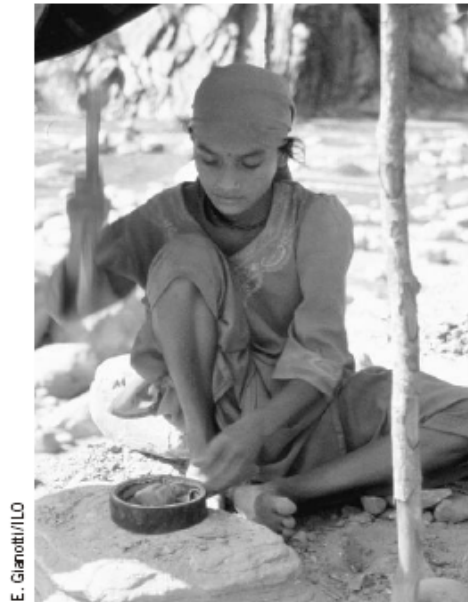


In their own words...

Nepal: Sudha



Sudha began work as a stone crusher at a quarry when she was 12 years old hoping to raise some extra money for her family. Although the stone she produces is used for road building in her area, it has not paved the way for an education for Sudha. This is something she regrets every day, as the local school is just a short walk from her home.

When asked if she would prefer to be at school, Sudha sighs and responds that it's too late for her to start now. Her wages from crushing stones, though small, are now an important part of her family's income, supplementing their small earnings from farming livestock along the banks of the river near where they live. Searching the nearby forest, the family gathers firewood, which they then sell at the market, providing another source of much needed money. Sometimes, Sudha's brother, sister and her parents also work as stone crushers in an effort to supplement their meagre earnings from farming. Their combined efforts earn them

1,400 rupees a week (around US\$20 or €15).

When asked why she continues to do this back-breaking and dangerous work,

Sudha simply sighs and stares at the sky. "There is no alternative", she says. For her, this is her destiny, her pre-ordained role in life.

(Source: IPEC: *Digging for Survival*. ILO, 2005, p. 4.)