



International
Labour
Organization

Major results of ILO work on child labour

Overview

Since the 1990's, the ILO – as the UN agency which sets international standards on child labour as well as on other fundamental principles and rights at work – has led a global effort to raise awareness of the child labour problem, to encourage member States to put in place appropriate legal and policy frameworks, and to ensure that appropriate attention is paid to child labour in wider development policies and programmes.

The ILO's most recent global estimates of child labour indicate that significant progress is being made. In the period 2000–2012, there had been a decline of over 30 percent in the number of children trapped in child labour from 246 million to 168 million. Most significant had been the accelerated decline between 2008 and 2012: 47 million fewer children in child labour, including 30 million fewer in its worst forms. This is remarkable progress over a short period of time that deserves to be pursued until all child labour is a thing of the past.

At the international level, the ILO has worked with governments, social partners and civil society in generating momentum for efforts to address child labour. Starting with the Oslo and Amsterdam Conferences of 1997, a Conference in The Hague in 2010 and a follow up Conference in Brazil in 2013, efforts have been made to build a worldwide movement of actors against child labour.

Alongside such global events, the ILO has implemented a major country based programme of work, implementing more than 200 projects aimed at tackling child labour through various interventions.



IPEC has been active in 107 countries

The technical assistance programme started in the early 1990s. In those early days, efforts were focused on a handful of target countries and on piloting innovative programmes to demonstrate that child labour could be effectively tackled. Much of this early work also focused on raising interest in the international community to develop and adopt a new international labour standard on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

The programme grew rapidly, not only in terms of number of donors and the amount of new project approvals but also in terms of the countries and sectors where work was carried out. At its height in 2006, the programme was attracting annual funding totalling over US\$72 million from more than 20 different donors. However, since that time, there has been a steady and steep decline in funding due to the financial crisis and changes in funding modalities of major contributors. In 2014, the programme has attracted approximately US\$9 million in confirmed new funding with a further US\$8 million in the pipeline.

The ILO's child labour work is technically coordinated through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) which is part of the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch. This Branch deals with the implementation of the ILO Conventions dealing with child labour, forced labour, discrimination and freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Over the 10 year period 2004–2014, the ILO's child labour programme has been active in over 107 countries, with 42 in Africa, 25 in the Americas, 17 in Asia and the Pacific, 16 in Europe and Central Asia and 7 from the Arab States. The size of these programmes varies from multi-million dollar, multi-year programmes (over US\$7 million and more than 4 years) such as in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Brazil, El Salvador, Indonesia and India to medium size multi-year programmes (over US\$3 million and more than 4 years) such as in Togo, Malawi, Dominican Republic, Jordan and Mongolia, to smaller programmes, such as in Liberia, Tunisia, Kosovo, and Belize.

985,698 children were withdrawn or prevented from entering child labour

A significant number of IPEC's country based projects implemented pilot programmes designed to provide services to children to take them out of child labour or protect vulnerable children entering child labour. From projects funded during the period 1995–2010, **a total of 985,698 children were withdrawn or prevented from entering child labour through the provision of educational and other opportunities.** This grass roots work also helped to build knowledge within the programme of the realities of child labour on the ground and strategies that are most effective in assisting children.



194 new laws adopted in 59 countries

Through its internal governance structure, the ILO establishes targets for its work and a monitoring and reporting framework enabling progress to be measured.

Some of the main areas of progress have been as follows:

1 Establishing legal frameworks based on the International Standards on child labour

The ILO has worked closely with member States to promote ratification of the child labour Conventions. Since it entered into force in November 2000, 179 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour and 167 countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on minimum age of admission to employment. In the history of international labour standards, the pace of acceptance of Convention No. 182 has been unparalleled.

However, experience has shown that ratifying the ILO's two child labour Conventions is not sufficient to eliminate child labour. Much more has to be done to turn the commitment of eliminating child labour into a reality. The first step is to transpose the standards into national laws.

Over the 10 year period from 2004 through April 2014, a total of 56 countries have developed, revised, and/or updated their legislative framework (at national and sub-national levels as appropriate) to comply with the provisions of ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182. The following table illustrates these advances by region and number of pieces of legislation that were adapted.¹

Region	Number of countries	Number of laws
Africa	23	47
Americas (Latin)	16	90
Asia and the Pacific	11	31
Central Asia, Eastern Europe & Arab States	9	26
	59	194

ILO projects assisted these countries in various ways:

- by providing support to surveys to provide estimates of the number of children in child labour and its worst forms;
- by raising public and governmental awareness of the importance of taking actions to combat child labour;
- by providing for concerned stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the pros and cons of adapting the legislative framework, building the capacity of governments, employers' and workers' organizations and others to better understand the provisions of the ILO Conventions and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- by providing assistance to conduct specific studies on gaps in legislation;
- by providing technical guidance and support to the legislative drafting process;
- by reviewing the proposed draft legislation to ensure the widest possible compliance and advocating with national authorities and the social partners to adapt the draft legislation.

In a number of countries, ILO-IPEC has been part of national consultative bodies charged with the task of reviewing various types of legislation (such as labour and criminal legislation) and recommending revisions. Some countries have had to revise their national constitutions to ensure that the rights of children to be protected from exploitation were respected. Many of the adapted laws concerned establishing the national list of hazardous work for children below the age of 18.

¹ Tables in this note were prepared in mid-2014 and current figures may be slightly different.

279 policies, plans & programmes adopted in 57 countries

2 Development of national policies and programmes to combat child labour

Since 2004, ILO projects have assisted **57** countries to formulate, adopt and implement specific policies, plans and programmes designed to combat child labour and the worst forms of child labour.

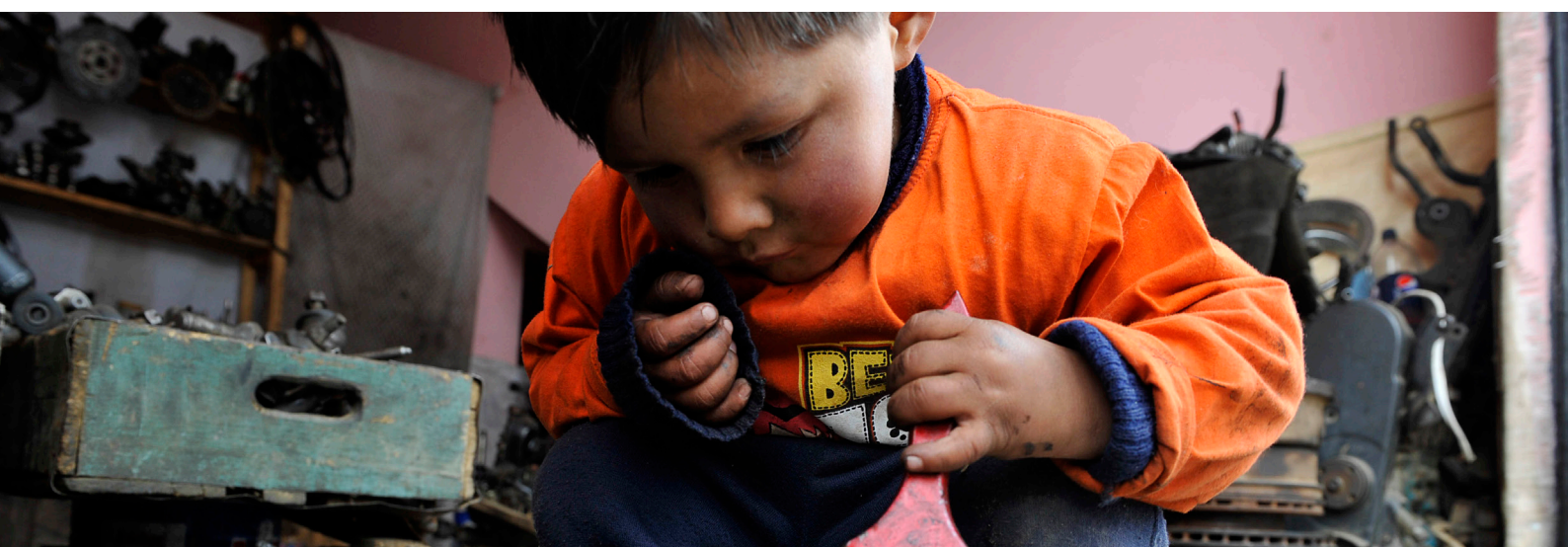
Region	Number of countries	Number of policies, plans & programmes
Africa	22	62
Americas (Latin)	15	129
Asia and the Pacific	10	56
Central Asia, Eastern Europe & Arab States	10	32
	57	279

ILO projects have assisted countries to develop, adopt and implement policies in a wide range of areas that have a direct impact on child labour, such as national child labour elimination strategies and policies, national action plans for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and sectoral policies and plans aimed at abolishing child labour from specific regions and districts or sectors such as sugar, tobacco or cocoa, through “integrated area-based approaches”.

3 Improved national policy coherence - The inclusion of child labour concerns in relevant development, education, social protection and other social policies and programmes

Positioning child labour concerns at the macro-level by integrating these concerns into the development priorities of countries has proven to be an effective way of achieving advances in the reduction of child labour. Since 2004, ILO projects have assisted authorities and stakeholders to have child labour included in relevant development, education, anti-poverty and other social policies and programmes in a total of **46** countries.

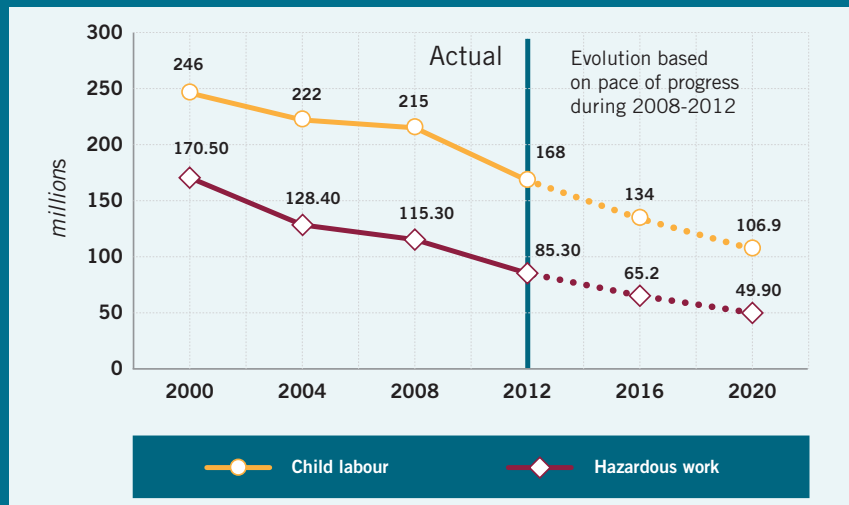
Region	Number of countries	Number of policies, plans & programmes
Africa	20	60
Americas (Latin)	12	65
Asia and the Pacific	11	52
Central Asia, Eastern Europe & Arab States	13	34
	46	211



Global estimates on child labour

The ILO is the acknowledged leader in the generation of global estimates on child labour. Through a series of Global Reports produced since 2000 it has been able to keep a global spotlight on trends in child labour and the need to address the issue. The estimates attract significant media attention and are widely used in the international arena and policy discussions (eg the recent announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize referred to the most recent estimates produced by the ILO).

The data to generate the estimates is collected through IPEC's Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), which supports more than 10 national child labour surveys each year. The ILO's role in monitoring global progress on child labour may well increase in importance as the new Sustainable Development Goals are likely to include new targets for elimination of child labour and the ILO will need to monitor progress in order to report to the international community.



4 Research and technical guidelines

The ILO has developed a number of global knowledge products that are used extensively worldwide today. These products include:

- in the period 1999 to 2013, 71 research and policy papers and 485 thematic, country, regional and global reports on child labour were made available. These included thematic reports on specific sectors (eg domestic work, agriculture, mining, brick kilns) and reports on specific themes, eg girls and child labour, education, hazardous work, the economic costs and benefits of investing in education and tackling child labour;
- training resources have been developed to support a range of programmes implemented through the ILO International Training Centre, many of which are replicated at national level;
- as a follow up to The Hague Conference, the ILO has started a series of World Reports on child labour. The first, launched in 2013, was on social protection and child labour, the second to be launched in 2015 will look at links between child labour and youth employment issues;
- through 2013, 20 countries were the focus of child labour research under the ILO/UNICEF/World Bank Inter-agency research cooperation programme, Understanding Children's Work, which yielded 18 country reports and 83 research papers.

5 Evaluations

Since 2004, IPEC has been taking a critical look at its programmes with the objective of maximizing learning, lessons learned and good practices. Projects are subject to progress and final evaluations. Over 50 compendiums of Good Practices by selected themes and geographical area have been prepared. Thematic evaluations are carried out to identify and document models of intervention. A Child Labour Impact Assessment toolkit has been prepared with methodologies to assess the impact of child labour interventions, from projects to policies. Twelve longitudinal tracer studies to document longer term impact have also been produced. Statistically robust impact evaluations of selected interventions have been completed, and the programme serves as technical advisors to other organizations on impact assessment. An inventory of over sixty impact evaluations has been created and is maintained as a way of enhancing the evidence base.

The World Day Against Child Labour

Since 2002, the ILO has annually led a World Day Against Child Labour (June 12). The event is widely supported with national level activities and policy discussions. The ILO usually issues a technical report on an aspect of child labour to coincide with the World Day. The event generates major media interest.

In 2015, the theme of the event is:

***No to child labour,
Yes to quality education***

Discussions have already taken place with UNICEF and there is an understanding to collaborate in 20 target countries to mobilize inter-ministerial discussions around the issue. The ILO is also in contact with **A World at School** which will focus on child labour as a barrier to education for 100 days running up to the World Day.

IPEC's Programme "Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media" (SCREAM) - which seeks to engage children and improve their experience of education - has been used in more than 70 countries and SCREAM modules have been translated into more than 20 languages.

The ILO has played a leading role in contacts between UN agencies and other partners on a number of initiatives such as the Understanding Children's Work Project, the International Partnership on Child Labour in Agriculture, the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education for All, and the Child Labour Platform (a group which brings together private sector companies wishing to engage on child labour issues).

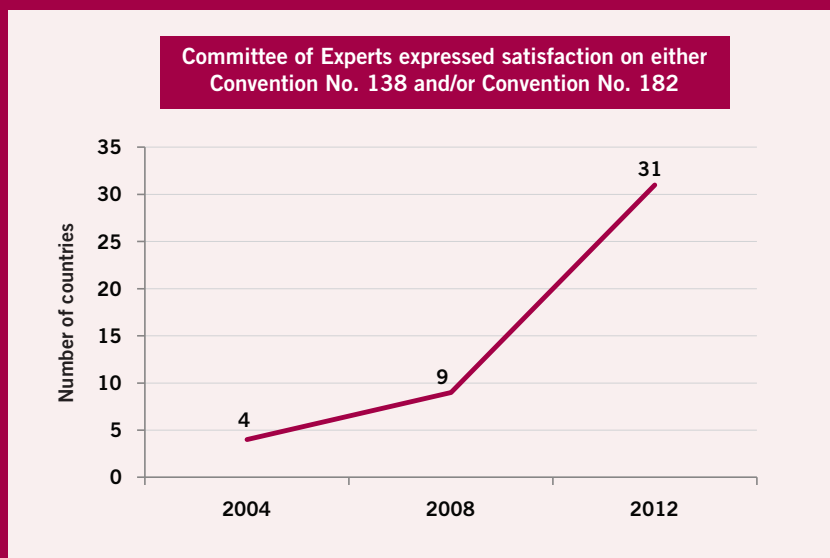


Regular review of national laws and practices by the ILO's supervisory mechanisms

The information in this note provides a picture of the work of the ILO's child labour programme and how it has forged partnerships with member States, Constituents and others, to progress action against child labour.

The progress of member States in implementing the ILO's child labour Conventions is also regularly considered by the ILO's standards supervisory system. The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) is responsible for the regular system of supervision of ratified Conventions. The Committee examines periodic reports submitted by member States on the measures they have taken to implement the provisions of the Conventions, including when requested, measures taken with IPEC's support.

There has been an increasing number of comments made by this body that have noted "with satisfaction" the various measures taken by governments in respect of applying the relevant ILO Conventions on child labour.



The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are likely to include a target for the elimination of child labour by 2025. While there has been important global progress in tackling child labour, it must be accelerated if this target is to be achieved. In the coming years the ILO will focus its work on child labour in the following areas:

- continuing to build the capacity of member States and constituents to establish legal and policy frameworks and programmes to address child labour, including through south – south cooperation;
- strengthening partnerships and activities on key areas of work including child labour and education and addressing child labour in global supply chains;
- continuing to build the capacity of local, national and global social partners in the real economy, – enterprises, enterprise associations and workers' organizations and not least in the rural and informal economies – to integrate child labour concerns more effectively into their business practice and their organizing and bargaining strategies;
- ensuring an effective and credible system is in place to monitor and report on global progress on the SDG child labour target;
- further developing the ILO's leading role in research and knowledge on child labour.

going forward

The ILO wishes to acknowledge contributions received for the child labour programme since 1992 from the following:

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • United States | • Sweden |
| • Germany | • Ireland |
| • Spain | • Belgium |
| • United Kingdom | • Japan |
| • Netherlands | • Australia |
| • European Union | • Dominican Republic |
| • Canada | • Austria |
| • France | • New Zealand |
| • Italy | • Poland |
| • Denmark | • Portugal |
| • Norway | • Korea |
| • Finland | • Hungary |
| • Brazil | • Luxembourg |
| • Switzerland | |

The ILO also acknowledges with thanks contributions to the programme which have been received through Public-Private Partnerships.

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