

# COMBATING CHILD LABOUR THROUGH EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

## A POLICY BRIEF



International  
Labour  
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### The challenge of child labour

Over the past ten years Indonesia has made major progress in reducing the numbers of children involved in child labour. It has done so primarily by expanding education provision enabling more children to attend and stay in school. This progress has been supported by the implementation of social protection programmes providing support to poor families.

However there remains a problem of child labour, children who are working below the legal minimum working age for the kind of work they are doing. The most recent national survey on child labour was integrated in the 2009 National Labour Force Survey, *Sakernas*. It found that some 1.76 million children were in work classed as child labour.

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKING CHILDREN IN INDONESIA

- 81.4% of all working children reside in rural areas. 65.2% of working children are found in agriculture.
- Working children are mostly unpaid family workers (85.7%)
- There are large differences in children's employment across provinces with the highest rates of working children in Eastern Indonesia
- Children who work spend on average 15.6 hours per week working. For more than half, work is an activity that is performed every day of the week, it is a part of the daily life of the children.
- Boys account for 55% of all working children 7-15 years old.

### National policy

The government of Indonesia has established a legal framework to address child labour. The 2003 Manpower Act established the legal minimum age for admission to employment at 15.<sup>1</sup> In addition the government has established a list of hazardous forms of work which are prohibited to those below the age of 18.

A new national policy has also recently been established which sets out a vision of Indonesia to be free of child labour by 2022. The strategy it outlines, based on evaluation of earlier progress, involves building support of a broad range of stakeholders in society for action against child labour, harmonising regulations, and strengthening access to education and social protection.

The initiatives to tackle child labour are reinforced by the Governments medium term development plan and several social protection programmes.

In the area of social protection the recent announcement of a Smartcard available to children to help them with the incidental costs of education can be a very significant development in efforts to help families keep children in school.

Of particular importance has been the strong government commitment to removing barriers to education, with initiatives such as the BOS programme to meet school operational costs and One Roof schools to extend access in underserved rural areas. A further important development is the emerging developing policy that seeks to extend access to basic education from 9 years to 12 years.

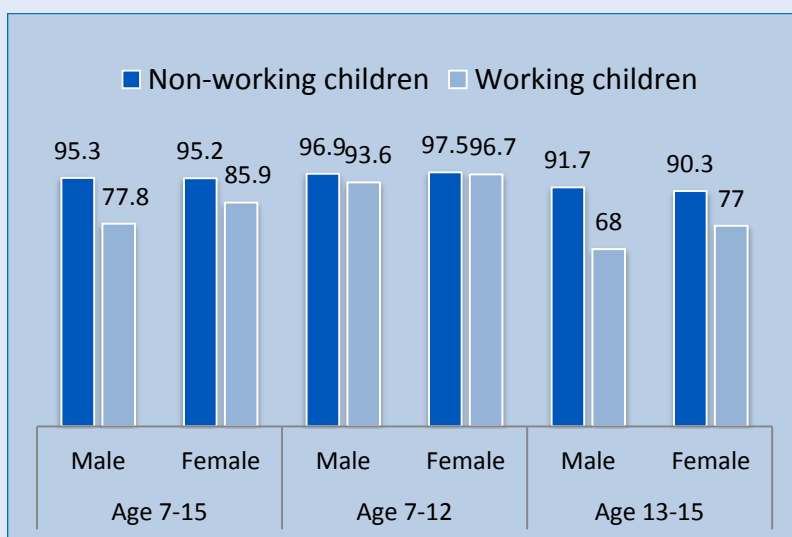
<sup>1</sup> Light work which does not impact on a child's education or development may be permitted from age 13.

Although this all represents positive progress, as can be seen from the information below, if further progress is to be made it will be important for progress to also be made in reducing child labour which still has an impact on school attendance, particularly in junior secondary schools.

### How does childrens work act as a barrier to education?

The school attendance rates of working children are often significant lower than those of non working children. The figure below shows that the difference is particularly pronounced among children of junior secondary school age (13-15). A recent global study found that adolescents were twice as likely to be out of school as primary aged children and involvement of children in work before the legal minimum age was a significant factor in this.

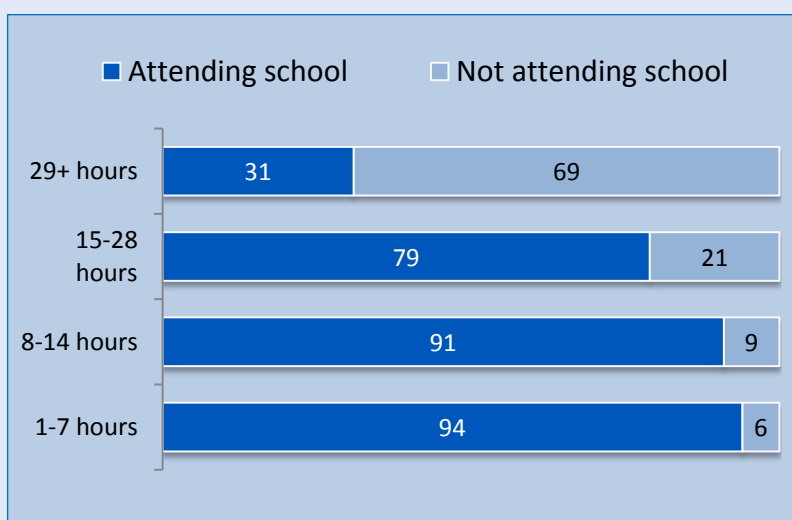
**FIGURE 1. School attendance rates by sex, age group and working status**



Source: Calculation based on micro-data from: Statistics Indonesia: *Working children in Indonesia 2009* – Indonesia Child Labour Survey (ICLS) (Yakarta, 2009).

The school attendance rates of children also decline according to the extent of their work. The figure below shows the likelihood that children will stop attending school as the hours of work increases.

**FIGURE 2. School attendance rates of working children 7-15 years old by grouped hours of work per week**



Source: Calculation based on micro-data from Indonesia Child Labour Survey (ICLS) 2009.

## ILO experience

The ILO has for some years cooperated with the Government, social partners and civil society to build awareness of the challenge of child labour and has supported a range of local level programmes to provide services to children in or at risk of child labour.

Most recently in 2011 the ILO-IPEC project “Combating child labour through education” has supported various programmes that specifically focussed on education interventions to tackle child labour. These included:

- Working with the District Education Office of Sukabumi and UPI Bandung in a programme to strengthen pre vocational training in One Roof Schools
- Working with partners in Jakarta in programmes to reach and provide education support to street children
- Supporting child domestic workers in Greater Jakarta (JABODETABEK) with education and training
- Working with partners in Makassar to tackle the problem of child labour on dumpsites

The discussions around these and other programmes have suggested that while national interventions are having a positive impact in increasing education access and reducing child labour, at the local level there are often specific groups of children who may not be reached unless there is a determined effort to identify and address the local factors and situation.

## Policy implications

Taking account of available data, recent policy discussions and developments and local level experience, the following points emerge as important issues to address in future work to prevent and tackle child labour.

The new Roadmap on the elimination of child labour provides an opportunity for coordination of work on child labour, education and social protection. As the government’s policy on extending access to education to 12 years develops, there is a need to ensure policy coherence between the minimum age of employment, age of education, and national policies on youth employment. It is important to have a consistent legal framework across Ministries.

- Whilst important progress has been made in increasing access to education there remain areas of disadvantage between and within provinces. In some areas much still needs to be done to increase enrolment and retention. A renewed effort to target children and families is required at the level of the local community.
- It is evident that as children work longer, attendance at school falls. A public awareness campaign focusing on the difference between light work which does not disrupt education, and excessive hours that do, could play a useful role in changing public attitudes.
- Working children have a considerable risk of dropping out from school. A review of how the education management information system could be used to identify districts or schools requiring particular attention could be explored. It could also be considered how teacher training programmes might include greater attention to monitoring of children vulnerable to drop out.
- A review of “second chance” education and broader education for youth interventions could assist in developing future strategy in this area particularly as efforts are made to increase the extent of education provision.
- The impact of One Roof schools on out of school children and child labour should be closely monitored with a view to potential upscaling.



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