

ENHANCE*Project Newsletter



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RESEARCH

National Child Labour Survey 2018 launched at high profile event

In Hanoi on 18 December 2020, the report of Viet Nam's second National Child Labour Survey (NCLS 2018) was officially launched. The high profile event gathered participants from the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and other relevant ministries and departments, the US embassy, employers and workers organisations, business associations, academia, UN agencies and NGOs. The workshop began with opening remarks from Madame Nguyen Thi Ha, vice minister of MOLISA, Chang Hee Lee, Director of ILO Viet Nam and representative from the US embassy, Robert Gabor, followed by a screening of an animated video providing an overview of key findings. An in depth presentation of the survey findings and recommendations was provided by the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs, followed by recommendations from experts, and a presentation from the Department of Child Affairs (DCA) on the way forward.



The findings outlined in the NCLS 2018 report identify an estimated 5.3 per cent of 5-17 year olds engaged in child labour in Viet Nam. This accounts for more than 1 million children, over half of whom are working under hazardous conditions. Comparatively speaking, the rate of child labour in Viet Nam is around 2 percentage points lower than the regional average for Asia and the Pacific, and, compared to findings from the first NCLS conducted in 2012, the latest figures point to an encouraging decrease in the prevalence of working children, which dropped from 15.5 per cent of children in 2012 to 9.1 per cent in 2018.

While there are signs of progress, there is still much work to be done to eliminate child labour in Viet Nam, particularly as the impacts of COVID-19 heighten the risk of child labour. Moving forward, the landmark survey will inform policies and strategies to eliminate child labour as Viet Nam progresses towards SDG Target 8.7



Rapid assessment uncovers the impacts of COVID-19 on project beneficiaries

In response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on child labour, the Project collaborated with Can Tho University to conduct a rapid assessment among 101 beneficiary households in An Giang province, to assess the impact of the crisis on vulnerable households and children. 84 per cent of respondents noted the impact of the pandemic on their income due to job loss, restricted trade and prohibited exports. As a result, around 33 per cent of these households are in financial difficulties related to COVID-19. Furthermore, the survey found that 35 students in the area had not yet returned to school since the lifting of social distancing and 10 students had dropped out permanently. Findings will support the development and planning of immediate and long-term interventions to address the heightened risk of child labour resulting from the pandemic.

Endline KAP survey results reveal improved understanding of child labour and remaining gaps

1.5 years after the baseline survey on Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) on child labour was initiated by the Project, an endline KAP survey was undertaken at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, the results of which have now been finalised. The objective was to measure changes to KAP on child labour among 7-18 year olds, household representatives, and staff of social organisations and Government agencies (SAGA) and media and communication agencies (MCA) in the project sites. Overall, results revealed positive changes to the KAP of participants, despite the short time period between the two surveys. Specifically, knowledge among household representatives and children on the defined age range of a child were evidenced, alongside marked improvements to knowledge on the process of reporting child labour violations. Among surveyed 7-18 year olds, there was evidence of increased awareness of their rights. The percentage of community members who reported having seen or heard programmes related to child labour increased. Accordingly, more participants indicated that they would take action if they witnessed a case of child labour compared to 2018. Overall, knowledge of SAGA and MCA staff was more accurate than that of community members, and significantly more SAGA and MCA staff had attended training related to child labour since the baseline survey. These results will inform project communications activities and channels during the Project extension phase.



Project endline survey highlights impact of interventions

Following a baseline survey conducted early on in project implementation, endline data was collected after 3 years of implementation, through the Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs at MOLISA. The report was finalised by ILO and USDOL by the end of June 2020. A comparison of the results of the Endline Survey with the results of the baseline survey shows some positive changes in the situation of children and minors aged 5-17 years of age engaged in economic activities. The surveyed children and minors engaged in economic activities tended to undertake more appropriate work for fewer hours and the proportion of children in child labour in the project target sites has decreased from 4.91 per cent to 3.6 per cent, decreasing in both rural and urban areas. However, regarding the rate of hazardous child labour, this decreased slightly in urban areas but increased in rural areas. To facilitate the planning process for the extension phase, the results from the endline survey were presented during the project review workshop and will be used to inform the design of concrete developmental interventions.

Support to develop the new National Plan of action on child labour reduction and prevention for the period 2021 -2025

On 29 June 2020, in Hanoi, a consultation workshop was convened on the evaluation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour (NPA) for the period 2016-2020. The event gathered around 60 participants from MOLISA and other relevant ministries, workers' and employers' organisations, industry associations and DOLISAs from 12 provinces. During the workshop, DCA shared an outline for the upcoming NPA for the period of 2021-2025, with a vision towards 2030, and participants made recommendations for the next phase of the NPA based on lessons learnt from the previous phase. Based on recommendations, the Project has provided technical assistance and recruited a team of national consultants to support DCA to further refine the new cycle of the NPA, which is currently under development in alignment with the roadmap to achieve SDG Target 8.7.

Progress towards promoting child labour free enterprises

With support from the Project and the Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR), MOLISA is taking the lead in coordinating and overseeing the development of a child labour accreditation scheme to support employers' and workers' organizations and industry associations to prevent, monitor, remediate and gradually eradicate child labour in Vietnamese businesses. The scheme is under development in collaboration with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA), Better Work in Viet Nam and a number of business enterprises. Following preparatory work throughout March and April, and a consultation workshop in May, CCR CSR shared the first draft of the certification scheme in July 2020. Based on recommendations from DCA and concerned stakeholders, CCR CSR developed a proposed scheme entitled, "Viet Nam Award towards Child Labour Free Business". The aim is to identify business pioneers and champions in combating child labour, to encourage more businesses to systematically

address potential child labour risks, and improve awareness related to child labour issues among the general public in Viet Nam. Throughout September, CCR CSR piloted the scheme's criteria, indicators and self-assessment tools with 4 enterprises from wood processing, garment and handicraft sectors to gather further inputs for improvement. On 18 September 2020, a second consultation workshop was conducted with 15 participants from MOLISA, VCCI, CCR CSR and 31 representatives of factories, brands and consultancy firms. The documents and tools are currently being revised and will be integrated into the upcoming NPA.

New content of the Labour Code 2019 disseminated and circular developed

The revised Labour Code, which contains clearer provisions on the employment of minor workers and enhanced protections for workers in the informal economy, came into effect on 1 January 2021. To raise awareness on its provisions, the updated content on minor workers was disseminated through two workshops in June 2020, in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, gathering 90 and 76 participants respectively. Participants included representatives from relevant Government ministries and departments, the National Assembly office and provincial DOLISAs and sector and industrial associations. The events were co-chaired by DCA and the MOLISA legal department. To promote the content of the revised labour code more broadly, in collaboration with the legal department at MOLISA, the project is leading the development of a Q&A handbook on the updated content.

During the workshops, DCA presented a draft circular to guide the implementation of labour code provisions on the employment of persons under 15 years of age. DCA is currently developing the circular with support from the project. Following inputs at the workshop, the draft was further refined at a validation workshop and submitted for review in October. After submission, it was returned for further revisions to integrate circulars on the list of hazardous work prohibited for minors, the list of light work permitted for workers under 15, and regulations on minors working over-time and working at night. The revised circular will be re-submitted in January 2021. Once it comes into effect, the circular will replace circular 10/2013 and 11/2013 which guided the implementation of provisions on minor workers from the 2012 labour code.

AWARENESS RAISING & EVENTS

Recommendations gathered and good practices validated at project review workshop

On 24 and 25 September 2020, a two-day workshop was organized in Nha Trang to bring together project partners from the three target provinces to share experiences, good practices and recommendations, as ENHANCE enters into an extended implementation phase. On the first day, DOLISA representatives from Hanoi, An Giang and HCMC shared experiences of project implementation from their respective provinces, followed by comments and questions from participants. Results from the Project endline survey were then presented by ILLSA, after which participants were divided into working groups to identify challenges and recommendations for further discussion during plenary sessions.

Day 2 of the workshop began with a presentation from the Department of Child Affairs (DCA) on the Project's support to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Child Labour (NPA) for the period 2016-2020. This was followed by a panel discussion on lessons learnt and recommendations to strengthen capacity building with representatives from the International Cooperation Department and MOLISA inspectorate. The second presentation was delivered by the MOLISA Communications centre, detailing the Project's awareness raising interventions, which was followed by a panel discussion to share lessons learnt and recommendations in this area from workers', employers' and business associations as well as VCA.

The final presentation of the workshop provided an overview of good practices and lessons learnt for

documentation to gather inputs from participants to contribute to the development of the final report. Fieldwork for the documentation of good practices was undertaken by consultants throughout August and September, and the report is currently under review and pending finalization. Once completed, it will be distributed to project partners as well as stakeholders in non-project provinces to promote learning from the Project's interventions, and facilitate the replication of good practices elsewhere.

The productive workshop has contributed to ensuring the success of the next phase of the project, during which interventions and activities that have proven successful will be scaled up, lessons learnt will be drawn on and implementation challenges will be addressed.



Raising awareness among enterprises

In early September 2020, 2 training courses on child labour prevention and elimination for businesses were organized in Can Tho and Nha Trang for 69 participants from different enterprises in 10 southern and south central provinces to raise awareness and understanding of child labour, and risks related to employers, enterprises and industry associations. The trainings aimed to encourage businesses to apply legal regulations and the Code of Conduct on child labour. During the training, participants were also provided with a chance to review the child labour situation in their businesses and draft an action plan for the prevention of child labour for their own enterprises.



World Day Against Child Labour 2020 highlights impacts of COVID-19

World Day Against Child Labour 2020 was observed throughout the month of June to raise awareness on the heightened risk of child labour resulting from COVID-19, drawing on the slogan, COVID-19: Protect children from child labour, now more than ever. To mark the occasion in Viet Nam, MOLISA collaborated with ILO and UNICEF to host a livestreamed panel discussion on the topic, with participating experts from ILO and UNICEF, the Director General of DCA and a parent and teacher from Ho Chi Minh City affected by the crisis. The event was livestreamed on the websites of ILO Viet Nam and UNICEF Viet Nam as well as MOLISA's For Children TV Programme and Facebook page, and the child protection hotline webpage, reaching an audience of 25,800. The panel discussion was also widely reported in newspapers, on television and radio stations and shared on social media platforms.



Two additional news reports were televised on popular national television channels, and An Giang DOLISA hosted a provincial talk show on the topic of child labour and COVID-19, which was broadcast on An Giang television in August. The panel included An Giang DOLISA Deputy Director, ILO, An Giang DOET, an ENHANCE Project beneficiary and Can Tho University. During the discussion, Can Tho University shared the findings of the rapid assessment on the impacts of Covid-19 on the project target group in An Giang. To supplement mass media communication, messages on child labour and COVID-19 were displayed on public buses at bus stations with high migrant traffic, as well as on LCD screens on buildings in crowded public spaces in Hanoi and HCMC.



Supporting ongoing SCREAM activities

The content for the awareness raising package, Supporting Child's rights through education, arts and the media (SCREAM) has recently been updated with content from the NCLS 2018 and the Labour Code 2019. Between June and September 2020, 3 trainings on the SCREAM approach were organised in non Project provinces. The first attracted the participation of 31 officials from DOLISA, Youth Unions, and provincial centers of social work from 17 Northern provinces, and the final two were organised in Da Lat and Hai Phong for 75 trainers, educators, officers of provincial Cooperative Alliances and cooperatives under the VCA system from 28 northern and south central provinces. At the end of the training sessions, participants were able to apply the SCREAM methodology to deliver communications events and trainings on child labour.

SCREAM activities in schools and communities have been integrated into the upcoming IAs with DOLISA and DOET until the end of the Project. In addition to training, a summer camp with the participation of 90 target children and 33 SCREAM trainers and district DOLISA officials was organized in Tinh Bien district, An Giang province from 29-30 August 2020. Activities took the form of painting, poetry recitals, role plays and dramas on child labour, and explored the impacts of COVID-19.



DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

Planning for direct support during the extension phase

To determine the needs of Project target groups and inform the design of direct interventions during the Project's extension phase, a series of livelihood needs assessments were undertaken across project communes starting in September. Inputs from the Project review workshop have proven instrumental to the planning phase.

In Hanoi, the project is working with Hanoi DOLISA, and Hanoi Cooperative Alliance (HCA) to continue the provision of livelihood support for non-handicraft households. Based on the results of the rapid needs assessment, HCA have organized 18 training courses on a range of specialized topics including agricultural production techniques, market analysis, household financial management, the development of production and business plans and skills on loan access. These courses were combined with six visits to workplaces for more than 100 participants in three communes to explore further needs for support. Based on these consultations, HCA has prepared a detailed work-plan on developing safe vegetable-growing models and pig-raising models in Huong Ngai commune and Trung Hoa commune, respectively. These models will be technically supported by experienced experts and HCA at different levels, and monitored by a working group composed of representatives of the project, Commune level People's committees, labour officials at district and commune levels and the cooperative alliance at commune level.

In An Giang, the Center of Technology Transfer & Services at Can Tho University (CTTS) is conducting an ongoing assessment of livelihood needs. The focus for the extension phase will be on replicating and scaling up the mango juice processing model and the spray irrigation system for chilli, and consolidating other models, including mushroom and eel farming. In terms of the provision of vocational training and local apprenticeships for vulnerable children, responsibility has been delegated to An Giang DOLISA. An Phu District has started the profiling process for at least 13 identified children, and consultation meetings will be held in other districts in the coming months.

In Ho Chi Minh City, the intervention model at Thien An school, whereby vulnerable migrant children have been provided with lunch and learning resources, has been transferred to Binh Tan District to enhance local ownership of the model. During the extension period, the focus will be on sustaining the outcomes of interventions at the school. The provision of vocational training to vulnerable children will continue to be implemented in partnership with Saigon Children's Charity, building on the good results of the past three months, during which an additional 41 children have been connected with vocational training schools.



Keeping track of child beneficiaries

By the end of June 2020, in total, 6,081 child beneficiary profiles were recorded on the Direct Beneficiary Monitoring and Reporting system (DBMR), among which 3,218 children are from An Giang, 1,677 from HCMC and 1,186 are from Hanoi. The system is currently being updated and reviewed to reflect the latest needs of children and their families in the three project provinces. In An Giang, information gleaned from the rapid assessment on the impacts of Covid-19 on project target groups is being implemented into the system, along with the results of a field visit to gather feedback from DBMR users at provincial, district and commune levels in September. In Hanoi, all information on the provision of support from the project was updated in the system and a field trip was conducted in September 2020 to identify needs for DBMR improvements. Ensuring a well functioning and up to date DBMR system is instrumental to facilitating effective monitoring and reporting on the status of beneficiaries and delivering appropriate support.



Enhancing vocational training and careers counselling services

With Project support, the Department of Vocational Education and Training (DVET) has developed guidelines on aligning vocational training programmes with market demands and providing vocational careers counseling. During the development phase, DVET gathered inputs from relevant vocational schools and a validation workshop was held in June 2020 with the attendance of 43 participants including DOLISA staff, representatives of vocational schools, DVET, and ILO. The guidelines were then pre-tested from May to June and in September with over 30 vocational schools. The schools conducted basic activities such as multiple choice tests, counseling seminars and vocational counseling fairs for 1,080 secondary students. The pre-testing phase achieved positive results and collected valuable feedback and comments to refine the draft guidelines. The goal is to promote their widespread application across the country.



Vocational Training in Action

By mid-September 2020, 240 targeted children had been sent to vocational training institutions, continuing education centres and local apprenticeship service providers in HCMC in collaboration with Saigon Children's Charity. Tam, 17, who loves to cook, is one such beneficiary, currently coming to the end of a 6-month culinary course at Saigon Tourist training centre. His social worker is supporting him to secure a professional placement while he awaits his qualification. "Having a professional qualification will change my life. I now feel in control of my future", he says. The teenager, who had to drop out early to support his family, used to work full time in the service industry from 11am-11pm. Since enrolling in vocational training, Tam no longer undertakes this heavy work, but still supports his mother with odd jobs after school. With support from SCC and Saigon Tourism training centre, Tam recently applied for a professional placement at a wedding catering company close to his home, where he can continue work towards his future goals in a safe and supportive environment.

Upcoming activities

- Dissemination of good practice documentation report
- Finalisation and implementation of the NPA (2021-2025)
- Distribution of awareness raising materials updated with NCLS 2018 results and content from the revised Labour code 2019
- Support to the legal department, DCA, VASEP and ICD to provide communication and guidance on the newly developed circular on minor workers and to raise awareness on new labour code regulations related to minor workers
- Finalisation and publication of manual for trade unions

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