, laboring in mines, eking out an existence on rubbish tips, and – in some countries – facing the risk of death and injury in armed conflict.

Child labor remains the moral equivalent of slavery in the twenty-first century. It is an affront to the values, laws and principles that bind together the community of nations. It is a violation of the letter and the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and countless other treaties, conventions, and international legal instruments. The lives of the children affected stand as an indictment of their governments and the entire international community. Modern advocates for child labor reform maintain that the eradication of child labor is possible within the lifetime of the current generation (ILO 2010). Yet progress towards that goal remains limited. While governments around the world have readily signed statements of bold intent, few have acted decisively to put in place the practical policies needed to eliminate the exploitation of children forced into employment.

Education has a critical role to play in changing this picture. Over the long decades that it took to eradicate child labor in the rich world, social reform movements mobilized behind a simple but compelling demand. They wanted children out of work and into school. The demand for free and compulsory education funded through public sources emerged as a corollary of the demand for more stringent factory legislation. Many factors contributed to the ultimate eradication of child labor, including technological change, rising incomes and – critically – political campaigns aimed at changing attitudes. There were many differences between countries in the pathway to reform. Yet in each case compulsory education made a difference. At the start of the twenty-first century there are compelling grounds for learning from this historical experience and putting education at the centre of national and international strategies for eradicating child labor.

Education is not a stand-alone solution for child labor. Few parents remove their children from school on a voluntary basis. As Kaushik Basu and Pham Van argued in their seminal study on the economics of child labor, household decisions to send their children into employment are driven by poverty rather than a parental concern to shift work responsibilities onto children (Basu and Van 1998). Many children are in fact working to pay for the education of their siblings –

another household poverty effect. It follows that reducing poverty has to be at the heart of any strategy for eradicating child labor. But free, full-time, compulsory education that provides real opportunities for learning has the potential can also act as a powerful catalyst for change. Tapping into that potential requires that education is accessible, affordable and perceived by parents as relevant and valuable for their children, regardless of their gender. What is clear is that attempting to eliminate child labor without universal basic education and expanded opportunities for secondary schooling is likely to fail.

There are two critical ingredients for change. The first is to expand the real choices available to parents. No parent wants to see their children exploited, let alone endangered, through child labor. The problem is rooted in the deprivation that limits what Amartya Sen describes as 'capabilities', or the range of choices that are open to people. Many parents withdraw their children from school and allow them to work because poverty leaves them without the freedom to choose an alternative. However, poverty also intersects with social norms and attitudes that diminish the perceived value of education, especially for young girls. To be effective, the eradication of child labor has to come from public policies that empower parents and children to choose an education over employment and address the underlying causes of social disparities in education.

The second ingredient is politics. Child labor was eradicated in Europe and North America not just by force of argument, compelling as the evidence presented may have been. The arguments won out because they were backed by political coalitions and campaigns dedicated to change. Child labor was a cause that brought together political leaders, industrialists, trades unions, churches, social movements, literary figures and the wider public. Successive waves of reform were driven by campaigns that tapped into moral concerns, communicated the scale of the problem, and offered practical solutions.

The challenge today is to forge a global coalition for the eradication of child labor by 2020. If it is to succeed, that coalition will need to bring together national and international alliances spanning the worlds of politics, business and trades unionism. It will have to draw on the energy and communication skills of development campaigners and wider social movements. Combating what the International Labor Organisation (ILO) describes as a 'child labor fatigue syndrome' is every bit as important as identifying the policies needed to achieve change.

This paper is divided into five sections. The first reviews the evidence on the scale and profile of child labor, including international trends. Section two looks beyond the data to briefly identify some of the activities and sectors at the heart of the child labor problem. In section three we explore the interaction between child labor and education drawing on the work of the Centre for Understanding Child Work (UCW). Section four looks at the current framework for eradicating child labor. Focusing on the national policy environment, it highlights the potential for education policy to play a far greater role in drawing children out of child labor and into school, provided that strategies are integrated into wider poverty reduction efforts. Section 5 turns to the international partnerships needed to support and facilitate effective national action.

1 The child labor balance sheet

Child labor is notoriously difficult to document and measure. Many of the oppressive and degrading forms are under-reported because the activities are illegal, because the victims lack a voice and because political leaders and the international community have failed to make the eradication of child labor a priority.

Thanks to the efforts of the ILO and the inter-agency partnership Understanding Children's Work (UCW), data availability has improved dramatically over the past decadeⁱ. Hundreds of surveys have been conducted, many of them national in scope. While many gaps remain, these surveys are creating a clearer, if still fragmented, picture of the number of children involved in different types of child labor – and of global and regional trends. In this section we look at the changing global profile of child labor and child laborers.

The good news is that the overall number of children in child labor is coming down, especially for younger children and for the most harmful areas of work. Most regions of the world have registered progress. But the decline in child laborers is happening unevenly and at too slow a pace. The world is not on track to reach the ILO target of eliminating the worst forms of child labor by 2016. In fact, the number of 15-17 year-olds in hazardous work is rising. There are also grounds for concern that the number of child laborers in Africa may be rising.

The record of the past decade illustrates the resilience of child labor in the face of rising prosperity. Economic growth has increased markedly across the world's poorest regions. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen pre-capita income growth averaging over 2 per cent a year and the first decline in the incidence of poverty in a generation. Parts of South Asia – notably India – have sustained high growth for over two decades. Yet there is little evidence of stronger economic growth driving a step-change in the incidence of child labor. In the case of sub-Saharan Africa, economic activity rates among children are increasing. It follows that eradicating child labor will require more than income growth. Successful interventions will have to address the underlying social and economic disparities, attitudes and beliefs that sustain child labor – and to raise the perceived value of education (Gunnarsson, Orazem and Sedlacek 2005).

The global reporting system

Over the years the international community has developed a framework of standards used to monitor and report on child labor. It should be noted that child labor is a narrower concept than child employment. Two ILO conventions provide the framework for international reporting. The first, Convention 138, sets a minimum age for employment. The second, Convention 182, identifies four 'worst forms' of child laborⁱⁱⁱ. These include (i) practices similar to slavery, debt bondage and the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict (ii) prostitution and pornography (iii) illicit activities and (iv) work that is likely to harm safety, health or morals (ILO 2010). Hazardous labor is a sub-category of the worst forms of child labor^{iv}. It encompasses activities such as mining, construction, working with machinery and garbage collection. While the 'likely to harm' provision of Convention 182 is not defined (a major weakness), the non-binding guidelines that accompany the Convention includes a list of activities – work that exposes children to physical or sexual abuse, work with dangerous machinery, work in an unhealthy environment and long hours in difficult conditions – aimed at specifying areas of hazardous employment (Buck 2011; UCW 2010).

The most recent ILO estimates draw on household survey from sixty countries for the period 2004 to 2008, with estimation techniques used to fill gaps (Diallo et al 2010; ILO 2011a; ILO 2011b). While monitoring and reporting systems have improved over time, there are ongoing concerns over the comparability and coverage of the data. Given the illegality of child labor and especially of hazardous work, parents, employers and children themselves may be loath to report associated activities. The same holds true even more forcefully for some of the worst and

most exploitative forms of child labor, including forced conscription into armed groups, sexual exploitation, and bonded labor.

Under-reporting may also skew the data on gender. International reporting systems indicate that boys tend to outnumber girls in employment activities. However, that position is reversed for household chores. In Burkina Faso, almost 80 per cent of 5-14 year old girls work on household chores – almost twice the share for boys (UCW 2010). These gender patterns have important implications. Excluding or under-reporting household chores will understate girls' involvement in employment. Yet few countries include household chores in national reporting systems for child labor. While some international agencies publish statistics on the incidence of children involved in household chores above a 28 hour weekly threshold, the data is partial and the threshold itself of questionable relevance. Looking beyond household chores, many of the economic activities undertaken by girls – notably cooking and collecting firewood and water – are widely unreported, whereas agricultural activities undertaken by their siblings are recognized and reported as employment (UCW 2012; Orazem, Tzannatos and Sedlacek 2009).

A global snapshot

Notwithstanding the data constraints, the ILO's estimates provide a snapshot of global trends for the period 2004 to 2008. While the trend data for child labor is not available by region, some degree of extrapolation is possible. In this section we provide a summary overview of the data and develop a range of scenarios for the future.

Trend data has elements of good news and a significant dose of bad news. The positive interpretation of development between 2004 and 2008 is that both child labor and hazardous labor is in decline (Table 1). In 2008 there were an estimated 215 million 5-17 year-olds in child labor - a 3 per cent decline from the 2004 level. More than half - 115 million in total or 7 per cent of the age group - were involved in hazardous work. Levels of participation in hazardous work rise with age. While 7 per cent of 12-14 year-olds are affected the incidence level rises to 17 per cent for the 15-17 age group. Although the number of children involved in hazardous employment fell between 2004 and 2008, the aggregate picture masks two different currents. Children aged 5-14 accounted for the entire reduction, with hazardous labor increasing among 15-17 year olds.

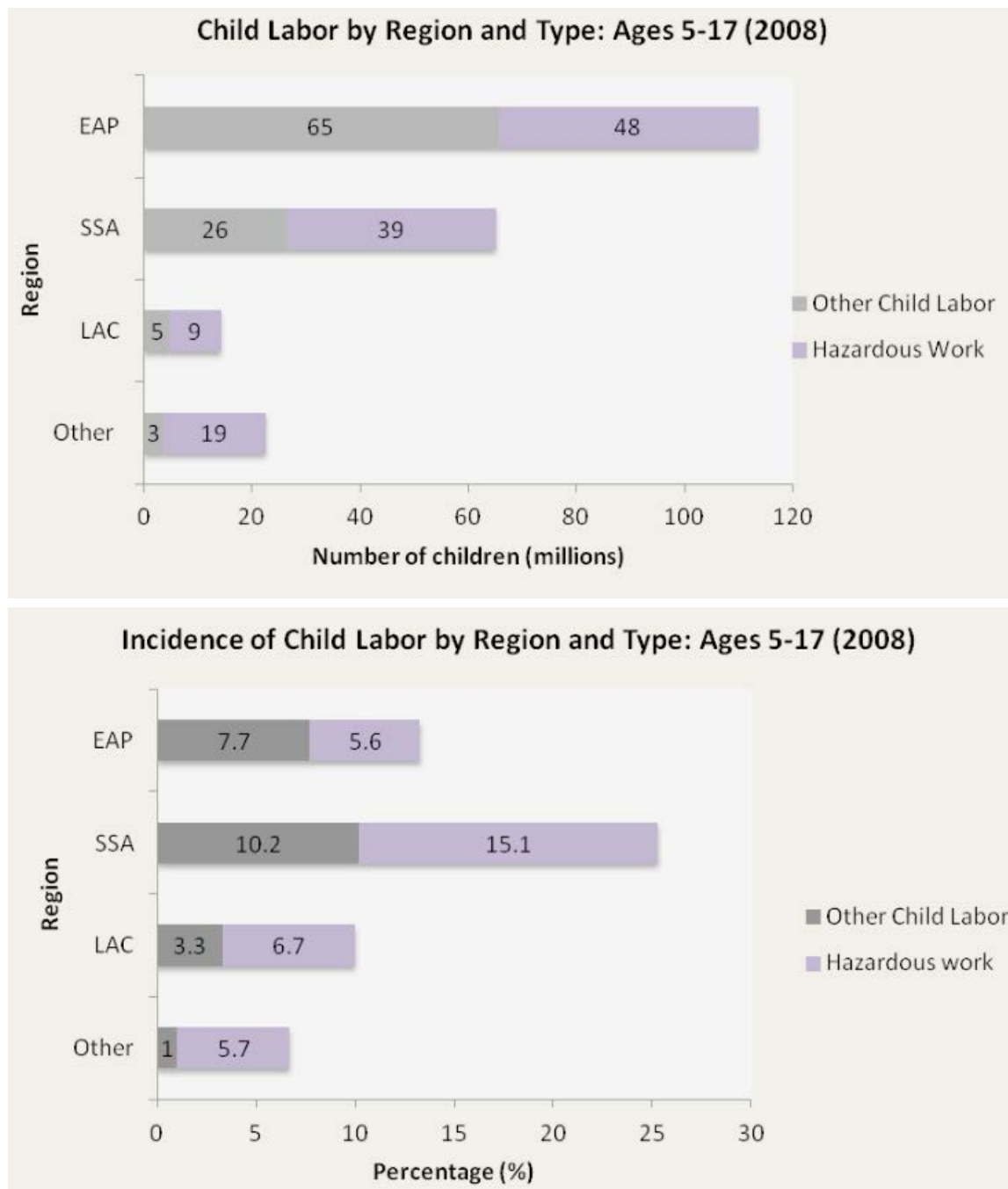
Table 1: Global Estimates of the Number of Children Engaged in Labor and Hazardous Work

Age Group	Global Estimates	Child Labourers		Children in Hazardous Work	
		2004	2008	2004	2008
5-17 years	Number (in 000s)	222,294	215,269	128,381	115,314
	Incidence (% of age group)	14.2	13.6	8.2	7.3
5-14 years	Number (in 000s)	170,383	152,850	76,470	52,895
	Incidence (% of age group)	14.1	12.6	6.3	4.3
15-17 years	Number (in 000s)	51,911	62,419	NA	NA
	Incidence (% of age group)	14.4	16.9	NA	NA

Source: ILO 2010

Aggregate global figures can obscure differences across and within regions (Figure 1). Over half of all child laborers live in the Asia Pacific region, with 13 per cent of the 5-17 year-olds affected. However, both the incidence of child labor and participation in hazardous work is highest in sub-Saharan Africa. In total, there are 65 million 5-17 years-olds involved in child labor – one quarter of the region's total population. Around 38 million – 15 per cent of the age group – is involved in hazardous work. Sub-Saharan Africa stands out for another reason. Whereas all other regions saw a decline in children's employment between 2004 and 2008, sub-Saharan Africa experienced an increase. The number of economically active children rose by 9 million - from 26 to 28 per cent of 5-17 year olds.

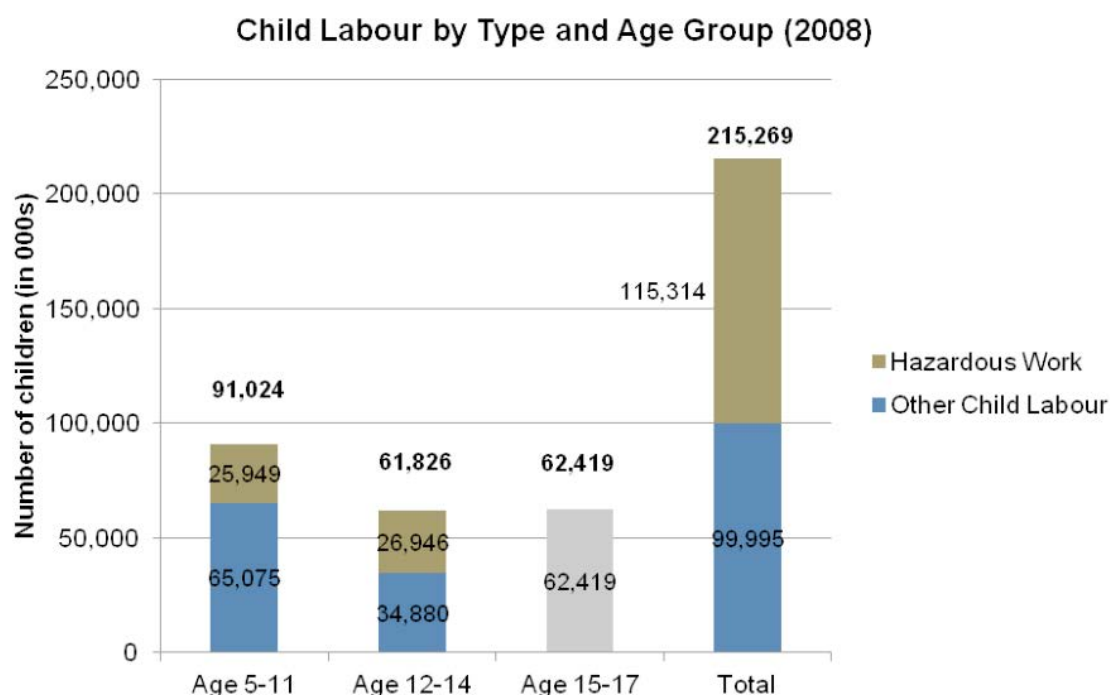
Figure 1: Regional Estimates of Child Labor and Hazardous Work by Number and Incidence: Age 5-17



Source: ILO 2010

The ILO data make it possible to isolate the incidence of child labor among 5-14 year-old children. Taking into account over-age entry into primary school, this group broadly approximates to the primary school and lower secondary school-age population. Just over two-thirds of child laborers, 154 million in total, are in the 5-14 age group - some 12 per cent of the total. Alarming, 91 million child laborers - more than one third of the total - are aged less than 12 years (Figure 2). Some 25 million of these children are involved in hazardous work. In total, around 53 million primary school-age child laborers are involved in hazardous work.

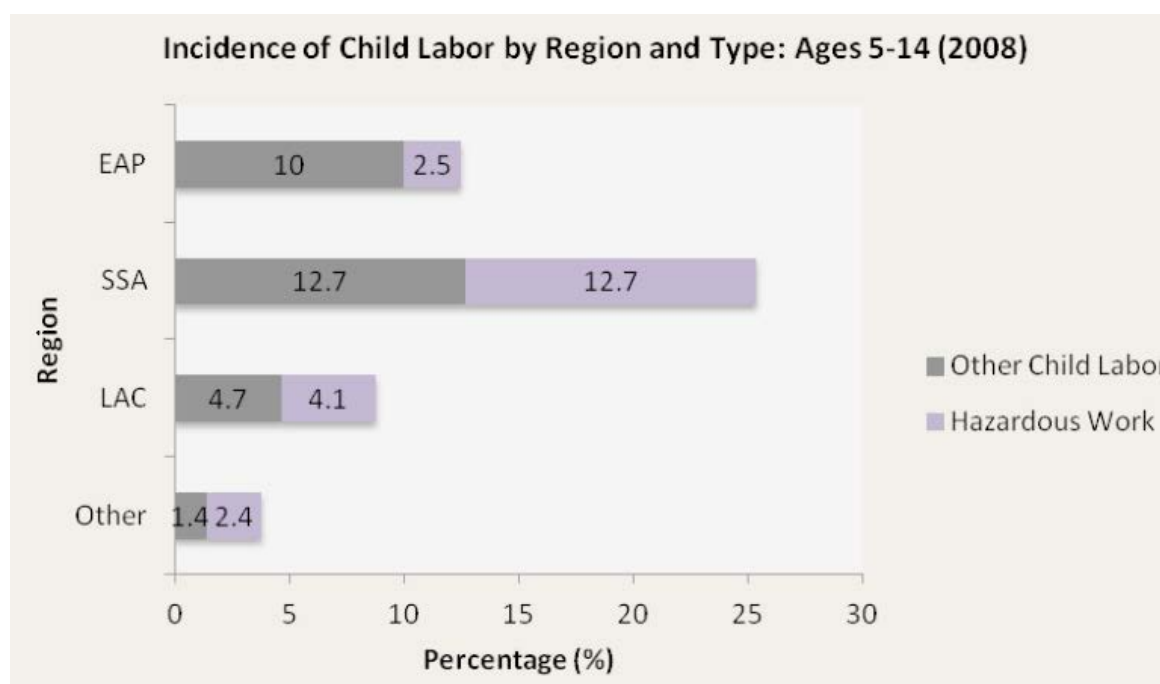
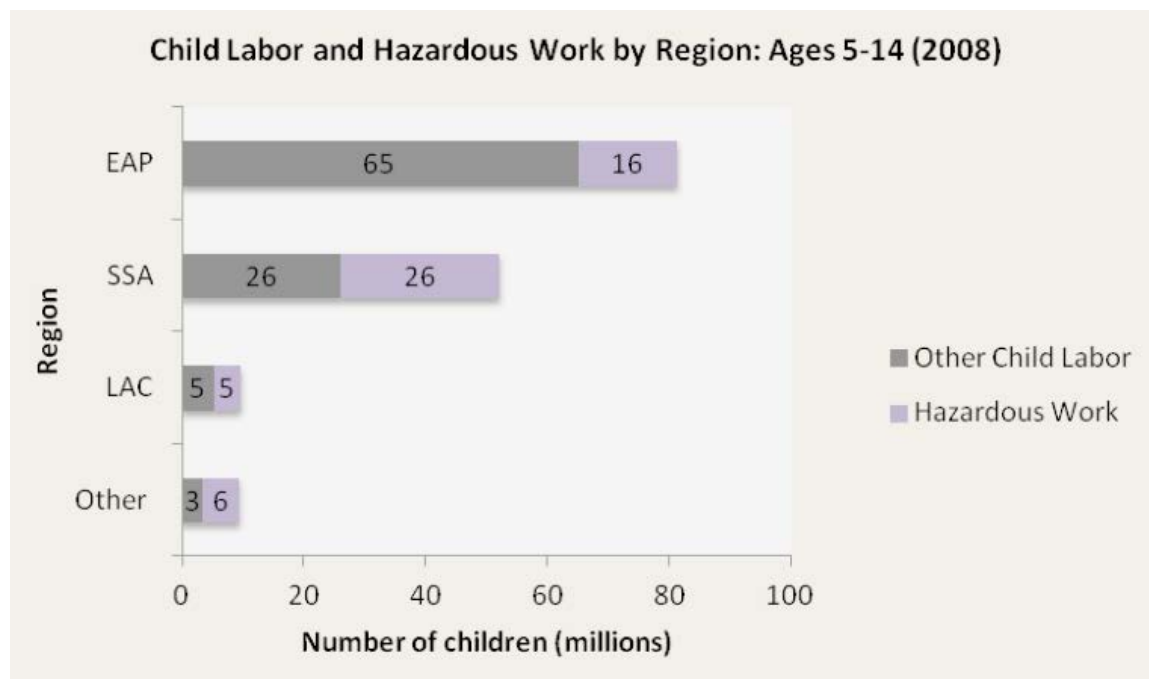
Figure 2: Child Labor and Hazardous Work by Age Group



Source: ILO 2010

The absolute number of 5-14 year-old children in hazardous work is highest in sub-Saharan Africa. Around 26 million children are affected. With just 16 per cent of the world's children, the region accounts for half of all hazardous employment among 5-14 year olds. Around 13 per cent of the region's primary school-age children are involved in hazardous work (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Regional Estimates of Child Labor and Hazardous Work by Number and Incidence: Age 5-14



Source: ILO 2010

National profiles and household survey evidence

The profile of child labor varies enormously across countries. One of the problems with existing data is that national and international agencies working on child labor face large gaps in information, with data characterized by large margins of uncertainty over the size, profile and distribution of the child labor force. To make matters worse, national and international agencies often operate with conflicting figures. In India, the officially reported figure for child labor is around one-quarter of the level estimated by NGOs and some UN agencies (Satyarthi 2012). These discrepancies matter because they have obvious implications for the cost of getting children out of employment and into school. In this section we draw on a range of data to provide a brief snapshot of the global profile of child labor.

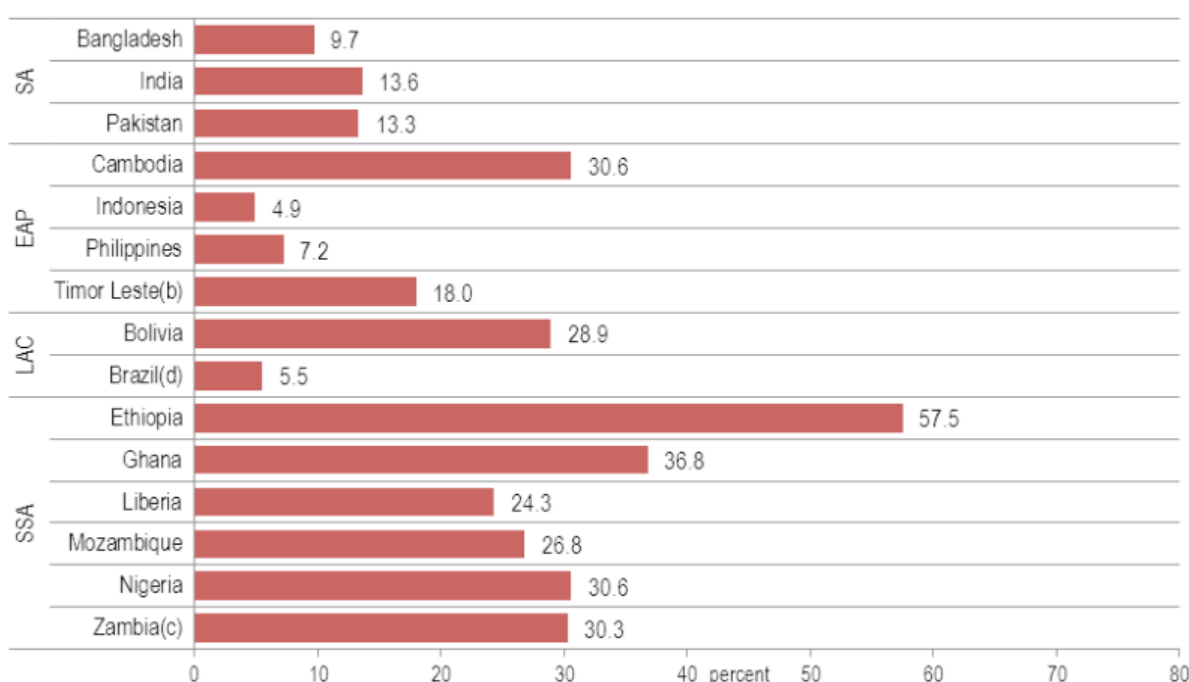
International media reporting frequently turns the spotlight on children working in manufacturing industries, especially those involved in exporting to northern markets. However, manufacturing accounts for just 7 per cent of reported child labor – and the bulk of child employment in the sector is geared towards small-scale, informal producers serving domestic markets. The services sector, which accounts for around one quarter of child labor, is dominated by activities such as domestic service work outside of the home and petty-trading. By far the largest source of child labor is unpaid family work in the agricultural sector, where 130 million children are involved (Global March Against Child Labor 2012). Only one-in-five working children are in paid employment.

Reported gender differences have to be interpreted in the light of the constraints noted earlier. The ILO's data puts the overall number of boys involved in child labor above the number of girls – and the gender gap becomes wider as age increases. Much of the decline in child labor recorded by the ILO between 2004 and 2008 was in the number of girls in employment, especially in areas characterized by hazardous labor. The number of boys involved in child labor actually increased by 7 per cent over the same period. There was an even steeper increase in the incidence of employment in hazardous areas. By the age of 15-17 years, boys outnumber girls in hazardous employment by two-to-one (Diallo et al 2010). However, full reporting of sibling care and economic activities such as firewood and water collection would simultaneously drive up the number of child laborers and change the reported gender profile (UCW 2010).

Household surveys provide another window on the national data that inform global estimates. The surveys are not strictly comparable on a cross-country basis partly because they are conducted at different points in time; and partly because of sampling and reporting differences. Even so, they tell an important story.

Drawing on survey evidence from Understanding Child Work (UCW), Figure 4 reports country specific estimates for a range of developing countries with data available from 2005. Consistent with the global estimates, countries in sub-Saharan Africa stand out because of their high child labor rates. Some 30 per cent of children in Nigeria and Zambia are involved in child labor, rising to 36 per cent for Ghana and 57 per cent for Ethiopia. Reported rates for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are far lower – indeed, they are so low as to raise questions about the reported data. As highlighted in Table 2, decomposition by sex, age and residence reveals more complex national patterns. The reported incidence of child labor is slightly higher for boys than for girls, but the large urban-rural divide underlines the central role of agriculture as a source of employment.

Figure 4: National incidence of child labor: selected countries



Source: UCW

Notes: (a) The child labor measure comprises three groups of children: 7-11 year olds in economic activity for at least one hour during the reference week; 12-14 year-olds in non-light economic activity (i.e. for at least 14 hours during the reference week); and 7-14 year-olds engaged in household chores for at least 28 hours during the reference week. (b) Timor Leste and Pakistan: Children aged 10-14; (c) Zambia, Philippines, Pakistan and Cambodia surveys do not include information about hours spent in household chores. The definition of child labor in these countries is based on hours in employment; (d) Brazil: the National legislation does not allow light work for 12-14 years old.

Table 2: Involvement in child labor by residence, sex and age

Region	Country	Residence		Age	
		Urban	Rural	7-11	12-14
Sub Saharan Africa	Zambia	11.5	39.7	25.9	37.9
	Nigeria	22.5	33.6	38.6	15.5
	Mozambique	17.9	30.8	26.5	27.4
	Liberia	18.4	28.3	34.4	5.2
	Ghana	20.3	46.9	45.2	23.4
	Ethiopia	18.4	63.4	57.9	56.9
	Brazil	3.9	12.5	2.7	9.9
	Bolivia	10.5	58.4	28.9	28.8
East Asia and Pacific	Timor Leste	10.1	20.7	17.3	18.5
	Philippines	4.7	9.2	7.2	7.2
	Indonesia	2.4	6.1	4.4	5.6
	Cambodia	9.3	34.5	24.2	40.6
South Asia	Pakistan	-	-	8.6	16.2
	India	9.4	15.2	11.8	16.6
	Bangladesh	7.7	10.3	6.7	14.2

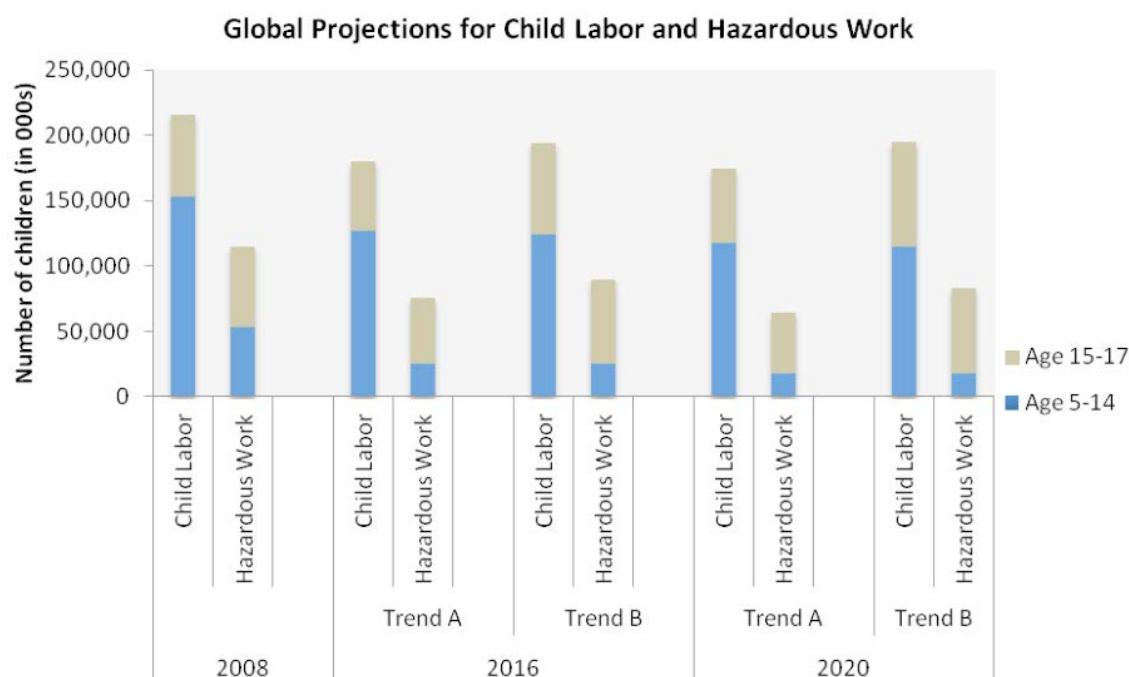
Looking to the future – scenarios to 2020

Any projection for child labor is an exercise in uncertainty. While the ILO has greatly improved the quality of comparative data, there are large data gaps and problems associated with the consistency of national reporting systems⁹. Only 50 countries are covered in the 2008 data survey. Beyond the immediate data concerns, past trends are a weak guide to the future: changes in policy can dramatically change trends. With all of these caveats and uncertainties in mind, the trends can help to identify a range of potential outcomes associated with a business-as-usual trajectory.

Figure 5 captures one such trajectory. It provides a snapshot of where the world would be in 2016 (the target date for eliminating hazardous labor) under two different trend scenarios. These scenarios project through to 2020 the longer-term 2000-2008 trend and the shorter-term 2004-2008 trend, deriving the total number of child laborers from the trend incidence and the projected population for the years in question. This simple linear exercise illustrates just how far away the world is from a trajectory that would lead to the early elimination of child labor. It also illustrates the scale of the slowdown in the reported decline in child labor. Among the results:

- There will be between 170-190 million child laborers in 2020.
- There will still be 80-90 million children in hazardous employment in 2016.
- Between 62 million and 82 million children will still be in hazardous employment in 2020.
- There will be 27 million 5-14 year old children in hazardous employment in 2016 and 17 million in 2020.

Figure 5: Global Projections for Child Labor and Hazardous Work



Source: Author's calculation based on ILO data and UN Population data

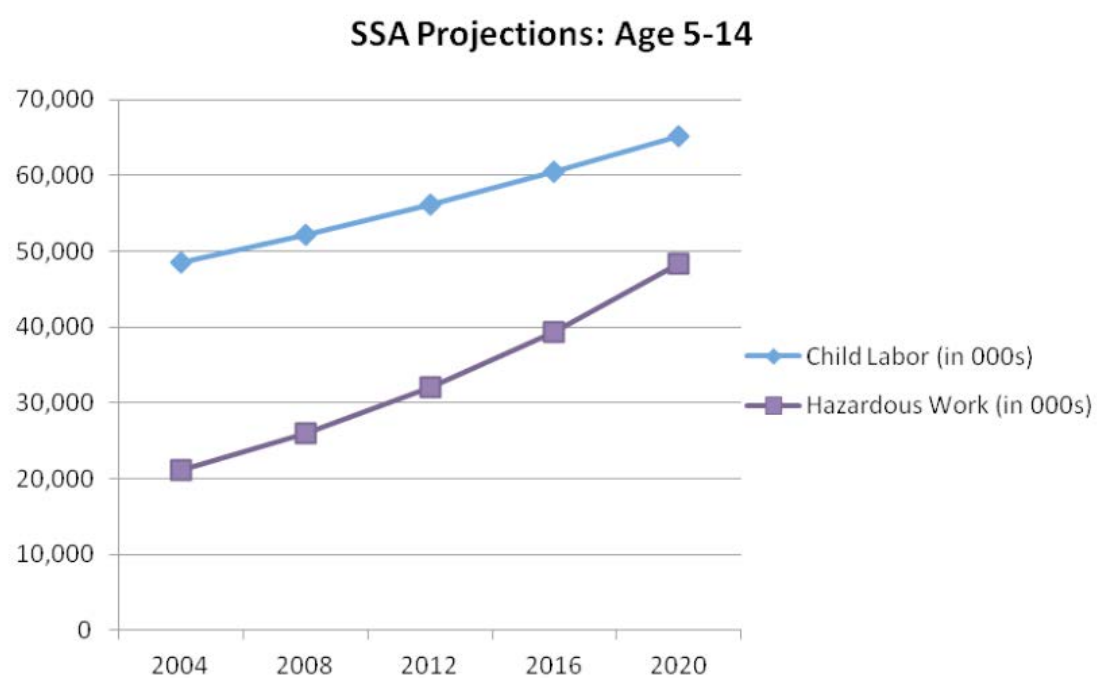
Trend analysis for sub-Saharan Africa raises some distinctive concerns. The data available does not report on a regional basis for changes in the incidence of child labor (or hazardous labor) between 2004 and 2008. As noted earlier, however, the data does report on regional changes in economic activity, both regionally and globally. Using the global data, it is possible to establish the average reported relationship between the change in economic activity among 5-14 year-old children on the one side, and the associated change in child labor and hazardous labor. Briefly summarized, the data suggests that the change ratio is 1:1 for child labor and 1:3 for hazardous labor. In other words a one percentage point reduction in economic activity is associated with an equivalent decline in child labor and a three percentage point decline in hazardous labor. If these ratios are broadly accurate and applicable to sub-Saharan Africa, there may have been a 3.7 million increase in the number of 5-14 year-old child laborers in Africa between 2004 and 2008, and another 5 million involved in hazardous labor.

There is a double jeopardy in projecting the 2004-2008 data for sub-Saharan Africa into the future. It cannot be assumed that the economic activity-child labor ratios will remain constant, that the economic activity trend is stable, or that the global ratios hold for Africa^{vi}. Set against these hazards, there are no obvious grounds for assuming that the economic activity rate will have declined as a result of changes in economic growth, or that the child labor reduction elasticity of economic activity will have increased.

Indeed, the regional economic slowdown and food price hikes may have increased the economic activity rate for children and reduced the child labor reduction elasticity of that activity. Projecting the trends for economic activity and child labor ratios for 5-14 year olds from 2004-2008 towards 2020 (Figure 6) points to a scenario that could include:

- Around 65 million child laborers in 2020, with 50 million in hazardous employment
- Another 19 million children in child labor in 2012 than in 2005, with hazardous labor accounting for the bulk of the increase.
- Around 40 million 5-14 year-old children in hazardous work by 2016.
- An increase of 16 million in the number of child laborers by 2020.
- An increase of 27 million primary school-age children involved in hazardous work by 2020.

Figure 6: Child labor and hazardous work projections: sub-Saharan Africa (2004-2020)



Source: Author's calculations based on ILO data

2 Child labor activities

Child labor is an umbrella category that covers a vast range of activities. The spectrum extends from involvement in the care of siblings to employment in underground mines and child prostitution.

Categorising and differentiating activities within this spectrum is made difficult not just by data constraints, but by the continuity between different forms of labor. Boundaries between different forms of child labor are often blurred. For example, the data on child labor excludes children involved in 'permissible light' work for less than fourteen hours a week - but there is seldom a neat dividing line between light work and unacceptably arduous work. Similarly, while international standards used in surveys draw a distinction between 'non-hazardous' and 'hazardous' work, many children are engaged simultaneously in both activities (Diallo et al 2010). The same is true for 'worst forms of child labor' - a sub-set of activities, including practices similar to slavery, the compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict, sexual exploitation and illicit activities.

The distinction between laborers and non-laborers is similarly uncertain. Child labor activity is often characterized by short employment spells with frequent entry and exit from the labor market. It follows that the annual incidence of spells of household child labor is often greater than would be apparent from survey data reporting on weekly or monthly activity. The proportion of households with children working at some point in the year can be two-to-three times larger than those reporting work in any given week (Duryea et al 2005).

Inevitably, survey data provide a very limited measure of what child labor means to those affected. Statistics alone can never capture the human costs of child labor. They do not measure the exhaustion of children forced to work long hours or lift heavy loads. They do not monitor the fear of children trafficked for work in agriculture, domestic labor and commercial sexual exploitation. And they do not capture the costs of a lost childhood or the long-term consequences of an education foregone. These are all areas more powerfully documented in the testimonies of children themselves (Parker 2007). In this section we look briefly at some of the activities at the heart of child labor across different countries.

The rural sector

Agriculture is the largest employer of child labor. Unpaid family work dominates, with children involved in herding, harvesting, weeding and a range of other activities (Global March Against Child Labor 2012). This is a category that may cover as many as 60 million children aged 7-14 worldwide.

The bulk of child labor in the rural sector takes place in households where livelihoods depend on smallholder farming and agricultural labor markets. Poor rural households in particular draw heavily on child labor. The division of labor varies. Within rural households, young girls typically dominate the collection of water and firewood, while sibling care frees up adult labor. Young boys are more likely to be involved in herding and direct agricultural production (Hertz 2011; Hunt 2008). In pastoralist areas of northern Kenya, young boys represent a significant part of the labor force responsible for herding cattle long-distances during the dry-season (Dyer 2006).

The contribution of child labor to agricultural employment is not widely recognized. Research carried out in Nepal by the UCW found that children aged 10-14 accounted for around 11 per cent of the value of agricultural output (UCW 2003). Similar research in Cameroon disaggregated the agricultural work force by age and employment. The data revealed that 6-14 year-old children accounted for an average of one-quarter of employment across all agricultural activities, rising to 57 per cent in herding (UCW 2012). What these findings illustrate is the high level of dependence of agricultural labor systems on the employment of children.

Commercial farming also draws extensively on child labor. Children often participate as part of a family work force and more rarely as (poorly paid) employees in their own right. In some cases, child labor on commercial farms is hazardous and involves a degree of compulsion. In the Dominican Republic, Haitian migrant children work collecting cut cane with machetes, carrying heavy loads, and clearing land. Many live in accommodation provided by plantation owners and are required to work long hours simply to pay rent. While these children may not constitute slave labor under the terms of the ILO conventions, they work under highly exploitative conditions (United States Department of Labor 2011). In Bolivia children, some of them as young as 10, work on sugar plantations cutting, collecting and carrying cane (see Box 1).

Cotton cultivation is another magnet for child labor. From West Africa to Egypt, India and Uzbekistan children regularly work in cotton fields removing pests and picking buds, often in the face of acute health risks from pesticides (Environmental Justice Foundation 2012). The introduction of new technologies that increase labor demands can have direct consequences for children. For example, research in India found that the introduction of genetically modified cotton seed had increased demand for child labor in the states of Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh (Reddy 2011; Singh 2012). An estimated 400,000 children are estimated to be working on India's cotton-seed farms - over half of them aged under 14 years (ILRF 2007).

The use of child labor in cocoa cultivation has come under the international spotlight in recent years, largely because of the connection to western consumers. Smallholder cocoa farms in West Africa, the world's major exporting region, are heavily reliant on child labor. Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana have a combined total of close to 2 million children working on cocoa farms, with around half of the children involved in cocoa cultivation are engaged in a least one hazardous activity (Tulane University 2011; Dale 2012). There is evidence that children from neighboring countries – including Mali and Burkina Faso – are trafficked or sold as bonded labor to meet labor demands in cocoa growing areas (Tulane University 2011; Hawksley 2011).

Box 1: Bolivia's young sugar workers-sweet canes, bitter lives

"The work is hard, very hard, exhausting. The canes are heavy...last year I had terrible back pains from work. I don't want to do this anymore, but I have no choice." Luis, aged 13

Child labor is illegal in Bolivia. Even so, it is estimated that almost one-third of the country's children are driven by poverty to work in hazardous conditions. These children are to be found in artisanal mines producing gold, silver and tin, where they work long hours in enclosed spaces, and are often exposed to dangerous chemicals. They are to be found among the indigenous Guarani people forced by debt bondage to make their children work on large cattle ranches in the Chaco region. And they are to be found in large numbers working in the production of sugar cane in departments such as Pando, Beni and Santa Cruz.

Surging world prices have seen a dramatic reversal in the decline of sugar cultivation in Bolivia. The harvest period, from April to November, acts as a magnet for laborers from the poorest parts of the country: some 60 per cent of sugar cane harvesters are temporary migrants. Most of the heavy harvesting work is still done manually. Children as young as 7 are involved in setting crops alight to remove unwanted foliage, cutting the cane with machetes, and stacking and loading.

Interviews with parents and children during the harvest on a sugar estate in Bermejo in the south-east of Bolivia powerfully capture the restricted choices they face – and the trade-off between education opportunities and employment imperatives:

"I'd like to study or maybe work in something better, something lighter. But I work most of all for my family, my family is really poor so they have nothing and I need to help." Ciro, aged 13

"I am not going to school anymore. I left this year when I started working here." Fiser, aged 10

"He helps me a lot. He used to be at school but I need him to come to work with me, at least this year, then he can go back to school. Now we need the money so his little brothers can eat and go to school." Fiser's mother, aged 44.

As this last statement illustrates, poverty is forcing the parents of many of the children trapped in the worst forms of child labor to make agonising choices between education and nutrition, and between children.

Sources: Schipani 2009; U.S. Department of Labor 2011

Mining and quarrying

From the Philippines to Burkina Faso and Bolivia, child labor is widely used in quarrying and mining activities that are unequivocally hazardous in nature, with children working long hours, carrying heavy loads and facing exposure to dangerous conditions. Estimates of the numbers involved are inherently imprecise. Almost all of the children involved in mining work in artisanal, small-scale mines which are not well covered either in work-force surveys or wider household surveys (ILO 2005). Rough estimates suggest that between 10-15 per cent of the global work force in artisanal mines is made up of children, implying a hazardous child labor force of 1.3 million to 2 million.

Hazardous labor overwhelmingly dominates the activities of children working in artisanal mining. They are involved in digging tunnels, working underground or panning for gold and precious stones. There is also a widespread use of child labor in the collection and carrying of construction materials, and in breaking stones. While boys dominate some aspects of employment – such as tunnelling – young girls are also actively engaged in hazardous activities such as crushing rocks, transporting rubble and panning for stones (ILO 2007).

Both boys and girls involved in mining face acute health risks. One survey in Niger found that over one-third of children working in artisanal mines had been the victim of an accident at their work site (ILO 2007). High levels of respiratory tract and musculoskeletal problems are widely reported among children engaged in artisanal mining. Contact with lead-bearing ores has also been associated with lead poisoning among child miners, with the WHO having documented an epidemic in Nigeria (WHO 2010).

In Mali, research by Human Rights Watch estimated the number of children working in artisanal gold mines at 20-40,000 (Human Rights Watch 2011). Children as young as six were involved in digging shafts and hauling ore. Most were performing dangerous tasks, working on average for more than nine hours a day for six days a week with little or no pay. Beyond the harsh physical labor, children working in Mali's mines are involved in using mercury to separate gold from sandy ore. Three-quarters of children interviewed said that they were directly involved in using mercury. The use of mercury places children at grave risk because it is a toxic substance that attacks the central nervous system and is particularly harmful to developing bodies. The mercury threats facing children in Mali are a microcosm of a far wider problem. Virtually all of the mercury used in artisanal mining is released into air, rivers and soil, posing serious health risks for all adults and children working in mining.

The use of child labor in mining illustrates the extensive overlap between hazardous labor and the worst forms of child labor. Research in the Mirerani mining zone in Tanzania found that many of the young girls living in the mining areas were engaged in commercial sex work (ILO 2007). The Human Rights Watch research in Mali also found widespread child prostitution in artisanal mining areas. In the conflict-zones of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), child laborers are involved in mining for gold, copper diamonds and tin ore (Human Rights Watch 2011). The DRC is also a major source of coltan – one of the core materials used in computers, mobile phones, MP3 players and electronic devices. On one estimate, children account for over 40 per cent of the Congolese working in the country's coltan mines (BMS World Mission 2010). Some of these children are recruited on a forcible basis to work in mining areas controlled by armed militia and factions of the Congolese army (United States Department of Labor 2011).

Manufacturing

Children are engaged in a vast array of manufacturing activities and service provision. On one estimate, around 14 million child laborers – 7 per cent of the total – are involved in manufacturing (Diallo et al 2010). While incidents of child labor abuses in overseas affiliates of western multinational companies make occasional headlines, the overwhelming bulk of child labor takes place in the informal sector, where weak regulation exposes children to hazardous conditions.

Patterns of involvement in manufacturing vary. In Bangladesh, one-quarter of children aged 5-14 are working. Labor activities include the production of salt, soap, cigarettes and footwear, welding, pulling rickshaws and dismantling large ships to recycle metal (UCW 2011a). Children in India make matches, bricks, footwear, garments and embroidered textiles. Across sub-Saharan Africa, young children are drawn into a range of informal sector manufacturing and service activities, including metalwork and welding.

Many children are drawn into manufacturing in the construction sector, notably through brick kilns. In Afghanistan, the use of child labor in brick kilns is one of the most common forms of hazardous labor in the country. One recent survey found that 47 per cent of the labor force in the brick kiln sector was under the age of 14 years (ILO 2011b). Most children begin working in the kilns at ages as young as 7 or 8 years old. Here too, the lines dividing hazardous labor from the worst forms of child labor are blurred. Bonded labor is common across the brick-kilns of South Asia. In Afghanistan, children are tied to the owners of the kilns by their parents' need to pay back loans taken out to meet the costs of basic necessities, medical costs, and rent (ILO 2011a). Similar arrangements are reported from other countries, including Cambodia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India (United States Department of Labor 2011).

While child labor is relatively rare in the formal manufacturing export sector, it is not unknown. In China, under-age labor recruited by networks of agents from poor rural areas has been found in factories supply companies such as Apple, Samsung and Google, prompting them to strengthen monitoring for their supply chains (Kan 2012; Barboza 2008). Moreover, the formal manufacturing sector is often linked through complex supply chains to outworker systems under which work is contracted down to households using child labor (Biggeri, Mehrotra and Sudarshan 2009). One example is the use of young girls and boys to sew beads onto garments.

Domestic service

One of the least visible forms of child labor involves children employed as domestic servants. Once again, the data is limited – but the practice is widespread. The ILO estimates that nearly 30 per cent of the 50-100 million domestic workers worldwide are children (ILO 2011b).

In countries as diverse as Indonesia, Morocco and Guinea, Human Rights Watch has documented young girls working more than 12 hours a day, seven days a week for a fraction on the minimum wage (Human Rights Watch 2010). In Haiti, families in poor rural areas send their children, particularly young girls, to go and work as *restaveks*, or domestic servants, for more affluent families. Many of the children employed in domestic service are subjected to physical and sexual violence (United States Department of Labor 2011). In Bangladesh, where more than 421,000 children, mostly girls, work as domestic servants, a 2006 study found that almost 70 per cent of these girls experienced physical abuse and systematic beatings (Save the Children 2006).

The use of child labor in domestic service is also endemic in India. One recent case covered with some intensity in the Indian media briefly brought the issue of domestic child labor into the national political spotlight. The case revolved around a 13 year old girl left locked in a house where she worked as a maid for a couple who had gone on vacation to Thailand (Yardley 2012). The girl in question was rescued, but her case was hardly unique. Tens of thousands of young girls, often from low castes or tribal groups in poor states, are sold every year into domestic

service in Delhi and other cities in defiance of national laws – and well away from the glare of

media interest.

Conflict-affected countries

Conflict affected countries are not well covered by child labor survey data. The evidence that is available suggests that children in these countries are far more prone to employment – especially hazardous employment – in part because of the limited provision of education. In South Sudan, sub-Saharan Africa's newest nation, over one million primary school age children are out of school as a result of the slow pace of reconstruction. Many of these children are to be found breaking stones by roadsides, working in fields, or eking out an existence on refuse tips (Box 2).

Children displaced by armed conflict represent a high risk group for child labor. In 2011 there were an estimated 26 million internally displaced people (IDP) and 15 million refugees worldwide^{vii}. Estimates for the number of children in the population vary, but are typically put at between 30-50 per cent. The lack of education provision in refugee and IDP camps makes these children particularly susceptible to recruitment by armed militia and to employment in hazardous activities. IDP children face even graver disadvantages than refugees living in camp environments. Beyond the immediate risks posed by conflict and the higher levels of poverty that come with conflict-related disruption of livelihoods, many – probably the vast majority – are living in environments that are beyond the reach of public education systems. One example comes from the war-zones of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where many children are forced to work in order to secure access to education (Box 3).

The worst forms of child labor

Protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse is one of the core objectives of international human rights law.

While child labor and hazardous employment depart from established global norms, the worst forms of child labor represent a special category of rights violation. The following are among the most widespread activities involved:

Children associated with armed groups.

The 'forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict' is recognized as one of the worst forms of child labor. The practice is illegal under international law and a violation of human rights. Yet forced conscription into armed groups is a reality for many children. Any figures are speculative, but credible estimates put the number of child soldiers at between 250,000 and 300,000 (Peace Direct 2012)^{viii}. UN reporting systems provide detailed accounts of child soldier recruitment in countries such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen (United Nations 2012). While there has been some progress towards reintegration in several of these countries, state and non-state actors responsible for forced recruitment continue to act with impunity (UNESCO 2011; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2011). In 2010, children were forced into armed militias by both government and opposition groups in Cote d'Ivoire. Child soldiers have also been drawn into recent conflicts in Syria, Libya and Mali. Emerging evidence indicates that members of the military in the Democratic Republic of Congo are forcing children to mine for cassiterite and coltan (Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers 2011; United States Department of Labor 2011).

Box 2: Living on the Margins in South Sudan

It's not easy to describe the rubbish dump outside of Juba, the capital of South Sudan. This is a vast expanse of plastic cups and bottles, old rags, tin, glass, pieces of metal and refuse. The stench is overwhelming. Toxic fumes leave you gasping for air.

Welcome to the workplace of a small company from South Sudan's battalion of child laborers. Mary Mabior aged 12 and her brother James, 10, spend their day looking for pieces of iron, tin and old plastic bottles which their mother sells to recyclers. They spend around nine hours a day on the dump. On a good day they make US\$1.20 between them. "Of course I wish they go to school, but if they don't work we cannot live," says their mother, Agnes.

Mary and James Mabior are just two children out of the estimated one million out of school – around half of the primary school age population. Most of these children live and work in rural areas, where they provide agricultural labor. In urban areas, as any trip around Juba will testify, children are to be found in large numbers breaking stones for road construction, carrying heavy loads, and working as petty traders.

The plight of South Sudan's working children highlights the deadly interaction between poverty and education disadvantage. Some seven years after the peace agreement that brought an end to two decades of civil war, the construction of a national education system is proceeding at a desperately slow pace. Donor support is limited (see main text section 4). Many of the schools that are available charge fees, effectively excluding the poorest households. Even without the barrier created by school costs, the daily struggle for survival forces many parents to push their children into employment markets or to provide labor for their farms.

Sources: Interviews conducted by author; UNESCO 2011.

Child trafficking.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes estimates that human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world – and children figure prominently among the victims (UNODC 2009). Trafficking represents around 20 per cent of all forced labor worldwide (Craig 2010). Each year an estimated 1.2 million children are trafficked for sexual exploitation or cheap labor (United States Department of State 2009; UNICEF 2007). Boys are often trafficked with a view to forced involvement in agricultural labor or illicit activities. The most common form of trafficking for girls is sexual exploitation, with children forced by poverty or bonded labor into the criminal worlds that control prostitution (Global Report on Trafficking 2008). In the Philippines, young girls are exploited in sex tourism industries and trafficked throughout Asia and the Middle East for forced labor and prostitution (United States Department of Labor 2011).

Sexual exploitation and criminal activity.

There are few accurate verifiable statistics on the sexual exploitation of children as the crimes involved are covert and associated with feelings of shame. On one estimate from UNICEF, around 1.8 million children enter the commercial sex trade each year. In the Philippines, young girls are exploited in sex tourism industries and trafficked throughout Asia and the Middle East for forced labor and prostitution. Studies in India suggest that over 40 per cent of women sex workers enter prostitution before the age of eighteen (United States Department of Labor 2011). Research in Zambia has documented the impact of HIV/AIDS and economic shocks in forcing children into employment involving sexual exploitation. A detailed assessment conducted in 2006 by the Central Statistical Office found that almost two-thirds of the children involved in commercial sexual exploitation were either single or double orphans. Almost half of the children came from households that had experienced some form of shock. One in five of the girls interviewed reported having to perform sex for accommodation, raising concerns about those working in domestic service (UCW 2009c).

Bonded labor.

Systems of bonded labor are at the heart of some of the most exploitative and damaging child labor practices. Some of these systems effectively deprive children of any control or autonomy over their labor, prompting some commentators to draw parallels with slavery (Craig 2010). The ILO estimates that around 5.7 million children are in forced and bonded labor, representing around half of all bonded labor victims. Some analysts suggest that the real figure may be twice as high (Bale 2007). Debt is the most common entry route into bonded labor, accounting for an estimated two-thirds of the total in South Asia. Child bondage through debt typically occurs when a parent takes on a loan at high interest rates secured against their time or labor. When loan payments fall due and parents are unable to pay, creditors assert a claim to the labor of children in the household. Bonded labor arrangements channel children into hazardous employment in mining, domestic services, child prostitution and a range of sweat shop activities. It is implicated in the forced begging activities of talibe children who study in Koranic schools in West Africa (Human Rights Watch 2010). And it is at the heart of rural employment practices that use indebtedness as a vehicle for transferring the labor of children from poorer to richer households.

Nowhere is the intersection of forced labor and hazardous employment more visible than in India – a country with an estimated 11 million child laborers. In the midst of one of the world's fastest-growing economies, the country remains a source, transit point and destination for children trafficked for sexual exploitation and forced labor in agriculture, manufacturing and begging. Whole networks of child labor recruitment agents lure parents gripped by poverty to contract their children to factories, land-owners or domestic employers (Chamberlain 2012; Nair and Sen 2005). Debt bondage also plays a role, with parents persuaded to transfer the labor services of their children to repay debts. Even though bonded labor practices have been illegal since 1976, they remain widespread (Srivastava 2005; UNHCR 2008).

In the past, small-scale artisanal industries such as carpet-making and silk have secured part of their labor supply through child labor (Human Rights Watch 2003). Today, traffickers target low caste and tribal families in rural areas of poor states such as Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, transporting the children to urban centers like Delhi and Mumbai, or to the commercial farming areas of Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Young boys and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh are also trafficked. The size of the trade in children is unknown: estimates range from 150,000 to 200,000 annually. Campaigners argue, on the basis of evidence collected from district offices, that some 96,000 children go missing each year – and that this figure includes many children trapped in child labor (Satyarthi 2012). What is clear is that many of the children working in India's workshops, factories and commercial farming areas have been trapped there by practices that are tantamount to informal slavery.

Box 3: Children in a war zone – eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

The eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo is one of the most violent areas in the world. Over 2 million people have been displaced as a result of armed conflict. Fewer than half of children aged 5-14 years old are in school. The worst forms of child labor reach epidemic proportions. Tens of thousands of children work in mines controlled by armed militia, or as child soldiers. Across the region, young children can be seen crushing stones, carrying heavy loads, working with machetes in fields, or standing by the road-side selling charcoal.

In the midst of the violence parents and children are struggling to access education. At the Kichange Camp for displaced people in Masisi District, North Kivu, families displaced by fighting between armed militia and the Congolese army have come together to build a school and hire a local teacher. Children have to pay around US\$1.20 a month to attend, which is a huge burden for families who have lost everything. While there are other schools in the area, most of them run by churches, few parents can afford the fees – and many struggle to cover the costs of sending their children to the school.

Children often work to help pay for the school fees and books, as well as food and medical costs. David Ichange, aged twelve, is an example. Working for two hours before school starts and in the afternoon after class finishes he can make around US\$0.50 cents a day breaking stones, carrying sacks of charcoal, or working as a porter in a nearby market. Against the odds, he has made it through to grade 3 of primary school. His enthusiasm is undimmed. “Being in school is fun – and people with an education can have a better life. I’ll be a doctor,” he says

But David’s prospects are uncertain. When he was interviewed in 2011 he had dropped out of school. The reason: his earnings were needed to pay for anti-malarial drugs and treatment for his sister. Like his two brothers, aged 14 and 15, he is now out of school.

David’s life is a microcosm of a wider struggle in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. There are no reliable data for the number of primary school-age children out of school, but best estimates put the figure at around 1 million – or one-fifth of the total out-of-school population in the country. The vast majority of these children are trapped in a cycle of poverty that pushes them out of school and pulls them into hazardous employment.

Sources: Interviews conducted by author; UNESCO 2010

3 Child labor and education – lost opportunities for learning

Beyond the obvious and immediate harm it causes to the children involved, child labor has life-long consequences. Excessive involvement in the world of work, especially in high-risk areas of employment, traps children in a cycle of poverty, vulnerability and diminished opportunity.

Education is part of the cycle of deprivation. Facing restricted opportunities to develop the skills and competencies they need during their school years, child laborers subsequently experience diminished life-chances and elevated risks of working poverty in adulthood. Detailed survey evidence from Latin America suggests that males entering the work force before the age of 12 earn 20 per cent less and are 8 per cent more likely to be in the poorest income quintile than comparable males entering the work force after the age of 12. It follows that delaying entry to the work force has the potential to enable people to work their way out of poverty, expanding the tax base and reducing the cost of future poverty reduction programs in the process (Ilahi, Orazem and Sedacek 2011).

The relationship between education and child labor is complex. Not all child laborers, including those involved in hazardous work, are out of school: most are in school and trying to manage the competing time-demands of education and employment. However, child laborers figure prominently in the out-of-school populations of many countries – and those in school are more likely to drop out (UCW 2012). There is also evidence that they register lower levels of learning achievement. Both the reduced number of years in school (education attainment) and lower learning achievement levels have direct consequences not just for income poverty, but for other aspects of human development. Because the children of poor households are more likely to be involved in child labor activities, the lower levels of income associated with early employment has the potential to transmit poverty across generations (Betcherman et al 2004).

It should be emphasized that the association between child labor and education cannot be interpreted as evidence of a causal link in either direction. Children may be working because they are out of school, rather than out of school because they are working. Patterns of causality vary across and within countries. But whatever the precise direction of causality in particular cases, getting children into decent quality education is one of the most effective antidotes to endemic child labor. The strength of the observed correlation between child labor on the one side and disadvantage in education on the other points strongly towards the incompatibility of child labor with the international development goals, which include universal basic education by 2015, gender equality and improved learning outcomes. The degree of incompatibility is strongly correlated with the intensity of child labor, as measured by hours in employment (UCW 2012).

While the precise mechanisms of work are complex and influenced by a range of unobserved factors – such as household preferences and family behaviour – the clear message to emerge from the research is that child labor is keeping many children out of school. Meanwhile, millions of children in school are fighting a losing battle to balance education with employment. In this section we look at:

- The impact of child labor on school attendance, including global out of school numbers
- The characteristics of children in employment, with a focus on parental wealth and education
- Time-intensity effects and the trade-off between child labor and education
- Evidence on the effects of child labor on learning achievement
- The impact of household chores and sibling care on school attendance among girls
- Education disadvantages associated with hazardous employment and the worst forms of child labor.

Employment versus school attendance – the child labor trade-off

Research carried out for this report by UCW has explored in detail the relationship between child labor and school attendance. That research points to a diversity of patterns across countries, reflecting difference in the incidence, intensity and pattern of child labor (UCW 2012). Within this diversity, there is a consistent pattern of education disadvantage associated with child labor.

That disadvantage covers a range of key indicators. Child labor has been identified in a wide range of national research exercises as one of the primary reasons for non-attendance and drop out (Hunt 2008; Colclough et al 2000; Boyle et al 2002). While most child laborers are in school, they face elevated risks of dropping out before completion, grade repetition, and failure to make the transition to secondary education (Sakurai 2006). The risks escalate over time, intensifying as children reach the higher grades of the basic education system.

While precision is ruled out by data constraints, there is compelling evidence that child labor represents a major barrier to attainment of the education for all target of universal primary education by 2015. Administrative data from UNESCO suggests that some 61 million children of primary school age are out of school, and that the decline in out of school numbers has slowed globally. Based on the available national survey data, the UCW estimates that around one-quarter of out of school children – some 15 million in total - are working^x. In sub-Saharan Africa around 10 million out of school children are working – roughly one-in-every-three. It is worth noting that these estimates may err on the side of understatement. They do not include household chores in the definition of child labor. Moreover, the UNESCO out of school estimate is based on enrolment data reported by governments rather than the school attendance rates reported in household survey data. It should be emphasized that association is not the same as causation: many children are working because they are out of school. Yet the UCW estimates lend powerful support to the proposition that child labor is both a cause and a consequence of the slow progress towards universal basic education.

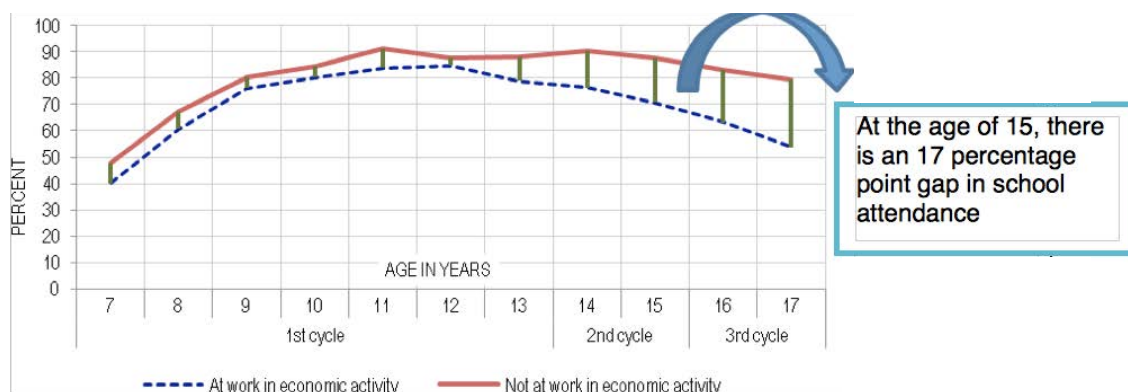
Survey evidence points strongly in the direction of a trade-off between child labor and education. That is, more of one is associated with less of the other – and the extent of the trade-off increases with time spent in work. Surveys carried out by UCW make it possible to compare the relative risk of being out-of-school faced by child laborers and non-laborers. Figure 7 documents the risk differential for a selected group of countries in South Asia, East Asia and Latin America using a simple comparison of attendance rates. In India, the non-attendance rate at school for child laborers is twice the level for non-laborers, rising to around four times the level in countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines. While the country coverage is partial, this survey evidence has global significance. Collectively, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan are home to 13 million out-of-school children on the most recent estimates – some 18 per cent of the world total in 2010. Pakistan alone has 7.3 million primary school age children not enrolled in school. It follows that effective national policies and international action on child labor in these countries could provide a powerful impetus towards the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

Detailed country-level analysis can help to identify some of the more granular patterns of disadvantage associated with child labor. The UCW has carried out a number of country surveys exploring the interface between education and various forms of child labor. These surveys capture not just the comparative position of child laborers and non-laborers at a specific point in time, but the cumulative patterns of disadvantage facing the former.

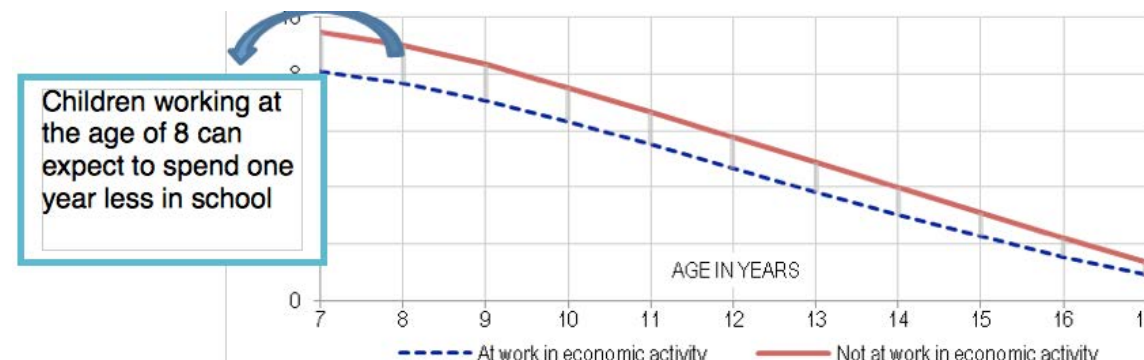
The evidence from Zambia illustrates these patterns (UCW 2009c). An estimated 1.3 million 5-14 year-old children in the country are involved in child labor – 41 per cent of the age group. As shown in Figure 8, child laborers lag behind non-laborers at every stage of the primary school cycle. The gap widens towards the end of the primary school cycle. Analysis of the social

characteristics of child laborers points to wider disadvantages. The child laborers in school are older than non-laborers, pointing to delayed entry or repetition – or both. There is also a distinct rural disadvantage: 88 per cent of children involved in manufacturing attend school compared to 74 per cent in agriculture (UCW 2009c). Similar work on Bangladesh has made it possible to identify specific sites of concentrated disadvantage associated with child labor (Box 4)

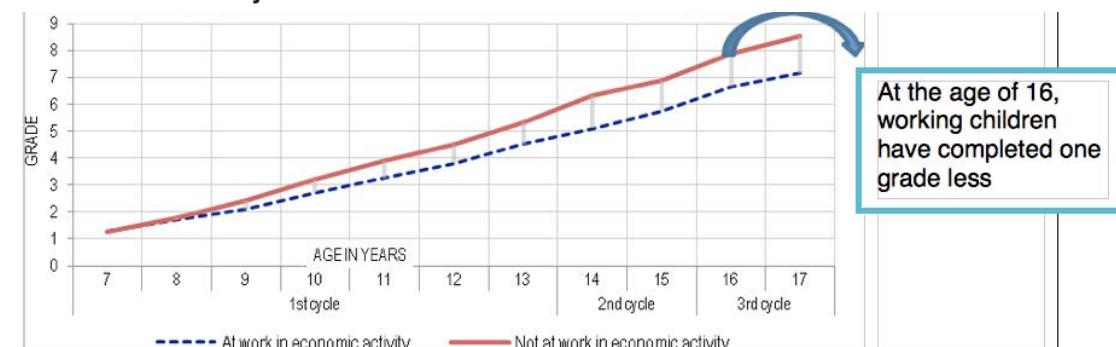
Figure 8 Child labor and education in Zambia
School attendance rate, by children's involvement in economic activity and age



Source: UCW calculation based on Zambia Labor Force Survey, 2005
School life expectancy, (a) by children's involvement in economic activity and age



Source: UCW calculation based on Zambia Labor Force Survey, 2005
Average grade completed of children currently attending school, by age and involvement in economic activity



Source: UCW calculation based on Zambia Labor Force Survey, 2005

Box 4: Mapping children's work in Bangladesh

Child labor remains an obstacle to achieving universal basic education in Bangladesh. While the problem is widespread, with all parts of the country affected to varying degrees, the pattern of child labor is complex and highly differentiated.

An estimated 3.6 million Bangladeshi children aged 7-14 years old were in employment in 2006, the most recent year for which data is available. Around 1.5 million of these children were not attending school. Many of these children are to be found in sectors characterized by hazardous employment conditions. There are also important differences based on region and gender.

The manufacturing and services sector is a far larger source of child employment in Bangladesh than most other developing countries, accounting for around one-half of the total. Current studies indicate that around 149,000 children are engaged in four extremely hazardous industries – welding, auto-workshops, road transport and battery recycling. An approximately similar number works in the cigarette industry (in northern areas) and the shrimp industry. Children are also extensively employed in construction, leather tanneries and the dry fish industry.

There are important geographic differences in the composition of children's employment. In Sylhet district agriculture accounts for three-quarters of total employment and manufacturing less than 3 per cent. The comparable figures for Dhaka are 36 per cent and 22 per cent. Sylhet has double the Dhaka's share of children only in employment.

Gender differences are marked. Boys are almost three times as likely as girls to be only-in-employment or combining work and school. This may reflect the impact of the stipends paid to families of girls attending primary school and making the transition to secondary education. One implication here is that poor boys have fallen behind. However, there is evidence that school attendance rates for rural girls still lags behind the level for boys at the upper primary level and beyond. One source of gender disadvantage in this area is a shortage of rural schools - attendance rates for girls are highly sensitive to distance from home to school. Girl domestic workers represent a group facing highly concentrated disadvantages in education (see main text).

As in other countries, time-intensity analysis in Bangladesh points to a marked trade-off between the amount of time spent in employment and school attendance. With an increase from 20 to 40 hours in employment the risk of being out of school is multiplied by a factor of four.

While there are many gaps in the survey evidence available from Bangladesh, the data that is available provides some important pointers for policy makers. It identifies manufacturing sectors where strengthened regulation, targeted incentives, and partnerships with employer associations could deliver results. It highlights regions – such as Sylhet – where progress will be contingent on improved provision of education opportunities in rural areas, especially for girls. And the evidence suggests that targeted financial support may be needed for boys currently only-in-employment. For girls in domestic service, an effective policy response is likely to require a combination of strengthened regulation and financial support.

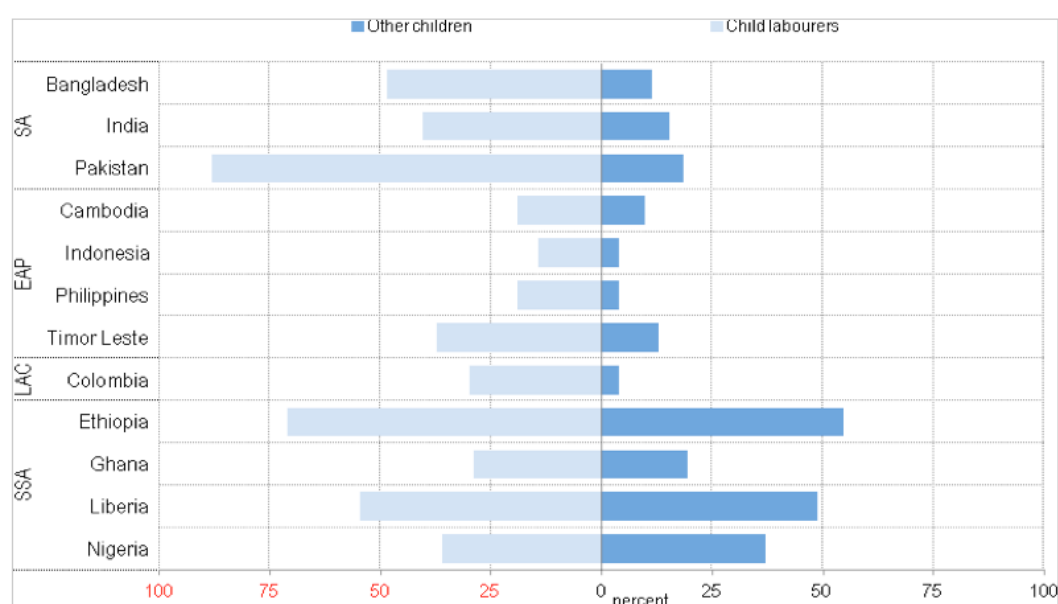
Sources: UCW 2011a; UNESCO 2010

Child labor profiles and household characteristics

Looking across a range of surveys it is possible to identify some of the underlying patterns of disadvantages faced by child laborers. Three recurrent themes stand out in shaping national profiles and defining the risks of education disadvantage that arise with employment.

Type of work performed. Family work – paid or unpaid – dominates the employment profile for out-of-school children. However, by comparison with children who are in school, out-of-school child laborers are more likely to be in paid work (Figure 9). This may reflect poverty-related pressures operating within their households, including the need to generate cash income to cover the costs of food, health and the education of their siblings. Household chores figure far more prominently in the employment of out-of-school girls. In Ethiopia and India, more than twice as many out-of-school girls as boys report working exclusively on household chores.

Figure 9 Incidence of paid work among child laborer: in-school versus out-of-school (selected countries)

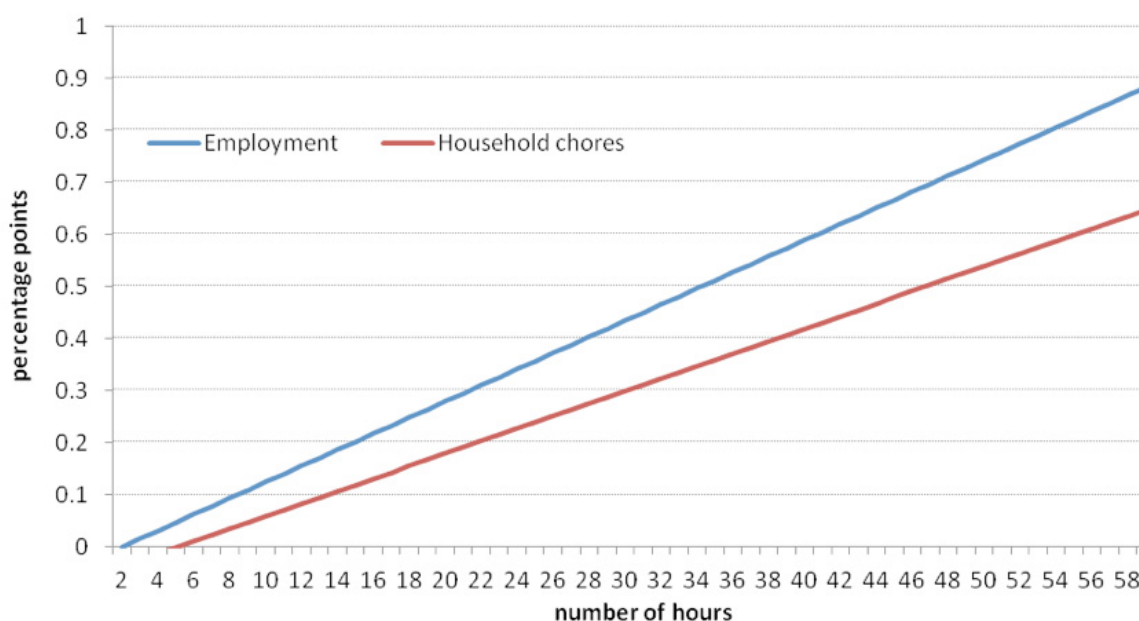


Source: UCW

Time-intensity of employment.

While the majority of in-school and out-of-school in many developing countries are working, out-of-school children work much longer hours. Drawing on survey evidence from 44 countries, UCW has plotted the average marginal effect on the probability of being out-of-school of an additional hour in employment and an additional hour spent on household chores (Figure 10). The findings are instructive. In both cases there is a linear effect: out-of-school risks rise with hours worked. However, the marginal effect of an extra hour in work is greater for employment in economic activity than for household chores. Employment in economic activity increases the risk of being out of school even with just a few hours of work. Increasing hours at work from 20 hours to 40 hours more than double the risk of being out of school. In the case of household chores, the first 8 hours in work have a limited effect. However, children working 38 hours face a 40 per cent higher risk of being out of school than those working 0-5 hours. Importantly, Figure 9 tracks the marginal effect of an extra hour in work. There are also important threshold effects in operation. In a parallel study covering twenty-five countries with available data, UCW found that working for up to 12 hours a week had limited effects on school attendance. However, the risk curve became far steeper after 20 hours. Increasing average hours of work from 18 to 30 hours doubled the risk of being out-of-school, with the transition to 46 hours doubling the risk again (UCW 2012).

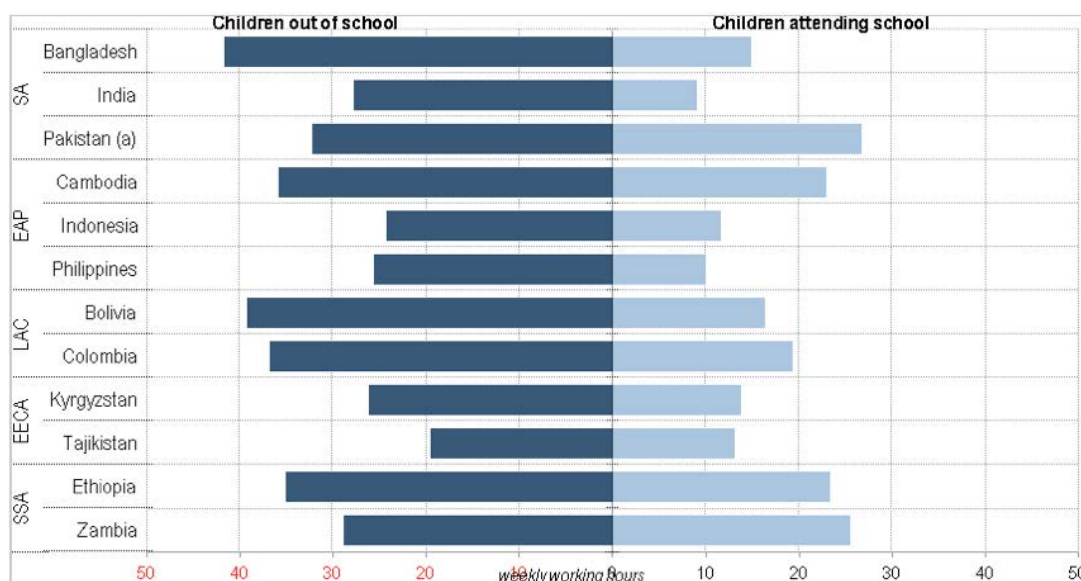
Figure 10 Average marginal effect of working hours on probability of being out-of-school: overall child employment and household chores in forty-four countries



Source: UCW

Individual country studies confirm the presence of an employment-education trade-off. On average, out-of-school children in Bangladesh and India are working between two-and- three times more hours than their in-school peers (Figure 11). Equally striking, however, is the fact that the average child attending school in countries like Cambodia, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Zambia is working for over twenty hours. This is well beyond the cut-off point for heightened risk of drop-out and points to labor demands at a level that may constrain learning opportunities. Health effects associated with time intensity may also compromise school attendance. In Cambodia, increasing the number of hours in work from 10 to 20 hours doubles the risk of injury for children in employment (Guarcello, Lyon and Rosati 2004).

Figure 11 Weekly working hours: out-of-school versus in-school working children, 7-14 years age group (selected countries)



Notes: (a) Pakistan: Children aged 10-14;

Household characteristics.

The household survey data points to a strong inverse relationship between household wealth and parental education on the one side and child labor on the other: the wealthier and better educated the parents, the lower the incidence of child labor. This relationship is unsurprising. Better-off households are less reliant on the income and labor of their children, and they have the financial resources to cope with external shocks without having to send children into paid employment. There is also evidence that parental education makes a difference at many levels. It is not just that the incidence of child labor declines with the level of parental education, but that the likelihood of child laborers being out of school rises dramatically in homes with less parental education. In Nigeria, child laborers from families where the household head has no education are almost ten times more likely to be out of school as those from families in which the household head has a secondary education (Figures 12a and b). Detailed survey evidence from Ethiopia provides an insight into the complex interaction between education, wealth, gender on the one side and child labor on the other. For children in the age-group 12-14 age group, having a mother with no education, coming from the poorest quintile and being rural all more than double the risk of spending over 28 hours working on household chores (Table 3).

Figure 12a Household wealth and out of school risks for child laborers: poorest quintile as a multiple of richest quintile (selected countries)

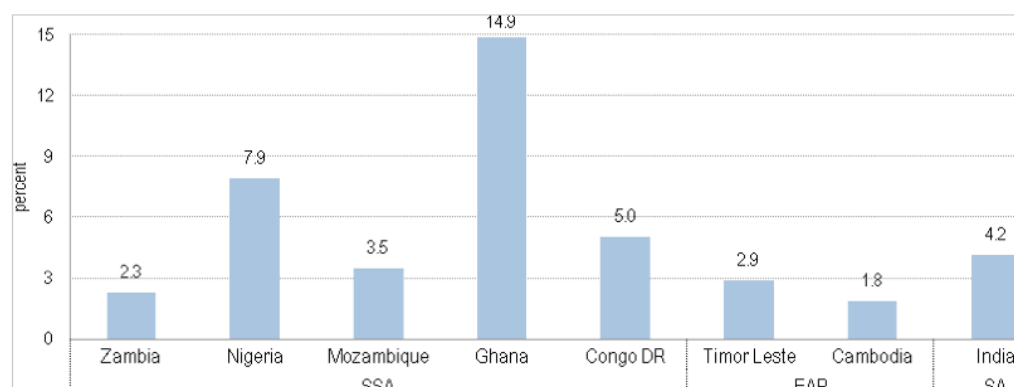
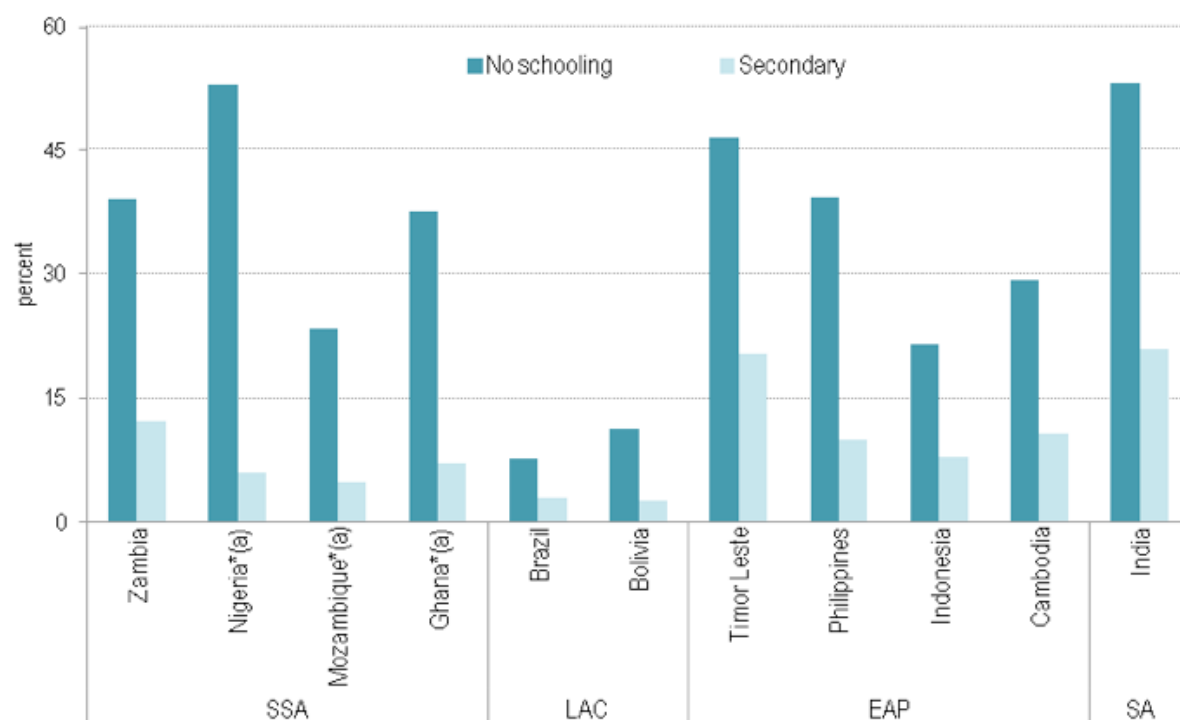


Figure 12b Percentage of child laborers who are out of school by education level of household head: selected countries



Source UCW notes (*) Education of mother; (a)Secondary and tertiary education.
Notes and sources: See Figure 1.

Table 3 Child labor: Ethiopia DHS, 2011

Background characteristics	Children aged 5-11 years		Children aged 12-14 years	
	Household chores for 28+ hours per week	Child labour	Household chores for 28+ hours per week	Child labour
Residence				
Urban	7.6	8.0	19.6	24.1
Rural	19.1	17.9	43.9	60.8
Mother's education				
No education	17.2	17.2	42.7	59.0
Secondary +	2.9	12.6	17.0	20.0
Wealth quintile				
Lowest	17.9	19.1	45.8	64.6
Highest	9.3	8.6	20.6	27.0

Learning outcomes

Taken in isolation school attendance is a limited indicator of educational opportunity. Attendance at school is both an important end in itself and a means for children to develop the literacy, numeracy and wider problem-solving skills that will create the foundations for future learning. Child labor weakens those foundations.

Evidence of the trade-off between child employment and learning comes from a number of sources. To the extent that it reflects low levels of learning achievement, grade repetition is a proxy indicator for the quality of education. Household survey data from several countries points to a strong association between child labor and repetition (UCW 2012; Sakauri 2006). Research on Pakistan and Nicaragua found that an additional hour worked by child laborers increased the probability of grade repetition, and that even a few hours of work could have a 'non-trivial influence on school outcomes' (Rosati and Rossi 2011). Test scores from international learning achievement studies also show a strong and consistent pattern of superior performance on the part of non-working children, even controlling for other factors (Sakauri 2006). Research in Cambodia found that an increase in the number of hours worked by children attending school had a detrimental effect on reading and writing scores (Ray and Lancaster 2004).

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence on the damaging interaction between child labor and learning comes from Latin America. One group of researchers used a unique data set on test scores for language and math among children in the third and fourth grades of schools in eleven countries across the region (Sanchez, Orazem and Gunnarsson 2009). In every country, child labor lowered proficiency, even when controlling for school and household attributes. The test score disadvantage for child laborers was 16 per cent for language and 17 per cent for math. Adverse impacts increased for children who worked regularly rather than occasionally, pointing to a time intensity effect. However, even modest levels of child labor at an early age led to delayed cognitive development, and to an average reduction of 12 per cent in test scores.

These findings have some two reaching policy implications. They suggest first that there is a substantial learning cost to having children work while they are at school. Second, the combination of lower test scores and higher drop-out rates is linked to the lower earnings of child laborers in their adult lives noted earlier in this paper. Other things being equal, eliminating double-digit loss in test scores associated with child labor in Latin America would produce wage effects sufficient to prevent many of these children falling into poverty as adults (Gunnarsson, Orazem, and Sedlacek 2005).

Household labor, sibling care and the education deficit

Any consideration of the implications of child labor for education has to take into account the overwhelming dominance of non-formal work, primarily within a family environment. Unpaid family work accounts for an estimated 72 per cent of child labor for girls and 64 per cent for boys (ILO 2011b; Diallo et al 2010). The most prevalent types of labor are sibling care and domestic household chores (dominated by girls) and agricultural tasks (dominated by boys). It is sometimes assumed that that working with parents or relatives is less damaging than working outside of the family, though there is little evidence to back this assumption.

Household labor allocation practices and gender roles can have profoundly harmful consequences for the schooling of children, and for intra-household disparities. In societies where girls traditionally do more chores than boys the opportunity costs in terms of labor services foregone of educating girls may appear higher to parents (Herz 2011; Lloyd 2005). The provision of sibling care by girls is a case in point. In most cultures, the household division of labor typically requires girls to assume a greater share of the sibling care burden (Hunt 2008). When that responsibility collides with school attendance, it is often the latter that loses out. In Kenya, the presence of children aged 0-3 years doubles the probability of girls working (Moyi 2010).

Similarly, evidence from Ghana shows that the probability of an elder girl dropping out of school increases with the number of siblings and, by extension, the time spent providing sibling care (Hunt 2008).

This is another area in which the interface between child labor and education has the potential to transmit disadvantage across generations. Research in Pakistan has found that the number of years spent in school by the oldest sister in a household has significant beneficial impacts for the education prospects of their younger brothers (Quereshi 2011). Specifically, an additional year in school for the elder sister increases the younger brother's completed years of schooling by half-a-year and his probability of being enrolled by 10 per cent. It also increases his probability of being literate and numerate by 7-19 per cent. These findings are important because they indicate that the curtailment of girls' education as a result of child labor has consequences not just for her, but for the education prospects of her siblings.

Not all household labor patterns skew school attendance opportunities against girls. Young boys also lose out when livelihood demands clash with education rights. Lesotho introduced free primary education in 2000, leading to an increase in net enrolment levels from 57 per cent to 73 per cent in 2008. Unusually in Africa, however, there are more girls in school than boys. Girls are also more likely to complete primary school and make the transition to secondary education. The inequalities are linked to labor allocation patterns in which boys traditionally herd livestock before migrating to work in the South African mining industry (Macro International Inc. 2008). In the arid and semi-arid land areas of Kenya, pastoralist livelihood systems depend on boys working with their fathers to herd cattle. During the dry season this can entail travelling over long-distances in search of pasture and water, leading to high levels of non-attendance at school (Watkins and Alemayehu 2012). The arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya account for around 20 per cent of Kenya's primary school age population but almost half of the country's out-of-school population.

Hazardous and worst forms of child labor

While all child labor has the potential to harm education, hazardous activities and the worst forms of child labor pose the most extreme threats. These are areas in which children are more likely to be working excessive hours, often in occupations that threaten their health and security.

There is limited data available of the education status of children trapped in the worst forms of child labor – but the data that is available suggests that these children are among the most disadvantaged in the world. It appears likely that the vast majority of the 5.7 million children in forced or bonded labor are out of school. One survey of 10-14 year old child laborers in South Asia's brick kilns – a sector in which child labor is endemic – found 68 per cent of boys and 76 per cent of girls were out of school (ILO 2011a).

Hazardous labor in artisanal mining is heavily implicated in the disruption of education. There are no reliable estimates indicating how many of the 1 million children involved in artisanal mining are out of school. However, the testimonies and evidence compiled by Human Rights watch in Mali powerfully captures the restricted opportunities facing many children (Box 5). Half of the child laborers being interviewed in this case reported being out of school, with the cost of education identified as a major barrier to entry. Few of the millions of under-age domestic workers are able to exercise their right to an education. Worldwide it is estimated that there are at least 15.5 million children in domestic work, more than half of them in hazardous employment. In Bangladesh, just 11 per cent of the 421,000 child domestic laborers were attending school at the time of a 2006 survey – and only half had ever attended (ILO 2001b).

Detailed survey evidence from the cocoa growing areas of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire provides another insight into the links between education and child labor. That evidence shows that most of the children involved in cocoa cultivation in both countries are in school. However, there are important differences between the two countries. Whereas over 90 per cent of the children working in the cocoa sector in Ghana are in school that number drops to 60 per cent for Cote

d'Ivoire (Tulane University 2011). These static figures may also understate the problem since they do not take into account either the absenteeism associated with labor demands, or the consequences for learning of long-hours spent in work. What is clear is that the international chocolate market links western consumers to forms of child labor associated with extreme disadvantages in education (Box 6).

Box 5: Child gold miners in Mali – locked out of education

"I have never been to school." Karim S, age 14

"I would like to go to school but we do not have the means." Susanne J, age 11

"I prefer to have free time than to work at the mine. But my parents say I have to work to buy study material for school." Lansana, age 13

"It is really difficult to combine school and work. One cannot do the two at the same time. I am always tired." Nanfadima A, age 11

These are the voices of four children working in the artisanal gold mines of western and southern Mali. Like tens of thousands of children across the 'gold belt' of the Sahel region and beyond, they spend their day descending and ascending narrow mine shafts, crushing rock, panning, and working with mercury to separate gold from ore. Many of them will never see the inside of a classroom – and few will complete an education.

The worst forms of child labor are common in Mali. Around 40 per cent of the country's children aged of 5-14 years old perform hazardous labor. Estimates put the number of children working in artisanal mines at 20-40,000, though the real number is unknown. While the artisanal mining is legal and governed by labor codes that prohibit child labor, much of the sector is unregulated. Research by Human Rights Watch found children working on average in excess of nine hours a day. Many of these children were performing dangerous tasks for little or no pay. Sexual exploitation and child prostitution is common in artisanal mining areas.

There are no comprehensive school attendance indicators for children working in artisanal gold mines. Many of the mines located in remote rural areas such as the Kenieba region do not have schools. Research by Oxfam and other agencies has found that, even when public schools exist, they are often over-crowded and lacking enough classrooms for each year group. Moreover, while primary education is nominally free in Mali, schools frequently charge. In interviews with a group of mothers in Kenieba, the Human Rights Watch research found that schools were charging US\$1.75 a month per child – a practice that forced them to send some of their older children to the mines in order to pay school costs for their younger siblings. Of the 33 primary school age children interviewed by Human Rights Watch, half were out of school.

Enrolment is a weak indicator of the state of education in the mining areas. Pupils working in the mines frequently fail to turn-up for school and many either drop-out or are forced to repeat grades. As one teacher interviewed by Human

Rights watch put it: “The fact that children in fifth and sixth grade work in the mine has consequences. They do not do their homework and are tired.”

Migrant children face special problems. According to the ILO, around two-thirds of the children working in the artisanal mines are migrants. Some come from neighbouring countries like Burkina Faso, but most move from mine-to-mine with their parents, often every couple of months.

The limited availability of education in mining areas has prompted several initiatives. Limited public provision has prompted the growth of independent community schools. Operating on a not-for-profit basis and managed by a local community or associations, these schools have helped expand access to education – but financing constraints means that most are forced to charge fees and hire untrained teachers.

As part of its global program to end child labor through education, the ILO/ IPEC has been active in Mali’s artisanal mining sector. Working in a small number of villages with a local NGO partner – Réseau d’Appui et de Conseils – it has renovated schools, provided materials, instituted free school meals and strengthened school management committees. While the model has the potential for scale-up, it is currently operating on a small-scale project basis.

Sources: Human Rights Watch 2011; Oxfam 2009; ILO 2010

Box 6: Chocolate and education – the cocoa sector in West Africa

“My mother brought me from Burkina Faso when my father died. I wish I could go to school. I want to read and write.” Yacou, age uncertain, child from Burkina Faso working on a cocoa farm in Cote d’Ivoire.

Chocolate is big business. The global market, estimated at US\$62bn annually, is dominated by major multinational companies such as Kraft Food, Nestle, Mars, Ferrero and Hersheys. In the United States alone more than 58 million pounds of chocolate candy are sold on Valentine’s Day and Britons eat their way through 80 million chocolate eggs every Easter. Few consumers are aware of the role played by the cocoa industry in linking them through a complex chain of retailers, manufacturers, wholesalers and exporters to children employed in harvesting the cocoa pods.

Africa dominates the supply of cocoa to world markets. Over 60 per cent of global exports come from two countries, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. Both have been under intense scrutiny for more than a decade after allegation of child slavery prompted the US Congress in 2001 to demand action by industry and governments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Progress since then has been limited.

Child labor is used extensively on the cocoa farms of West Africa. More than half of children living in the cocoa growing areas work in agriculture, 25-50 per cent of them in cocoa. There are around 820,000 children involved in Cote d'Ivoire and almost 1 million in Ghana. These children are frequently involved in hazardous work. They use machetes to cut and open cocoa pods, carry heavy loads, and are exposed to potentially dangerous pesticides. There is significant trafficking of children from Burkina Faso and Mali to work on cocoa farms, with many of the children affected living in conditions of servitude.

The education of child laborers suffers as a result of excessive labor demands. The average weekly time spent by children working in cocoa is estimated at 10 hours in Ghana and 20 hours in Cote d'Ivoire. School attendance patterns reflect these time differences. School attendance rates for Ghana are 90 per cent but fall to 60 per cent for Cote d'Ivoire. This suggests that 100,000 children in Ghana and 492,000 in Cote d'Ivoire are out of school as a direct result of their work in preparing cocoa.

Several international initiatives have attempted to address the problems facing child laborers. Prompted in part by US legislation, the chocolate industry has participated in a public-private initiative – the International Cocoa Initiative – aimed at eradicating child labor. The results have been disappointing (see section 3). Parallels initiatives in Europe have set some ambitious targets for eradicating child labor, though results to date have been limited. Fair trade chocolate supplied through audited farmer cooperatives provide consumers with an alternative, though the problem is so widespread that it is difficult to segregate markets. Campaigns directed at individual companies are playing an important role in pushing them to clean-up their supply chains, though the major actors have collectively failed to provide the leadership and resources needed to transform the sector.

Sources: International Cocoa Organization 2011; Tulane University 2011; Hawksley 2011; International Labor Rights Forum 2012.

4 From human rights to national action – eliminating child labor

National and international action against the worst forms of child labor is not just an imperative for human rights - it is also a condition for achieving the internationally agreed development goals. Child labor is transmitting poverty, extreme deprivation and inequality across generations, and it is a potent barrier in the way of achieving education for all. The ILO target of lifting 115 million children out of hazardous employment by 2016 is a starting point for change. However, this should mark a transitional point en route to the more ambitious goal of eliminating child labor as a barrier to education by 2020.

If international conventions, human rights laws and legislation on education and employment were the measure of progress in combating child labor, the world would look very different. There would be fewer child laborers, more children in schools, and poor countries would be far closer to the 2015 education for all target.

Over the past two decades there has been a proliferation of national and international commitments to eradicate child labor. Real change in the lives of the presumed beneficiaries - child laborers themselves - has lagged far behind the statements of intent. If the rights to a childhood free of exploitative labor and to compulsory education are fundamental human rights, they are violated on a widespread and systematic basis – not least by many of the governments that are signatories to international conventions. While many international development agencies and financial institutions have taken up child labor as an issue of concern, the slow pace of progress towards a world in which all children are in education rather than employment points to a wider failure of global partnerships.

Looking beyond the specific policies, there are five fundamental requirements for a global breakthrough on child labor:

- **Developing a global road-map backed by multilateral financial commitments:** Governments around the world should come together in an international summit on child labor not to adopt another tranche of principles, resolutions, and vague declarations, but to adopt a global roadmap for the eradication of child labor by 2020. The road-map would include financial estimates for achieving the 2020 goal, with an initial focus on the most hazardous forms of child labor – and it would be backed by a multilateral fund. National governments seeking increased and additional financing would be required to draw up comprehensive national strategies for achieving the 2020 goal, with technical support from the ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank.
- **Getting serious about projecting and protecting child rights – meeting the leadership challenge:** There is no substitute for political leadership in combating child labor – and far too many political leaders, nationally and globally, have allowed child labor to drift to the periphery of the development agenda. Recognizing child labor as a fundamental human right is not enough. Governments have to enforce the right of children to live free of exploitative labor, identify those responsible for violating that right, and create the judicial, regulatory and financial framework for protecting that right. Private companies – national and global – must also be held to account for employment practices that violate child rights.
- **Strengthening the role of international development and financial institutions.** Employment practices affecting children reflect local market conditions, the social and economic circumstances of poor households, and the effectiveness – or otherwise – of national laws and institutions. But external actors also have an influence. Powerful multinational companies link consumers in rich countries to labor markets in poor countries not just through their direct employment practices, but through the complex web of contracting and sub-contracting that underpins global production systems. UN agencies and

international financial institutions play a critical role in informing policy approaches, setting rules and monitoring outcomes. The international community already has in the Global Task Force on Child Labor a vehicle for coordinating action and promoting ‘child friendly’ national policies. That vehicle brings together the ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank, Education International and the Global March Against Child Labor (see below). Yet while the institutional mechanisms are in place, delivery has been weak. It is vital that heads of UN agencies and international financial institutions must ensure that their organizations are part of the solution, and not part of the cycle of indifference that traps so many children in exploitative employment.

- **Building a global campaign to raise awareness and leverage change.** During the 19th Century and early 20th century, social reformers mobilized broad coalitions to challenge child labor. These coalitions not only countered the vested interests and the received wisdom perpetuating child labor. They also appealed to basic human empathy, generating the public concern needed to leverage change. While there are several inspiring national and international campaigns against child labor – notably the Global march – it is difficult to escape the conclusion that current movements lack the critical mass of coalitions and public support needed to achieve a breakthrough. Broadening the social base of the movement against child labor and using social media to appeal to a wider public are priorities for change.
- **Making the link to compulsory education through 2015 national education plans.** Education has a critical role to play in eradicating child labor. Here too there are lessons from history. In 19th Century Europe the introduction and expansion of free and compulsory public education provided a catalyst for the eradication child labor, reinforcing factory legislation and regulatory measures (Fyfe 2005; UNICEF 1996). The same was true for the United States in the early decades of the 20th Century (Whittaker 2005). Policies aimed at getting children out of work and into school could play a similar role today. Education reform is not a stand-alone strategy. Breaking the triangle linking child labor to poverty and education disadvantage will require integrated policy approaches that tackle the underlying causes of deprivation. Yet education is one of the most potent weapons in the armoury for eliminating child labor. As part of their commitment to the 2015 education targets, national governments should draw up national strategies for accelerating progress by extending opportunities to marginalized groups – with child laborers a priority. Building on existing plans, these strategies should set out clear policies and financing requirements for getting all primary school aged children out of work and into school by 2015 – and for extending second chance and vocational training options for adolescent children and young adults.

The precise mix of approaches adopted in any one country has to be shaped by national circumstances, with national governments providing leadership. Given the financial and institutional capacity constraints facing many countries, development assistance also has a vital role to play in creating an enabling environment for successful country-led strategies. In this section we outline some of the policies and wider strategies needed to accelerate the eradication of child labor. We focus on four areas:

- **Strengthening the human rights framework**
- **The national policy environment**
- **Education policy as a driver for change**
- **National and international campaigning**

The current human rights framework

Many governments around the world have ratified an impressive number of international treaties prohibiting or restricting child labor^x. Education is at the heart of these treaties. Unfortunately, delivery of practical outcomes has been less impressive than the declarations of principles.

An overarching requirement of international human rights provision is that any employment activities involving children should not interfere with their schooling. Indeed, child labor is defined by the ILO as work that is “mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children” and “interferes with their schooling.”^{xi} Both the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention (Convention 182) and the Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138) are aimed at prohibiting work that is harmful to their physical and mental development of children. Article 7 of the Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention requires that states take measures to “ensure access to free basic education.”^{xii} The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a wider legal framework for protecting children. Under Article 32 children have a right ‘to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development’^{xiii}.

The corollary of child rights is government responsibility. Some of the obligations have an immediate relevance. Provisions enshrined in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) are subject to progressive realization, but states have a ‘minimum core obligation’ to ensure ‘at the very least, minimum essential levels of each of the rights’^{xiv}. The right to education is of paramount importance in this context because of a requirement that states make available free and compulsory primary education with immediate effect^{xv}. Indeed, the CESCR explicitly recognizes that education has a vital role to play in “safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labor and sexual exploitation”, and requires^{xvi}. In 1999 the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Requirements explicitly stipulated that every government that had not achieved universal basic education was under an ‘unequivocal obligation’ to draw up within two years a plan of action for delivering access to decent quality education for all children^{xvii}. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has similar provisions^{xviii}.

Responsibilities to protect the human rights of children, including their right to education, extend beyond governments. Private companies also have obligations. As employers, companies are under a legal requirement to comply with national employment laws. The UN Human Rights Council has also adopted a set of international norms linked to human rights treaties. These norms call upon companies to exercise due diligence to prevent and mitigate violations of human rights – including those relating to child labor – in their supply chains and commercial operations. However, there are no binding provisions on mandatory monitoring, reporting and remedial activity. Similarly the UN Global Compact provides a code under which companies agree to adhere to ten principles of corporate responsibility, including measures to ‘uphold the effective abolition of child labor’.^{xix} Here too compliance is voluntary, though the principle of prohibiting any form of child labor that erodes the right to education is enshrined in the framework.

Several industry initiatives have evolved under the broad umbrella of human rights provisions on child labor. The OECD had adopted a (non-enforceable) code on due diligence with respect to removing compulsory labor and the worst forms of child labor from supply chains of minerals in conflict-affected areas. Efforts are being made to extend these principles to the gold supply chain.^{xx} Industries such as garments and textiles have adopted codes of conduct on child labor, with multinational companies auditing their immediate supply-chains to encourage compliance.

More recently, international campaigns and public pressure has give rise to new initiatives. The Harkin- Engel Protocol in the United States is an innovative public-private agreement aimed at eradicating the worst forms of child labor in cocoa in Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana. That agreement led in 2002 to the creation of the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) in 2002, under

which major multinational companies in chocolate and confectionary agreed to a range of targets and monitoring arrangements (Tulane University 2011). The results have fallen far short of expectations (Box 6). The Dodd-Frank Act, which was signed into law in July, 2010, establishes a mandatory requirement that companies using tin, tantalum, tungsten or gold from the Democratic Republic of Congo or neighbouring countries carry out due diligence. Implementation has been delayed and the resulting uncertainties have deterred some companies from investing in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Global Witness 2012; Seay 2012). Even so, there is encouraging evidence that mandatory reporting requirements have created incentives to improve supply chain management (Wyatt 2012; Enough Project 2012).

From human rights laws to national policies – a weak link

Translating international human rights norms into practical outcomes for children requires national legislation, backed by institutional capacity for enforcement and political leadership. While many governments have sought to align national laws with international norms, significant gaps remain. An even wider gap separates the legislation and enforcement capacity. Fragmented planning systems further dilute the effectiveness of national legislation and national action plans aimed at the eradication of child labor.

The ILO conventions on child labor are now among the most widely ratified in the world. Even so, 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. The shortfall from universal ratification inevitably weakens the international human rights architecture on child labor.

Non-ratification is not the only concern. ILO reviews of national policy have highlighted problems of inconsistency between the child labor conventions national laws, with many national laws weakened by misalignment and ambiguity. Education is an example. Recent research has drawn attention to inconsistencies between the minimum age for admission to employment and the age set for compulsory schooling. Employment law in around one third of the countries that specify both of these ages allow children to work before education law allows them to leave school (ILO 2012b; UCW 2012). Aligning the minimum age for admission to employment and the age for schooling is a legislative precondition for making enforcement of compulsory education a more effective catalyst for change.

Clarifying legislation on child labor is another precondition. In some areas national legislation fails to go beyond statements of broad intent. While 183 countries have ratified Convention 182, the majority either lack a comprehensive list of the industries considered 'hazardous'. Many leave out sectors – such as agriculture and domestic labor – where children's work is common but widely accepted (ILO 2011; UCW 2012). One-third of countries have no list defining hazardous work prohibited to children, weakening the scope for enforcing legislation aimed at protecting children from such employment – and undermining the intent of the ILO conventions in the process. Similarly, while relatively few countries lack basic legislation on the minimum age for employment, laws are often either ambiguous or include extensive waivers. To cite one example, the Zambia Employment of Young Persons and Children Act states that 'no child' shall be employed in any industrial undertaking, but also allows children aged 13-15 years old to be employed in 'light work' without prohibiting their employment in such undertakings (UCW 2009c). In Senegal, an exception to the labor code allows children aged under-16 to work in underground mines if they are doing 'light work' (United States Department of Labor 2011). Some countries fail to specify an age at which hazardous work may begin, while other countries allow hazardous work to be performed by children below the age of 18.

Moving from legislation to policy planning and implementation raises a wider set of concerns. Few of the countries in which the worst forms of child labor are endemic have established comprehensive monitoring systems enabling planners to identify, quantify and report with any accuracy on child labor. There is a very literal sense in which monitoring and report difficulties

start at birth. Countries with high levels of child labor often have low levels of birth registration, undermining prospects for effective enforcement of national legislation on child employment and compulsory education. While international agencies such as UNICEF are supporting national efforts to strengthen birth registration, national strategies need to draw on the combined resources of national and local governments, the media, schools, health clinics and village institutions to raise registration levels, especially in rural areas.

National strategies for eradicating child labor often reflect underlying institutional weaknesses. Many governments have worked with UN agencies to develop national action plans on child labor. There are now around ninety such plans. In some cases, the plans set bold targets. But in almost every case there are three underlying weaknesses. First, the targets adopted are weakly linked practical policies and financial provisions for their attainment: most are aspirational rather than practical. Second, the planning framework suffers from fragmentation. Most national action plans are implemented under the auspices of ministries of labor or employment, with other line ministries – covering agriculture, social welfare, families, children and education – consulted on a partial and ad hoc basis. The upshot is typically a mix of poorly designed, overlapping, poorly coordinated and often contradictory policies, with damaging implications for impact and cost-effectiveness.

The third problem is the limited role of education ministries in the planning process. Education ministries are often at best peripheral actors in national planning on child labor, which is seen predominantly either as an employment or as a social welfare problem. In Nigeria, responsibility for overseeing enforcement of federal laws on child labor rests with the Ministry of Labor and Productivity, with the education ministry having played a negligible role in framing policies. In India, the National Authority for the Elimination of Child Labor is a high-level body covering eight ministries, chaired by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE). Even the extensive network of National Child Labor Project schools operating in twenty-one of India's states are administered by MOLE, rather than education authorities.

The marginal engagement of education ministries is reflected in national action plans for eradicating child labor. Few of these plans identify policy pathways and financing requirements for getting children out of employment and into school. Similarly, ambitious national plans for eradicating child labor are seldom backed by detailed proposals setting out the strategies for absorbing more children, adolescents and young adults into the education system. This is particularly damaging given the planning horizon required to build more primary school classrooms, train more teachers, and provide second-chance opportunities through accelerated learning programmes and vocational training.

Not all of the evidence on national planning points in a negative direction. Perhaps more than any other country, Brazil has demonstrated that political leadership backed by robust and well integrated policy design delivers results. Having failed to make significant headway during the 1990s, successive Brazilian governments have strengthened the institutional machinery for combating child labor. Overall responsibility for planning rests with the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CONANDA) - the national body that coordinates policies to protect children's rights and monitors their implementation. The National Committee for the Elimination of Child Labor leads the implementation of the National Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of Working Adolescents. While coordinated by the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE) it includes 17 government agencies along with representatives from trade unions, business associations and civil society organizations. Arguably more important than the institutional framework for coordination has been the policy architecture. Child labor policies are integrated into national strategies for education, employment, health and child welfare under the national plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. One of the core parts of that plan is the National Program to Eliminate Child Labor (PETI) – a US\$200 million conditional cash transfer scheme aimed at families with working children. The PETI is in turn part of Brazil's wider program of conditional cash transfers, putting incentives for education at the center of the wider national strategy for eradicating child labor.

Another positive example comes from Bangladesh. In 2010 a new National Child Labor Elimination Policy (NCLEP) was approved (UCW 2011). The policy identifies ten strategic areas for action, including education and health, the enforcement of legislation on employment and child safety, and monitoring. Education figures as a central theme. The NCLEP includes the provision of free and compulsory education to all currently working children. Under the new framework, the education ministry is required to identify the requirements for providing education not just for primary education (from grade 1 through grade 8) but for early childhood care and development.

It has to be stressed, though, that these positive cases are the exception rather than the rule – and that strengthening national planning and enforcement is a complex process. One of the most positive developments in combating child labor globally in recent years has been the adoption by India of an ambitious new legislative framework. Concerns remain, however, over the degree to which the legislation will be translated into practical actions (Box 7).

Box 7: New hope for India

India has one of the world's largest populations of child laborers. After years of political indifference, there are today some signs that policy makers are acting more decisively to tackle a problem that two decades of high economic growth has done little to resolve.

Under the proposed Child and Adolescent Labor (Prohibition) Bill, the Government of India has banned all forms of child labor for children under the age of 14, along with employment in hazardous occupations for the 14-18 age group. Making it a cognizable offense, the penalties for violating child labor laws have also been increased. Will it make a difference? The answer to that question will depend on developments in three areas.

First, effective enforcement will require robust action by agencies charged with upholding the law. Government agencies have prosecuted only 50,000 cases of child labor law infringement since 2007. In only around 10 per cent of these cases have employers been convicted – and the penalties imposed (typically in the range \$10-25) have been derisory. One campaigner has described the penalties as “a ruthless and cruel joke played on the children of our nation.” If the new law is to succeed, mechanisms must be put in place to bring employers to justice more swiftly through fast track courts empowered to impose more punitive measures. The endemic corruption, insensitivity and indifferent attitude of agencies charged with inspection and enforcement must also be addressed.

Second, there is a danger that information gaps will weaken the impact of the new legislation. Data on child labor in India is notoriously weak. Official estimates of the numbers involved – less than 500,000 – almost certainly underestimate the scale of the problems by several orders of magnitude. Moreover, campaigners have presented compelling evidence that many children are falsely listed on school registers when they have fallen victim to child trafficking, bonded labor, sexual exploitation or forced labor thousands of miles from their homes. More research based on more comprehensive household, employment and education survey data are required.

Third, the education system has to be prepared for effective implementation. The present scheme for rehabilitation and provision of education to children needing to make the transition from the world of work to the world of education is miniscule. One of the greatest challenges is to provide education for the conservatively estimated 150,000 to 200,000 children employed in hazardous work. The starting point could be the development of education initiatives directed towards the provision for education of children employed in industries – such as carpet making, garments, brick kilns, stone quarries and glass – and districts characterized by high levels of child labor.

Source: Satyarthi 2012

From work to school – strengthening the national policy environment

Translating international principles into effective policies on child labor will require policies that break the transmission mechanisms linking child labor to disadvantages in education. The single most effective way to stem the flow of school age children into work is to extend and improve schooling. Legislation on free and compulsory education has to be backed by policies that make education and accessible, affordable and relevant alternative to child labor.

The world is a long way from achieving the 2015 international development goal of universal basic education. In 2010, an estimated 61 million children of primary school age were out of school, along with 71 million adolescents. After picking up for the half decade after 2000, progress towards the 2015 target has slow globally and stalled in sub-Saharan Africa – the region with the highest incidence of child labor. Countries affected by armed conflict face distinctive problems. In 2009, these countries accounted for just under half of all out-of-school children (UNESCO 2011).

It impossible to determine exactly how many children are out of school because of child labor, and how many are working because they are out of school. What is clear is that child labor is intimately connected to restricted opportunities for education - and to the failure of education policies to reach marginalized children forced by their poverty into premature employment. Children trapped in the worst forms of child labor are among the hardest to reach in any country. They are often drawn from social groups facing the most deeply entrenched disadvantages. Living in informal urban settlements or on the streets of major cities, in remote, highly marginalized rural areas they are poorly served by public education systems. Moreover the economic sectors in which child labor is concentrated – households, informal enterprises and the service sector – are weakly covered by government regulatory systems.

What are the policies that can unlock the potential of education to release children from the child labor trap? The answer to that question varies across countries. Specific policies have to be informed by the national child labor profile, and by evidence on what works. Programs that deliver results in one context may fail in another. But there are ten broad principles and policy guidelines that can be followed:

1 Set targets and identify the children, sectors and activities involved

Every national education strategy should incorporate time-bound targets on child labor. These targets should chart a course towards ending child labor within a decade, and for eradicating hazardous child labor by 2016. National education plans should profile the characteristics of child laborers, along with a menu of policies and financing strategies for reaching different categories of children and providing them with opportunities for education. The current fragmentation in planning between education and employment weakens prospects for progress towards the eradication of child labor, as does the failure of education strategies to address the specific needs of child laborers.

With the 2015 deadline for the education for all goals approaching, there are opportunities to create a renewed political momentum on child labor. The former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, has called on governments in Africa to draw up Millennium Development Goal plans aimed at accelerating progress towards the 2015 targets (Africa Progress Panel 2012). More specifically his proposals call on governments to identify policies aimed at reaching social groups that have been left behind. In the case of education child laborers constitute one of the largest of these groups. Building on this theme, in September, 2012 the current UN Secretary General launched an 'Education First' initiative, again aimed at accelerating progress through greater equity. This sends a strong signal to national policy makers and donors, opening the door to stronger international cooperation on child labor.

2 Strengthen equity

Policies need to target the groups and regions most vulnerable to child labor. The employment of children, especially hazardous employment, is highly concentrated among the most marginalized social groups and in the most disadvantaged areas, including poor rural regions and urban slums.

The same groups and areas are frequently penalized by policies in education. Schools in wealthier regions often secure higher levels of per pupil financing. In Kenya, the arid and semi-arid northern counties have some of the highest levels of child labor and lowest education indicators for the country. Yet they are actively discriminated against by education financing policies that link resources to the number of children in school, penalizing those with high drop-out rates. Some of these counties – such as Wajir and Turkana – receive less than half the amount on a per pupil basis that they would receive were the education budget to be distributed on an equal basis (Watkins and Alemayehu 2012). The case is not untypical. Under-resourcing of schools in poor rural areas and urban slums reinforces a vicious circle between education disadvantage and child labor, making it more difficult to attract qualified teachers, provide textbooks and finance measures aimed at raising demand for education (see below). Governments can strengthen equity and the quality of education provision in marginalized areas by adopting financing formulae that attach more weight to indicators for disadvantage, including the number of children out of school, household poverty and parental illiteracy.

3 Make education free in practices, as well as in legislation

Making basic education free through the elimination of direct and indirect costs is a vital component in any strategy for eradicating child labor. Cost-barriers continue to keep many children out of school, even in countries where education is nominally free. In some cases, as in Kenya, the failure of governments to provide education in urban slums means that households are left with no alternative but to turn to private providers. Many of the poorest are unable to afford the costs (UNESCO 2011; Oketch et al 2010). In other cases, informal fees and the costs of uniforms or textbooks keep children out of school. In Zambia, one-fifth of households with children who are working and out-of-school report school costs as a barrier (UCW 2009c). The introduction of free education across many countries after 2000 contributed to a surge in enrolment in many countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Engel 2011). Driving down the residual cost barriers would help to diminish a major push-factor that is driving children towards

labor markets.

4 Ensure that education is accessible

Supply-side measures such as classroom construction and the recruitment of teachers can help to draw children away from employment. Building schools that are close to communities helps to reduce journey times (and hence the opportunity cost) of children attending school, with significant benefits for all children. Girls in particular stand to gain because their school attendance patterns are more sensitive to distance.

School distance can constitute an important barrier to school attendance, especially in rural areas. One of the reasons that Ethiopia was able to increase school enrolment by some 3 million between 2001 and 2006 is that classroom availability and teacher numbers increased respectively by 11 per cent and 12 per cent annually (Engel 2011). In Bangladesh, the presence of a primary school in a village makes it much more likely that families send their children to school. Providing a local primary school makes it six percentage points more likely that a child attends school full-time, while at the same time reducing a child's risk of full-time employment by two percentage points (UCW 2011a).

Some caveats have to be attached to the positive association between school access, attendance and child labor. Research in Burkina Faso (de Hoop and Rosati 2012) has explored the effects of an integrated project with a package of interventions aimed at reducing child labor and increasing school attendance through the construction of classrooms (to reduce distance to school) and provision of free meals (to increase demand). The project covered 132 rural villages. One part of the intervention succeeded. School participation in project villages increased by 13 per cent compared to a control group of villages. However, there was no decrease in the prevalence of child work – and some evidence that employment for boys increased. On a more positive note, the program resulted in substantial improvements in test scores (roughly 0.2 – 0.4 standard deviations for math and French). It appears that in this case, the demand for child labor is so high that a reduction in school journey times has the effect of increasing labor time. In this type of situation programs that aim to increase school participation and to reduce child labor have to be attuned carefully to the incentives and constraints facing poor households.

Schools also have to be responsive to livelihood patterns. In northern Kenya many male children drop- out of primary school during periods when labor demands for herding increases. As in other countries, temporary withdrawal from education is often a prelude to dropping out. The underlying problem is that livelihoods are highly mobile whereas schools are fixed. An alternative is to provide herders with mobile schools (UNESCO 2010). Non-formal education provision has the potential to provide an exit from child labor. In Bangladesh, the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children program is targeted towards providing employed children aged 10-14 with basic education skills and a route back into formal education. At the same time, some 22,000 learning centers have been created to provide second-chance learning opportunities (UCW 2011a). Non-government organizations are also actively involved in non-formal provision. The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) provides an accelerated primary education program, enabling most completers to join mainstream upper-primary or lower-secondary schooling (UCW 2011a).

5 Raise learning achievement levels

Parents are more likely to send their children to school if there is a perception that the education they are receiving is of reasonable quality. When poor quality schooling leaves children unable to acquire basic literacy skills, forced to repeat grades, and unlikely to complete a full primary cycle, incentives to prioritize education over employment may move in an unfavourable direction.

There is a general need to improve education for all children, but especially for those vulnerable to child labor. If education fails to provide relevant learning and a route to the primary school leaving certificates that offer a pathway to secondary education, parents are less likely to sustain the opportunity costs – and the real financial costs – associated with keeping children in school. Evidence from national learning surveys is of direct relevance to the debate on child labor. For example, the ASER survey in India found that 40 per cent of children in grade 4 classes were unable to successfully complete grade 2 levels exercises. In Tanzania, 30 per cent of grade 5 students were unable to complete a grade 2 reading test. These outcomes point to low levels of value-added for learning by an additional year in school.

Factors that compromise the quality of education - including high student-teacher ratios, poor facilities, a lack of textbooks and poor quality teaching – expand the pool of potential child laborers. They sustain high drop-out rates and deter parents from sending their children to school. It follows that policies aimed at raising the overall quality of education and learning achievement levels, especially in highly marginalized areas and for the most disadvantaged communities, have an important role to play in combating child labor.

6 Increase demand for education through social protection

Protecting vulnerable households from external shocks has a vital role to play in the eradication of child labor. Many children are pulled out of school and pushed into labor markets as a result of circumstances brought about by events such as droughts, unemployment, and episodes of sickness which force households to curtail expenditure, sell assets, and generate new income streams – in some cases by drawing on child labor. Social protection can alleviate poverty and provide a buffer against shocks. Conditional cash transfers that offer targeted payments to vulnerable households provided that their children are in school have a proven track record.

Box 8: Conditional cash transfers in Brazil – supporting the transition from work to school

The experience of Brazil demonstrates the potential for conditional cash transfer programs to counteract the poverty-related pressures and external shocks that push children into employment. By providing households with a flow of income linked to school attendance, cash transfers have changed the economic incentives that shape choices between education and employment and empowered parents to make choices in favour of schooling.

The Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil (PETI) scheme provides cash grants to families with school-aged children aged 7 to 14 years, conditional on school attendance. The PETI, which supports over 820,000 children in 3,500 municipalities, is part of the wider Bolsa Família scheme (ILAB 201). Another program - the Jornada Ampliada programme – provides after-school activities, lowering the incidence of children working after school. Independent evaluation of Bolsa Família has found that it increases school attendance by 4 percentage points nationally, but by 9 percentage points and 12 percentage points respectively in rural regions and the north-east respectively – areas marked by high concentrations of child labor in agriculture.

Child labor rates have fallen dramatically. The probability of children working has by a quarter in Bahia, the Brazilian state with the highest child labor force participation. Both PETI and Bolsa Família are underpinned by an extensive network of community coordinating committees on which local counterparts of the education, social welfare, labor and other agencies, as well as civil society, are represented. When a child laborer is identified, these committees respond by establishing a record on the national child database, and then arranging for financial support for the child's family and for the child to return to full-time schooling.

Source: de Braw et al 2011

The experience of Latin America is instructive. Anti-child labor policies have been effective partly because of the design and institutional mechanisms built into cash transfer schemes. In Brazil and Mexico, conditional cash transfers have provided poor households have received a strong incentive to keep children in primary school (Box 8). Secondary education has also benefited. The Oportunidades program in Mexico increased secondary school attendance by approximately 10–30 per cent on one estimate (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009). However, one of the lessons of the more successful programs is that support for demand has to be backed by increased supply of quality education in regions prone to child labor. Over the past fifteen years, Brazil has used federal government transfers to increase public spending on education in the poorest states, introduced a nationwide learning assessment system to identify failing schools and pupils, and strengthened teacher training and support. The country has registered one of the fastest-rising test scores in the PISA (Bruns, Evan and Luque 2012).

Many countries are now integrating child labor and education provisions into cash transfer programs. Brazil is providing technical support for one such program in Ghana. Recent reforms to Indonesia's social protection systems have specifically targeted child laborers. The impact of cash transfer schemes is inevitably shaped by design and resourcing. Implementation of one program in Nicaragua – the Nicaragua Red de Proteccion Social - saw enrolment rise by 18% but labor participation decrease by only 5% (Thomas 2010). In this case, the incentive to keep children in school had a only marginal effect on the incidence of child labor, but it did appear to have reduced the time intensity of children's work.

Social safety nets can also weaken the transmission mechanisms linking poverty, child labor and education disadvantage. One example comes from Ethiopia. The Productive Safety Net Program (PNSP) in Ethiopia launched in 2005 now provides over 7 million people with guaranteed employment at a minimum wage. While the primary aim is to enable vulnerable households to cope with droughts without having to run down productive assets, the PNSP has also been instrumental in reducing the amount of time that children spend working and increasing the amount of time they spend in school. Around 15 per cent of the transfers made under the PNSP are directed to education (Gilligan et al 2008; Coll-Black et al 2011; Devereux et al 2006).^{xxi}

Estimating the financing requirements for the type of global safety net that might facilitate accelerated eradication of child labor is notoriously difficult. The ILO estimates that the world's poorest 48 countries would require social protection investments of around \$60bn, with one third of the financing gap – around \$20bn annually – having to be covered through aid. However, programs in countries such as Brazil and Mexico suggest that the costs of creating strong incentives geared towards the narrower goal of facilitating the transition from work to school could be much lower, ranging from 0.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent of GDP (ILO 2011).

7 Target vulnerable children through stipend programs

Education systems cannot fully counteract the wider pressures that force children in child labor. What they can do is mitigate these pressures. Like other cash-transfers, stipends directed towards students vulnerable to being taken out of school and pushed into employment – notably adolescent girls - can create incentives that help to keep potentially vulnerable children in school.

One of the most striking examples of a successful stipend program comes from Bangladesh. The country's Female Secondary School Assistance Programme provided cash grants, book allowances and tuition fees for girls in secondary school in the 121 poorest districts in the country – districts characterized by high levels of child labor. One result was a rapid narrowing of the gender gap in basic education, with girls eventually over-taking boys at the national level. Since extended to boys, the transfers now reach 0.8 million children (UNESCO 2011). There is a parallel program at the primary school level covering an estimated 5.5 million pupils from the poorest households enrolled in eligible primary schools in poor rural areas (UCW 2011a).

Like other interventions, stipend programs are likely to be most successful when integrated into wider strategies. In Cambodia, the introduction of a secondary school scholarship program for the most disadvantaged students (especially rural girls), created incentives for parents to keep children in school. But it was one element in a broader package including the withdrawal of school fees, more equitable public spending designed to benefits smaller schools in poorer areas, poverty-targeted school feeding programs, increased teacher recruitment (Engel 2011b). Meanwhile, a targeting six provinces identified as having the worst education indicators in the country focused on improving the quality of education in hard-to-reach areas with large ethnic minority population.

8 Expand early childhood provision

Early childhood and pre-school programs can generate a twin benefit in combating child labor. By promoting readiness for school, increasing school enrolment and reducing subsequent drop-out rates, successful programs reduce the flow of potential child laborer. More immediately, the presence of affordable early childhood programs have the potential to reduce the labor demands on young girls in particular providing sibling care.

Currently, early childhood provision is very limited in most countries with endemic child labor – fewer than 10 per cent of children are covered in much of sub-Saharan Africa. The provision that is available is often private and unaffordable to the poor, pointing to the importance of public finance in supporting the development of affordable and accessible early childhood programs.

9 Build public-private partnerships

The private sector and employer organizations have a vital role to play in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. They have the power to directly influence employment norms and to reach beyond the formal sector into the small-scale enterprises and informal sector activities that typically dominate the worst forms of child labor.

There are several islands of good practice to draw upon (ILO 2010). One example comes from Chile, where the Chilean Safety Association, a leader in labor accident insurance, provides guidance to over 37,000 enterprises on child labor provisions. In Thailand, the Employer's Confederation, has led efforts to eradicate the worst forms child labor in the fishing and seafood industry, drawing up agreements between enterprises and provincial governments not just to prohibit employment, but to support schooling and vocational training. Between 1996 and 2002, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and UNICEF jointly developed a comprehensive child labor monitoring, verification, and reporting system that was successful in curtailing the employment of children in factories, and is now being extended to other sectors through the national strategy for eradicating child labor.

Collective and free bargaining by trades unions is another most powerful constraint on child labor. In factories, workshops and agricultural sectors where social dialogue thrives, and where organized workers can negotiate freely with employers on standards for decent work, hazardous child labor is relatively rare. The problems are more deeply entrenched in the informal economy, much of which is unregulated and uninspected. Even here trade union activity can make a difference. For example, the General Agricultural Workers Union of Ghana has championed national measures to eradicate the worst forms of child labor (ILO 2010). In the Indian state of Tamil Nadu trades unions representing workers in the brick kiln industry and the employers federation have worked with the ILO and the state education ministry to establish 20 education centers serving out-of school children. Similar schemes are reported by IPEC across a range of countries and sectors, though most of the projects operate on a relatively small-scale basis (ILO 2008b; ILO 2010).

Multinational companies are well-placed to effect change. Most major foreign investors participating in global production and supply systems have adopted corporate social responsibility codes with child labor provision. They are also party to a range of voluntary social initiatives and signatory to declarations of principles, including the UN's Global Compact, ILO declarations on rights at work, and industry-wide initiatives. For the most part, direct employment of children by major foreign multinational companies is a residual concern – albeit one with the potential to excite considerable media interest. The role as indirect employers is far more important. Current corporate initiatives, with their emphasis on voluntarism, have often been ineffective in tackling child labor problem. The West African cocoa initiative is one high profile example. Having promised a great deal, it has delivered very little in terms of education and wider opportunities (Box 9). Independent mandatory auditing and reporting of the type envisaged under the Dodd-Frank legislation could help to ensure that anti-child labor principles inform core business activities, leveraging change in firms along the supply chain.

10 Reinforce regulation

More effective regulation and enforcement of national laws can strengthen the effectiveness of education policies, creating incentive for employers and parents to comply with national legislation and international norms. Failure to bring the force of the law to bear in dealing with the worst forms of child labor actively weakens the role of education as a force for change. With little fear of prosecution, the actors responsible for child trafficking, sexual exploitation and the forcible recruitment of children as soldiers have little incentive to comply with national laws.

Box 9: Public-private initiatives in cocoa – falling short on education

It might have been hoped that a US\$86bn industry, two major governments and the international aid community would find a way to break the link between the worst forms of child labor in cocoa and the education crisis in cocoa-growing areas. That was one of the intentions of the Harkin-Engel legislation in 2001 that gave rise to the International Cocoa Initiative. The results have been disappointing.

Industry has not lived up to the commitments undertaken in 2011. Independent research commissioned by the US Department of Labor and carried out by Tulane University has documented the number of children reached through projects supported by the ICI. The results tell their own story. In total, around 3,600 children have been withdrawn from employment as a consequence of the projects. Over the entire eight years between 2001 and 2009, education was been provided to around 3,700 children in Ghana. The equivalent figure for Cote d'Ivoire is 13,000 children provided with education. This is equivalent to just 3 per cent of the total out-of-school population in the cocoa growing areas of both countries.

As the Tulane report concludes: "Industry was not able to achieve...its commitment to cover '50 per cent of the two countries cocoa producing areas by July 2008'...and was unable to accomplish the commitment to reaching 100 per cent of the cocoa growing regions...by the end of 2010." In fact, by 2010, remediation efforts had reached just 4 per cent of cocoa-growing communities in Cote d'Ivoire and 30 per cent in Ghana.

Part of the problem has been a shortfall in financing. Meeting the targets set by industry would have required funding estimated at around US\$75m, or around 0.1 per cent of 2009 turnover. In the event, companies funded ICI activities with between US\$2-3 million annually between 2002 and 2010.

The governments of the two countries concerned have very different track records. Successive governments in Ghana have responded to international concerns by developing a National Plan of Action for eliminating the worst forms of child labor, setting up detailed monitoring surveys and commissioning district action plans to identify strategies for eliminating the practice. The national plan operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare in collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Ministry of Finance. However, the education component of the plan is weakly developed and requires more engagement from the Ministry for Education.

Cote d'Ivoire's efforts have been far more limited. Of course the 2002-2004 civil war and the governance crisis that accompanied the 2010 election are important factors, but cannot explain away all the lack of progress. The country has a strongly legal framework for eradicating the worst forms of child labor – but that framework is weakly implemented. One legal gap of great concern is the absence of laws requiring children to attend school and setting a compulsory age for education, though children do enjoy a constitutional 'right' to education.

Source: Tulane University 2011; Dale 2012

5 International cooperation, campaigning and advocacy

Eradicating child labor is not just a matter of identifying policies with a potential to deliver results. It is also about creating an enabling political environment by building a broad consensus behind the case for change, and by developing the political coalitions needed to make change happen. Policy responses to child labor are unlikely to be effective in the absence of high-level political commitment, backed by increased public awareness, the active participation of civil society and social partners in implementation. This is most evident at the national level, where laws framed to protect children from child labor have often suffered as a result of weak political backing and limited public scrutiny. But international cooperation also has a role to play, especially in the poorest countries.

Strategic communication, coalition-building and advocacy have a critical role to play both nationally and globally. This is another area in which the history of child labor abolition in rich countries offers some insights. In nineteenth century Britain social reformers forged new alliances against child labor, bringing together industrialists, philanthropists, trades unionists and religious groups. Literary figures from William Blake at the start of the century to Charles Dickens increased public awareness of the conditions experienced by child laborers, helping to build momentum for reform. In the United States, the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC), formed in 1904, helped to organize committees in every state where child labor was reported. It was one of the first social reform movements to make widespread use of photographic evidence to change attitudes. The photographs of Lewis Hine provided communicated to a wider audience the social conditions of children documented by activists across the United States (UNICEF 1996; Walters and Briggs 1993). Cutting across all of these efforts was the critical role of compulsory education in forcing change (Box 9).

Good policies divorced from effective social mobilization will deliver limited results. The factors that draw children into work go beyond economics. They are rooted in social norms, cultural attitudes and perceptions. In much of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, young girls drop out of school and enter labor markets early because norms favouring early marriage mean that parents ascribe a low value to the education of their daughters. In India, the bonded labor systems used to entrap children are well known to policy makers and law enforcement agencies but widely ignored.

Box 9: Compulsory education and child labor – lessons from history

During the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century successive generations of social reformers worked first to reduce and then eradicate child labor. Employment legislation and factory acts played a critical role, as did technological change and rising income levels. But compulsory primary education was among the most powerful levers for lifting children out of work and into school.

Child labor was widespread during early industrialization. In the United Kingdom children under the age of 15 are estimated to have accounted for almost one-quarter of mill workers in the north-east in 1820. Fifty years later 26 per cent of boys and girls aged 10-14 in Britain were working, many of them in textile mills and coal-mines. In the United States, child labor persisted into the 20th Century. Several streams of legislation were introduced to curtail the employment of children. Factory acts regulated the duration of employment, stipulated employment activities that were prohibited for children, and introduced

requirements for education. Employment law established minimum working age provisions. And compulsory education introduced a requirement on parents, employers and government bodies to ensure that children received a specified amount of time in school.

Germany: State provided compulsory education in Europe was largely a German invention. By the time of unification in 1871, school attendance was almost universal. The enforcement of compulsory education laws reinforced employment laws that set limits on the amount of hours that children and a floor under the amount of hours in compulsory education.

England: Unlike Germany, England followed a voluntary pathway to compulsory education. Two-thirds of education financing was voluntary as late as 1869. Early factory legislation forced employers to provide some minimal education for working children. But it was not until the Elementary Education Act of 1870 and subsequent legislation that school boards were required to enforce compulsory education. Significantly, the decade after 1870s saw a sharp decline in child labor and increase in school- attendance: the share of 5-14 year olds in school double from 22 per cent to 45 per cent. However, it took England another half-century to eliminate child labor.

United States: The United States followed a different course to Europe. The country's highly devolved political system constrained attempts at national legislation. During the second-half of the nineteenth Century the movement for public education had created taxpayer-financed provision, with five years of schooling commonplace by the turn of the Century. Education constrained the growth of the child labor force, which declined substantially after 1900 as states strengthened child labor laws and expanded compulsory education to secondary provision.

What is striking about the historical record on the eradication of child labor in the industrialized countries is the diversity and underlying similarities. Countries varied in the design and timing of the legislation that was introduced, and the interaction between compulsory education and child labor was in each case complex and coloured by national circumstances. But in each case compulsory education played a pivotal role in driving change.

Where states were slow to act of left legislative gaps, political alliances responded by building pressure for reform. In Britain, this took the form of parliamentary commissions and alliances linking the labor movement to wider social movements. In the United States too, labor movement campaigns pushed the eradication child labor onto the New Deal reform agenda of the 1930s.

Sources: UNICEF 1996; Fyfe 2005

International action to combat child labor suffers from the same fragmented approach as national policies. Most international aid donors and agencies are doing something on child labor and there is cooperation between the ILO, the World Bank and UNICEF. Yet the sum total of the global effort lacks leadership, finance and a coherent policy framework. Much of that effort is channelled through projects. For example, the ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), which was established in 1992, has built up an impressive track record in a range of projects spanning sectors from brick kilns in Pakistan to the fisheries industry in Bangladesh and artisanal mining in Burkina Faso. Yet relatively few of these projects have gone to national scale. More progress has been made in strengthening information systems – a critical element in efforts to tackle child labor. IPEC has supported some 250 child labor surveys, 60 of which are national in scope. Meanwhile, the UCW has emerged as a center of international excellence for the analysis of child labor. However, strong information systems linked to what are weak and under-developed international partnerships do not deliver optimal results.

Non-government organizations occupy a critical position in the fight against child labor. They provide support to the children affected, inform public opinion and act as advocates and campaigners for change. In Cambodia, the NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child is a 40-member coalition whose members work actively to rehabilitate the victims of the worst forms of child labor, including those subject sexual exploitation, monitoring the compliance of employers with national and international laws, and leading campaigns to prevent child trafficking (UCW 2009a). In Bangladesh, the Together with Working with Children network, which was launched in 2005, provides a mechanism for coordinating NGO action against child labor. The network, which links national NGOs and international agencies such as Save the Children, played an important role in developing the National Child Labor Elimination Policy. Some non-government organizations have mounted highly effective campaigns to challenge these systems and the political indifference that facilitates their survival.

Some non-government organizations have successfully local action with national advocacy and global campaigning. In India, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA, or Save the Childhood Movement) has undertaken direct action to free child laborers and support their rehabilitation and education. In the recent past it has brought cases against brick kiln owners, sweatshop employers and groups involved in trafficking children. It has also mobilized national campaigns and advocacy efforts aimed at prompting political leaders in India to act on their international obligation, securing more stringent legislation on employment. The BBA has also been the prime-mover of the Global March Against Child Labor, which groups together hundreds of trades unions and NGOs in a worldwide alliance^{xxii}.

This is just one example among many. Yet given the scale of the child labor problem, national political coalitions and campaigns remain weakly developed in most countries. The same holds true at an international level. Though much has been achieved in forging international partnerships, child labor lacks a global movement that can engage governments, put child labor at the center of the international development agenda, and hold governments to the commitments that they have made. As the ILO (ILO 2010) has put it: "Further support is required to release the latent capacity of the worldwide movement, based on common goals of decent work, the elimination of child labor and education for all."

The last of these three strands – education for all – is a natural focal point, yet nowhere is the weakness of international cooperation more evident. While child labor is one of the greatest of all the obstacles to the 2015 goal of universal basic education, a major cause of the low learning achievement levels reported in many countries and a potential source of inequality in educational opportunity, the issue is largely conspicuous by its absence from the education for all agenda.

The problem is compounded by the generalized neglect of education in international aid. UNESCO estimates that the aid financing required to achieve the 2015 education targets in the poorest countries is around US\$16bn annually. Aid flows to these countries has stagnated at US\$3-4bn. Moreover, the education sector has suffered from the absence of a strong multilateral core. There is no counterpart to the global health funds that have played such a decisive role in mobilizing finance, forging public-private partnerships and galvanizing political action to combat HIV/AIDS and extend childhood immunization. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the only multilateral vehicle serving the education for all partnership, has suffered from limited financing, bureaucratic delays in disbursement, and a failure to respond to the distinctive needs of conflict-affected countries.

Child labor could provide a focal point for wider international efforts to change this picture. It is difficult to think of a policy area – or a cause – meriting more urgent attention, or more amenable to effective advocacy, communications and the development of national alliance. There are also opportunities to build bridges between national reform movements and wider global partnerships, especially in education. Among the priorities:

- **Support national efforts to put the eradication of child labor at the heart of national education planning.** The specialized agencies of the United Nations – the ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO – working with the World Bank should build the capacity of national governments to identify the policies and financing requirements for reaching child laborers, and facilitating their transition from work to school. The center for Understanding Child Work (UCW) has pioneered work in this area and is well-placed to provide intellectual leadership.
- **Increase aid for education by US\$12-13bn annually to close the 2015 financing gap.** Development assistance cannot substitute for effective policies, but it can supplement domestic resources to facilitate increased spending on targeted interventions, as well as measures aimed at strengthening quality and equity.
- **Expand social protection.** The importance of social protection in reducing child labor and getting children into school is well understood. Well-designed social protection interventions serve to support coping strategies that enable parents to keep children in education during times of stress, providing a buffer against external shocks. Conditional and unconditional cash transfers both have a role to play.
- **Mobilize support for anti-child labor interventions through the Global Partnership for Education.** The education for all convening agencies – UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank, together with the ILO – should actively campaign for new and additional resources to be made available through the GPE for national strategies with a high potential for getting children out of work and into school. The GPE could also provide a focal point for private sector actors seeking to support national strategies for reducing child labor.
- **Focus on the special circumstances of children in conflict-affected states.** While precise numbers are unknowable, conflict-affected states account for a significant share of child laborers. Conditions across these states vary. In some cases, as in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, ongoing conflicts are sustaining high levels of displacement. In others – South Sudan is a case in point – delayed reconstruction has limited opportunities for children to make the transition from work to school. Donors should increase the share of humanitarian assistance dedicated to education (it is currently just 2 per cent) to prevent conflict-related emergencies fuelling the supply of child labor. They should also create pooled funds to support the reconstruction of education systems after conflict.

Conclusion

Though much has been achieved over recent years child labor remains a global epidemic. That epidemic is depriving some 215 million children of their childhood, exposing them to the risks that come with arduous and often dangerous employment. It is also holding back progress towards the education for all goals, trapping a whole generation of children in a cycle of poverty in the process.

Education has a vital role to play in changing this picture. Getting children out of work and into school should be an international development priority. Removing the financial barriers that keep children out of school and raising the quality of provision through more effective teacher training, more equitable public spending, and a strengthened focus on marginalized children and areas is one of the requirements for unlocking the potential of education to act as a catalyst for change. But if the right to education is to be translated into a reality for children trapped in the worst forms of child labor wider measures will be needed. Education has to be integrated into wider national strategies for eliminating child labor through strategies that combat poverty, inequality and vulnerability, including social protection and targeted support.

Success in combating child labor will require more than good policies. Many of the required interventions are well known. What has been lacking is political leadership in countries affected by the worst forms of child labor and political engagement on the part of aid donors, non-government organizations and others. There are no ready-made blue-prints for changing this picture. Yet the complexity and resilience of the child labor problem is not an automatic barrier to progress. In the 19th Century, social reformers working for the eradication of child labor were confronted by vested interests, political and the force of received wisdom. Their efforts succeeded because they were able to marshal strong evidence and mobilize public support. Similar efforts are required at the start of the 21st Century. While child labor is deeply engrained in the social, economic and cultural fabric of many societies, there are compelling moral, economic and political grounds for making its eradication a priority in national planning and international cooperation.

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Endnotes

ⁱ Cited in 'Speeches of the Earl of Shaftesbury (1868)': <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/factmine/condmine.htm> (consulted 25 August, 2012)

ⁱⁱ The Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor, established under ILO auspices in 1988, is the primary source of information on child labor. Understanding Child Work (UCW) was launched in 2000 as a collaborative undertaking between the ILO, the World Bank and UNICEF.

ⁱⁱⁱ ILO Convention 138 is accessible at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/ILOconventionsonchildlabor/lang--en/index.htm>

^{iv} ILO Convention 182 is accessible at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc87/com-chic.htm>

^v For a detailed overview of some of the methodological issues raised by household survey data see Diallo 2010 and UCW 20102.

^{vi} In fact, there is an obvious endogeneity issue since the global data includes an estimated figure for sub-Saharan Africa.

^{vii} Figures based on: <http://refugeesinternational.org/get-involved/helpful-facts-%2526-figures>

^{viii} <http://www.peacedirect.org/landing-page/child-soldiers/>

^{ix} This figure is derived from an approximate calculation. Drawing on national survey data from ninety-eight developing countries available at UCW, we looked at the reported employment status of children aged 5-14 not attending school. The weighted average across these surveys for the share of children in employment was 25 per cent. Applying that figure to UNESCO reported out of school population for 2011 produces a number of 15 million children working. As highlighted in the text, caution has to be exercised in interpreting this figure. The national survey data used for the extrapolation is partial and uneven across regions, and most of the surveys were conducted over the period 2005-2011 (seventeen were pre-2005) whereas the UNESCO out of school estimate is for one year (2011). The data used is available on the UCW web-site at: <http://www.ucw-project.org>

^x There is an extensive body of international treaties that cover child labor beyond the ILO Conventions. It includes the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

^{xi} ILO/IPEC 'About Child Labor' <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en/index.htm> (consulted 19 August, 2012)

^{xii} Ibid

^{xiii} Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm> (consulted 19 August 2012)

^{xiv} UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No.3 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4538838e10.html> (Consulted 20 August, 2012)

^{xv} CESCR, General Comments No 13 <http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/ae1a0b126d068e868025683c003c8b3b?Opendocument> (Consulted 20 August 2012)

^{xvi} *ibid*

^{xvii} CESCR General Comment No 11, Plans of Action for Primary Education <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/59c6f685a5a919b8802567a50049d460?Opendocument> (consulted on 21 August, 2012)

^{xviii} African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Article 11 http://www.africa-union.org/official_documents/Treaties_%20Conventions_%20Protocols/a.%20C.%20ON%20THE%20RIGHT%20AND%20WELF%20OF%20CHILD.pdf (consulted 21 August 2012)

^{xix} UN Global Compact <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/AboutTheGC/> (Consulted 21 August 2012)

^{xx} On the OECD's due diligence guidelines for conflict minerals and gold see: <http://www.oecd.org/corporate/guidelinesformultinationalenterprises/goldsupplementtotheduediligenceguidance.htm> (Consulted 21 August 2012)

^{xxi} <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/esspwp24.pdf>

^{xxii} On the BBA's activities see: <http://www.bba.org.in/main.php>

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