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CHILD LABOUR AND DROP OUT CHILDREN

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Abstract:

The child labour episode is closely associated to that of out-of-school children (OOSC). The majority of children not in school are occupied in some form of work activity and, for children in school involvement in work makes them more liable to untimely drop-out. Considering the interplay between child labour and out-of-school children is therefore critical to achieving both Education for All (EFA) and child labour elimination goals. This study presents a vivid profile of links between child labour and out-of-school children from different developing countries included in the OOSC study. The focus is primarily on the 7-14 years age range, and on Dimensions 2-5 of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion. How are the OOSC and child labour phenomena related? The intersection of the OOSC and child labour groups can be expressed in two different ways: first, the extent to which the OOSC population is composed of child labourers and second, the extent to which child labourers are out of school. These two indicators offer different ways of viewing the interplay between the OOSC and child labour groups.

Keywords: EFA, OOCS, Elimination, Child Labour, Innate Talent, Family Behaviour, Pote4ntial Hazards etc.

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The first indicator, out of school child labourers expressed as a percentage of the total out of school children population, offers some insight into the importance of child labour as a factor in children being out of school. The second indicator, out of school child labours expressed as a percentage of the child labour population,

offers insight into the social cost of child labour in terms of denied schooling. But it should be emphasized that these descriptive indicators cannot be interpreted as evidence of a causal link between child labour and OOSC (in either direction). Establishing causality is complicated by the fact that child labour and school attendance are usually the result of a joint decision on the part of the household, and by the fact that this decision may be influenced by possibly unobserved factors such as innate talent, family behaviour and or family preferences. While they fall short of establishing a robust causal link between child labour and out of school children, the indicators nonetheless serve to illustrate the degree of incompatibility between child labour, on the one hand, and school participation, on the other. Out-of-school children are at a greater risk of child labour and child labourers are at greater risk of being out of school.

Statistics from different countries indicate clearly that drop out children are at greater risk of child labour compared to children attending school, suggestive of the important role of child labour as a "pull" factor in decisions to leave school prematurely or to not enroll in school in the first place. Seen from the opposite perspective, child labourers are more likely to be out of school, either due to drop-out or to non-entrance, evidence of the educational cost of child labour and its importance as a barrier to Education for All. Child labour clearly makes it more difficult to attend school, although it should stressed that school attendance status is an incomplete indicator of the full educational costs of child labour, as work also effects the time and energy that working students have for their studies, and their ability, therefore, to benefit from their classroom time. The likelihood of being out of school increases with the time intensity of child labour. More rigorous econometric evidence indicates that engagement in economic activity increases the probability of being out of school from the first hours of work. This positive effect becomes increasingly large with the number of hours spent in employment.

On the contrary, the marginal effect of household chores is small and constant for the first hours spent in household chores, increasing only after 16 hours of work. The different apparent impacts of economic activity and household chores on school attendance offers an empirical justification for treating household chores and economic activity differently in the measurement of child labour. In particular, it provides a rationale for treating household chores as child labour only after a certain hours threshold. Out-of-school child labourers log many more working hours than child labourers who are attending school. One of the most striking differences in the nature of the child labour performed by OOSC and the child labour performed by children attending school lies in its time intensity. OOSC child labourers work much longer hours than child labourers attending school in almost all of the countries with this information. The difference is most stark in Turkey, where OOSC child labourers must log an average of 45 hours of work per week while their peers attending school put in only 15 hours per week. This suggests that it is the time

intensity of child labour, rather than child labour per se, that is often most important impediment to school attendance. Child labour performed more intensively also means greater exposure to potential hazards in the workplace, and greater risk of work-related injury and ill-health. Children belonging to poor households are more likely to be in child labour.

There is a negative correlation between child labour and household income in all of the countries where these data are available. In other words, higher household income is associated consistently with lower levels of child labour. This is not surprising, as better off households are typically less in need of their children's productivity or wages in order to make ends meet and the opportunity cost of schooling is therefore lower. But household income appears to not only affect children's risk of child labour but also the extent to which child labour is associated with denied education. Statistics of different countries indicate that child labourers from lowest income households are generally much more likely to be out of school than child labourers from highest income households. Children from household with less education are also at greater risk of child labour. There is also a negative correlation between child labour and the education level of the household head in all of the countries where data on household head education are available. In other words, higher levels of household education are associated with lower levels of child labour. This could be in part the product of a disguised income effect, but it may also be that better educated households are more aware of the returns to education, and/or are in a better position to help their children exploit the earning potential acquired through education. Household education, like household income, not only affects children's risk of child labour but also the risk of child labourers being out of school – child labourers from poorly educated households are much more likely to be out of school than their counterparts from better-educated households. Taken together, the empirical evidence from nearly 25 countries underscores the important linkages between child labour and dimensions 2-5 of the Five Dimensions of Exclusion. These linkages, while not causal, are nonetheless suggestive of the need to invest in improved schooling, to mitigate poverty and household vulnerability, and to raise household awareness levels as part of a broader strategy against child labour and school non-attendance. The continued large number of out-of-school children also argues for investment in second chance education opportunities for those who are denied schooling. These policy priorities are briefly summarized below: Improving education access and quality, in order that families have the opportunity to invest in their children's education as an alternative to child labour, and that the returns to schooling make it worthwhile for them to do so. There is broad consensus that the single most effective way to prevent child labour is to extend and improve schooling as its logical alternative.

Providing second chance learning opportunities, in order to compensate for the adverse educational consequences of child

labour. "Second chance" policies are needed to reach former working children and other out-of-school children with educational opportunities as part of broader efforts towards their social reintegration. They are critical to avoiding large numbers of children entering adulthood in a disadvantaged position, permanently harmed by early work experiences. Expanding social protection to help prevent child labour from being used as a household survival strategy in the face of economic and social vulnerability. Establishing adequate social protection floors (SPFs) constitutes a particular priority for efforts against child labour and educational marginalization and for broader poverty reduction and social development goals. SPFs should contain basic social security guarantees that ensure that all in need can afford and have access to essential health care and have income security at least at a nationally defined minimum level over the life cycle. Awareness raising, to build a broad-based consensus for change. Households require information concerning the costs or dangers of child labour and benefits of schooling in order to make informed decisions on their children's time allocation. Cultural attitudes and perceptions can also direct household decisions concerning children's schooling and child labour, and therefore should also be targeted in strategic communication efforts. Improving the evidence base, to inform policy design and to ensure the effective targeting of interventions. The evidence presented in this study made clear the negative relationship between child labour and schooling, but beyond this general pattern many questions concerning the nature of the relationship between work involvement and education remain unanswered. There is a specific need to open the "black box" of child labour, and look more closely at the effect of different forms of work on enrolling and staying in school.

There is broad consensus that the single most effective way to prevent child labour is to extend and improve schooling as its logical alternative. Despite progress, ensuring that children have access to quality education remains a major challenge. A growing body of evidence also indicates that incentive schemes that provide cash or in kind subsidies to poor families conditional on school attendance offer another promising route to extending participation in school. Such schemes are particularly advanced in Latin America. These incentive schemes can increase schooling directly by providing poor families with additional resources as well as indirectly by compensating parents for the foregone economic product from their children's labour and thus reducing child work. The benefits of providing free school meals each day are also well-documented both as an incentive to keeping children in school and as a means of ensuring are able to benefit fully from their time in the classroom.

"Second chance" policies are needed to reach former working children and other drop out children with educational opportunities as part of broader efforts towards their social reintegration.Second chance education programmes offer out-of-school children a "bridge" to successful integration or (re-integration) in the formal

school classroom. A wide range of policy measures are relevant in this context, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, public employment schemes, schemes, family allowances, school feeding schemes, social health insurance, unemployment protection and old age pensions. Developing and strengthening community-based social safety mechanisms will also be important. Micro health insurance plans, community savings groups, and micro-credit initiatives, should be promoted and expanded in this context,

Conclusion:

Ensuring the social protection floors reach the specific groups of children most at risk of child labour generally, and of worst forms of child labour in particular, should be a particular priority. Especially vulnerable groups include children orphaned or affected by HIV/AIDS, other children without parental care, children from marginalised ethnic minorities and indigenous groups, children affected by migration and other socially- or economically-excluded persons. The special circumstances that make these groups more vulnerable to child labour need to be given particular attention in the design, implementation and monitoring of social protection schemes

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