



International
Labour
Office

A Decade of ILO-India Partnerships Towards a Future without Child Labour

1992-2002



A Decade of ILO-India Partnerships

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Towards a Future Without Child Labour
(1992-2002)

International Labour Organization
Subregional Office for South Asia
New Delhi

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Foreword

During the last decade, child labour has emerged as one of the major international issues. Increasing attention to human rights, changing international economic relations, as well as new dynamics in bilateral and multilateral trade issues have reinforced child labour concerns and highlighted its complex and interlinked causes. The effective abolition of child labour remains one of the most urgent challenges of our time. The partnerships and joint efforts in India highlighted in this publication showcase how collaboration among ILO's constituents and other actors helps to build a supportive framework in which effective action to combat child labour can be taken within and between countries.

In the ILO, the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is responsible for activities in the area of child labour. IPEC aims to work towards the progressive elimination of child labour through country-specific initiatives and the creation of a world-wide movement. Launched in 1992 as a single donor programme with six participating countries including India, IPEC has now evolved into a global partnership of nearly 90 countries. India was amongst the first countries to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the ILO to implement IPEC initiatives as a supplement to national efforts.

IPEC's work in India received initial financial support primarily from the Government of Germany and to a lesser extent from the Governments of Finland and Sweden. The encouraging results from work done during the 1990s resulted in the interest by other donors, including the Department for International Development (DFID), Government of United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, the Department of Labour, Government of the United States and the Government of Italy.

This publication presents a review of a substantial number of IPEC programmes from 1992 to 2002 in India. Most of which were undertaken in collaboration with the ILO constituents, who have also taken an active part in the IPEC National

Steering Committee. It is our hope that this publication will generate a wider understanding of this complex issue. The review also attempts to identify directions for future development of programmes and policies. The ILO stands ready to continue to contribute to the fight against child labour in India in cooperation with its constituents and other partners to achieve the shared goal of a world free of child labour.



Herman van der Laan
ILO Representative in India

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIOE	All India Organization of Employers
AITUC	All-India Trade Union Congress
APFTUCL	Andhra Pradesh Federation of Trade Unions for the Elimination of Child Labour
APSBP	Andhra Pradesh State Based Project
BMS	Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh
CBWE	Central Board of Workers' Education
CEASE Child Labour	A Consortium of Employers' Associations for the Elimination of Child Labour
CIE	Council of Indian Employers
CINI	Child in Need Institute
CITU	Centre of Indian Trade Unions
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSG	Community Support Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
DWCRA	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
EFI	Employers Federation of India
HMS	Hind Mazdoor Sabha
IASP	Integrated Area-Specific Project
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress

ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
MCR HRDI	Dr. M. Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute
MOLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCLP	National Child Labour Programme
NFE	Non-Formal Education
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SCOPE	Standing Conference of Public Enterprises
SHG	Self-Help Group
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
TBP	Time-Bound Programme
TEC	Transitory Educational Centre
TEI	Trainer Establishments and Individuals
WB	World Bank
WCL	World Confederation of Labour

Introduction

Poverty is the single greatest force that generates the flow of children into the workplace. It forces children to work for their own survival and for the survival of their families. The acute need in many households to keep a number of family members working makes any investment in children's education a practical impossibility for most.

Indeed, the price of such an investment can be very high. Most free public education is in fact very expensive for a poor family, which is expected to meet the cost of books and other school supplies, uniforms, clothes, transportation, and often other unforeseen expenses. In some countries, the costs for a primary-level student may represent one-third of the entire cash income of a typical poor family, many of whom have more than one child of school age.

Many children also live in communities that do not have adequate school facilities — so they work. Even when schools are available, the comparatively high cost of education to poor families means that the return on such an investment must also be high. While it is true that many children drop out of school because they have to work, it is also the case that many become so discouraged by school — and the expectations that result from it — that they prefer to work instead.

Analyses at the macroeconomic level show a high rate of social return on investments in education, particularly at the primary level. Empirical work undertaken by the ILO at global level shows that the benefits of eliminating child labour will be nearly seven times greater than the costs, or an estimated US\$ 5.1 trillion in the developing and transition economies, where most child labourers are found.¹ The study also says that child labour can be eliminated and replaced by universal education by the year 2020 at an estimated total cost of US\$ 760 billion. Indeed, history continues to remind us that countries did not industrialize before investing in universal education. On the contrary, in Austria, Germany, Japan and the United States, high rates of literacy were achieved well before large-scale industrialization.

¹ ILO Geneva: Investing in Every Child, An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labour (December 2003).

It is generally believed that children are most likely to be employed when their labour is less expensive or less troublesome than that of adults, when other labour is scarce, and when they are considered irreplaceable by reason of their size or perceived dexterity. That child workers are often paid less than their adult counterparts is true in most cases. However, the competitive wage differences and other advantages of child labour are not always as present, clear and compelling as is often claimed. The argument for economic irreplaceability is surprisingly tenuous, as recent studies examining the labour-cost savings made by the employment of children demonstrate.²

Not all reasons for using child labour are economic. In the informal sector, enterprises hire children and adults on a piece-rate basis, which means that there are no discernible cost savings as a result of using child labour. This in turn implies that there are important non-economic reasons for employing children. Parents are a major source of demand for the work of children from their own families. Significant numbers of children work as unpaid workers in family farms, shops and stores that depend on family labour for their economic survival. It is generally assumed that these children are much less likely to be exploited than those who work outside the family, but the evidence does not support so sweeping a generalization: indeed, the opposite is often true. However, it is certainly clear that many families in both developing and developed countries continue to count on children to assist in maintaining the household economy. In fact, children in almost all societies work in one way or another, although the types of work that they do and the conditions of their involvement vary across societies and over time. Children's participation in certain types of light work, such as helping parents care for the home and family for short periods during the day, or teenagers working for a few hours before or after school or during holidays, is considered to be an integral part of growing up. It is also a means of acquiring basic knowledge, self-discipline and practical skills. This type of participation is valuable as long as it is not abusive and as long as it does not hinder the educational and livelihood development of children.

But there can be little doubt that the worst forms of child labour — slavery, prostitution, debt bondage, and use in armed conflict, to name a few — cause profound physical and psychological damage to children. They have also been known to critically threaten children's lives.

The International Labour Organization (ILO)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) — from its very inception — has made these forms of child labour one of its central concerns. As child labour compromises

² Centre for Operations Research and Training (Baroda): *Economics of Child Labour in Hazardous Industries in India* (New Delhi, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1998).

both economic growth and social development, the ILO believes that poverty reduction begins with children. To this end, it is committed to the development of a global strategy that combats the participation of children in the labour market.³

The ILO adopted its first Convention on Child Labour, (Minimum Age [Industry] Convention No. 5) in 1919, the year of its foundation. It has continued to strengthen its efforts to combat child labour with the adoption of the Minimum Age Convention No. 138 in 1973 and, most recently, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, which was adopted in 1999 and has since been widely ratified.

ILO Conventions have set in motion a process that begins to allow children to actualize their potentials and enjoy their basic rights. As human beings under the age of eighteen, they are entitled to education and other fundamental rights. Drawing on the provisions of C138 and C182, ILO has identified three categories of child labour that need to be abolished:

- ◆ Work performed by a child who is under minimum age as specified in national legislation for that type of work.
- ◆ Work, known as *hazardous work*, which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children.
- ◆ The *worst forms of child labour*, as internationally defined, including slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, other forms of forced labour, and forced recruitment for use in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, and other illicit activities.

The ILO has been giving priority to the worst forms of child labour and hazardous work. By prioritizing the time-bound applicability of its programmes, it aims — with time — to progressively eliminate all forms of child labour.

Context

The concern over child labour is now greater than ever before — both within India and all over the world. The objective of this report is to assess and learn from the experiences of ILO's IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour) in India from 1992 to 2002. IPEC in India has undertaken a structured stock-taking exercise of its programmes in order to identify, document and disseminate information regarding interventions that have proven to be both effective and sustainable in the long term.

³ For further information on the ILO's work, please see: www.ilo.org/childlabour.

This report begins with an introduction to IPEC and its approach at a global level. The first chapter provides an overview of the different approaches that IPEC has used to progressively eliminate child labour — particularly its worst forms — throughout India. It then gives an overview of the various IPEC partnerships with government, employers' and workers' organizations, social groups, and civil society actors.

The second chapter examines many of the good practices the programme has identified over the years. It focuses in particular on what has been learnt from organizations that have collaborated with IPEC.

Finally, the third chapter looks towards the future, highlighting the key challenges confronting IPEC and all those who aim to eradicate child labour in India and elsewhere.

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)

IPEC was launched in 1992 to operationalize ILO's mandate with regard to child labour. To this end, it aims at strengthening national capacities and creating a global movement to address child labour issues. IPEC works at both country and global levels with local partner organizations, both public and private, to implement measures to:

- ◆ Prevent child labour;
- ◆ Withdraw children from hazardous and abusive work, and provide alternatives for them and their families; and
- ◆ Improve working conditions as a transitional measure towards eliminating child labour.

Since it began its operations in 1992, IPEC has worked to achieve this in several ways: through country-based and regional programmes that promote policy reform, build institutional capacity and put in place concrete measures to end child labour; and through mobilization that is intended to raise consciousness, change social attitudes and promote ratification and effective implementation of ILO child labour conventions. IPEC plays a catalytic role in combating child labour through a multisectoral set of policy instruments, advocacy efforts and technical cooperation initiatives. These efforts have resulted in hundreds of thousands of children being withdrawn from work and rehabilitated. It has also prevented the recruitment of children into the workforce. Direct actions have been complemented throughout by substantial statistical and qualitative research, policy and legal analysis, programme evaluation and child labour monitoring. In turn, this has led to the accumulation of a vast knowledge base of

statistical data, technical methodologies, thematic studies, guidelines and training materials.

From an initial six countries in 1992, including India, IPEC had developed activities in over 80 ILO member states by 2004. Donor support was originally provided by only one country, Germany. In 2004 IPEC received support from more than 30 donors, including municipalities and many employers' and workers' organizations.

The IPEC approach

IPEC's approach evolved over the years as the programme acquired more experience and the movement against child labour took on global dimensions. In the early years, IPEC supported its partner organizations in developing innovative and experimental activities. These included determining the nature and extent of the child labour problem; devising national policies and protective legislation; setting up mechanisms to provide in-country ownership and the operation of national programmes of action; and creating awareness in communities and workplaces. This country programme approach was instrumental in mobilizing broad support against child labour and in enhancing the capacities of many national institutions. Since 1997, IPEC has gradually widened the scope of its operations by covering large geographical areas and specific economic sectors. In the meantime, IPEC has also begun to address the issues of workplace monitoring and social protection. These programmes have helped withdraw several hundred thousand children from hazardous work, while endeavouring to keep workplaces child labour free and ensuring that former child labourers and their families are provided with alternative livelihoods that are viable in the long term.

Another significant development of IPEC's technical cooperation programme is the implementation of comprehensive projects aimed at combating child labour both regionally and nationally. These initiatives have generally yielded positive results. They have combined a multitude of activities, including child labour surveys, the sensitization of political leaders and the general public and specific projects to withdraw children from work. Moreover, in order to address the issues of vulnerable groups and hazardous sectors more effectively, IPEC launched several cross-border regional projects to address trafficking in children, child soldiers, and child labour in domestic work, mining and commercial agriculture.

The development and adoption of ILO C182 on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour was a significant step for IPEC. The clear commitment to eliminating the worst forms of child labour has helped place the issue on national development agendas. For example, the Time-Bound Programme (TBP), as a product designed to

assist member states in implementing C182, aims at eradicating the worst forms of child labour within a determined period of time. TBP's are also expected to demonstrate that the elimination of the worst forms of child labour can have a significant impact on sustainable development.

IPEC's policy research, data collection and analysis, evaluation methodology, campaigning, communications and legal advisory work are vital for the effectiveness of IPEC's technical cooperation programmes and the enhancement of national capacities. These functions were considerably enlarged during 2000-01, reinforcing ILO's role as a global centre for child labour information and legal expertise. The rapid expansion of the programme has raised IPEC's public profile worldwide and has generated considerable public interest.

IPEC's early programmes targeted children using underlying baseline data that were often not disaggregated by gender. Consequently it became difficult to determine to what extent girls — who are particularly vulnerable to abusive exploitation — had been provided with effective assistance. As C182 requires that special attention be given to girls, IPEC stepped up its efforts to mainstream gender in its approach. In doing this, IPEC recognized that all steps in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes required careful consideration with respect to how boys and girls are differently affected by the worst forms of child labour. Although IPEC's knowledge base shows that girls are vulnerable to some of the most serious violations of human rights — such as trafficking for sexual exploitation — IPEC also recognizes that, in some socio-cultural contexts, boys are at even greater risk. Special measures need to be applied in order to reach these specific target groups. The mainstreaming of gender as an analytical tool translates into programmes that are designed with these considerations in mind. Existing interventions promoting equal opportunities for boys and girls are analyzed for any potentially negative impact they might inadvertently create.

Children's participation in designing and undertaking anti-child labour projects can be the key to successful results. They can also provide a reality check in relation to the development of national policies on children. Programme planners can carefully assess how and at which levels children can and should contribute to the different steps within the process. Children's views can be solicited through focus group discussions in safe and comfortable environments, where they can voluntarily participate. In direct action interventions, the power of peer education under adult support and guidance has been of great value. Children's participation, especially older children, in the planning of their own future after withdrawal from the worst forms of child labour is crucial so that their personal motivations and interests can determine the nature of present and future interventions. It has become clear that

when programme implementers win the children over and give them space for assuming some responsibility, the probability of sustainable progress is considerably greater.

Working children and former child labourers can be empowered to help influence public opinion in combating the worst forms of child labour. Their active involvement in the development of national TBPs can also take C182's requirement for consultation with affected children a step further. At a minimum, hearings can be organized for children involved in child labour activities. Other types of child participation include consultations with affected children and organization of child labourers and child advocates, child advocacy activities (i.e. meetings with heads of state, first ladies and local politicians), public events (i.e. rallies, marches and concerts), and other activities for school children. Former child workers can also be encouraged to go back to their communities and advocate against the worst forms of child labour.

Although the programme continues to expand at a rapid rate, it is clear that IPEC's technical cooperation resources can only provide direct relief to a very small portion of children in need of help. Still, IPEC's broad experience gained over more than a decade has put the programme in a strong position to significantly widen its impact by concentrating greater resources on facilitating the work of its many partner organizations worldwide. IPEC is gradually reducing its role in the direct execution of individual programmes, while increasing its focus on larger, integrated and highly focused projects at the national and sub-regional levels. It also provides policy and technical assistance to ILO member states in formulating their own policies and programmes related to the implementation of C182 and C138. With over three-quarters of ILO member states now having ratified C182 — and with universal ratification now within reach — this type of IPEC assistance will be in constant demand in the coming years.

It is now widely accepted that a development-oriented approach that reduces poverty and promotes universal education is the most effective way of attacking the complex root causes of child labour. This approach will further ensure that child labour will be effectively eliminated in the long term. The programme's overall strategy is thus firmly based on the premise that the reduction of child labour and poverty through reforming policies, enhancing capacity, protecting children's rights, enhancing community participation and empowering parents and children will have a much greater and sustainable impact than direct action alone.

To ensure the effective implementation of these ILO conventions, upstream policy-related work and downstream interventions are being combined in an integrated

approach that is sensitive to the capacity of participating member states. Currently, IPEC supports member states in:

- ◆ Formulating, promoting, enforcing and monitoring relevant national policies, laws and regulations, including the official list of hazardous work;
- ◆ Collecting and analyzing data on the worst forms of child labour and developing sound and participatory child labour monitoring and information systems; and
- ◆ Developing and implementing participatory time-bound policy and programme frameworks to address child labour issues, with particular emphasis on the worst forms of child labour.

Two important initiatives undertaken by IPEC since 2000-01 reflect the focus on comprehensive, integrated actions. These are the development of the TBPs for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and the Networking Initiative, which covers development policy and hazardous child labour. IPEC's strategy of building institutional capacity to help ensure that assistance is cost-effective and sustainable is also in line with this approach.

The TBP concept is designed to meet the need for large-scale interventions that exists in many countries. In this framework, national agencies and institutions take the lead in programme development and implementation, including resource mobilization. To encourage this, IPEC is refining the TBP concept to account for the variability of national situations with regard to the extent and nature of the worst forms of child labour and the respective differences in institutional and technical capacities. During 2002, the first three national TBPs for El Salvador, Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania were effectively implemented. The formulation of TBPs has since been completed in the Dominican Republic, the Philippines and Pakistan, and other countries across various regions have started programme development work.

Child labour and international standards

The rationale for seeing child labour as a problem comes from three distinct perspectives. The first is rooted in the respect for children's universal rights. The second relates to the adverse effects of child labour on economic development, particularly for the long-term development of human capital. The third underscores the adverse effects of inappropriate work on children's health and mental development. While these perspectives appear to be conceptually distinct and their immediate policy implications may occasionally conflict, they remain profoundly complementary in the long term.

Three sets of international standards — the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the ILO Conventions on Minimum Age and the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the ILO Convention on Safety at Work — provide the legal and

internationally agreed upon basis for action. These conventions also constitute the policy framework for IPEC's work. The CRC specifies the rights and protection — including protection from exploitation through labour — for those who are under the age of eighteen. Throughout its existence, the ILO has used *the minimum age for admission to employment* as a yardstick for defining and regulating child labour. At the very first session of the International Labour Conference in 1919, the ILO adopted the first international treaty on child labour — the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 5) — which prohibited the work of children under the age of fourteen in industrial sectors. During the following fifty years, nine further conventions were adopted, all of which set standards for minimum age in different sectors — industry, agriculture, maritime work, non-industrial employment, fishing, and underground work. The adoption of these standards demonstrated a growing international commitment to abolish child labour and to draw a line distinguishing child labour from more acceptable forms of work by children.

It was not until much later that it became possible to adopt a comprehensive convention on the subject — the *Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)*. This landmark Convention applies to all economic sectors and to all working children, whether they are employed for wages or working on their own behalf. It represents the most comprehensive and authoritative international definition of minimum age for admission to employment. It is also innovative in that it provides for a progressive and flexible approach to the problem, particularly for developing countries. Thus, it places on ratifying states the obligation to fix a minimum age and define a range of minimum ages below which no child should be required to work.

Minimum ages according to Convention No. 138

In general

Minimum age: not less than age of completion of compulsory schooling, and in all cases not less than 15 years

Light work: 13 years

Hazardous work: 18 years (16 years under certain strict conditions)

Where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed

General minimum age: no less than 14 years for an initial period

Light work: 12 years

Hazardous work: 18 years (16 years under certain strict conditions)

Focusing on the worst forms of child labour

The adoption of Convention No. 182 helped to focus the spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate, as a priority, the worst forms of child labour, which it defines as:

- (a) All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs, as defined by relevant international treaties;
- (d) Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (Article 3).

A distinction can be drawn between two categories of the worst forms of child labour:

- ◆ Those that this report terms the “unconditional” *worst forms of child labour*, referred to in Article 3(a) - (c) of C182, that are so fundamentally at odds with children’s basic human rights that they are absolutely prohibited for all persons under the age of 18; and
- ◆ *Hazardous work*, as defined by national legislation, that may be conducted in legitimate economic sectors but that is nonetheless damaging to the child worker.

But while the elimination of the worst forms of child labour is IPEC’s most urgent priority, this does not imply that the long term goal of eliminating all forms of child labour has been abandoned. Instead, giving priority to the worst forms of child labour provides an entry point for addressing the other critical issues on its agenda.

A universal commitment to effective abolition

The adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) emphasises the fact that the elimination of all forms of child labour has become the shared goal of every ILO member state. It is also an objective of the organization as a whole, which has pledged to assist its members in this historic endeavour — an endeavour that continues to generate profound social and developmental change all over the world.

IPEC target groups

There is no single group or action that can resolve this complex issue. Success largely depends on the cooperation of partners, whose roles and respective skill sets can complement one another. All groups in society can play a vital role in this crucial effort.

Key stakeholders include:

- ◆ Working children, ex-child labourers and children at risk of becoming child workers;
- ◆ The parents and employers of these children;
- ◆ Employers' and workers' organizations;
- ◆ Governmental agencies at the local, state and national levels in such fields as planning, administration and finance, labour legislation and enforcement, education, health, social welfare, statistics and development;
- ◆ Community and religious leaders;
- ◆ Teachers, as well as health and social workers;
- ◆ Non-governmental organizations and associations;
- ◆ Committed individuals at all levels of society;
- ◆ Media; and
- ◆ Universities and research institutes.

ILO's tripartite constituents: governments, employers and workers

The full commitment of the *government*, and in particular its *Ministry of Labour*, has always been a prerequisite for undertaking large-scale IPEC work in any country. Traditionally, this commitment has been expressed through a Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO and the government. With the development of TBPs, however, the principle of national ownership has been given greater prominence. As TBPs aim at integrating child labour into national development efforts, other government agencies (i.e. ministries of planning, social welfare, education, rural development, and others) are taking on larger responsibilities.

Employers' organizations also have an important role in the struggle against child labour. IPEC maintains close contacts with the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and such international organizations as the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industries and other sectorial organizations. Many national employers' organizations do pioneering work by combining policy development, awareness raising and practical interventions. In 2002, for example, the Chocolate Manufacturers' Association and the World Cocoa Foundation joined with IPEC to end child labour in cocoa production in West Africa.

Workers' organizations also play a central role in the programme, not only by mainstreaming child labour issues into their national agendas, but also by implementing concrete interventions on behalf of IPEC. Many programmes are implemented jointly by more than one organization. This has become a trend in the trade union world because child labour is an issue that tends to consolidate trade union unity. Furthermore, IPEC works with the main international workers' organizations, like the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL). These contacts generally focus on issues of campaigning, mobilization and policy development rather than the direct implementation of technical cooperation activities. IPEC also has close contacts with Education International and the World Confederation of Teachers: during 2000-01, there was a significant increase in the number of action programmes implemented by teachers' organizations.

Civil society is a rich source of motivation and action in the fight against child labour. Children and their parents must be a part of the process, and community-based organizations are particularly well-placed to involve them. Community-based monitoring and the strengthening of community ties are effective ways of preventing children from entering into the worst forms of child labour. Community-based organizations and NGOs are already focusing on the same problems and target groups that IPEC hopes to focus on — so the partnership is a natural one.

United Nations agencies and other international organizations have been key partners in IPEC's ongoing combat against child labour. Comprehensive programmes designed to cover large geographical areas need to be based on a careful mapping of on-going, planned and potential interventions by other actors. As IPEC alone is not in a position to mobilize the immense resources required for the effective technical support of member states, collaboration with other UN agencies is vital. To this end, IPEC continues to make the effort to ensure that the elimination of the worst forms of child labour is included in the children's rights, poverty-reduction and universal education programmes of other international organizations.

Multilateral and regional development banks also have a major role. The Poverty Reduction Strategies of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are increasingly recognized as the framework for providing development aid to the developing world. These Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), however, have given limited attention to the elimination of child labour as an explicit developmental objective. But PRSPs remain crucial in shaping the policy environment in which IPEC programmes are planned and implemented. These strategies — particularly those in relation to poverty alleviation, employment creation, investment and primary education — are of critical importance to child labour. Some headway

in this direction has already been made: in both Nepal and the United Republic of Tanzania, the master monitoring plans of the PRSPs contain references to combating the worst forms of child labour, and the PRSPs have been used as part of the strategic framework for the development of the TBPs. The World Bank, UNICEF and IPEC have also joined forces through the Understanding Children's Work Project to improve the global knowledge base on child labour. In addition, IPEC is working with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on child labour issues with a view to strengthening the observance of core labour standards in the bank's lending and project development activities.

A Decade of Partnerships in India

This chapter examines the magnitude of child labour in India, government response at national and regional levels, and the nature of IPEC's interventions throughout the 1992-2002 decade. It further explores how these strategies evolved over time and how IPEC has drawn lessons from its past experiences to develop future strategies and ensure maximum convergence with national efforts.

Child labour in India

A considerable number of children in the country are pushed, by a combination of circumstances, to seek employment. In 1991, there were an estimated 11.3 million child labourers in India. Approximately 90 per cent of them were to be found in rural areas, with an estimated 2 million working in hazardous industries.¹ The 55th Round of the National Sample Survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 1999-00 indicates that there are about 10.4 million working children.²

A complex set of supply and demand forces has led to child labour. These include factors such as parental poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment; social and economic circumstances; lack of access to basic education and skills; and deeply ingrained cultural values.

A child labour force existing along with significant numbers of unskilled adult workers has serious developmental implications. This contingent of manpower, equipped with limited skills and with insufficient access to employment opportunities, is unable to respond to the needs of increasing globalization, competition and technological development. This widens socio-economic inequalities and can have a profoundly detrimental impact on the country's economic prospects. Child labour tends to perpetuate poverty and may amplify the social exclusion of vulnerable segments of the population.

¹ Government of India: Census of India 1991: Working Children in India: An Analysis of the 1991 Census Data.

² Ministry of Labour and Employment, Working Group Report on Strategy for the 10th Plan.

Another major factor contributing to the economic exploitation of children in India is the poor working conditions associated with low-income employment. With employers either unwilling or unable to invest in basic occupational safety and health measures, juvenile workers are often exposed to dangerous and unsanitary conditions. This, in combination with unusually long working hours, often results in a range of health problems and a comparatively high levels of injury.

Governmental institutions and development agencies at central and state level have taken significant initiatives to combat child labour. These initiatives have led to a greater awareness of the critical implications of this issue.

Response at the national level

With the introduction of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act in 1986, the Indian government embarked on a pro-active course to combat child labour. The most significant steps in this direction were the adoption of the National Child Labour Policy in 1987 and the establishment of National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) in nine districts that had a high incidence of child labour in hazardous sectors.³

With the Ministry of Labour projecting child labour as a major issue within governance, the 1990s marked an even more significant turning point. In his Independence Day address to the nation in August 1994, Narasimha Rao, then Prime Minister of India, pledged to withdraw and rehabilitate the 2 million child labourers working in hazardous industries by the year 2000. The Supreme Court of India then directed the union government and the states of India to identify all children working in hazardous occupations, withdraw them from work and provide them with basic education.

The NCLP is now a mature and consolidated programme which plans to cover 250 districts throughout the country. Sufficient financial resources have already been allocated and are being made available within the framework of the 10th Five Year Development Plan (2002-2007). Close policy and operational linkages have been established with other large centrally funded development projects, particularly in the field of primary education.

ILO in India

In 1992, India became the first country to sign an MOU with the ILO to implement IPEC as a supplement to its National Child Labour Project.

³V.V. Giri National Labour Institute: Towards Eliminating Child Labour – A Report of Workshop of District Collectors/ District Heads (NOIDA, 1996).

IPEC's goals in India were to:

- ◆ Strengthen the capacity of government, employers' and workers' organizations, and NGOs to develop and implement measures geared towards the elimination of child labour;
- ◆ Withdraw children from hazardous work and provide them with alternatives; and
- ◆ Improve working conditions where immediate withdrawal from work was not possible.

To this end, IPEC supported 175 action programmes over the last decade. Two large-scale projects during this period were the Integrated Area Specific Project and the Andhra Pradesh State Based Project against Child Labour, which will be examined at length. IPEC strategy in India moved from the more sporadic work of earlier years with NGOs to a more integrated approach that covered entire districts and states.

This chapter provides an overview of the nature of interventions and changes in strategy from 1992 to 1999. The majority of interventions sought to:

- ◆ Mobilize and generate awareness;
- ◆ Build the capacity of different social actors (trade union members, local community members, and others);
- ◆ Provide non-formal education;
- ◆ Advocate institutional reforms; and
- ◆ Develop income-generating alternatives.

Evolution of IPEC in India

IPEC in India was launched in late 1992 and designed a considerable number of action programmes, the majority of which were to be implemented by NGOs. IPEC's choice of them as partners was based on their comparative advantages in implementing advocacy, mobilization and community based initiatives. But while some NGOs focused specifically on child labour, many did not. IPEC's strategy was to re-orient the NGOs already working on children and encourage them to work on the specific issue of child labour. This was not without difficulties, as many NGOs still believed in providing welfare for children and were less preoccupied with child labour eradication as a formal objective. But this large base of NGOs from all over India was to provide a strong foundation around which IPEC could evolve. This influential partnership eventually spoke with greater unity on the issue, which in turn had a broad impact on the media and the general public.

It became increasingly clear, however, that this issue would only be successfully raised in the public consciousness if IPEC forged alliances with other organizations at

the same time. Trade unions emerged as a natural ally, although many were initially hesitant as to why they should be working on child labour. But many eventually recognized that, wherever children worked, the wages of adult workers were significantly depressed. Understanding the impact of child labour on adult labour made the trade union movement, particularly the five major trade unions — All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), and Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) — begin working on the issue in earnest. This was set in motion during a three-day workshop on child labour conducted at the National Labour Institute in late 1993, where the five trade unions agreed on a common platform for action. Trade unions throughout the country then began IPEC-supported action programmes for sensitization and awareness building in their respective states.

As a means of reaching out to civil society, IPEC built close working relationships with existing institutions in the country. Government institutions such as the Central Board of Workers' Education (CBWE) clearly had a tremendous outreach. The CBWE, with 48 regional offices across all states, had a powerful influence on the issue of workers' education. Through these regional centres, the CBWE reached out to hundreds of thousands of workers every year. By introducing the subject of child labour into the CBWE training programmes, IPEC was convinced that CBWE's constituents could be sensitized. CBWE ensured that child labour was introduced as a module into all of its ongoing training programmes. In addition to the CBWE, other government institutions such as the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, the Maharashtra Institute of Labour Studies and the Gandhi Labour Institute also became important partners.

The next step in forging alliances was to establish a collaborative dialogue with employers' associations in the country on the importance of addressing child labour issues. IPEC began working with the All-India Organization of Employers (AIOE) on behalf of the Council of Indian Employers (CIE) in an action programme, which encouraged partnerships with regional employers' organizations, such as the Employers' Federation of Southern India and other regional bodies. This partnership with employers' organizations was particularly helpful since it provided direct exposure to the perspective of employers who had hitherto been employing children.

IPEC went on to commission studies on the economic implications of eliminating child labour in certain industries. One dimension of the research was to examine possible links between large families and child labour. Did it necessarily follow that there was a heightened tendency for children to be sent to work when the size of the family was large? A study conducted in Baroda showed that, when the size of the family crossed the threshold of 3.5 children, there was a pronounced increase in the

tendency among parents to send their children to work.⁴ These research findings in turn led to partnerships between IPEC, the World Bank and other research institutions throughout the country.

At the end of IPEC's first five years in India, a four-party evaluation — including representatives from the Indian government, trade unions, employers and NGOs — was conducted. The evaluation resulted in several valuable suggestions, among which the recommendation that IPEC focus less on small and sporadic action programmes and more on an integrated framework was the most noteworthy.

The evaluators also recommended that the programme work more closely with the government, as it had become increasingly clear that the elimination of child labour could not be achieved without the involvement of the government at both state and national levels.

The NCLPs were an obvious site of intervention. While the NCLPs have been in existence since 1987, they were able to target and rehabilitate around 40,000 children within the first three years of IPEC in India. In fact, IPEC's presence had an almost catalytic effect on the expansion of the NCLPs. Their number expanded from nine to 14 in 1994 alone and has continued to expand considerably. Today the majority of child labour endemic districts are covered by government supported initiatives.

The NCLPs could clearly be strengthened by expanding the movement to the district and grassroots levels. The evaluators recommended an integrated approach, where children would be put into non-formal, and later to formal schools; rehabilitation would be sustained; and the accretion of children into the workforce would continue to be prevented. In addition to running non-formal education and transitional education centres, this integrated area-specific approach also addressed another key concern: the substantive drop in family income when a child stopped working. Providing the families with avenues for supplementary incomes became one of the main interventions in the integrated area-specific approach. Other interventions included facilitating greater coordination of government services at the district level; mobilizing departments within the district government (such as the departments of education, rural development, and women and child development); and mobilizing grassroots organizations. Until this point, the issue of child labour had fallen mainly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour.

⁴ Richard Anker, Sandhya Barge, S. Rajagopal and M.P. Joseph (ed.): *Economics of Child Labour in Hazardous Industries in India* (Baroda, Centre for Operations Research and Training, 1998).

The integrated approach also mobilized trade unions at the district level to add strength to the struggle. The other significant component was the role that employers could play in dissuading their peers from employing children. The integrated area-specific model also examined the possibility of small changes in technology through which child labour could be discouraged and the employment of adult workers could be further encouraged. For example, in the carpet industry in Uttar Pradesh and other areas, the loom is designed to be suitable for a child weaver. The integrated area-specific approach assisted local counterparts in altering the design of the loom by making it more difficult for a child to use it.

IPEC then moved from the district level to the state level. Although child labour is a subject that can be legislated upon by union and state governments (and the NCLPs are funded exclusively by the central government), the machineries of the state governments and grassroots organizations were critical for enforcement, awareness raising, and the admission of children into schools. This led to development the state-based project called the Andhra Pradesh State Based Project (APSBP) for the elimination of child labour. Today, the APSBP works very closely with the state government and its departments to address this issue. In many ways, the establishment of APSBP in early 2000 was the culmination of IPEC's work in India during the first decade of its existence.

IPEC-funded interventions

Over the last decade, IPEC — in collaboration with its partners — has directly rehabilitated approximately 145,000 children working in hazardous industries. These figures indicate the number of children who have been directly targeted by IPEC's interventions and who have since received some form of education.

In terms of geographical coverage, all the main child labour states in the country have been covered, although often on a small scale (see map).⁵ This coverage can be observed in the following chart, which indicates IPEC programme allotment per state and highlights the shift in focus among partner agencies over time.

IPEC's target groups in India

IPEC's primary target groups are child labourers and their families, often described as direct beneficiaries, who fall under four main categories:

- ◆ Those engaged in factories, industrial enterprises, cottage industries and home-based activities;

⁵ The map is purely for illustrative purposes and does not reflect a position by the ILO on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

IPEC-supported programmes in India (1992-2002)

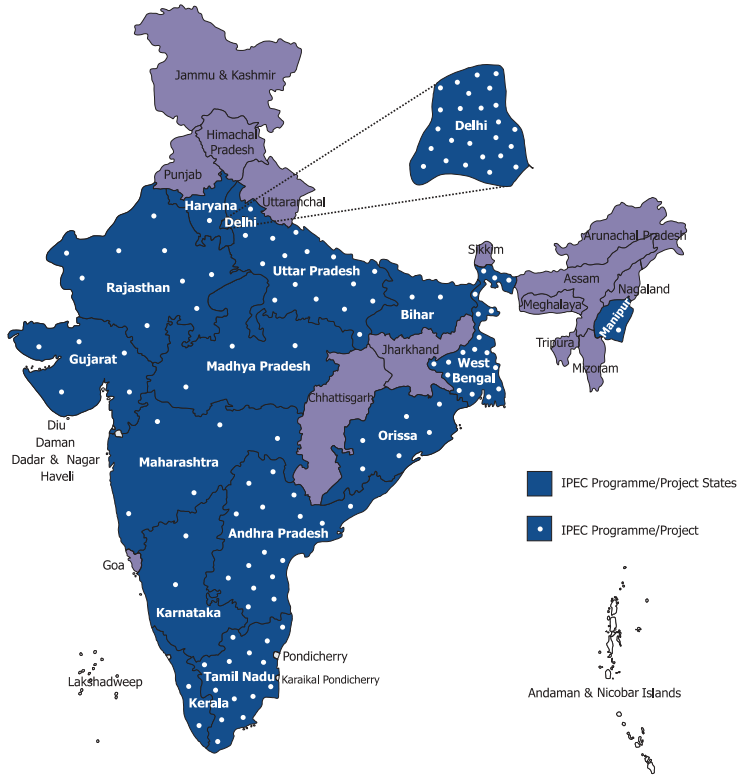


Table I. Number of children directly benefited by IPEC interventions, 1992-2002

Partner Agencies / Projects	No. of Children
By IPEC partner agencies	
Non-governmental Organizations	90 999
Trade Unions	7 820
Employers' Organization ^(a)	280
By Integrated Area Specific Project	36 000
By Andhra Pradesh State Based Project ^(b)	7 200
Total	142 299

Source: IPEC Reports

^(a) Employers have mostly been involved in indirect action against child labour.

^(b) APBSP is a state based project which has been involved in indirect as well as policy action against child labour.

Coverage of Action Programmes 1992-2004

10% Kerala, Karnataka, Gujarat, Bihar, Manipur

20% Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa

30% Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh

40% Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal

1992-94

Civil Society Organizations

1994-98

Focus on Trade Unions and, Employers' Organizations

1998-2003

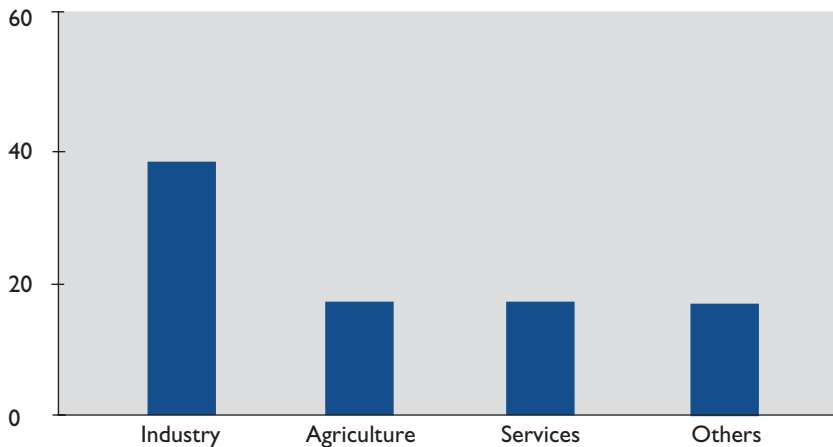
Complementing action by Central and State Governments

2003-2004

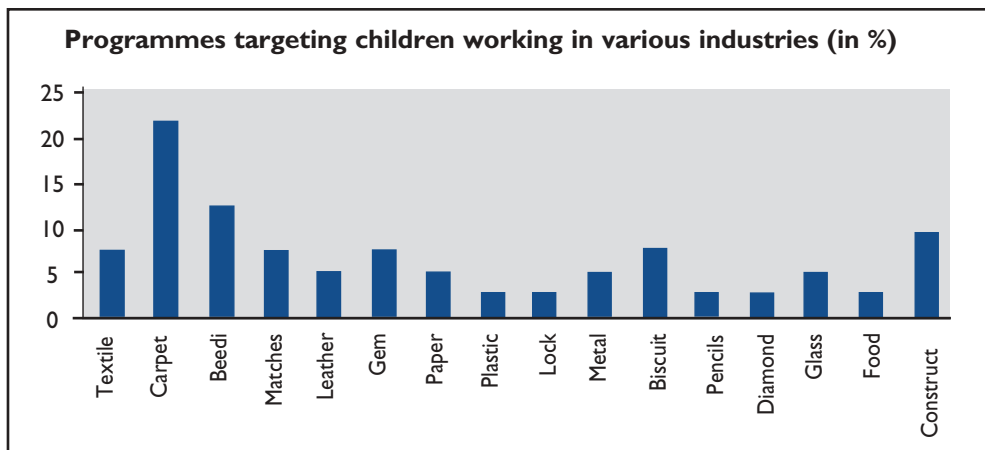
Large interventions with Sectoral and Area Based focus

Source: IPEC Reports

Programmes targeting children working in different sectors (in %)



Source: IPEC Reports



Source: IPEC Reports

- ◆ Those engaged in agriculture and fisheries;
- ◆ Those engaged in the service sector; and
- ◆ Street children.

Within these broad categories, the following were a priority:

- ◆ Children in forced labour and bondage;
- ◆ Children in hazardous work;
- ◆ Children below 12 years; and
- ◆ Girl child labour.

The intermediate partners comprise those who create the enabling environment to support the withdrawal of children from the workforce and facilitate their integration into educational programmes. Children thus benefit from the interventions of these indirect beneficiaries. These groups include:

- ◆ Parents, teachers, and employers;
- ◆ Employers' and workers' organizations;
- ◆ Factory and labour inspectors;
- ◆ Research and training institutions;
- ◆ Government ministries and departments at the national and local levels; and
- ◆ NGOs.

Generating awareness among parents, family members and partners is a crucial aspect of the intermediate partners' action programmes. Unless parents are aware of the risks, negative consequences and future cost of allowing their children into the

workforce, the elimination of child labour will not be sustainable in the long term. Some of the main strategies adopted by the action programmes include:

- ◆ Setting up camps to generate awareness;
- ◆ Providing education to mothers;
- ◆ Facilitating advocacy by teachers;
- ◆ Organizing parent-teacher meetings;
- ◆ Counseling parents;
- ◆ Exerting social pressure on parents and employers; and
- ◆ Enforcing legal actions.

IPEC in India from 1992 to 1999

An evaluation of IPEC undertaken in 1997 highlighted areas where IPEC has made successful interventions.⁶ One such intervention has been education. The provision of non-formal education (NFE) through NGOs accounted for the majority of interventions during the first biennium (1992-93) and directly covered over 80,000 working children during the period from 1992 to 1999. The approach during this period was flexible, allowing for the adoption of different strategies to address the different needs of specific socio-economic groupings and socio-cultural regions.

This section captures a view of 150 IPEC-assisted action programmes from 1992 to 1999:

Typology of strategies:

- ◆ Direct action with children;
- ◆ Family-support intervention;
- ◆ Partnerships with teachers and community mobilizers;
- ◆ Public awareness generation;
- ◆ Building broad institutional alliances; and
- ◆ Coordination and networking.

Direct action with children

The elimination of child labour ensures that children are not only protected from hazardous and exploitative work but are also allowed to develop into productive adults. Seventy per cent of the action programmes had a direct action component. Of these, 85 per cent focused on withdrawing children from the workplace; 27 per cent provided improved working conditions; and 18 per cent devised strategies to

⁶ ILO: Evaluation Report IPEC in India 1992-96 (New Delhi, 1998).

prevent siblings of working children and other high-risk children from becoming child labourers. The impact of IPEC action programmes can be measured from the fact that 86 per cent of the children withdrawn from the workforce have been absorbed into mainstream public elementary education and completed their primary education cycle.

The action programmes have adopted diverse methodologies, depending on the nature and urgency of the problem, the socio-economic environment and the availability of local infrastructures. Three broad elements have been included:

- ◆ Withdrawal of working children from the workforce and their rehabilitation;
- ◆ Improvement of working conditions for older children and reduction in their working hours; and
- ◆ Prevention of potential child labourers from entering the labour market.

Withdrawal of working children from the workforce and their rehabilitation

Transitional Education

Once the children are withdrawn from work, they must be provided with viable alternatives to prevent them from returning to work. Very young children under the age of eight can be directly sent to school. Non-formal or 'transitional' education is helpful to older children with little or no education, who gain the necessary proficiency to enter regular school and are supported during the critical transitional phase between work and school. Non-formal education is also critical because rehabilitated children are enrolled into public primary schools, which allow them to eventually be brought into the mainstream. Almost 72 per cent of the action programmes reviewed have set up transitional education centres that teach non-formal education.

Pre-vocational education and skill training

Several IPEC partners have tried to restructure school curricula to set up pre-vocational skill development facilities and basic literacy schemes in transitory rehabilitation centres, in an attempt to attract and retain working children. In some of the programmes, certificates have been issued at the end of the course to improve future prospects for these children.

Twenty-six per cent of the action programmes contain vocational education or skill training components. A majority of these have concentrated on providing training in skills such as carpentry, tailoring and electrical wiring.

Improvement of working conditions for older children and reduction in working hours through legal enforcement

One of the drawbacks of the institutional set-up in combating child labour lies in existing legal structures. Legal enforcement of child labour laws and regulations continues to require attention. IPEC action programmes have focused on this issue by providing direct training to parents and communities on existing laws relating to child labour. Exploitation of child labour generally occurs in the form of non-payment of wages, low wages, inhuman and hazardous working conditions, extended working hours, bonded labour and forced labour, among many other forms. IPEC also made consistent efforts to sensitize officials in the judiciary, which led to a considerable increase in the number of prosecutions and convictions throughout the country.

Prevention of potential child labour

Educating potentially high-risk children

Working children often come from communities that have traditionally not had access to schooling. IPEC's action programmes have specifically targeted these groups — particularly young children between the ages of five and seven — for enrolment in elementary education.

Making schools attractive and child-friendly

Programmes have adopted different strategies to enable working children to attend transitional schools. Sixty-one per cent of the action programmes provided children with healthcare and nutritional supplements, while others have experimented with innovative training programmes for teachers. Many have provided recreational facilities for children. Many workshops related to health and nutrition issues taught mothers about sanitation, safe drinking water and physical fitness.

Family-support intervention

Counseling of parents

The counseling of parents through training programmes is a priority because their support of the rehabilitation process is crucial. About 49 per cent of all direct action programmes have included some form of counseling.

Supplementary sources of income

In order to reduce the economic dependency of parents on their children, some action programmes focused on strengthening the earning capacity of the families. Twenty-four per cent of the action programmes included interventions focusing on the formation of credit and thrift groups. A few programmes specifically targeted

mothers of children enrolled in non-formal education centres, which were formed by viable self-help groups (SHGs). In order to supplement family income, the SHGs were provided with seed money to set up micro-enterprises or businesses for income generation. In some cases, training on entrepreneurial development and skill upgrading was also provided.

Partnerships with teachers and community mobilizers

Because social actors are often the principal agents of changes on development issues, IPEC has engaged in collaborative initiatives with teachers, community mobilizers from government departments and other agencies, women's groups, members of employers' organizations, community and religious leaders, trade union leaders and students for awareness raising activities.

Teachers

Schools that poor children have access to are often experiencing infrastructure and educational constraints and learning frequently becomes difficult.

The recognition of these limitations has led to the promotion of innovative teacher training programmes. About 22 per cent of direct intervention programmes have conducted at least one training workshop or seminar for teachers to improve the quality of education in schools and to re-prioritize values in education.

Community mobilizers

Community mobilization was on the agenda of 35 per cent of all direct intervention programmes. Well-trained mobilizers and social workers were involved in:

- ◆ Motivating children to leave work;
- ◆ Convincing parents to send children to schools;
- ◆ Educating employers to refrain from recruiting child labourers; and
- ◆ Encouraging trade union leaders to sustain pressure on employers.

Public awareness generation

Generating public awareness against child labour has been one of IPEC's main thrusts, as experience has shown that these campaigns can lead to remarkable changes in attitude. Awareness raising and information-dissemination activities, as well as advocacy and media campaigns were sponsored by IPEC. The awareness campaigns have targeted the general public, parents and guardians, youth volunteers, community leaders, elected representatives, government officials, trade union leaders and activists, employers, judges and lawyers, policy-makers, NGO activists and teachers.

It was found that the most effective techniques for awareness generation at the community level were a combination of several interventions which included:

- ◆ Rallies and processions;
- ◆ Posters and wall hangings;
- ◆ Pamphlets and stickers;
- ◆ Signboards;
- ◆ Street plays;
- ◆ Door-to-door campaigns;
- ◆ Seminars and workshops; and
- ◆ Meetings with community leaders, employers and parents of child labourers.

National and international days like the Anti-Child Labour Day (30th April), Children's Day (14th November), May Day (1st May) and World Day against Child Labour (12th June) have generated increased awareness about children's rights. Rehabilitated child labourers and their peers in schools have been involved in a number of projects to generate awareness among the general public.

Building broad institutional alliances

IPEC has forged broad local and national alliances in its effort to eliminate child labour. Since its third biennium of operations (1996-97), IPEC has enlisted the collaboration of its intermediate partners — parents' groups, political leaders, community heads, government and NGOs.

Values, traditions and perceptions of what is considered to be acceptable work (or the acceptable age at which children can work) are shaped at the community level. Because of this, IPEC has supported the creation of local constituencies, village committees, *mahila mandals* (womens' association) and citizens' forums. Organizations such as these have acted as pressure groups in the implementation of specific programmes and have also helped to ensure the development of a social culture that favours children's education.

Coordination and networking

The coordination and collaborative initiatives between government and NGOs at various levels has been encouraged to broaden outreach efforts to larger target groups. IPEC partner organizations have joined hands with other supporting organizations in the fields of social services, local participatory governance, administration and research in an effort to generate a multiplier effect in mobilizing the entire community. Workshops and seminars initiated by these institutions have

resulted in an exchange of ideas and experiences that have strengthened alliances and partnerships.

IPEC in India from 1999 to 2002

IPEC's experience in India, as in other countries, shows that integrated and comprehensive projects, which simultaneously address several key aspects of the problem, have the best chances of succeeding. The ILO recognizes that access to education and employment-related training is a critical aspect of improving the quality of one's life. Thus, the commitment to increase investment in education is central in combating child labour and the economic exploitation of adolescents. Education is not only the most potent tool for preventing child labour but also for rehabilitating children who have entered the labour force prematurely. In particular, the educational process for children under 14 years allows them to acquire new knowledge and a broader understanding of possible career options. Vocational training, which offers the potential to learn multiple skills necessary for productive employment, is also very valuable.

The publication *IPEC in India 1992-95: Looking Back* recorded that the smaller action programmes and approaches of that period had created a strong foundation for IPEC.⁷ Assessing the strategies IPEC employed to address child labour during this period, it also highlighted the commendable role played by NGOs in raising the issue to public consciousness.

The 1997 evaluation of IPEC recommended that, instead of creating new mechanisms, special efforts should be made to create synergies with existing government and other planning agencies. It also recommended that IPEC strengthen its profile by concentrating on supporting larger, focused and more area-specific projects. These recommendations resulted in a decrease in smaller action programmes and led to the development of two large pilot projects. The first one, the Integrated Area-Specific Project (IASP), covered six districts. As a pilot project, it attempted to supplement the NCLPs. The second pilot project was the Andhra Pradesh State Based Project for the Elimination of Child Labour. In the following section, these two projects will be examined.

Integrated Area-Specific Project (IASP) against Hazardous and Exploitative Forms of Child Labour

During the period 1999 to 2003, the project was implemented in six districts in four states: Coimbatore and Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu, Mirzapur and Ferozabad in

⁷ M.P. Joseph (ed.): *IPEC in India 1992-1995: Looking Back* (New Delhi, India, ILO, 1996).

Uttar Pradesh, Jaipur in Rajasthan, and Markapur in Andhra Pradesh. These interventions were implemented through NCLP societies formed under the National Child Labour Policy in 1987. The main NCLP thrusts were on running special schools where non-formal education and vocational training could be taught and supplementary nutrition and healthcare services could be provided. In addition, a stipend was paid to children who had been withdrawn from employment. The IASP complemented the efforts of the government with a set of innovative pilot methodologies.

Typology of strategies

Direct intervention in prevention, withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labour

Three main components for direct action were:

- ◆ Preventing children from being added to the labour force by encouraging their parents to enrol them at the beginning of the year;
- ◆ Identification and removal of children working in hazardous industries; and
- ◆ Rehabilitating them in transitory educational centres (TECs) and mainstreaming them to formal schools or providing them with skill training.

The project had a target of preventing at least 25,000 children from the ages of five to seven from entering the labour market by enrolling them in formal schooling; withdrawing 10,000 children from the ages of eight to twelve from hazardous work and providing education for them in TECs for about eighteen months and later mainstreaming them to normal schools; and imparting skill training to at least 1,000 children aged 13-16.

An impact assessment undertaken at the end of the project indicated that the results achieved through the IASP in the five districts were more than satisfactory when examined in the context of the input costs employed. Through the IASP efforts, around 9,600 children have been withdrawn from hazardous employment and admitted into 400 TECs, where they have been given non-formal education and provided with mid-day meals to improve their health and nutrition. Of the above, more than 8,500 children have been mainstreamed to formal schools from bridge courses that ranged from six to eighteen months. More than 30,000 children aged five to seven have been enrolled into formal schools through the efforts of community groups. Furthermore, in the districts of Virudhunagar and Coimbatore, more than 1,800 child labourers aged 13-16 were trained in trades (tailoring, machine embroidery, hand embroidery, motor winding, two-wheeler driving, electrical work, house wiring and plumbing jobs) that would improve their earning capacity. In Ferozabad, glass-cutting, making of glass toys, screen-printing and motor-winding

was taught, while children in Jaipur acquired computer, handbag-making, and candle-making skills.

Local community institution-building through the empowerment of women and thrift and credit management

Parents of rehabilitated child labourers can significantly transform the attitude of other families in the community. The project specifically targeted mothers of children enrolled in TECs. To compensate the families for any real and notional loss of income, efforts were made to organize mothers of child workers into SHGs.

This component of the project had a three-fold benefit. The first of these is an escape from the debt trap of moneylenders. The lack of availability of immediate micro-finance facilities for mothers often forced them to send their children to work, as they did not have any other source of raising funds in cases of emergency. It was also observed that parents who sent their children to work because of their severe poverty gave away more money to moneylenders as interest than they received from the earnings of their children. Hence, IASP helped in mobilizing the mothers of children withdrawn from labour to form micro-finance groups to address their urgent financial needs. Secondly, by utilizing the funds of SHGs, they were able to create opportunities for self-employment, collective entrepreneurship or at least avoiding middlemen for the piece-rate work they did. In addition to improving their earning capacity, this also helped in developing a sense of financial empowerment. Moreover, SHGs could also form a collective pressure group at the local level. In all, more than 5,000 mothers of child labourers withdrawn from work joined to form approximately 300 SHGs.

Social mobilization

It is essential to mobilize the considerable resources of civil society to help make the general public aware of the pernicious long term implications of child labour. Social mobilization in affected communities seeks the involvement of as many groups and individuals as possible in the interests of generating social change. This was done through the awareness generation of parents and the general public, and the creation of a groundswell of community support. Awareness generation was necessary at both macro and micro levels. The first focused on sensitizing the public at large through mass media and interventions at the district level (workshops, presentations, photography and poster competitions, plays and exhibitions, etc.).

While such methods of awareness generation were towards forming a community support structure, other activities were directed at village and individual levels. To this end, community support groups (CSGs) — which typically consisted of a chairman,

secretary, village administrative officer, post master, NGO representative, rural welfare officer, bank manager, president and secretary of SHGs, head teacher, NCLP and IASP field officers, voluntary health nurse, employers, trade union representative, and representatives of relevant government programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) — were formed in each village. These CSGs acted as a kind of 'neighbourhood watch' on the issue.

Strengthening the role of government functionaries through sensitization and coordination

This was achieved through the mobilization of government institutions and the coordination of state services against child labour. The mobilization of government institutions included:

- ◆ Identifying and training enforcement officials, representatives of *Panchayati Raj* institutions and judicial officers;
- ◆ Conducting orientation workshops for district-level officials in the departments of rural development, family welfare, health, women and child development, and social welfare to sensitize them.
- ◆ Raising awareness about the integrated area specific approach and encouraging them to think about the various means by which their departments could contribute to the prevention, reduction and elimination of child labour;
- ◆ Involving them in the day-to-day activities of this project to ensure their department inputs into the programme and their stake in its success;
- ◆ Identifying influential persons, such as trade union leaders, political leaders, media personnel, lawyers and others to form a special task team to increase the effectiveness of enforcement efforts against child labour;
- ◆ Getting them nominated to the task team through the district collector;
- ◆ Identifying areas to be covered and ensuring the launching of enforcement efforts against child labour; and
- ◆ Holding frequent meetings of the task team to strengthen and provide support for the enforcement drive throughout the district.

The convergence of state services against child labour attempted to increase the effectiveness of all development-related initiatives that had some bearing on the issue. Close collaboration with the programme functionaries of development-related departments was of critical importance. The NCLPs identified officers and field-level functionaries dealing with developmental projects as well as school teachers from existing schools in the area to sensitize and orient them on the importance of their contribution to the process. Key priorities were to:

- ◆ Identify specific areas for collaboration to assist child labourers and their families with government programmes;

- ◆ Provide specific training to field staff on their role in child labour prevention and elimination;
- ◆ Ensure admission of the younger children from families with a history of child labour into local pre-schools;
- ◆ Ensure assistance for former child labour families in the government's ongoing poverty eradication and employment-generation schemes;
- ◆ Ensure coverage of women from former child labour families in ongoing women's empowerment programmes;
- ◆ Ensure coverage of former child labour families in ongoing family welfare programmes;
- ◆ Train local teachers to ensure their participation in child labour prevention and elimination programmes;
- ◆ Hold quarterly meetings with field-level development staff to ensure the adequate convergence of state services; and
- ◆ Hold quarterly meetings with teachers and their supervisors to ensure overall participation in the effort to prevent and eliminate child labour.

Technological improvements

In many sectors, the existence of child labour is ascribed to low technology and prevailing production processes. The IASP initiative piloted some changes in production technology and re-engineering parts of the production process to allow the replacement of child labour with adult labour. A clear example of this was the introduction of a new polishing machine for semi precious gems in Jaipur, which was not just more productive but also facilitated both better working posture and a cleaner work environment. A polishing wheel that was four feet high was constructed so that a child less than five feet tall could not work on the machine. The functionality of this innovation is being reviewed also from the point of view of its productivity enhancements.

Tripartism

Tripartism encouraged the involvement of social partners in decision-making processes at the district level. Employers' associations and trade unions were mobilized for direct activities, such as the running of bridge schools and awareness generation programmes. Partners were also sensitized through training workshops. Because of this, the incidence of child labour in the organized sector has been substantially reduced. But there are children still working in the informal and home-based sectors, as well as in outsourced activities of the organized sector. For example, the joining of bangles in Ferozabad, sticking of labels to match boxes in Sivakasi in the Virudhunagar district, pulling of threads from rejected cotton garments in Tirupur in the Coimbatore district, and polishing of semi-precious gems in Jaipur are all done within the home-

based sector. At present, much of this work is done at home after school in the late afternoons, nights or early morning hours. The tripartite partners were motivated to develop action plans that led to the formation of employers' associations and trade unions to eliminate even this kind of child labour. This has proven to be successful in Coimbatore, where the following activities were organized:

- ◆ Skill training for children aged 13-16;
- ◆ Opportunities for ILO project staff to address employers' association meetings;
- ◆ Appeals published in a journal by the exporters' association to persuade members to avoid employing child labourers in their businesses;
- ◆ Formation of area/unit committees with employers as members to look after local child labour issues;
- ◆ Regular employers' meetings for sensitization;
- ◆ Space allotment in magazines for employers' associations for child labour-related articles and advertisements;
- ◆ Production of an awareness-oriented short film; and
- ◆ Participation of trade unions throughout the NCLP decision-making process and in direct action against child labour.

Challenges faced during implementation

An evaluation of the project has revealed that it has been successful in three districts and moderately successful in one district, while in the remaining districts the performance was not fully satisfactory. The analysis brought out the following:

- ◆ In the districts where performance was below expectations, the project directors were state government officers who had additional responsibilities and therefore could not engage in supervising project activities on a full time basis.
- ◆ The project showed better results in districts where most of the activities were performed through one NGO, in comparison to districts where many small NGOs were involved.
- ◆ Districts with good skill training and technical institutions for training teachers and women's groups had a higher overall performance.

While the identification of working children who should be enrolled in schools is in itself a significant task, enrolling and retaining them is an even more daunting challenge. One of the biggest hurdles is the attitude of parents, who feel that working is a more productive alternative to unproductive schooling. Thus, all IPEC interventions required elaborate monitoring and review mechanisms, as the geographical coverage was considerably large.

The evaluation also reported that, since the intake capacity of the TECs was limited,

many motivated children in the area could not be admitted. In other words, awareness-building exercises preceded accessibility to education, as well as the availability of schools. Furthermore, the evaluation noted that the lack of effective convergence with the departments of labour and education, coupled with the low awareness levels among local authorities, posed a major challenge.

Enrolling working children in vocational schools was one of the instruments used by IASP to economically rehabilitate them. However, it has been able to motivate only a few of the children to join these schools because of the dearth of suitable job opportunities after the completion of vocational training.

In view of the nature of the problem and the scale of interventions required, the period for which IASP was run was too short to assess significant long term impacts. In addition, there is an enormous time gap between motivating community members, mothers, employers and children to action and observing actual results on the ground. If the duration of the action programme is only limited to the initial stage of motivation, it becomes difficult to sustain any kind of meaningful momentum, as follow-up activity is an essential pre-requisite for any intervention. Moreover, the problem is compounded when target groups have a limited understanding of what they have been taught.

Andhra Pradesh State Based Project for the Elimination of Child Labour

The Andhra Pradesh State Based Project for the Elimination of Child Labour was designed in 1999 as a collaborative initiative between the Government of Andhra Pradesh, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the ILO. The first phase of the project, started in November 2000, completed its activities in March 2004.

Andhra Pradesh government strategy on child labour

The Government of Andhra Pradesh sees the elimination of child labour as possible only with the full enrolment and retention in schools of all children up to 15 years of age. The government policy for eliminating child labour is therefore to universalize elementary education until the age of 15 (or until the completion of Class X) and to ensure that all children are admitted and retained in schools.

Project strategy

The APSBP employs a strategy, which works at the macro, meso and micro levels to create a multi-dimensional impact on child labour. **At the macro level**, the project used its experience to enrich government policies and programmes in a time-bound manner. To this end, the project worked with government at the policy, legislative,

programme and project levels to support it in the development and implementation of its policies and programmes.

Work with the state government took place at four levels of governance. At the state level, the project worked with the departments of education, labour, and women and child development to channel the experiences and learning that emerged from its work at the grassroots level. The project also worked with senior policy-makers in government, particularly with the chief, education and labour ministers and with the secretaries of these respective departments. At the district level, the project worked with district collectors and with the district administration. At the *mandal* (administrative unit) level, the project sensitized *mandal* officials on child labour issues and helped considerably in capacity-building programmes. The project also worked directly with village officials.

At the meso level, the project had a strong impact on influential bodies. Employers' and workers' organizations and other ILO partners that were in a position to influence government thinking were encouraged to work on child labour. In turn, they exerted their own influence on policy and decision-makers. Other partners and groups within civil society who could contribute to government thinking and policy and who have strategic linkages with child labour were also tapped.

Trade unions

The project brought together the state's six major trade unions to form a federation of unions geared towards combating child labour. This federation, which was registered as the Andhra Pradesh Federation of Trade Unions for the Elimination of Child Labour (APFTUCL), developed a strong cadre of adult workers who were sensitized to child labour and who could ensure that it was discouraged in their homes, work places and communities.

The trade unions jointly and individually took up a wide range of activities in five selected districts. In each of these districts, the unions trained 25 of their district-level leaders as organizers and motivators on child labour. The organizers and motivators in turn built up a cadre of over 50,000 informed workers.

In the remaining 18 districts, coordination committees were set up and one union was encouraged to take the lead against child labour. Coordination committees organized a number of awareness programmes in the districts.⁸

⁸ ILO: Coming Together: From Confrontation to Collaboration: A Tale of Trade Unions Joining Hands against Child Labour (Hyderabad, India, 2002).

Employers

A Consortium of Employers' Associations for the Elimination of Child Labour (CEASE Child Labour) — representing 24 employers' organizations comprising two state-level employers' federations, 20 business associations and two human resource associations — was formed. These 24 associations included those whose member employers had previously been employing children. The consortium also represented about three quarters of the business, trade, and industry throughout the state. Its member associations have been actively sensitizing their members against child labour and dissuading them from employing children below the age of fifteen.

The Seedsmen Association, one of the 22 employers' organizations, represents the major seed growers in the state (including hybrid cottonseed growers, with a large number of working girls). It has resolved to eliminate child labour in the hybrid cotton industry in the Bhuthpur *mandal* of Mahabubnagar district. It has also identified more than 2,000 children who are working — drop-outs or those not enrolled — and facilitated the enrolment of about 400 children in local schools. The association is running two residential bridge course centres for older children with the support of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the state government. The Bhuthpur initiative is emerging as an interesting model for collaborative work among the employers, government, international agencies and NGOs.

The Andhra Pradesh Hoteliers' Association, Hyderabad Hotel Owners and Confectioners' Association, Irani Hotels Association, Automobile Technicians' Association, *Vijaywada*, Cotton Ginning Association; Employers' Federation of Southern India, Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and two associations of human resource professionals — have all mobilized their constituents, generating a significant momentum throughout the state.

Civil society organizations

A network of civil society organizations (CSOs) was formed at the state level and in each of the 21 districts, with representation from a diverse set of institutional bodies and citizens' groups.⁹ Through this network, the CSOs collectively undertook campaigns on child labour to influence state and district-level policy implementation. These linkages have considerably strengthened their capacity to work with government.

⁹ The networking of CSOs is a work that the APSBP started toward the latter part of the project period and which is still evolving. As of February 2004, the CSOs had been formed in 21 districts.

Media

The project recognized the media's powerful role in influencing public opinion and thus it worked very closely with both the print and electronic media. English, Telugu, and Urdu media were used to empower children and to sensitize direct and indirect contributors to the child labour process. This was done through news stories, commissioned articles, discussions (on television and radio, particularly *Doordarshan* and All-India Radio), interviews (on TV and in the press), TV spots and jingles. The goal was to increase media focus on child labour and to highlight the policies and good practices being followed by the state.

The third level of strategy was at the field or grassroots **micro level**. In this regard, the project was developed and implemented as a replicable intervention in four pilot areas. These interventions formed an important input for influencing government policy development at the macro level and influencers at the meso level.

The following activities illustrate this strategy:

- ◆ Sensitization and capacity building of diverse groups;
- ◆ Developing innovative techniques to prevent children from entering the labour force;
- ◆ Experimenting with an innovative model for providing additional income opportunities to the families of child labourers;
- ◆ Creating awareness;
- ◆ Developing monitoring and evaluation tools;
- ◆ Implementing the IASP model in the district of Markapur;
- ◆ Implementing a pilot programme on girl child labour; and
- ◆ Identifying lessons and best practices for documentation and dissemination.

Highlights of project outcomes

Federating trade unions against child labour

The federation of six trade unions fighting child labour is one of the more important outcomes of the project. Five of these are national-level trade unions, while one is a state-level union. These six unions have registered themselves as a Trade Union of Trade Unions and are working together on a common anti-child labour platform. This approach has been highly successful.

Bringing employers together

An equally important outcome has been the building of a consortium of 24 employers'

associations in the state. It has since been registered as a society and has become a powerful tool for the sensitization of its large constituency.

Developing a model for eliminating child labour

The project has chosen four areas in the state to pilot a comprehensive model to end child labour. The model addresses five of the major causes of child labour — lack of income, awareness, capacities, community monitoring and strategies to address school enrolment and attendance. The strategies created to address these causes constituted a successful model for eliminating child labour, and received significant appreciation by the mid-term review of the project.⁹

Influencing government policy on child labour

The project has adopted a collaborative approach and is working closely with government in contributing to policy development and in providing international experiences. Cabinet ministers, members of Parliament and members of the Legislative Assembly have been involved in various advocacy, policy-level and operational initiatives. Capacity building at the district and *mandal* levels has also been emphasized.

Mobilizing CSOs

A sustainable innovation that the project has adopted is getting CSOs to form networks in all districts across the state. In 21 of the 23 districts, associations of lawyers, engineers and doctors; social clubs; religious leaders; women's groups and NGOs have come together to network on the issue of child labour. They have also officially registered as societies for this specific purpose.

Encouraging and assisting the government in enacting a new law on child labour

The most recent break through has been the successful lobbying with government for the enactment of a new law on child labour that is in keeping with C138 and C182. At the request of the state government, the project — in collaboration with the National Academy of Legal Studies and the Research University of Law in Hyderabad — has developed a draft legislation which was presented to the government for submission to the Legislative Assembly.

⁹ Review Team, Ramya Subrahmanian and Benedict Light: Mid Term Review Report India: Eliminating Child Labour: A State Based Approach in Andhra Pradesh (New Delhi, 2002).

Impact achieved to date

The project was able to put child labour firmly on the agenda of the state government. It succeeded in:

- ◆ Collaborating with the government in drafting a new legislation in keeping with the state's pro-active policy on the issue.
- ◆ Bringing six trade unions with very diverse ideologies to form a federation that worked together on the issue. Child labour is now firmly on the agenda not only of the federation but also of the six individual trade unions;
- ◆ Achieving a similar breakthrough in the case of employers. By turning employers into proactive and collaborative partners, the project was able to support employers' efforts in engaging more proactively with a wide range of partners, including trade unions and civil society organizations. The consortium is developing common approaches and a code of conduct that employers' associations can use to help eliminate child labour;
- ◆ Making the localized efforts of a few NGOs operating at district-level a state-wide issue across all districts, owned not only by NGOs but by government, employers' and workers' organizations and many different partners of civil society; and
- ◆ Mobilizing the local media to initiate and fully back efforts to eliminate child labour throughout the state.

Lessons learnt

Perhaps the most important lessons learnt was that, even in a state as large as Andhra Pradesh, if the right conditions are exploited, a significant and successful effort can be made to end child labour. Other critical lessons include the following:

- ◆ Child labour cannot be eliminated by government and NGOs alone. It calls for the mobilization of workers' and employers' organizations, civil society and the media.
- ◆ Strategic thinking and the effective use of ILO's traditional partners can influence government thinking on child labour and support its action.
- ◆ Policy pronouncements address in all integrative way on child labour have to be quickly and effectively backed by legislative actions.
- ◆ Child labour is caused by a wide variety of complex factors. Any model for the elimination of child labour requires a comprehensive set of integrated elements that addresses these complex problems.
- ◆ An effective strategy to end child labour would be to end it across all sectors simultaneously in a geographically-defined area and in a time-bound manner.

- ◆ Efforts designed to facilitate the sustainable elimination of child labour at the micro level should focus both on the target group in the form of specific initiatives and the wider community in the form of comprehensive policies.
- ◆ Any campaign on child labour has to include a wide variety of communication tools.
- ◆ There is a need to focus on children aged 14-18, who get left out of approaches that focus mainly on elementary education as the primary means of eliminating child labour.
- ◆ Finally, it is important to develop strategies for large urban centres, where community and institutional structures are inadequate.

Summary of Lessons Learnt

This chapter brings together the many lessons that have emerged from IPEC's action programmes in India. It highlights good practices that bear replication on a larger scale and attempts to offer useful insights on what worked, what did not work — and why. Each type of intervention is examined in the context of specific case studies that will be discussed below.

Awareness raising and advocacy

Awareness raising, sensitization and advocacy have always been a very important part of the work of IPEC in India. During its first decade, children, their parents, employers and the public in general had difficulties in fully recognizing the negative effects of child labour on children. Child labour was often seen as a natural part of the life of the poor. But it became increasingly clear that child labour — particularly its most abusive forms — could only be eliminated if there was a broad social consensus that it was socially unacceptable. To build this consensus, there was a need for greater public dialogue: without discussion at the community and national level, old attitudes would persist and conditions of poverty would continue to be cited as the primary cause of child labour, making it seem both acceptable and inevitable.

In this context, the raising of awareness became a critical element of all project interventions. Public awareness could be generated in a variety of ways. For example, a small action programme on child labour that touches only a few hundred children can itself generate a broad impact on attitudes within that community. But with effective information dissemination, people across the district — and the entire state — can, in turn, be profoundly influenced.

Indeed, it was discovered that very large audiences could be reached through advocacy and media campaigns. Some of the key elements of specific awareness raising action programmes involved:

- ◆ Keeping up the momentum in the campaigns for the ratification of C138 and C182 and the full implementation of child labour legislation throughout the country;

- ◆ Regularly highlighting success stories through the media;
- ◆ Mobilizing constituents, communities and children; and
- ◆ Collecting, documenting and publicizing good practices for replication.

Strategies adopted for awareness generation at the community level were:

- ◆ Rallies and processions;
- ◆ Posters and wall hangings;
- ◆ Distribution of pamphlets and stickers;
- ◆ Signboards;
- ◆ Street plays;
- ◆ Door-to-door campaigns; and
- ◆ Meetings with parents of child labourers, community leaders and employers.

Strategies at the state and national levels included:

- ◆ Workshops and seminars with policy makers;
- ◆ Involving trade unions and employers' organizations in information dissemination;
- ◆ Conducting research studies on important aspects of child labour (analyzing the economic implications particular industries would have to take into account if child labour were to be replaced with adult labour) and disseminating the results of these studies widely;
- ◆ Using the wide outreach of organizations with large national networks (such as the Central Board for Workers' Education) to spread awareness;
- ◆ Encouraging the media to highlight issues, particularly cases of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour; and
- ◆ Highlighting the impact of successful interventions on child labour.

State-level strategy: In Andhra Pradesh, awareness raising was developed using both traditional and modern communication tools. This campaign made full use of audio-visual, print and outdoor media; folk arts; and a web site in all five pilot areas. The following tools were developed after detailed consultations with stakeholders:

- ◆ Four one-minute films for screening in movie theatres;
- ◆ Four 30-second TV spots;
- ◆ Four radio jingles;
- ◆ A set of four posters;
- ◆ Stickers;
- ◆ Graffiti;
- ◆ Posters and banners;

- ◆ Bus shelters and paintings; and a
- ◆ Web site.

Awareness campaigns were implemented using the communication tools developed under the action programme. The print materials were sent to the NCLPs, DPEP and public relations offices of the government in all the 23 districts of the state.

This material was very useful to the state government during the launch of *Chaduvula Panduga*, the Festival of Education. Advocacy and awareness raising materials continued to be used by NCLPs and community-level organizations involved in child labour initiatives.

Corporate business houses and employers also showed interest in sponsoring the campaign. The India Tobacco Company screened the one-minute films on the local cable TV network and in four towns in the East Godavari district.

Good practices and success stories

The Arunodaya Centre for Street and Working Children in Tamil Nadu brought out a quarterly magazine called *Child Workers' News* and a collection of songs on child labour entitled '*Sitterumbu Paduthu*' (Small Ants are Singing).

'*Harawalele Balpan*' (The Lost Childhood), a programme on the problems of working children, was telecast by Mumbai Doordarshan. The programme was based on the activities of Snehankeet, an NGO working to rehabilitate child labourers in Pune. Inspired by the telecast, the Kolhapur Municipal Corporation replicated many of Snehankeet's strategies.

The Ruchika School Social Service Wing in Bhubaneswar organized cycle rallies to highlight the rights of street and working children and the importance of protecting them. The rally covered 10 urban areas with a substantial geographical reach. It specifically targeted urban pockets where street and working children were common.

The Vivekananda Education Society in West Bengal, as a part of its advocacy programme on child labour, organized:

- ◆ Group meetings and seminars for municipal councillors, members of Parliament, and members of the Legislative Assembly;
- ◆ Training programmes, workshops and group meetings to sensitize community leaders and employers;
- ◆ Group discussions and counseling for both child labourers and their mothers;

- ◆ Special awareness workshops for police constables regarding the rights of children and the provisions of the Child Labour Act;
- ◆ Orientations for labour inspectors to strengthen collaborative efforts with NGOs engaged in child labour elimination programmes; and
- ◆ Publicity through newspapers, posters and video shows.

To sustain the momentum of its work even after the withdrawal of funding, a great deal of emphasis was placed on the building of SHGs, comprising leaders and parents within the community. Orientation programmes were also conducted for these SHGs. A monthly meeting of IPEC partners was carried out so that their respective experiences could be shared with one another. This network helped in organizing workshops, seminars and the documentation of many of IPEC's programmes.

In the old city section of Hyderabad, a door-to-door mobilization campaign was launched to raise the awareness of Muslim families in slums. Another door-to-door survey to identify children not attending school and a campaign to release children from work and facilitate their rehabilitation in schools was also launched. This was complemented with *basti* (street) campaigns focusing on the need for the education of parents of child labourers, community leaders and youth. These interventions, along with family counseling against child labour by local community leaders and *imams* (Muslim religious leaders), had a strong impact on the community.

Lessons from awareness raising and advocacy activities

- ◆ For awareness raising at the local community level, traditional or popular street theatre combined significant cost-effectiveness elements. Advocacy messages were included in theatre narratives that could be easily understood and that resonated well with locals. The highlighting of sensitive issues through humour and farce helped to diffuse tension and break the ice among spectators, making the discussion of difficult topics much easier.
- ◆ Awareness raising is most effective if it is combined with both possibilities for rehabilitation and income-generating alternatives, which lend greater credibility to IPEC's messages.

Mainstreaming child labour into formal education through non-formal or transitional education (bridge schools)

During its first decade in India, IPEC focused very closely on the supply side issues of child labour. It was clear that children participate in work when education is unavailable; when available education has limited relevance to the local socio-economic context; or when it is unaffordable and with priority gaps. Relevant education was clearly a priority.

Except in the rarest cases, IPEC found that mainstreaming children from work directly into formal schools would fail as the child who has been working for a few years would find it difficult to adjust both psychologically and academically to children who had been in school for some time. It was here that non-formal schools and transitional education became key instruments in combating child labour.

At the same time, it was clear that formal educational systems needed to be more responsive to the needs of former working children to ensure that they could integrate into the system. The creation of curricula and the training of teachers needed to be planned with these concerns in mind.

IPEC began its work in India by focusing mainly on setting up NFE centres to rehabilitate child labourers. The NFE centres were initially seen as the final step in the educational rehabilitation of children. They were thus an end in themselves. While further education beyond the NFE was encouraged, it was not seen as a mandatory next step in the rehabilitation process. It was only regarded as something to be encouraged in the case of unusually intelligent children. It soon became evident, however, that NFE could not be the only end in the process. Getting rehabilitated children into regular schools became a key focus area for IPEC's work.

Railway station platform schools in Orissa

A unique initiative in terms of the target group was the IPEC action programme implemented by the Ruchika School Social Service Society in Bhubaneshwar for children who work on the platforms of railway stations. Established in 1985, the organization provided 250 children, living or working in and around the platforms, with formal and functional literacy classes during 1992-93. Support services were also provided in the form of weekly visits from the doctor, recreational trips, regular food and a drop-in shelter for homeless children. The project aimed at getting children away from platforms and into regular schools in three progressive stages.

The Bhubaneshwar railway station and nine other nearby stations were targeted in the first phase of the project, which lasted 18 months. NFE centres were set up on the railway platforms and children working in and around the stations were encouraged to attend. The classes lasted about two or three hours each day so the children could continue to do the work they were otherwise doing. Attendance was not always very regular and often the children complained that their parents, who were themselves living on the platforms or nearby, would rather have them work than attend the classes. Counseling of the children and advising the parents on the importance of education was therefore crucial. To attract children to the classes, a meal was provided at the end of each day's session. Important inputs during these

sessions included health and hygiene education. The children were often living on the platforms in highly unhygienic conditions and knew little about personal hygiene and health.

At the end of the first 18-month period, a three-tier strategy was developed for school enrolment. In selected railway stations, the NFE centres ran continuously for two to three hours. Gradually, about 300 of the children attending the NFE centres were shifted to full-time day centres located away (but not too far away) from the railway stations. These day centres were an attempt to gradually withdraw the children from the work atmosphere of the station. The day centres were also meant to be non-formal in structure, although greater emphasis was placed on academic work, with the view to culling out the brightest children and mainstreaming them into the formal school system. Regular mid-day meals were provided at the centres (at a cost of Rs. 10 per head a day). Educational materials and clothing for the children were also provided.

The goal was to make the day centres attractive for both the parents and children. Teachers' salaries in the day centres were kept at the level required to attract good, professional teachers. Gradually, about 150 of the 300 children in the day centres were identified and encouraged to join nearby government schools. Financial support was provided towards the expenses connected with mainstreaming them. This would include admission fees, if any, the cost of buying uniforms or new clothes for the children, and expenses for regular and systematic follow-up and coaching, so that those admitted would remain in school.

The project also envisaged launching a systematic campaign in selected stations in conjunction with the railway authorities and police to prevent more children from working on the platforms. At the same time, it persuaded families living on the platforms and near the railway stations to send their children to schools and keep them away from dangerous work on the trains and platforms.

Project features

- ◆ Sensitizing station masters and superintendents of selected stations, their staff and their superiors, as well as the railway police, through direct interaction, seminars and workshops;
- ◆ Developing a plan of action with them to progressively phase out child labour in their stations by eliminating the existing child workforce and preventing the entry of new children;
- ◆ Using the trains passing through these stations to carry messages against child labour to other stations and other parts of the country;

- ◆ Using the public address system on the platforms to carry messages against child labour to the travelling public, child labourers and their parents;
- ◆ Sensitization of the children and their families living in and around the platforms;
- ◆ Admitting the four to six-year-old children into schools in order to prevent their entry into the workforce;
- ◆ Working towards making one or two selected railway stations free of child labour by the end of the project period; and
- ◆ Sustaining the movement against child employment on railway platforms.

More than 40 per cent of the targeted children worked in hazardous occupations, ranging from rag-picking to work on construction sites. All children, except the self-employed, said they were ill-treated by their employers. About 44 per cent of the children were girls. A survey carried out by the Ruchika School Social Service Society showed that the parents were not interested in educating girls, feeling little responsibility towards them. Many of the children were from scheduled castes (45 per cent), scheduled tribes (34 per cent) or families of migrant labourers.

Health services were provided on railway platforms, as was counseling for children addicted to marijuana and tobacco. Children were taken for outings and participated in marches and rallies. Arts and crafts exhibitions were also organized. These events attracted the media, generating a significant impact on the local public, many of whom were not aware of the nature and extent of the child labour problem. Twenty people were trained to be educators in different station areas. They met with parents' groups, conducted home visits and motivated employers to recognize the necessity of child education, children's rights and child labour laws.

Sixty child labourers were withdrawn from the workforce and admitted to regular schools. Others learned how to negotiate with their employers for better salaries and other benefits. Their reluctance to go to regular schools arose from a weakness in the education system, which in some cases was perceived as discriminatory. Other disincentives were teachers' absenteeism and parental short-sightedness. Parents invariably preferred the money the child earned over the long term benefit of education.

The success of the project was mainly due to the innovative approaches used to teach the children. For example, they were made aware of the location and services offered by primary health care centres and other social services. The overall response to the programme in the community was highly positive. The children were very appreciative of what they had learnt and the support services they had been provided with.

Lessons learnt

Children working on railway platforms are a very difficult target group. It is important to understand the compulsions that force them to work. The environment in which their families live also needs to be understood, which is why a gradual approach is important. The first phase of the project was devoted to providing only non-formal education for two hours a day. While the children were continuously counselled about the importance of education, no attempt was made to withdraw them from work.

It was only after the first 18-month phase was over that the second and third tiers of the strategy were implemented. Selected children were taken away from the platforms to full-time day centres. Half of these children were then gradually mainstreamed into the regular school system.

Regular contact, academic coaching and psychological counseling with the mainstreamed children are very important.

Tangible non-monetary incentives have to be provided at the second and third tiers of the project. Otherwise, there will not be sufficient motivation for the children to leave the platforms and move on to day centres and formal schools.

The project recognized the critical importance of working closely with the railway authorities. Their support is essential, especially in using the platforms for running the NFE centres and in effectively implementing the awareness programme.

The approach can be easily replicated in many railway platforms across the country. A joint initiative of district collectors and railway authorities will ensure the success of similar attempts, particularly those where the platforms are near their district headquarters.

Towards child labour-free zones in West Bengal

CINI-Asha is an NGO that was set up in 1989 by the Child in Need Institute (CINI) in West Bengal. Its activities mainly concentrated on children from migrant families who had settled in slums. These children worked long hours as daily wage-earners in hazardous industries like battery-breaking, rag-picking, rubber *chappal* (slipper) strap cutting, leather work, plastic recycling, domestic work and vending. In addition, the programme also targeted 'idle' children, who were neither in school nor performing economic activities and children doing non-wage household work like cooking, looking after siblings, etc.

The programme was aimed at weaning children away from hazardous occupations into non-hazardous jobs, reducing their hours of work, and mainstreaming them into formal schools through the NFE centres. It also aimed at developing and nurturing individuals, groups and grassroots organizations in the locality, who could actively participate in the movement against child labour. This goal was achieved through the active involvement of community clubs, which conveyed the importance of sustaining the programme to the rest of the local community. Twenty NFE centres with health-care facilities were also established.

Eventually, the working hours of 80 per cent of the children were reduced by two to three hours per day. One hundred and fifty-two child labourers were mainstreamed into formal schools with the assistance of the government of West Bengal and the Municipal Corporation of Calcutta. Community-wide concern for child labourers led to the support of many NFE centres. In parallel, getting parents interested in education for their children was perhaps one of the main achievements of the programme.

At the community level, several awareness programmes were held. Local NGOs organized a workshop to sensitize union leaders and academics on the issue of child labour. Factory inspectors were motivated to collaborate with NGOs in performing their enforcement functions. An Anti-Child Labour Day was also launched.

The action programme generated an atmosphere of general concern about the issue, creating the basis for the second phase of the project, which concentrated on mainstreaming working children into schools.

CINI Asha adopted a wider definition of child labour, which was very revolutionary at the time but is now widely accepted by many (including the state government of Andhra Pradesh), according to which any child out of school aged 5-14 is a child labourer. This definition thus covers all children, including potential child labourers and those who are working in their own homes.

The action programme involved a large variety of stakeholders (mothers, employers, trade union members, teachers and peer groups) to generate awareness about children's education and the hazards of child labour. In the process, youth clubs, employers' associations and trade unions were brought together as partner groups.

In order to retain children in schools, the programme also provided mid-day meals, health services, uniforms, coaching, counseling and school fees when children were mainstreamed into schools. It is noteworthy that, even after CINI Asha decided to discontinue nutritional support for the children, parents, child labourers and families were more concerned with having continued access to education.

CINI Asha also pioneered a child-to-child approach against child labour, encouraging children to motivate vulnerable children already in school and working children to stop working so they could go to school. This peer approach had a strong impact on the working children, who pressured their parents and families to put pressure, in turn, on schools. Booklets, calendars, and video cassettes were distributed as part of the awareness campaign.

It is worth noting that the bridge programme developed and implemented by CINI-Asha to integrate children into the mainstream was found to be highly replicable. The model was used by other NGOs throughout the country. In addition, the integrated approach in the programme was later expanded upon by the IASP. The broader definition of child labour and the move to involve all social actors were later replicated on a much wider scale in the APSBP.

Finally, community participation in the monitoring and evaluation of the programme led to significant community changes because of growing public awareness.

Lessons learnt

Some of the lessons that have emerged on mainstreaming child labour into the educational system:

- ◆ Children empowered by education think critically about their choices in life. They are more likely to resist having to work. Once the education process has been initiated, both children and their parents become determined to find ways and means to sustain it.
- ◆ The primary issues are giving children access to school and providing parents with knowledge about the importance of education.
- ◆ Education policy needs to strengthen the school system, making it more flexible so that it can adequately mainstream child labour. Strengthening the system in terms of both accessibility and affordability can, at least in the case of the younger children, eliminate the need for special interventions, providing a sustainable solution to the child labour problem.
- ◆ CINI Asha conducted a study in Kolkata on the adjustments families make when their children are withdrawn from work and sent to school. The results of this pilot study, published in *Child Labour and the Right to Education in South Asia*, show that government-aided schools charge for books, uniforms and yearly fees, which can be quite substantial for many poor families.¹ The study found that such families

¹ Naila Kabeer, Geetha B. Nambissan and Ramya Subrahmanian (ed.): *Child Labour and the Right to Education in South Asia: Needs versus Rights?* (New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2003).

have adjusted the costs of their children's education by cutting down on other expenditures, changing their eating habits, reducing the consumption of tea, *beedis* (indigenous cigarettes) and cigarettes by male parents, etc. In many cases, parents also increased their working hours.

- ◆ NFE centres need to be lively places where education through plays, dance, music, crafts and group activities attract children.
- ◆ The centres need to be as close to the child's home as possible. Thus, if children live on platforms, the NFE centres are best located on the platforms themselves.
- ◆ The involvement of local agencies, government and others in the running of the NFE centres greatly enhances the success of these centres.
- ◆ The provision of mid-day meals and nutritional supplements turned out to be an important incentive for keeping children and their families in these centres.
- ◆ NFE programmes should not be seen as an end in themselves, but only as a transitory phase from work to school. The development of the concept of TECs was an important step forward in developing a sustainable mechanism for rehabilitating children.
- ◆ It is important to encourage fundamental changes in the formal education system to make it relevant, accessible and of good quality as the best means of getting children into school and retaining those that are already in school within the system.
- ◆ The attention span of children who are not familiar with or who have forgotten the nature of classroom conditions needs to be factored into any successful model of transitional education.
- ◆ The children and their parents look forward to learning that will yield immediate practical results in the life of the child and their family. This means providing skill development opportunities to at least the older children in the NFE centres and TECs.
- ◆ It was clear that the medium of instruction had to be in vernacular languages and should be taught by local teachers. This did not take away, however, from the importance of teaching English as a second language to the older children.
- ◆ Wherever possible, the NFE centres and TECs should broach discussion on issues related to the causes and consequences of child labour.
- ◆ The NFE curriculum could not be a watered-down version of the regular school curriculum, which was not especially designed to address the needs of these children in terms of both content and method. There is a clear need for a well-designed syllabus and careful monitoring of teaching methodologies in TECs and NFE centres.
- ◆ It is pertinent to highlight the *problems and challenges* that the running of both types of education centres disclosed:
 - ❖ Some gaps in ensuring the availability of qualified teachers was a problem faced by most IPEC's partners. This was compounded because of the low salaries, multi-grade teaching in limited spaces

and poor infrastructure. Many of the teachers who joined educational centres treated such assignments as a stop-gap arrangement and left at the first available opportunity. This high turnover of teachers affected the quality of education, impeding both the children's schooling and the achievement of the project's objectives.

- ❖ In many cases, those involved with the NFE lost sight of the fact that these centres were meant to be a bridge to formal education and not an alternative to formal education.
- ❖ When children moved from the NFE centres to regular schools, they encountered problems in integrating with the formal school system and the children already in those schools. The issues usually related to neglect by the teachers and rejection by their peers. This often led children to drop out of school and return to work.
- ❖ Mainstreaming children from NFE centres into formal school also led to often insurmountable bureaucratic hurdles. Many formal schools refused to admit children in the middle of the academic year and insisted on parents producing birth certificates to prove the age of their children. Many also required residence certificates (proof of domicile) and caste certificates as proof of the caste of the child. These barriers proved to be profoundly discouraging to families who often did not have access to these documents.

Pre-vocational and vocational skill training

It was quickly observed by IPEC's partners that, for large numbers of child labourers being mainstreamed into schools, learning vocational skills was crucial. It had to be accepted that it was unlikely that most of them would get higher education. More than a quarter of the interventions in the first decade of IPEC offered some opportunity for skill training to rehabilitated children.

Skill training in the APSBP for the elimination of child labour

The APSBP carried this further by pilot-testing a flexible child-centred model that provided skill development training to a very large number of children coming out of the school stream at the ages of 14 and 15. The model was not based on building up new or additional machineries for providing skill training. Instead, it used the existing infrastructure in an area to put children under the aegis of master craftsmen and existing industrial and commercial sectors for a well-structured, closely monitored skill training system not unlike the *gurukul* (family and apprentices of the guru) system in ancient India.

This skill development concept made heavy initial investments in training infrastructure (whether on land, buildings, machinery, equipment or trainers) unnecessary. The system of attachments that resulted from this was different from the apprenticeship programme already established by the Indian government, where factories and major industries have to legally provide apprenticeship training to young persons.² In this scheme, there would be no similar legal compulsions. Instead, it would be based upon the benefit that the trainer would get from the child s/he is training in the form of additional unpaid help in his/her work. Under appropriate monitoring and supervision, the child learns the skills from the trainer establishments and individuals (TEIs) to whom s/he is attached.

The advantage of this scheme is that it has the capacity for massive replication at very low costs. The key to its successful replication lies in the implementing agency's ability to manage the attachment of large numbers of children and ensure that the training takes place under close child monitoring by experienced training counsellors.

The concept is child-centred. The child's aspirations and wishes for a skill area where s/he would like to be trained in are an important source of consideration. Secondly, his/her aptitude for the particular skill area is considered before the skill choice is determined. Thereafter, the agency organizing the training seeks out TEIs that can provide training to the child in that particular field and arranges for the attachment of the child to this TEI.

Another positive aspect of this approach is that heavy investment on training infrastructure is avoided. Under existing skill training systems, a heavy initial investment is required in terms of setting up a training centre with sufficient machinery and equipment. In contrast, the APSBP model did not involve such costs. Establishments and persons already well-skilled in their own professional trades were encouraged and motivated to provide on-the-job training for children.

Since training can come from commercial or domestic establishments or individuals practising a trade, the number of training centres where children can be given training is infinitely large. Any establishment or individual (provided that they fulfil the TEI criteria) has the potential of being a trainer under this model. This means that, in theory, every existing commercial and domestic establishment has the possibility of being a training centre for a child. Even if only a fraction of the establishments and individuals in a locality take on children as attachments for training, the number of possible training centres is enormous. What this means is that, even if the number of

² Ministry of Labour, Government of India : Report of the National Commission on Labour, Volume I, Part II (India, 2002).

children runs into the hundreds of thousands, almost every child coming out of school has the possibility of becoming trained.

There is a wide range of such training establishments. They can include, for example, hotels for housekeeping training; offices for training on office works; restaurants for training on serving, cooking, laying of the table, etc.; computer centres for training basic computer skills; tailoring shops for training on tailoring, cutting, design, etc.; auto garages for auto repairs; department stores for basic sales and accounting skills, etc.

Similarly, individuals who can provide training under this approach include carpenters, plumbers, welders, computer technicians, electricians, fitters, cycle mechanics, auto mechanics, drivers, etc. Even ordinary housewives with whom adolescent children can train in domestic work can contribute.³

Skill training in the IASP against hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour

The IASP targeted 200 children in each of the five districts that it covered. The most successful example of this intervention was in Coimbatore district, where skill training was given to 424 children (against the original target of 200), of whom 71 per cent were girls. About 75 per cent of the targeted children underwent training in tailoring, while others were trained in computerized embroidery. Such skills were very valuable in the garment manufacturing town of Tirupur. While 15 per cent of the children (all boys) received training in two-wheeler mechanics, the remaining 10 per cent (both boys and girls) received computer training.

The training courses were conducted by 15 institutes located in Tirupur, Avinashi and Palladam. The courses were generally full-time and stretched over a period of six months. During this period, the children were unable to continue with their normal work. While many girls and their parents enthusiastically participated, this became a problem for many, particularly boys who had to forgo the incomes of at least Rs.200 a week that they otherwise earned.

The training institutes that participated were well-established and experienced. For instance, the Don Bosco Nest in Tirupur trained about 115 girls, while the Nanjappa Institute in Avinashi trained another 60 girls. As the institutes became sensitized to child labour issues, some — like Don Bosco — not only gave a small sum of their

³M.P. Joseph: Providing Child-Centered Vocational Skill Training to Large Numbers of Older Children (14-18 Age Group), unpublished concept paper, (Hyderabad, ILO, 2003).

tuition fees (received as project contributions) to the students as stipends, but also distributed sewing machines and tool kits to deserving students. Furthermore, some of them conducted NFE classes to the drop outs and illiterate students during the evenings.

A study of the impact of the training showed that 80 per cent of the beneficiaries reported a rise in their income status after training. While some of them had already begun to earn salaries that were higher than what they received before the training, many trainees used their skills to stitch their own clothes. This naturally meant that their spending decreased. In addition, by catering to some of the tailoring needs in the local community from their homes, a number of girls earned a monthly income of Rs. 500-1,000.

Interviews conducted with some of the skill-trained students demonstrated the amount of progress that had been made. A group of girls, who had been trained and provided with sewing machines by Don Bosco, began to take subcontracted orders from a local garment company, which not only increased their incomes but also their confidence. Many other girls who stitched from their homes actively looked for customers among their neighbours and friends, planning their week's work accordingly. Parents also preferred their adolescent daughters to work from home. Many trainees with regular jobs elsewhere tried to work from home during holidays. Others requested donations of (or assistance in purchasing) tailoring machines. Even poorly educated children who were engaged in monotonous work on power looms showed enough confidence to start tailoring units when funds were available. Suggestions were often made that, with government support, these children could be given tailoring orders for government school children's uniforms in their respective localities. Many children also showed an interest in starting SHGs among themselves.

The post-project survey of 23 children (seven boys and 16 girls) who had received training in tailoring and two-wheeler mechanics in the 14 to 18 category showed that 17 of the 23 earned higher incomes after the training, with the increase in weekly wages ranging from Rs. 250 to 500. An evaluation of the project described the skill training as especially successful in the case of tailoring among girls. A majority of the students (80 per cent) who were interviewed as a part of the evaluation process observed that they earned higher incomes than during their pre-skilled phase. The evaluation also reported that there was widespread interest among the children for exploring avenues for further development.

Lessons learnt

Skill training should be seriously considered only in the case of children who are 14 and above. It would be premature to provide skill training to children below that age

because such children are not likely to fully benefit from these learning opportunities. Ideally, therefore, for children below 14, emphasis should be placed on basic academic skills, while both skill training and academic work should be emphasized for children who are 14 and above. At most, craft lessons can be introduced gradually among younger children.

The choice of training has to be carefully made. There is a need to identify skills that can provide a vocation for the child within the next two to three year-span that is also within the immediate neighbourhood. It is critical to avoid skills where the job market for children remains limited.

It is also important to ensure that not too many children are provided with training in the same skills so that a glut in the job market is not created. Ideally, the decision on the choice of skill to be offered to the children should be based upon a market-demand survey of the local labour context.

In order to cater to the training needs of a very large number of rehabilitated child labourers, it is important to look at non-traditional methods. The skill training model being developed under the APSBP is emerging as such an alternative.

The response to skill training programmes from children, their parents and families, and the community as a whole has been such that it is clear that they consider skill training to be the most critical aspect of the education of rehabilitated children. Indeed, most consider academic training to be relevant only if it leads to skill development. Only when there was a certainty of a skill-training programme being made available at the end of (or as part of) the schooling did child labourers and their families feel most comfortable with rehabilitation.

Income generation

As the IPEC programme evolved, it became increasingly clear that the most serious deterrent to the elimination of child labour was poverty. While poverty was not the only cause for the perpetuation of child labour practices, in most cases it was true that families feared poverty as the inevitable fall-out of withdrawing their children from the workforce. The threat of poverty was as real as poverty itself. Various interventions therefore began to look for ways of neutralizing this fear through the introduction of income-generating alternatives for families within the programme.

The first major step in this direction was a collaborative ILO initiative between IPEC and the Infocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development resulting in the development of a training programme on micro-enterprise development for mothers of rehabilitated child labourers. The training

that was provided was tailor-made to the specific needs of beneficiaries. It was based on oral and visual aids and the sharing of experiences. The training was intended to help mothers understand the rudiments of running a business and concepts such as profit, loss and working capital, and enable them to familiarise with market dynamics so they could decide on the types of enterprises they would like to set up. The training also helped them gain access to credit and other sources of funding.

A pilot programme was conducted to develop the training manual and to test it in different parts of the country. Hundred mothers of rehabilitated child labourers received training.

This manual was used widely in the APSBP to train one member each in over 4,000 families to help them set up income-generating programmes to supplement family incomes when children withdrew from work. This was done by training the trainers of 150 social workers from NGOs and other organizations so they could then train target families.

Two manuals were developed by the APSBP. One was for training family members about micro-enterprises and was called the *Training Manual on Providing Additional Income Opportunities to the Families of Child Labourers*. The other, entitled *A Trainer's Manual on Additional Income Opportunities to Families of Child Labourers*, was used by social workers to train members in setting up, grounding, running and sustaining micro-enterprises in a profitable way.⁴

The trained members of the 4,000 families were encouraged to form SHGs to promote savings and credit. The APSBP also provided a subsidy of Rs.1, 000 to each of the trained family members who had joined the SHGs. This was to be used as seed capital for attracting credit.

The project also coordinated with banking and non-banking micro-credit institutions in the area to encourage them to provide credit to these family members. A significant number of them have since set up very successful micro-enterprises. Others are in the process of doing so.

Providing information and support

Through its community contact programme, the Ruchika School Social Service Wing encouraged teachers to discuss ways and means of increasing the savings and earning

⁴APSBP: Training Manual on Additional Income Generating Opportunities for the Families of Child Labourers, developed by National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (Hyderabad, India, 2002) APSBP: A Trainer's Manual on Additional Income Opportunities for the Families of Child Labourers, developed by National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (Hyderabad, India, 2002).

capacity of households with parents, especially mothers. Ruchika linked the mothers to existing government-sponsored Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) groups in the area, through which the women were trained in poultry rearing, mushroom cultivation and other activities.

The Indian Council of Child Welfare in Tamil Nadu, as part of its efforts to rehabilitate child labourers in match industries, regularly provided information through a bulletin board to mothers about additional income sources.

The Saghan Kshetra Vikas Samiti in Uttar Pradesh also provided skill training to parents and adult siblings to help them increase their employment opportunities.

The Gharib Nawaz Mahila Avam Bal Kalyan Samiti in Rajasthan taught vocational skills to parents of working children, especially mothers, to enable them to earn income from self-employment schemes.

Formation of credit and thrift groups

Credit and thrift groups form an integral aspect of skill training, particularly for those who will be establishing their own enterprises. Because of this, 24 per cent of IPEC action programmes have focused on the formation of credit and thrift groups.⁵ Some programmes specifically target mothers or one member of the family through the formation of SHGs. They are then provided with seed money. Training on entrepreneurial development and skill upgrading is also provided to allow them to supplement their incomes. The following are examples of such programmes:

- ◆ The Vivekananda Education Society in West Bengal formed SHGs and women's development programmes to help these groups improve their credit.
- ◆ The Society for Education and Environment Development Service in Andhra Pradesh adopted a 'save and thrift' programme for the rural poor by forming *mahila mandals* (women's association) in 16 villages. Under this scheme, women were granted loans from government schemes like DWCRA and other self-employment schemes.
- ◆ The Arunodaya Centre for Street and Working Children in Tamil Nadu formed *madhar sangams* (mothers' associations) after mobilizing the community to take up action against child labour. These associations are regularly informed about government schemes that can help augment the family incomes of their members.

⁵ The number of action programmes is 175 during 1992-2002 including 10 action programmes of the APSBP.

Lessons learnt

The experiences from these income-generating, credit and thrift activities indicate the following:

- ◆ It is important to train the family member who is primarily responsible for income generation in what micro-enterprises mean, how they are to be set up and the issues connected with running and sustaining them. This training is vital because, in addition to skill, it provides confidence. It is also critical because it allows credit institutions to assess credit-worthiness and to extend credit.
- ◆ The training programme should be well-structured and should last five to six weeks, with only about one to two hours of training per day. This structure of a few hours every day is important because most of the trainees are first-time learners and are not accustomed to absorbing too much of information in one stretch. The importance of staggering the training over a longer period of time is to accommodate the fact that many of the beneficiaries have household responsibilities and other employment commitments.
- ◆ It has been observed that when rehabilitated children are encouraged to assist their family members in skill acquisition, a great deal of enthusiasm is generated within families and among the beneficiaries.
- ◆ The training modules have to be very carefully developed. Most of the trainees are illiterate, which is why the modules should be based on oral teaching, visual methods, group work, play acting and experiential learning. Visits to banks, credit institutions and market places are very important. At the same time, analysis of market trends should also form part of the module.⁶
- ◆ In order to make the training effective, it is important to develop a cadre of trained trainers. These trainers should preferably be social or community workers drawn from partners working within the community. These social workers should be put through a methodical training programme that would allow them to train family members of rehabilitated child labourers in the setting up and running of micro-enterprises.⁷
- ◆ The role of the social worker training the family member extends beyond the training itself. S/he provides continuous back-up support to the trained member in the crucial early months when the trainee tentatively puts into practice the skills s/he has developed. At this stage, the continuous presence and support of the social workers is a crucial factor in ensuring that the trained member of the rehabilitated child's family is able to identify an appropriate enterprise and obtain subsidies and credit so the business can be set up and run successfully.

⁶ APSBP: *Training Manual on Additional Income Generating Opportunities for the Families of Child Labourers*, developed by National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (Hyderabad, India, 2002).

⁷ APSBP: *A Trainer's Manual on Additional Income Opportunities for the Families of Child Labourers*, developed by National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (Hyderabad, India, 2002).

- ◆ The formation of SHGs is a crucial next step in ensuring the success of micro-enterprises. These SHGs boost the confidence of individual members, develop their savings and thrift habits, help them to obtain credit and subsidies and, in times of crisis, act as an effective support mechanism.
- ◆ Credit mobilization for disadvantaged groups is not easy. The formation of SHGs provided confidence to banking and non-banking micro-credit institutions to extend credit to trained members. The APSBP, in particular, set in motion the critical process of actively encouraging banking and non-banking micro-finance institutions to support trained members of SHGs with credit for their enterprises.
- ◆ Learnings from pilot interventions confirmed that if a small subsidy could be provided to trained members of the SHGs, it would go a long way in encouraging credit institutions to come forward with credit.
- ◆ There are many schemes in government, particularly from the departments of social welfare, backward classes welfare and tribal welfare, which provide subsidies to families below the poverty line. In the APSBP, the importance of mobilizing credit for the benefit of families of rehabilitated child labourers was strongly emphasized. Similarly, the Bihar Khet Parishad in Bihar assisted parents of child labourers to generate income by linking them with government-sponsored programmes like the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and the Integrated Rural Development Programme.

Policy and legislative reforms

Legislation in India

The introduction of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act in 1986 was a major milestone in the country's legislation against child labour. While this law is the most comprehensive and focused piece of legislation on child labour in India, it must be recalled that there are about two dozen other laws in the country which also have a bearing on child labour. Thus, for example, the Factories Act, Minimum Wages Act, Shops and Commercial Establishment Act, Plantation Labour Act, Motor Transport Workers Act, Beedi Workers Act, and Mines Act — all have important sections that prohibit child labour.

V.V. Giri National Labour Institute

IPEC's work in policy and legislative reforms took the form of a comprehensive programme that was implemented by the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute. It addressed the issue of strengthening the capacities of labour and factory inspectors across the country in the interests of eliminating child labour. A training module for the capacity-building of these inspectors was developed by IPEC in collaboration with the institute. This action programme trained over 600 labour and factory

inspectors for the state government and union territories during the period 1992-95.

The programme was designed to sensitize inspectors on the negative impact of labour on children, the economy and society as a whole. The training programmes were held in Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Ahmedabad in collaboration with:

- ◆ West Bengal State Labour Institute in Kolkata;
- ◆ Maharashtra Institute of Labour Studies in Mumbai;
- ◆ Gandhi Labour Institute in Ahmedabad; and
- ◆ Tamil Nadu Institute of Labour Studies in Chennai.

Overall feedback indicated that the training programmes had had a significant impact on the enforcement of child labour laws.

Another approach that IPEC followed during its first decade of operations in India was to encourage the use of laws other than the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act for the active discouragement of child labour. Thus, for example, the Shops and Commercial Establishments Act was effectively used to discourage child labour in small shops, hotels, restaurants and small industrial establishments which, because of their size, did not always fall under the purview of the Factories Act. The Bonded Labour Abolition Act was also used to identify and release bonded child labour, particularly in the agriculture sector. The Minimum Wages Act proved to be an effective tool against child labour since this act had a provision through which officers of the labour department could order an employer of a child to pay back wages of up to six months of the differential between the minimum wage prescribed for that particular industry and the nominal wage that the child had been paid. This was an effective deterrent for employers because the total of such back wages could amount to a considerable sum. In Andhra Pradesh, the Minimum Wages Act was used to mobilize public awareness on child labour by holding public sittings of the court and encouraging villagers to be present at the court hearing where practices found in establishments were subjected to legislative provisions. The collective recognition that child labour was not worth the financial trouble and the associated social stigma spread quickly from village to village through this medium.

The 1997 judgement of the Supreme Court of India, in which the court directed that employers found employing children in hazardous occupations would be asked to pay a compensation of Rs. 20,000 to the child employed — and that this amount would go directly into an account for the child's education — proved to be another effective deterrent, particularly in the hazardous sectors. Some state governments,

particularly the Andhra Pradesh government, have been using the Supreme Court judgement very effectively to collect compensation from employers, crediting it to the child's education. Since the amount involved is not small and, in cases where an employer is found to be employing more than one child, the sum total of the amount potentially prohibitive, this has proven to be a very effective tool for discouraging child labour.

Drafting new legislation in Andhra Pradesh

The government of Andhra Pradesh sought ILO's assistance in drafting comprehensive new legislation on child labour, in view of its current proactive policy on eliminating child labour. This was followed by a formal request by Mr. Mandava Venkateswara Rao, the then state's education minister. Consultative workshops were then organized to seek inputs from key stakeholders throughout the state, leading to the constitution of a drafting committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Ranbir Singh, Director of the National Academy of Legal Studies and the Research University of Law. The final draft was received by the then chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on behalf of the state government and in the presence of Dr. P. D. Shenoy, the then Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India. Both expressed their commitment to ensure that the law would be submitted to the relevant state-level legislative machinery.

Pertinent features of the final draft include:

- ◆ The draft bill defines a child as a person who is under 15 years of age. It prohibits any work by a child that interferes with his or her full-time schooling.
- ◆ No person below 18 years of age can be employed in any of the worst forms of child labour.
- ◆ The onus of proving that a person is not a child will lie with the employer and not with the prosecutor.
- ◆ The government has the responsibility to provide universal free and compulsory education and ensure the availability of full-time formal schools for all children.
- ◆ The government also has a special responsibility to provide for and implement special rehabilitation and education programmes for vulnerable children.
- ◆ In order to ensure accessibility to schools and prevent children from dropping out, no school can refuse to enrol any child during any time of the year. It will also be the obligation of every school to ensure the regular attendance of all enrolled children.
- ◆ Employers employing children in contravention of the provisions of the bill will have to pay a compensation of up to Rs.7, 000 for their first contravention and

up to Rs.10, 000 for the second. This compensation will go directly to the child. For the third and subsequent contraventions, in addition to a compensation of Rs.10, 000 that goes to the child, a fine of up to Rs. 10, 000 and/or imprisonment of up to one month can be imposed. Compensation officers for the levy and settlement of such compensations have been provided for in the bill.

- ◆ Where the government fulfils its responsibility in providing schooling for children, every parent has the obligation to send their children to school and ensure their regular attendance until 15 years of age or Class X, whichever is earlier.
- ◆ For failure to do so, the parent can be counselled by the *panchayat* (a village council) and/or the village education committee. In the case of repeated contraventions, the parent can be warned by the Child Labour Abolition Authority set up under this bill.
- ◆ In order to ensure the proper implementation of the provisions of the bill, state, district and *mandal*-level Child Labour Abolition Authorities will be set up and given appropriate powers. One-third of the Authority's members will be women; children will also be members.
- ◆ A complaints procedure has been provided for through which any individual or organization can make a complaint before the Authority.

Other action programmes

- ◆ The CBWE developed and introduced modules on child labour into all its training programmes, which reached out to over 200,000 workers across 48 regional centres throughout the country every year. In all these modules, emphasis was placed on existing legislation and its enforcement.
- ◆ As part of its activities on eliminating child labour in the tea estates of north-east India, the Institute for Plantation, Agricultural and Rural Workers generated awareness about the Plantation Labour Act among plantation management officials and trade union members.
- ◆ In order to create awareness among judicial officers, the V. V Giri National Labour Institute developed a package for providing orientation to these officers. This package has been effectively used by other organizations.
- ◆ On 29 March, 2001, the Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly unanimously resolved to take all necessary steps to eradicate child labour in the state before 2004 and put all children into schools by the year 2005. This was the first time that any state assembly had adopted a resolution which called upon the government to end child labour within a specified time-frame. This was also the first time that the state assembly had so clearly established the link between the elimination of child labour and the provision of universal elementary education.

Lessons learnt

- ◆ While existing protective child labour laws cover the organized sector, they need to be extended to the informal sector, including agriculture and housework, where most child workers are found and which are inadequately covered by legislation.
- ◆ It is important to ensure that labour legislation is complemented by other reinforcing and complementary measures. Often the enforcement of existing laws and the prosecution of offenders leave much to be desired. Legislation can also unintentionally make the situation worse by driving child labour underground into burgeoning unregulated sectors, where detection and protection are more difficult.
- ◆ The implementation of laws and policies is the key to the success of these reforms. This calls for strong political commitment, as well as effective and efficient implementation machineries. Efforts in this direction can be improved through specialized training and the sensitization of labour inspectors.

Coordination, networking and alliance-building

One of the most important developments in the second half of the 1990s has been the broadening of partnerships involved in child labour. Trade unions and employers' organizations began to play a much larger role in the process. In collaboration with many NGOs, these partners began to coordinate and communicate through a series of workshops held in Chennai and Kolkata in 1995. The network that developed as a consequence of this began to share learning experiences with one another.

Co-ordination and networking activities within the APSBP

This initiative of bringing different sectors of civil society together in a broad alliance led to the groundbreaking approach adopted by the APSBP, with the formation of a network of CSOs in 21 of the 23 districts throughout the state. These networks are registered under the Societies Act and have a core group that provides the thrust for setting up similar civil society networks at the *mandal* level. Civil society groups are also being set up at the village level. So far, *mandal*-level networks have come up in over 250 *mandals*, while village-level networks have developed in over 3,000 villages.

These networks are composed of a broad range of groups, such as organizations of doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, lawyers, and film artists; social clubs such as the Rotary, Lions, and Jaycees; religious communities; women's and youth groups; children's associations; and the media. One thousand four hundred such associations

have already become part of the civil society network throughout the state.

The village, *mandal* and district-level networks are being coordinated by a state-level network, which also provides the ideological support base for all networks across the state.

Key examples of strategic alliances created by the APSBP:

- ◆ The project has brought together six major trade unions to form a federation of unions to combat child labour throughout the state.
- ◆ The project's work with trade unions and employers has been very helpful in identifying the supply and demand issues on child labour. Trade unions, employers and CSOs created an enabling atmosphere in the state for eliminating child labour in a cost-effective way.
- ◆ The project has also facilitated the formation of the Consortium of Employers' Associations for the Elimination of Child Labour (CEASE Child Labour), a body comprising of 24 state-level employers', business and human resource associations. These associations continue to undertake activities to sensitize employers and businesses that employ children.
- ◆ Through its Steering Committee, the project has worked with the Department of Education, District Collectors in the districts implementing the DPEP and other senior officials and institutions. This, in conjunction with its work with the Dr. M. Chenna Reddy Human Resource Development Institute (MCR HRDI), which is among the highest state-level policy-making and training institutes, has influenced governance at many important levels. Since the MCR HRDI designs policies and programmes, as well as coordinating and reviewing the work of government departments, the mainstreaming of child labour concerns through this institute is highly cost-effective and sustainable. This has also led to the establishment of the Chaduvula Pandaga programme and the inclusion of child labour as an issue in the Janmabhoomi programme of the state government. These have directly resulted in the identification and enrolment of significant numbers of children.
- ◆ The media has been mobilized through news stories, commissioned articles, television and radio discussions, TV and press coverage, and radio jingles. As a result, there is now heightened media coverage of child labour issues throughout the state.

Other coordination and networking activities

- ◆ The Young Women's Christian Association in Tamil Nadu formed a network of NGOs for the protection of the rights of women and children. Twenty-seven

NGOs from Madurai and 34 from Tirupur, Bodinayakanur, Marthandam, Usilampatti and Kovilpatti were part of this network.

- ◆ All the IPEC partners from Kolkata developed a network to coordinate and share experiences among themselves, as well as with various agencies at the state and local governments. These partners met once a month and included the Forum of Communities United in Services, Vivekananda Education Society, Institute of Psychological and Educational Research, Child in Need Institute, Calcutta Social Project, Prantik Jana Vikas Samiti, Chamtagara Adibasi Mahila Samiti and Ramakrishna Mission Janasiksha Mandira.
- ◆ In December 1993, the Institute of Plantation, Agriculture and Rural Workers in West Bengal organized a workshop. The participants included state government officials from the Tea Board, producers' associations operating in the north-eastern zone, all trade unions and their affiliated plantation trade unions, various social organizations, teachers' associations and university representatives. As an outcome of this workshop, the Indian Tea Association (the largest tea producers' association in the north-eastern region) circulated instructions to their members to phase out the employment of child labourers in the next four to five years.
- ◆ Other important partner institutions are the National/State Labour Institutes, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Shramik Vidyapeeth, the Bal Bhawan Society of India and the Aurobindo Ashram.
- ◆ A networking effort in Ahmedabad helped the Amrit Child Labour Welfare Trust in Ahmedabad solicit practical assistance from various organizations so that healthcare and medical facilities could be provided for working children. Polio victims were given free callipers (special shoes); tonics and vitamin supplements were provided by the Employees State Insurance Corporation; and doctors from the Family Planning Association have been mobilized to help the community.
- ◆ Social Action for Integrated Development Services in Andhra Pradesh formed *mahila mandalis* (Womens Association) that have played a major role in preventing the employment of girls.
- ◆ Ankuran in New Delhi formed *mahila mandalis* that have helped in getting many children into rehabilitation centres. These *mandalis* have also been involved in mobilizing and sensitizing employers against the use of child labour.
- ◆ M.V. Foundation in Andhra Pradesh has involved women through the government's DWCRA groups to support the education of female children.

Challenges for the Future

The previous chapters have looked back at the experiences of IPEC and its partners over the past ten years. This chapter provides some pointers for future action and studies the key challenges facing the many organizations collaborating together to end child labour in India.

A decade of collaboration among ILO partners — the Indian government, employers' and workers' organizations, and civil society as a whole — has resulted in many valuable lessons. Perhaps the greatest lesson has been that the struggle to end child labour cannot be fought alone. It has become increasingly clear with time that a holistic response, involving a range of strategies at many levels, will be required. Many of the issues that determine child labour — the lack of awareness, skills, access to credit, social security, quality schooling and employment opportunities for children and their parents — have to be addressed in an integrated, area-specific manner that links issues within the community to the broader network of district, state and national efforts.

The second period of IPEC intervention, from 1999 to 2002, provided an opportunity to put into practice the lessons of the first seven years. The learnings and pilot models tested through the IASP and APSBP remain a testimony to the strength and impact of collaborative partnerships.

The task, however, remains enormous. Four key challenges have come to the fore.

Targeting the informal economy and hard-to-reach child labour

Nature of the problem

The informal economy is a burgeoning field of economic activity, where a great deal of the country's economic growth can be found. In fact, the employment trends of the organized sector have been stagnant over the last decade. The informal sector encompasses the expanding and increasingly diverse group of workers and enterprises in both rural and urban areas. They share one important characteristic: they are not

recognized or protected under existing legal and regulatory frameworks in India. In addition, informal workers and entrepreneurs are characterized by a high degree of vulnerability. The informal economy is where by far the highest number of child labourers can be found. It cuts across all economic sectors and remains closely linked to organized sector production. In agriculture, for example, highly-organized commercial plantations may contract work to small-scale family farms. In manufacturing, the factory of a multi-national or national enterprise may use materials sourced from small workshops or through contractors from families working from home.

Most small and micro-enterprises are characterized by an informal work-setting, unsafe conditions, cheap and often unpaid labour (including that of children), and relatively low productivity and returns on investment. Where activities such as mining, fishing, home-based production and assembly work remain unregulated, untaxed and unrecognized employment relationships, children are an integral part of the informal economy. The preponderance of child labour in this sector, beyond the reach of most formal institutions, represents one of the principal challenges to its effective abolition. Although the informal economy is sometimes described as invisible, children working on the streets of cities across India are probably the most visible face of child labour. Their activities are diverse — vending food and small consumer goods; shining shoes; washing wind-shields; repairing tyres; scavenging; rag-picking; begging and many other menial tasks. Work in the urban informal economy also includes work in small businesses and workshops providing bicycle or car repairs, small construction, food preparation or other services to city-dwellers. Children may be part of family or other informal enterprises and networks or they may be self-employed. Actual street work is often associated with these socially excluded groups. These children face hazards from the work itself and, more importantly, from the environment — traffic, exhaust fumes, exposure to the elements, insecurity, harassment and violence.

There are large numbers of children in domestic service but they are among the most invisible child labourers and are therefore difficult to survey and analyze. There has been some documentation of tribal girls (as well as boys, often from as far away as Nepal) migrating to urban areas to work as domestic workers. Child domestic workers are often ignored by policy-makers and excluded from the coverage of legislation; indeed, even adults in this sector are often hidden from view in private households and denied legislative protection, let alone the right to organize.

While most child domestic workers are between 12 and 17 years of age, some are as young as five or six. The majority are girls, although boys are involved as well. Child domestic workers, often isolated and far from their families, are under the total

control of their employers and are often deprived of emotional support, good nutrition and education. They generally work long hours for very meagre payment. They can also be victims of physical, emotional and often sexual abuse. In addition, the mantle of foster care or informal adoption can be thrown over a relationship that can end up being one that is purely exploitative.

Another hard-to-reach group includes children carrying out a variety of jobs in the hotel, catering and tourism industry, from bell-boys and maids to dishwashers, hawkers and golf caddies. While much of the work of young people in the sector is legitimate, there are indications of considerable abuse. Low pay is the normal experience of young employees in hotels and catering. Many children work in the informal economy, which surrounds and supports the formal tourist industry. Active recruitment and trafficking agents may pull children to work in this sector, although poverty and the lure of consumerism are other key factors at play. Children's work in tourism may have a spill-over effect into prostitution — exposing children to the risk of sexual exploitation because of the element of personal service involved and the stark discrepancy in income between workers and clients.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is one of the most dramatic and hidden forms of exploitation in urban centres. For many children, being drugged, abducted, abused and/or sold by their parents or other relatives can lead them down the path of exploitation to prostitution and pornographic performances. However, it is not always easy to draw the line between children involved in commercial sexual exploitation and those who, because of their situation, are prone to sexual exploitation and abuse by adults. The terrible consequences of sexual exploitation for children, both emotional and physical (as a result of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, and physical violence and abuse by clients) are liable to lead to the loss of self-esteem, mental and physical illness, infertility, behavioural problems, substance abuse, mental illness and death.

Possible responses

IPEC projects have increasingly focused their attention on the informal economy over the last decade, both because the employment of child labour in the formal economy is on the decline and the presence of child labour in the informal economy has become more evident. It has also been necessary for some ILO constituents, most notably workers' and employers' organizations, whose base remains in the formal economy, to reassess their potential role vis-à-vis child labour. Examples of this have been highlighted in previous chapters, notably in Andhra Pradesh, where trade unions formed a federation that reached out to the informal sector in particular. In the same state, 24 employers' organizations have come together to form CEASE Child Labour, a consortium reaching out to children working in sectors like the

hotel and service industry. In both examples, employers' and workers' organizations have encouraged their members not to allow children to work, even as domestic workers, in the hope of reducing the more hidden forms of child labour.

The All India Organization of Employers (AIOE) has also generated awareness among its large constituency throughout the country. It is currently collaborating with IPEC in efforts to develop a code of conduct for employers to prevent the use of child labour not only in their respective businesses, many of which are in the informal sector, but also in the businesses of their suppliers, who often tend to come from the informal sector as well. They are also attempting to document practices that employers have found to be successful in combating child labour. The formation of a network of CSOs in the APSBP, as well as a close collaboration with the state media, has provided a very strong network that continues to reach out to the informal sector.

The experience of the last few years in India and elsewhere has demonstrated the importance of working with a wide network of organizations if the informal and hard-to-reach child sectors are to be involved in combating child labour. The second phase of the APSBP has recognized the importance of identifying viable strategies to eliminate child labour in these sectors. Its overall strategy not only builds on the network established in the first phase with employers', workers' and CSOs, as well as the media and government agencies, but also places a specific focus on the urban areas where hard-to-reach child labour in the informal economy is most often found.

Systematic application of a holistic and integrated approach

Nature of the problem

Experience gained over the last decade has reinforced the understanding that a piecemeal approach to child labour is not enough to resolve this complex and multi-dimensional problem. Indeed, the importance of implementing integrated, state-based approaches was one of the more valuable lessons identified during the post-evaluation phase. Holistic responses were clearly necessary if the factors determining child labour were to be effectively addressed. These factors can be examined at three levels.

Immediate causes are the most visible and obvious causes that act directly at the level of the child and the family. Household-income at poverty level (income that is not meeting cash needs for subsistence) and cash-flow crises caused by shocks to the household economy are often trigger points. For example, with a sick mother, an absent father and no food, the eldest child in the family may well pick up a bucket and cloth and go to wash windscreens.

Other immediate causes include the size and structure of the family (number of children and adults, sex, age, spacing and birth order of children, and presence of elderly or disabled family members). Changes in family form and function also tend to affect children's participation in the labour market.

Underlying causes are values and situations that may predispose a family or community to accept or even encourage child labour. Perceptions of poverty come into play at this level: for example, consumeristic aspirations may drive children and parents alike to seek to earn more money to buy consumer goods that are becoming increasingly available.

Employers' perceptions also play an important role. Some employers may prefer children because they are paid less than adults on a daily-rate basis, because of beliefs about their suitability for certain jobs, and because more work can be extracted from them in view of their greater docility and lack of awareness of (and ability to claim) their rights. Traditions and cultural expectations also play a role. In some communities, employers feel a social obligation to offer income-earning opportunities to poor families and their children.

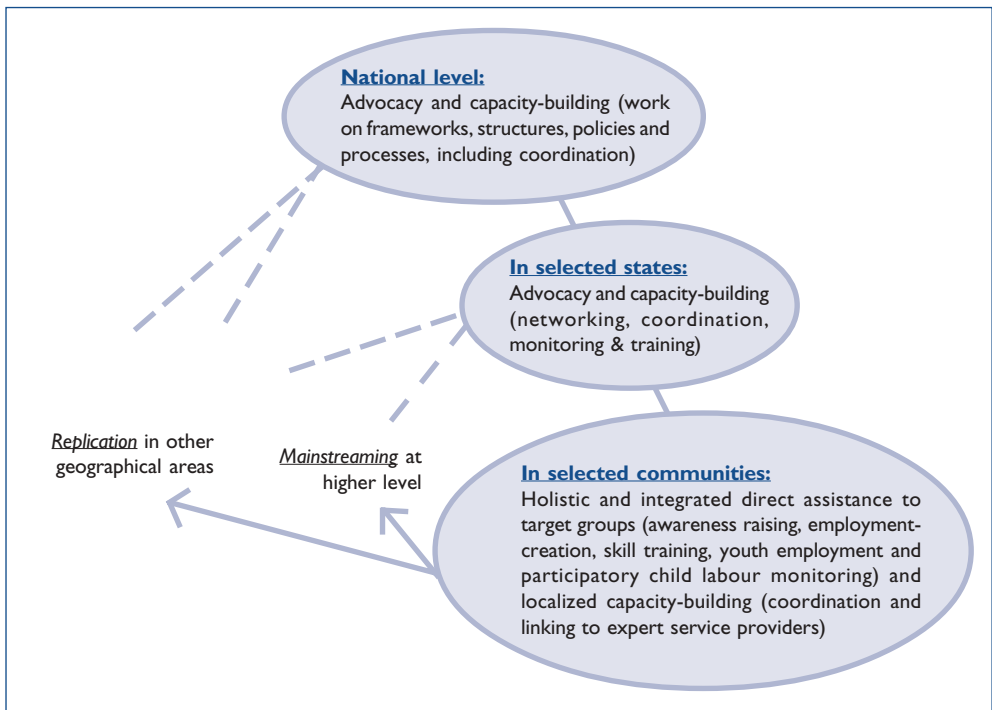
The kind of work offered to girls and boys is a reflection of traditional gender roles in India. Sex segregation in the child labour market often mirrors the adult labour market. Children's jobs may involve work they are good at because they are children (such as begging) or work for which they can be paid less than adults (such as unskilled, time-consuming tasks on agricultural plantations). Children's jobs also differ according to their age, in line with their evolving capacities. The position of both children and youth in the labour market in general reflects their lowly status in society. Indeed, children from socially-excluded groups often find themselves at the very bottom of the pile.

Structural or root causes act at the level of the larger economy and society, influencing the enabling environment in which child labour can either flourish or be controlled. Aggregate national poverty (low gross domestic product) operates at this level.

To address this multitude of factors contributing to child labour, the responses provided need to operate at different levels in order to be effective. It is no longer enough to raise the awareness of target groups, provide income-generating alternatives, remove children from exploitation and put them in school, or develop child labour policies. To be effective in addressing the problem, all of the above and more need to occur at the same time and at different levels in order to bring about lasting change.

Possible responses

Experiences gained in recent IPEC projects in India, as well as those gained by IPEC in other parts of the world, highlight the importance of applying a holistic and integrated approach to the elimination of child labour. Project interventions have to include the capacity-building of key stakeholders in order to create a more sustainable enabling environment, advocacy for policy change, and awareness raising to change attitudes, values and ultimately collective social behaviour. Direct assistance aimed at providing target groups with opportunities for decent work and addressing some of the immediate causes of child labour also need to be an integral aspect of any intervention. The diagram below describes this multi-dimensional response.



Such an approach demands the involvement of key actors across the government spectrum at all levels, such as the ministries of labour, education, women's affairs, agriculture and others. It also requires the involvement of trade unions, employers' organizations, chambers of commerce, trade associations, NGOs and other members of civil society. Most of all, it emphasizes the importance of the participation of community members, who are in a position to act as catalysts for change and can help ensure the long term sustainability of action. It is through the collaboration and coordination of action that such a wide range of actors will create the necessary responses to drive the momentum for lasting social change.

Transitional Education Centres

Some of the more specific challenges identified in addressing the immediate causes of child labour include those relating to the effective use of TECs in the rehabilitation of child labourers, those at risk of becoming child labourers and who have never entered into (or have dropped out of) the mainstream.

Experiences

Non-formal education is generally provided during the transitional period before children are integrated into formal schools. However, some implementing agencies have faced a number of practical difficulties in this area. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, instead of acting as a bridge to formal education, non-formal education often becomes an end in itself. The main problems in this sphere relate to the curriculum, functioning of the teaching staff and practical difficulties that the latter face while trying to absorb the children into the mainstream.

Curriculum

The NFE curriculum includes basic functional literacy (reading, writing and spoken language), numerical awareness (simple calculation and science), practical life skills (health, hygiene and family education) and, in some cases, work skills and knowledge about safety at work. The objective of this exercise is to provide contextually-relevant education to children who have either been completely deprived of education or have had limited exposure to it.

The main problem, however, pertains to the lack of both a well-designed curriculum and the absence of coherent learning modules. Most of the centres and schools working with IPEC either adopted existing formal education curricula or sourced freely available learning material from various agencies.

The Ruchika School Social Wing in Orissa and the M.V. Foundation in Andhra Pradesh are among the agencies that have implemented programmes that achieved unparalleled success on the basis of this model.

Some of the implementing agencies claim that putting the children into non-formal schools with an alternate curriculum creates an inferiority complex in the minds of these children when they are integrated into the formal education system. Some evidence suggests that this fall in self-esteem among children causes them to drop out of school and return to child labour activities. The Centre for Concern for Child Labour in Uttar Pradesh has thus argued for the need for a well-designed syllabus and, more importantly, for the careful monitoring of teaching methodologies in NFEs.

Absorbing children into the mainstream

Admitting children into formal schools even after they have been enrolled in NFE centres poses many technical problems because of rigid admission requirements in many formal schools. The Institute of Psychological and Education Research in West Bengal and the Integrated Rural Development Service in Andhra Pradesh have cited numerous instances where they faced difficulties in integrating children into the mainstream because of the absence of an open and functional education policy.

Furthermore, NFE methodologies, by their very design, are likely to be more child-focused and friendly, as opposed to the more rigid formats in formal education. As a result, children face several problems, especially neglect by teachers, when they undergo the transition.

Teaching staff

The non-availability of an adequate number of qualified teachers seems to be a perennial problem faced by almost all IPEC partners, mainly because of the low salaries offered to the teaching staff. A majority of the teachers join the IPEC centres only because of the lack of alternate employment opportunities elsewhere and consequently treat such assignments as temporary. Thus, well-trained and qualified teachers leave the TECs at the first available outside opportunity. This high turnover of teachers affects the quality of education and impedes the learning process for many rehabilitated children. In addition, the following factors also contribute to teacher de-motivation:

- ◆ Non-recognition of these teachers by the local community and the government, who label their activities as voluntary;
- ◆ Multi-grade teaching in extremely limited spaces;
- ◆ Poor school infrastructure; and
- ◆ Lack of job security due to the dependence on external funding.

Some of the learnings suggest that:

- ◆ Transitional education must be streamlined to fit in with public elementary education in order to ensure the smooth progression of children from TECs to formal schools. Administering model test sheets to teachers and students may be one of the solutions to this problem;
- ◆ There is a need to develop a monitoring system for teachers to ensure that the contents of the curriculum are being adequately administered. Setting monthly or quarterly teaching targets could be a viable solution to this problem;
- ◆ Regular and periodic teacher training should be factored into the NFE system;
- ◆ Realistic salary figures for qualified teachers and skill training instructors should be factored into the interventions; and

- ◆ Specific funds should be allocated to the implementing agencies for infrastructural development, with special emphasis on transitional schools. The use of local, private or government school buildings and/or other existing infrastructural facilities can also be encouraged.

Training in vocational skills

Twenty-six per cent of the action programmes undertaken over the last decade of partnerships in India offer some kind of skill training.¹ This strategy is based on the fact that poor children and their parents look for immediate economic gains from education, particularly since many of these children have already been supporting their families financially for some time. This is reinforced by the belief that there is an urgent need for a more job-oriented school curriculum and that the formal education system in the country lacks an important pre-vocational or apprenticeship component.

Some of IPEC's partners have therefore tried to restructure the school curriculum and set up facilities for pre-vocational skill development and basic literacy in the TECs. Generally, however, many of these programmes suffer from a lack of understanding of the underlying conceptual basis for providing the training. They are neither contextualized nor linked to the larger problems in the labour market and the prevalent economic environment, with the result that the skills imparted to children are often insufficient to guarantee them employment.

Content of training

It is believed that vocational education or any kind of skill training offers children better employment opportunities, especially when the target group consists of older and working children. But there is also a strong belief, as Katha in New Delhi has argued, that simply withdrawing children from the labour market and providing them with NFE is unsustainable in the long term. It is for this reason that there has been an increase in the number of implementing agencies involved in imparting skill training.

While a majority of the action programmes have designed and developed their own curricula for skill training, almost all the programmes have opted to cover a limited number of skills. Girls are taught sewing, tailoring and food preparation, while boys are taught carpentry (which extends to furniture-making in some cases), repairing of electrical faults and, more recently, computer data-entry. However, there is no specific information about the placement of these children in jobs after the completion of their training. In fact, children continue to suffer due to the lack of relevant content

¹ The number of action programmes is 175 during 1992-2002 including 10 action programmes of the APSBP.

in many of these courses, the non recognition of the courses by prospective employers, and the absence of sufficient training and support.

Needs of the labour market

In all cases, the implementing agencies claim that the basis for deciding on the training programmes has been in accordance with local needs and current market demands. Furthermore, many of them provide training in only those skills that they perceive would ensure self-employment for the children.

In practice, however, very few agencies have conducted market-demand surveys, and none of them have attempted to look at the problem holistically. As a result, there is often a glut in the market in many of the target areas, which prevents these 'trained' children from securing employment. The relative weakness of the programmes can also be gauged from the fact that there has been limited effort to link the training courses to apprenticeship periods with employers.

Teaching staff

The implementing agencies generally employ instructors who are specialized in certain skills, while some have engaged persons with appropriate qualifications from registered institutes. As in the case of non-formal education, the implementation of this strategy is also affected by the limited ability of these agencies to provide adequate wages. Due to the low wages, agencies are forced to employ persons who have undergone training in similar (but not identical) courses, are inexperienced, and perceive the assignment only in terms of earning some additional income. The seriousness of the problem of wages becomes evident from the fact that, in virtually all programmes, the instructors tend to be part-time employees.

Skill-training instructors also face the problem of little or no capital investment in machinery. In many cases, instructors lament the high ratio of student/apprentice per piece of equipment and state that this as a major requirement for the improvement of the curricula.

Some of the learnings suggest that:

- ◆ Serious market-need assessments should be carried out periodically in order to ensure that marketable skills lead to actual employment;
- ◆ Vocational skill-training provision should include a career guidance component;
- ◆ This provision should also be linked to job placement agencies and opportunities;
- ◆ The wider use of apprenticeship masters should be actively encouraged in order to increase the potential for on-the-job training and eventual placements;
- ◆ Entrepreneurship training, providing basic skills, such as generating a business

(ideas for developing a new micro-business) and starting a business (including basic product development, business plans and marketing) should be made available to those who are inclined to start their own businesses; and

- ◆ Tracking systems to monitor the impact of the vocational skill training imparted should be established in order to monitor its effectiveness.

Other support services

The need for an integrated approach in combating child labour has resulted in the inclusion of various types of support services in many of the later programmes. This is evident in larger IPEC initiatives such as the IASP and the APSBP.

Child-centered approaches to health, nutrition, counseling and recreation

With the increasing focus on the need for an integrated approach, many implementing agencies have attempted to reduce the vulnerability of children and their families to diseases, while also working to improve their prospects for employment. The most common strategy has been to provide either a nutritional supplement (mid-day meal) or health-care to child labourers in transitional schools, as this would help poor families reduce their expenditures on health services. Some programmes have also attempted to introduce counseling sessions to facilitate the integration of child workers into mainstream formal education.

These initiatives seem to have been generally successful, as can be judged from an increase in the child enrolment and retention figures in these programmes. However, the following problems have continued to be stumbling blocks in the practical implementation of these initiatives:

- ◆ Limited availability of space for recreational activities and for cooking mid-day meals;
- ◆ Insufficient funds to provide full-square meals and a comprehensive health support component; and
- ◆ Lack of staff to cook the mid-day meals.

Strengthening the families' capacity

It is well known that families of child labourers are financially vulnerable. While some schemes (e.g. the offer of free books, stipends, etc.) have been designed to protect families from the immediate cost of educating their children, they do not necessarily address its full economic impact. In recent years, implementing agencies supported by IPEC have experimented with a number of strategies in addition to the provision of vocational skill training. The formation of SHGs and micro-finance initiatives has

shown that they are viable and effective solutions to strengthening the economic base of these families.

Reports on completed and ongoing projects highlight some areas that require further attention. It remains critical to:

- ◆ Link pilot initiatives to larger government programmes for sustainability;
- ◆ Introduce these groups to skill training programmes for effectiveness; and
- ◆ Enlist full-time and well-trained community mobilizers.

Working with central and local governments

The environment at the state and local levels significantly influences the effectiveness of IPEC-supported projects. Prior to the 1998 Evaluation Report (and consequent shifts in focus and priorities), IPEC had not developed comprehensive strategies for working with governments except on marginal capacity-building programmes for government officials.²

In the post-1998 period, however, it has been working at strengthening the state machinery, especially the NCLP, through the IASP programme and the APBSP. Based on these experiences, IPEC launched in 2003 a large project jointly funded by the Government of India and the US Department of Labour in 4 states covering 20 districts that works with the NCLP and the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for All) Programme in ten hazardous sectors that have been identified. Thus, IPEC is now working with the national and state governments using sectoral, area-specific and geographical approaches. A similar state-based initiative is being launched in the state of Karnataka with support from the Italian Government.

Local community

Since the types of child labour vary across regions, the strategies for interventions adopted by IPEC partners have also been distinct. It has been recognized by most IPEC partners that local-level institutional arrangements — such as the formation of child labour, parents' and community organizations — are important. However, as in the case of strengthening families' capacity, the main issue is one of sustainability. Better strategies thus need to be developed to sustain the activities of these groups in the long term.

² ILO: Evaluation Report IPEC in India 1992-1996 (New Delhi, 1998).

Coordination, networking and alliance-building

Nature of the problem

The application of a holistic and integrated response to the problem of child labour is complex and demands the involvement of a wide range of actors. Achieving this level of cooperation requires the development and maintenance not only of a network of national and sub-national organizations, but also collaboration with institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UN agencies and the donor community as a whole.

Existing gaps in some coordination mechanisms among key stakeholders, however, may have contributed to disjointed communication and information-sharing, often resulting in limited responses to the problem.

While everyone may agree on the need to network and coordinate, the lack of resources, clear objectives and authority of members within the network to make decisions, as well as the domination of particular organizations and interest groups, are some of the more obvious challenges facing this type of organization.

Although these may seem daunting and have proven to be discouraging to some organizations, it is also worth looking at the important benefits that such a network can provide. Collaboration allows organizations to:

- ◆ Face large and multi-dimensional problems together, and not alone;
- ◆ Share the workload;
- ◆ Reduce the duplication of efforts and waste of resources;
- ◆ Provide a needed sense of solidarity among peers, as well as mutual moral and psychological support;
- ◆ Broaden the understanding of the issue by bringing together different constituencies;
- ◆ Promote the exchanges of ideas, insights, experiences and skills;
- ◆ Strengthen advocacy;
- ◆ Influence others — both inside and outside the network;
- ◆ Mobilize financial resources; and
- ◆ Identify opportunities for meaningful cooperation in the future.

Possible responses

Experience tells us that there is no doubt that networking and collaboration is one of the key approaches to successfully tackle the problem of child labour in India. The difficulties in effective networking, coordination and collaboration discussed above are not to discourage networking but rather to approach networking with a sense of realism and care. For networks to contribute effectively to cooperation and

collaboration, they need to be established with careful preparation. The full potential of inter-agency collaboration continues to be explored.

The key questions to be asked before establishing a network include:

- ◆ Are there concrete and common problems faced by potential members and are they aware of them?
- ◆ Are there relevant results and experiences that can be shared?
- ◆ Do potential members have a good idea of what a network is and what it would mean to them?
- ◆ Are they prepared to spend the necessary time and energy in sharing and networking at the expense of their own programme?
- ◆ Is there an atmosphere of openness among potential members which allows them to admit mistakes?

The following eight steps provide an approach to building and sustaining a network for collaboration on actions to combat child labour:

- ◆ Prepare a statement of purpose;
- ◆ Define goals and objectives;
- ◆ Create an action plan;
- ◆ Establish ground rules;
- ◆ Define a decision-making process;
- ◆ Choose an organizational structure;
- ◆ Prepare a communication plan; and
- ◆ Secure financial, human and material resources.

Systematic documentation and sharing of good practices and lessons learnt

Nature of the problem

The problem of child labour will not be resolved by IPEC alone. Not only is there a need for building broad networks with social partners and civil society to coordinate holistic responses, but there is also a need to build on the learning acquired through hundreds of interventions to ensure that it is broadly shared with social partners.

Most IPEC interventions are seen as opportunities for piloting new approaches that may provide a greater understanding of the nature of the problem and provide insights into future strategies and solutions. An important aspect of this piloting is the ability to demonstrate impact: are the desired interventions achieving their purpose? Are children being taken out of exploitative labour? Are they being placed in schools?

Are they staying in school? Are older youths being provided with marketable vocational skills? Are other children being prevented from entering the workforce in the first place? In short, are we making a difference? If so, how is this being achieved and what makes it work (or not)?

These questions are simple enough, but the answers are often elusive. Primarily, the nature of the problem of child labour is often hidden. It is hard to identify its scope and all its manifestations, let alone how interventions have resulted in improving the general situation. Secondly, this difficulty is compounded by the fact that most organizations do not systematically document outcomes in terms of assessing effectiveness, impact, relevance, efficiency, innovativeness or sustainability.

Over the years, IPEC has improved its capacity and that of its partners to assess and document the impact of interventions. A growing body of information is contributing to a better understanding of the nature of child labour and the nature of strategies that are viable for addressing it. This is crucial, if effective strategies are to be brought to scale and mainstreamed into government policies, strategies, plans and budgets. It is only through objective assessments of the effectiveness of proposed strategies that governments at national and state levels will be convinced to integrate them into and bring them to scale.

Possible responses

Research initiatives undertaken by the ILO in India and in various regions include advances in measuring household and women's work, informal sector studies and the use of ethnographic techniques and time-use studies, all of which have served to improve the quality of information relevant to the issue. The ILO's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) now provides technical and financial support to countries to carry out child labour surveys, undertake baseline surveys, set-up national data banks and disseminate information. The data, which are disaggregated by gender, serve as essential tools in identifying the incidence, scope and causes of child labour; providing information for awareness raising and monitoring trends; and evaluating the impact of interventions. More importantly the SIMPOC methodology and its statistical tools provide a set of instruments which assist ILO member states in analysing and understanding child labour trends and forming appropriate policy responses. SIMPOC has also developed a set of indicators on child labour to assist in programme development, impact-monitoring and country comparisons. These indicators help to track the magnitude, distribution and consequences of child labour.

At the programme, project and individual intervention levels, such methods not only help identify the trends and consequences of child labour, but also help assess strategic impact and identify what works and what does not. It then becomes possible with

this information to document good practices and lessons learnt for sharing and use in policy formulation and action.

Documenting the good practices and lessons learnt in project interventions should become an integral component of all project interventions. However, the process that leads to this documentation is complex and requires the availability of specific expertise. It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed framework for the collection of baseline data, related research and participatory methods that can be used. Much documentation has been done on the subject, including a recent publication of the Regional Working Group on Child Labour entitled: *Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children*, in which ILO contribution has been significant.³ This publication provides the reader with a 'how-to' approach on research and baseline data collection.

In conclusion, a few words about what is meant by good practices must be said. A good practice can be defined as anything that works in some way to combat child labour, whether fully or in part, and that may have implications for practices at other levels elsewhere. The following are implicit in its definition:

- ◆ A good practice can represent *any* type of practice, small or large.
- ◆ It can represent a practice at any level: for example, good practices can range from broad policy-level activities to practices at the grassroots level in the field.
- ◆ It need not represent an overall project or programme. Even if a project in its entirety may not have been successful, there still could be good practices that it developed or applied.
- ◆ It could be a very specific 'nitty-gritty' process or activity: for example, a strategy for incorporating questions relating to child labour in other household surveys, a means of getting teachers in a rural setting to incorporate child labour considerations into the curriculum, a technique that was successful in getting an employer association on board, an effective communication strategy, etc.
- ◆ It could also represent something that only emerges after comparisons across multiple settings are made: for example, what has emerged from the analysis of IPEC's work in numerous settings is that a combination of measures — a holistic approach — is almost always required.
- ◆ A key aspect is that a good practice is something that *actually has been tried and shown to work*, i.e. as distinct from what may be a potentially good idea but has not actually been tested. It could, however, represent work in progress by presenting preliminary or intermediate findings.

³ Regional Working Group on Child Labour in Asia: Handbook for action-oriented research on the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking in children (Bangkok, 2002).

- ◆ While there should be some evidence that the practice is indeed effective, definitive ‘proof’ is ordinarily not essential.
- ◆ The overriding criteria should be the potential *usefulness* of a good practice to others in stimulating new ideas or providing guidance on how one can be more effective in some aspect related to child labour.

Criteria for determining a good practice include the following:

- ◆ *Innovative or creative*: What is special about the practice that makes it of potential interest to others? Note that a practice need not be new to fit this criterion. For example, an approach may have been in use for some time in one setting, but may not have been applied or widely known elsewhere.
- ◆ *Effectiveness and impact*: What evidence is there that the practice actually has made a difference? Can the impact of the practice be documented in some way, through a formal programme evaluation or through other means?
- ◆ *Replicability*: Is this a practice that might have applicability in some way to other situations or settings? Note that a practice does not have to be copied or ‘cloned’ to be useful to others.
- ◆ *Relevance*: How does the practice contribute, directly or indirectly, to specific action against child labour?
- ◆ *Responsive and ethical*: Is the practice consistent with the needs of the problem, has it involved a consensus-building approach, is it respectful of the interests and desires of the participants and others, is it consistent with principles of social and professional conduct, and is it in accordance with ILO labour standards and conventions?
- ◆ *Efficiency and implementation*: Were resources (human, financial, material) used in a way to maximize impact?

These are merely general guidelines and may vary in applicability, but they provide an overarching framework for documenting the good practices and lessons learnt in programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

This last chapter highlights some of the key challenges in the fight against child labour. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 examined the learning experiences gathered from IPEC’s last ten years in India. It is evident that much still remains to be done. The ILO will continue to work together with its Indian constituents in identifying viable strategies for combating the problem, creating conditions that will allow for their broader replication, and documenting and sharing the process with its many partners, partners because of whose valuable contributions the successful elimination of child labour in India has now become an inspiring possibility.

Millions of children worldwide are engaged in labour that is hindering their education, development and future livelihoods; many of them are involved in the worst forms of child labour that causes serious physical or psychological damage. The effective abolition of child labour is an essential element of the International Labour Organization's goal of achieving decent work for all women and men.

In India, the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has worked closely over the last decade with the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, state governments, employers' and workers' organizations and a wide range of implementing partners.

A Decade of ILO-India Partnerships: Towards a Future without Child Labour provides an overview of various programmes and collaborative efforts undertaken by the ILO with its tripartite constituents. It identifies some of the gaps, describes the evolving process of work and attempts to capture lessons learnt and suggests priorities for future action. The review demonstrates that many of the building blocks to achieve the effective abolition of child labour in India are in place and that progress has been made. However, much remains to be done. The ILO calls on all partners in this endeavour to redouble their efforts, to give all Indian children, the childhood and the future that they deserve.