

WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

POSITION PAPER TERRE DES HOMMES NETHERLANDS



Terre des Hommes / Oscar Timmers

PROBLEM

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated in 2012 that 168 million children are involved in child labour. More than half of them, 85 million, are involved in hazardous work. Children work mainly to contribute to their family income. Poverty in childhood is often the root cause of poverty in adulthood.¹ The most recent ILO Study², covering the period between 2000 and 2012 revealed that the number of children in child labour has declined globally by one third since 2000, from 246 million to 168 million children. More than half of them, 85 million, are in hazardous work (down from 171 million in 2000). Child labour among girls has fallen by forty per cent since 2000, compared to twenty five per cent for boys. However, the progress made so far is too slow.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) aims to eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025. Terre des Hommes works in difficult areas in Asia and East Africa. TdH NL is making significant contributions to reducing child labour in **Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia**. In Asia, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Programme of TdH NL is running in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and the Philippines**.

POSITION OF TERRE DES HOMMES NETHERLANDS

TdH NL fights the worst forms of child labour. Child Labour is defined in article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and in the Conventions nr. 138 and 182 of the ILO. Within Terre des Hommes, child labour is defined either as work performed by a child under the minimum working age set for the type of work involved, and/or as work falling under activities defined in ILO Convention 182 (i.e. worst forms of child labour). These are:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- 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.

TdH NL does not oppose the participation of children or adolescents in light work that is positive and beneficial to their development and to the welfare of their families. However, child labour has detrimental effects on the development of children, deprives them of their right to go to school, and is physically, socially, psychologically and morally hazardous. In its most extreme forms, child labour involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities – often at a very early age. Whether or not particular forms of ‘work’ can be called ‘child labour’ depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries.

Poverty is not only a cause of child labour, child labour also perpetuates poverty. Poverty can never be eradicated until child labourers are redirected to school. Children that work under extremely difficult conditions from an early age are mostly illiterate and can become seriously ill or disabled. They are destined to become poor uneducated adults who

themselves have to send their children out to work. In the long term, a poorly educated workforce, may lead to the economic decline of a country. On the other hand, the reduction of child labour contributes to the development of a country.

Children who perform dangerous and heavy work, face great risks with their safety and health. Deformities and injuries can be caused by work that is too heavy for the body of an adolescent that is still growing. Protective measures against the harmful effects of chemicals are rarely used, or not used at all. Safety precautions, formal training and adult supervision are often lacking in jobs that are done by children.

Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) directly focuses on eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2025:

- Goal 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms;

Our work to end the worst forms of child labour contributes directly to the the achievement of the SDGs.

ADDRESSING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

TdH NL believes that all worst forms of child labour should be abolished, and that no child (every person below the age of eighteen, pursuant to the CRC should be involved in hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour, as defined in ILO 182. TdH NL prioritizes its child labour work on Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) specifically by targeting children working in mines, children doing hazardous domestic work, and children working in urban/ peri-urban areas doing hazardous work within the informal sector. These worst forms of child labour jeopardize a child’s physical, mental, educational or social development, in the framework of the CRC, and ILO Conventions 29, 138, 182 and 189 and should be directly eliminated.

Terre des Hommes focuses on fighting against child labour, and specifically targets:

- Children in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

- Child Domestic Workers
- Children in Construction, Mining, Mineral or Oil Extraction
- Child Labour and the Corporate Social Responsibility of the Private Sector

Our Theory of Change is the roadmap to the sustainable changes we aim to achieve and guides us in the interventions that are needed to eradicate the exploitation of children. Terre des Hommes' Theory of Change uses four strategies (Prevention, Provision, Promotion and Prosecution) to combat child exploitation. Through its Worst Forms of Child Labour Programme, TdH NL aims to prevent children from becoming victims of Worst Forms of Child Labour, and to ensure that within its programme, exploited children receive adequate short and long term support. Additionally, we seek justice against perpetrators, and call upon the responsibility of authorities in strengthening legal frameworks to end (the worst forms of) child labour. Working with local partners and applying a participatory approach is a precondition for doing this.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR WORK

CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH

TdH NL regards children as active agents in their communities, and aims to ensure meaningful participation of children in the determination of their best interests. Terre des Hommes uses strategies that address the root causes of child labour, such as poverty and lack of education. Sustainability of preventive measures is built into the programme through involvement of communities and establishment of referral systems (child protection committees).

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PARTNERS

TdH NL has built up an extensive international network of local partners that can work closely together to support children who are victims of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. By creating protective networks and offering child-friendly services at community level, children become less vulnerable, and exploitation of children can be prevented.

WHO WE WORK WITH

Terre des Hommes' programmatic approach against WFCL focuses on achieving the following six objectives in targeted communities:

The Private Sector implements policies in line with global standards, adopts Codes of Conduct, and contributes to the well being of children.



Children

build resilience, understand strategies to protect themselves from WFCL, have access to legal services and develop in an age-appropriate manner.



Families and Communities

protect children from exploitation, support children's access to services, report exploitation, and develop alternative livelihoods.



WHO WE WORK WITH

Law Enforcement Agencies

prosecute perpetrators, apply child-friendly protocols, actively investigate child exploitation, or more specifically WFCL cases, and facilitate reporting of cases.



Civil society

upholds the best interest of the child, holds government, the private sector and other CSOs accountable, advocates for child rights and activates their constituency.



Governments

provide access to services for victims and children at risk, allocate resources to ensure child rights, and enter into dialogue with CSOs and the private sector.

ADDRESSING PERPETRATORS AND SEEKING JUSTICE

TdH NL focusses on both the demand and supply side of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, to ensure sustainable solutions and an end to the exploitation of children. To do this, we build the capacity of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute violations of child rights and child labour laws and regulations. To ensure that child victims are treated with dignity and respect, we also give training in child-friendly approaches and interview techniques.

RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

TdH NL seeks to influence policy makers at local, national and international levels, to adopt, maintain and enforce legislation to protect children who are victims of the Worst Forms of Child Labour. To support this, we conduct studies in targetted communities, to build a stronger understanding of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

GOALS

TdH NL aims to end the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025. Terre des Hommes works in the most difficult areas in Asia and East Africa. TdH NL is making significant contributions to reducing child labour in **Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia**. In Asia, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Programme of TdH is running in **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and the Philippines**.

By the end of 2018, Terre des Hommes Netherlands aims for:

- 26,124 children vulnerable to child labour, and victims of the worst forms of child labour to have received educational services or vocational training;
- 21,660 families with vulnerable children, or child victims of the worst forms of child labour to participate in income-generating activities to meet their own basic needs;
- 11,149 children to receive legal advice while seeking justice;
- 2,330 government officials, judiciary and police staff to be trained in child protection, child-friendly interview techniques and releasing press statements after convictions;
- 33,152 child labourers, and 20,848 family members, to have received psychosocial



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support and counselling to cope with the experience of exploitation;

- 110,455 vulnerable children, and 273,650 adults, to participate in awareness-raising activities to learn about the risks of child labour;
- 735 cases of child abuse and child exploitation reported to the authorities and CSOs, and 120 court cases followed up/attended by partners;
- 610 NGOs to be involved in networks promoting children's rights with police and the judiciary;
- 314 private sector decision makers to have participated in child right events and 96 private sector child rights (due diligence) training courses to have been held.

REFERENCES

Additional information about the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Terre des Hommes' approaches can be found in the Worst Forms of Child Labour Policy Paper.

¹ UNICEF, A Post-2015 World Fit for Children: An Agenda for #Every Child 2015.

² Global child labour trends 2008 to 2012, ILO /IPEC 2013.

COLOPHON

Terre des Hommes Netherlands prevents child exploitation, removes children from exploitative situations and ensures these children can develop themselves in a safe environment.

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