



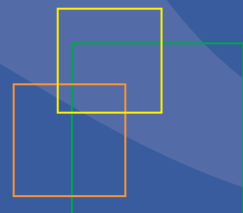
International
Labour
Office

INVESTING IN THE FAMILY

A study on preventive factors and the vulnerability of child domestic labour in others people's homes in rural and urban families: Colombia, Paraguay and Peru



SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION





International
Labour
Office

INVESTING IN THE FAMILY

A study on preventive factors and the vulnerability of child domestic labour in other peoples' home in rural and urban families: Colombia, Paraguay and Peru



SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ILO-IPEC

**INVESTING IN THE FAMILY.
A STUDY ON PREVENTIVE FACTORS AND THE
VULNERABILITY OF CHILD DOMESTIC LABOUR IN OTHER
PEOPLE'S HOMES IN RURAL AND URBAN FAMILIES:
COLOMBIA, PARAGUAY AND PERU**

Summary of Results of the Investigation

"Weaving Networks against the Exploitation of Boys, Girls and Adolescents" is a regional project of IPEC financed by the Department of Labour of the United States of America (USDOL). Its development objective is to contribute to the prevention and elimination of child domestic labour in other people's homes (CDL) and the commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents (CSEC) in South America through interventions in Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru. Initiated at the end of 2004 with an end date of December 2007, it aims to achieve the following products in its execution: comparable and quality information with respect to the characteristics and magnitude of CDL and CSEC in selected countries, made available and used by key actors; a legal, institutional and cultural framework favourable to the initiation of effective action against CDL and CSEC in Colombia, Chile, Paraguay and Peru; and effective pilot models developed for the prevention and withdrawal of boys, girls and adolescents from CDL and CSEC.

This regional study was done by the *Weaving Networks* project to generate qualitative and comparable information on three countries in South America, where the problem of child domestic labour in other people's homes continues to be part of the daily lives of thousands of boys, girls and adolescents. Under the technical coordination of the anthropologist Jeanine Anderson of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and following a common methodological design, qualitative studies were done simultaneously between September 2005 and June 2006, in Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, with a view to:

- i) Identify economic, social, cultural and psychological factors that determine the attitudes and behaviours that drive families to send their

sons and daughters to work as domestic labourers in other people's homes;

- ii) Learn about the factors of vulnerability to CDL and the protective factors that can contribute to the prevention of the problem in urban and rural communities in Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, and
- iii) Learn about factors that generate possible links to the problem of CSEC in the population of boys, girls and adolescents in CDL.

The three countries in question share with the rest of Latin America a long tradition of domestic service and characteristics of strong social and economic inequality. The unequal relationship between the rural areas and the city has fuelled decades of migration on the part of the rural population, who leave in search of opportunities. There is also a strong pattern of gender and ethnic inequality that contributes to the preservation of traditional domestic arrangements in the home. Undoubtedly, each one of these countries has historical and current peculiarities, with which this study is concerned. The report analyzes the similarities and differences between the three countries in order to establish patterns and to indicate possible routes for the corrective and preventative actions.

There are two central subjects to the study. The first constitutes the risk factors that expose underage boys and girls to be employed in other people's homes as domestic servants. The second area, and no less important, relates to the protective factors that distance boys, girls and adolescents from becoming involved in this activity. The analysis of both sets of factors is focused on the families and the local neighbourhoods and communities. As with all things relating to human beings in the process of maturation, they must locate their place in their current world but also prepare themselves for their future responsibilities as adults. The analysis involved different time-frames: short, medium and long term. The concepts of risk and vulnerability assume different meanings according to the time-frame in question.

The central questions to be answered with the study in the three countries were:

- ❑ Which are the economic, social, cultural and psychological factors that determine attitudes and behaviours, those that drive families to send their sons and daughters to work in CDL?
- ❑ Which are the factors of vulnerability as well as the protective factors that can contribute to the prevention of CDL in urban and rural communities?
- ❑ Which are the possible links between CDL and CSEC? That is to say, which could be the bridges between one form of labour and the other, which could be the routes that lead from domestic labour to commercial sexual exploitation, or what could be the causal factors that they have in common?

To analyze the causes and routes that lead to CDL, and that can lead to CSEC through CDL, a complex theoretical model is required. There are a large number of variables associated with the model. In addition, as generally occurs with subjects that touch the educational and labour trajectories, strong “path dependency” effects must be anticipated. The families, boys and girls are themselves pushed in certain directions; they invest resources and energies in certain strategies; and that makes the return routes increasingly expensive and difficult.

The way the investigation of the problem is set out puts emphasis on the risks on one hand, and opportunities on the other. In both cases, there is a **perceived** level of risk and opportunity that families and their children identify in their environments: they become aware of them, hear about them, believe they exist. Also there are a level of risks and opportunities **objectively stated**. The study took into account both dimensions and also had to prioritize the risks and opportunities with respect to their importance at the family level. In fact, these decisions respond to a balance that is struck between the dangers associated with CDL (and other risks in the environment; for example joining gangs) and the possibilities of guiding their daughters and sons along more prosperous paths.

The focus on rights formed a fundamental part of the approach. Firstly, the rights of boys, girls and adolescents to protection, education, sustenance, respect, the healthy development of their identity and autonomy. But an important consideration is also the rights of the fathers,

mothers and families: political, economic, social and cultural rights. These were seen as part of the community environment and an element of relevance to cultural or ethnically differentiated sectors against the dominant groups in their respective countries.

The methodology followed for the study was qualitative and combined different data sources, data collection techniques and modes of analysis. It looked to maximize the comparison possibilities to be able to establish patterns of influence on the families with sons and daughters who were potential candidates for CDL as well as patterns of actions and decisions on the part of the families. The comparison was considered in several stages. Comparisons were made between families belonging to the same local environments but located in different positions according to their socioeconomic level, their social networks and familiar histories of participation in domestic labour, amongst other variables. Comparisons were made between males and females, between the adult and the current generation. Comparisons were made between rural and urban areas and between times of the year that can influence the activities and projects of the families. Finally, comparisons were made between the three countries: Colombia, Paraguay and Peru.

There were four main data collection techniques: flash polls, semi-structured interviews with experts, autobiographies of males and females, boys and girls with or without CDL experiences and participant observation in the field. Additionally, institutional documents and reports were compiled. With respect to the data sources, the design favoured the narratives that are produced by the individuals themselves about their lives; narratives that reflect their intentions, perceptions, aspirations and calculations of risk and advantage. The quality of the data was prioritized over the quantity. This option demanded the use of certain strategies for approaching people and technical data collection. These strategies were aimed at registering firstly the spontaneous production of stories and interpretations on the part of the subjects, and secondly, semi-structured personal and group interviews.

STUDY ZONES

In each country, the study was carried out in a rural and an urban zone, searching for links between these two realities. The urban localities were

new and populous human settlements within the capital city: in the Colombian case, the Kennedy neighbourhood in the south of Bogotá; in Paraguay, the neighbourhood of “Bañado Sur”, Asuncion, on the banks of the Paraguay River that crosses the city; and in the Peruvian case, the zone of Pamplona and other areas that are popular destinies for rural migration.

The rural localities were the municipality of Tuta (Boyacá), in Colombia; the colony of Pirapey (Itapúa) in Paraguay; and the province of Yauyos in the south of Lima, Peru. These three zones also send domestic labourers towards the capital city and towards intermediate places. In addition, there is a definite migratory flow towards foreign countries. In the rural and urban zones, where the information collection was carried out, there were a large number of people found representing the generalized situations in their respective countries.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. STRUCTURALLY VULNERABLE FAMILIES WITH STRUCTURALLY FRUSTRATED ASPIRATIONS:

The causes of CDL that are associated with families reflect the simultaneous interaction of multiple factors of vulnerability. They also reflect the importance of particular situations, of individual histories and of subjective conditions that are difficult to measure and to compare between one case and another. Factors of vulnerability such as poverty are the major backdrop issue, alongside the crises of health, unemployment, harvest failure, debts, extraordinary demand for money in cash. The crises act as triggers, forcing the families to make drastic adjustments in their strategies to obtain income.

In the three countries the turning points in the composition, structure and operation of the families are moments of risk. Such moments can involve changes in the authority and control structure, separations and abandonment on the part of one of the adults in charge, violence, migration, or loss of some family member for another reason. Such situations are extremely variable, which prevents the generalization or the establishment of a stable hierarchical ordering of the causal factors.

The lack of opportunities comprises of a lack of services, the limited offering and low coverage of promotion and integration programmes with a content truly relevant to the lives of the underprivileged groups, a lack of information and guidance. The problems of family breakdowns and precarious situations in many families could be resolved if there were good support through intervention programmes for situations of alcoholism and substance dependency, domestic violence and unwanted pregnancies. In the three countries of the study, there is a serious lack of non-formal educational services, of attractive cultural offerings, of infrastructure and facilities for recreation, sport and entertainment. This is the case in urban and especially rural contexts.

Amongst other responses, it is necessary:

- ❑ To deal with the economic problems of families and communities, through the creation of new sources of work in the rural areas, the generation of income and promotion of productive projects, technical and labour training, and technical support to enter new markets. To diversify the sources of income for both women and men.
- ❑ To strengthen the community and family networks of solidarity through support and collaboration with the community organizations based in the intervention zones and with the organizations and institutions that work in these zones (religious, educational, non-governmental organizations) as well as the identification of people from the same communities prepared to work in the installation of those services.
- ❑ To redesign, reinforce and equip with greater resources the organizations and programmes charged with supporting the families in aspects of coexistence and problem resolution.

B. ROLE OF MOTHERS AND FATHERS

The families consist of mothers and fathers: present or absent, biological or substitutes, with determined ideas about the role that they must fulfil and a determined capacity to achieve their own ideals in that sense. Very complex realities exist surrounding both figures, maternal and paternal.

The mothers are the main protectors of their daughters but at the same

time they are the key link with CDL. Usually they have the prevailing voice in decisions about their daughter/son's use of time and about the type of contribution they make to the family: in terms of assistance in their own home or in their capacity as labourers for others. The mothers are part of women's networks, linked to grandmothers and great aunts, sisters, aunts and cousins, close and distant. In these networks there are examples of domestic labourers, there are connections with employers and information is circulated about how to obtain employment quickly, if the need presents itself. In addition, the networks between peers are important. The girls and adolescents spread news about work opportunities and among them they serve as models and sources of information about what is expected of a domestic labourer.

The fathers do not usually directly influence the decision to send their daughter or, possibly, their son, to be a domestic labourer. On the contrary, the father's preference could be that the daughters remain at his service in their own home and that the sons stay close to their father. Their role is more passive but not less ambiguous than the mothers. Many fathers are distant for their daughters: they are not thought of as a defender or protector. There are recurring characteristics of authoritarianism and machismo that run through the descriptions that the boys and the girls make of their fathers. The attitudes and behaviour of the fathers annul their role as protectors; in addition, many of them are not present in the homes that the child domestic labourers originate from.

Amongst other responses:

- To work imaginatively on new models of care services for people that complement the care that is offered in the homes. To create alternatives for families whose fundamental need for domestic support is the care of small sons/daughters, particularly in the poverty stricken areas.

- To carry out public education campaigns that help to clarify the rights and obligations that should exist between mothers and daughters. To give social legitimacy to the capacity of daughters to be understood as individuals separate from their mothers: collaborators, linked in a loving relationship, but not responsible for their mothers nor forced to carry the burden of her obligations.

- ❑ To use the law and persuasion to assure that the fathers actively assume their responsibility as protectors of their daughters, whether biological or adoptive, formally or informally.
- ❑ In the schools, mass media and work places, to promote responses to the problems of the social construction of masculinity and the ways to express masculine roles within the family.

C. CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH: ASPIRATIONS AND FRUSTRATIONS

In the three countries, it is a general expectation that the female and male adolescents become progressively economically independent; this applies to all the underprivileged sectors, urban and rural. Some girls and boys undertake this path even before they reach adolescence. In the context of many deficiencies and shortcomings, all of them learn to work and to value money for what it allows them to have and to do.

In this sense, child labour allows families to redirect their funds towards the needs of the smaller children as well as other members of the family with special needs and fewer opportunities in the world of work. It allows savings: which do not have to be spent upon things that child or the adolescent can now provide for her/himself. CDL is particularly attractive in that context, since it transfers part of the costs of maintenance of the girl or adolescent to the employers: including food, living, clothes and educational expenses in the best of cases. Where this savings logic predominates, the basic needs are prioritized ahead of considerations of the dreams, desires or aspirations of the boys and girls

Nevertheless, CDL is seen sometimes as promoting the aspirations of the girls, boys and adolescents. It allows the escape from a violent home, controlling parents and overcrowded living conditions. It allows the escape from boring rural towns where the peer pressure pushes them towards what are perceived as mediocre lives. We discovered eager young people opening their worlds to goods like clothes, videogames, mobile phones and makeup but also to travel, books, the arts and the development of special talents. Boys, girls and adolescents gather models transmitted by the television, cinema and conversations with their peers. The parents do not only lack the means to finance such goods for their daughters and sons but they do not understand the origin or meaning

behind such demands. They are considered frivolous and senseless by the parents.

In other cases the demands of the boys, girls and adolescents reflect a direct investment in their own future. In order to overcome the constraints of a very low quality school in the rural town or the poor urban neighbourhood, boys and girls sometimes look for a school that offers more. This school is necessarily more expensive. The official education is complemented with particular courses, literature and Internet services. All this represents factors not-covered by the regular family budget. The CDL, in absence of other alternatives, offers the possibility - that is often never realized - of an exit.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To create opportunities at the rural and marginal-urban areas that resemble the opportunities (of learning, socialization, recreation, access to consumption, construction of identity, social participation) that boys/girls and young adults of the wealthy middle class have.
- ❑ In response to what appears to be an irreversible migratory movement of adolescents and young adults from the rural areas towards the cities, to install in the destination places labour training services that help them to achieve the improvements they seek.
- ❑ To install services of intervention and restraint with regards to sexual and reproductive health, the case of mistreated women, the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, the treatment of addictions and alcoholism.
- ❑ To propose alternative models of future goals to potential child labourers in other people's homes, and to their families: ways of becoming professionals, businessmen/women, scientists and social workers. To create channels that make the achievement of these goals possible for girls and young adults.

D. THE NATURALIZATION OF CDL

CDL remains prevalent in Latin America because it is customary, normal, "convenient" and meets little resistance. It is naturalized as a stage and

dimension of life, mainly for women from poor backgrounds. It is naturalized, in addition, as an element of the relationship between different segments of society, that are very unequal in the way of life that they can aspire to and in the the rights and opportunities that they can count on.

In effect, the three countries reflect unequal progress in modernity with their conceptions about the relations between parents and children, the rights of the child, the legal demand for protection and legal measures that stand to secure the universal application of such principles. The socially conservative religious beliefs mixed with modern ideas in precarious combinations and places. Above all this applies to the idea of gender; the role and the place of males and females are deeply rooted. From this cultural background, a situation is created whereby CDL becomes permissible and find almost no objection.

The socialization of gender contributes strongly to the naturalization of CDL. The girls are prepared and then wooed into carrying out domestic work. They are trained in activities of servicing other people, developing their "emotional intelligence" precociously. The result is that the role of CDL for girls is not perceived as strange nor - for the feminine person who is "born to serve" - humiliating or harmful.

The force of the ideology could be resisted if the CDL were perceived as dangerous for some of the involved actors: be they boy/girl child labourers, the employers, the employers' sons and daughters or the origin families of the CDL. That is not the case either. In the three countries there are certain filters that leave the information and reports that would reflect the risks of CDL out of circulation. The cases of girls who suffer harassment, physical violence, sexual violence, psychological abuse, humiliation and the denial of rights are not accumulated in some registry, nor can they be seen by the relatives. According to the established framework of analysis, they are isolated and extraordinary facts; not what any boy, girl or adolescent can expect to experience nor what must be taken into consideration in their calculations of advantages and disadvantages to enlist themselves in CDL. If such risks are considered, CDL continues to be seen as a lesser of two evils and one that lasts only a short time. It is an occupation or a transit situation.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To provide information about the risks of CDL especially in points along the circuits that outline the labour market: transporters, Internet and Phone utilities, night and vocational schools, parks, religious centres. To forge networks and coalitions of state, community organizations and NGOs in activities of public education, forging systems of denunciation and defence.
- ❑ To train mothers, fathers, sons and daughters on their rights, in addition to the public in general, using all the available channels of communication.
- ❑ To empower mothers, fighting the feminine submission and the machismo culture.
- ❑ To separate domestic tasks from the essential feminine identity. To promote public education campaigns that make this distinction. To gain the collaboration of the advertising industry in the search for new images of domestic arrangements and the relationships between genders and generations within the home.
- ❑ To sensitize all the public employees - from education, health, social programmes, the judicial system, the police department- about the need to make clear definitions on CDL, in agreement with the national laws and the Plans for the Elimination of Child Labour.

E. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CDL

CDL finds support in economic, political, legal, social, cultural, religious and ideological institutions; not in all cases obviously, but enough to create an inertial force in favour of its perpetuation. Labour markets for CDL exist that are quite formalized and in line with other labour markets in other economic sectors and for those “graduates” from CDL. The low payments of male and female workers and civil servants encourage the hiring of underage people as domestic assistants, since the family income is not sufficient to pay an adult and the necessary services are not available to resolve the problem of running the home in another way.

It is the diverse links between the rural areas and the city that, under the

conditions that were observed especially in Paraguay, work to facilitate the international migration towards CDL and other activities. The transport and communication systems are institutionalized, sending parcels, messages and money that also act as facilitators. In addition, unexpected events such as the internal displacement that has taken place in Colombia and Peru as a result of violence have made the supply of women and girls to domestic work increase. Faced with the population movements and the needs of people to find a way of life in their new settlements, the feeble institutional responses have not been able to put a stop to the channelling of supply towards domestic service.

The institutional structures that facilitate CDL operate in contradiction with the laws and some programmes that, in the three countries involved in the study, have been created with the express intention of eliminating child labour in situations of risk and limiting CDL to those above 14 years of age and only under conditions of protection. The fact is that the new norms and mechanisms arranged for the application of the initiative have not been set up with sufficient force. It is only in Colombia where some institutional barriers were found to have real effectiveness. These work mostly at the labour market level for CDL. It was found that, due to the demand for security, the middle and upper class homes began to prefer older women considered more responsible and judicious, although their labour costs more. The community leaders and local workers are resistant to recommending people whom later “make them look bad”; in this way important links in the networks of recruitment of boys, girls and adolescents are interrupted.

Ironically, the barriers that are erected around certain forms of CDL, in certain social sectors, end up pushing the most vulnerable boys and girls towards the riskiest and worst paid jobs. The smallest girls end up working for families in their own neighbourhood who cannot pay more than a plate of food and that offer minimum security in emergency situations. They end up working for homes linked to their own family network, very possibly without payment and sent to a world of psychological, moral and existential confusions. What does it mean to be a family, in these conditions? Who is it possible to trust?

These are societies whose institutional adjustments assume the existence of cheap, abundant and easy to obtain domestic service. It is necessary to

analyze the institutional surroundings in both senses: what they offer, structure and establish a norm for and what they do not offer, structure or establish a norm for. By not providing the goods and services that would allow the organization of homes in other ways, the Latin American countries as a whole are condemned to the institutional burden of domestic service, and the aberrations that occur within it, until they confront the demands of the social, economic and cultural arrangements of care in the domestic environment.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To attack the institutional components surrounding CDL that are directly illegal or at least questionable under the current legislation. Amongst these are the recruitment networks of underage workers, even though they use fictitious identities such as “aunt” or “godmother”. To activate the authorities such as ombudsmen to be much more proactive and decisive in this field. To equip them with an investigative capacity.
- ❑ To work on behalf of the demands of child labourers to boost those public and private services that alleviate domestic work and to make their practises more efficient.
- ❑ To promote changes in the mindsets of the population regarding the modern way of organizing the home and family finances: the housework shared by members of the family, the use of external support such as childcare centres, laundrettes. To achieve a replacement of the current institutional complex (homes with domestic service, self-sufficient, with guaranteed abundant personal services for all the members of the household) with an alternative institutional complex (homes without domestic services or that make use of precise services to satisfy their needs via the markets, and whose members assume and certain share of the housework).
- ❑ To urge the projects to attempt the “professionalization” of domestic work.

F. THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EDUCATION

In the three countries of the study, education acts as a positive function,

opening doors for boys, girls and adolescents and giving them certain protection against other alternative occupations. Nevertheless, it also has a problematic side. It is problematic when it does not completely fulfil its goal of transferring capacities and competences to people whose social origins create serious obstacles for them before life begins. It is also a problem when some of the policies and practices associated with education promote CDL, implicitly or explicitly.

Of the three countries, the most positive outlook for education is in Colombia. There, it has been found that the school provides certain feeding and health services and opens pathways towards labour and social progress. The most negative image of the education emerges from the study in Peru, where it was found that the schools and special environments for underage labourers practically act as employment fairs for CDL. Even the teachers search for domestic help amongst their students and make connections with relatives and acquaintances that need domestic assistance. The education that is within reach of the underprivileged sectors in general is of poor quality and little relevance, especially in the rural areas.

Faced with the deficiencies in the formal education system, child labour - and CDL in particular - forms a major part of the alternative system, the vast world of informal education. Its only rival as the premier medium of alternative education is the mass media that is able to reach the child and adolescent populations of our study in varying degrees according to their location in rural areas or the city. For the parents of the family, work teaches values such as responsibility, autonomy and the tenacity to bear difficulties. Although the attitudes vary, the parents have legitimate doubts over whether public education can be an effective way for their sons and daughters to enter adulthood properly trained and prepared. They need to complement the school education with a diversity of experiences and extracurricular lessons. If the worst comes to the worst, the classes and the curriculum uphold the myth of exclusion and disadvantage that the young people need to understand as it really is.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To recognize in all the programmes, curriculum and teacher trainings that the school has protective responsibilities over girls, boys and

adolescents that they must take up with the same level of eagerness as their pedagogical roles.

- ❑ To review the situation of the education centres that are “specialized” in female/male underage workers: the quality, the need for specific curricula, teacher training, the importance of additional support (social psychologists, social workers, connections with the police department and the legal system, recreational and cultural activities, mechanisms of compensation for some disadvantages that the students bring). To encourage the participation of the civil society organizations in the search of better working strategies.
- ❑ To guarantee that the public, free, compulsory education is indeed free. To eliminate the incentives for boys/girls and young adults to work during the school holidays in order to buy school materials that will make their registry possible the following school year.
- ❑ To promote programmes on family and sex education, collaborating with the prevention of early pregnancies, equipping the girls and young female adults to recognize situations of risk of abuse and sexual exploitation, and instilling a strong sense of rights in boys and girls with respect to their physical, psychological and emotional integrity.
- ❑ To prohibit teachers from hiring their pupils as domestic labourers in any capacity and for any period, and to punish those who do.
- ❑ To prohibit and punish the intermediation of teachers in hiring domestic child labourers for other people, within the same locality or further afield. To apply effective sanctions so that these functions disappear from teachers’ practices in rural and urban schools in poor neighbourhoods, the suppliers of CDL.

G. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is doubtless that, in such situations, the frequent tendency is “to pass the buck”: every one hopes that someone else will take the initiative, creating grounds more favourable for measures to be taken, as follows:

The overlapping of the rights of boys, girls and adolescents and those of their families, demands an integral response. The review, in Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, of the laws and mechanisms to manage its compliance, and of the programmes and mechanisms to assure its application and broad coverage, make it clear that the integral approach that is required is very far from being obtained. The National Plans on Childhood and similar instruments are a good start. As this report has demonstrated, they are only the beginning.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ Within a process of dialogue that involves the governments, private organizations (NGOs) and the families, to agree firstly to a new sense of responsibility on behalf of the families with respect to their sons and daughters and secondly, to a sense of responsibility on behalf of the local community and society as a whole with respect to the families. To diffuse these new sentiments through messages in the mass media, education and in all type of services that reach out to the population.
- ❑ To promote a healthy self-critical attitude in domestic labour employers in general, helping them to recognize in their own conduct the risk of wanting to take advantage of the other people's need. To discredit the religious speeches that create escape routes for the hypocrisy and self-obliging paternalism. To encourage in its place a recognition other values such as equal rights.
- ❑ To permanently give due caution to the coherence and integrity of policies and programmes that affect families and that are directed at children and adolescents.
- ❑ To promote research that explores the interrelations between phenomena related to families, and the policies and programmes that have an impact upon them. Also to discover the "critical routes" that produce synergies with beneficial effects as well as the gaps that frustrate the beneficial effects of certain measures and processes.

H. INEQUALITY AND HIERARCHIES OF PRESTIGE

Domestic child labour is placed in a context that has deep historical roots in Latin America and in the three countries under analysis here.

The inequality between social groups and between rural and urban areas constitutes a profound backdrop. In the past and currently, domestic service is one of the ways in which the rural areas and urban populations communicate with one another, even reaffirming an old pattern of unjust distribution of the benefits of citizenship and access to opportunities.

In this way, CDL is an expression of, and also an adaptation to, the inequality. It allows that the underprivileged sectors to approach their “superior” counterparts, to see and learn about their style of living, soon to be able to imitate some of their practices when convenient. It was, from colonial times, a mechanism of “civilization” in that sense. Today, it makes it possible for the employers to use generosity, solidarity and charity to describe their actions when contracting a girl or adolescent as a domestic labourer. They are opening the door of their house and admitting that person into the private life of their family and social circle. Somehow, they can think that they do them a favour by giving them the opportunity to learn to merge with their “superiors”.

The same attitudes are translated into psychological abuse for many girls, boys and adolescent domestic labourers. The humiliation and the insults prey on the working class of the labourer or child labourer and upon the ethnic and racial stereotypes. The sons and daughters of the employers, that could be contemporaries or even younger than their “servants”, learn to set themselves apart from these other boys and girls, and learn to imitate the insults and acts of mistreatment and violence that they see in their parents. The social inequality within the houses is reproduced with every one assuming their expected role. From Colombia, a hierarchical system is reported even within the child labour sectors. The domestic labourers are seen as placed upon the bottom step of the prestige ladder within the child labour world. The boys who work as transporters/load-bearers and as vendors in the Corabastos market in Bogota refer to domestic workers: “Ah, maid’s work, whores’ work”.

From the perspective of the girls, boys and adolescents, and that of their relatives, domestic labour can, on the contrary, serve to teach a valuable lesson in defending oneself against social discrimination and prestige hierarchies that are based on trades, habits and injustice. The Andean campesino parents know the risks of leaving their place and fear the

retaliation that it can bring. For them it is vital that their daughters and sons learn to understand the danger of certain attitudes and words. This comes with experience. Where the social inequalities are strong, the children must learn very early on how to handle themselves in threatening environments and represent the submissive attitude that is expected of them. CDL is a forced education of that kind.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To promote the access to goods and similar ways of life between the cities and the rural areas, with free movement and frequent contacts between both.
- ❑ To promote public campaigns against the discriminatory and hierarchical attitudes that prevail between members of the same national community.
- ❑ To intensify the educational campaigns and programmes (mentioned especially in the Colombian case) that promote attitudes of respect, consideration and healthy coexistence within houses.
- ❑ To separate the ideas of “service”, “servitude”, “submission” and “obedience” from the ethnic and racial identities.
- ❑ To promote the modernization of the consumption ideals and the social status symbols, surpassing the traditional ideals (abundant servitude, customized services in one’s own house) and replacing them with values of solidarity, efficiency and shared responsibilities.

I. THE URGENCY OF PERMANENT MONITORING OF THE RISKS OF COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The context of abuse and sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents surround the situations that this report has touched upon. There is a serious defencelessness inherent in the situation of a girl who works in another person’s home. A girl must herself, a lot of the time, place limits on what should and should not be considered part of her role in the house where she lives. The psychological and social vulnerability is confused with the economic vulnerability.

The reports from the three countries, especially Paraguay and Peru, leave no doubts about the presence of trafficking networks of boys, girls and adolescents for child labour in general and, in particular, for commercial sexual exploitation. These networks take advantage of the networks that have a better family and local logic, those that are in charge of placing minors in CDL situations with certain given protections. The problem comes with distinguishing the better networks with the most dangerous and the risk for the parents and the girls/adolescents of not having the required means to be able to distinguish a legitimate offer of domestic labour from a doubtful offer.

The results of the study in the three countries suggest that the routes to commercial sexual exploitation occur mostly through employment offers in bars, restaurants, hostels and discos. They are associated with certain geographic zones where it can be identified that a demand has just arisen (tourism, opening of mines or economic borders of other kinds) or has been long established. Although it would not seem to be the principal port of entry, CDL can lead indirectly to the world of commercial sexual exploitation through a sequence of steps. An example would be a girl or female adolescent, working in a house, who progressively loses her links with her family of origin, that live far away; she suffers sexual abuse or a some heart-break being far from her family and without immediate social and emotional support; she becomes a single mother without the means to maintain her son or daughter; in an environment with few and weak links to a social protection network in her immediate surroundings.

The results lead one to think that the bridge between CDL and CSEC is mainly the background of common causal factors. The grand theme running through CSEC is isolation: rural communities isolated from the flows of information about the *modus operandi* of the recruitment networks; fathers and mothers isolated from the information sources that would allow them to make a better calculation of the risks of sending their daughters and sons to different places and jobs; girls and female adolescents isolated from the people and institutions that could help them to understand the consequences of some of their decisions. Then it is the forced isolation that the organization of the CSE business characterizes, that makes their tracking and elimination so difficult. The references in Paraguay to international migration linked to sexual

commerce add new concerns and a renewed sense of urgency needed for action.

As a factor that works in favour of the possibility of putting an end to sexual commerce involving underage people, it is necessary to emphasize the use of condemnatory social attitudes. If the CDL loses something of moral clarity when it becomes “a natural” fact and an institutionalized practice, the same does not happen with commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents. All the behaviours that surround it - the recruitment, the development of the business, the condition of the client and exploiter- inhabit a normative world of shame and contempt. There were no signs whatsoever in the studies in Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, of attitudes that would lessen the wrongful nature of CSEC or that would place it in the light of a-means to another end (as can happen in the sexual commerce that involves adult women).

If CSEC really is a new concern, the non-commercial sexual abuse that happens within the CDL framework is a threat as old as domestic service in Latin America. The report has reiterated many times the vulnerability of the girls and adolescent domestic labourers to this danger.

Amongst other responses:

- ❑ To capture with all the force of the law those who recruit boys, girls and adolescents for jobs that lead to the commercial sexual exploitation, using a cover of CDL or not.
- ❑ To carry out information and awareness raising campaigns that increase the ability of fathers, mothers, local communities and authorities to recognize the presence of networks of hiring underage people for illegal work and to act against them.
- ❑ To create defence mechanisms for localized situations of well-known vulnerability: hot lines services, verification systems for work offers, among others.
- ❑ To reinforce the social attitudes of non-tolerance those who become clients of sexual commerce involving underage people, victims of trafficking and slavery.

- ❑ To carry out constant work with boy, girl and adolescent CDL promoting their capacity to recognize and to protect themselves from abuse and illegal requirements.

J. THE OVERLAPPING OF RIGHTS AND THEIR INTEGRAL DEFENCE

Throughout the report, situations have appeared in which a right is violated along with many others. The defence of a certain right requires a series of preconditions, each of which involve their own rights. In other words, the rights of the boys, girls and adolescents are violated because political, economic, social and cultural rights of their parents, families and local communities are not guaranteed.

In this environment where the problems look like insurmountable walls of complications, linked together, it is easy to be discouraged. It could be that partial solutions are resorted to, that are not necessarily positive. In this way, good willed people accept girls working in their house for the sake of protecting them from the worse effects of other scenarios.

The problem of rights - their defence and violation - in relation to CDL concerns a great diversity of beings and actors. They are different people (adults, minors; relatives and non-relatives; agents and traders of boy/girl labourers), different institutions (schools, health centres, basic services, citizen participation, police, border defence, industry) and different social sectors (indigenous groups, racial minorities, poor sectors, poor and non-poor families that need to solve their domestic problems). Each action or omission of one of these actors affects many others. Likewise, the alternative actions of each one depend upon which of the others are implicated.

NOTE

Researchers involved in the study: Jeanine Anderson (Coordinator) - Pontifical Catholic University of Peru – PUCP; Lilian Soto and Raquel Escobar – Center of Studies and Documentation - CDE (Paraguay) and Martha Nubia Bello Albarracín - National University of Colombia.

Study Collection: Weaving Networks

The *Study Collection: Weaving Networks* aims to contribute to the creation of a legal institutional and cultural framework to initiate effective actions against the worst forms of child labour, particularly child domestic labour in other people's homes and the commercial sexual exploitation of boys, girls and adolescents.

We hope to contribute with theoretical and practical elements that promote effective local, national and regional responses, in South American countries, to prevent and eradicate the causes, conditions, factors and situations of economic, social, cultural and personal vulnerability that produce different forms of exploitation of childhood and adolescence in our continent.

This Collection is a product of the "Weaving Networks Project" against the Exploitation of Boys, Girls and Adolescents, executed by ILO-IPEC in South America and financed by the United States Department of Labour.

International Labour Organization
<http://www.oit.org.pe/ipec>