

# The devil is in the detail

Why a gender- and  
adolescent-specific lens is  
essential to accelerate progress  
in eradicating child exploitation

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# Acronyms

CESSP	Cambodia Education Sector Support Project
CRIC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Surveys
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ETI	Ethical Trading Initiative
GAGE	Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PANES	Plan de Atención Nacional a la Emergencia Social
PSSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNE	Special Needs Education
STI	Sexually Transmitted Disease
TESFA	Towards Economic and Sexual Reproductive Health Outcomes for Adolescent Girls
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

# Overview

Ending child labour and modern slavery – including forced marriage – in line with the targets of Sustainable Development Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work) and 16 (Just and Inclusive Societies) requires a dual-pronged approach. It is critical to use a broad lens to identify and challenge child and adolescent exploitation in all its forms, while systematically disaggregating its underlying causes and effects by gender, age, disability and other indicators of social exclusion.

## The scale and shape of the challenge

- Despite progress, there are an estimated 152 million children – 88 million boys and 64 million girls – engaged in child labour on a daily basis. Of those, approximately half are in hazardous work, over two-thirds are in agriculture, and nearly all are in the Global South.
- The risks that adolescents face are diverse and are shifting alongside global processes such as urbanisation and migration. Gender plays a critical role in shaping risk, with boys more likely to be in paid labour and girls more likely to work without pay behind closed doors.
- Nearly 30% of trafficking victims, and 25% of modern slavery victims, are children under the age of 18. Adolescent girls are disproportionately represented in both, in large part because they are especially vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and forced marriage.
- Of the 10 million children under the age of 18 in modern slavery, more than 5.5 million were married as children, 96% are girls and 44% were forced to marry before the age of 15.

## Key actions to accelerate progress

- Invest in policies that strengthen age- and gender-sensitive social protection and avert negative coping strategies (such as child labour, trafficking, forced marriage and begging), and tighten labour and human rights legislation – and its enforcement – to prevent exploitation.
- Expand access to free, quality education through secondary school, with built-in flexibility to allow children from impoverished households to combine school and safe forms of work.
- Support programmes that provide tailored assistance to the most disadvantaged adolescents, such as domestic workers, those with disabilities, child-headed households and victims of trafficking and modern slavery.
- Tackle the discriminatory social norms associated with age, gender, disability, caste or refugee status that leave adolescents particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of exploitation.
- Engage with private employers to create skills building and labour market opportunities in developmental and humanitarian contexts alike, and promote compliance with international instruments on business and human rights, as well with related national legislation.
- Strengthen the evidence base to improve programme design and learning, including capturing adolescents' heterogeneous risks to exploitation, by systematically disaggregating data and also investing in robust impact evaluations of what works.

# 1 Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which calls for gender equality, SDG 8, which calls for decent work for all and SDG 16, which calls for just and inclusive societies, all have targets to end child exploitation, including trafficking and forced marriage, child labour, modern slavery and abuse against children in all its forms. Undoubtedly, this broad framing has been critical in galvanising greater international attention around child and adolescent injustice (see also Box 1). However, such an approach also arguably has drawbacks. A lens that amalgamates ‘all harmful practices’, ‘child labour’, and ‘all forms of violence’ risks obscuring the specific needs of diverse groups of adolescent girls and boys, potentially leaving them behind as wider progress is made.

With this in mind, the point of departure for this report is that meeting adolescents’ age- and gender-specific needs requires a dual-pronged strategy. It is important to simultaneously (1) highlight that the exploitation of young people, of any form, is a concern that requires urgent policy and programmatic attention; but also critical to (2) systematically disaggregate the patterning and underlying drivers of adolescent exploitation so as to strengthen progress.

Accordingly, we begin by disentangling the patterning of child labour and exploitation, noting where adolescent

girls and boys are especially vulnerable to different forms of abuse, and how risks and outcomes are shifting over time. We draw on qualitative research findings from the Overseas Development Institute’s (ODI) Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) programme to spotlight the challenges that diverse groups of adolescents face and to underscore why more tailored interventions are urgently needed. The second half of the paper looks at promising entry points to tackle adolescent labour and exploitation, and we conclude with policy and practice recommendations.

## 1.1 What is child and adolescent exploitation?

The focus on justice, rights and wellbeing for all within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda has seen a growing consensus about the importance of tackling the multiplicity of exploitative attitudes and practices towards children and adolescents (Alliance 8.7, 2017; UNICEF, 2017a; FMECD and UNDP, 2015). While the parameters of child and adolescent exploitation currently remain somewhat fluid, illustrated by the inclusion of trafficking in three different targets (see Box 2), if we are to eradicate such practices over time, it is important that we reach consensus about how to robustly monitor and evaluate progress.

### Box 1: DFID’s Strategic Vision for Gender Equality (2018-2030)

DFID’s new gender equality strategy recognises adolescence as a key window of opportunity for intervening in girls’ lives. Noting that unequal power relations shape every facet of girls’ and women’s lives, DFID’s strategy calls for a life-cycle approach that works across sectors to ensure girls have access to food and education, are protected from early and forced marriage, and can access decent work as they grow up. It also notes that leaving no one behind will require a more sustained focus on fragile and conflict-affected regions or countries, and the most marginalised groups of people, who are yet to benefit from recent progress.

Recognising that girls and women represent only one side of the gender coin, and mindful of the deep-rooted social norms that truncate girls’ and women’s trajectories, DFID’s strategy further notes that the social pressures and expectations on boys and men have an important impact on gender equality, encouraging boys and men to assert their masculinity in ways that are detrimental to women and girls.

However, while the strategic vision gives welcome attention to the pervasive effects of violence and exploitation in constraining girls’ and women’s potential across the life-course, moving forward it will be important to develop a theory of change that sets out what types of programmatic investments in modern slavery and child labour are most likely to contribute to transformative change and resilience. Understanding what types of tailored approaches will contribute to addressing the different risks of exploitation facing diverse cohorts of adolescent girls and boys will be especially important.

Sources: DfID, 2018

A possible starting point is the distinction – which analysts have been highlighting for some time – between child work and child labour (Hindman, 2009; Edmonds, 2008; Edmonds and Pavcnik, 2005). As the International Labour Organization (ILO) notes (2017a), children's work can be beneficial, helping young people contribute to their families' welfare and their own, promoting their development and preparing them for productive adulthood. However, when children's work activities are dangerous or harmful, and prevent them attending and succeeding in school, they are considered child labour. There are three legal conventions that separate 'legitimate' child work from child labour (see Box 3). Child exploitation, however, transcends the boundaries of even those forms of labour specified as the 'worst forms'. It also moves

beyond the boundaries of international conventions such as the Palermo Protocol and the recent Call to Action to End Forced Labour, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking.<sup>1</sup> After years of campaigning begun by Anti-Slavery International (Anti-Slavery International, 2015; Turner, 2013), the most recent Global Estimate of Modern Slavery (ILO, 2017b) also include forced marriage. While we note that the existing evidence base on child marriage suggests that its underlying drivers are more complex than economic gain – and include families' desire to foster social connections, protect their daughters' virginity and family honour, and preserve local culture (Harper et al., 2018) – given the scope of this report, we will discuss forced marriage only as it relates to economic motives.

### Box 2: Child exploitation in the Sustainable Development Goals

Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

Target 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

Target 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

### Box 3: Disentangling child labour from child work

ILO Convention 138 calls on states to set a minimum age for child work – 15 years in developed countries, 14 years in less developed countries, and 18 years for hazardous work. It also delineates 'light' work that may be appropriate in small doses for younger adolescents.

ILO convention 182 sets out the 'worst forms of child labour', which overlap with conceptions of modern slavery and are always considered exploitative. These are:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which – by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out – is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

The third legal convention that separates child work from child labour is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It recognises the right of children 'to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with' their health or education.

Source: ILO, 2017a; Quattri and Watkins, 2016.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/646246/CALL\\_TO\\_ACTION.PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/646246/CALL_TO_ACTION.PDF)



## 2 Child labour

Child labour by definition is harmful to children.<sup>2</sup> It can expose them to accidents and injury, increase their vulnerability to abuse, and deprive them of education and the socialisation and recreation that are central to childhood (ILO 2017a; UNICEF, 2014b; Roggero et al., 2007). It also has knock-on impacts that cascade across generations, perpetuating poverty, inequality and limiting economic growth (Pereznieto et al., 2016; Emerson and de Souza, 2009; Bird, 2007).

### 2.1 Progress in reducing child labour

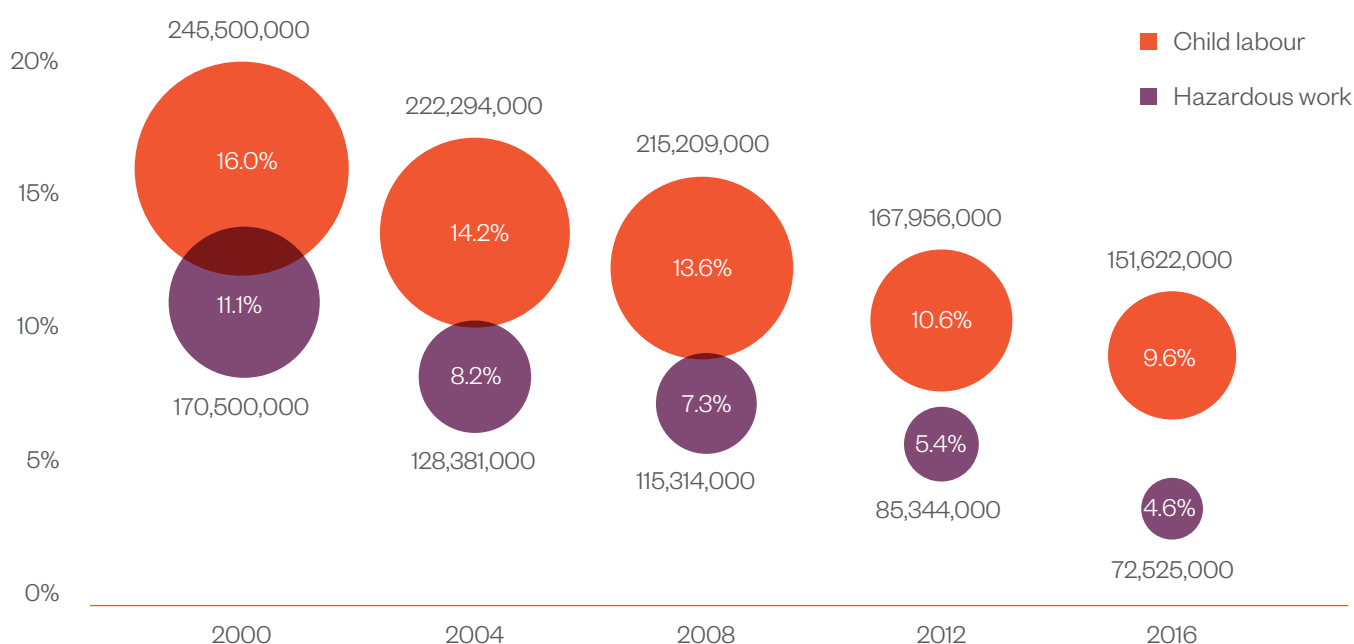
Recent estimates suggest that there has been significant progress towards reducing child labour since 2000. The ILO (2017a) notes that whereas in 2000 16% of all children were engaged in child labour, this figure had fallen to less than 10% by 2016 (see Figure 1). Progress

towards eliminating the most hazardous forms of child labour was even faster, with the global incidence dropping from 11.1% to 4.6% during the same period. That said, in 2016 there were still 152 million children engaged in child labour, of whom 73 million were doing hazardous work. Notably, the ILO (2017b) estimates that 4.3 million of the world's child labourers are doing forced labour – with one-in-five victims of forced labour being children under the age of 18.

Unsurprisingly, given that children become more productive as they get older (Krauss, 2016; Khan and Lyon, 2015), most child labourers are adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17. While the age categories used to measure child labour are not in line with the internationally agreed definition of adolescence (10–19 years), the ILO (2017a) reports that 48% of child labourers are aged 5–11, 28% are aged 12–14, and 24% are aged 15–17. It further notes

**Figure 1: Children's involvement in child labour and hazardous work over time**

Percentage and absolute number of children in child labour and hazardous work, 5-17 years age range, 2000-2016



Note: Bubbles are proportionate to the absolute number of children in child labour and hazardous work

Source: ILO, 2017a

<sup>2</sup> <http://libguides.ilo.org/child-labour-en>

that because children aged 15–17 are over the minimum working age in most countries, they are not counted as child labourers because they are working, but because they are doing hazardous work. In Bangladesh, for example, Khan and Lyon (2015) estimate that 75% of 15–17-year-olds are engaged in hazardous work.

Given the close relationship between poverty and child labour, most child labourers are in the global South, with Africa having both the highest percentage and the highest absolute number. There is significant variation within regions. Within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for example, where average rates of child labour are among the world's highest, national rates (5–14-year-olds) range from 12% in Senegal to 39% in Guinea Bissau (UCW, 2014). In South Asia, Nepal's rate (26%) overshadows that of Bangladesh (12%), which ranks second regionally (Khan and Lyon, 2015). Overall, the ILO (2017a) calculates that 19.4% of children in low-income countries are engaged in child labour, compared with 1.2% of their peers in high-income countries (see Figure 2). UNICEF (2018) reports that among least developed countries, 26% of children are in child labour. Variation within countries is often even greater than between countries. In Benin, for example, 67% of children in the poorest households are engaged in child labour, compared with 26% of those in the richest (ibid.). In Ethiopia, 12-year-old children from the poorest tercile work 5.3 hours a day

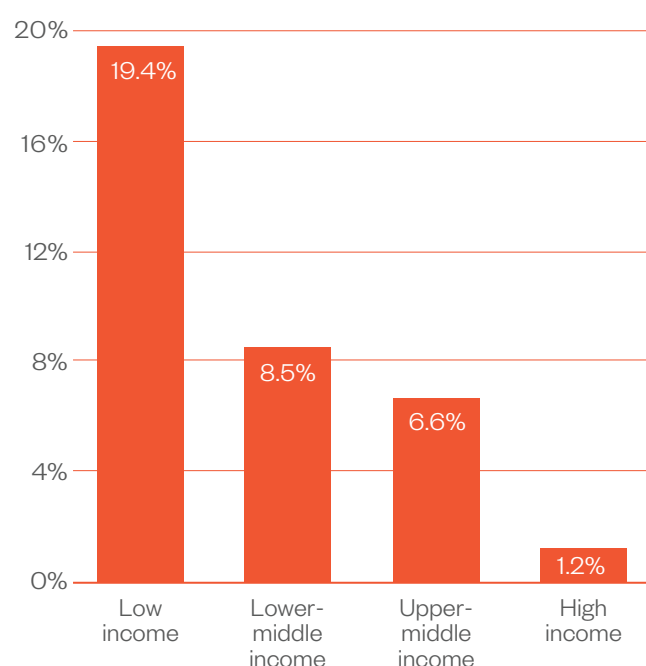
compared to only 2.5 hours per day for their peers in the top income tercile (Morrow and Boyden, 2018).

Children in conflict-affected countries are more likely to be engaged in child labour – 17% (2016), compared with a global average of 9.6% (ILO, 2017a). Our research has highlighted that Palestinian boys living in Gaza (which has the world's highest adult unemployment rate) (World Bank, 2015), and Syrian refugee boys living in Jordan (whose parents have until recently been banned from working) (Hamad et al., 2017), are particularly vulnerable not only to child labour but also to hazardous work (see Box 4).

Many child labourers are out of school. The ILO (2017a) estimates that one-third of all labouring children (aged 5–14) do not go to school. Older children are even less likely to be enrolled. Furthermore, evidence suggests that even when labouring children are enrolled in school, their educational outcomes suffer as a result of their labour. In Ethiopia, for example, a study using Young Lives data found that children who work for more than two hours a day have poorer scores on vocabulary tests (Woldehanna and Gebremedhin, 2015), while in Rwanda, has found that children working in agriculture had an average delay of one age grade compared to children who were not working (IOF, 2012).

It should be noted that the relationship between child labour and education is complex. While child labour can preclude investment in education, it can also – where children work to afford their fees – support it (Morrow and Boyden, 2018). Boys and girls in our qualitative research sample in urban Oromia, Ethiopia, for example, noted that access to work in the informal labour market (from construction to cleaning vehicles at truck stops, to selling food on the streets) was critical to their being able to afford the fees for night school, and still cling on to dreams of an education and decent work. As a 15 year old boy explained, *'I have been here for two years – when I first came I was running away from the violence at home – ever since my stepfather moved in there were problems. I arrived with nothing and managed to survive by joining the other boys who wait around on the streets to clean the trucks as they come through the town – sometimes we get 10 birr or 20 birr, other times the truckers watch us cleaning their vehicles but give us nothing. It's tough but I pray it won't be forever. A few months ago, I finally had enough money to pay for a room with friends and leave the streets, but my first priority – even more than bread – is paying the 60 birr per month for evening school. I'm in Grade 2 and I will do everything to continue. It's my future.'*

**Figure 2: Child labour and national income**



Source: ILO, 2017a

### Box 4: Boys' burden

Many of the adolescent boys who have participated in GAGE's research in Gaza and Jordan are out of school and working to support their families, doing long hours for low pay, under hazardous conditions. On-the-job injuries are common. Boys know they are being exploited, but feel they have no recourse, given that their parents are unable to make ends meet. As one 14-year-old Syrian boy said:

*When I arrived in Jordan, I was 10, I started working as a blacksmith. I used to work in the summer [and attend school but] left school. I first worked with my relatives then I worked for our neighbour, he was paying me 2 JOD per working day. After that I worked for our second neighbour, he was giving me 25–30 JOD per week. Then I worked in plastics and then at a car service station. Finally, I worked for a Palestinian who paid me 30 JOD per week. [I worked] from 8:30am to 6pm or 7pm. Fridays were off, but Saturdays were not. I had to stop working because work [with a hammer] harmed my eye and my fingers. An object entered my eye and it was only removed in the hospital.*

Another Syrian refugee boy, now 17, added:

*I work in the construction sector, doing outdoor tiling work. I've been doing this for two years now – initially it was 7.5 JOD a day and now 9 JOD a day. I start work at 7.30am and finish at 8pm. There are Syrians and Jordanians – and there is no discrimination. Differences in wages depend on the number of years you have been working. But I worry about not having a work permit. I'll apply once I'm 18 years. I feel afraid sometimes – although we usually hear when the Ministry of Labour is in the area, and we run away. The inspector caught me once – and my employer gave him a guarantee that I wouldn't work for him again. But as soon as the inspector had left, the employer asked me to come back to work again.*

In a similar vein, a 12-year-old Gazan boy explained:

*There is no one else to support the family. My father is paralysed. Do you want me to watch my mom go out begging on the streets? I sell balloons at Rimal next to Mazaj. Once, a man hit me with the car. He ran and stopped the car. I told him to leave so the police wouldn't take the car. I wasn't hurt. The next day, a woman bought balloons from me and gave extra money for them. Once, my mom, my brother and I went to an organisation people had told us that supports needy people. We gave all our papers and gave them my mother's cell phone number and everything. That was almost two years ago. We didn't receive anything from them though.*

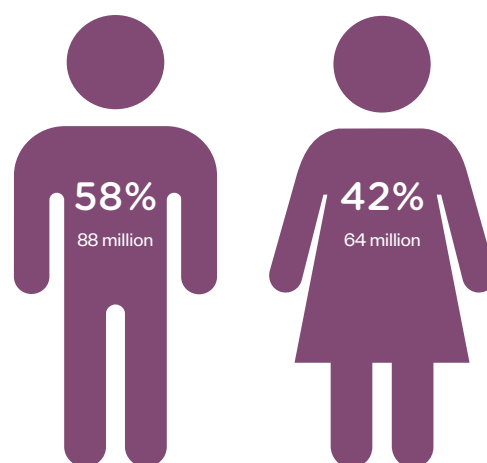
## 2.2 What a gender lens on child labour reveals

The patterning of child labour is deeply gendered. On a global basis, boys are significantly more likely to be engaged in child labour than girls, comprising 58% of all child labourers. Of children aged 5–17, 10.7% of boys and 8.4% of girls are child labourers (ILO, 2017a). The gender gap increases with age, such that of those aged 15–17, 12.9% of boys and 8% of girls are engaged in child labour. The gap is also, however, narrowing over time. Between 2012 and 2016, the number of boys doing child labour fell by 12.3%; the number of girls fell by only 6% (ibid.).

As the ILO (2017a) notes, however, appearances can be deceptive. Boys' over-representation in child labour largely reflects not their greater involvement in work, but the way in which child labour figures have historically been calculated. Crucially, unpaid household work – including domestic chores and care work – is considered 'unproductive' and therefore not included in estimates of child labour (or labour force participation more generally). As gender norms around the world tend to leave girls and women with a disproportionate share of this invisible work, girls' labour has remained undercounted and girls' needs overlooked (Morrow and Boyden, 2018; ILO, 2017a, Samman et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2016). Indeed, while age-

disaggregated data is not available, time use surveys from around the world have found that when productive and unproductive work are both considered, females tend to work more hours each day than males (Charmes, 2015; Samman et al., 2016).

The ILO, as part of Alliance 8.7 (a coalition for eradicating forced and child labour), is working with UNICEF, which for many countries has produced estimates of child labour that include both productive and unproductive work (see Box 5), to bring girls' work into focus by creating a better indicator to track progress towards meeting SDG target 8.7. Its Global estimates of child labour report (ILO, 2017a)



### Box 5: How UNICEF counts child labour

In UNICEF's calculations, a child is considered to be involved in child labour under the following conditions: (a) children 5–11 years old who, during the reference week, did at least one hour of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores, (b) children 12–14 years old who, during the reference week, did at least 14 hours of economic activity or at least 28 hours of household chores, (c) children 15–17 years old who, during the reference week, did at least 43 hours of economic activity or household chores, and (d) children aged 5–17 years old in hazardous working conditions.

Source: UNICEF, 2018

observes that girls account for approximately two-thirds of the 54 million children who do household chores for at least 21 hours a week (and a similar proportion of those doing 28+ hours and 42+ hours). UNICEF (2016) estimates that globally, girls aged 5–14 spend 550 million hours a day on household chores – 160 million more than boys. National-level data from GAGE countries supports these global patterns. In Rwanda, among children aged 10–14, the average girl spends 4 hours more each week on chores than the average boy (NISR, 2012), and by age 15, this gap has risen to 6 hours. In Ethiopia, of children aged 10–14, 46% of girls (versus 21% of boys) collect water, spending 30 minutes a day doing so (on average) (13 minutes for boys) (CSA, 2014). Similarly, roughly 25% of girls aged 10–

14 collect fuel (versus 13% of boys), spending an average of 25 minutes a day (14 minutes for boys).

One way to highlight girls' invisible burden is by looking at their school enrolment and outcomes. Globally, gender parity has been reached in both primary and secondary education. Girls are now just as likely to enrol as boys and, in many countries – including Rwanda and Nepal – they now make up the majority of students (World Bank, 2018). However, troubling trends still remain. For example, across all low-income countries, girls are still less likely to attend school than boys (secondary gender parity index (GPI) of 0.83) (ibid.), in large part because the poorest girls – and those from ethnic and religious minority households – remain unable to access their right to an education (Stromquist, 2014).

Some girls are never allowed to attend school at all, as they are required to give up their own life opportunities to become long-term caregivers for their parents (see Box 6).

While child labour (at least in Bangladesh) means boys are more likely to leave school than girls, working girls are more likely to fall behind in school than working boys (Khanam and Ross, 2008), probably because of their double burden. Furthermore, girls are consistently found to be less likely to have left school due to their own lack of interest (Quattri and Watkins, 2016; Jones et al., 2014). Finally, even where girls are enrolled in and attending secondary school, their learning outcomes often lag behind

Image 1: A Nepalese girl works to support her family



© ILO/Raju Bhandar



### Box 6: No life to call her own

Kiros is typical of many girls who appear destined to remain their parents' unpaid carer, without any independent life of their own. Aged 14, she lives in northern Tigray, and is the fifth daughter of nine siblings. She has never been to school, despite living 100 metres away from the local government office, which is (in theory) responsible for enforcing children's legal right to a primary education.

It's not that her parents are desperately poor – they have some land, 6 cattle and 2 donkeys – which is enough to get by on. Her older siblings are now married and she is the oldest of those still at home, so is expected to do much of the housework and care work, leaving no time for classes and the 2-hour journey it would take to get to the local primary school.

Unlike her sisters who were pressured to get married at her age or younger, her parents have never mentioned marriage to her, even though in her community a girl older than 18 is considered unmarriageable. For years, she has been begging to go to school but her parents retort *'who will look after us, and especially as we grow older?'*

those of boys. Ethiopia is a case in point: at secondary level, the GPI climbed from only 0.67 in 2000 to 0.96 in 2015 (World Bank, 2018). However, not only are girls still slightly less likely to sit the General School Leaving Certificate Examination at end of 10th grade (47.7% in 2016), they are significantly less likely to pass. In 2014, 55% of girls failed the exam, compared to 39% of boys – despite more lenient pass scores required of female students (Ministry of Education, 2015). Our qualitative work has found that girls' underperformance is closely related to the amount of time they spend on household chores, which leaves them less time for study (see Box 7).

Another reason why girls are undercounted in estimates of child labour is that even when they do productive work, the type of work they do is largely invisible. The ILO (2013a) estimates that there are 17.2 million children aged 5–17 –

two-thirds of whom are girls – working as domestic workers in private homes. This figure represents approximately 10% of all girls who are economically active. Of those 17.2 million children, it is estimated that 11.5 million (including 7.5 million girls) are engaged in child labour – with 3.7 million (including 2.6 million girls) in hazardous work that exposes them to dangerous items such as knives, hot pans, and toxic chemicals, under exploitative conditions that include inadequate rest and food, loss of educational opportunities, low wages, and physical and sexual abuse (ibid.; see also Veitch, 2013; Human Rights Watch, 2013).

As well as being inaccurate due to undercounting, estimates are also widely recognised to be out of date (the most recent were compiled in 2012). In most countries, domestic work is not covered under labour regulations (ILO, 2017b) and age-disaggregated data is not produced

**Image 2: Adolescent girls fetching water in Sof Omer, Ethiopia**



### Box 7: Adolescent girls' disproportionate work burden

In all the GAGE focal countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nepal, Rwanda), girls report that they are often unable to focus on their schooling because of the time they have to spend doing household chores and childcare. A 14-year-old Ethiopian girl noted that sometimes her chores preclude her from attending school at all: *'When there is lots of work at home, we don't come to school.'* A key informant added that the recent drought has made this worse: *'(be)cause of the water shortage here many children are made to stay home from school and fetch water.'* A 10-year-old, also from Ethiopia, reported that although she does go to school, doing her homework is a significant challenge: *'I fit in homework when I sit down after being done with my chores and while I am herding animals. And I study at night.'* Girls are pressured to take on even more domestic chores as they get older. As a girl from Nepal noted: *'A girl has the pressure of household work from a very young age. As she grows older, the workload increases.'* A girl from Bangladesh explained, *'Often, we can't finish doing our homework before it gets late at night. Occasionally, we read until it's 1am. We have to study again after waking up in the morning.'* When girls begin to fall behind, many drop out. An Ethiopian girl explained, *'All the responsibility to help my mother rested on me. That was the reason I lagged behind in my education, and in the end, I left it altogether.'*

Our research suggests that parents know the costs of the demands they are making of their daughters. A mother in Rwanda explained that she regards her young adolescent daughter's work, and compliance, as a sign of maturity: *'I see that she has grown up because of many reasons. For example, when I go to work and ask her to stay home and take care of her young sister, she does it. She cleans her and dresses her. She also cooks when I leave home without having prepared food. She makes sure to cook before going to school... I taught her how to clean the house, how to care for animals and she does all of these willingly... That shows me she has grown up.'* Indeed, another mother, also from Rwanda, noted that daughters provide significantly more support than their sons: *'If she was a boy, I would not have dropped her out of school. What would a boy do for me? He can't do domestic work. Boys just spend the day sitting.'* A mother in Ethiopia agreed, *'When a boy comes home from school he eats his lunch and either he studies or plays. A girl is usually overburdened with work so she lags behind the boy in her education.'* Several girls in Ethiopia told us that when they attempted to assert themselves, and ask for more time to do homework, their parents were scathing: *'Let your books feed you – eat the papers, if you are only going to study and do no work.'*

Girls' labour is exploited in other gendered ways too. For example, the ILO (2017a) notes that girls are more likely than boys to combine paid and unpaid work – largely because while girls and women have begun taking on some traditionally male roles (such as wage earning), boys and men have not responded in kind, and rarely help with housework. For example, the 2016 Jordan National Child Labour Survey found that of children who were working for pay, 59% of girls but only 9% of boys also helped clean the house (ILO and Centre for Strategic Studies, 2017). Working girls were also much more likely than working boys to cook (30% versus 1%) and to wash clothes (36% versus 0.5%).

Our qualitative work has also found that parents are more likely to consider girls' (as opposed to boys') wages as contributions to the family. In Rwanda, for example, mothers sometimes take their daughters with them when they do paid farm work, and then keep their wages, along with their own. A mother in Nyaruguru reported that she wants her daughter to do paid domestic work – and that she wants her daughter's wages paid directly to her. In Ethiopia, adolescent boys recognised how disadvantaged girls are when it comes to reaping the rewards of their own labour. One 14-year-old boy explained that girls are far more bound by notions of filial piety than boys: *'They give the money to our parents rather than using it for entertainment.'*

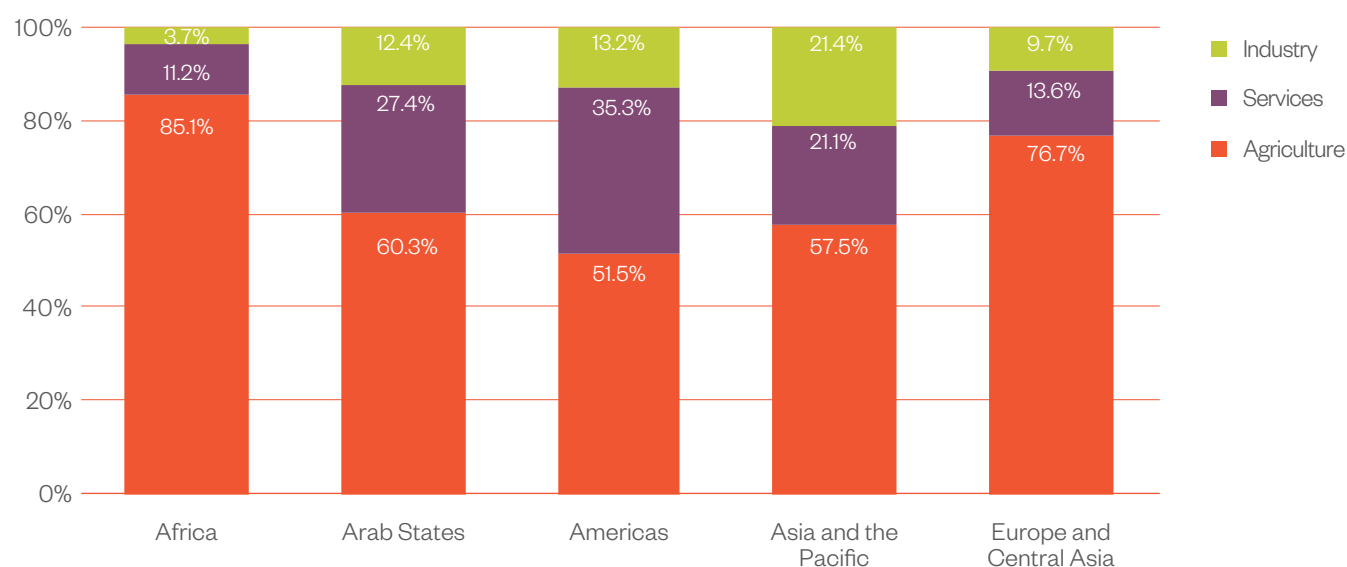
– meaning that girls' experiences are lost in the broader welter of women's work. Child domestic workers are even more invisible due to upticks in independent child migration, traditions of fosterage (wherein poorer children are sent to live with – and work for – wealthier relatives), and debt bondage (see below). National-level data again confirms girls' exploitation. In Haiti, for example, up to 10% of all children are in "restavek" – a fosterage situation recognised as a form of modern slavery (Smith, 2014; Restavek Freedom, 2018). At least 60% (Restavek Freedom, 2018), and perhaps as many as 75% (Smith, 2014), of those children are girls. In Malawi, a recent survey found that 26% of all girls, including 43% of all urban girls, were doing paid domestic work. Of young adolescent girls (aged 10–13), 29% of those in hazardous work were doing domestic work (ILO and NSO, 2017). In Ethiopia, a survey

of 10,000 young people found that 37% of working urban girls were doing domestic work (Erulkar et al., 2010) – with more recent research highlighting that compared to girls in other forms of employment, domestic workers earned the lowest monthly wages (Population Council, 2018a).

## 2.3 Rural versus urban risks

Most child labour takes place not in kiosks or factories, but on family farms. The ILO (2017a) reports that globally, 69% of child labourers are unpaid family workers and 71% are engaged in agriculture. Of those children involved in hazardous work, 60% are farm workers (ibid.). Patterns, unsurprisingly, vary by location and with children's age. Agriculture, for example, is especially common in Africa, where 85% of child labourers are farm workers (compared to 52% in the Americas) (see Figure 3), and is common

**Figure 3: Sectoral composition of child labour by region**



Source: ILO, 2017a

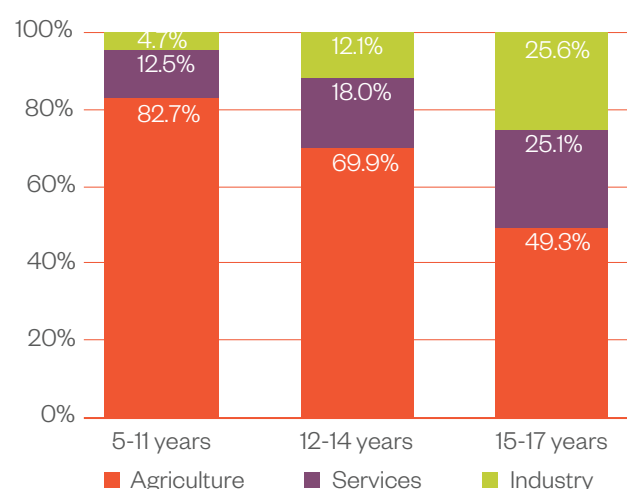
among younger children, 83% of whom are farm workers (compared to 49% of child labourers aged 15–17) (see Figure 4). Children are more likely to be working in services in the Americas (35.3% versus 11.2% in Africa) and in industry in Asia and the Pacific (21.4% versus 3.7% in Africa).

These broader patterns hide a wealth of diversity that must be accounted for in order to address the age- and gender-specific exploitation that adolescents face. For example, while it is true that most children who are engaged in agriculture work in subsistence farming, which

exposes them to hazards of its own, a substantial number are employed in medium-scale commercial agriculture, which can amplify risks and open new opportunities for exploitation, or – especially in the case of boys – mining. The ILO (2016), for example, reports that in Asia and Africa, child labour is common in cotton farming. Children work long hours, often for little pay, and are exposed to pesticides that can lead to acute and chronic illnesses (see Box 8). The ILO also observes that about one million children work in mines and that the number is increasing.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, while in many countries, most child labourers live in rural areas, as urbanisation continues to entice children into migration with opportunities for paid employment – and opportunities for begging – it is increasingly the case that urban children are more likely to be engaged in child labour than rural children (see Box 9). Bangladesh, which has the world's second largest garment industry (Ahmed and Nathan, 2014), provides an example of this shift. The country's 2014 DHS reports that of younger adolescent girls (aged 10–14), 8% of those in urban areas were working at the time of the survey, compared to 3% of those in rural areas (for boys, figures were 11% and 10% respectively). For older girls (aged 15–19<sup>4</sup>), the figures were 21% and 13% respectively (44% and 40% for boys) (NIPORT et al., 2016). Quattri and Watkins (2016), in their survey of children in Dhaka's slums, found that over 62% of working girls were employed in the formal garment sector, compared to only 13% of boys. They also found that

**Figure 4: Sectoral composition of child labour by age**



Source: ILO, 2017a

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/areas/Miningandquarrying/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> We include these older adolescents because those 15–17 are counted as being in child labour when they are working under hazardous conditions.



### Box 8: Child labour in the export floriculture market in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, we interviewed multiple adolescents working for a Dutch-owned flower farm. Many were underage, some had been trafficked, and all worked under exploitative – and sometimes quite dangerous – work conditions.

One girl, now age 15 told us, *'I was just a kid and even the people there didn't believe I was fit to work. I lied that I was 15 when I first applied for the job. I wrote 15 on my ID with a pen (laughing).'* Another, now 16, added that while *'the manager fired me after three days because I was small,'* she was hired back by a different manager after waiting for a few months. A 17 year old explained that while the minimum age for working at the farm is ostensibly 18, and supervisors claim to that they will not hire adolescents under the age of 18 because of *'labour exploitation'*, in reality hiring is based on *'the height of the individual rather than age'*.

Most of the adolescents we interviewed had come to the flower farm on their own, because *'family economic problems'* meant that they needed to work rather than complete their schooling. A few had even defied their parents to do so. A 16 year old girl reported, *'I actually insisted to come here. My parents wanted to me to stay with them. But I refused. I told them if they stop me from going, I will kill myself. I thought everything would be comfortable here.'*

Others had been tricked by relatives who promised them easy money and good working conditions. A 15 year old girl explained: *'My sister told me that things are better and easy here. I was a kid and I believed her. She told me that I will not face any difficulty or hardship in the town. She said I would look good once I started living here. I didn't want to drop out of school. She told me that I will go to school here.'*

While the adolescents we interviewed reported that the income they could earn at the flower farm was more stable than daily labouring jobs or waitressing, they were clear that their working conditions are not decent at all. *'We have just one day off a week,'* explained a 17 year old – who added that *'we can start as early as 7 o'clock and then go home in the evening either at 8pm or 9pm'*. Another 17 year old said, *'we are not allowed to sit'*. A 16 year old girl reported, *'We have to work obediently and have to be quiet while working. We can't chat with the girl next to you. You just concentrate on the work. We get fined 90 birr if we talk outside of lunch breaks.'* Workers are also fined, we were told, if they *'broke a single head of the flower'* or if they did not *'accomplish the work targeted to do in a month'*.

Young people are particularly worried, however, not about hours and fines, but about the chemicals they are exposed to at work. They are worried not only for themselves, but also for their family members, given that they *'come back home with the chemicals on your clothes'*. A 17 year old girl explained, *'Sometime those flowers harvested in the evening are put in chemicals and when we go in the morning the chemical is very fresh and not good for health. Due to the high exposure to chemicals, I always live suspecting my health status'*. Indeed, another girl, also 17, added, *'when I was first employed here, I had no health problems, but after I started suffering from gastritis, typhoid, typhus, and low blood pressure'*. She suspects, she said, that this is because *'the chemical from the flowers is sprinkled on my hand when I use my hands'*. A third girl explained that there is no help for workers who are overcome by chemicals. She said, *'if they see you staggering between death and life, there is none to support you at the work place. They even feel ashamed touching you'*.

### Box 9: Intersectional vulnerabilities facing adolescents with disabilities

Adolescents with disabilities in developing countries are far less likely to fulfil their right to education and may be at particular risk of exploitation in urban areas – especially when they are engaged in begging or domestic work (Groce et al., 2014; ACPF, 2010). In many low-income countries, adolescents with disabilities are forced into child labour and begging to cover their own needs and because they must contribute to household income. A study on children and adolescents with disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa found that between 17% and 23% of those surveyed in Ethiopia, Senegal and Uganda worked to support their families, with nearly one in three reporting that their working conditions were dangerous. In Uganda, 38% of respondents revealed that they were attacked and insulted by fellow workers because of their disability, and most were treated unequally by their employers (ACPF, 2011).

One of the Special Needs Education (SNE) teachers we interviewed in urban Amhara noted that a key challenge faced by her and her SNE colleagues was supporting students to secure part-time work so they could stay in school. Besides the small monthly government stipend provided to children with a disability to attend school, most students lacked any other financial support and many had been effectively abandoned by their families and were living alone or in child-headed households. While begging is reportedly a traditional avenue of survival for people with a disability in the area, teachers were striving to secure non-exploitative work opportunities for students so that they could cover basic living costs and continue their education.

A key informant at an Ethiopian district Office of Women and Children confirmed that many children with disabilities are denied their right to an education – or a childhood. He said, *'(p)arents of children with disability are not interested to integrate them with other people. Traditionally children with disability are mostly considered as cursed and given in response to one's sin under God's grievance'*. Indeed, he added, most in rural areas are not even *'allowed'* to beg – as parents would *'rather hide them and placing them out of sight.'*



while approximately three-quarters of girls reported that they were treated 'well' at work, the median number of weekly hours worked by children under the age of 14 was 70, and that nearly 40% of girls (but only 19% of boys) were sometimes compelled to work extra hours.

## 2.4 The limits of a 'child migration as future-seeking' narrative

Recent research on child migration has largely moved away from its earlier trafficking narrative and tended to highlight agency, and the way in which migration can play a key role in children's 'future-seeking', especially in resource-poor environments (Yaqub, 2009; see also Boyden and Howard, 2013; Heissler, 2013; Temin et al., 2013). However, this shift may have been premature: not only are child migrants vulnerable to trafficking – for labour and for sexual exploitation – but migration itself can increase children's odds of becoming child labourers (UNICEF, 2017b; de Glind and Kou, 2013). Quattri and Watkins (2016) note that in urban Bangladesh, the probability of children's working decreases in line with the number of years her or his family has been living in the same slum. The ILO (2017a) also notes that migrant children engaged in child labour tend to work longer hours, for less pay and under more hazardous conditions than local children. As UNICEF (2017b: 6) concludes, 'children's journeys are rife with risk and exploitation'.

In Ethiopia, the Population Council (2018a) reports that among female rural-to-urban migrants, domestic work is the first survival strategy: two-thirds of girls enter the urban workforce as domestic workers. Nearly 40% of those girls were lured into migration with deceptive promises of a better life, good pay, or opportunities for schooling. GAGE research in Amhara and Oromia Regional States has highlighted how rarely those promises come true, and how extreme the exploitation faced by young migrants – girls and boys – can be. A key informant at an Office of Women and Children in Amhara told us, 'There are a lot of adolescent girls who migrated to urban areas. They work here as domestic servants and some of them work in hotels or in construction sites. They are highly vulnerable to labour exploitation.' She added that 'young boys (10-14) work as taxi assistants and are most of the time exploited by their employers because of their age.' A key informant in Oromia in a district Office of Women and Children agreed: 'Child labour exploitation is a concern. Violent treatment of children is not uncommon. Children may also be denied of their payment.'

International migrant flows are highly disparate, with different groups of adolescents facing different risks in different countries (UNICEF, 2017b). A recent report (2017) by UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) observed that of unaccompanied children arriving in Europe, approximately 90% were adolescent boys over the age of 14. Indeed, 80% of those arriving through Italy reported experiencing exploitation, and those coming through Greece from sub-Saharan Africa were four times more likely to report exploitation than those coming from other regions.

GAGE's work has also found that in some countries, boys are particularly likely to migrate – and to experience exploitation. In Nepal, for example, older boys' migration overseas is seen as prestigious so they are likely to migrate for work soon after leaving school. Most go to India (where labour permits are not required), Malaysia or the Middle East, where they contribute to the 25% of gross domestic product (GDP) that is supported by remittances (ILO, n.d. (Nepal)). With regard to Nepali girls' migration, because the government recognises the risks inherent in the international Maid Trade, it effectively bans women under the age of 30 from obtaining a work permit (Government of Nepal, 2014). While it is estimated that up to 12% of labour migrants might be female, some working in India and some migrating informally (ILO, n.d. (Nepal)), the Nepali adolescents in our research were clear that 'girls are not allowed to go anywhere for work'.

**Image 3: A 12 year old at water pump in Ethiopia**



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Conversely, in Ethiopia, adolescent girls often migrate overseas, despite a 2014 ban, and often face harrowing risks (Jones et al., 2018). As a key informant explained, *'Most of the illegal migrants are young girls. They migrate in hidden ways through which we cannot control them.'* Pulled by a desire to make their parents *'very rich'*, have a *'Blackberry and touch-screen mobile'*, or improve their personal hygiene by being able to afford soap, and

pushed by conservative gender norms that recognise only their instrumental value and stigmatise them for remaining unmarried, tens of thousands of adolescent girls are thought to leave Ethiopia *'through Djibouti and through Kenya'* each year (key informant). For most, the line between labour migration and trafficking is almost non-existent (see Box 10).

#### Box 10: The Dangers of the Middle Eastern 'Maid Trade'

Zem Zem is an 18-year-old Ethiopian young woman recently returned from a brief and unsuccessful sojourn in Saudi Arabia. Convinced that *'Nothing worse than this – death is preferable'*, she does not plan to travel for work again.

Zem Zem spent nearly 10,000 birr (of which 6,000 was borrowed from a broker) to migrate, in the hope that she could help support her parents. Although she was underage when she applied for her passport, and immigration officials initially refused to believe her when she told them she was 24, in the end, she explained, *'I acted confident and so had no problem convincing them to give me the passport.'*

When Zem Zem arrived in Saudi Arabia she was taken to an isolated family compound in the middle of the desert and told, despite her midnight arrival, that she was expected to immediately begin serving the entire extended family. Working day and night, and *'beaten by the daughter in the house and the daughter next door'*, Zem Zem told us that language barriers caused many problems: when asked to fetch something, for example, she did her best to fetch the right item, but if she fetched the wrong item, her employers *'would beat me with the object'*. Desperate to leave, especially after one of the daughters used laundry chemicals to burn her hands, Zem Zem was rarely allowed to call her parents – and saw no way to cross the desert on her own.

Several months after her arrival, Zem Zem was overpowered by one of the family's sons while she was in the shower. She said the last thing she remembered, before she lost consciousness, was an overwhelming smell of chemicals. The first thing she remembered, when she came to, was blood. Soon after she had been raped, her employers terminated her contract and sent her home without pay. On the plane home, she found that her story was far from exceptional. Few of the young returnees had finished their contracts; most had been abused and psychologically traumatised.

Zem Zem, who has not told her parents that she was raped because she does not feel they could deal with the strain, said that in her opinion *'there is no solution'* to migration other than totally *'shutting it down....We can talk about our experiences, but girls with migration dreams simply won't listen. From 100, 15% might have a good income. They just see 15% success stories rather than the failures.'*

Source: Jones et al., 2014

## 3 Trafficking and modern slavery

Human trafficking and modern slavery are recognised as worst forms of child labour. The former, which is defined by the Palermo Protocol (General Assembly resolution 55/25), refers to “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion” (UN, 2001). The latter, the definition of which has recently evolved to include forced marriage, “refers to situations of exploitation that a person cannot refuse or leave because of threats, violence, coercion, deception, and/or abuse of power” (ILO, 2017b: 16).

### 3.1 Trafficking

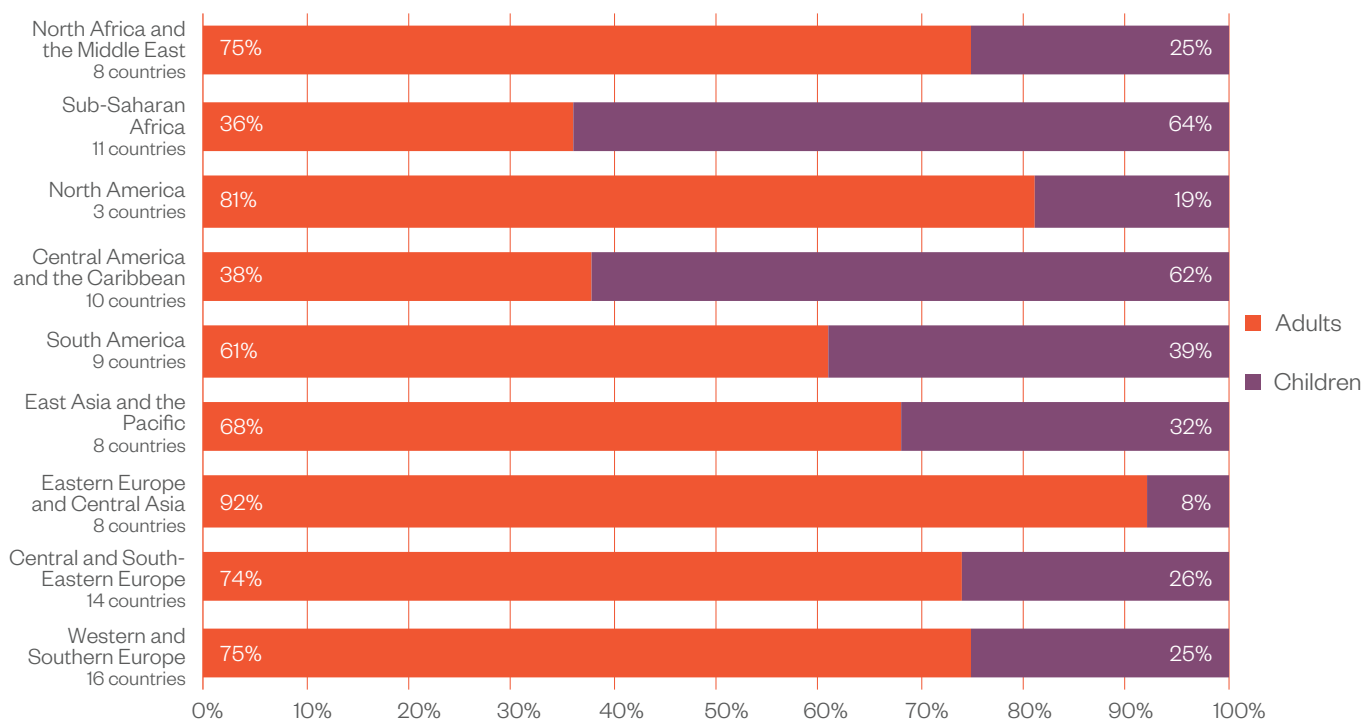
As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2016) observes, accurate trafficking figures are not available. Not only do definitions and methodologies differ, but the clandestine nature of trafficking inherently renders it under-reported. That said, children accounted for 28% of detected victims in 2014 (see Figure 5). Girls were more than twice as likely to be detected as boys (20% versus 8%).

There was tremendous variation by region, with children accounting for nearly two-thirds of cases in sub-Saharan Africa, where boys are often trafficked for labour, compared to Central America and the Caribbean, where girls are often trafficked for sexual exploitation. While we do not know what percentage of girls versus boys were trafficked for sex versus labour, of all detected trafficking victims, 72% of females had been sexually exploited and 86% of males had been exploited for labour (UNODC, 2016).

The problem is daunting. UNICEF estimates that the total annual revenues for child trafficking and forced labour account for nearly \$40 billion (Peled, 2018). Research suggests that adolescent girls may be even more vulnerable to sexual exploitation than older women. Not only are they less able to protect themselves and often lack protective social networks (Greenbaum et al., 2015; Ferede and Erulkar, 2009; Simkhada, 2008), but research suggests that adolescent girls are actively sought after in the sex trade as they are less likely to have sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) (Joshi

**Figure 5: Trafficking by age and region**

Shares of adults and children among detected trafficking victims, by region, 2014 (or most recent)



Source: UNODC, 2016

and Swahnberg, 2012). Armed conflict and natural disasters are known to exacerbate not only trafficking in general but girls' vulnerability to trafficking more specifically – as families under stress turn to negative coping mechanisms rooted in discriminatory norms and traditions (UN, 2017).

What we know about forced labour and other forms of modern slavery largely fails to address adolescents' age- and gender-specific vulnerabilities – again, due to the clandestine nature of the issue. The data that is available speaks to gendered risks, and to age-related risks, but is unable to tell us much about the specific risks that are unique to adolescent girls and boys.

We know that females are far more vulnerable to modern slavery than males – as they account for over 70% of victims, including 99% of victims of commercial sexual exploitation. We know that females are more likely to endure forced labour, including bonded labour (see Box 11), in the private economy than males. The ILO (2017b) estimates that 58% of forced labourers are female, with domestic workers making up the largest share of those victims whose work is known about (at 24%). We also know, however, that there is tremendous variation across countries. In Bangladesh, for example, ranked 4th globally for the number of people in modern slavery, forced labour – in manual labour, construction, drug production and farming – is far more likely to affect men than women (85% versus 15%) (Global Slavery Index, 2018).

## 3.2 Modern slavery

We also know that children are highly vulnerable to modern slavery, in that 25% of all victims (including 21% of all victims of commercial sexual exploitation) are under the age of 18. The ILO (2017b) estimates that 3.3 million children around the world are in forced labour (outside of commercial sexual exploitation) and that while child labour is declining over time, the number of children in forced labour appears stable. The sectors that use enslaved children vary widely: Ghana, for example, has an estimated 21,000 child slaves in the fishing industry (Minderoo Foundation, 2016), whereas in India, many child slaves can be found in the garment industry (Sekhon, 2017). In Uzbekistan, children are forced by the government to harvest cotton (ILO, 2017b). UNICEF estimates that nearly 70% of the \$39 billion industry that relies on child exploitation is labour exploitation (Peled, 2018).

The ILO (2017b) also estimates that there are 1.1 million children – girls and boys – in commercial sexual exploitation (see also Minderoo Foundation, 2016) – though ECPAT International (2016) adds the caveat that 'international law does not offer a distinct definition of sexual exploitation of children'. The UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OHCHR, 2016) notes that while this figure appears to indicate significant progress since 2000, when 1.8 million children were estimated to be prostituted or coerced into producing pornography, not only is child commercial

### Box 11: Bonded labour

Debt bondage, or bonded labour, is a form of modern slavery wherein poor, marginalised members of society are required to 'sell' their labour for free in order to repay debts that cannot be repaid. In the case of children, some parents bond individual children while other children are born into bondage, as debts are carried across generations (ILO, 2017b; Anti-Slavery International, 2017a,b; UNODC, 2016). The ILO (2017b) estimates that half of all victims of forced labour are in debt bondage.

While debt bondage is a worldwide phenomenon, it is most common in South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where it is associated with agricultural work, domestic work, and work in brick kilns (ILO, 2017b; Khan and Gazdar, 2017; Anti-Slavery International, 2017a,b; UNODC, 2016; Wolfe and Schauer, 2011; Upadhyaya, 2008). Musa and Olsen (2017) observe that the drivers of bonded child labour are complicated as they combine economic, social and cultural causes, and that gender norms within and between different ethnic groups appear particularly relevant to understanding the phenomenon.

While the ILO (2017b) found that females are most likely to be in bonded labour in the Middle East (with nearly 90% of female forced labour victims in that region in bondage), child debt bondage appears more common in South Asia. For example, a 2009 survey in 12 districts of Nepal found that around 36% of girls and 32% of boys were in debt bondage (Kumar et al., 2013). The ILO (2013b) notes even higher rates in some districts of India. In Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain, for example, 47% of child labourers aged 6–14 were in bonded labour – rising to 68% for those aged 15–17. In some industries, most children are in bonded labour. Anti-Slavery International (2017a) notes that in Indian brick kilns, up to 80% of children aged 5–14 are already working alongside their parents – rising to 99% for those over 15.

Children in bonded labour are particularly vulnerable to violations of their human rights (Khan and Gazdar, 2017; ILO, 2017b; UN Human Rights Council, 2016) and are largely unaware that they even have rights. Within bonded labour, gender discrimination is widespread: girls do more tasks, are less likely to be in education, face early marriage, and are vulnerable to sexual abuse (Giri, 2009a; 2009b).



Image 4: Ethiopian adolescent girl recently returned from Saudi Arabia



© Clare Price / ODI

sexual exploitation particularly difficult to quantify, but the rise and spread of the 'dark web' has increased children's vulnerability while also complicating data compilation. The internet allows predators to groom children online, using the social media platforms that young people prefer, while new technologies allow child pornographers to create virtual child pornographic images that are difficult to trace (ibid.). Rapid urbanisation, migration, conflict and epidemics also increase children's vulnerability to trafficking and commercial exploitation – particularly when combined with poverty, social exclusion, and abuse (ILO, 2008). UNICEF estimates that the sexual exploitation of children accounts for approximately 22% of the \$39 billion industry that relies on exploiting children (Peled, 2018).

In some countries and sectors, children are particularly at risk. The travel and tourism industry, for example, has been singled out by the OHCHR (2013) as a growing threat due to the industry's rapid growth. In the Philippines, a popular destination for 'sex tourists', it is estimated that up to 2% of adolescent girls and young women are involved in commercial sexual exploitation (Bagley et al., 2017). The Special Rapporteur also reports that children are commercially sexually exploited in the context of major sporting events, such as the Olympics and World Cup (OHCHR, 2016). Domestic workers are also at high risk of commercial sexual exploitation. In Ethiopia, where rural girls are flocking to urban areas to take up paid domestic work, but often subsequently move into commercial sexual exploitation, a recent survey found that 49% of adult

commercial sex workers had started before the age of 18, and 21% had been tricked into entering the field (Population Council, 2018a; 2018b). While the Special Rapporteur notes that children in Nepal were made vulnerable to exploitation by the 2015 earthquake, which devastated parts of the country and left many children orphaned (OHCHR, 2016), our own work in Nepal found the factors pushing girls into commercial sexual exploitation to be complex – and include failed love marriages (see Box 12).

#### Box 12: Adolescent girls in Nepal's 'adult entertainment' sector

Under the GAGE programme umbrella, the Nepal Institute for Social and Environmental Research (NISER) has been exploring the lives of adolescent girls working in the adult entertainment sector. While findings remain preliminary, it is already clear that Nepali girls are highly vulnerable to trafficking into commercial sexual exploitation. Girls are pulled into massage parlours and dance bars by their peers, knowing that '*clients do not come for massage, they come for sex*'. Those working in India, on the other hand, were often pushed into the sector by their boyfriends and husbands. For several girls, elopement marriages were the turning point between childhood and commercial sexual exploitation. One girl, now working at a massage parlour, told us: '*I dropped out of class 5 and eloped with a boy of my choice. It turned out that he had a wife and 2 children at home. I could not go back to my parents. They would not accept me. They boy's family threw me out of the house. The boy left me. I was pregnant and had nowhere to go.*'

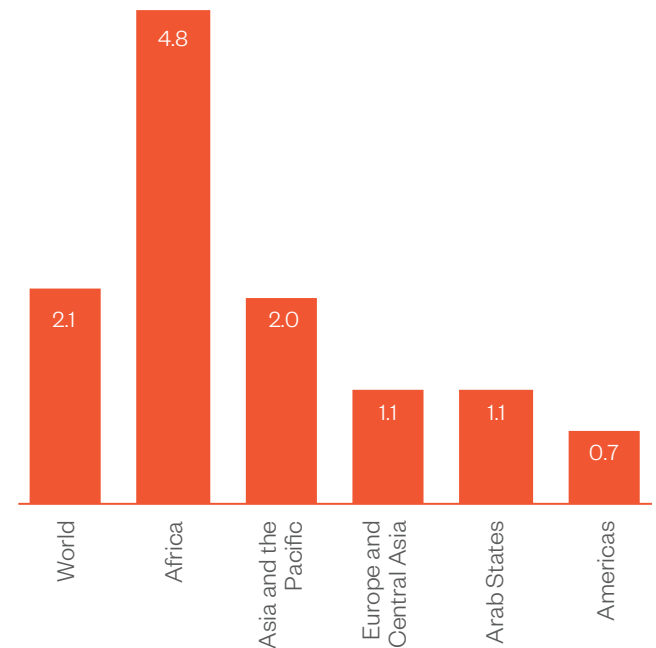
Source: Ghimire et al., (forthcoming)

Forced marriage is a form of modern slavery to which adolescent girls are especially vulnerable (Anti-Slavery International, 2015b; Turner, 2013). The ILO (2017b) estimates that 84% of victims of forced marriage are female, and that of the almost 10 million children under the age of 18 in modern slavery, more than 5.5 million are in forced marriage. Of those child victims, 96% are girls and 44% were forced to marry before the age of 15.

Absolute numbers of victims of forced marriage are highest in Asia and the Pacific. In some countries in that region, sex-selective abortions have resulted in gender imbalances that are reportedly fuelling bride-kidnapping (The Economist, 2015); the number of women kidnapped for marriage in India has risen a staggering 71% between 2010 and 2014 (Pokharel, 2015). However, the prevalence of forced marriage is highest in Africa (see Figure 6 and Box 13), often exacerbated by conflict and climate change. From Nigeria, where Boko Haram is kidnapping girls into marriage (Amnesty International, 2015), to Iraq and Syria, where Yezidi girls and women are forcibly married and impregnated (Human Rights Watch, 2014), conflict leaves girls not only open to 'persuasion' by families made desperate by poverty (Bartels et al., 2018; UNFPA, 2017; Save the Children, 2014), but also vulnerable to brutality. In Bangladesh, rising waters – which are threatening

livelihoods – are driving forced marriage, as the poorest families are increasingly pushed into marrying girls in early adolescence, when dowry requirements are lower (Alston et al., 2014).

**Figure 6: Prevalence of forced marriage by region**



Source: ILO, 2017b

### Box 13: Forced marriage in Ethiopia

Our research in Ethiopia has found that forced child marriage is rampant. In some regions, such as SNNPR, those forced marriages are accomplished via abduction. One young woman explained: '*I was abducted when I was 15 and was fetching water. My brother arranged the abduction when he knew my parents were not nearby. He arranged it because of the money he received.*' Another girl, aged 14, told us that a female friend had arranged her abduction, and that while her father had tried to take the abductor to court, he was dissuaded when he was paid 8,000 birr for her.

In other regions, parents force girls into marriage. In Gambella, for instance, girls are effectively used as currency to obtain the cows needed to secure better marriages for their brothers. In Tigray, on the other hand, girls can be forced to marry older men to make their parents better off financially. An 11-year-old boy explained, '*My uncle married a small girl last year. He is an adult man but she is a small child. The kebele [ward] administration imprisoned him in town. Later on, he paid 10,000 birr to her parents as compensation. Now he lives with the girl. There is an age difference... He is a rich man, and her parents wanted her to be married to a rich man. She was 9 years old when she was married.*' In Gondar, a father similarly explained: '*My daughter was 12 years old and in 6th grade when we forced her to get married even though she was still interested in school. It was last year. I thought she would gain if she gets married... He was a deacon and I wanted her to be the wife of a deacon so she could be close to God. She begged me not to marry him and she said she wants to continue with her education but I didn't listen.... My daughter's husband is 20 years but because my daughter looks strong and she has a bigger physical appearance then there was no 'gyied' [a restriction agreed on with elders at the time of marriage regarding age to start physical interaction with a young wife].*

Contract marriages are also becoming more common. One young Amharan woman we spoke to was married and divorced twice by the age of 16, sold into marriage by her father. Her 'job' was to accompany a farmer who was travelling to another state, to cook for him and satisfy his sexual needs. For three months, her father was paid 1,500 birr (about £47). '*I feel so bad about it; it has spoiled my life. I didn't succeed in marriage, nor was I able to resume my schooling. I am just living with parents – I feel alienated and unhappy. I dare not hope for a better future,*' she told us.

Source: Jones et al., 2016a; Jones et al., forthcoming.



### Box 14: Enforcement, where laws fall down

Stronger laws and policies must be backed up with reporting mechanisms and effective enforcement. Verisk Maplecroft (2017) observes that from a policy perspective, Denmark and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are identical. They have both signed the same international treaties and their domestic laws provide children with similar levels of protection.

The US Department of Labor (2016) notes that Nepal and Rwanda have made only moderate advances towards preventing child exploitation, partly because they lack sufficient labour inspectors and levy fines that are too low to incentivise changed behaviour. Indeed, in Nepal, it is estimated that approximately 175,000 people – including 30,000 children – are still in bonded labour, despite the 2002 Bonded Labour Prohibition Act (Anti-Slavery International, 2015a). In Bolivia, where the working age was recently lowered to 10 as long as the government approves the child's application to work, a lack of funding has meant that only about a third of applications are reviewed – reportedly resulting in many parents simply sending their children to work unsupervised (Lind, 2016).

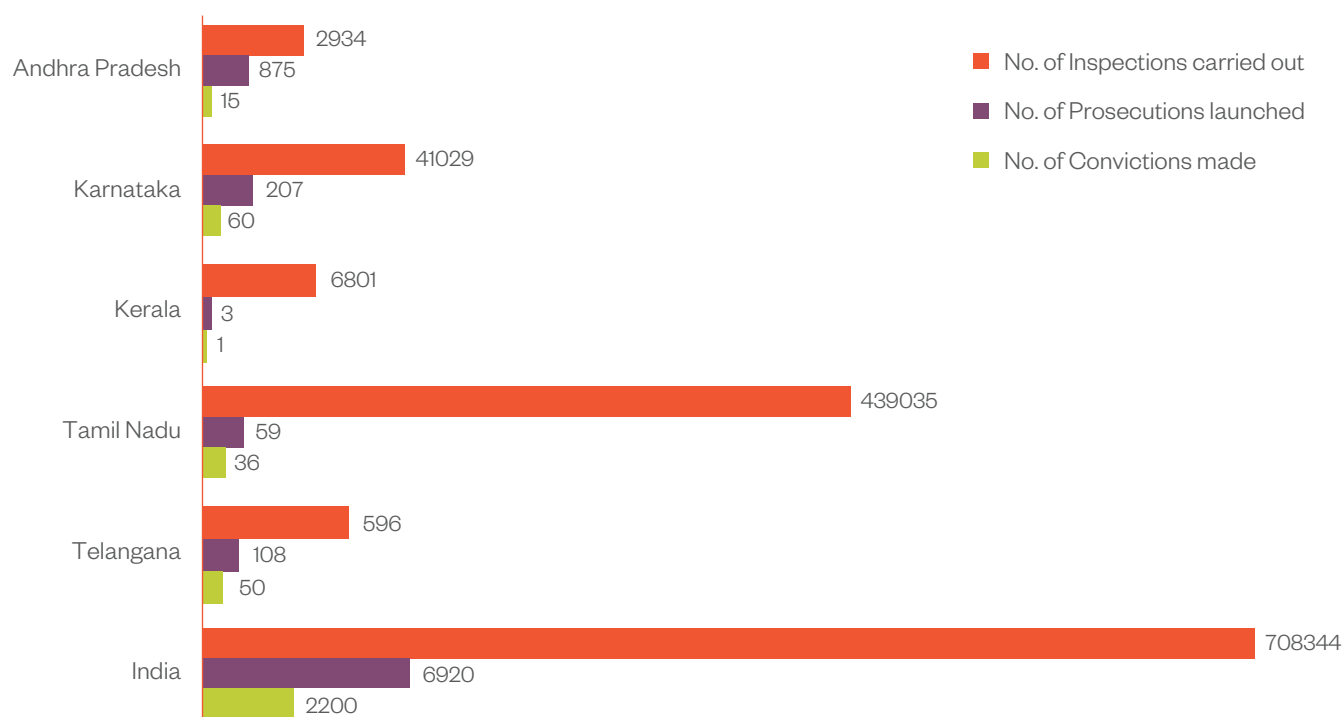
Justice for exploited children is rare: in India, of more than 700,000 inspections, less than 7,000 prosecutions were launched, and only 2,200 of those resulted in convictions (Minhaz, 2017) (see Figure 8).

Source: Minhaz 2017

laid out minimum standards for wages, hours and benefits (WIEGO, 2018; ILO, 2013c). It also set a minimum age of 15 and established response mechanisms to protect those being abused (ILO, 2013c). While the US Department of Labor (2016) notes that Filipino children continue to participate in the worst forms of child labour, it also notes that the Philippines has made significant advancement in recent years, with progress set to accelerate further as the government has prioritised removing children from domestic work by 2022.

Other countries stand out for the notable ways in which recent legislation may actually make children more vulnerable to exploitation – despite aiming for the reverse. In India, a 2016 law banned work for children under the age of 14, except for those who are employed in 'family business'. Anti-Slavery International (2017b) notes that because the law does not define 'family', children have less protection now than they did in the past. In Bolivia, which is signatory to international conventions on child labour, the government lowered the minimum working age to 10 as long as work is judged non-harmful and is accompanied by a minimum wage (UNICEF, 2014a).

Figure 8: Justice for Indian child labour victims



Source: Lok Sabha Starred question no. 341 for 27/3/2017



## 4.2 Private sector engagement

The private sector also has an important role to play in ending child labour and modern slavery. This responsibility is outlined in two key international instruments as discussed in Box 15. This is true of the multinational corporations whose supply chains include children, as well as the landowners whom we found 'allowing' refugee children in the Levant to work 12-hour shifts, 6 days a week, believing that they are somehow supporting children's best interests. Given the complexities of ensuring private sector companies comply with international instruments and national instruments (see Box 15), promising efforts have focused on a multi-faceted approach that make clear the links between legal requirements and a robust business case. The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) has produced Base Code Guidance on both child labour (Dottridge, 2017) and modern slavery (Skrivankova, 2017) to help companies understand the complexity of the problem

and their own responsibility for ensuring compliance with national and international laws. For child labour, for example, ETI suggests that companies – especially those that work in regions of the world known to rely on child labour – examine their supply chains not just for actual child labour but for the potential of child labour, working with stakeholders that include NGOs, youth associations and local teachers (Dottridge, 2017). ETI further suggests that senior leaders and larger companies need to leverage their positions within and across companies, highlighting that children's best interests must always be central to solutions, meaning that remediation may include shifting hours, changing work responsibilities, and supporting children to return to school (ibid.). Spurred in part by the 2012 fire in Dhaka that killed over a hundred garment workers, multinationals such as Gap Inc. have sought to reclaim their public image by embracing these guidelines (Gap Inc., 2018).

### Box 15: International instruments providing guidance on good social practice in business

Two key international instruments provide direct guidance to the private sector on ending child exploitation in their work practices. The Tripartite declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy (MNE Declaration) and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of the MNE Declaration addresses the different roles that States and the private sector have for ensuring good social practice, including the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. The UNGPs, adopted unanimously by the Human Rights Council in 2011, provide the private sector with the steps to develop robust management systems, including around issues related to child labour.

The UNGPs identify three interconnected ways that private sector activities may lead to or exacerbate child and adolescent exploitation: 1) through a company's own direct actions and decisions (e.g. exposing children under 18 to hazardous working conditions); 2) as a result of unsustainable business relationships with suppliers and other parties (e.g. not having clear contracts with suppliers that explicitly address child labour); 3) as a consequence of the type of operation, product or service being provided (ILO, 2015: 20).

When a company directly causes or contributes to child labour it is expected to stop doing so and take steps to address the causes. However, if child labour is deemed an indirect result of the company's operations and business relationships then there is no legal responsibility to stop these practices, although the company may be expected to mitigate the potential impacts of child labour (ILO, 2015: 21). This distinction between a company's activities and its operations, products and services creates a grey area when it comes to the legal accountability of the private sector for addressing child labour.

Although there is a clear duty on the private sector to take steps to prevent and alleviate child exploitation and abuse, the UNGPs recognise that the success and sustainability of these measures will require robust support and oversight from States in the form of policy, legislation and regulation. For instance, the UK Modern Slavery Act (2015) has introduced due diligence that requires private sector companies based in the UK to improve the transparency of child labour practices within supply chains. At a regional level, since 2016 the European Union have required the 6000 largest listed companies to disclose how they manage risks to human and labour rights, including those affecting children (SHIFT, 2017: 44). According to UNGPs, when domestic laws fall below or are in conflict with agreed international human rights standards, private sector companies are expected to honour human rights principles, including minimum age for entry into work and the types of light or hazardous work permitted at different ages.

UNICEF, the UN Global Compact and Save the Children have also developed ten Children's Rights and Business Principles to provide businesses with concrete advice on supporting children's rights in a comprehensive manner. The principles recognise that existing legal frameworks and ILO agreements do not adequately address the diversity of ways in which the private sector can prevent and mitigate child labour, especially through marketing and distributing practices.



In a similar vein, the ILO has worked closely with Coca-Cola as a member of the Child Labour Platform to support the company to recognise its responsibility for child labour in the supply chain (ILO, 2015). One outcome of this work has been for Coca-Cola to develop and share a Human Rights Due Diligence Assessment for all suppliers. This Assessment interrogates child labour in sugar-sourcing countries and addresses hiring (e.g. proof of age documentation), work environment (e.g. whether workers bring children to work), remediation (e.g. mechanisms for getting school age children back into school) and community engagement (e.g. parental education about risks of child labour) (Coca-Cola, 2014).

However, the company has also recognised and embraced the business case for meeting these legal requirements. Coca-Cola recognises the potential reputational damage that being linked to child exploitation in their supply chain may have on their business brand, as well as the potential for aligning their company brand with human rights in line with increasing expectations from customers and the public that they take responsibility for human rights throughout their supply chain. As Oxfam's 'Behind the Brands' research shows, Coca-Cola still has a

lot of work to do, but it is making progress to improve the way that their suppliers behave (Oxfam, 2016).

There is also growing recognition of the role that industry specific membership organisations can play in coordinating efforts between companies and wider industry stakeholders. For instance, the 'Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing' (ECLT) good practice guide (2016) brings together tobacco growers with leaf suppliers and manufacturers to leverage greater impact. In 2014, 13 companies ratified a 'pledge of commitment' to uphold policies on child labour throughout the tobacco supply chain.

### 4.3 Education sector interventions

As the ILO (n.d. (education)) notes, '(h)istory has shown how instrumental education has been to the abolition of child labour' – especially when it is free, high quality and linked to labour markets that provide decent employment for graduates. Indeed, in contexts as diverse as Viet Nam's northern mountains (Jones et al., 2014a) and rural Egypt (IOF, 2010), simply having school as an option can reduce children's odds of participating in child labour.

Image 5: Metal worker and his young assistant in Egypt



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For adolescents, though – who often have to combine school and work to pay their own fees and buy their own supplies – it is critical to minimise the cost of education so that they do not need to juggle work schedules and can find sufficient time for their studies. Some countries are leading the way: just last year, Ghana abolished all fees for secondary schooling (Martínez, 2017); while in Kenya, secondary school will be free as of 2019 (Nzioka, 2016). It is also necessary to deliver quality teaching that results in decent employment (Jones, et al., 2016b, 2018; Morrow and Boyden, 2018; Sarkar and Sarkar, 2012; Bazin and Bhukuth, 2009) (see Box 16).

Programmes that help out-of-school adolescents who have been engaged in child labour to return to formal or informal education have also helped set young people on a better trajectory for adulthood. In Egypt, ICF (2010) found that families were likely to withdraw girls in particular from agricultural labour when non-formal community schools were made available to them. In India's Bihar state, UNICEF has been working with government to implement Vertical Competency Based Learning, to help child labourers 'catch up' with their schooling so that they can return to mainstream classrooms (Unisa, 2014). Non-government organisations (NGOs) in Rwanda, Jordan and Lebanon are working with adolescents displaced by conflict to help them return to school, sometimes after many years' absence. The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and

Security (2016) reports that thousands of adolescents in conflict-affected countries have successfully returned to school through these programmes. Our own work in Jordan has highlighted how much adolescents appreciate these opportunities (see Box 17).

### Box 16: Broken links between education and the labour market

In many developing countries, teacher absenteeism, poor learning outcomes, and broken links between education and labour markets reduce parents' and adolescents' commitment to education. In India, for example, a recent survey found that one-quarter of teachers were absent during random visits (Anand, 2016), which has had devastating impacts on children's learning – documented as amongst the world's lowest when India last participated\* in the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (OECD, 2018; Chhapial, 2012). In Ethiopia, where youth unemployment is high and even university graduates can struggle to find decently paid employment, our own research suggests that many adolescents increasingly see investing in schooling as futile. In Ghana, where the annual income of households who are self-employed in agriculture is roughly the same for those with no education and those who have completed nine years of basic education (\$59 vs \$56), parents have little incentive to invest in even elementary school (Krauss, 2016).

*\* India has refused to participate since 2009.*

### Box 17: A future of his own

Mohammed is 17 years old and for the past five years, since his family fled Syria for Jordan, has been out of school and working to support his family. His father is chronically ill so cannot work but also needs expensive health care, so Mohammed has had to shoulder this burden alone, caring for both his parents and his younger brother.

Mohammed works in the construction industry doing long hours (7.30am til 8pm) six days a week. His wages have risen with age and experience, and he now makes 9 JOD a day (about \$12.70).

His family have received 50 JOD a month in World Food Programme (WFP) vouchers for some years now, but recently they also began to receive cash assistance from UNHCR and UNICEF. While this amount is not sufficient to allow Mohammed to give up work entirely, it has allowed him to think about returning to school part-time. His mother recently heard about an evening school for adolescents that allows students to study part-time for two years to get a 10th grade certificate, and then eventually sit the Tajii national exam, which would allow for university entrance. Mohammed is signed up and will begin his studies soon. He is negotiating with his employer to allow him to leave work early to attend the evening classes.

He is thrilled to have this opportunity: *'I lost lots of opportunities since leaving Syria and I don't want to lose any more! I loved school in Syria but I've had to prioritise other things here because of my family's situation and my responsibility for the household'*, he explained.

Mohammed knows that the next few years will be difficult financially, as his salary will probably be cut because of working fewer hours. But, thanks to the cash assistance, he has begun to dream of a future that involves more than survival. *'My dream is to be an accountant so that I can take care of my father's business – he has a butcher's shop in Syria... Our future is linked with our certificates – we need a very good education to realise our ambitions.'*

Source: Hamad et al., 2017



## 4.4 Social protection interventions

Given that child labour and other forms of child exploitation are often driven or exacerbated by poverty, it is vital to support families to make ends meet and avoid negative coping strategies. Evidence suggests that providing educational stipends or conditional cash transfers that offset the real and opportunity costs of educating children can reduce child labour (Dammert et al., 2017; de Hoop and Rosati, 2014). For example, in Pakistan, the Female School Stipend Programme reduced girls' labour force participation by 4%–5% (Alam et al., 2011). In Ecuador, the Bono de Desarrollo, an unconditional cash transfer, was found to reduce children's participation (age 5–16) in economic activities by 17%, with even stronger results for those aged 11–16 (25%) (Edmonds and Schady, 2012). Education-focused cash transfer programmes – ranging from Mexico's Oportunidades<sup>5</sup> (Skoufias and Parker, 2001) to Plan de Atención Nacional a la Emergencia Social (PANES) in Montevideo, Uruguay (Borraz and González, 2009), to the Education Sector Support Project (CESSP)

scholarship programme in Cambodia (Ferreira et al., 2009) – have also driven reductions in various types of labour (paid and unpaid) for boys and girls (as cited in de Hoop and Rosati, 2014). Key, notes Ullah (2013), is that stipends and transfers adequately address the both “the out-of-pocket and opportunity cost of attending school” (p. iii) – and, observe Dammert et al. (2017), do not shift adult employment in ways that increase child labour (see Box 18).

There are a range of other social protection programmes that also reduce families' reliance on child labour. Evidence from Rwanda, for instance, suggests that health insurance which protects households from shocks can impact not only children's odds of working, but also their educational achievement (Strobl, 2017). Similarly, evidence from both India (UNESCO 2010, Kaul and Sankar 2009) and Mozambique (Martinez et al., 2012) suggests that the provision of childcare/pre-school can allow poor mothers to work while sparing older sisters from childcare. Take home rations can also reduce girls engagement with economic activities (Kazianga et al., 2013).

**Image 6: An adolescent refugee girl making bricks in Chad**



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<sup>5</sup> Oportunidades is now called Prospera

### Box 18: Unintended negative consequences

Not all outcomes of social protection programming are positive. Some programmes appear to increase child labour in some groups of children – and certain design features appear to make impacts even worse. In Malawi, for example, households receiving the Social Cash Transfer scheme invested in productive assets, which ultimately increased the hours that children spent on both household chores and farming activities (see Covarrubias et al., 2012). Public works programmes can also increase child labour. Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) (Hoddinott et al., 2009; Quisumbing and Yohanne, 2005) and India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) (Shah and Steinberg, 2015) have both been found to have impacts on girls' domestic work, because they are forced to substitute their own labour for that of their mothers. Furthermore, design features meant to increase women's empowerment appear to amplify girls' disadvantage. Specifically, by targeting women, who care for children, girls may be forced to leave school. Shah and Steinberg (2015) estimate that for every 20 women brought into the labour force by MGNREGS, between 1.2 and 4 girls may leave school in order to shoulder the household work that was formerly their mother's.

## 4.5 Tailored interventions to reach the most vulnerable adolescents

Evidence suggests that the most vulnerable adolescents, such as those engaged in domestic work or those with disabilities, are all too often missed by broad, mainstream programmes and therefore need interventions that are carefully tailored to their needs. Fortunately, there are promising practice examples to use as models. The International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF) and the ILO (2017a; 2017b) report a variety of organisations in Asia and Africa that support child domestic workers and their parents, teaching them about their rights and the importance of education; other organisations are working with adult domestic workers, training them to advocate for their younger peers. In Ethiopia, the Population Council's Biruh Tesfa (Bright Future) programme supports out-of-school adolescent girls in urban areas. Piloted in 2006, and working in 18 cities with 75,000 girls by 2016, the programme uses trained mentors to go door-to-door to find and invite girls to participate. Two-thirds of participants are migrants, nearly half have lost a parent, one-third are domestic workers, one-quarter are daily manual labourers, and over a thousand have a disability. Biruh Tesfa provides these vulnerable girls with social support from adults and peers, as well as health care and life skills training. Evaluation found that the programme improves social support, knowledge of HIV, and literacy and numeracy – all of which reduce girls' likelihood of exploitation (Medhin and Erulkar, 2017; Erulkar et al., 2012).

A key premise underpinning promising programming approaches for adolescents with disabilities is to support these young people to prepare for independent living rather than relying on charity. Leonard Cheshire Disability, for example, is supporting 23,000 young people across Asia and Africa – where one-third of all children with disabilities

are out of school – to make schools more physically accessible, training teachers on disability-inclusive pedagogies, raising parents' and community awareness of disability, and supporting children with disabilities to join child clubs. In Kenya, as part of the DfID-funded Girls' Education Challenge, the organisation is taking a gendered approach to help girls with disabilities join their peers at school. An evaluation found that the project increased girls' enrolment and their academic outcomes – and also improved the attitudes of parents, teachers, peers and other community members (Leonard Cheshire Disability, 2017; 2018).

## 4.6 Labour market interventions in humanitarian contexts

As Edmonds and Pavonik (2005) have noted, “(e)conomic development that raises the incomes of the poor is the best way to reduce child labor around the world” (p.216). Indeed, to that end, labour market interventions that reduce poverty can be seen as critical to reducing all forms of child and adolescent exploitation, including not only child labour – but also forced marriage. While this is true more globally, development actors arguably have a particularly important role in supporting these types of interventions in conflict affected situations. With conflicts now lasting an average of ten years (World Bank, 2017), and more than 65.5 million people currently displaced around the world (UNHCR, 2016), the scope of need is significant. The Jordan Compact (announced in 2016) is one promising example, as it simultaneously seeks to address the needs of vulnerable Syrian refugees but also of Jordanian host communities (which have seen unemployment and poverty rates skyrocket since the onset of the Syrian crisis) through turning the refugee crisis into a development opportunity that attracts new investments and expanded employment



opportunities (Government of Jordan, 2016). The Compact includes £1.6 billion in foreign assistance and investment pledged to the Jordanian government in exchange for up to 200,000 work permits for Syrians. Although only 87,141 permits had been issued as of January 2018 (Government of Jordan, 2018), the situation for Jordan's Syrian refugee population is far better than that of their peers sheltering in Lebanon, where the government has restricted refugees to only three sectors (agriculture, construction and cleaning) and the job training programmes offered by NGOs have little practical connection to labour market realities (Dziadosz, 2016).

## 4.7 Programming focused on social norm change

Research suggests that another key to ending child labour, forced marriage and other forms of child exploitation is addressing the social norms that perpetuate them. This is true of the Ghanaian parents who see children's agricultural work as a 'basic form of socialisation' (Krauss, 2016), the Kenyan Maasai mothers who see girls' domestic work as central to preparing them for their adult roles (Munthali, 2018), and the impoverished parents who bond their children into labour for their own economic gain (Musa and Olsen, 2017). In addition to programmes which target child labour directly, many of which have been implemented by the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) (ILO, 2015 as cited in Dammert et al., 2017) our own research in Ethiopia, Nepal and Viet Nam points to promising approaches. It suggests that it is important to work simultaneously with adolescents, to help them develop aspirations and voice, with parents, to help

them nurture those aspirations and respect that voice, and with communities, to shift the social norms that trap children and their parents in customs that have outlived their social utility (Harper et al., 2018).

In Ethiopia, and echoing the findings of other evaluations (Edmeades et al., 2014), we found that in some communities, CARE's TESFA programme had significant success in shifting social norms linked to gender equality and forced child marriage. Working with married adolescent girls, and organising them into groups for life skills or financial training and support, and engaging 'gatekeepers' on norms (such as religious leaders, husbands and mothers-in-law), TESFA not only contributed to improvements in the lives of already married girls, but also helped communities begin to phase out child marriage – especially among very young adolescents. This was attributed to the way the programme built local ownership of problems and solutions, used persuasion rather than force, and worked with local leaders to help deliver messages (see Box 19). An evaluation of a parenting support programme in South Africa also concluded that local ownership was key to shifting norms around parenting (Doubt et al., 2018).

Girls' clubs have emerged in our work as an especially important mechanism for shifting the social norms that constrain adolescent girls' lives. GAGE's evidence review, which synthesised 63 studies on the empowerment impacts of 44 girls' or youth development clubs and life skills programmes with a gender equality focus, found a wide variety of impacts (Marcus et al., 2017). These included helping girls develop self-confidence and voice, shifting their attitudes towards gender equality, supporting the development of the friendship networks necessary to

### Box 19: Engaging religious leaders to shift social norms around child marriage

Takele is a priest in Hawzet and is 'really embarrassed' that his wife was only 12 years old when they married. Now a member of a CARE Social Action and Analysis (SAA) group, he is working to 'change the attitude of the society through time, using a systematic approach' that works separately with mothers, fathers and girls themselves.

When he first began his work, Takele was frustrated by the challenges in securing community buy-in and the active backlash against his awareness-raising work. For example, he explained, 'My potato garden was destroyed one night and unknown individuals also damaged my house.' Now, however, Takele takes great pride in the changes he has helped bring to his village.

Girls, he explained, have 'better awareness about their rights, the benefits of education, the effects of early marriage on their life, and how to report' if they are threatened. In particular, he explained that the community has come to see the 'long-term benefits of educating girls'.

Takele is especially proud of the 28 girls he has directly saved from child marriage. One case, he reported, was 'a big challenge from both parties', forcing them to 'hide the child' from her own parents before her marriage was ultimately cancelled by the courts. While his work has been hard, he knows that 'I have special place in the lives of the victims and respect from the majority of the society'.

Source: Jones et al., 2016b

achieve broader psychosocial wellbeing, increasing their knowledge and educational achievement, and improving their economic wellbeing. Our review found that the most effective programmes allowed ample time for socialisation, directly focused on gender, provided training that girls and their parents felt was useful, and worked in parallel with parents and community members (ibid.).

## 4.8 Evidence, monitoring and evaluation

The adoption of the SDGs and their underlying equity agenda has resulted in a renewed focus on how to measure progress towards ensuring access to services and justice for all. As well as existing indicators from national censuses and surveys (such as Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS)), which are reflected in the Global Indicator Framework

agreed in 2017 (UNSDSN, 2017), efforts such as those of Alliance 8.7 aim to develop new indicators that will help make adolescents' needs – and progress in meeting those needs – more visible. As yet, however, we do not believe that efforts are sufficiently focused on disaggregating detail and separating the 'signal' from the 'noise' (see Box 20).

In addition to a need for better evidence about exploitation itself, there is also a need for better evidence about what works to reduce it. Indeed, central to the GAGE programme are efforts through rigorous mixed methods impact evaluation and research to identify "what works" – for whom and under what conditions. Evident from the unintended consequences that some social protection programmes have had on child labour, noted above, a better understanding of how to protect specific groups of vulnerable young people is required before taking programmes to scale.

### Box 20: The case for better-disaggregated data on child labour and exploitation

To make adolescents' exploitation more visible, we not only need a better way to track how much time girls spend doing household chores and care work (and integrate their domestic and care work into child labour definitions and figures), we also need to know how many girls and of what ages are working for third parties. Simply recording whether domestic workers are under or over the age of 15 tells us little about the magnitude of the workforce, let alone their likely risks and needs.

To make boys' exploitation more visible, we need to accurately count those working informally, especially in conflict-affected countries, where our own research suggests that parents often significantly under-report their offspring's involvement in labour activities despite adolescents often shouldering the greatest burden in settings where parents are excluded from the labour market (Hamad et al., 2017).

Forced labour and trafficking figures also need to be reported not only by gender and age, but by both gender and age, to bring adolescent girls' and boys' needs to the fore. The size and composition of the population of young people with disabilities who have been forced into begging – due to a dearth of safety nets and to social norms that view supporting people with disabilities through a charity rather than a rights-based lens – also needs to be identified and monitored. Critically, given the millions of girls facing lives of servitude clothed in the guise of marriage, we must also pay more attention to the patterning of child marriage. This will mean collecting data not only on those over the age of 15, but those 14 and younger.

# Conclusions

Despite recent progress, tens of millions of children around the world continue to be exploited every day – most in their own homes and on their own farms, an increasing number in factories and other commercial endeavours, and an unknown number in forced labour, forced marriage, and other forms of modern slavery. Renewed attention to the magnitude and breadth of adolescent exploitation, as part of the SDGs, is a necessary step towards eradicating it. As yet, however, we believe there is still insufficient attention to the problem. By creating a broader lens, but failing to systematically disaggregate the underlying patterning and drivers of that exploitation, adolescents (and especially adolescent girls), who are already too often overlooked, risk being rendered even less visible in policy and programming. The devil, as they say, is in the details.

To deliver on the SDG commitments to gender equality (Goal 5), decent work (Goal 8) and inclusive and just societies (Goal 16), we suggest that development actors invest in the construction of 'bifocals', which first let us zoom out, to understand the size and shape of the population of children facing exploitation, and then zoom in, to see the specific needs of different populations of children of different ages. This means delivering, at a minimum, on seven key priorities:

1. **Address legal and policy gaps, and invest in their enforcement**, especially as they relate to the worst forms of child labour, trafficking, forced marriage, and modern slavery (as highlighted in SDGs 5,8, and 16).
2. **Provide free, quality education through secondary school, ensuring that options for older children are flexible enough to accommodate the reality that many of them have to work to support themselves**. This should include evening classes as well as bridge programmes to help school dropouts return to formal education.
3. **Strengthen age-, gender- and disability-responsive social protection programmes so that families have a safety net and can avoid resorting to negative coping strategies such as child labour, forced marriage or begging**. Provisioning needs to go beyond design, be sufficiently resourced for effective implementation, and be well monitored.
4. **Invest in programmes that provide tailored support to the most disadvantaged adolescents, such as those with disabilities, domestic workers, survivors of trafficking, and child-headed households**. Interventions need to focus on reducing the exploitation that these children face and, where they have suffered trauma, provide them with psychosocial services, perhaps through investment in social workers and other support staff.
5. **Work with parents and communities through outreach activities such as community conversations and media campaigns to tackle the underlying discriminatory social norms on age, gender, disability, caste, etc.** that leave children vulnerable to the most egregious forms of exploitation, such as forced marriage, forced labour and trafficking. Interventions should also provide young people with mentors and social support to help them identify – and fulfil – their own aspirations.
6. **Engage with private employers who will be increasingly important to ending child labour, given the social and economic transitions unfolding across the global South, including urbanisation and the unprecedented levels of people affected by humanitarian crises**. It is vital to create skills-building and labour market opportunities in general, and in humanitarian contexts in particular, where limited access to employment opportunities for adults has forced young people into highly exploitative work situations. It is also critical to promote compliance with international instruments on business and human rights, as well with related national legislation.
7. **Invest in robust data and evidence that will reveal more precisely the magnitude and patterning of child exploitation, as well as assess programme impacts**. Evidence-informed programming can contribute to strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of programming especially in the most resource-constrained contexts.

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## **About GAGE**

Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE) is a nine-year longitudinal research programme generating evidence on what works to transform the lives of adolescent girls in the Global South.

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