

REPORT



Painting by Vasily Perov

CHILD LABOUR IN THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

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Coordinator -M. Antonyan, PhD, Social Sciences

Scientific consultants -A. Khachatryan, PhD, philosophy

M. Zaslavskaya, PhD, mathematical sciences

Legal consultant – A. Yesayan

Field coordinators of the study -M. Petrosyan, M. Mkhitarian

M. Ter-Hovhannisyan, S. Arzumanyan

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From authors

In Armenia child labour has been a matter of concern for specialists already for several years. Various state and non-state organizations and NGOs dealing with issues of children in difficult life situations have different understanding of the phenomenon stemming from their experience. It has been a long time since the need to have a scientific and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of child labour has emerged as a challenge in the country.

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The phenomenon of child labour is widespread in the world. In almost all countries it is considered unacceptable since it contradicts with the interests of children and the whole society. Therefore efforts are put everywhere if not to eliminate but at least to alleviate the phenomenon. Fortunately Armenia is not among the countries that have high occurrence of child labour. Yet, the practice exists in our country as well. Social vulnerability, poverty and other factors in families with children force many children to go to work at an age below (often with conditions conflicting with the law) the one accepted by the society.

The creation of guarantees for social protection of children is a priority issue for every country. In Armenia in the current period of large-scale reforms going on in the sector of child protection, the study of the issue of child labour is vital because it is necessary to appreciate the occurrence and forms of child labour in the country, the pattern the working children exhibit by gender, age, residence, family status, education and other key variables. Finally what are the causes making children to work at an early age and how does the fact of a child working affect his/her childhood and the future life.

The final report, which in essence summarizes the analysis of cause-effect relationships among the foregoing and a number of other phenomena, contains a series of recommendations on legislative, procedural as well as public perception changes necessary for prevention, early intervention and mitigation of the effect of the phenomenon. I think that this is a very valuable material in the period of massive reforms, which have been undertaken by our country in the sector of child protection. Possession of accurate data on the phenomenon of child labour and its tendencies will allow making the situation manageable, alleviating its negative impact on the quality of life of children.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to all those specialists, persons, organisations, who have supported the implementation of this important research.

Minister of Labour and Social Issues of RA – A. Vardanyan

Abbreviations used

1. **NGO** - Non-governmental organization
2. **CPU** - Child protection units
3. **LI** - Labour inspectorate
4. **TEC** - Territorial employment centre
5. **MoLSI** - Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
6. **LA** - Local authority
7. **GTC** - Guardianship and Trusteeship committee
8. **JPD** - Juvenile police department
9. **TSSA** - Territorial social service agency
10. **NSS** - National Statistical Service

Executive Summary

Objective of the study. The problem of labour exploitation of children, although not very spelled, used to exist also in the Soviet period. It became particularly severe in post-soviet period of Armenia as a result of massive and extreme poverty as well as the change of the economic system. Land privatization forced rural families to reassume production functions, the accomplishment of which, in the absence of financial means, forced them to brutally involve all members of the family, including children.

Children were quickly integrated into the labour market and began to be exploited as a cheap work force. However there is poor information available on the nature and occurrence of the phenomenon. Firstly, employees' registration current procedure does not include children. Secondly, recording in the labour market is complicated due to shadow practices, and thirdly, when it comes to children, employers tend to hide this phenomenon avoiding additional responsibilities which are stipulated for employers in the event of child labour exploitation.

The present study is an attempt to examine the phenomenon of child labour exploitation in Armenia, to assess the degree of its occurrence and developmental trends.

Study findings

Child labour. 1,066 households have been surveyed, out of which in 65 at least 1 working child has been identified, in some of them – more than one, and the total number of working children was 71. In the group of children (2,032) of the sample (1,066 households) as of the week preceding the day of the survey the number of working children was 3.6%, and 4.7% of all children have been engaged in work during the last year. Hence, with error probability of 5% it can be stated that in the course of one year 4.7% of children aged 7-18 (not having reached 18) engaged in paid work, or in 6.1% of households with child (ren) of that age at least 1 child involved in paid work can be encountered. In particular, 1.4% of working children are of the age of 7-10 (10 exclusive), 28.2% - children of the age of 10-14 (14 exclusive) and 70.4% - children of the age of 14-18 (18 exclusive). This means that about one third of working children are of the age lower than the age allowed under labour legislation.

The composition of the number of working children by gender is the following: boys - 84.5%, girls - 15.5%. These include only children who have employers or have been paid for their work. This number does not include children who work in private “business” of their households (farm, land plot, etc.) and/or are engaged with adults (or without them) in household production activities. Around 73.7% of children participate in household works every day, half of them carry out production activities, the rest do so frequently: during the day they would replace adults at selling desks, carry foodstuffs to the market with adults, engage in works the ultimate goal of which is earning money. With some reservations employment of children in households can also be classified as paid work. This is especially true since about 17% of children are busy all day long and 24% of them are busy in the morning when it is time to go to school. In the opinion of the vast majority of interviewees, work in a household has an important upbringing implication.

2.6% of children have dropped out of education because of work and 5.1% of children have absenteeism rate of one month and more.

The number of children involved in agriculture amounted to 31.9% of working children, out of which boys were 67.1% and girls were 32.9%, it is followed by trade and construction. According to survey findings, 1/3 of working children have just started their work activities, an equal number of children have work experience of over one year. Merely 19.7% of working children have permanent jobs, the rest have either seasonal or occasional jobs.

During the week preceding the survey 93% of children having done paid work have been doing

it in the course of the last 12 months as well. This means that for the vast majority of children included in the labour market, work is a permanent activity. Moreover, part of the children not working as of the moment of the survey – 1.3% - has also had work during the last one year.

By marzes the highest numbers of working children were observed in Shirak - 15.6%, Armavir - 12.8%, Syunik - 11.8% and Ararat - 9.7% and the remaining marzes - 5-5.5%. In Yerevan the number equated to 3%.

Sectors of Work. Child paid work takes place in various sectors. They are agriculture, cattle breeding, construction, industry, trade, services, etc. Children work in various environments – from their own house (which seems the safest in terms of risk) to street (which is the most risky). Child labour takes place in formalized (production, construction, etc.) and non-formalized environments (their or other's house, field, garden, street, etc.). If the formalized format entails certain standardization and control, the non-formalized cases have shadow nature; (therefore the number of working children may presumably be much bigger in reality) they rule out any control and sometimes are seriously suspicious (ensuring safety is left to the sole discretion and skills of other participants of the work situation).

In small urban settlements there are more opportunities for children to find work. More often they engage in short-term works and small enterprises such as car service points, operation of vehicles, construction, trade, etc. Children are also often involved in gathering of waste metal and bottles (“non-standard” activities are also observed, e.g. in Shirak marz children are working in public minibuses). A significant share of families living in rural and particularly in small urban settlements, former administrative-regional centres or industrial settlements do not have their own land and as a rule they work at landlords', especially large ones. Such works are equally attended by children regardless of climate conditions. Among sectors, agricultural work of children is the highest in occurrence and rural children are involved in such work.

Ways of finding work. 31.8% of working children have found jobs on their own. A small percentage of working children (9%) are recruited by employers¹ as a cheap labour. However, during the study it was felt that many of them avoid doing it fearing possible intervention of labour inspectorate. Another reason of evasion from work by children is the lack of skills and relatively low quality of work. In case of 59.2%, children are mainly assisted by parents, relatives and friends for various reasons such as helping the family, pulling the child from the street and so on. It is noteworthy that children of the age of 14 and below involved in paid work often find jobs by themselves without parents' intervention.

Relationships with employers. 80% of working children work having only verbal arrangement with the employer. There are only few cases where the work of children is recorded duly in accordance with the stipulated procedure and in conformity with the norms and requirements in effect: children are paid promptly and even enjoy special attention and treatment by the employers. Mostly – in 23.3% of cases –children are paid on a daily basis, only 16.9% - monthly, the same - weekly, and 7.7% - in-kind. In particular, only 6.2% sign against his/her name in the wage ledger. The survey findings show cases when the child is not paid at all (9.2%). On the contrary, in the event of officially non-registered child labour case payments are made without delay and based on the arrangement made (mostly in the event of presence of an adult intermediary).

Only 8,5% of working children have employment contracts, the age of children working on the

¹ In recent years, in non-formal labour exchanges emerged in urban settlements, in addition to unemployed men children also gather there with expectation to get jobs on daily payment basis, especially in the period of mass harvests.

basis of a contract is higher than 14 for 83.3%, only 16.7% are between 10 to 14. Thus, the majority of employers applying child labour do not comply with the rules and requirements stipulated by labour legislation.

Work duration. Child work is mostly not normalized: the working week has different durations for different children. For about half of them the working week lasts 7 days. The rest are less busy mainly because of doing occasional work. More than half of them work from morning till evening, a large part work when needed, some work also at night. For working children the average weekly load is 40 hours. Often the employer would also call on for overtime work, for which the child would normally be paid by the regular rate. 91.1% of working children have complained of adverse conditions of work.

Educational issues of working children. 58.7% of children combine education and work. 41.4% of working children do not study. In some communities the accessibility of mainstream education (in particular secondary school) has become difficult for children: absence of a school in the community, difficulties of forming a grade, additional transportation and other expenses.

2/3 of working children belong to the age group of 14-17. In that age the period of receiving eight-year education ends and children who are from socially vulnerable families, or do not have special educational abilities and ambitions are enrolled in labour market filling up the cluster of low-qualified workers. Complicated access to and lack of demand in secondary vocational education creates serious problems for children of the age of 14-18. Furthermore, children not having received eight-year education due to work, later are not able to qualify for secondary vocational education, since the latter requires certificate of eight-year education, which they lack². The vast majority of non-working children plans to continue the study (83%), while only 44% of working children do so.

A large group of working children – about 30%, has already dropped out of the education system. The reason is the schooling costs, as well as lack of interest in education by the child and/or the parent. Besides, the work provides the child with money, which is a means of satisfying his/her interests. Those who carry on attending an education institution do not demonstrate sound regularity of attendance. At the same time, in the group of non-working children long-lasting absences from classes have been mentioned associated with helping in the household work activities and involvement in family business. 30% of children not only miss classes during the harvest period but do not resume the study to help their families. Some children mention that sometimes because of work they are not able to attend classes, but the teachers treat this practice easily knowing that children “earn for the living of the family”.

Causes of child labour. In a large group of households children are exposed to high risk since those households do not have stable and sufficient financial inflows: in 44% of households surveyed there is no family member having regularly paid job; in only 36.7% there is at least 1 person working on a regular basis and in 14.8% - 2 working persons. The majority of working children are boys. They typically represent families where as a result of social pressure (absence of fathers or economic migration) children take up the responsibility of earning for the livelihood of families early: in the event of presence of at least one regularly working person and increase to more than one, the number of working children sharply decreases³. The circumstance of incomplete family, especially in case of absence of main breadwinner, is a

² For most of them no favorable conditions materialize later for filling in this gap because in a few years boys leave for military service and girls who account for about 15% in that group either get married or keep on packing low-qualified jobs.

³ The same pattern is observed when considering the correlation between the number of persons having occasional jobs in families and the number of working children.

serious ground for a child to engage in work activities at an early age.

The analysis of specific cases of children having dropped out of education and working children shows that along with poverty the families of these children (in case of 78% of working children) are not socially active, are not informed, do not know how to organise search for additional resources. In certain individual cases the adult members of families have “unacceptable”, anti-social livelihood mechanisms: prostitution, various work activities requiring long-term absence⁴, which eventually break up the family, make the future life of children uncontrollable and leave them without positive guidance (16 cases or 24.6% of working children).

Meanwhile, the labour force in families of the majority of working children is either absent or insufficient. Judging based on data on coverage of families of working children by various state and non-state support forms, only 45.5% of families with working children are covered by the system of family benefits, 5.9% - by charity, 49.2 % receive absolutely no assistance through either formal or non-formal channels⁵.

There are many reasons for children to “earn money”—earn a living for the family, support the family (in some cases the child is the only member with working capacity in the family and has to take care of the minimum needs of the family by him/herself). These children usually give the money they earn to parents (64.6%), yet another important motivation is the desire to be self-sustaining and independent, to have own pocket money, to have the possibility to satisfy personal needs (buying cigarettes and attending entertainment places with friends) (27.2%); and 4.6% are guided by the desire to “learn something and not waste time”. The most frequent reason for working is catering for the needs of the family, especially schooling expenses: part of the children buy school clothes and stationery for themselves or pay for professional education (also for the sister or the brother) with the money they earn. Rarer are the cases of children wishing to specialize by working.

The next reason for working is the urge for being valued.

Health: 78.1% of children have good health indicators. However in cases where children are involved in heavy physical jobs – a porter, in construction - harmful consequences for their health are not immediately obvious but they regularly have pains. Among reasons for health problems 4.5% of children have quoted work. 60% of injury cases for working children are related to work as described by parents. Working children report on health problems and injuries more often than non-working children. There are cases when children have serious problems at work but they hide that since they know that their family would not survive without their work.

Leisure: Children have no leisure activities; there are no entertainment opportunities, especially in rural areas. In the majority of villages surveyed there are no sports—cultural centres, in particular music, sports, art schools, etc. Moreover in addition to above reasons entertainment and leisure activities are non-existent for children also because of work.

Conclusion

Occurrence of the phenomenon. The number of working children seems low at first glance - 6.1% in households with children aged 7-18 (18 exclusive). However that impression changes when we take into account the group of “hidden working children” in households, which

⁴ For example, in cafeterias located close to the road and far from settlements, with extended shifts in hotels, far from the village in the market, etc.

⁵ The percentages are higher than 100 since some families take advantage of several types of support.

comprises 80% and in fact is “behind the closed doors” and in uncontrollable conditions.

Characteristics of the phenomenon

By gender the vast majority of working children are boys, which is explained by the culture accepted in the Armenian society.

By work experience length, 1/3 of working children have been working for over a year, which means that child labour is not an occasional phenomenon but a regular practice.

By the way of finding a job, as study data stands, the majority of children aged 14 and below have found work without parents’ intervention and agreement. It can be concluded that by considering parents as a party responsible for protection of their children (based on the law) it will be difficult to control the phenomenon.

From the point of view of **relationships with employers** child labour is not recorded. More often it is children who look for a job (employer) than employers look for child labour: the phenomenon is in its early stage and it is the right time to efficiently prevent its future undesirable developments.

From the viewpoint of legislative regulation 1/3 of working children are of the age below than that allowed by the law and therefore effective labour legislation cannot ensure protection of working children.

Reasons for working. Judging the reasons for a child to engage in work at an early age, child labour is mostly a mechanism of survival for him/herself and his/her family and to fight poverty. Therefore banning of child labour without any compensating means and “buffer interventions” will not make sense.

The influence of work on other spheres of a child’s life.

In comparison with non-working children, working children more often miss classes for a long time and drop out of education, more often complain about trauma, injuries and chronic pains from accidents and finally have less time and opportunities for leisure and recreation, fewer opportunities for continuing their education and obtaining specialization than non-working children. In the meantime, working children “are more mature”, have earlier been engaged in “adult activities”, are more practical and self-reliant.

Perception of the phenomenon of child labour. The wide variance of viewpoints of adults (parents, specialists, experts) surveyed with regard to the phenomenon of child labour shows that the perception of the phenomenon is not unequivocal and can be viewed as undesirable and damaging on one hand, and as an important component of positive socialization of the child on the other. Hence the social context of the issue of child labour is not adequately recognized and realized.

Thus child labour is shaped by three groups of factors:

1. Poor livelihood of families (and other factors shaped by poverty);
2. Existing cultural peculiarities of Armenian society in this issue; and
3. Detachment of the system of social protection of children and families from the social basis of the reality.

Taking into consideration the optimal timeframe required and the objective complications of neutralization of the effect of these factors as well as the difficulties related to making the system flexible it can be anticipated that the number of working children will grow in the near future while in the event of delay of interventions other trends will also materialize in parallel to the increase of the number.

What solutions? There are two possible ways for regulation of child labour issue: the first is imposing barriers and strengthening thereof and the second is prevention and setting of positive control. In conditions of a large-scale population poverty, unequivocally banning of child labour without offering any alternative to the family is meaningless and inefficient: one should not mechanically ban any use of child labour in the household but should follow not to do on account of satisfying their basic needs. It is necessary to protect children in cases when it is simply not possible to hold them from working, but first it should be admitted that there are such “necessarily existing” cases and define them.

The issue of players. Recognition of child rights and his/her protection in case of working cannot be effective by legislative means only, additional flexible professional approaches are needed, which should be mandated in job descriptions of these players.

Recommendations

Possible ways to address the issue of child labour:

In social welfare sector:

- Efforts of preventing child labour can be effective if they constitute part of the poverty reduction strategy. In particular, in the sector of family benefits there is a need to revise the criteria of inclusion.⁶

In education sector

- Making the operation of institutions, such as education, “flexible”, shifting their focus on child needs.
- With the purpose of provision of specialization, introduction of all possible alternatives into the school, this will allow to hold the child in the school to continue education or to combine education and opportunities for specialization along with work. That means that the school should develop more flexible, almost personalized programs for working children.
- To allow schools to be more flexible in scheduling school vacations adjusting the latter to the seasonal pattern of large-scale harvesting in their regions. The school can become the work place of the child, i.e. the school can organise teaching of various skills in production workshops, producing an output and earning money on that, along with education of children, thereby bringing the process into a more controllable and organized field⁷.
- After grade 6, if difficulties of continuing education arise, to try and arrange crafting training in the school preparing the child for a transfer to vocational education. To recover the former network of crafting training, when children are unable to continue mainstream education in the school for various reasons; they would be admitted to crafting colleges retaining the opportunity to receive mainstream education.
- To abolish the condition on compulsory 8-year education in case of receiving specialization. With regard to children who have dropped out of education, to grant them the chance to combine specialization with receiving mandatory education.

In the sector of adjustment of the system and legislative reforms

- Identification and mandating of specific parties responsible for regulation of the issue of child labour.
- When cases of child labour on unacceptable conditions are identified, the law should

⁶ Given the significant number of cases identified during the study the family is left out of that system for different reasons.

⁷ Here a series of issues arise: organizational, realization, etc., but those issues are of technical nature and require expert assistance.

stipulate a period of compensation after the ban of child labour, because the child will be left without livelihood for survival as a result.

- It makes sense to set up a special department on child labour with the labour inspectorate, the functions of which, apart from control, should be supportive-organizational and hiring of a social worker for that position.
- To exempt employers having children as legally registered employees from social security payments as well as employ other methods of motivation in creating jobs suitable for children along with the development of appropriate control mechanisms. In order to create opportunities for continuing future education for such children, elaborate encouraging schemes for employers (for example reimbursing against part or full expenses made by the employer for education of the child). Various other mechanisms may be considered for discussion with the stakeholders.
- Territorial employment centres should also work with children in professional orientation and training programs; undertake collaboration with employers for having job places for children. To assign monitoring of these issues to these centres and marz units of child rights protection – starting with data collection to intervention and follow-up control.

Organizational-procedural

- By means of mobilization of professional resources, work with specific and individual cases, community self-monitoring with regard to working children.
- Permit the CPUs to arrange work placement of children of non-working age as an exception unless it is possible to solve the social protection issue of their families by other means as well as in cases when the child is registered in the police juvenile department, evades study.

Awareness raising and capacity building

- Cooperation between NGOs and mass media and enhancement thereof to focus the public attention on interpretation of difficult cases.
- There is a need to conduct public awareness raising campaigns on the social context of child labour and to perform special capacity building of specialists working with children.

Introduction

Armenia, like many countries, has the issue of child labour exploitation, but its nature, forms, actual scale, occurrence and depth have not been studied. Official statistical data does not directly contain data on the issue while the majority of organizations and services dealing with children in difficult situations report that the issue exists in various examples.

It is clear that in a country with complications of recording population employment in general there could hardly exist more regular recording and especially control and referrals of cases of working children, as long as the only existing prerequisite is the legislative framework without implementation mechanisms and direct linkage with the social reality.

Irrespective of official registration today child labour is obviously in existence in the Armenian economy. In post-soviet period of Armenia the political and social-economic changes that have taken place have resulted in the deterioration of living conditions of wide strata of population and deterioration of the quality of life. The poverty remains widespread and children in families directly suffer its consequences. After land privatization rural population has switched to farming widely involving children in those activities. Vulnerable social status of the family was and continues to be a very strong case for justification of such an involvement, especially in seasonal work. It is not a secret that heavy seasonal work is often beyond the capacity of children and is done at the expense of their health, education and leisure. In addition to participation in own farming or similar work children began to fill up the paid agriculture labour market particularly in the harvest season.

In urban settlements children became enrolled in the paid labour market: porter, trade, services and gathering activities (non-ferrous metals, bottles, etc.).

In such conditions child right protection from labour exploitation becomes an urgent and difficult task. Legislation reforms protect child rights only formally.

Child labour is considered as a means of his/her socialization and upbringing on one side and such labour is an undesirable practice on the other side: where is the border, what is its perception in the cultural context of the society, what changes does it undergo in the stage of transition?

The urgency of the present study is shaped by the fact that the phenomenon is visible but its actual scale (depth, occurrence) and impact on the life of children has not been investigated and there is no reliable data on either aspect of the phenomenon.

The situation analysis of working children in Armenia may be useful for the stakeholders responsible for social policy in order to develop comprehensive strategy to address the issue.

Thus it will be possible to outline the range of realistic interventions that will be targeted at the working child, his/her parents, family and community.

Chapter 1. The phenomenon of child labour in the Republic of Armenia. General information

1.1. Conceptual issues and used terms: Notions of “child”, “labour” and “employment” have been a matter of debate for childhood specialists especially for scholars ever since the 80s of the previous century. The presence of different conceptual approaches in literature is explained by the cultural context of the notion of “childhood”, which entails differences related to national and regional peculiarities.

At present there are two opposite perspectives in circulation with regard to child labour:

Abolitionism: Supporters of this standpoint state that enrolment of the child in economy in the form of any work eventually damages his/her harmonious development, therefore, child labour must be prohibited. This approach does not account for the genuine causes of the phenomenon of child labour. The abolitionist approach would hardly be realistic for Armenia, where child labour has historically been irreplaceable for land cultivation and huge historical experience has been accumulated⁸.

Protectionism: Followers of this approach consider labour as an important factor for socialization of the child (phase or a required component), which in turn promotes the mental and physical development of the child, unless labour is harmful by nature and provided that labour is guided positively. This viewpoint is more realistic for the Armenian case, but the real issue lies with how children should be protected so that engagement in work is under beneficial rather than damaging conditions.

The notion of “child labour” or “work done by the child” is defined in different ways in various studies. In some research the notion includes both paid and unpaid work done by the child, i.e. the work done in his own household. If we take into consideration the fact that the ultimate outcome of any economic activity can be expressed in monetary terms or can be converted into monetary equivalent, supporters of such opinion are right. In the present study we have considered only those cases when the child is paid by the employer or earns money by providing a service or selling goods. Still we have reserved the opportunity to look at the forms and scale of involvement of the child in the household activities as labour.

Thereby we have distinguished two notions:

1. “Working child” implying those cases when the child works with an employer and earns money or is paid in other alternative ways: e.g. in-kind, etc.
2. A child working in production within his/her household economic activities (“the employer” is the family or it is under the child’s own initiative to engage in the production).

For the complete list of terms used see annex 1.

1.2. Demographic data

According to the data of National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia as of 2004 out of a total population (3,222.9 thousand), the urban population was 2,065.9 thousand and the rural population was 1,157.0 thousand, including 700.3 thousand under the age of work

⁸ Usually the comprehensive participation and involvement of the child in running household activities and land cultivation has been the only guarantee to inherit the right of its subsequent management and use from moral and legal standpoints.

capacity (urban - 419.4 thousand and rural - 280.9 thousand).

The distribution of the number of households with a child of the age of up to 16 by number of children is the following: one child - 22.2%, two children - 22.9%, three children - 7.2%, four children 1.8%, five and more children - 0.6%, without children - 45.3%.

45% of households do not have a child of the age of up to 16.

As of 2006 the number of children registered with state pre-school institutions was 47.3 per 1,000 children (21.6% of children), for towns that figure was 38.4 (28.5%) and for villages 8.9 (10.5%).

The number of children studying in state mainstream schools was 458.6 per 1,000 children, from which in towns - 271.0 and in rural settlements - 187.6, and in evening schools (with more than 1 shift) 0.26.

The number of attendants of state secondary professional institutions was 28.3 per 1,000 and 87.8 per 10,000.

1.3. The national and legal framework of the issue

In Armenia, nearly all children are included in household work activities. The inclusion originates at a very early age. The work in the household economic activities is considered so ordinary that adults even doubt about the necessity to question its justification. They treat child labour as an important means of upbringing of the child and making them more mature. Realizing the need for children to work and support their families in rural settlements during periods of mass harvesting, schools free children from classes assisting families in their work arrangements.

The idea of making children participate in production activities of the household has opponents among specialists who increasingly talk about violation of child rights claiming that child labour takes place at the expense of his/her leisure and education. Furthermore, it often happens in unmanageable conditions out of the scope of the family, community institutions and the legislative regulation.

Legal framework⁹ The Convention on the Rights of the Child calls for avoiding involvement of children in work activities at an early age taking into consideration the risks to their health and development. Armenian legislation permits persons of the age of 16 and up to work, and in certain cases also persons of the age of 14 by the agreement of the parent/guardian. In case of children aged 14-16 it is assumed that a due contract must to be signed with the parent or the guardian. In other words, the parent/guardian acts as a guarantor of child labour safety and fulfilment of obligations of the employer. The law also stipulates exclusion of conditions clearly classified as damaging to the health of the child and in the event of failure to adhere to such conditions, administrative fines are imposed.

Guarantees defined by the law concern:

- *work duration*, since a short working day is stipulated for children, consequently overtime work is ruled out (twenty-four hours a week for employees aged 14-16, thirty-six hours a week for employees aged 16-18).
- *conditions of work*: (it is prohibited to involve children under harmful or especially harmful

⁹

conditions).

- *leisure considerations*: the daily intermittent rest must not be less than 14 hours for children aged 14-16 and 12 hours for children aged 16-18.

The amended articles of the labour code relating to working conditions such as sanitary and hygiene rules, air pollution and other issues will come into force in three years after the code takes effect.

Although penalties are stipulated for cases of failure by employers to fulfil their obligations starting with June 2008, the issue of assigning an entity for imposing sanctions has not been settled under the legislation yet. In other words, there is inconsistency between labour and administrative codes.

Thus, the legislation of the Republic of Armenia refers to child's right to work for children aged 16 and higher and for children of the age interval of 14-16 relies on parental intervention in dealings with the employer. Studies show that children can engage in work at an earlier age than 14 and without parent's intervention, as a rule.

The legislation of the Republic of Armenia uses the term "paid work" for children or by saying "work" already implies payment for efforts, however it would be more useful to apply terms "beneficial", "harmful" or "dangerous" and therefore "prohibited". While the law does make use of the term "harmful" it is not clear where the border between works of "beneficial" and "non beneficial" nature lies. This unsettled issue generates serious complications for regulation of the sector.

In article 102 of the Labour Code it is stipulated that voluntary work cannot be considered illegal, hence a problem arises on how to find out whether the work has been undertaken voluntarily or with application of violence or force. This issue is extremely urgent in relation to children. The Labour Code of the Republic of Armenia does not currently specify what is considered forced labour. Another gap in the legal framework is the fact that so far the legislation of the Republic of Armenia does not stipulate the notion of "informal economic activity", which makes specialists face barriers in their work.

The informal economy makes up a considerable part of national economy and labour market and plays an important role in creation of jobs and generation of income. Since urbanization is high in the country, the informal economy as a rule "absorbs" the major part of urban labour force. The informal economy has become a crucial alternative means of survival since the level of pensions, benefits and salaries remains to be insignificant. Yet there is a connection between poverty and work in informal economy: gaps in labour legislation, lack of a system of social protection of employees involved in informal economy as well as the fact that the wages are lower in the informal economy than in the formal economy, makes people "occupied" but does not develop into means of breaking away from poverty.

Chapter 2. Methodology and data collection

2.1 Goal and objectives of the study

Goal

Examination of the phenomenon of the labour of working children in the Republic of Armenia aimed at child rights (those related to labour) protection, which includes collection of information on occurrence of child labour and relevant factors and development of a package on recommendations targeted at regulation of the phenomenon.

Key objectives

- * To establish the nature and forms, reasons of involvement and regional peculiarities of child labour in the labour market of the Republic of Armenia.
- * To establish conditions of labour of children enrolled in labour market of the Republic of Armenia as well as main dimensions of the impact of the mentioned phenomenon on health, education and development of children.
- * To produce the demographic characteristic of working children in the Republic of Armenia at the marz and national level.
- * To submit recommendations for prevention of child labour, monitoring of working conditions and improvement of the situation.

2.2. Generation of the sample. During the study households have been taken as units of observation, since they have been viewed by the study group as the social environment where the personality of a child emerges and the process of inclusion really takes place. Random selection of households given the representative sample allows to make reliable judgments on the occurrence of the phenomenon of child labour in Armenia as well as the number, gender and age distribution of working children, reasons for the phenomenon, the relation of the families of working children to socially vulnerable groups and social strata, main forms of the phenomenon observed in our practice.

Table 1. Survey sample by type of settlement

	Number of households by type of settlement			Total
	Yerevan	City/town in marzes	Village	
Yerevan	369			369
Syunik		30	21	51
Kotayk		46	45	91
Vayots Dzor		8	11	19
Shirak		56	34	90
Tavush		20	24	44
Gegharkunik		29	47	76
Armavir		32	62	94
Ararat		31	64	95
Lori		58	34	92
Aragatsotn		19	28	47
Total		329	368	1066

During the survey multi-layer territorial sampling has been performed. The population of households in the Republic of Armenia has been considered as total population. In case of the sample size of 1066 the marginal error of the sample does not exceed 3% for a 0.95 confidence level. The sample size was 1066 units. As a result of layering that size has been distributed among Yerevan and 10 marzes. In Yerevan 369 households and in towns and villages of the other 10 marzes 697 households have been selected while the number of settlements was over 40.

For identifying units of the sample the method of routing sample has been applied. Before

entering the chosen household the interviewer has checked on the presence of children of the age of 7 and up /there could also be children of other ages but the presence of a child of the mentioned age interval was an obligatory condition for including the household in the sample, otherwise he/she should have searched for another household. In the event of detecting a working child in the household a separate interview has been held with him/her, too.

The designed multi-layer territorial sampling has been accomplished in the following 5 stages:
I stage. The units (cells) of the selection of the first stage have been the settlements. Layering of the general population has been done by territorial division, by type of settlement (urban vs. rural), by size of settlement and by altitude of the settlement.

1. The following types of settlements have been incorporated into the population:

- settlements with population below 1.000
- settlements with population of 1,000-10,000
- settlements with population of 10,001-20,000
- settlements with population of 20,001-50,000
- settlements with population of 50,001- 100,000
- settlements with population of 100,001-500,000
- settlements with population of 500001 and up
- villages

2. The population has included settlements, which were situated at 3 altitude zones:

- I zone – elevation of up to 1000m
- II zone – elevation of 1000-1500m
- III zone – elevation of 1500m and up

The population has been distributed on the basis of a strategy to ensure equal chances for selection of final sample units (that is, the units have been distributed directly in proportion to the sizes of population of marzes and settlements).

II stage. The selection units (cells) of the second stage were the streets. Layering has been done based on the types of streets – downtown and suburb. In particular, in Yerevan the sampling has been conducted in all 11 communities.

III stage. The selection units (cells) of the third stage were the buildings (or houses). In each street the buildings have been selected by random sampling.

IV stage. The selection units (cells) of the third stage were the households. Those households have been included in the sample, which have children of the age of 7-18. So, 1066 households have been selected. Households have been chosen from the list by random sampling.

V stage. In the 5th stage the selection of final units has been performed. The strategy for selection of “single interviewee” has been applied, i.e. the member of the household has been included in the sample that could provide more detailed information on the child. In the sub-sample of working children the child of the age of 7-18 has been included who had his/her date of birthday closest to the date of the survey.

Interviews with employers: During the survey, for the working children identified in the sample a list of work places and employers has been compiled. In each settlement included in the sample (40 settlements) such a list has been prepared. Employers were selected from those lists for interviews by sectors of economy - industry, agriculture, trade, construction, services, etc.

Interviews were held with the employers, which have allowed obtaining a full picture on the

status of protection of rights of working children, to appreciate what issues exist in that sector, what mechanisms need to be introduced in order for working children to be more protected. Organization of interviews with employers has allowed obtaining an information that will lay ground for regulation of legal issues present in the field. 17 employers have been interviewed in total.

Organisation of focus groups. *Arrangement of focus groups with participation of specialists dealing with children:* Nine focus groups have been set up in marz centres, where specialists dealing with children in the marz have been involved (service providers and decision-makers on child issues - teachers, doctors, employees of NGOs dealing with child issues, social workers, psychologists, officers of guardianship committees, employees of newly-formed marz departments of child protection, employees of social, education, health departments in marz administrations, Labour Inspectorate, Employment services).

I stage. In 8 marzes lists of institutions dealing with children have been compiled:

- a) schools
- b) polyclinics
- c) juvenile police departments
- d) NGOs (local and international)
- e) state institutions, departments, bodies (guardianship and trusteeship committees, child protection departments, etc.).

II stage. Separate lists for each of the above-mentioned institutions have been compiled and from each of them one institution has been randomly selected (1 school, 1 polyclinic, 1 police department, etc.).

III stage. From each selected institution 1 or 2 experts have been chosen with considerations to ensure representation of institutions and keep the group size within acceptable limits. The selection has been done on the basis of objective criteria – work experience, education background, degree, etc.

Justification of the methodology of focus groups' sampling with participation of specialists working with children: The method of focus group has enabled the specialists well aware of child issues to discuss the issues of working children in their marz, complement each other and obtain complete information on the status of working children in the given marz. With the help of focus groups it was possible to find out the attitude of specialists to child labour and to understand whether the phenomenon of child labour is part of our culture or a forced social practice, to indentify the causes of the phenomenon, the gender and age structure and geography of working children, to identify the shortfalls of the law, as well as to find solutions to changing the situation and protecting child rights.

Preparation and implementation of focus group discussions have been arranged by experts with relevant qualification. The initial outcomes of mass survey carried out have shaped the key questions subject to discussion in focus groups.

Brainstorming: Having received information on the situation of working children in the country and highlighting the existing issues, in November 2007 an expert survey was conducted with the method of brainstorming with participation of specialists playing major roles in the development of policies on the child: representatives of relevant departments of Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Labour Inspectorate, Employment social assistance), marz child protection departments, UNICEF consultant. In the preparatory phase of the survey, experts were chosen from the relevant institutions taking into consideration certain objective criteria – experience, official position, education background, recognition in the sector.

18 experts took part in brainstorming. Taking into account the data obtained as a result of the study, the brainstorming was held primarily covering the steps targeted at further improvement of the legislative framework, issues on creation of appropriate mechanisms and development as well as execution of appropriate programs.

Organisation of focus group discussions with participation of working children: 4 focus group discussions were held with working children although they were not initially planned. For additional focus groups with working children (4) marzes have been chosen after the survey of households depending on the number of working children. The additional focus group discussions have been implemented in those 4 marzes, where the numbers of working children have been relatively higher (Vanadzor, Shirak, Armavir, and Ararat). 8-10 interviewees have participated in each of the focus group discussions.

Selection of marzes: The above-mentioned marzes have been chosen taking into consideration the data of quantitative research (based on data of marzes with more working children).

Selection of children. As a result of the quantitative survey, a list of working children has been prepared for each marz chosen. The data on children has been grouped by ways of their involvement in household activities. 8 children have been included in focus groups on a random basis while trying to ensure representation of their work by sectors/ directions.

By using the findings of surveys conducted with households 23 working children have been selected, whose cases have been individually examined by the method of case study (episodes of their social stories are presented in the report).

2.3. Methods of obtaining information

In the first stage of project implementation the following documents on child labour have been reviewed:

- a) legislative and normative acts of the Republic of Armenia regulating child labour,
- b) available statistical information on working children,
- c) reports of studies on working children conducted by various institutions (state, public, international).

Consequently the study group gained an idea on the urgency and the current status of examination of the issue of working children in the Republic of Armenia as well as the occurrence, geography and factors leading to the phenomenon.

The following methods have also been applied:

Quantitative methods: (surveys of households and working children), the results of which have been processed by mathematical methods, and

Qualitative methods: unstructured interviews with employers, focus group discussions with specialists, surveys of children working in households, which have allowed to identify the qualitative indicators characterizing the phenomenon.

2.3.1. Study tools

The following tools have been prepared for the field phase of the study:

- * Questionnaire for household survey
- * Questionnaire for interviews with working children
- * Questionnaire for focus groups of specialists
- * Questionnaire for survey of employers (see in the annexes)

The suitability of study tools for information collection has been verified with brief studies, after which they have been fine-tuned and prepared for the main study.

2.3.2. Selection and training of interviewers and supervisors

With the purpose of realization of the field stage of the study 20 interviewers have been hired and instructed. After experimental text interviews a selection of 17 has been made.

For interviewers and supervisors selected training has been conducted on June 17-20 (2 days were dedicated to theory, 1 day – to practice and familiarization with the questionnaire), another day was dedicated to learning practical skills such as rules of holding an interview, sampling and working conditions as well as key ethical rules.

2.3.3. Organisation and monitoring of the field stage of the study

In the field stage the interviewers have travelled in groups to marzes and carried out surveys in settlements chosen in advance with planned proportions. The surveys have involved all marzes and Yerevan.

With the purpose of monitoring the quality of work of interviewers they were requested to write down the interviewee's phone number at the end of the questionnaire. The supervisors have been in the field along with the interviewers supervising the process of interviews. Their task was also to call the interviewees on the days following the survey by random selection and check whether the survey has actually taken place and the interviewers have touched upon all questions. After going out to the field the team has been in constant contact with the Coordinator. By such supervision it was possible to ensure the quality of data being collected in the field.

Minutes of qualitative questionnaires have been prepared and developed in line with the questionnaire. Then preliminary reports were developed for each marz, which were subsequently integrated into the final report.

2.4. Sources of collection and methods of analysis of data

The data obtained as a result of *quantitative* survey (household survey) were input into the computer and processed with computer program SPSS 14.0. Data processing was done in two phases. In the first phase one-factor frequency tables were processed, and then correlation analysis was done to analyze relationships among variables. The following correlation relationships were considered: a) type of settlement and probability of child work; b) child work and life activities (health, leisure, education); c) level of income of the family and children's lifestyle, the fact of children's working and the rest of variables, etc.

The information obtained as a result of *qualitative studies* (interviews with employers, focus group discussions, brainstorming) has been analyzed and is presented in the report.

Thus:

- The surveys of 1066 households as planned under the methodology have been conducted as planned.
- Surveys of children working in households have been conducted (65 in total).
- The number of 17 unstructured interviews planned to be held with employers has been kept.
- No deep interviews with working children was initially planned but 23 such interviews have been held (2 were suicide cases).
- 8 focus group discussions with specialists working with children were planned, 9 have

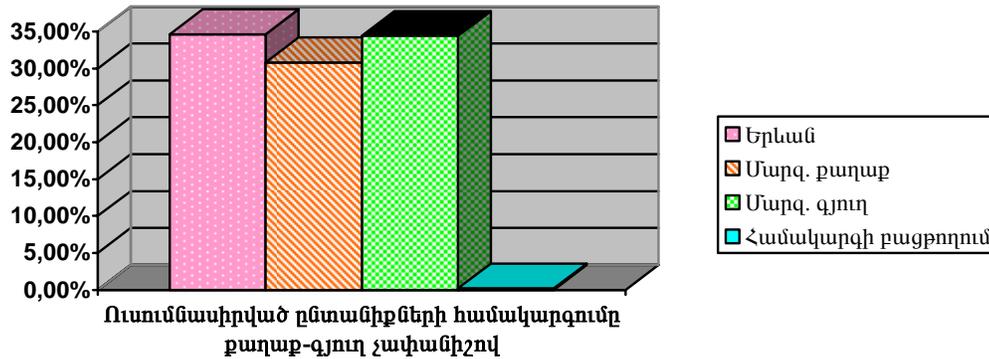
- been held, and 1 brainstorming session (as initially planned) was held.
- 1 brainstorming discussion (as planned beforehand).
- Focus group discussions with working children were not initially planned but 4 such events were held.
- Expert surveys were not planned either but 10 have been held.

For summary information on interviewees see annex 4.

Chapter 3. Characteristics of study data

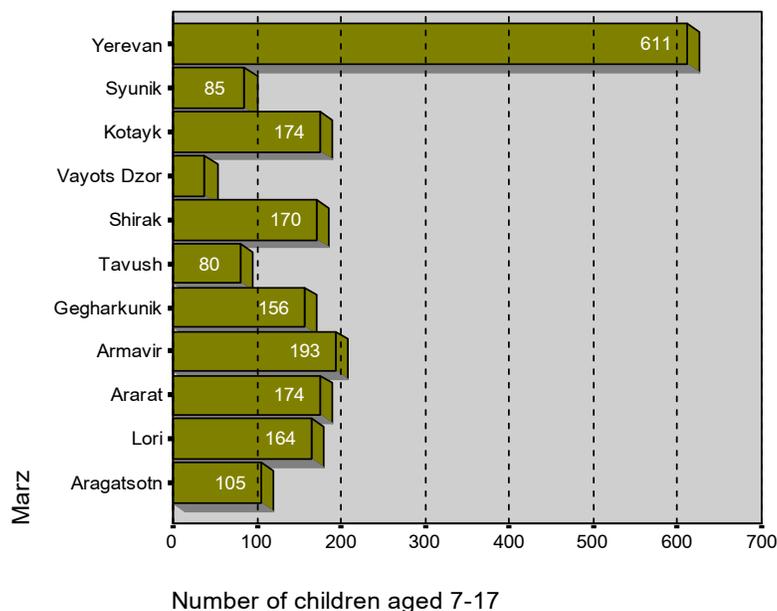
3.1. Social-demographic profile of households surveyed. The makeup of the number of families surveyed by town-village criterion is the following (chart 1):

Chart 1. Families surveyed by the criterion of town-village



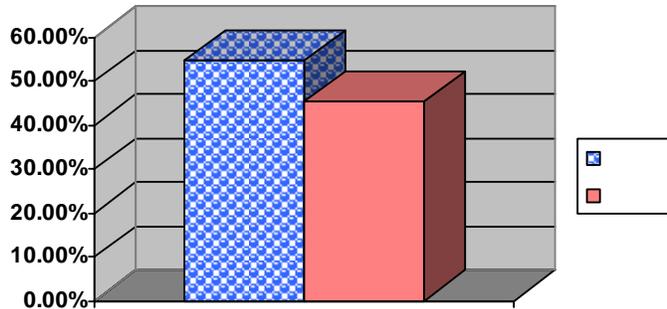
The distribution of the number of children aged 7-18 (18 exclusive) (1946) identified in the households observed is presented in Chart 2 by marzes:

Chart 2. Number of children by marzes



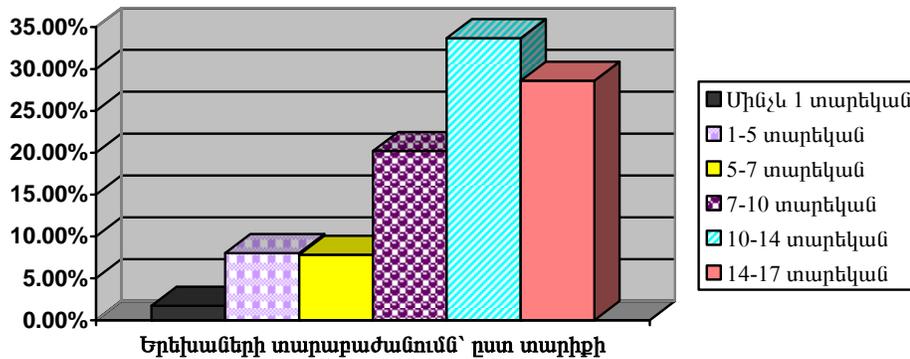
The distribution of surveyed children by gender is the following (chart 3):

Chart 3. Distribution of children by gender



The group of children in surveyed families is divided into the following age subgroups (chart 4):

Chart 4, Distribution of children by age



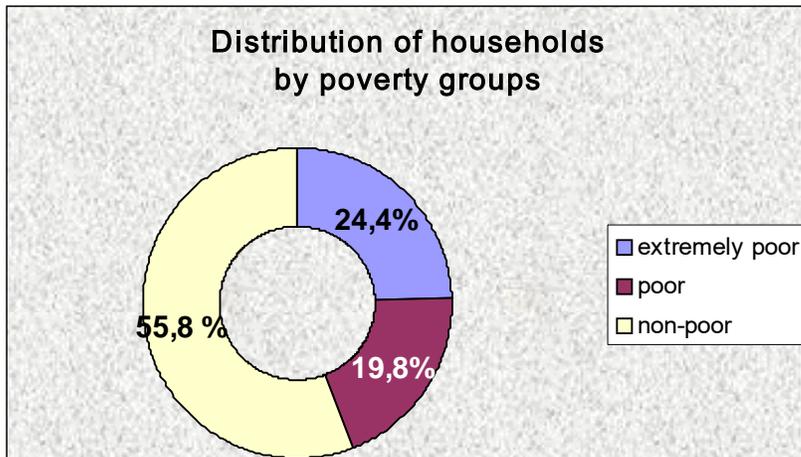
Among all children surveyed children with disabilities accounted for 1.6% and refugees accounted for another 1%.

By composition of families: families consisting of 2 members accounted for 2.3%, families with 3 members – 9.09%, families with 4 members - 24.5%, families with 5 members - 26.07%, families with 6 members - 26%, families with 7 members - 9.19%, families with 8 members - 3.09% and families with 9 members - 4.97% of the sample (chart 1, annex 3).

In 36.3% of households surveyed there is one or more member with higher education. In 90% of households there are members whose education background is between incomplete higher education and secondary education. Members with lower education background total a similar number but their vast majority comprise children who do not go to school yet or have not finished their eight-year education. Overall the education background in households surveyed during the study is quite high, which is a favourable precondition for successful education career of children unless social obstacles hamper that possibility.

By the criterion of material base, households are grouped in the following way (chart 5).

Chart 5. Distribution of households by poverty groups



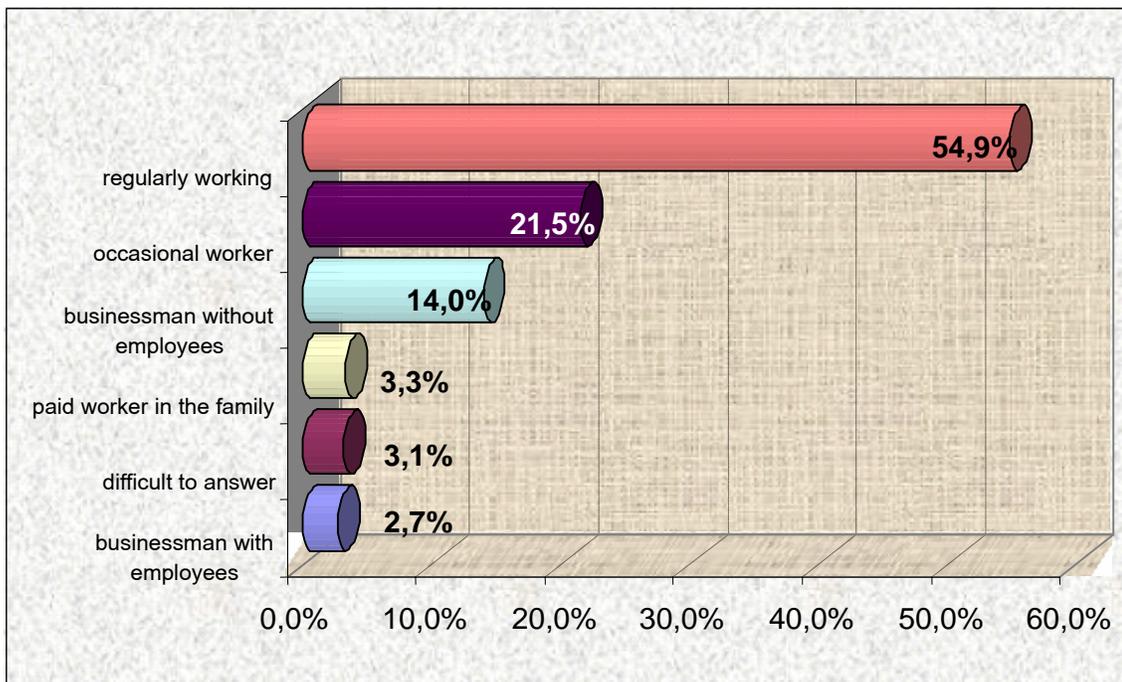
The poverty threshold was taken AMD 20.289 per 1 person per month¹⁰. Those families with total expenditures of less than the adopted poverty threshold were considered poor. Extreme poor were considered those families where members spent less than AMD 13.266 per person per month.

Over 1/3 of households surveyed are poor, which jeopardizes the processes of care and socialization of children growing up in those families.

In 44% of households surveyed there is not even one member having regularly paid job; in only 36.7% and 14.8% there are respectively one and two regularly working members (see table 1, annex 2).

The nature of jobs of working family members has the pattern shown in chart 6:

Chart 6. Distribution of families' working members by nature of work



¹⁰ , 2007.

All these are arguments supporting the hypothesis that in a large group of households children are exposed to high risk as those households lack stable and sufficient financial inflows.

Table 2 evidences that in 65 of households surveyed there was at least 1 working child identified. In some households the number of working children was more than one and their total number in the population amounted to 71.

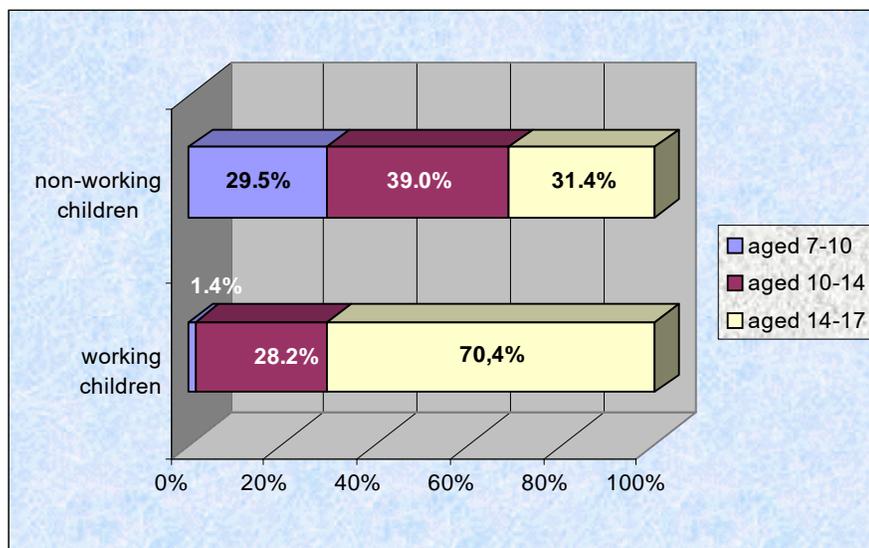
Table 2. Distribution of households by the criterion of presence of working children.

	Number	%
Households with working children	65	6,1
Households without working children	1001	93,9
Total	1066	100,0

The share of working children in all children was 3.8%. Out of them 84.5% were boys and 15.5% were girls.

70.4% and 28.2% of working children were of the age groups of 14-18 (18 exclusive) and 10-14 respectively, while children aged 7-10 amounted to 1.4%.

Chart 7. Age groups of working and non-working children



3.2. Living conditions of children in the family

Given the conditions of the present poverty scale, in many families care and upbringing of children are jeopardized and education and health services are not accessible. The interviewees were unequivocally stressing that Armenian families receive adequate attention by the state, that is, parents are provided with jobs and, whenever necessary, adequate support. They would state that the family would not allow occurrence of distortion of the natural flow of childhood of their children. 53.9% of the surveyed have permanent income while 51.4% solely rely on benefits and pensions (see table 2 in annex).

Within the framework of the program of “Family benefits for poverty” implemented in the country, measures taken by the state are not enough for the family to be in a position to fully protect children from social risks.

As study findings state 69% of families have never taken advantage of any assistance by any service. Of these families 4.3% have at least one working child.

Noteworthy facts

“We were hardly making ends meet with state benefit in 6 people. My husband started to work, we were receiving merely AMD 40,000, he was working as a guard, and payment of the benefit was terminated. Then my sons aged 14 and 15 had to start carrying heavy bags on the construction... I am doing gathering work on others’ fields and my daughters help me, what else can we do for livelihood, how can they go to school? ...” Mother of working children

It can be concluded that one of the consequences of the outstanding issue of family welfare is the involvement of children in work at an early age while from the perspective of the system of family benefits for poverty the circumstance of presence of a working child in the family is not a matter of special consideration.

Hence, the level of livelihood of the family and the circumstance of engagement of children in work at an early age are in direct correlation.

In the course of the survey it was found out that besides financial problems, in some communities of the country there are also other important issues related to living conditions such as insufficiency of infrastructures, absence of drinking and irrigation water and roads. This significantly complicates the possibility to generate income, childcare, augments the existing risks associated with health care. Especially notable were the issues of housing conditions and inadequacy of food.

Noteworthy facts

The house of the family of the working children lacked bath, toilet and the windows did not have glass. The grandmother of the children said that they eat very poorly and for days only drink tea (especially herself and the younger grandchild), the other 2 grandchildren and the son eat something outside, for example, the grandchild working in the neighbouring cafe provides them with food from time to time. Kapan

In particular there were issues related to lack of housing not only due to objective reasons (in the earthquake zone - Shirak, Lori, in the landslide zone - Tavush, Kapan, etc.) but subjective reasons as well such as sale of own houses driven by the need, deterioration of available housing conditions due to long-lasting lack of opportunity to renovate them, etc.

3.3. Child education

Difficulties have materialized in the issues of organisation of education for children. In some communities the accessibility of mainstream education (in particular secondary education) has become very serious: absence of a school in the community, difficulties related to creating a respective class (mixed age classes), difficulties related to going to school in a neighbouring community, transportation and other expenses. Part of the difficulties associated with schooling is connected with the livelihood of the families. Whenever there is a problem of packing village schools and classes with required number of children, students end up further education in schools of neighbouring communities (which entails financial and transportation problems) or simply give up the idea of further education. In some villages such situations have been encountered when secondary schools were transformed into eight-year schools. There are communities where because of a small number of children even first grades are not formed and

lower grades are merged¹¹. There is also an issue of human resources. Young families abandon villages leaving schools without qualified specialists.

By witness of some participants of focus groups the opportunities for further education are very limited for rural and some urban children. The centralization of educational institutions in the capital and some cities hinders the access of children of other settlements to education. In some marzes, e.g. Vayots Dzor, the opportunities to receive higher education are very limited and the same are chances for getting a job with such educational background.

About 78% of both working and non-working children identified in families during the survey were school students.

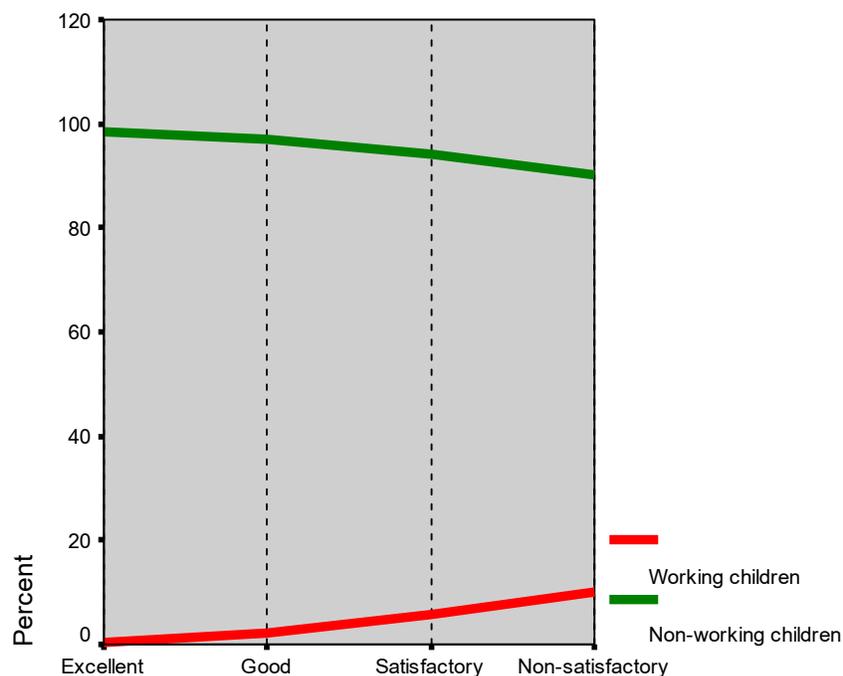
Table 3. Educational institutions attended by working and non-working children

	The educational institution currently attended	working %	non -working %	Total %
1	College	9,8	4,0	4,1
2	Mainstream school	85,4	92,3	92,1
3	Special school	2,4	1,3	1,3
4	Higher educational institution	2,4	2,3	2,3
	No answer	0	0,2	0,2

Data in the above table shows that the vast majority of children both working and non-working at the moment of the survey attend mainstream schools. 9.8% of working children (as opposed to 4% of non-working children) attended secondary vocational education institution. As to the performance of school children the situation is not very robust. First, in families where there is an intention to receive higher education in the future plans of the child the family starts working on preparing the child for that goal from an early age thereby taking that burden from the school (by intensively following preparation of lessons, hiring additional teaching, etc.). The family does not count on the school which seems to have released itself from that obligation. Moreover, in some cases school personnel would “not notice” absences when the child is taking additional classes out of school. As low as 8.4% of children aged higher than 7 report on having or receiving professional education. 21.1% of children of the mentioned age group receive higher education, 11.2% receive secondary professional, and 65.2% receive secondary and eight-year education. In Chart 8 the pattern of performance of working and non-working children is illustrated.

Chart 8. The performance of working and non-working children during the semester

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The above pattern on the quality of study of the working child is explained by their chronic tiredness, staying back and other problems in overall conditions of devaluation of education. In the meantime the comparison of future plans of working and non-working children witnesses certain differences (table 4).

Table 4. Plans of working and non-working children for the coming 3 years

Plans of children for the coming 3 years		working %	non-working %	total %
To work		30,0	2,5	3,5
To continue the study		44,3	90,9	89,2
To take up military service		18,6	2,9	3,5
To leave for abroad		4,3	0,4	0,5
To get married		0	0,7	0,7
Having no clear plans		0	1,1	1,1
To get crafts training		0	0,1	0,1
Other		2,9	0,7	8
Difficult to answer		0	0,1	0,1
Total		100,0	100,0	100,0

The vast majority of non-working children have a plan to continue their studies while only 44% of working children do so. As low as 2.5% of non-working children have plans of working in coming three years. Working children do not plan to replace their work activities with education either. 30% of them intend to keep on working and another group expects to leave for the army. Both groups have plans to leave Armenia.

During the survey it was found out that there were many cases when due to poor financial status of the family children had to attend boarding schools or special mainstream schools. As a result of recent conversion of some boarding schools into care centres there are parents who prefer stopping children's education. Most of those children have to work to provide for the family's needs and leave education. Such a shift is caused by several factors including the

difficulty to switch from the relatively easy study program curricula of the boarding school to that of the mainstream school, reduction of certain material guarantees, rise of transportation costs and, finally, failure to value the importance of education.

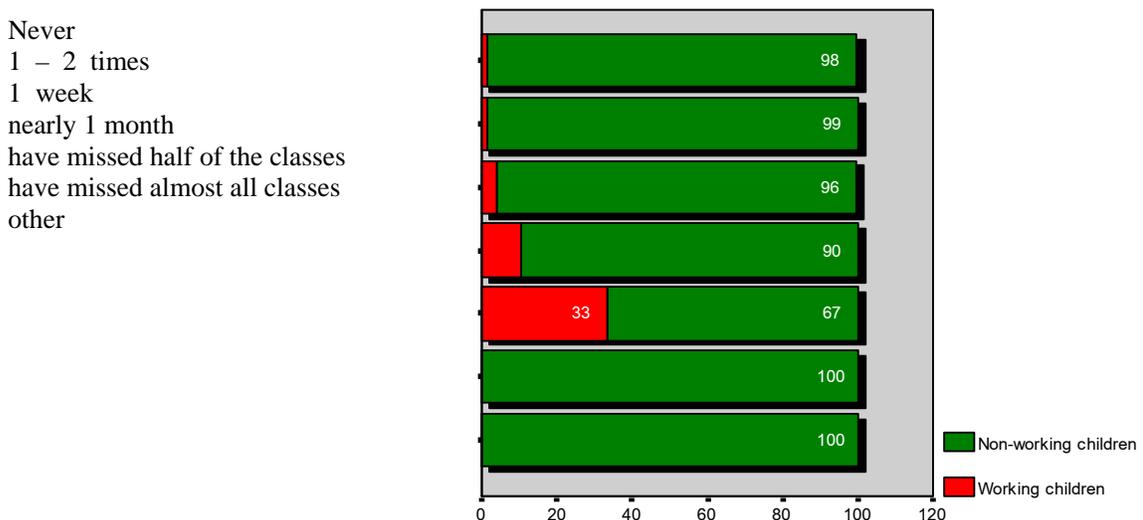
...My children do not have mental disorders, just because of lack of money they attended a boarding school because they were eating right there, besides, receiving school stationery free of charge and textbooks and having classes right there. But now there is no point for them to stay there they'd better come and help me... A parent of working children, Vanadzor

Education and upbringing of children suffer a lot because of absences. The study data prove that absences of children attending schools are common practice: with 20% of absences lasting a week or longer (see annex 2, table 11). However we should bear in mind that sometimes absences (not for a health-related reason) happen at the consent of parents (who think that not attending a school is not a big loss). This practice is uncontrollable and interventions are ineffective as the school has lost its authority in the eyes of parents while the livelihood has become difficult. This is why whenever a choice has to be made between taking the child to school and involving him/her in household activities they choose the last option.

Pursuant to article 176 of Criminal Code a parent failing to fulfil his/her obligation with regard to upbringing or education of the child, in particular failing to control the absences of the child from classes or insufficiently exercising such control, shall bear liability in the court. This year administrative penalties have been imposed in 6 cases (each AMD 1,000), but those interventions have not produced any result. focus group discussion with specialists, Yerevan

It is interesting to note that high number of absences apply to both working and non-working children. A tendency of general devaluation of education is observed (see chart 9).

Chart 9. Number of absences of working and non-working children during the semester



The working child does not get an absence score at school even in cases where he/she does not go to school for one month or longer¹². As the specialists dealing with children reported the attendance in early autumn is especially low. This phenomenon is especially visible in rural communities connected with harvesting activities where children are widely participating.

There are children who help their own families, but the number of children working during the harvest season for others and receiving some form of compensation (mainly in-kind) against their work is high as well. The problem is that some children miss classes not only during the harvest, but also they do not continue their study at all with the purpose of helping their families.

“... it is not that I do not want to study but I just do not manage to find time because I work and my job is hard”. A child having stopped the education from grade 5, Kotayk.

Table 5 shows that there are children dropping out of education with wide-ranging reasons. In particular for 6.1% of children not attending schools the reason is social.

Table 5. Main reasons of children not attending schools

Main reasons for not attending schools	number	%
Has graduated from school	190	82,3
The family is not able to pay for schooling expenses	14	6,1
Is not able to cope with the education program	7	3,0
Is not interested in study	6	2,6
The age is young	6	2,6
Disability	5	2,2
The family does not attach importance to school education	3	1,3
Works against any payment / in family business / farm	3	1,3
Helps in household work activities	3	1,3
Illness	1	4
Other	3	1,3
No answer	5	2,2
Total	231	100

Focus group discussions held with participation of working children show that the majority of working children have left school for work while part of them have been “pulled out of school” by their parents so that they can work and help the family. They mentioned that they would very much like to receive education in future but for some of them it is a mere desire as they cannot afford it.

Thus it can be stated that the gaps of education in the lives of children pausing their study because of work are not filled later.

During the survey certain cases came across when children would not continue their study because of the attitude of teachers or other specialists.

¹²... While the school principal or teacher often fail to report accordingly to the appropriate bodies

Noteworthy facts

I have attended a mainstream school but up to grade 4. I studied at school with satisfactory marks having difficulties with only “English” subject: the teacher did not like me and would not miss the chance to hurt me. At the end of the year I did not pass to the next grade. I failed to pass for the same reason the next year too. And ultimately I quit the school. My mother transferred my file to another school but I did not go there either – I was too frustrated. An interview with a working child.

Some children reported that sometimes they do not manage to attend classes because of work but teachers treat such cases smoothly knowing that they “earn for the family” with their work. At the same time there existed certain shadow phenomena as well.

Some school principals treat cases of absenteeism because of work calmly and later on issue graduation certificates. Focus group discussion with specialists, Armavir.

During the survey other local peculiarities of the education system have been explored. (See annex 5, references).

3.4. Child health

In general no extraordinary situation with regard to emergence of diseases in children has been reported in this study: based on parents’ opinions no problem has been observed during the last year among 76.8% of children and among others health problems have been reported that are common for children of that age. In surveyed households, in 23,2% of cases one and more cases of health problems have been observed among children while injuries occurred more frequently.

Poverty and associated malnutrition and deterioration of quality of food on one side and difficult access to medical services because of low affordability on the other threaten child health.

In some settlements, especially in rural areas, there is a lack of medical services or the existing ones are not equipped with necessary equipment and means (Lermontovo, Rya Taza and Yeraskh), there are no adequately qualified specialists.

Working children make up a high-risk group in terms of health status as they work in environments and conditions threatening their life, contact with animals, and hence, are more sensitive to various disease outbreaks.

In many cases children are involved in heavy physical works (porter, construction) and even though their harmful consequences on health do not show up immediately, pains regularly appear thereby affecting their health status.

Over the time, as a result of work I have obtained some health problems - pain in my back and waist, but I have not paid attention to them. There have also been cases when I went to work (porter, agricultural works) not feeling very well. In that regard I am very reserved, do not want to express my feelings so that my mother does not learn about my problems and does not worry, besides I need to work albeit with pains every day so that my family is not short of anything.
Working child, village of Azatan

Table 6. Injuries and illnesses reported by working children

Symptoms	Occurrence	%
Severe headache	3	10,3
Arm and leg injury	9	31,0
Fainting	1	3,4
Pains in the back and waist	5	17,2
Eyesight and hearing problems	1	3,4
Bleeding	1	3,4
Disorders of digestive system	4	13,8
Other answers	5	17,2
Total	29	100,0%

As seen in table 6 injuries of arms and legs are the most frequently reported cases. Neither parents nor children were able to find the link between work and certain illnesses: at best they could report on those injuries that have occurred at work. Parents attribute 60% of cases of injuries of working children to work.

In all cases this way or another injuries and diseases are reported more and more frequently among working children than among non-working children.

Considering the occurrence of injuries or other symptoms it becomes clear that the probability of repeating injuries and other symptoms is higher among working children as compared with non-working children (annex 3, chart 2).

According to parents, among working children the number of those who have stopped or changed their main work activity because of injury is the highest.

As for the causes of health problems among children the picture here is rather alarming. Firstly, by 4.5% work is reported as a reason for health problems (annex 2, table 12).

An assumption can be made that this 4.5% may be actually higher because the interviewees answering the questions were parents who in some cases might not know or hide the real cause of the injury (feeling guilty does not prevent them from reporting cases of injuries honestly).

As it was made clear from the outcomes of the focus group discussion held with working children, when they experience serious health problems at work they avoid telling others because they fear losing the job and, consequently, the means for survival.

The boy works in a plant of cement packing as a worker, carries heavy bags and works in a dusty environment all the time. The cement dust has burnt the cornea of his eyes¹³ and he has been absent from work for rather a long time. Kotayk, working child aged 17

Children report that in some cases they do dangerous work and accidents as well as serious injuries become inevitable (for example, a child was seriously injured while collecting wires)¹⁴.

¹³ Notwithstanding that, he is happy with the job, receives AMD

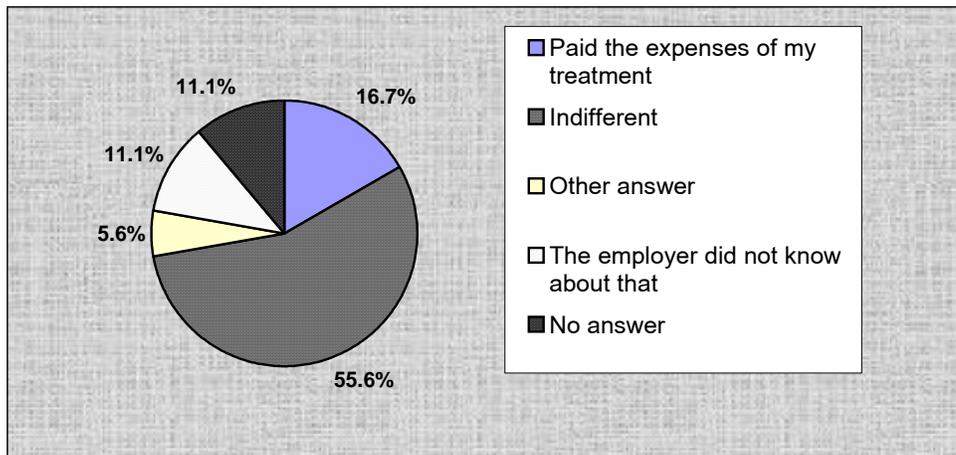
¹⁴

Noteworthy facts

2 years ago my son fell at work from a high place, hit his head and had an injury. Friends brought him home but did not take him to the doctor. At that time he was working on the construction of school No.4 in Vanadzor as a worker. He continued to work afterwards as there was no other working person in the family, but he felt bad very often. Parent of a working child, Vanadzor

The response of employers to injuries (or diseases) happened at work is presented in **chart 10**.

Chart 10. The attitude of the employer to the fact of injury (according to children)



Obviously employers rarely support children in coping with their health problems at work. Perhaps the main reason for that is the absence of contractual relationships which allows the employer to easily “get rid of” such problems.

In some specialists’ opinion working children manage to get money uncontrollably for adults and spend it on harmful stuff such as tobacco, alcohol, etc. Working children attempt to use such stuff much earlier “to reinforce their self-reliance”.

3.5. Child leisure

Child leisure is not usually organised unlike during the soviet period. While during the soviet time children used to have opportunities to organise their leisure in camps and rest-houses in summer nowadays only few children can afford it. Children do not have leisure and recreation as such; this especially applies to rural areas where there is a lack of leisure facilities, music, sports, fine arts schools, etc.

Noteworthy facts

In Vayk the child does not have any activity except farming; even there is no place to walk around: the street has become a place to walking around and spend time. In the village of Her-Her of the same marz some children attended a karate class but they had to go to Vayk for that purpose twice a week and pay a fee and transportation expenses. As a result most of the children were left without any activity.

In some settlements efforts are put to organise leisure activities for children but still they are not enough.

In table 7 children’s leisure activities are presented. Only a small number of children (who can

afford, who have motivated parents, who live in urban settlements, etc.) succeed in realizing their right to leisure.

Table 7. Leisure activities of working and non-working children

What activity do you like to engage in when you have free time	Working %	Non-working %	Total %
To watch TV	23.9	14.2	14.6
To play games	22.5	42.7	42.0
To listen to music	12.7	8.3	8.5
To walk around	12.7	4.3	4.6
To do sports	8.5	7.3	7.3
To visit relatives, friends	5.6	2.3	2.4
To engage in arts	7.0	9.1	9.1
Fishing, hunting	2.8	0,5	0,6
Caring for animals and birds	1.4	0,4	0,5
Land cultivation, planting, gardening	0	0,1	0,1
Passive leisure	5.6	3.3	3.3
Crafts	2.8	1.6	1.6
No free time	0	0,4	0,4
To attend cultural facilities	0	0,3	0,3
Reading	5.6	16.6	16.2
Other	1.4	2.3	2.3
No answer	4.2	1.8	2.0
Hard to answer	0	0,1	0,1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

As we see playing games as an activity is observed among working children two times less than among non-working, while it is widely known that playing games has an important role in formation of the child's personality.

As identified from the data of qualitative study the fact of working seriously interferes with leisure and particularly social contacts.

Currently I am very busy, I work day and night and even do not find time to meet my friends.
A working child, village of Azatan, Shirak marz

Thus the effective use of free time by children is hindered for the following reasons: lack of proper facilities, difficult access to existing facilities and child labour.

Chapter 4. Work activities of children

4.1. Child labour in the household

The study showed that almost all children are engaged in household work activities.

Table 8. Participation of children in household work activities (according to parents)

Has the child conducted household work activities last week	Number	%
yes	1434	73.7
no	511	26.3
Total	1945	100,0

The difficulties of life have led to involvement of children in household work for longer periods and in more types of activities as compared with the past. Moreover, the work is sometimes carried out at the expense of leisure and education of children.

Table 9. Participation of children in household work activities

Types of household works	number	%
Preparation of food	159	11.1
Shopping	818	57,3
House cleaning	695	48,7
Laundry, ironing	246	17,2
Repair works	101	7,1
Carrying water or wood	215	15,1
Child care	35	2,5
Care for sick or elderly family members	20	1,4
Care of animals	204	14,3
Land cultivation and gardening	392	27,5
House construction	23	1,6
Other similar work activities	54	3,8
No answer	19	1,3
Total	1428	100.0%

As we can see along with traditional forms of involvement of child labour in household activities there are also forms that can be indirectly considered as paid work, for instance, agricultural work where children participate quite often.

Occupation of adult members of the family in these activities, which allow them to earn money, has increased sharply and for that reason the duty of general maintenance and serving of the household is often left to children. In engaging in these activities the principle of conventional division of work is sustained and thus gender orientation to household duties of children is maintained.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of official statistics it is obvious that household work is especially widespread among children and women. The reason for such practice are the negative consequences of economic migration whereby male work force had left abroad to find work and subsequently certain types of household activities have passed to other members of the family

and particularly to children.

Around 73, 7% of children engage in household work every day. The others do so more often. If we recall that today many families implement production functions then it is feasible to assume that many children participate in that either directly or indirectly. During the day they replace adults behind the counter, carry the food to the market, and participate in work the ultimate goal of which is earning money.

Children engage in household work primarily in villages doing various agricultural activities (cattle breeding and farming); in the city there are individual cases where the child helps his/her father, brother or other relative in organisation of trade.

With some reservations we can consider that employment of children in the household can also be classified as paid work. In particular, when we look at occupations of children during the day, we see that about 18,6% of them are busy all day long, 27,3% - in the morning when it is time to go to school (annex 2, table 6).

In the majority of mountainous villages children go to summer grazing fields with parents or alone to care for animals or assume the duty of taking out and bringing in the cattle there.

There are cases when children have to bear all responsibilities of the household from time to time due to incapacity of other family members, sometimes combining that undertaking with outside work.

I am so busy that I do not manage to do the work of our house promptly. I mainly help in cutting wood, shopping, all the rest is done by my sister because she is at home the whole day while I work since my father is not here and my mother is in hospital. A 12-year old child, Azatan

A large number of children are engaged in agriculture, a sector, which is not recorded during the analysis of the informal sector based on certain considerations. Since 2003 agricultural workers are not subject to social insurance. Taking into account the fact that in Armenia mainly children and women work in households – without social insurance payments – it can be concluded that pension insurance of rural population is threatened.

Thus it is the financial vulnerability of the family that forces it to widely use child labour. This phenomenon has become massively visible after land privatization when families regained their production functions.

Children are viewed as an important work force for catering family needs. They are extensively involved in production performed in households (which are in some cases very hard or labour intensive) or they replace adults at home in order for the latter to be able to work outside home. And whenever the family has limited opportunities in terms of work capacity of family members children take up the entire responsibility of earning for the family.

4.2. Paid child labour

Paid child labour is not a very obvious phenomenon: perhaps the shortage of jobs for adults hampers wider inclusion of children in paid labour market. At least during the survey of specialists the majority of interviewees are confident that “there are very few cases of working

children”¹⁵.

Anyway, the phenomenon exists and it is more widespread in urban settlements where the possibilities to earn money are higher than those in a village.

Table 10. Indicators of paid child labour

Did the child work last week for remuneration or compensation?	number	%
yes	71	3,6
no	1873	96,2
no answer	2	,1

At the first glance it looks like working children are very few in number but this is not the case. While the above table shows that 3.6% of all children do paid work, in 6.1% of surveyed households working children have been identified (*See table 2, chapter 3*). Secondly, they are only those children who have employers or get paid for their work from other persons. That number does not include children who participate in family businesses or whose work outcomes are present in the final outcome attained by the family, for instance, proceeds from the sale of foodstuffs.

Child work is carried out in various environments in their own or others’ houses, production workshops, on the street, etc. Those environments may be both formalized and non-formalized. Hence the number of working children may be actually much higher. While the formalized mode entails certain standardization and control the non-formalized mode, on the contrary, rules out any supervision and is sometimes very suspicious.

From table 8 of annex 2 it is seen that a large group of children is engaged in agricultural work from which it can be assumed that they are rural children.

By occurrence agriculture is followed by trade and construction. This data shows that children work in risky environments. According to survey findings, while 1/3 of working children have just started their work activities, an equal number of children have work experience of over one year. Therefore it can be concluded that the work is not episodic but is the main occupation for these children. Only 12.3% of working children have permanent jobs while jobs of the rest are seasonal or occasional.

Table 11. Sources of jobs for children

Sources of jobs	Number	%
Parent	20	30.8
Friends, relatives	27	41.5
By announcements	1	1.5
By him/herself	10	15.4
Employer has found	4	6.2
No answer	1	1.5
Other answer	2	3.1
Total	65	100.0

Data of table 11 shows that mainly parents, relatives and friends help children in getting jobs and

¹⁵ In some communities the surveyed

their motivations may vary such as assistance to families, pulling the children out of the street, etc. A small portion of working children is recruited by employers. Today non-formal labour exchanges have emerged in urban settlements where unemployed men gather with an expectation to get jobs with daily remuneration. In some settlements children join them especially during periods of massive harvest.

As to compensation for the work, it normally gets to the employee by an unofficial channel. As low as 6.2% of children put their signatures under their names in the salary ledger (annex 2, table 7). 5.6% of working children work under a contract. More than half of children “pays in“ the money earned by him/herself to the family budget, about 1/4 of them spend it for meeting his/her own needs.

Child labour is not normalized in terms of timing. More than half of them work from morning till evening, and some work as necessary.

Table 12. Duration of child work

Work duration	Number	%
From morning till night	36	55.4
From morning till afternoon	8	12.3
From afternoon till late at night	8	12.3
With shifts	3	4.6
As necessary	10	15.4
Total	65	100

For various children the working week has different durations as they usually do occasional work or work on a daily payment basis. For about half of children the working week lasts 7 days. The rest are less busy because they often do not get a job.

For working children the average weekly load is 40 hours. 40 hours is the duration, which is stipulated under the legislation for adult workers. Moreover, it happens often that a child works overtime but usually gets paid as usual. Survey findings also report cases where the child is not paid at all (14, 3%).

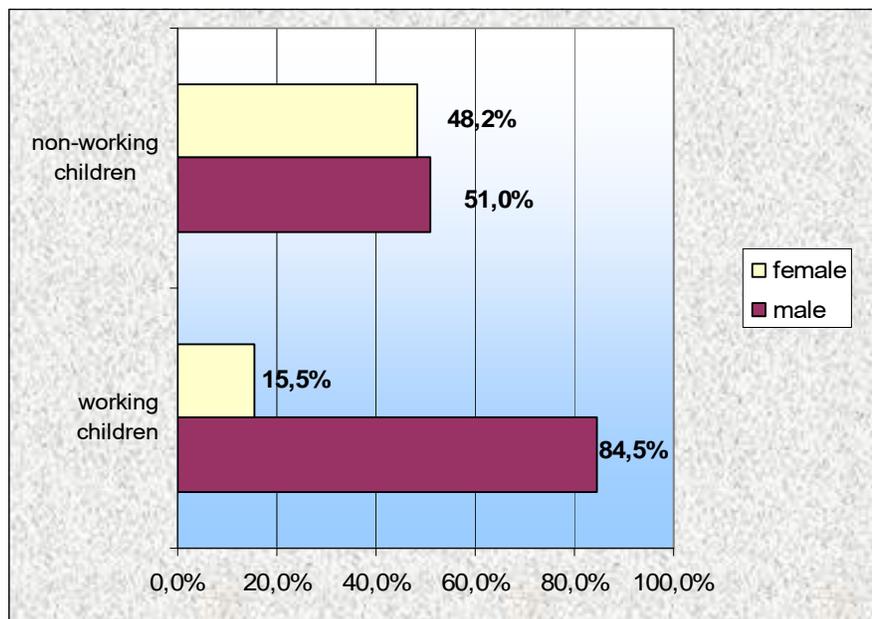
Table 13. Form of remuneration for overtime work

Form of payment for overtime work	Number	%
As usual	13	61.9
Extra payment	2	9.5
Do not pay	3	14.3
Reward somehow	1	4.8
No answer	2	9.5
Total	21	100

Therefore conclusions can be drawn that there is application of child labour without compliance with the norms stipulated, in other words there is exploitation of child labour.

Drawing some parallels between the peculiarities of lives of children involved in paid work and non-working children we arrive at a striking picture. The distribution of working and non-working children by gender has the pattern shown in chart 11.

Chart 11. Distribution of working and non-working children by gender



As we notice the majority of working children are boys. They are mainly from families where due to social pressures children undertake the responsibility to provide for the needs of the family at an early age (absence of parent, their incapacity to work, low incomes, etc.).

1/3 of working children belong to the age group of 10-14. The rest belong to the age group of 14-17 (chart 12). Here it should be remembered that the period of receiving eight-year education ends at that age and children who are from socially vulnerable families or do not have special abilities and ambitions engage in the labour market. Social conditions prevent them from getting appropriate level of professional education and children of that age add to the group of low-qualified workers. For most of them favourable conditions for filling the education gap do not arise even in the future. Few years later boys take up military service and girls (who account for around 15% in that group) either get married or carry on occupying low-qualified jobs.

Limited access to and low demand in secondary vocational education creates serious problems for children aged 14-18. During the soviet period this group used to be enrolled in the system of secondary professional education which used to cover the entire territory of the republic and was accessible and, in a sense, mandatory.

Today in the life of children of this age group a vacuum has emerged as a result of reduced requirement of mandatory education and not offering alternatives.

Furthermore, children not receiving eight-year education due to work do not find themselves in a position to receive secondary vocational education later since in order to qualify for it they must submit their certificate of eight-year education which they lack.

Chart 12. Age groups of working and non-working children

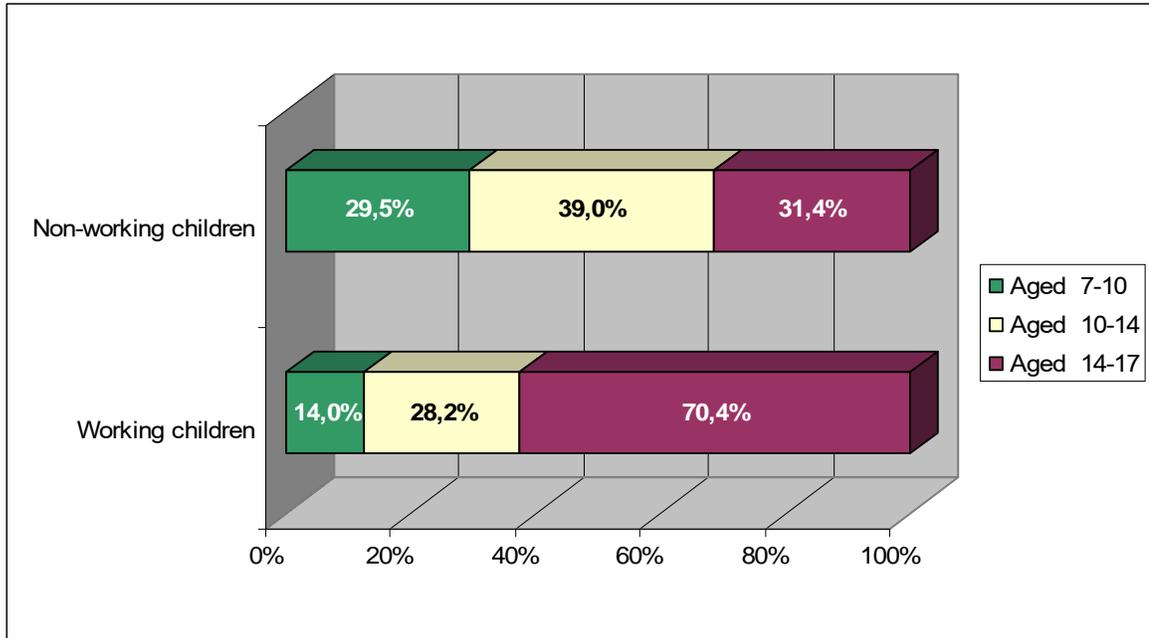
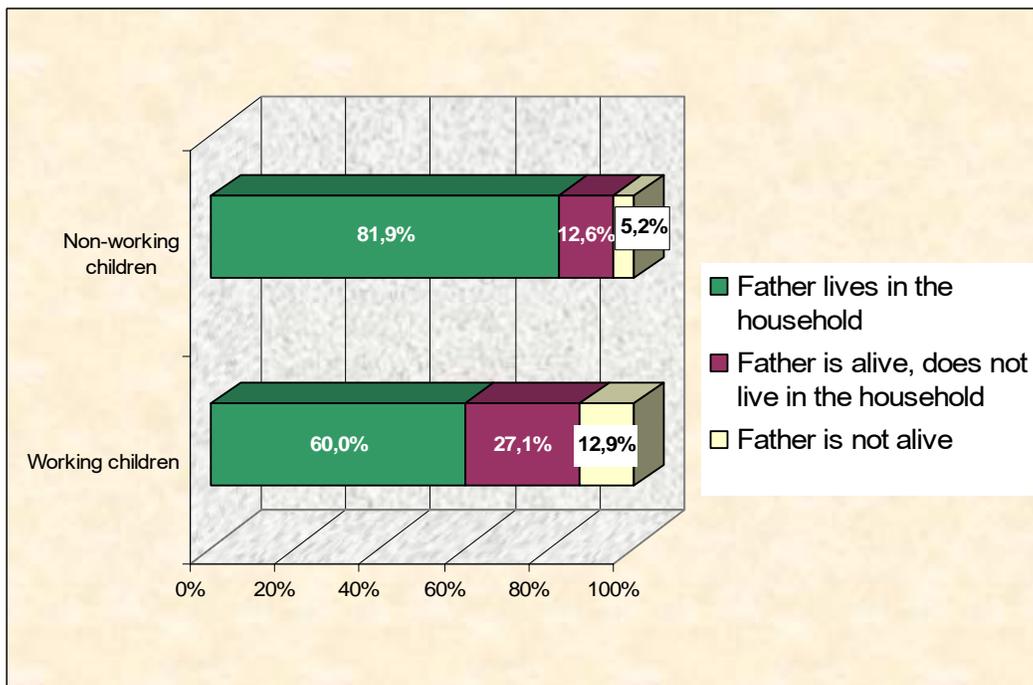


Chart 13. Presence of a breadwinner in families of working and non-working children

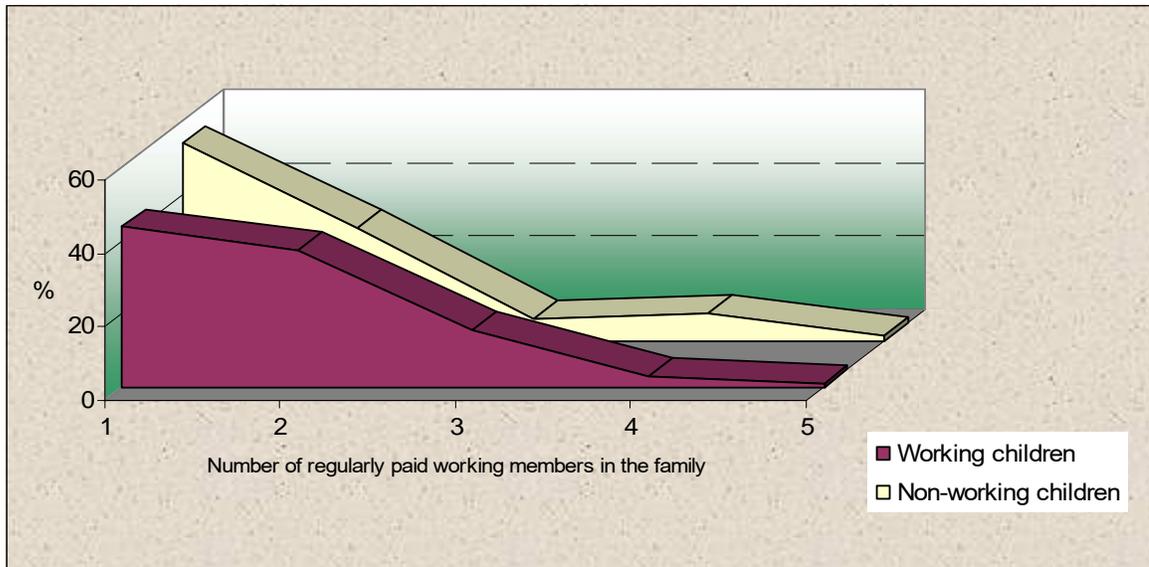


As it can be seen from chart 13, in the group of working children, the number of cases where fathers of children are not alive or live outside the family, is about twice as high as in the group of non-working children. Naturally in such families boys try to take up this role prematurely. This is mainly the reason why in the group of working children the proportion of boys is so significant.

Data given in chart 14 also shows the fact that the inclusion of children in paid labour market is

due to social vulnerability of the family. As working persons appear in the family and their number grows, the number of working children sharply decreases.

Chart 14. Number of families with working and non-working children by the number of regularly working persons in the family

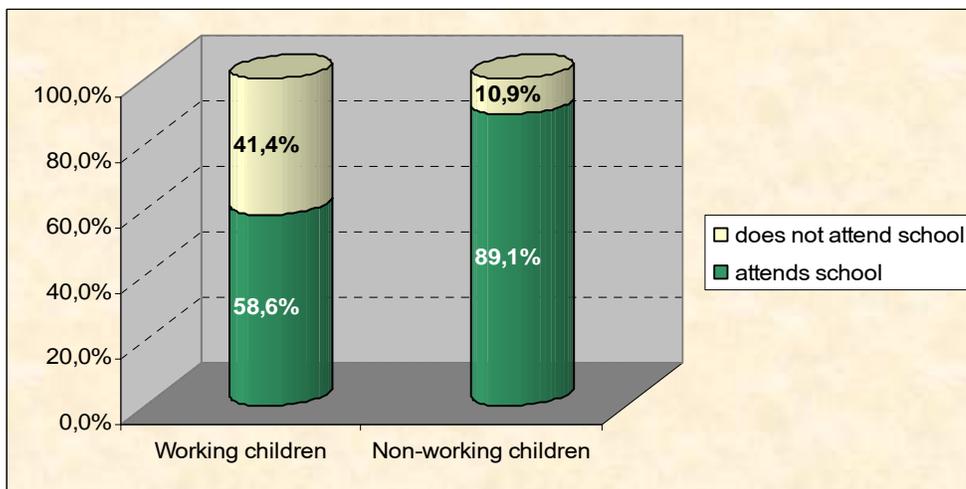


The same pattern is observed while considering the correlation between the number of occasionally working persons in families and the number of working children.

From chart 15 it can be noted that a large group of working children (by around 30% more than in cases with non-working children) has already found itself out of the education system.

And those who continue to attend an education institution do not have regular attendance.

Chart 15. Correlation between attendance of education institution and the fact of working



As for the reasons of failing to attend schools, one of the key reasons in the group of working children was the social vulnerability of the family which prevented them from paying schooling expenses of children as well as lack of interest in education (also in this group part of children stops quits studying earlier or is satisfied with only 8-years education and prefers work to study).

The work fosters new interests in the child which are shaped by the new environment and new people. At the same time work supplies the child with money which is a means of satisfying new interests.

None of the parents of working children has mentioned work as a reason for his/her child missing classes since for those children it is the main activity. On the contrary, in the group of non-working children cases of absences from classes have been reported which were associated with the causes of helping in household work and involvement in family business.

Most of working children have not got and as of moment of the survey have not received any vocational education which reflects the fact that they mainly perform low-qualified work: the majority is not expected to be able to fill their education gaps in the future (*annex 2, table 9*).

Data of the next chart shows that the working children are simultaneously loaded with catering for household needs.

Household duties of working children are heavier. They not only work but also actively participate in household work. Their involvement is much higher than that of non-working children in activities that require high level of responsibility, perseverance and physical force (*see annex 2, table 4*). The majority of children working at the moment of the survey had been involved in various types of paid agricultural activities. By occurrence, the next type of activity in that group was construction. This is obviously a heavy duty for children since their biological maturity has not been achieved and heavy physical loads may lead to various disorders in the development of the body. The next two types of activities were caring for animals and trade. (Table 13).

Table 13. Types of paid work¹⁶

Work for payment	Did he/she work last week for remuneration or any other compensation?		
	yes %	no %	total %
Farming, fishing, waste metal, bottles, harvesting	25.8	34.8	28.1
Food preparation		4.3	1.1
Sale of agricultural produce	15,2	8,7	13.5
Washing, ironing, cleaning, repair of machinery	1,5		1.1
Washing or cleaning of shoes	3,0		2.2
Transportation of goods for exchange or sale	1,5		1.1
Construction	18,2	8,7	15.7
Care for animals	10,6	13,0	11.2
Low-qualified specialist in agriculture sector	6,1	8,7	6.7
Low-qualified specialist in trade sector	10,6	4,3	9,0
Low-qualified specialist in transportation and communications sector	3,0	4,3	3.4
Specialist in culture, sports and leisure sector	3,0	4,3	3.4
Worker in construction		8,7	2.2
Specialist in the sector of municipal utilities	4,5		3.4
Specialist in care technical service	1,5	4,3	2.2
Worker in care technical service		4,3	1.1
Other		1,5	1,1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0

¹⁶ The sum of figures given in columns of Table 13 is higher than one hundred because the surveyed have simultaneously mentioned several activities.

According to specialists the phenomenon of “working children” is inevitable, in the meantime:

There are and will be working children, but we cannot unequivocally state that the child is being exploited. In rural communities the child has always been working. There are children who work in manufacturing and construction sectors but it happens by the will of the child. Focus group discussion, Kotayk

Distribution of sites by occurrence of child labour is presented in table 14:

Table 14. Place of the work for working children

Place of work	%
Own house	3,0
Another's house	1,5
In an organization/office	15,2
On the field, in the garden, land plot, forest	37,9
In the plant/production workshop	1,5
Trade facility	16,7
Various	7,6
Abroad	3,0
On the street	7,6
Service sector enterprise	3,0
No answer	3,0
Total	100

Table 14 shows that 1/2 of children perform their work in the field where they participate in farming and animal breeding processes. The next place of work is trade facilities.

Organisations and offices follow – this can be production workshops, etc. Cases of working abroad are also encountered. These are children who are accompanied by the father or another adult to engage in migrant activities outside Armenia (Russia, Ukraine, etc.). Then the street and other places are reported. By the opinion of children majority of them work on the street. Thus, the working environment of children is risky from the perspective of safety and insurance of that safety is left to the discretion and skills of other participants of the work situation.

Data shown in table 15 allows comparing the physical conditions of activities conducted by working and non-working children. The differences between the first and the fourth answers stand for the likelihood of working children finding themselves in risky environments more often than others.

Table 15. Working conditions of paid working children

Conditions of work	Did he/she work last week for remuneration or any other compensation?		
	yes %	no %	total %
Dust, smoke, gas, noise, poor lighting	53,0	26,1	46,1
Very high/low temperatures, humidity	37,9	39,1	38,2
Hazardous instruments and devices	3,0	4,3	3,4
Work at a high place	4,5		3,4
Other	1,5		1,1
No	30,3	47,8	34,8
No answer	1,5		1,1
Total	100	100	100

In the marz of Syunik working children do mainly heavy construction and blue-collar jobs, are paid very poor salaries, their “working age” varies between 12 and 14. Child labour in hazardous conditions is also recorded, for instance, work in gas filling stations. Focus group discussion with specialists, Kapan, Syunik marz

The relationships with the employer are governed by verbal arrangements. 80% of working children work having only a verbal arrangement with the employer. Merely 3% of them has reported that when entering the work they completed “some papers”. Employers resort to child labour as cheap labour force; however during the study it was observed that today many of them avoid doing so because the interventions of relevant bodies performing child rights protection as well as the labour inspectorate bother them (see the data of table 16).

Facts

As of the moment of the study in the village of Zangakatun of Ararat marz children were involved in gasification program but the leader of the group refused to talk about the program and rejected the arguments brought by the villagers. From the materials of the study

There are individual success stories when the work of children is duly registered, children get paid promptly, they even get special attention. The parents are mostly informed of the fact of the work of children but there are also cases when they are not.

By the way, children usually work on a daily payment basis which is suitable for the employer as well: no record is made, no responsibility is borne.

Table 16. Relationships of working children with employers

Nature of relationships with the employer	%
Contractual verbal arrangement	7,6
Arrangement	48,5
Upon invitation	13,6
The employer has invited by him/herself	27,3
Other	1,5
No answer	1,5
Total	100,0

4.3. Child labour types and child protection

The opportunities for children to find a job are larger in small urban settlements. They are more often involved in short-term assignments and small enterprises such as car service points, vehicle operation, construction, trade, etc. They often engage also in collecting metals and bottles (extraordinary “non-standard” activities). In Shirak marz, children working in public minibuses have been encountered (Gyumri).

A large group of families in rural and particularly small urban settlements, (formerly regional administrative centres or industrial settlements) surveyed do not have own land plots and as a result work with landlords, especially large ones.

These activities are equally attended by children regardless of climatic conditions on the field. Situations have been reported when children have been involved in such temporary paid activities alone without participation of adults of the family (either in negotiations or in

implementation of work).

In villages, children are mainly engaged in seasonal works such as harvest and animal breeding. In mountainous settlements they engage themselves also in harvesting, for example they collect wild berries and plants for selling.

Some of the specialists think that child labour is not a widespread phenomenon here, while the legislation covering child labour is almost perfect, even administrative fines are stipulated for violations. Therefore, “we can be sure that employers will not record and register child labour” (focus group). Moreover, by the opinion of specialists of Labour Inspectorate “if a problem is not detected by inspections, there is no problem”. By the opinion of specialists of employment services they do not perform any functions with regard to child labour and employment.

“I have been an eyewitness of a number of cases when the requirements of work conditions or work duration have been breached. The problem is there and is neglected and no one is tackling it”. From the interview with representatives of RSS

According to some experts the exploitation of child labour is present and it is a fact. Some of these problems refer to cases when the work of the child is “controlled” by strangers, for instance, a child gathers ferrous metals but he/she does not take it to the reception point by him/herself which would lead to maximum earnings, moreover, this is done by an adult who subsequently earns more than the child doing the job. The study has shown that some children work in difficult conditions. In Armavir and Ararat, cases of sunstroke of working children were reported.

Noteworthy facts

Children work in markets, carry heavy loads or collect cables in destroyed houses which may collapse every moment. Focus group discussion, Shirak marz

The child washes cars with cold water in wintertime, carries loads heavier than him, and breathes in the dust of cement. Expert opinion survey, Ashtarak

According to children the main reason for doing paid work is to help the family. In some cases the child happens to be the only family member having capacity to work and has to cater for the minimum needs of the family. These children give the money they earn to parents.

“At the beginning I was collecting berries in the forest for selling. After the age of 13 I started working in construction as we need to buy medicines for my father, we had a really bad time.” Working child, Vanadzor

“... One can say that I do not have friends because if you don't have money they “tease” you. We don't have a proper house that is why I left the school after grade 8 to help my parents to build our house.”¹⁷ 15 years old boy, Gyumri

The next motivation for working is the urge to feel more valued and respected. Relatives, friends encourage the child to work and this is an incentive for the child. The child feels more accomplished if he/she works.

There are cases when children have to turn to other measures for caring the needs of the family.

¹⁷ The family used to live in a -

The boy has been registered with the police 3 times for committing minor crimes through which he tries to tackle the needs of living for his family that is why we have not arrested him. Juvenile police inspector

Some of the children buy school clothes and stationery for themselves, pay for their professional education. These are the children who work to avoid asking for money from their parents when they need it.

The next reason is to specialize and gain opportunities. For example, in the case of children working at Vanadzor Theatre the motivation is to learn artistic skills while the remuneration has only a symbolic value.

Yet the opportunity to be self-sufficient and independent, to have own money in the pocket and satisfy the interests is not less important. Thus one of the reasons for working is the desire to have own money (according to specialists) which is sometimes used for undesirable purposes.

The child sees that money has power and the parent is unable to either ban or provide it to him. There are few children who work for the family. They work for themselves and for having their own money. Then they spend that money on tobacco and drinks. Employment service

In addition to the foregoing types of reasons for the child to work, “extraordinary” reasons were also identified during the study such as engagement in gambling or pressures by peers and “street gangs”. Furthermore, these extraordinary reasons sometimes lead to tragic outcomes¹⁸.

Indeed if we apply the criteria accepted by international organizations during assessment on types of application of child labour in households of Armenia it will appear that children are extensively exploited in families and it is necessary to put an end to this practice. However two important factors should be taken into account. The first is the low level of family welfare. Given the present poverty and unemployment levels families have to use child labour in order to survive. The second factor is the cultural peculiarity. The majority of people are sure that work is a serious upbringing means and it should necessarily be applied when bringing up children. The issue lies with recognition of the extent of child employment.

As the study showed there is no institution in the country which is the ultimate party responsible for the social issue of child labour. It looks like all available and active institutions have mandates not only to be concerned about but to bear responsibility to deal with child labour issues. However the relation of all these institutions - police, child protection departments, guardianship committees, schools and others – to these problems has an episodic and unregulated nature. The interviews with the above-mentioned structures showed that it is explained by inadequate awareness of the social context of the issue and lack of knowledge and skills to work with the problem. “After all is it possible to do something, it’s the family’s problem ...” or “... and what can we do about it? ...”

Thus officials who have the duty to deal with child labour exclude the existence of the phenomenon and the persons not dealing with the problem witness many cases and bring in examples.

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Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The prevalence of the phenomenon: From the first sight the number of working children seems small - 6.1% in households with children between 7 and 18 years of age. However that impression changes when we take into consideration that the group of children involved in “hidden child labour” in households is 80% and in fact happens “behind closed doors” and under uncontrollable conditions. 31.3% of them in rural areas work with or without adults and is employed by large landowners. Taking into consideration that enlarging of land plots is an unavoidable process it can be assumed that the involvement of children in paid agricultural jobs will gradually increase. Based on this forecast we can think of mechanisms that will enable bringing child labour into a controlled context, especially as agriculture becomes taxable starting from 2009.

As for child labour within the household, its recognition and definition in practice is associated with difficulties – the phenomenon is “behind closed doors” and can range from simple participation in household works (which is encouraged by social norms and is recommended) to exploitation. The recognition of exploitation and appropriate attitude towards it is hampered by family norms, ethical issues in division of rights and responsibilities between parents and children and, finally, insufficiency of appropriate state guarantees for interventions and consequences thereof.

Characteristics of the phenomenon

By gender: Boys comprise the majority of working children which is explained by social norms and culture of Armenia – boys tend to replace the absent breadwinner of the family at an earlier age than girls. Moreover, the view that “studying is a girl’s occupation” is widely accepted so the society is tolerant to the phenomenon of early involvement in child labour by boys. Future intervention plans should take this into consideration.

By duration of work experience: 13% of working children work more than one year which means that child labour is not something random or temporary – it is a regular practice. At the same time the prevailing number of working children has seasonal jobs especially in agricultural high season. This factor “localizes” or narrows the scope of future intervention by focusing it on one season.

By possible means of finding employment: According to data obtained during the survey the majority of children under 14 have found jobs without parents’ involvement or consent. We can conclude that considering parents as targets of child labour protection (as is stipulated by the law) it will be difficult to monitor this phenomenon and thus new targets have to be defined, for example, departments of child protection, other organisations working with children to make them responsible for prevention and positive monitoring of the phenomenon.

From the point of view of relations with employers: As a rule child labour is not registered, employers (94.5%) avoid registration to evade limitations defined by the law (short working hours, etc.). Children (as well as parents) do not see the importance of registration looking for simple relations based on trust, and employers avoid formal relations freeing themselves from additional responsibilities associated with having a child employee. It is more the children who look for employment than the employers who look for child labour. This is a situation which will be favourable for prevention of child labour without having to confront interests of employers which would bring about much resistance (the survey has shown that the tendency of exploiting child labour as cheap labour is not considerable). Thus, the phenomenon is in the initial stage of development and it is the right time to effectively impact it in order to prevent undesirable

developments in the future.

From the point of view of legislation: 1/3 of working children is below the age allowed by legislation, thus, existing work legislation cannot ensure the protection of working children as it is not relevant to the existing social practice. Existing legislation in fact has no impact on social phenomena and cannot ensure welfare and protection of children¹⁹.

If from absolute ban the law makes a transition to regulation of the context of child labour it will be possible to bring child labour out of the shadow and thus make it controllable. The labour has to stipulate protection of children in cases where it is simply impossible to keep them from working (but first we have to recognize and accept those “absolutely necessary” cases).

In addition, the law should incorporate other present characteristics of social-economic development (in particular the existence of informal sector and permit child labour stipulating necessary means of protection).

RA legislation uses the terms “harmful and dangerous” however it is not clear where the border between “useful” and “harmful” labour is. This issue creates serious problems for regulation of the field.

With the help of existing legislative means the recognition of children’s rights (particularly in households, small business, agriculture) and the fight against social dimensions accepted in economic, educational, cultural and practical realms is effective only within the formal sector. Informal sectors require flexible approaches and mobilization of interested parties. Legislative, administrative, social and educational standards defined by the state and relating to child labour minimum age, duration and conditions of work and appropriate sanctions are important prerequisites, however, they should be reviewed taking into consideration appropriate scientific interpretations on social maturity (some children are ready for independent activities earlier than the age specified by the law).

Reasons for child labour: Based on the reasons for early involvement in employment by children we can say that in most cases child labour is a clear survival mechanism of the child and the family and a means to fight poverty. Thus the phenomenon of child labour is directly related and is a consequence of poverty. It is directly related to absence, inability to work or socially unacceptable life by adults (poverty culture). Thus banning of child labour without compensating means and “buffer” interventions has no sense. The child works because of poverty and in order to be able to cater for her needs rather than to be prepared for adulthood although there are certainly some cultural and social features here. That is why it is important that external intervention be related not to banning or allowing child labour but to soothing of factors that make children get involved in employment at an early age - often at the cost of their present and prospective social opportunities.

The impact of labour on other areas of the life of the child: in general in households covered by the survey the educational background was rather high; this can be a favourable factor for successful educational career of children if social factors do not hamper that. However there is a

¹⁹ According to study data 1/3 of working children are in the age group of 7-14, that is lower than the minimum working age as stipulated under the law, at the same time this is the group that works driven by the need, which means that the “legal” translation of the issue is detached from the actual social practice.

general trend of decreasing the value of education which is attributed to the situation where catering for basic needs in most of the families becomes a priority.

As compared to non-working children working children have higher absenteeism and drop out rates, have more complaints about trauma, injuries as a result of accident and chronic pains and finally have less time and opportunities for leisure activities, continuing education, getting specialization. At the same time working children are more mature, they have “adult” needs, are more practical and independent. On the one hand it can be considered as an early loss of childhood, on the other hand – early maturity. Thus there is a direct relationship between regular involvement in education, health indicators, opportunities for leisure activities and child labour. Based on description of conditions, duration of work, effort required and impact of employment on important areas of the child’s life (education, health, leisure) working children are in an apparently unfavourable situation.

Perception of child labour: The diversity of views on child labour expressed by adults involved in the survey (parents, specialists, experts) shows that the phenomenon is not perceived unanimously and it can be viewed as undesirable and harmful on the one hand and as a component of positive socialization of the child on the other. Thus, the social context of child labour issue is not sufficiently recognized and comprehended. Thus the issue is to define the scope, volume and duration of child labour and reaching general consent on acceptable limits thereof. Legislative, administrative, social and educational standards defined by the state related to child labour age, duration and conditions as well as sanctions are important prerequisites but they do not take into consideration scientific justifications of social maturity (some children are ready for independent activities earlier than the law defines). If a transition is made from absolute ban to regulation of the context of child labour it will be possible to bring child labour out of shadow and make it controllable. It is necessary to protect children in cases where it is simply impossible to keep children from working but first of all we should accept that there are these absolutely necessary cases. The law should take into consideration the characteristics of present social-economic development, particularly; the cases of children that need to work (allow ad stipulate protection measures).

This means necessity of long-term and comprehensive public awareness raising and a need to give specialists necessary knowledge to work with the issue.

Thus, there are three groups of reasons for child labour: 1. Low living standards of families (and other factors that are consequences of poverty) 2. Armenian society and cultural norms related to this issue and 3. The gap between social protection system for children and families and the real social situation. Taking into consideration the optimal duration and objective difficulties related to neutralization of the impact of these factors as well as difficulties related to low flexibility of the system it can be forecast that in the near future the number of working children will increase and if interventions are delayed there will be other trends accompanying this increase.

What solutions: There are two possible ways to regulate the issue of child labour. The first one is banning and enforcement and the second one is prevention and positive monitoring. In the conditions of large scale poverty of population, unequivocally banning of child labour without offering any alternative to the family is meaningless and inefficient: one should not mechanically ban any use of child labour in the household but should follow not to do on account of satisfying their basic needs. In other words the issue is to recognize the scope of child labour. Thus the second way is effective – prevention as well as positive monitoring and comprehensive protection of working children. The ban cannot be useful for working children since it will simply cause children that have to work to get involved in better “hidden” employment. At the same time when banning child labour we should make exceptions for cases when according to

specialist opinion the work will not harm the child (an appropriate regulation should define the body that can give such a conclusion). It is necessary to protect children in cases where they cannot be held back from work but first we should accept that there are such “absolutely necessary” cases and define them.

From the point of view of social mobilization the joint efforts targeted at reasons causing child labour will be more effective and this approach will receive the support of the majority of decision makers and specialists involved in service delivery.

The issue of main players: it seems that all existing bodies should have responsibility to get involved in child labour issues according to their mandates. However the relation of all these bodies – police, child protection department, guardianship committees, schools and others – is episodic and unregulated and there is no clear responsibility for the issue. The recognition of children’s right and protection of working children by merely legislative means cannot be effective, there is a need for additional flexible, professional approaches which should be put in the mandates of main players.

The biggest gap is related to the mandates of bodies responsible for the regulation of the issue (who is responsible). The legislation can impact usual social practices if it chooses school and general education reforms as a means of making education as attractive as possible and relevant to the expectations of families. Efforts in this direction can be more effective in prevention of child labour and regulation of these issues than banning child labour. The efforts to eliminate child labour can be effective if it becomes part of poverty reduction strategy. Efforts targeted at soothing the impacts of factors causing child labour can receive considerable support from various interested parties in child protection system.

Thus the efforts to eliminate child labour are twofold: prevention and monitoring.

Recommendations

Social security

- Efforts for prevention of child labour can be effective if they are part of poverty reduction strategy. Particularly, standards of coverage of beneficiaries in the area of family benefits should be reviewed.²⁰
- If cases of child labour under banned conditions are identified, the law should stipulate a compensation period after ban since the child would otherwise be left without means to survive.
- Child protection units should have the right to find employment for children below working age if the issues of social security of their families are not possible to solve in another way as well as in cases where the child is on record at the department of minors of state police (drops out of education).
- It is important to create a special child labor unit in the labor inspectorate, which beside supervision will also be responsible for provision of necessary support and for organisational issues with participation of a social worker.
- It is also important to exempt the officially registered juvenile laborers from social taxes,

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as well as to use encouraging ways while opening relevant employment posts for children, this can be achieved through development of appropriate supervision mechanisms. To create future educational opportunities for these children it is important to decide on encouraging ways for the employers (e.g. repay partially or fully for education of an employer's child). Various other mechanisms can be put for discussion with the interested bodies.

- Territorial employment centers should also work with children on professional orientation and professional development; establish cooperation with the employers to open employment posts for children. The supervision should be under marz child protection units and the aforementioned centers, including data collection, intervention and future supervision.

Education

There is a need to reform such a fundamental institute as the education system. From an institution giving education that is not related to the real life, the school has to become a place where the community's, especially children's needs are met, an important factor having an impact on undesirable phenomena.

- **Gradually introducing flexibility into the functioning of the school:** making the school more child-focused. The flexibility should be introduced through review and adjustment of internal resources of the school, meanwhile introducing external resources in order to enable application of modern social technologies (social workers).
- **Under the umbrella term of “specialization”** the school should embrace all those interesting, alternative initiatives that have already been tested by various NGOs, are shown to be viable and will enable to keep the child in school, continue education or combine education with work, getting opportunities for specialization. The management of all these resources requires scientifically justified approaches, it is necessary to create an accessible and flexible education concept and appropriate strategy. The school can become a workplace for the child meaning that the school will combine education with teaching of skills at various workshops, producing things and earning money thus bringing child labour into a more controllable and organized field²¹.
- An issue directly related to child labour is the issue of their **professional orientation:** for avoiding consequent unemployment it is necessary to address the issues of professional orientation of students of higher grades by analyzing local and international experience in this sector and by stipulating this function in the mandate of Employment Service.
- Another realistic opportunity is connected with **collaboration with Employment Service**, whereby it is will be possible to use school holidays by involving school students in public programs which will allow them to be occupied and earn income. In other words, this will be a shift from spontaneous labour process to a controlled and organized one.
- After grade 6 when the child faces difficulties associated with continuation of the study, it is meaningful to try to organize **crafting training** right in the school thereby preparing the transition to professional education. Another need is to recover the former network of crafts education when children unable to continue the mandatory education at the school

²¹ There are a series of issues occurring here: organizational

for various reasons were admitted to crafts colleges preserving the opportunity to receive compulsory education.

- **Abolishing the requirement of mandatory education:** This may be thought of as regress for the country but in practice it will mean bringing education closer to the requirements of the reality. The circumstance that in colleges the precondition for receiving professional education (etc.) is the certificate of eight-year education of the child deprives many children of the possibility to receive such education. This procedure needs review and adjustment with the purpose of making it more flexible. Otherwise, if eight-year education is mandatory the state must create appropriate guarantees and conditions for that so that there are no dropouts from mandatory education.

Mobilization and awareness raising of NGOs

- **Mobilization of NGOs along with mass media to focus the society's attention to interpretations of cases of child labour.**
- For increasing the knowledge of and managing the issue of ethical conflicts in relation to paid child labour and child labour in households there is a need to shape a proper public attitude to distinguish child involvement from exploitation.

Mandating

- With the purpose of regulation of the issue of child labour there is a need to mandate **specific responsible parties**. If mandating is not reinforced with charters and procedures, the issue will again be left without a specific responsible party: «the issue is the business of all but no specific body takes responsibility». As the study findings stand the responsible party may become the marz CPU which will mobilize the other key stakeholders. At the same time it will be meaningful to identify a responsible person for child labour issues for the given territory within regional units of State Labour Inspectorate whose competence will include: collection of necessary information from all services and agencies – stakeholders in the field of child labour in the given territory (school, Employment Agency, Police, Child Right Protection Department, State Social Insurance Fund, Social Service, State Tax Service if necessary, etc.), compilation of quarterly and annual reports and analyses of situation of child labour in the given regions. Then, a national aggregation will be done and discussions of stakeholders will be held to decide on further steps.
- **Work with individual cases:** this means identification of cases of working children through mobilization of professional resources in the community and organization of appropriate and correct intervention.
- **Situation analysis:** Carrying out such studies regularly is important – once in 3-4 years to grasp and manage the trends observed in the field of child labour.

Introduction of new technologies

- It may make sense to launch and operate a special “hot line service” which children may apply to free of charge whenever they have needs of protection in relation to work.
- **Mapping:** The mapping and mobilization of various services active in the social sector of the country in both prevention and control and monitoring processes has become an obvious urge. This is an activity that can be regulated by CPU.

Development of employer – protection system dialogue

- The clarification of the list of “harmful” jobs is an important issue starting with the least

harmful to the most harmful indicating also the duration and other important parameters.

- Giving the employer certain tax privileges, encouraging the employer to register child labour and providing the employer with the opportunity to organize education viewing the employer as a teacher and providing some compensation for that. Thereby the child will get a chance to become experienced and have good opportunities for future social mobility.
- For organizing proper and effective interventions it may be wise to plan an option for the young inexperienced unemployed to be hired on a job with a master-employer as a trainee, to provide stipends, allow gaining experience and then be ultimately recruited. This should be an organized process within the scope of a certain program, for a certain term and in controlled conditions.

Capacity building for specialists dealing with child labour issues

- Having gained necessary additional skills the specialists will be in a position to work with individual child cases as a guidance provider and intermediary between the child (family) and the employer.

Annex 1.

KEY TERMS

1. **Children** – persons aged less than 18 (children aged 7-18 have been studied (18 exclusive).
2. **Incomplete family** – a family, where the upbringing of and care for the child or children are carried out by only one of the parents – either the mother or the father (one of the parents (guardians) is absent).
3. **Labour force or “active population”** – all people who match the criteria of persons with jobs and unemployed.
4. **Working child** – in the group of economically active children, working children are considered those children who announce that they have a job regardless of whether they are paid or not and the type of activity.
The following categories of children have been covered in the given study:
 - children having worked during the previous years or 12 months irrespective of work duration
 - children having worked at least 1 hour last week
 - children having worked in the last 1 month
 - children currently working
5. **Employed children** – children who, during the week of observation, have done either paid or non-paid work for at least an hour regardless of the period of remuneration or receiving of income from the activity, have temporarily been absent from the work due to illness, care for a sick person, are on an annual leave or holidays, training outside the work place, being in compulsory paid or non-paid leave by the initiative of the management or the employer, strike, have worked in the household without a remuneration.
6. **Self-employed** – persons who are engaged alone or together with one or several partners in an income-generating activity without involvement of staff or with staff working on a non-permanent basis.
7. **Paid workers** – persons who work on the basis of a contract with the management of an organization or an employer, based on a written order for recruitment or a certain written or verbal agreement, and receive monetary or in-kind compensation in the form of a salary.
8. **Household works** – individual services which are not considered economic activity and do not pursue income generation objective. These are preparation of food, laundry, ironing, daily shopping, care for youngsters and sick members of the family, house cleaning, repair of house and articles of everyday use on their own, etc.
9. **Family members working without remuneration** – persons who work for supporting or helping in a family business belonging to a family member or relative and do not receive remuneration either monetary or in-kind.
10. **Persons occupied in the informal sector** – persons who, during the observation week, have been involved in an organization without state registration as a legal entity.
11. **Employers** – persons who, together with one or several partners, run own organization (business) and permanently recruit one or several employees for performing various works.
12. **Dangerous work** – applies to activity which by its very nature or stemming from any other circumstances damages the health, safety and development of a child (WHO, 2002, page 20):
 - works as a result of which children are exposed to physical, psychological or sexual abuse
 - underground, underwater works, works at dangerous altitudes and in limited areas

- work using hazardous appliances, devices, instruments and hardware or work involving haulage of heavy loads or manual work
- work in an unhealthy environment, which may expose children to hazardous conditions, processes, temperature fluctuations, noise
- work in especially hard conditions, such as extended or overnight work, or work where the child is unreasonably exposed to the whims of the employer.

13. **The worst forms of child labour** - (pursuant to WHO Convention N182 include):

- all types of slavery or similar conditions
- forms of forced labour
- sexual abuse
- illegal actions
- hazardous work.

Annex 2: TABLES

Table 1. Number of regularly working family members

Number of regularly working members	Number of families	%
0	470	44,1
1	391	36,7
2	158	14,8
3	36	3,4
4	10	0,9
5	1	0,1
Total	1066	100,0

Table 2. Distribution of households by sources of income²²

Sources of household income	Number	%
Salaries received for permanent job position	575	53,9
Amounts received for short-term works	303	28,4
Profits generated from own venture (enterprise)	51	4,8
Rental fees from letting property out	9	,8
Income earned as interest	11	1,0
Income generated from self-employment	120	11,3
Income generated from agriculture	299	28,0
Remittances from relatives residing abroad	232	21,8
Remittances from relatives residing in Armenia	91	8,5
Benefits, pensions and other similar allowances	548	51,4
Funds generated from sale of personal articles	31	2,9
Funds borrowed	140	13,1
Assistance in the form of goods or food	37	3,5
Other	18	1,7
No answer	1	,1
Total	1066	100,0

Table 3. Distribution of working and non-working children by gender

Gender	Working children, %	Non-working children, %
Male	84,5	51,8
Female	15,5	48,2
Total	100,0	100,0

Table 4. Types of household works

Types of household works	Has he/she worked last week for remuneration or other compensation

²² The sum of the answers is higher than

	Yes %	No %	Total %
Food preparation	8	11.2	11.1
Shopping	50	57.5	57.3
House cleaning	20	49.7	48.7
Laundry and ironing	12	17.4	17.2
Repairs	40	5.9	7.1
Carrying water or wood	26	14.7	15.1
Child care	4	2.4	2.5
Care for an ill person and an elderly	0	1.5	1.4
Animal care	28	13.8	14.3
Land cultivation, gardening	60,0	26.3	27.5
House construction	6	1.5	1.6
Other similar works	2	3.8	3.8
No answer	2	1.3	1.3
Total	100	100	100

Table 5. Absence/presence of the fact of working during the last 12 months

Absence / presence of the fact of working during the last 12 months	Fact of working last week			
	Yes %	No %	No answer %	Total %
Yes	93,0	1,3		4,7
No	5,6	98,7	100,0	95,3
No answer	1,4			1
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Table 6. Distribution of household work during the day

Time of the day of work conducted	Number	%
Morning	392	27.3
Evening	273	19.0
Afternoon	567	39.5
All day	267	18.6
Night	2	,1
In the course of the day	49	3.4
Whenever is free	4	,3
No idea	1	,1
No answer	57	4.0
Other	6	,4
Total	1437	100.0

Table 7. Forms of remuneration

Forms of remuneration	Number	%
Signs in the wage list at the cashier's desk and receives the wage	4	6.2

The parents and relatives receive	10	15.4
The employer or another person hands in	43	66.2
After delivering the service he/she retains his/her part	2	3.1
Difficult to answer	1	1.5
Other forms	2	3.1
No answer	3	4.6
Total	65	100
Absence of a system	1001	
Total	1066	

Table 8. Place of work conducted by children

Place of work conducted	Number	%
Field, garden, land plot, forest	21	32,3
Trade facility	11	16,9
Street	10	15,4
Construction	9	13,8
Own house	5	7,7
Organization providing services	5	7,7
Office	3	4,6
Another's house	2	3,1
Total	65	107,7

Table 9. Professional education background and work

Did/is he/she receive/receiving any professional education?	Has he/she worked last week for remuneration or other compensation			
	Yes %	No %	No answer %	Total %
Yes	14.1	8.1		8.4
No	84.5	90.6	50	90.4
No answer	1.4	1.2	50	1.3
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 10. Reasons for not attending school

Reasons for not attending school	Has he/she worked last week for remuneration or other compensation		
	Yes %	No %	Total %
The family cannot afford meeting the schooling expenses	10.7	5.4	6.1
Is not able to handle the study program	0	3.4	3
Is not interested in study	7.1	2	2.6
The age is low	0	3	2.6

Disability	0	2.5	2.2
The family does not value the school	0	1.5	1.3
Works for remuneration in family business or farm	3.6	1	1.3
Helps in household works	3.6	1	1.3
Illness	0	5	4
No answer	0	2.5	2.2
Other	0	1.5	1.3
Total	100	100	100

Table 11. Number of cases of absences from classes by children last semester

Number of absence cases last semester	Number	%
Never	402	23,3
1-2 times	948	54,9
1 week	261	15,1
Have been absent for nearly 1 month	89	5,2
Have missed half of classes	10	,6
Almost have not attended classes	1	,1
Difficult to answer	1	,1
No answer	14	,8
Other	2	,1
Total	1728	100

Table 12. Reasons of occurrence of health problems among children (according to parents)

Main reason of injury	Number	%
No idea	71	16,7
Work	19	4,5
Poor conditions of life	66	15,5
Games, sports	54	12,7
None	13	3,1
Infection	28	6,6
Have caught cold	90	21,1
Malnutrition	7	1,6
Accident	4	,9
Other answer	71	16,7
No answer	3	,7
Total	426	100,0

Annex 3. CHARTS

Chart 1. Composition of families in households surveyed

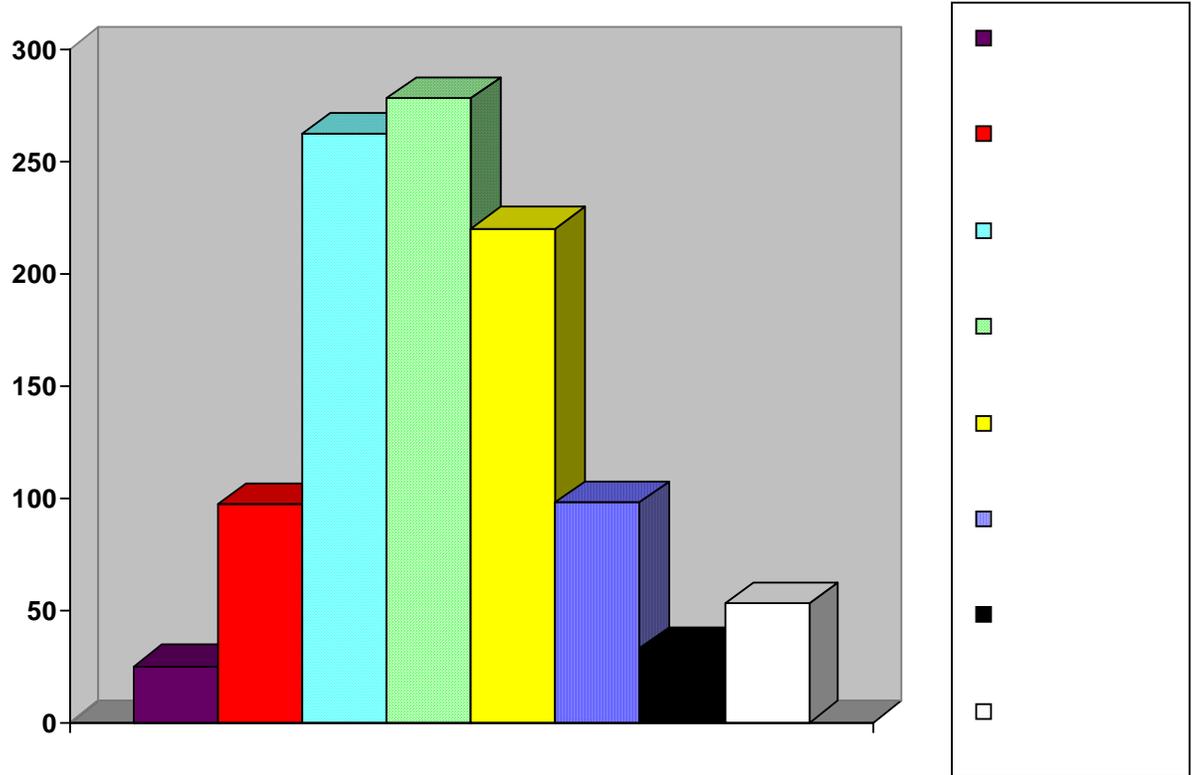


Chart 2. Number of injuries among working and non-working children during last 12 months

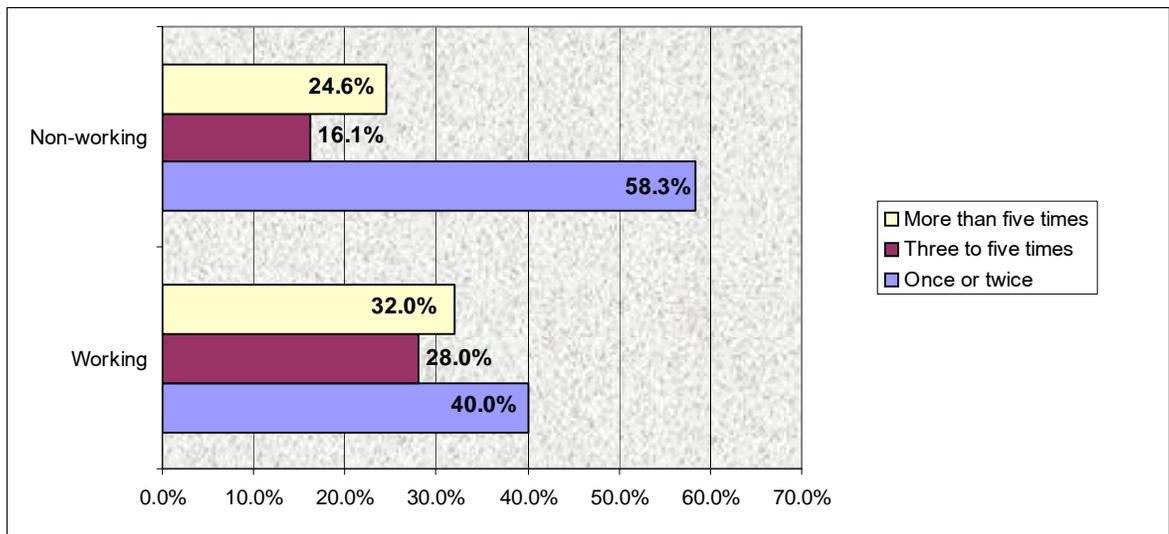
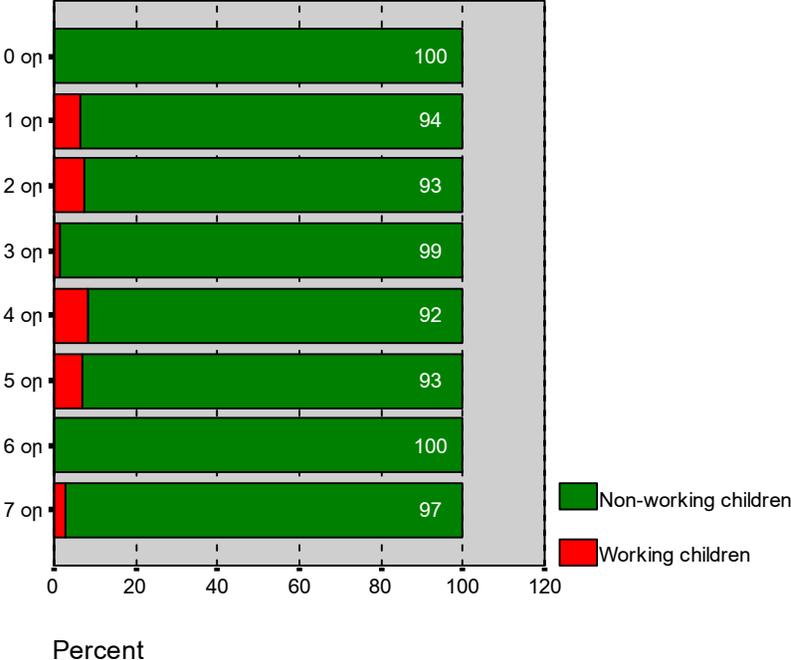


Chart 3. Load in weekdays



Annex 4. SUMMARIES

Table 1. Brief info on the surveyed by survey methods

Survey method	Type or sector of the surveyed	Number of the surveyed
<p><i>Standardized interview in households</i> a/ Family member more informed of the household and the child: total 1066</p> <p>male 175 female 841</p> <p>b/ Working child: total 65</p>	<p>Adult son/daughter of main family</p> <p>sister</p> <p>grandson</p> <p>granddaughter</p> <p>daughter in law</p> <p>mother</p> <p>father</p> <p>other members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ agriculture ▪ trade ▪ construction ▪ household production activities ▪ services sector ▪ office ▪ factory 	<p>692</p> <p>132</p> <p>19</p> <p>14</p> <p>19</p> <p>143</p> <p>21</p> <p>3</p> <p>23</p> <p>27</p> <p>21</p> <p>11</p> <p>5</p> <p>7</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p>
<p><i>Focus group discussion with specialists: total 9</i></p> <p><i>total 107</i> male 39 female 68</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pedagogue ▪ Child right protection department specialist ▪ village mayor ▪ Juvenile police department policeman ▪ NGO representative ▪ Hospital/polyclinic staff member ▪ Mass media ▪ Guardianship committee member ▪ Legal consultant (lawyer) - expert ▪ Regional social service agency ▪ Church 	<p>21</p> <p>33</p> <p>3</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>9</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>
<p><i>Open interviews with employers total 17</i></p> <p>male 15 female 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ construction ▪ culture ▪ trade ▪ theatre 	<p>7</p> <p>2</p> <p>6</p> <p>2</p>

<p><i>Brainstorming with specialists²³:</i> total 19</p> <p>male 15 female 14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment sector (chief specialists) 2 ▪ Labour Inspectorate 1 ▪ Ministry of Social Issues (chief specialists, department heads) 2 ▪ Child protection department head 2 ▪ Juvenile police department deputy head 2 ▪ NGO representative 7 ▪ School principal 1 ▪ National statistical service (chief specialists) 2 	
<p><i>Case studies on working children: total 21</i> male 20 female 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trade 4 ▪ agriculture 3 ▪ portering 1 ▪ construction 6 ▪ services 5 ▪ workmanship 1 	
<p><i>Expert opinion survey²⁴:</i> total 10</p> <p>male 8 female 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State Labour Inspectorate 4 ▪ Regional employment agency 5 ▪ National Statistical Service 1 	
<p><i>Focus group discussion with working children</i> total 26 male 17 female 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ construction 5 ▪ sale of cables 4 ▪ trade 3 ▪ services 3 ▪ agricultural works (harvesting) 11 	

Summary of annexes

#	Types of the surveyed	Number
1	Households	1066
2	Working children ²⁵	65+26+21
3	Specialists	107+19
4	Employers	17
Total		1321

²³ An additional method applied

²⁵ For the focus group discussions and the open interviews working children have been invited who have been identified with the snowball method in addition to those identified through household surveys.

Annex 5. Abstracts and excerpts of cases

Case 1.

They live in 3 – the mother who is ill, younger brother and himself. The boy is 16 years old, works in the district of Taron in Vanadzor in a construction to be a car wash service outlet. Works outside. Earns AMD 1,500 daily. No contract has been concluded between him and the employer, there was only a verbal arrangement between him and the employer. Work starts at 9am and finishes at 9pm. The job had been found by the younger brother, who works in the gas filling station. As he says his younger brother is smarter than he is and is better informed of where jobs available are. The wage is disbursed in cash one a month. He takes the wage twice as the family survives mainly with the money he earns. There have been cases when he felt bad at work but has not told the employer fearing that they got to know about his sickness him being sick they would not give a job. Because the school season has began now the younger brother goes to work after classes. He washes car window glass, for each car glass wash he is paid AMD 100. He is happy that he was taken on the job and as he says “They have seen that we live in poor conditions, have sympathized and taken on the job”. **16 years old boy, Vanadzor**

Case 2.

The child works in a furniture manufacturing business and participates in production of doors and windows, saws wood, works as porter, assists the masters. “Is getting mastered step by step” and has already made 2 chairs on his own for his house. The child is very happy with his job. The work is remunerated on contractual basis. Before hiring the organization had requested a written consent of the parents as well as a contract had been duly signed. The child earns AMD 50-60 thousand per month. With the money received for his work he has procured the provision of wood for heating in wintertime and potato, and has a number of goals which he connects with his job and hopes that he will get a wage raise in a few months. **16 years old boy, Yerevan.**

Case 3.

The 15 years old child works in a private stone blocs production workshop located not too far from his home. The production is outside, have not got a cover and workers works in the sun. It has been 5 months since he started working there. The employer had by himself invited the child and offered a job. Since he has worked in different places from the age of 13 he is known in Vanadzor and often whenever there is such a work to do the employers themselves offer it to him. He works without any contract but on verbal arrangement. The work starts at 9am and ends at 7pm. The break is 1 hour, he comes to home at the break and does not spend money on transport. The wage is paid once in 15 days. He gives the wage to his mother, they buy flour, sugar and clothes for himself and the other children. He does not want to lose the job because his previous job was far harder than the current one. When he reaches 18 years, he will go to army, after which he will leave for Russian Federation for work.

Case 4.

The father had gone to Russia for work but has never sent any information so far and the family was living in extreme poverty. During that time the children have many times gone to fields with their mother to collect salads as no food was available to eat. And once when they came across mushrooms they collected it and made a fire right there to cook it as they had been starving 2 days prior to that. Mainly 2 sisters had eaten the mushroom (he had not eaten in order for the sisters not to be hungry), the younger sister was saved with intervention of doctors and the elder sister died from poisoning. “... I decided not to be poor when I grow up and for that reason started to work from 11”. **14 years old working boy, Vanadzor**

Case 5:

Two brothers work at coffee plant “Semya” as workers. At hiring the boys the employers had requested a written agreement by the parents as well as entered into a contract. On the day of interview 15 years birthday of the boys was and the employer has gifted AMD 5,000 to each of them with which the boys bought clothes for themselves.

The work lasted from 9:00 to 17:00. Each receives AMD 50,000 monthly, which they give to the parents and is spent on meeting family needs as the children mentioned that their father’s work alone did not make ends meet. *Yerevan*

Case 6.

... he works in construction as a worker, does rather hard work – carries heavy bags, stones, etc. He does the work at a height and sometimes is scared to look below especially from high floors. The work takes from 9:00 till 19:00. There is no work agreement signed. He receives monthly AMD 90,000, the payment is done promptly. *Yerevan*

Case 7.

The situation in **the village of Agarak in Syunik marz** is unique: the village is close to the military unit, “criminal rules” are prevalent there in relationships among children. There is a group of children which forces other children to pay a “tax” in the amount of USD 300-800. 3 such cases ended up with child suicide. There is no psychosocial service available in the mentioned and neighbouring villages. The police is just incapable in handling this issue.

Excerpts

There are 2 children taken out of the school for his **conduct** in our village who have very bad image. They have required money from my son, have forced him to steal money and give them, and have been bothering him all the time. My son worked on the border for several days, which was very insecure. That they chased him, he escaped and tried to defend and that accident took place. Over time it has become clear that that group has bothered and required money from our neighbour’s son as well, and the brother of that boy in order to make them leave his younger brother alone collected the required USD800 and took it to them without telling anyone about that. One day the mother of that child told that she was afraid that her child might also make a suicide because was tired of those scores. However the family does not report to police because of fear. *Passage from an interview with the parent*

Once we had a fight with several schoolboys in grade 8, beat each other. Then my mother went to police and complained and I was taken onto record. The juvenile police inspector would come to the school and I would be called to the school principal. I would feel unhappy and sorry from that, as if “I were a major criminal”, the teachers would recall and remind me of my deed at any relevant case, so I decided to quit the school and to work, there was no way I could stay in the school any longer. *An interview with a working child, Armavir*

Among yezids families are formed starting with the age of 12, and naturally children do not continue the study although there is 10 years school in the village (Ria Taza). The children getting married leave the school in grade 6 to provide for the family. Only those continue the school who do not marry – mainly boys.

Focus group discussion with specialists

In Lermontovo education is not in the first place. Firstly, the village is aging, there are districts where there is no child at all, the number of families whose children do not attend school is not small in the village, which is due to indifference of parents and underestimation of the importance and value of education by them. Focus group

... My son was a very smart child, performed well at school. It (meaning the suicide) was committed because of money (implying USD 350-400) for which he had been under pressure. He left the school, found a job in the station, paid that amount twice, but was not able to pay the third time, and did not tell us anything either, was ashamed apparently ... From an interview with a parent.