

# Interventions on Child Labour in South Asia

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## Question

- *What are the key interventions on child labour and what organisations are carrying them out?*
- *Have rigorous research and/or impact evaluations been carried out?*

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## 1. Overview

This Help Desk Report highlights the key interventions on child labour in South Asia at a local, national, regional, and international level.

The three principal international conventions on child labour (Minimum Age to Employment Convention, 1973 (No. 138), Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, together set the legal parameters for child labour and provide the legal foundations for national and international action against it. Whilst advocacy efforts are the predominant type of intervention, it is difficult to attribute the successes in ratifying conventions and implementing legislative policies and powers to any one organisation or campaign. Notwithstanding, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) continues to lead in this area due to their global presence, funding and partnerships internationally, regionally and nationally. A number of other actors including a number of regional level strategic policy and technical alliances also engage in programmatic support and technical

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assistance addressing child labour. Impact evaluations on child labour programmes tend to suffer from two main limitations:

1. Seldom is child labour the main outcome of interest of impact evaluations and;
2. Social protection programmes and their constituent interventions are not necessarily selected according to a consistent knowledge generating strategy.

Despite these challenges, integrated approaches such as conditional cash transfers combined with supply side interventions such as the provision of education and healthcare services have demonstrated the most success according to the studies examined for this report. Effective and well-targeted responses to child labour demand a strong body of knowledge on the issue, including an understanding of the number of child labourers, which employment sectors and geographical areas they work in, the demographic characteristics of the children involved, and the type of work that they carry out. Despite recent national household surveys in most South Asian countries (with Afghanistan as an important exception), data quality and comparability are uneven and significant information gaps remain, affecting the true understanding of the dynamics of child labour and the ability of policy-makers to address it. There is a general need therefore, for mainstream systems for the collection, analysis and dissemination of child labour statistics, as well as more targeted research aimed at filling specific knowledge gaps.

This report will begin with an overview of advocacy efforts and service provision at the international, regional and national levels followed by programmatic and technical assistance interventions also sub-categorised in a similar manner. Lastly the report will conclude with a discussion regarding impact evaluations, key findings and its challenges.

## 2. Advocacy and Programming

As there are many overlaps between organisational advocacy efforts and service provision e.g. rehabilitation services they are presented together in this section where appropriate.

### International Level

At the international level, the ILO, UNICEF and other organisations such as Save the Children, Terre des Hommes (TdH) and Plan International lead the way on interventions on child labour. The ILO coordinates and implements most of the advocacy efforts through inter-agency cooperation with other bilateral institutions and organisations globally.<sup>1</sup> For instance, the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has focused on raising awareness on child labour and the implementation of legal and policy frameworks with more than 200 projects worldwide (ILO 2013b). Similarly, UNICEF has undertaken campaigns to raise awareness about child labour, for example through a Parenting Education Initiative in Nepal, where the goal is to increase parents' awareness of the harmful effects of child labour (UNICEF, 2014).

ILO-IPEC and UNICEF, among other international NGOs, have also extended their focus on child labour to ending child recruitment into armed forces during conflicts and on reintegration in post-conflict countries (IPEC, 2007). Unfortunately, there is very little evidence concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS\\_387362/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS_387362/lang--en/index.htm)

impact of these advocacy activities on child labour outcomes. Moreover, general knowledge regarding the different types of communication and channels that are most effective in influencing behaviour is limited. This has been highlighted as an important avenue of research given the documented negative effects that child soldiering had on ex-combatants labour and education outcomes (Blattman and Annan 2010). Other programmes have focused on providing an integrated set of interventions for children working or at risk of working, usually conditioned on school attendance (Dammert et. Al, 2017).

### **Human Rights Watch (HRW)**

In terms of advocacy, HRW lobbies governments, UN agencies, regional bodies such as the European Union, employers, and trade unions on a range of different issues including changes in policy and practice that promote human rights and justice around the world.<sup>2</sup> Annually, HRW publishes more than 100 reports and briefings on human rights conditions in over 90 countries, generating extensive coverage in local and international media. In terms of child labour, HRW produces reports on child labour statistics and its prevalence globally. Their findings are used as the basis of many of its advocacy efforts which largely remain global in focus though they do collaborate with local human rights groups. The most recent report produced by HRW regarding South Asia is – “They Bear All The Pain” Hazardous Child Labour in Afghanistan (HRW, 2016a).

### **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

Through its South Asia hub, ILO-IPEC works through advocacy and other means to mainstream child labour into government policies, strategies, plans and budgets. As a result of these efforts, child labour issues have been included in the national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan, and mainstreaming is being pursued in other Asian countries, such as the Philippines and Vietnam. At present, there are efforts to integrate child labour and trafficking concerns into Education for All initiatives in Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam (Khan & Lyon, 2015).

Some of the ILO’s global advocacy campaigns include: *Red Card to Child Labour*<sup>3</sup> (launched in 2002) and the Global Conference on Child Labour where the *Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016* was agreed upon by representatives from 97 countries (though progress since has been slow) (UNICEF, 2014; US DoL, 2015). The fourth edition of the conference is to be organised by the Government of Argentina and will take place in Nov 2017.<sup>4</sup> Since 2002, ILO has annually led a World Day Against Child Labour (June 12). The event is widely supported with national level activities and policy discussions. The ILO usually issues a technical report on an aspect of child labour to coincide with this day annually. The ILO has also played a leading role in collaborations with UN agencies and other partners on a number of initiatives such as the Understanding Children’s Work (UCW) Project, the International Partnership on Child Labour in Agriculture, the Global Task Force on Child Labour

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/05/30/human-rights-supply-chains/call-binding-global-standard-due-diligence>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/ipeccampaignandadvocacy/RedCardtoChildLabour/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_532236.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_532236.pdf)

and Education for All, and the Child Labour Platform (a group that brings together private sector companies wishing to engage on child labour issues) (ILO, 2015).

### **Save the Children**

Save the Children works with state authorities & civil society organisations to free children engaged in labour and is working to withdraw 50,000 child domestic workers from domestic help. One key outcome from Save the Children's work is the creation of a national child protection system in India though it is difficult to . The organisation currently works across 2000 villages in 9 states of India with the aim of removing children from exploitative working conditions and then rehabilitating them and supporting their education. Along with the organisation's action to remove children from exploitative working situations, Save the Children has been active in mobilising public opinion and lobbying for policy and legislative action to abolish child labour in all its forms.<sup>5</sup>

### **Terre des Hommes (TdH)**

Terre des Hommes, a Netherlands based non-governmental organisation (NGO), fights child labour by:

- providing medical care and improving risky working conditions;
- raising awareness among local communities on the common disastrous consequences of dangerous and poorly paid work, the importance of health care and the need for education for the child;
- educating parents to prevent the next generation from ending up in the vicious circle of poverty;
- enabling as many children as possible to attend school (again);
- lobbying in government bodies to counter child exploitation and to put child rights on the agenda.

The organisation has worked extensively in Asia, and in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Nepal specifically. In India, Terre des Hommes currently fights against the exploitation of over 20,000 children who work under dangerous conditions in the mica mines. In the regions of Jharkland and Bihar, TdH works towards making villages 'child-friendly'.<sup>6</sup> They have also produced research reports regarding hazardous child labour in mica mining in Jharkland. TdH attributes the decision of the Indian government to sign two conventions on children's rights – one to lay down the minimum age at which children are allowed to work and one that prohibits children under 18 from performing dangerous work or work that may be harmful to their health – to their years of lobbying and advocacy. The signing of these conventions is particularly significant as India is one of the last countries to sign ILO conventions in these areas.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.savethechildren.in/what-we-do/child-protection/child-labour>

<sup>6</sup> 'Child friendly' villages refer to villages where children do not work but go to school and their parents are aware of the risks posed by child labour

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/news/india-imposes-restraints-child-labour>. Also see US DoL.

In Bangladesh, TdH's activities revolve around the sexual exploitation of children, child trafficking and migration of children and the sexual and reproductive health rights of young people.<sup>8</sup> In Nepal, TdH's work focuses on child exploitation in the adult entertainment sector.<sup>9</sup> In Myanmar, TdH focuses on child labour in tea shops and the agricultural sector, the recruitment of child soldiers, the sexual exploitation of children, child trafficking and the migration of children.<sup>10</sup>

Some of TdH's latest global campaigns involving child labour include: the TdH VR Experience which using virtual reality, viewers experience the exploitation of the 12-year-old girl Amani by a Kenyan middle class family.

## Regional Level

At the regional level in South Asia, there are a number of strategic technical and policy advocacy alliances many of which are partners with the ILO and TdH. These are listed below:

**BIMSTEC** - The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organisation comprising of seven Member States; five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand. BIMSTEC is often part of regional discussions and forum concerning children's rights and child labour (Khan & Lyon, 2015).

**SAARC (South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation)** - SAARC was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. SAARC comprises of eight Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of the Association was set up in Kathmandu, Nepal on 17 January 1987. SAARC Commitments on Children include:

- The Rawalpindi (Ministerial) Resolution on Children of South Asia (1996).
- SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia (2002)
- SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002).
- The Colombo (Ministerial) Statement (2009)
- The SAARC Development Goals (SDGs).
- South to South Cooperation on Child Rights 2010.

SAARC organises regional workshops and events to create a forum to discuss issues including child labour. The second regional Child Labour Workshop was organised in New Delhi by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, India, in collaboration with the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute and the ILO in 2013. SAARC also organises the South Asia Labour Conference which last took place in Lahore, Pakistan in April 2014 (Khan & Lyon, 2015). There is also a SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/bangladesh>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.tdh.ch/en/our-interventions/nepal>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.terredeshommes.nl/en/myanmar>

### **South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG) –**

SACG is an inter-agency group of United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) and other actors engaged in child rights and protection at the regional level in South Asia. Member agencies include the ILO (as Chair), UNFPA, Plan, UNICEF, TdH, World Vision Asia, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, Child Helpline amongst others.<sup>11</sup> Its mission is to work together with the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), the National Action and Coordinating Groups against Violence against Children (NACGs), children and young people and other stake-holders to end all forms of violence against children in South Asia, focusing on advocacy, institutional strengthening and technical support.

Outcomes of SACG include the **South Asia Strategy against Child Labour (SASCL)**. The strategy development process, led by the ILO, in coordination with SACG, involved a participatory approach in which recommendations were sought from key actors, including representatives of ministries of labour, child development, and human rights, SAIEVAC Governing Board members and National Coordinators, representatives of employers' and workers' organisations, civil society and other stakeholders who participated in three key meetings/workshops in 2012-13. SASACL aims to enhance knowledge generation, dissemination and utilisation; capacity development including for enforcement and implementation; innovative and strengthened partnerships; and effective resource mobilisation so as to accelerate the pace and scope of action and policies that will contribute to ensuring children's rights and end all violence against children (Khan & Lyon, 2015).

**South Asian Alliance of Grassroots NGOs (SAAGN) –** SAAGN (supported by the European Commission) is a regional alliance of grassroots NGOs working in the field of child rights and basic services for children and their families in five South Asian countries, namely: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Butterflies (India) founded the National Alliance of Grassroots NGO's (NAGN) and thereafter SAAGN with other partner NGOs.

Today, the alliance comprises of 139 organisations throughout the South Asian region that are actively associated with the alliance. These NGOs have been working for varying lengths of time on fields such as child rights advocacy, child labour, education and child participation. The alliance therefore strengthens these NGOs, which suffer from chronic underfunding, and enhances their negotiation power in the region with important stakeholders at every level allowing for more effective regional co-ordination.<sup>12</sup>

Since January 2011, SAAGN in collaboration with other alliance members from national chapters have been implementing a project titled 'Civil Society Alliance for Child Rights in South Asia' with support from the European Commission. The project looks at building capacities and developing opportunities for grassroots organisations in India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka to work on child rights issues.<sup>13</sup> In terms of advocacy the project aims to:

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_300828.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_300828.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.saagn.org/>; Anti-Slavery (2008)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.saagn.org/places/>

- Train lead NGOs – from all five countries<sup>14</sup> on initiating and sustaining public campaigns on child rights.
- Develop a sound means of outreach and advocacy for the SAAGN forum on child rights and related issues such as child labour.
- Disseminate learning from research studies, awareness material and other tools with the wider public.
- Develop advocacy campaigns specifically to get formal assurance from the SAARC on positive measures on child rights<sup>15</sup>

**Civil Society Asia (CSA)** – CSA is a regional project supported by Plan International Asia and aims to increase the accountability of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and SAARC to the realisation of children’s rights and protection. It also receives financial support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Framework Agreement of Finland, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Its overarching aims are to further strengthen the advocacy efforts by civil society actors in East and South Asia to effectively lobby ASEAN and SAARC for increased commitment to child protection. It builds on a four-year initial project cycle which focused on building civil society organisations (CSOs) capacities for implementing children’s rights effectively in Asia. The project is implemented by the Child Right Coalition Asia (CRC Asia) and National Action and Coordination Group against Violence against Children (NACGs), two regional civil society coalitions operating at the ASEAN and SAARC sub regions respectively. The countries involved in the programme include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam.<sup>16</sup>

**Global March Against Child Labour (GMACL)** - Global March (GMACL) is a grassroots movement built on constructive, cohesive and coherent collaboration between child rights’ organisations, trade unions and teachers’ organisations. It is a long-standing partner of the ILO, particularly IPEC and other organisations, including UNICEF. GMACL focuses on knowledge management, advocacy and campaigns as primary mechanisms to highlight the importance of child labour elimination as one of the central pillars for human development. The organisation actively participates in wide-ranging regional and global discussions related to child labour, Education For All (EFA) and poverty alleviation, highlighting the inter-linkages between these development goals.<sup>17</sup>

Some of their ongoing campaigns include:

- ***Forging Civil Society Action Against Child Domestic Labour (CDL) To Combat The Gender Disadvantage*** - GMACL (with the support of the Commonwealth Foundation) is working together to strengthen the capacity and knowledge of CSOs in Bangladesh and Pakistan to undertake advocacy efforts in making policy and institutional linkages

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<sup>14</sup> Lead NGOs - Aschiana (Afghanistan); Aparajeyo (Bangladesh); Butterflies (India); Child Welfare Scheme Nepal (CWSN) (Nepal) and Kantha Shakthi Organisation (Sri Lanka)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.saagn.org/places/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.civilsocietyasia.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.globalmarch.org/aboutus/whatwedo>

between trafficking and child labour, domestic labour and associated Gender Based Violence (GBV) using India as a case study. The expected outcomes are to give impetus to participatory governance by the CSOs towards engagement with Local Education Authorities (LEAs) including the judiciary, through legal intervention & advocacy for the implementation of existing child's rights legislations, policy reforms and revisions particularly on child domestic labour, slavery and associated GBV.<sup>18</sup>

- **Strengthening The Worldwide Movement Against Child Labour Towards Roadmap 2016 And Beyond 2015** – GMACL, with support from The Royal Embassy of the Kingdom of The Netherlands, is providing support to increase the participation of civil society, trade unions and governments, particularly parliamentarians in guiding, contributing to and influencing national efforts for ending the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all forms by 2025. In Bangladesh, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum is leading the campaign activities.<sup>19</sup>
- **Reducing Child Labour Through Youth Engagement and Empowerment and Inculcating Democratic Values** - With the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation, GMACL aims to foster strong and organic grassroots civil society structures by engaging and empowering young people and the community at large, through the promotion of civic engagement and sustainable development, and promoting democratic values for sustainable communities. The campaign activities are being carried out across 20 villages and 7 hamlets of Jharkhand, Karnataka and Rajasthan through Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), GMACL's India Partner.<sup>20</sup>

## National Level

According to Anti-Slavery International (2008), NGO advocacy has had great success in South Asian countries and played a major role in raising awareness. For example, NGO advocacy was a key factor in the Government of Pakistan's initiative to enact bonded labour laws and a time-bound plan against debt bondage. NGOs have also organised various protests. In Nepal, NGOs organised visits of journalists in the Kamaiya areas publicising the plight of kamaiya bonded labourers.

Below are some examples of prominent national level NGOs/CSOs, which also have significant overlap with programmatic activities.

**Aschiana (Afghanistan)** - Aschiana Foundation invests in the education and well-being of vulnerable children in Afghanistan through providing education and training to working street children in Afghanistan. Programmes include: Kabul Children's Centre, IDP Camps for displaced children, Mazar-e-Sharif and Gardez.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> <http://globalmarch.org/campaign/forging-civil-society-action-against-child-domestic-labour-cdl-combat-gender-disadvantage>

<sup>19</sup> <http://globalmarch.org/campaign/strengthening-worldwide-movement-against-child-labour-towards-roadmap-2016-and-beyond-2015>

<sup>20</sup> <http://globalmarch.org/campaign/reducing-child-labour-through-youth-engagement-and-empowerment-and-inculcating-democratic>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.aschiana-foundation.org/program-support/>

**Aparajeyo - Bangladesh (AB)** is a national, non-government and non-profit child rights organisation. It was founded in 1995 through the localisation of an international NGO. The organisation commenced activities in 1976, working with children living in and around the slums of Dhaka city. Its main aim is to provide a range of services to socially excluded children in the urban settings in Bangladesh. Through its advocacy initiatives, programmes and projects, AB provides a range of rights-based services to children through a holistic approach.<sup>22</sup> Programmes include Child Helpline '1098', Child Labourers in Small Factories, Protection of Children at Risk amongst many others.

**Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF)** – BSAF is a highly influential and active NGO based in Bangladesh. BSAF undertakes a number of activities including awareness raising activities, advocacy for adopting/activating laws and policies and service delivery to abused children. In terms of advocacy, BSAF organises workshops and national level seminars (involving stakeholders from all levels) to advocate for the elimination of hazardous child labour and other related issues. BSAF is currently implementing a three-year project (ending Dec 2018) titled 'Ending Child Labour in Bangladesh' with the support of Terre des Hommes-Netherlands and the other members of a five member consortium.<sup>23</sup>

**Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) (India)** - Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) is India's largest grassroots movement for the protection of children, whilst ensuring their access to quality education. Since its establishment by the Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi in 1980, BBA has led the world's largest civil society campaign in the form of the Global March Against Child Labour (GMACL) and has been at the forefront of formulating laws against child labour and trafficking in India. As of October 2014, BBA has rescued, rehabilitated and supported more than 83 500 victims of trafficking, slavery and child labour.<sup>24</sup> Some of BBA's campaigns include:

- In 1991, BBA initiated the 'Anti-Firecracker Campaign', to highlight the plight of young children involved in the manufacturing of fire crackers. The campaign led to the sensitisation of around 10,000 schools and 6-7 million children.
- BBA also launched the Fairplay Campaign in 1996, which drew attention to child labour in the manufacturing of sports goods in India.
- To build public awareness on child labour, BBA has organised several long marches. This included the 5000 km long Indian March Against Child Labour from Kanyakumari to Delhi in 1995, the South Asian March from Calcutta to Kathmandu in 1996 and the 1998 Global March Against Child Labour. The latter was an 80,000 km long march across 103 countries, which saw the impressive participation of 7.2 million children, women and men demanding an international ban on child labour.
- With Rugmark (now known under GoodWeave International), BBA was involved in the first ever social labelling of child-labour-free carpets, which has been replicated in many countries as an innovative Corporate Social Responsibility and ethical trade tactic.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.aparajeyo.org/aboutd.html>

<sup>23</sup> [http://bsafchild.net/?page\\_id=9](http://bsafchild.net/?page_id=9)

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.bba.org.in/?q=content/about-us>

- Child Labour Free India Campaign organised by BBA in 2012, a national campaign, comprised a series of events and activities and was directly addressed the demand for a blanket ban on child labour in the country.
- Since 2008, BBA has also annually organised a nationwide campaign called the India Action Week.<sup>25</sup>

**Grassroot Organisation of Development of Human Being (GODH) (Pakistan)** - GODH is a Lahore based non-profit civil society organisation working on issues such as the rights of men, women, children, peace, social justice and good governance. GODH also serves as an information resource centre and develops resources for oppressed and illiterate communities. GODH implemented the Forging Civil Society Action Against Child Domestic Labour (CDL) in Pakistan with funding from GMACL.

### 3. Programmatic Interventions & Technical Assistance

#### International Level

##### International Labour Organisation (ILO)

In South Asia, ILO-IPEC was initiated to deepen the technical cooperation between the ILO and its in-country partners. Project implementation began in the early 1990s, supporting countries through the basic Country Programme modality to establish and strengthen existing systems, undertake research and assessments to learn about the extent and nature of child labour, develop capacities for planning and implementation, forge partnerships with civil society organisations and other stakeholders and test innovative intervention models.<sup>26</sup> The ILO's projects range from multi-million dollar, multi-year large scale programmes to smaller scale programmes co-funded by national governments.

With support of the ILO, many countries globally, have undertaken national and other forms of surveys on child labour and established a body of statistical information and knowledge on the subject. On the basis of this information, the ILO subsequently devised its methodology for global estimates and trends, which are published in their Global Reports on Child Labour. The Brasilia Declaration, adopted at the 3rd Global Conference on Child Labour in October 2013,<sup>27</sup> reinforcing previous recommendations on the subject, calls on countries to “develop and strengthen the collection and dissemination, as appropriate, of more and better national statistics and information on children in employment, both in the formal and informal economies, with data disaggregated preferably by occupation and industry, gender, age, origin and income so as to enhance their visibility and help better design and implement public policies to eradicate child labour” (Khan & Lyon, 2015, p. 33).

The ILO has also been extensively involved in the creation of knowledge products which include: *Combating child labour: A handbook for labour inspectors International Labour Organisation; International Association of Labour Inspection; a Child Labour Impact Assessment toolkit* and other training resources which have been developed to support a range of programmes

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<sup>25</sup> <http://bba.org.in/?q=content/child-labour>

implemented through the ILO International Training Centre, many of which are replicated at national level (ILO, 2015).

The most recent ILO-supported project, namely the Convergence Child Labour Project, which ended in 2013, focused on the concept of convergence, as articulated in the Nepali National Child Labour Policy (1987) and prioritised by the Core Working Group on Convergence (CWGC). It was implemented in ten districts in five states and tested strategies to leverage benefits of various schemes related to education, social protection, and poverty alleviation, with the objective of preventing and eliminating hazardous child labour. Lessons from implementation will be integrated into action on child labour in the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme (ILO, 2013a)

Some of the ILO's most recent interventions include:

- Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour (CLEAR) project in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (2013-2017) which is funded by the US Department of Labor (US DoL).
- Towards Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as Priority (ACHIEVE) – Nepal (Phases I-II) (2011-2016) which is funded by the Government of Denmark.
- Converging Against Child Labour: Support for India's Model (2008-2013) which was funded by the US Department of Labor (US DoL).
- Combating Child Labour through Education and Training (CCLET) (Phases I-IV) – Pakistan (1999-2011) which was funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The impact evaluations of these efforts are discussed in Section 5.

There are a number of national government development agencies who also contribute significant levels of funding to ILO projects and other inter-agency cooperation efforts. In order of funding they are: US DoL, DFID, GIZ, The Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Denmark, EU Commission amongst others.<sup>28</sup>

### **US Department of Labor (US DoL)**

The Bureau of International Labor Affairs has been working to eliminate the worst forms of child labour since 1993 through research, policy engagement and technical cooperation. It is the largest funder of the ILO's technical, policy and programmatic assistance to South Asia. As highlighted by O'Driscoll (2017), US DoL undertakes large research projects with its latest report of the Worst Forms of Child Labour published in 2016 (US DoL, 2016).

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<sup>26</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new\\_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms\\_387365.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new_delhi/documents/genericdocument/wcms_387365.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <http://childlabour2013.org/the-brasilia-declaration-on-child-labour/>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS\\_387362/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/child-labour/action/WCMS_387362/lang--en/index.htm)

The US DoL's research has informed their policy and program design to end child labour globally. To this end, US DoL has funded more than 270 projects to combat child labour in over 90 countries and worked with more than 60 organisations worldwide. In addition to working directly with children and families to provide education or financial assistance, US DoL works with countries at the national, district and community levels to strengthen systems and services required to address child labour. For example, US DoL projects have trained labour inspectors and law enforcement officials on child labour law enforcement. They have also developed community-based, child labour monitoring systems in the supply chains of key sectors.<sup>29</sup>

## UNICEF

In general, UNICEF and other child protection actors are increasingly moving away from small-scale, issue-specific projects in favour of a systems approach, with a strong focus on prevention, i.e. tackling the root causes of issues like child labour (Khan & Lyon, 2015; UNICEF, 2014). The systems approach intends to enable more systematic policy development and programming that considers the child, family and community as a whole and aims to result in better coordination of poverty reduction, social welfare, justice, labour, and education policies which in turn should ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency. A systems approach also intends to address social drivers such as marginalisation and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics specific to the context in question (UNICEF, 2014). In South Asia, UNICEF's efforts in combatting child labour largely involve programmatic support, legislations, child protection mechanisms, technical assistance and research at the system level, for example, on their Global Initiative on Out of School Children. Throughout their country offices in South Asia, UNICEF carries out a variety of programmes under the umbrella of the 'Country Programme' which acts as a holistic system level intervention in each country.<sup>30</sup>

The UNICEF child labour programme in Nepal is part of the organisation's overall efforts to develop and strengthen a comprehensive child protection system in urban areas, creating the foundation for a comprehensive and integrated response to children's issues. Within the framework of Child Friendly Local Governance, district and municipality approaches to address child labour are co-funded by local government, development partners and the private sector in Nepal. As a result of structures, mechanisms and services established in urban cities, more than 9,000 Nepalese children who had been in child labour and without family care, have been reunited with their families and provided with appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration services, such as rescue and emergency support (shelter, food, clothes and medical assistance), psychosocial counselling, mediation with parents and employers, and legal support. After family reunification, the children received education or vocational training, and their families were provided with income-generating support. Similarly, over 10,000 children at risk of child labour and their families have been reportedly offered counselling, and livelihood and education support (UNICEF, 2014).

UNICEF also has extensive experience in working against child labour in India. Most programmes focus on children in specific types of work, for example cotton production in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh,

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/our-work/child-forced-labor-trafficking>

<sup>30</sup> <http://unicef.in/WhoWeAre/IndiaCountryProgramme>

metalwork and carpets in Uttar Pradesh and tea gardens in Assam. These programmes reach tens of thousands of children and their families in areas with high levels of child labour.<sup>31</sup>

In collaboration with their international, government and civil society partners, UNICEF actively engages the private sector, to promote actions that fulfil their corporate responsibility to respect children’s rights and support young workers in the workplace, in line with the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (See Figure 1 below).

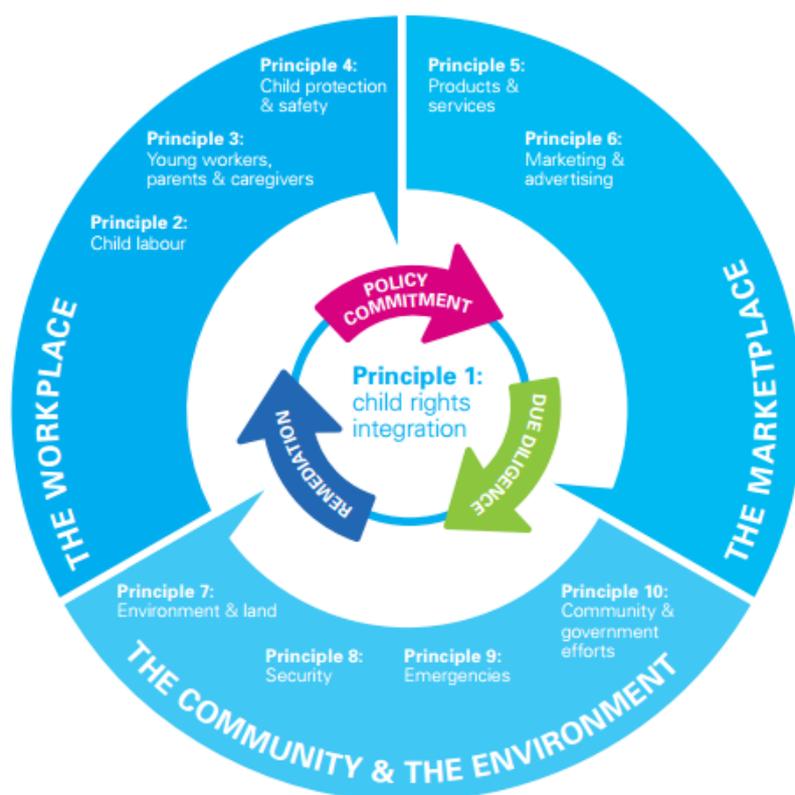


Figure 1: Children’s Rights and Business Principles (UNICEF, 2013).

Developed by UNICEF, the United Nations Global Compact and Save the Children in 2012, the Children’s Rights and Business Principles explore how businesses can protect and support children’s rights in the workplace, marketplace and community. The Principles provide a child rights approach to the global standard on the independent responsibility of all businesses to respect human rights, as established by the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Each Principle defines actions that businesses can take to fulfil their corporate responsibility to respect children’s rights. The Principles also describe how businesses can take the extra step and make a corporate commitment to more broadly support children’s rights (UNICEF, 2013). Companies such as H&M, Coca-Cola and IKEA have signed up to the agreement. In the instance of IKEA, in partnership with UNICEF and Save the Children, the IKEA Foundation supports education and child protection projects aimed at addressing the root causes of child labour and promoting quality education for children aged 6 to 14, benefiting over 10 million children in India and Pakistan. Activities include raising awareness and mobilising rural

<sup>31</sup> <http://unicef.in/Whatwedo/21/Child-Labour#sthash.boOn4wkr.dpuf>

communities to protect the rights of all children and support their education, as well as ensuring access to quality education by supporting child-friendly teaching methods to facilitate better learning levels and retain children in schools. (UNICEF, 2014)

## **Regional Level**

Regional activities tend to revolve around legislation, technical assistance, legal or policy advocacy rather than project implementation. The exceptions to this would be SAAGN and the NGOs under this umbrella, though they would operate at a national rather than regional level.

## **National Level**

The span of activities of national level NGOs and CSOs are difficult to ascertain. Whilst a few names are featured in some reports and mentioned casually, there is a lack of cohesion in terms of national level efforts (beyond the regional alliances mentioned earlier in the report) therefore this section will deal with government level social interventions aimed at tackling child labour. The following programmes have been highlighted by the US DoL (2016) as attempts to eradicate the worst forms of child labour though general reference to child labour is also made. Donors for these programmes include the ILO, UNICEF, the World Bank and US DoL.<sup>32</sup>

### **Afghanistan**

According to US DoL (2016) in 2015, Afghanistan made a moderate advancement in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. One example is the President ordering the creation of a committee to prevent and prosecute government officials involved in the commercial sexual exploitation of boys. The government also prevented children from enlisting in the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. However, children in Afghanistan continue to be engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including in armed conflict and the forced production of bricks. Afghanistan's labour inspectorate is not authorised to impose penalties for child labour violations, and the government still lacks programmes to eliminate child labour in certain sectors in which it is prevalent.

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<sup>32</sup> For detailed country case studies detailing ratifications of conventions, legal provisions, law enforcement figures (including convictions) and polices please see US DoL (2016).

Table 1: The most recent social programmes to address child labour in Afghanistan

<b>Programme Name</b>
<b>Project to Prevent Child Labour in Home-Based Carpet Production in Afghanistan (2013–2017)</b>
<b>Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour (CLEAR)</b>
<b>Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme</b>
<b>Afghan National Security Forces Recruits*</b>
<b>Trafficking Shelters*</b>
<b>Counter-Trafficking Programme</b>
<b>Safety Nets and Pensions Support Project (2009–2016)</b>
<b>Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (2014–2016)</b>

Source: US DoL (2016: 65-66)

\*Funded by the Government of Afghanistan.

## **Bangladesh**

According to the US DoL framework, in 2015, Bangladesh made a moderate advancement in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Government of Bangladesh published the results of the 2013 National Child Labour Survey and approved the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy which will set the minimum age for domestic work at 14 years. The National Child Labour Welfare Council as well as two Divisional Child Labour Welfare Councils met for the first time to discuss child labour elimination activities. However, significant numbers of children in Bangladesh are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including in the production of bricks and forced child labour in the production of dried fish. The legal framework at present does not protect children working in informal economic sectors, including small farms and street work, where child labour is most prevalent. The law also does not specify the activities and number of hours per week of light work that are permitted for children that are 12 and 13 years of age. The government lacks the capacity to enforce child labour laws as the number of labour inspectors is insufficient for the size of Bangladesh's workforce and fines are inadequate to deter child labour law violations. As at the time of the report, Bangladesh was yet to ratify ILO C. 138, Minimum Age Convention. Below are some of the national level social programmes aimed at eliminating child labour (US DoL, 2016).

Table 2: The most recent social programmes to address child labour in Bangladesh

Programme Name
Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour, Phase III*
Services for Children at Risk Project*
Urban Social Protection Initiative to Reach the Unreachable and Invisible and Ending Child Labour
Reaching Out-of-School Children II (2012–2017)
Child Sensitive Social Protection Project (2012–2016)
Enabling Environment for Child Rights
Primary Education Stipend Project, Phase III*
Support Urban Slum Children to Access Inclusive Non-Formal Education
Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce (CLEAR) Child Labour Project
Expanding the Evidence Base and Reinforcing Policy Research for Scaling-up and Accelerating Action Against Child Labour
Shelter Project*
Child Help Line 1098
National Helpline Centre*
Vulnerable Group Development Programme*

Source: US DoL (2016: 134-135)

\*Funded by the Government of Bangladesh.

## India

In 2015, India made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. More than 35,000 children were rescued from hazardous work conditions and were rehabilitated by the National Child Labour Project. State governments located approximately 30,000 missing children, including many involved in the worst forms of child labour, during two rescue and rehabilitation operations. The Ministry of Women and Children Development launched the Website Khoya-Paya, which allows parents and the general public to report and search for missing children. Despite these successes, children in India are engaged in forced labour in the production of hybrid cottonseed and garments for example. As present, the legal framework is inconsistent with international standards, as it does not prohibit work for children under age 14 or ban hazardous work for children under age 18. The law also does not provide legal protection for children working for household-based businesses (US DoL, 2016).

Below are some of the national level social programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

Table 3: The most recent social programmes to address child labour in India

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<b>Programme</b>
<b>National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme*</b>
<b>Grants-in-Aid Scheme*</b>
<b>Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour Scheme*</b>
<b>Integrated Child Protection Scheme*</b>
<b>Welfare of Working Children in Need of Care and Protection*</b>
<b>Anti-Human Trafficking Activities*</b>
<b>Childline*</b>
<b>TrackChild*</b>
<b>Testing Methodologies to Support Informal Economy Workers and Small Producers to Combat Hazardous Child Labour in Their Own Sectors</b>
<b>Education for All Scheme (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan)*</b>
<b>Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness in Bihar Operation*</b>
<b>Midday Meal Programme*</b>
<b>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme*</b>
<b>National Rural Livelihoods Mission*</b>

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Source: US DoL (2016: 537)

\*Funded by the Government of India.

## **Nepal**

In 2015, Nepal made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Ministry of Labour and Employment piloted an initiative to conduct unannounced monitoring visits at approximately 100 establishments in formal and informal sectors where child labour is common. The Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Welfare elected 22 Child Protection Officers and 53 Child Protection Inspectors to investigate and oversee cases involving the violation of children's rights. Following the April 2015 earthquake, government agencies took actions to reduce the vulnerability of children to human trafficking. The worst forms of labour still prevalent in Nepal include the production of bricks and commercial sexual exploitation. Nepal currently lacks a compulsory education law, and children ages 16–17 are excluded from the protections of the country's hazardous work list, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of

child labour. The Labour Inspectorate’s budget, the number of labour inspectors, and the resources and training are all insufficient for enforcing labour laws, including those related to child labour (US DoL, 2016).

Below are some of the national level social programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

Table 4: Social programmes to address child labour in Nepal

<b>Programme</b>
<b>Comprehensive Child Labour Programme (2011–2015)</b>
<b>Green Flag Movement (2014–2017)*</b>
<b>Child Helpline – 1098*</b>
<b>Country-Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour II (CLEAR II) (2014–2018)</b>
<b>From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labour (The Bridge Project)</b>
<b>Towards Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour as Priority (ACHIEVE) (2013–2016)</b>
<b>Project for the Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour in Restaurants in the Kathmandu Valley (PRECLOR) (2011–2015)</b>
<b>Decent Work Country Programme, Nepal (2013–2017)</b>
<b>Combating Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) Project (2010–2016)</b>
<b>Support for Schools*</b>
<b>Compulsory Education Pilot Programme*</b>
<b>School Sector Reform Program (2009–2016)</b>

Source: US DoL (2016: 762)

\*Funded by the Government of Nepal

## **Pakistan**

According to US DoL (2016), in 2015, Pakistan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. The Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed the Prohibition of Employment of Children Act and the Bonded Labour Systems (Abolition) Act. The Provincial Government of Punjab collaborated with the ILO to provide free education and books to the children of brick kiln workers. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, which proscribes serious offences against children, was passed by the National Assembly and is awaiting Senate approval. Predominant worst forms of child labour include forced domestic work

and bonded labour in brick kilns. Three Provincial Governments are yet to establish a minimum working age, and the Federal minimum age for hazardous work does not meet international standards. Furthermore, provincial Governments do not have the resources necessary to enforce laws prohibiting child labour, including its worst forms.

Below are some of the national level social programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

Table 5: The most recent social programmes to address child labour in Pakistan

<b>Programme</b>
<b>National Centres for Rehabilitation of Child Labour*</b>
<b>Child Support Programme*</b>
<b>Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme*</b>
<b>Decent Work Country Program (2010–2015)</b>
<b>Sabawoon Rehabilitation Centre*</b>
<b>Project to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour*</b>
<b>Education Programme for Children of Brick Kiln Workers</b>
<b>Global Action Programme on Child Labour Issues</b>
<b>Education Voucher Scheme*</b>

Source: US DoL (2016: 810)

\*Funded by the Government of Pakistan

## **Myanmar**

There is a dearth of data on Myanmar and no case study included in US DoL (2016)

## **4. Impact Evaluations and Research**

Despite the increasing sources of information on child labour over the past decade, there is little evidence on the validity of data collection methods either through research or impact evaluations (Edmonds 2008; Dammert et al., 2017). This can be partly attributed to varying definitions of child labour, exemptions in national level data collection methods, cultural and social interpretations of what constitutes child labour and the hidden nature of the work itself (Khan & Lyon, 2015). Moreover, few solid impact evaluations of child labour programmes in developing countries definitively identify the causality from policy to programme to effect.

The impact evaluation of child labour projects poses special challenges, both theoretical and logistical, particularly if they are multi-sectoral. Child labour projects are often diffuse in nature and scope, extend over a long period, vary widely across applications, and have outcomes

across a range of sectors. It has been argued that these challenges must be addressed in an impact evaluation to ensure that causality is well established and that outcomes are adequately measured to be effective (Paruzzolo, 2009; Dammert et al, 2017). For example, when looking at the effects of an education intervention on child work, the reduction of the hours worked is also a function of health and schooling. Thus, isolating the impact of an individual component of an intervention, testing the optimal combination of interventions in different contexts, or looking at potential spill over effects becomes increasingly important in the context of child labour (Paruzzolo, 2009). In terms of schooling, this is particularly important as the importance of improving school quality is theoretically well established, but the empirical evidence linking school quality to child labour is far from robust (Paruzzolo, 2009; Edmond & Shrestha, 2012; Bhardwaj et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2014; Dammert et al, 2017). In terms of logistics there are a number of considerations to keep in mind. For instance, when interviewing minors, issues of parental consent are important, while at the same time providing the necessary safeguards to protect the children's privacy.

Further critique presented by Dammert et al. (2017) is that the impact evaluations currently available focus almost exclusively, on short-term outcomes. Evidence on the long-term impact of programmes aimed at addressing child labour is very limited which is crucial as child labour potentially has negative effects on long-term outcomes in the labour market. Moreover, mental and physical harm experienced because of child labour may become apparent, persist and severely affect children at later ages. Hence, information on long-run effects would help generate a better understanding of child labour and its wider implications. Likewise, the cost-effectiveness of interventions is seldom, if at all, addressed in impact evaluations. More information on the expenditure per child kept out of labour would make the comparison of the different interventions more meaningful for policy makers.

## Some Key Findings

Despite the strong critique, there are some key findings that have been presented in systematic reviews of impact evaluations by the UCW project which covers projects in South Asia. Two recent studies attempted to discuss the impact of legislation concerning child labour in developing countries (Edmonds and Shrestha, 2012; Bharadwaj et al., 2013). The findings suggest that the Indian child labour ban policy of 1986 actually increased child labour, a result that is consistent with prior theoretical predictions (Basu 2005; Bharadwaj et al. 2013). These findings raise concerns regarding the effectiveness of such policies when households that rely on child labour face multiple constraints. As per Basu's (2005) theoretical framework, the recent findings further suggest that if child labour is largely a phenomenon of poverty, any attempt to ban it through an enforceable minimum employment age policy could potentially have little effect or be counterproductive. In addition, if the ban is only well enforced in the formal sector, it could increase participation in the informal sector as was seemingly the case in India. Furthermore, legal interventions, even if properly enforced and subsequently reduce child labour, do not necessarily increase child welfare thus building the case for UNICEF's system level approach (Bhardwaj et al., 2013).

Another key finding is that investment in early childhood education (ECD) appears to substantially lower the risk of child labour and increase the likelihood of school attendance at later ages (Paruzzolo, 2009).

A promising intervention is conditional cash transfers. Such schemes have proved effective in several countries in increasing enrolment, retention in school and thus helped to reduce child

labour supply (Raju, 2006). Paruzzolo (2009); Guarcello et al. (2010); UNICEF (2014) and Dammert et al. (2017)<sup>33</sup> build upon this and highlight the effectiveness of what they call, 'social transfers'. UNICEF defines social transfers as regular, reliable and direct transfers in cash and/or in kind to individuals or households.<sup>34</sup> Linking transfers with other types of social protection programmes and child protection systems can maximise positive outcomes. For example, social transfer programmes linked to extra-curricular activities have shown greater impact in reducing child labour. Whilst a positive intervention to explore, UNICEF's (2014) findings suggest that the impact of social transfers on child labour differ by region and by gender – with boys more likely to benefit than girls from reductions in child labour. This may be explained by the fact that in many studies on the effectiveness of social transfers, household chores, which are predominantly done by girls, were not included in the definition of child labour (UNICEF, 2014). Social transfers can also produce unintended consequences on child labour. For example, a cash transfer scheme may provoke an increase in productive investments by beneficiary households, in turn creating new opportunities for children's work within the family. Consequently, child-sensitive programmes must be carefully designed to achieve positive impacts on child labour.

In the same vein, Dammert et. al (2017) analyse public works schemes and programs that aim to encourage micro-entrepreneurial activity amongst adults, such as microcredit schemes and business training courses (possibly in combination with the provision of capital). Findings from impact evaluations suggest that these schemes may increase children's work either directly in the household business or in activities within the household otherwise carried out by adults. Public works programmes have had limited success in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

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<sup>33</sup> This paper involved an exhaustive search of the literature relating to impact evaluation papers with social protection and labour focus, all of which applied rigorous methods to estimate the impact of the program on child labour. However, it is excluded household chores and focused on children's participation in economic activities conducted for pay and/or for the household.

<sup>34</sup> There is little evidence on how this relates to the worst forms of child labour.

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## About this report

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