

FTI Stakeholder Consultations on Issues Paper on Out-of-School Children

Comments from the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

Proposed activity number 1: Data

- The consultation paper echoes the concern reflected in recent EFA meetings that more and better data on out of school children must be collected, analysed, and used in policy and programme formulation. It also identifies child labour as one of the reasons children are out of school, and the obvious linkages with poverty.
- In the past ten years the knowledge base on child labour and education linkages has developed considerably. The ILO-IPEC programme, through its Statistical Information and Monitoring arm (SIMPOC), has supported an extensive range of household surveys on child labour, implemented through national statistical offices. Attached is a list of countries in which child labour surveys have been undertaken or are currently ongoing or planned. SIMPOC National Child Labour Surveys (NCLS) can be either stand-alone or modules embedded in labour force surveys; Living Standard Measurement Surveys, etc. SIMPOC surveys provide rich data on two key aspects mentioned in the proposal: i) reasons for not attending / never having attended school and; ii) irregular school attendance. Questionnaires for both modular and stand-alone NCLS can be accessed at: www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/Model%20questionnaires/lang--en/index.htm. The development of a new data collection instruments could benefit from an exhaustive analysis of existing survey programmes. Explicit references to these sources could perhaps be included in the proposal. SIMPOC would also stand ready to include more education and OOSC relevant questions in its standard questionnaires.
- It is believed that one of the key factors in characterizing OOSC is to assess the activities they undertake; whether they are in employment, unpaid household services, or a combination of both. If they do not go to school, or have an irregular school attendance, what do they do instead and why? This information is essential to contextualize the situation of OOSC and to disentangle the decision making process of households concerning school attendance and child labour. The literature on the determinants of child labour can significantly contribute to elucidate some fundamental determinants of OOSC. Such analytical angle has implications in terms of questionnaire design (i.e., capturing and characterizing the work-related activities) and also for policy formulation. For instance, the design of CCTs should take into account the opportunity cost of attending school (i.e., economic and non-economic contribution to the household of children's work)¹. One suggestion would thus

¹ A forthcoming report of the ILO, to be published next year, will look at the links between expanding social protection schemes for vulnerable households and levels of child labour and schooling.

be to perhaps mention explicitly the need of characterizing both economic and non-economic activities of OOSC.

- The measurement and especially the characterization of OOSC is not only a matter of questionnaire design but also of sampling. If modular survey approaches will eventually be developed, sampling strategies should be considered consequently, given that these populations may be irregularly distributed and in some countries constitute only a small fraction of the total population of school-age children. This is also an issue when conducting modular child labour surveys. Our suggestion would thus be to take sampling considerations into account right from the outset in the design of the new tools and instruments.

Proposed activity area 2: Policy

It is perhaps fair to say that despite the increased availability of data there has been relatively little connection between analysis of the data on child labour collected through household surveys and consideration of education planning. Yet information collected through household based child labour surveys could provide important information for education planners in their efforts to develop strategies to reach out of school children. For example child labour surveys might illustrate patterns of non-attendance and bring out issues concerning the geographical focus of new interventions or the impact on hours of work on schooling.

Under a project being support by the Government of the Netherlands, ILO-IPEC has plans to look in detail at these linkages in four countries, Uganda, Mali, Bolivia and Indonesia. The intention is to try to forge a closer connection and to identify ways of using child labour survey data to support the discussion on education sector plans and strategies to reach out of school children.