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About us

The Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project is an inter-agency research cooperation initiative involving the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNICEF and the World Bank.

The Project is guided by the Agenda for Action adopted at the 1997 Oslo International Conference on Child Labour. The Oslo Agenda identified the need to improve data and information on child labour, and called for stronger international co-operation in efforts towards child labour elimination.

UCW research activities are designed to inform policies that impact upon the lives of child labourers in countries where they are prominent. Research efforts help provide a common understanding of child labour in specific national contexts, and a common basis for action against it. For further information on UCW, see the Project website at www.ucw-project.org.

Featured research

Special feature: Towards eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia by 2016, an assessment of resource requirements

UCW research efforts in Cambodia have shaped the development of a two-volume inter-agency report on child labour. Volume I, was released in June 2006, analyses the current child labour situation in Cambodia - the extent and nature of child labour, the causes and consequences of child labour, and policy approaches for addressing it. Volume II of the inter-agency report assesses the additional resource requirements for eliminating worst forms over a nine-year time horizon. It was adopted by the Cambodian National Steering Committee for Child Labour in September 2009. This edition of the UCW Newsletter provides a brief summary of the study. For further information, readers are referred to the full report available for download at the [UCW Project website](http://www.ucw-project.org).

Study overview. Cambodia witnessed a substantial reduction in the incidence of child labour in the 1990s and early part of the current decade. But this progress, even if sustained in the context of the current global economic crisis, will not be enough to eliminate worst forms by 2016. Rather, current progress must be *accelerated* to achieve this goal by the 2016 global target date. The aim of this report is to assess the amount of additional resources needed to realize this accelerated progress.

The report focuses on the "residual" group of children that is expected to remain in worst forms in the absence of accelerated efforts. In other words, it looks at the group "left behind" in worst forms, even when current broader education, social protection and other national development efforts (as well as demographic evolution) are taken into account. It estimates the likely size of this residual group in worst forms, and the cost of additional targeted interventions designed to reach it.

Two broad scenarios are used for the estimates. The first scenario assumes that economic growth and progress in implementing national development plans are significantly slowed by the unfolding global economic crisis. The second assumes that the impact of the economic crisis on growth and spending will be more contained over the nine-year time horizon.

The estimation results show that even in the highest-cost scenario the resources required for eliminating worst forms are not large – about US\$10 million per year, equivalent to two percent of annual overseas development assistance. This suggests that eliminating worst forms over the envisaged nine-year time horizon is by no means an unrealistic goal. Indeed,

with a relatively modest additional resource investment, the goal of eliminating worst forms of child labour appears well within reach in Cambodia.

How the estimates are derived. The core intervention package used as a basis for the cost estimates is drawn from the national Time-Bound Programme (TBP) for the elimination of worst forms. It is worth emphasising in this context that the intervention package does not by itself constitute a complete policy response to worst forms of child labour. Rather, it constitutes a set of core measures identified by the Government that needs to be closely integrated with other development efforts across a range of sectors and involving all concerned sectoral ministries. ILO/IPEC experience in project implementation in Cambodia is relied upon for costing the specific items within the core intervention package.

Arriving at cost estimates for reaching the residual group of children in worst forms with targeted interventions involves a number of sequential steps. Estimates are first needed of the baseline population of children in worst forms. Projections are then needed of how this baseline population will evolve over the nine-year period. These projections, in turn, require a model of factors influencing involvement worst forms, including on-going efforts in education, social protection and other areas, and of how these factors are likely to change over the nine-year period. Next, information is needed on the precise package of measures to be applied to the target population of children in worst forms, and on the per child cost of each. Finally, information is needed on the phase-in schedule and the relative weights accorded to the different measures within the intervention package in order to establish the total cost of implementing the package. These steps are briefly summarized below.

Cost of extending core intervention package to remaining children in worst forms over a nine-year time horizon. In order to offer an assessment of the likely cost of extending the core intervention package to remaining children in worst forms, three different implementation schemes are elaborated. The three schemes help to determine the amount of the resources needed to implement the core intervention package on the basis of the dynamic interplay between preventive and withdrawal/second chance interventions, their relative costs and the costs by age group.

The first implementation scheme involves the prevention of all children from entering worst forms and the withdrawal of all children already in worst forms from the outset of the programme, and therefore assumes that there are no capacity constraints. The second implementation scheme involves a gradual four-year phase-in period for both prevention and withdrawal measures during which some children graduate into adulthood untreated. The third intervention scheme also involves a gradual phase-in for both prevention and withdrawal, but does not allow any children to slip through the cracks, even during the initial phase-in period. The three schemes are evaluated with reference to the two growth/policy scenarios discussed above.

Table 1. Estimated cost and coverage of core intervention package for eliminating worst forms, by intervention scheme and scenario

	Implementation scheme I		Implementation scheme II		Implementation scheme III	
	Target population (scenario 1)	Target population (scenario 2)	Target population (scenario 1)	Target population (scenario 2)	Target population (scenario 1)	Target population (scenario 2)
Total children prevented from worst forms	601,822	329,084	534,121	274,476	534,121	274,476
Total children withdrawn (5-13 year-olds)	89,129	94,041	49,366	48,215	65,885	64,668
Total children withdrawn (14-17 year-olds)	198,086	198,086	151,513	147,272	289,031	282,066
Total children treated (prevention and withdrawal, 5-17 years)	889,037	621,211	735,000	469,963	889,037	621,211
Total cost of prevention and withdrawal (US\$, '000)	\$82,429	\$64,865	\$70,524	\$50,834	\$90,380	\$70,314

The total cost of extending the core intervention package to all remaining children in worst forms over a nine-year period varies considerably according to the implementation scheme selected (Table 1). The total number of

treated children under scheme III is the same as that under scheme I, but costs are lower in the first scheme because treatment occurs earlier in the lifecycle. More children are prevented from entering worst forms at an early age under scheme I, and a greater proportion of those in worst forms under scheme I are reached with second chance interventions in the younger 5-13 years age bracket when their cost is significantly lower. The total direct cost for scheme III is higher than for scheme II because the third scheme treats greater numbers of 17 year-olds with costly second chance interventions. But the third scheme avoids the social costs incurred in scheme II associated with allowing some older children to graduate into adulthood untreated, and therefore in likely need of even costlier interventions later in their lifecycles.

The total cost of implementing the core intervention package also depends heavily on the prevailing economic growth/policy scenario. In a context of zero economic growth and limited progress in implementing the national education and social protection plans (scenario 1), projected numbers of children in worst forms are much higher, in turn raising the cost of reaching this population with the core intervention package. The zero growth scenario will be increasingly relevant should the global economic crisis extend significantly beyond 2010, but nonetheless can be seen as an upper cost benchmark for full implementation of the core intervention package.

But even the highest estimate for eliminating worst forms (scenario 1, implementation scheme III) of \$90.4 million over nine years (about US\$10 million per year for nine years) is not large when seen from the prospective of Cambodia's annual overseas development assistance (ODA) or its total annual social spending. The estimated annual cost of US\$10 million amounts to only two percent of total 2007 ODA (OECD, 2009). This suggests that eliminating worst forms over the envisaged nine-year time horizon is by no means an unrealistic goal. Indeed, with a relatively modest additional resource investment, the goal of eliminating worst forms of child labour appears well within reach.

Project news and events

1. Mission to Mongolia (*Ulaanbaatar, 12-15 October 2009*). A multi-disciplinary Technical Forum was held in Ulaanbaatar to promote inter-sectoral policy dialogue to address the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and promoting productive youth employment. On the basis of the key findings of the interagency report '*Understanding children's work and youth employment outcome in Mongolia*', the forum also aimed at providing consultative ground for the development of the National Plan of Actions to eliminate the WFCL and the Decent Work National plan of Action.

2. IV UCW seminar on child labour, education, and youth employment. (*Istanbul, 8-9 October 2009*). The seminar, jointly organized with the University of Galatasaray, aimed at presenting recent research in the area of child labour, education and youth employment. The opening session was devoted to discussing policy options to eradicate child labour and promote youth employment, with a special attention to Turkey and Mena Region. Representative of international organizations, as well as Turkish institutions, presented their activities. Researchers from several Universities and Organizations presented recent research aiming at identifying measurement issues, the determinants, and the linkage between child labour, education and youth employment. Evidence of the impact of specific policies on child labour concluded.

3. Summit on the Global Agenda - World Economic Forum. (*Dubai, 20-22 November 2009*). Following last year's inaugural Summit on the Global Agenda, a second brainstorming on the global challenges, will bring together the world's leading minds from academia, business, government and society. UCW will participate in this global event, aiming at contributing to identify ways to tackle governance gaps at local, regional and global levels.

4. Workshop on the rights of the children. (Rome, 26 October and 2 November 2009). UCW has been contributing in a training for inter-national volunteers, organized by VIS (Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo). UCW intervention aimed at introducing the concept of children's employment and child labour, and the link between child labour and education. Main policy options to eradicate child labour were also presented, and the concluding group work aimed at identifying policy options in specific countries.

5. Seminar on child labour. Setting up a protection system (Rome, 12 October 2009). The seminar, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Labour, aimed at presenting the agreement between the Ministry's General Administration for Labour Inspection and SOS (an Italian NGO, collecting information regarding violence against children). The agreement sets up a link between SOS and the local inspection offices to identify and promptly act against child exploitation. UCW contributed to and represented ILO Rome office at this event.

Recently posted on www.ucw-project.org

1. Understanding children's work and youth employment outcomes in Mongolia (UCW, 2009). Overcoming the twin challenges of child labour and youth unemployment will be critical to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, as both can lead to social vulnerability and societal marginalisation, and both can permanently impair productive potential and therefore influence lifetime patterns of employment and pay. The two issues are closely linked, pointing to the need for common policy approaches to addressing them. The current report examines the issues of child labour and youth employment in Mongolia. Guided by observed outcomes in terms of schooling, work activities and status in the labour market, it considers the economic as well as the social determinants of child labour and youth employment. The issue of migration both as a risk factor in child labour and as a determinant of youth employment prospects is also addressed.

2. Towards eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia by 2016: an assessment of resource requirements (UCW, 2009). UCW research efforts in Cambodia have shaped the development of a two-volume Inter-Agency Report on child labour. Volume I of the Inter-Agency Report - Children's Work in Cambodia: A Challenge for Growth and Poverty Reduction - was released on 12 June 2006. It analyses the current child labour situation in Cambodia - the extent and nature of child labour, the causes and consequences of child labour, and policy approaches for addressing it. The current Volume II of the Inter-Agency Report on child labour assesses the additional resource requirements for eliminating worst forms over a nine-year time horizon. The report focuses on the "residual" group of children expected to remain in worst forms even when demographic evolution, and broader education, social protection and other national development efforts, are taken into account.

References

UCW Project, *Towards eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Cambodia by 2016: an assessment of resource requirements*, UCW (2009)