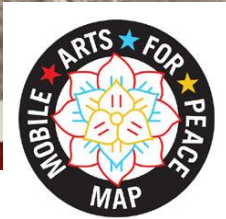


Policy Brief 1

May 2022

Reducing child labor through art-based approaches



Summary:

Nepali law prohibits child labor and has set targets to banish all types of child labor by 2025. Child labor is recognized as a violation of human rights, deprives children of education and impacts their future. However, despite this, recent data shows that over 15% of children in Nepal are engaged in child labor. Child club members of the Bhusaldanda secondary school explored the issue using art-based methods to analyze the root causes and impact of child labor. The research shows that more needs to be done to raise awareness and to monitor the implementation of the legislation.

Key Policy Recommendations

1. Action should be taken to raise public awareness against child exploitation. NGOs and the local community should play a role as pressure groups for the protection of children against child labor and for raising public awareness in favor of child rights.
2. Local NGOs and Local governments should use arts-based methods for awareness activities.
3. Local Curriculum Development Committees should integrate content in local curricula that increase awareness of child rights and contribute to reducing child labor.
4. There should be successful and effective implementation of laws against child labor and in favor of child rights and fulfillment of positive social efforts and roles. The local government's oversight mechanism should be proactive.

This research is part of the [Mobile Arts for Peace – MAP – project](#), which aims to strengthen peace by teaching young people to express their ideas and feelings through the creative arts and by highlighting the need to participate in the life of the community.

Introduction

Child labor is not only a violation of human rights but also a social crime, violating the fundamental rights of children and pushing their future into darkness. Child labor deprives children of education, meaning they lose the knowledge, training, and skills they should gain by attending school. Children working as child laborers are generally from uneducated, and poor families. Child labor is a common phenomenon in the country and is deeply rooted in society with little concern about its deleterious effects on children's schooling and future productivity, or the negative impacts on their physical, mental and social growth.

Nepali legislation prohibits child labor – which is defined in Nepal's Child Act 2075 (2018) as the employment in physical or mental work of children below 18 years of age – and Nepal has ratified the Convention on the Minimum Age for Employment 1973 (No. 138) and Worst Form of Child Labor Convention 1999 (no, 182). The main goal of the 10-Year National Master Plan on Child Labor Prevention (2018-2028) issued by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security is to put an end to all forms of child labor in Nepal, with targets to banish the exploitative and worst form of child labor in Nepal by 2022 and all types of child labor by 2025.

Despite this legislation, data collected by the Central Bureau of Statistics and the International Labor Organization in Nepal show that child labour is still a common feature in Nepal; 1.1 million children – more than 15% – aged between 5 and 17 are involved in work.

The research

In December 2021, the members of the Bhusaldada Child club discussed pressing social issues of young people. When one of the child club members shared that he had to go to work at a construction site in the Palpa district every day to earn living expenses, the Club members decided to explore the issue of child labor. They first used the 'conflict tree' method to analyze the root causes and impact of child labor and then participants were asked to present their feelings and ideas through photos and pictures. They also consulted with teachers, parents, and local stakeholders.

Drawing on these inputs, the young researchers decided to create an awareness video and Lok Dohori song against child labor, using a member of the club involved in child labor as the main character. The video and song were presented to parents and local government representatives to gather their feedback.



Lok dohori against child labor organized by Bhusal Danda Child Club, Tansen, Palpa

Research Findings:

The research conducted by the child club members reveals a situation that is in dire need of attention.

1. Poverty is major cause of child labor. Parents forced their children to go for work for financial benefit, rather than sending them to the school. This means that parents prioritize work and earning over education. Parents do not have awareness on the child rights.
2. There is no means of communication between children and policy makers, so there is little understanding in policy of youth-related issues. Young people found the art-based methods were useful in sharing how they felt.
3. Many young people revealed that they had not been taught about child labor issues at school. They feel it would be useful to get information on their rights and government efforts to stop child labor through the curriculum.
4. Most of the young people who were engaged in child labor said there was no oversight mechanism and that no agency had consulted with them. This means that the oversight mechanism has to increase its monitoring works.

“We have friend who used to go to labor work and he was irregular to the school, he was about to drop out his education. We have created a video-based on the story of our friend and who is the main actor in the video, we have used his location to film the video. Since the video creation, he is regular at the school, which is changed due to our video.”

Narayan Bhat, Bhusaldanda secondary school, Tansen Palpa, 28 April 2022

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