

Towards a Child-Labour Free Philippines: Supporting the Philippine Programme against Child Labour Building on Past Gains and Addressing Challenges

The Challenge



In an ideal society, children spend time studying as they prepare to become productive members of their community.

In the real setting however, many children are trapped in economic activities as they are forced to help their parents survive and meet daily living costs. This situation speaks very well of the condition of many children in the Philippines. The number of children forced to work remains alarming in the Philippines, especially in rural areas.

Some working children have no choice but to skip classes, while some totally withdraw from school. While this could also be due to the inaccessibility of schools in their areas, the problem highlights the lack of job opportunities of parents pushing many young hands to get engaged in economic activities. Poverty can be considered the culprit on the prevalence of child labour. No parents would like to see their children working. If parents have access to decent and productive work, they will be able to support their children and send them to school. Education is the path to a better life as it opens opportunities for children trapped in child labour.

The Response

The Philippine Government showed its commitment to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and acting quickly to launch a Time-Bound Programme. This commitment is expressed in the goal of Philippine Program against Child Labor (PPACL) to reduce worst forms of child labour by 75 per cent by 2015. The ILO, through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), supports this goal towards decent work and improved living conditions.

The ILO-IPEC commits to help in reducing the cases of child labour. This ILO programme assumes responsibility of giving direct services of 9,350 children involved in child labour in the Philippines. These direct services must save 5,500 from worst forms of child labour, and 3,350 who are at risk. Meanwhile, some 500 working children aged 15-17 will be reached by interventions that protect their safety and welfare.

Four demonstration areas were chosen: Northern Samar, Quezon Province, Bukidnon, and Masbate. All are rural areas identified by the stakeholders based on the existing child labour conditions.

Key Statistics

- Six out of 10 working children did not experience attending school.
- Boys comprise the majority of working children in the Philippines. In 2009, 62.9 per cent of the total working children were boys.
- The proportion of working children against the total population of children in the country is 7.7 per cent as of 2009.
- Agriculture, hunting, and forestry employed 55 per cent or more than half of the working children in 2009.

Source: Department of Labor and Employment—Bureau of Labor Employment and Statistics, March 2011

Objectives

Development Objective: To contribute to the PPACL's goal of reducing the worst forms of child labour by 75 per cent by 2015 by preventing, protecting, and reintegrating child workers.

Immediate Objectives:

- Information on child labour will feed into national and local child labour policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation.
- The national and local child labour committees and social partners have clearer mandates and responsibilities and improved capacities for policy development, enforcement, and child labour monitoring.
- Models to withdraw working children and prevent children at-risk from working are developed, piloted, and documented.
- The child labour agenda is made an integral part of national development frameworks and local development programming; with local governments supported in coordinating resource allocations for child labour action.

Relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190)

Achievements

- The Child Labour Knowledge Sharing System (CLKSS) was rolled out. CLKSS training for national and provincial users were conducted.
- Child labour committees were organized in provinces of Masbate, Northern Samar, Quezon, and Bukidnon.
- Partners in project sites were trained in child labour monitoring, direct beneficiary monitoring and reporting, para-legal, and project management.
- Action Programmes on provision of educational, health, psychosocial, and livelihood assistance to 9,350 child labourers and their families have started in Masbate, Northern Samar, Quezon, and Bukidnon. Systems for child labour monitoring and referral are also being developed.
- Partnerships are being forged with Philippine Information Agency offices in project sites to scan present levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices and to develop information materials.



Contacts

Mr Cesar Giovanni Soledad
Project Manager
Email: soledad@ilo.org

Mr Jesus Macasil Jr.
Senior Programme Officer
Email: macasil@ilo.org

International Labour Organization
Country Office for the Philippines
Tel: +632 580 9900
19th Floor Yuchengco Tower
RCBC Plaza 6819 Ayala Avenue
Makati City 1200 Philippines
Website: www.ilo.org/manila

Components

Donor: United States Department of Labor (USDOL)

Acronym: IPEC

Start Date: September 2009

End Date: September 2013

Budget: US\$ 4.75 million

Partners: National Child Labor Committee, Provincial Child Labor Committees in project sites, Department of Labor and Employment and other Government Agencies, Trade Unions, and Employers' Federations

Project Sites: Provinces of Quezon, Masbate, Northern Samar, and Bukidnon