

Child domestic workers: A handbook for research and action

Maggie Black

With additional material by Jonathan Blagbrough

Illustrations: Clive Offley



Anti-Slavery International

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	
Chapter one: Why do we need this book?	1
The unknown child domestic	1
Domestic work as part of upbringing	2
Child domestics and international standards	3
The need for information	5
Summary	6
Chapter two: Analysing the situation of children in domestic employment: Where to start?	7
Needed: a framework for analysis	7
1. Terms of employment	8
2. Working conditions	10
3. Socio-economic background of child domestics	13
4. Impact of employment on the child's physical, intellectual and psycho-social development	14
Summary	17
Chapter three: What are we going to research, and why?	18
Setting the research agenda	18
What do we already know?	19
Identifying priority concerns	21
What are we going to do with the information?	22
What do we need to know?	25
Finalising the research statement	26
Summary	26
Chapter four: How do we find out what we need to know?	27
Exploring existing sources and expertise	27
Secondary sources	28
Planning the research: defining key words	30
Matching key words to sources	32
The research outline	34
Final adjustments	35
Summary	36

Chapter five: Collecting first-hand information - 1:	
Surveys	37
Surveys: the key to basic facts	38
Undertaking a survey in employer households	39
Choosing a sample of households to be surveyed	39
Establishing the prevalence of child domestic work	41
The interview schedule or questionnaire	42
Selection and training of enumerators/research assistants	44
The telephone survey	44
Recording and analysing your findings	45
The specific survey among a small group	45
Summary	46
Chapter six: Collecting first-hand information - 2:	
Interviews	47
The need to involve children	47
Sensitivities of collecting first-hand information by interview	47
Problems of interviewing children	49
Creating the right setting	50
The interview process	51
Other in-depth techniques: focus groups	52
In-depth scientific data	55
Summary	55
Chapter seven: Reporting the findings	56
Organising the report	57
Translating research into action	58
The actual publication process	60
In conclusion	61
Annexes:	
Annexe 1: Participants at international meeting on <u>Research</u> into <u>Child Domestic Servants</u> , held at Charney Manor (United Kingdom), 22-24 January 1996	62

Preface

The occupations in which children are most often found form part of the informal and frequently 'invisible' work-place. They are in open-air locations such as the street, the market, the shopping mall; on remote farms and plantations; in guest-houses and bars; in private households; and in back-room workshops. All these are outside the normal reach of labour controls.

More detailed and reliable information on the impact of work on children is needed to inform growing public concern about the issue. Methods of research need to be specially developed which take account of the wide variety of jobs undertaken by children, and of the difficulties in reaching them in certain settings -- such as when they are employed within the households of others.

Anti-Slavery International (ASI) first became actively interested in the situation of children in domestic work during the early 1990s. ASI's interest stemmed not only from its concern with exploitative child labour generally, but from the ways in which children are placed in such work -- their 'terms of employment'. The United Nations (UN) *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery* (1956) defines the following practices as servitude, a form of slavery: 'Any institution or practice whereby a child or young person under the age of 18 years is delivered by either or both of his natural parents or by his guardian to another person, whether for reward or not, with a view to the exploitation of the child or young person or of his labour.' This precisely describes ASI's concern with the way in which children typically enter domestic work.

Not only the contractual basis of child domestic labour but many of its practical characteristics have features akin to slavery. A child employed in a private household may be unpaid; be expected to work around the clock without set hours or time off; be virtually imprisoned and treated as the chattel of the employer. In the 1993 Report of the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of the Conventions and Recommendations, the Committee commented on the situation of *restaveks* (child domestic workers) in Haiti in relation to one of the ILO's most important labour standards -- Convention No.29 Concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (1930). The Committee noted the domestic worker's separation from her home and family, the threat of physical and sexual abuse, the long hours, the exploitative conditions, and the humiliation she must endure.

In many cultures children are still regarded as totally under the control of parents; the idea that they have independent 'rights' of their own is alien. In such cultures it is common for employers of child domestics to be seen as parent substitutes. The situation of child servitude is, in these circumstances, regarded as natural, or at least acceptable. Only recently, mainly as an outcome of debates inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, have non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in some countries of the South begun to challenge this perspective.

ASI, in taking forward the issue of child domestic workers, has been aware that it would be inappropriate to arouse attention internationally to their situation unless it does

so in tandem with organisations in the countries where children are commonly employed as domestic workers. It was also thought irresponsible to mount an international advocacy campaign on an issue about which little data was available. Although domestic service is known to be one of the most widespread forms of child employment in the world, very little research has been done into it and there is limited reliable information on which to base campaigns.

ASI therefore adopted a policy of trying to identify NGOs which were interested in the issue, and encouraging them to undertake research. In 1993, ASI published a paper entitled: *In search of a workable methodology for analysing the situation of child domestic workers*. Subsequently, three research studies commissioned by ASI were undertaken drawing upon this methodology, in Togo, Bangladesh and Indonesia. Other NGOs and research institutions have also used it as a resource.

This handbook for researchers therefore takes forward a process in which ASI has been involved for some time. During that period, the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the ILO has become a close collaborator. UNICEF too has expressed support.

In January 1996, at the invitation of ASI and with IPEC support, a seminar was convened of researchers into child domestic work from all over the world. The 13 practitioner participants came from Bangladesh, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, Senegal and Togo. Representatives of IPEC, Save the Children Fund (UK) and Rädde Barnen (Sweden) also took part. The seminar's purpose was to gain insights from the participants' research experiences for the development of the research guidelines contained in this handbook.

Not only are the experiences and views of the seminar participants reflected here; so is the tenor of the meeting -- that something simple and practical is needed. The handbook, therefore, offers a more practical approach to research, with useful insights for practitioners at different levels of technical competence. Hopefully, it will also inspire other child labour NGOs to enter the field, along with workers' and employers' organisations and relevant government departments. Much still needs to be done to repair the paucity of solid information concerning children working in people's homes.

Mike Dottridge
Director, Anti-Slavery International

This handbook has been produced by ASI with technical and financial assistance from ILO-IPEC.

The author and organisations involved in writing and publishing this handbook would welcome comments on its usefulness, particularly researchers' experiences as a result of its use.

chapter one

Why do we need this book?



Who's that young girl in your household ?



Who's that young girl in your household?

Woman: `Who was that young girl I saw in your household the other day?

Man: `She's someone my wife has taken in. She comes from my wife's village -- her family is very poor.

W: `I thought you were deeply opposed to child labour?'

M: `Of course I am! She isn't child labour -- we don't pay her to work! My wife took her in out of kindness.'

W: `But I thought I saw her in the kitchen doing the washing up?'

M: `Naturally she helps my wife about the house.'

W: `And does she go to school?'

M: `Well, no ...'

The unknown child domestic

In some countries children working as maids, child-minders, garden boys, and general house-helps are a familiar sight. Domestic work is, in fact, one of the most common forms of child employment. But we do not know how many children are involved. Nor do we know much about other characteristics of the practice, such as the age range of the workers, what led to their employment, the terms and conditions of their work, and their feelings about it.

There are a number of reasons for this lack of information. One is that almost every worker is employed in a separate household, so that as a group, child domestics are invisible and difficult to reach. Another is that arrangements about the job -- frequently made between the child's parents and the employer -- are informal. The jobs are not registered and do not feature in employment statistics. And then there are variations of domestic work in different settings. Conditions of work as well as rates of payment differ even within one city, let alone from country to country.

Although detailed information is sorely lacking, some information about these child workers is available thanks to the pioneering work of certain NGOs. We know enough to state confidently that their numbers run into the millions worldwide. We also believe that this kind of child labour is increasing. We have discovered that some children start employment as young as five years old, although most begin at around the age of 10. And we know that, because of the nature of the work, by far the majority of child domestics are girls.

In most places where the practice is common, it is regarded as so normal that nobody thinks twice about it. This is mainly because of its traditional roots. Child domestic labour occurs in societies where the use of domestic assistance in the home is commonplace. This may be connected to a traditional value system which holds that one ethnic group or caste should serve another. Or it may be simply a traditional part of local economic life. In many places today, increasing numbers of children are being engaged because they are a cheaper and more malleable source of household labour than adults.

There are many ambiguities about this situation. Some child domestics come from very poor backgrounds and the mother is widowed or abandoned. Their placement in a 'better home' is seen as an advantage. That they help out around the house is seen as a natural repayment for favour, and a training for a future life of domesticity. The fact that many are on duty all hours of day and night, are discriminated against in the household, and sacrifice their own childhood to the well-being of the employer is not regarded. This is because of a confusion between 'work as upbringing', and 'work as employment', and between patronage and exploitation.

Domestic work as part of upbringing

The idea of work as part of childhood training has a very long history. Since time immemorial, parents have brought up their children -- especially daughters -- to perform tasks about the house. Their help is needed in washing dishes, collecting water, minding livestock, looking after younger children and all the other daily activities that make the household function. Instruction in doing these things correctly is seen as a vital preparation for the child's future adulthood, marriage and parental life.

Where a family group includes a number of related couples, it is also not unusual for parents to send a child to live in another household for part of his or her upbringing. This might be because the relatives are childless or infirm, or because they are better off and can help a youngster make a good start in life. The important change today is that this kind of traditional child help is becoming commercialised. Increasingly, it is not a

family arrangement designed to suit the child's interests, but the outcome of a financial transaction in which the traded commodity is the child's labour.

Today, many more children and young people work in households which are not related to their own. Parents and employers see nothing wrong with this -- the job is a favourable opportunity for the child. Very poor parents are relieved that the child will be housed and fed. They may hope that the child will strike lucky -- maybe marry someone rich. After all, many go from rural areas to work in town, where life is supposed to be much better. The employer, meanwhile, may sincerely intend to look after the child and attend to his or her interests.

But the actual consequences may be quite different. Child domestics -- especially where they are living in -- are often very far away from family and home. They are also under the control of adults whose first concern is not their well-being, but their contribution to the well-being of the household. The love and care all children ought to receive, together with other kinds of preparation for adult life than practice in domestic skills, is missing or cannot be guaranteed. Such children are also likely to be denied the chance of going to school. And if they are over-worked, neglected or abused, they have no-one to turn to and may feel isolated and trapped.

When this kind of traditional childhood training becomes a job, therefore, the child's development may be adversely affected. But at present we can only speculate about the degree to which this is happening. Without better knowledge, we also do not know what best to advocate on behalf of child domestics. Should we be discouraging their employment altogether? Should we be trying to provide them with education or health services? Or do they most need personal support and a social life? We might like to invite employers and parents of these young domestics to reconsider whether they are acting in the children's best interests. But we must first be sure that we have some useful suggestions to offer.

Recently, NGOs in certain countries have begun to work with, or inquire into, the situation of children in domestic work. In some cases their concern has been aroused by cases of abuse which have come to their attention. In other cases concern for working children generally has alerted them to the practice, and to its potential deprivation of family life, schooling, liberty, sense of self-worth and other attributes of a healthy childhood.

Child domestics and international standards

These attributes are spelt out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Virtually all countries in the world have now ratified this human rights treaty -- agreeing to abide by the standards it has set for the treatment of children. Children's employment as domestic workers is likely to preclude fulfilment of a number of their rights. Therefore, along with the 1956 UN *Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*, ILO's *Forced Labour Convention No.29 (1930)* and *Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973)*, the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* provides international legitimisation for action on behalf of child domestics.

Child domestics and rights of the child



W: 'According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the rights of child domestic workers are rarely respected.'

M: 'Where does it say in the Convention that having a girl to work in your house is wrong?'

W: 'It doesn't. That's not how the Convention works.'

M: 'How does it work?'

W: 'It sets up standards concerning childhood. If a child enjoys all the rights in the Convention, then that child enjoys a well-protected childhood and one which equips him or her properly for adulthood.'

M: 'But surely a child placed in a good household, learning how to do domestic chores, is both protected and being prepared for adulthood?'

W: 'She's being "protected" by the employer only in exchange for her work. And her entire "preparation for adult life" is confined to domestic chores. Her other childhood needs are neglected.'

M: 'You mean education, play, making friends, family life and so on. I'm beginning to see your point.'

W: 'Put it this way. Would you regard domestic service as a suitable and well-rounded upbringing for your own child?'

The rights in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which child domestics do not, or may not, enjoy are as follows:

- The right of non-discrimination, on grounds of ethnic or social origin, birth or other status (Article 2);
- The right to be cared for by his or her parents (Article 7);
- The right of a child separated from his or her parents to maintain regular contact with them (Article 9);
- The right to be brought up by parents or guardians whose basic concern is the best interests of the child (Article 18);
- The right to protection from physical or mental ill-treatment, neglect or exploitation (Article 19);
- The right to conditions of living necessary for the child's development (Article 27);
- The right to education (Article 28);
- The right to rest, leisure, play and recreation (Article 31);
- The right to protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that interferes with his or her education or is harmful to his or her mental, spiritual or social development (Article 32);
- The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Article 34);
- The right not to be arbitrarily deprived of liberty (Article 37).

The need for information

The world is far from perfect and we are a long way from being able to assure that every child enjoys every right in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Where families are extremely poor and social attitudes deeply ingrained, it is difficult to chastise either parents or employers for making a choice for a child which seems to both practical and even beneficial.

Whatever its rights and wrongs, the practice is likely to continue for some time to come. Until such time as they can abandon work altogether, improvements in the child workers' situation -- better status in the household, access to education, social activity, rest and recreation -- may be the best option. But all these efforts require adequate information about the children's needs and the circumstances of their employment.

This handbook has been prepared in the hope of encouraging more organisations and individuals to undertake investigations -- anything from simple interviews to large-scale surveys -- which would give us a better insight into the situation of these young workers. Its content has been shaped by a meeting of NGO practitioners with appropriate experience specially convened for the purpose in early 1996.

Other activists, researchers, NGOs, national and international organisations and government departments involved in preventing child labour and helping working children may now be ready to take up the cause of children in domestic employment. No-one denies that there are difficulties in reaching these child workers, but some of these difficulties may turn out to be more imagined than real. Hopefully, this handbook will spur

on would-be researchers and provide them with the tools they need to make their work productive.

Summary

In spite of the fact that domestic work is one of the largest categories of 'child labour' in the world and often equivalent to servitude, we know very little about the practice. In order to act on these children's behalf, research is needed. This handbook explains how to undertake that research.

Chapter two

Analysing the situation of children in domestic employment: Where to start?

Needed: a framework for analysis

When planning an investigation into the situation of children in any kind of special circumstances -- such as working in domestic service -- it is important to capture all the ways in which their childhood or adolescence is being adversely affected. As we have already seen, child domestic workers are experiencing loss of their rights in a number of ways. The obvious violation is their economic exploitation, as is the case with other types of child labour. But they may also suffer from neglect, violence or abuse, and lose many of their opportunities for personal growth as well. An analysis that focuses only on working conditions, but ignores the way the child is confined inside the household and misses out on schooling, will not fully indicate the extent of the potential or actual damage to his or her childhood.

Some researchers into the situation of children in special kinds of circumstances start out by listing all the Articles from the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* which seem especially pertinent, like we did in Chapter one, and use that as a guide. They then have a complete picture of loss of childhood rights and protections according to the Convention. This has its uses but as you can see the list it produces is a very mixed bag. The different types of violations need some sorting out and grouping.

So in this chapter of the handbook, a **framework for analysis** of the situation of children in domestic service is suggested to ensure that you consider as many relevant aspects of the child's situation as possible. This kind of 'tidying up' exercise which groups things to look out for under various headings is designed to help you think through everything logically and in an organised way. It is not supposed to be an intellectual test - - everything in this handbook is meant to be practical! But at this stage, do not try to identify research priorities. These should derive from the actual situation on the ground, and the process for setting those priorities is described in the next chapter.

The chapter sections look at different aspects of the potentially damaging situation of child domestics, using a number of illustrative case examples. You will see that it is difficult to be categorical and that many things overlap. For example, being confined in the house represents on the one hand a loss of liberty akin to slavery; it also represents a loss of opportunities to become educated, enjoy a social life and make friends. So bear these links and overlaps in mind. Sample lists of questions are added to help flag up the various things you may need to know.

1. Terms of employment

The terms on which children have been employed are very important in indicating the degree to which they are at risk of gross exploitation, even to the extent of being in a condition of servitude, bondage, or slavery.

India

A destitute raised in a foundling home, Jacob was given in adoption to a well-to-do family who had a daughter but no son of their own. Now, years later, it is obvious that Jacob has been brought up to assume the role of a perfect domestic worker, with one difference - he is not paid for his labours.

He is required to assist his 'mother' in the kitchen, keep the floor and furniture tidy, wash, shop and run other errands. He has been given a bicycle to help ease his burden while the employer's only daughter is given a car and he has to clean it for her.

A National Socio-Economic Survey of Domestic Workers, School of Social Work, Mangalore; Catholic Bishop's Conference of India, Commission of Labour, Madras, 1980.

Written contracts between employers and domestic workers of any kind in any place are rare, and in the case of child domestics virtually non-existent. The absence of a written contract does not necessarily mean bad treatment or gross exploitation. But its absence puts a child or young person completely at the employer's mercy. Children may not even be informed of the terms on which they were recruited. Because children are young and vulnerable, they are heavily dependent on the honesty and goodwill of their employers to honour their promises regarding pay and other terms and conditions of work, and to treat them well.

Nepal

Most of the children are unaware of their employment contract, especially when they have been employed through brokers. Brokers often cheat the parents as well as the child, keeping for themselves the bulk of the child's earnings. Many children work just for food and shelter and find the idea of payment in cash absurd. Even when the child is supposed to be paid it is not uncommon for the employers to have the money in 'safe-keeping', promising to buy gold or jewellery. The child may never see the money.

Child Labour in Nepal, O. Sattaur, ASI/CWIN, 1993.

Even where the child or young domestic has a clearly understood agreement about pay, they may not receive the wages they have been promised. The child's wage may be paid directly to their parents, or to the child's informal guardian in the neighbourhood -- a woman known to his or her family -- by the employer. This person may also be the recruiter of the child. And this guardian or 'auntie' may also be an exploiter as well as a carer. Sometimes part of the child domestic's salary is given to her, in repayment of unspecified travel 'debts' or brokerage fees.

Where there is no-one to champion the child's right to his or her wages, they may never be received. Employers can decide to withhold payment of wages to a child

domestic on any number of pretexts. Many do so for breakages or real or imagined bad behaviour. In the case of girls employers have been known to withhold wages to go towards a dowry, perhaps because an undertaking has been made to find the child a husband in due course. Any kind of deferment of wages not only denies the child access to her own money but also ties the child to her employer.

In certain situations a child of a family unable to repay a debt to a local landlord or moneylender may be sent to work as a servant in repayment of the debt. This practice is one manifestation of the practice known as **debt bondage**, a still common practice in many countries.

Grossly exploitative employment practices need not involve the exchange of money. Many child domestics (particularly those under the age of 12) have been **given** by parents or guardians to another person to be 'looked after'. This may be called 'fostering' but in reality the child becomes an unpaid servant for the host family -- a practice also known as 'false adoption'. Such children are often the most difficult of all child domestics to reach because they are regarded as part of the employer's family.

Haiti

In Haiti most child domestics (known as *restaveks*) are given by their parents to an employer to be brought up. The agreement between the employer and the child's parents is verbal, and is made without consulting the child. From the time the employer takes the child, contact between the child and her or his natural family is severed and the child becomes totally dependent on the employer for food, clothing and shelter. The child, who may be as young as five years old, loses her or his liberty and must work without pay for the employer's family, often for many years or until the employer no longer requires the child's services. If the employer's family becomes dissatisfied with 'their' *restavek* they may simply turn the child out onto the street.

Restavek: Child Domestic Labor in Haiti, Minnesota Lawyers
International Human Rights Committee, August 1990

Terms of employment: things to find out

Is the child paid/unpaid?

How much is the child paid? How often?
Does the child her or himself receive the wage? In full?
If the child is not given the full wage, who is it given to? (parents, an 'auntie' or other recruiter, or kept by employer?)

How was the child recruited? (by a friend/neighbour, or by an agency?)
Has any advance been paid to parents for the child's labour? How much?
What are the implications of this advance?

Does the employer ever make deductions from wages? If so, for what?
Are any items given in kind? (eg medicines, clothes) If so, what?
Are presents or tips given? To what value per year?

Was the employment contract oral/written?
What was the agreement that was made?
Who made the agreement? (parents/employer/recruiter/child?)
Are the child's parents clear about the terms of the agreement?
Does the child understand the terms of the agreement?

2. Working conditions

One of the key issues distinguishing domestic work from other types of child labour is the **24- hour nature of the job**. Because the place of work is the same as the place of rest, and because -- as we have noted above -- the terms of employment are likely not to be clearly defined, the child domestic is liable to be on-call day and night, seven days a week.

After her assigned tasks there are endless errands to be run -- fetching a glass of water for one member of the household, polishing the shoes of another. During the night she may be woken up to nurse a sick child, or maybe required to get up just to open the door for a late arriving member of her employers' family.

Bangladesh - Endless chores throughout an endless day

No matter what the socio-economic conditions of the employing families, age of the domestic workers or strenuousness of the chores, their daily routine is the same. They wake before anyone else in the household and are the last to go to sleep. From the employer's point of view and in existing social practice, this does not seem to be inhuman, but domestic workers must always be prepared to undertake any chore, light or heavy, at any time of the day or night. When the working child is going out with us, away from the daily grind, we employers perceive that she is going on an outing, while in reality, her role of a domestic servant is the same. 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, the domestic worker's status remains unchanging.

Child Domestic Workers: Is Servitude the Only Option?

H. Rahman, SHOISHAB Bangladesh, 1995

Lack of time off. Real time off is a rarity. A child domestic often has to snatch rest periods when she can, and sleeping on the job will be penalised. Holidays may be very rare, often consisting of one visit home per year.

Hazards. Child domestics are compelled to undertake repetitive chores, often unsupervised, which contain risks and dangers. Unsupervised, they are required to: **cook and serve** -- chopping vegetables using sharp knives, boiling water, lighting fires, carrying charcoal or wood, dealing with gas; **clean** -- fetching and carrying heavy water pots, handling disinfectants and other chemicals; **wash and iron clothes** -- bending for long periods, taking clothes and linen out of boiling water, and operating hot irons; **go to market** -- carrying heavy bags of groceries, and possibly being exposed to rough behaviour or sexual innuendo in the street. And these tasks are often undertaken at the same time as looking after the employer's children -- ensuring that they are free from danger. Although many of the tasks may not be hazardous under normal circumstances, fatigue due to long hours of work and interrupted sleep can make even light tasks potentially hazardous.

Nepal - Hazardous work

There is no limit to the amount or kind of work to which child domestic servants are subjected. They will wash dishes, on average for six people, at least three times per day. They will hand wash clothes for the whole family and guests, clean the house, baby-sit, escort older children to and from school and look after them after school. They will do the shopping, cook the food, tend the garden and look after pets. If there is any construction work (the addition of a new room or the construction of a well or water tank are not unusual activities), they will act as labourers, fetching cement and clearing rubble.

Child Labour in Nepal, O. Sattaur, ASI/CWIN, 1993.

Violence and abuse. Verbal, physical and sexual attacks or harassment of child domestics frequently occur. A child domestic may be shouted at or beaten as a form of discipline or as punishment for working slowly or doing a task poorly. Child domestics are known to be at risk from sexual harassment and rape by male members of the employer's household and visitors.

Separate treatment. While cooking or helping to prepare food for the rest of the household the child domestic often receives a smaller portion, or be expected to eat leftovers. Often the child is not allowed to eat at the same time as the family, and may have to eat alone in the kitchen or bedroom, or even outside the house. During time off in the evening she may watch television with the family, but sits apart from the rest of the household. Sleeping arrangements for child domestics are likely to be rudimentary -- in some cases just a makeshift bed on the kitchen floor. Likewise toilet and washing facilities for the child are likely to be of an inferior quality to those of the employer's family. While most employers send their own children to school, the same opportunities are rarely open to the child domestics in their care.

Peru - Maria

They would give us two rolls to eat with tea. After that I used to go to bed. Meanwhile, they were eating buttered toast, coffee with milk, steak, and on top of that, grapes, pears, apples and peaches. We had to take their breakfast up to the second floor. They ate it at a table. We ate in the kitchen and only had tea with bread. While they had breakfast at seven in the morning, we couldn't do so until nearly ten, once some of

the work was behind us. We had to cook separately for them. While they were eating good chicken soup, we would have a watery noodle broth with a spoonful of rice.

Muchachas No More: Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean; E.M. Chaney and M.G. Castro (eds.), Temple University Press, 1989.

Confinement. Child domestics spend almost all of their time inside employers' households, and are often not allowed out during rest periods. Employers are often reluctant to allow their child domestics from leaving the house, and discourage them from having visitors, seeing such contacts as a distraction from the child's duties and an opportunity for the child to pick up bad habits. Often the only chance to get out of the house and meet others is at the local market or while running errands. In some settings, the only chance to make friends is on the roof when hanging out washing at the same time as a servant girl next door.

Working conditions – things to find out

What tasks does the child perform?
What are the hazards involved in the tasks?
Has the child had any accidents? How serious? What happened?

What are the child's working hours?
Does the child have any rest breaks? During the day? During the week?
Does the child have any full days off during the week? During a month?
Does the child have any opportunities for leisure? (in house/away from house) How often?
How often is the child allowed out of the house? For how long?
Does the child get any annual leave? How much?

What are the child's living conditions like?
Where does the child sleep?
What does the child eat? When? How often?

How many members are there in the employer's household?
How big is the house?
What facilities does the house have? (e.g. water and sanitation facilities)
To what extent does the child receive separate treatment? (accommodation/meals/other facilities)

How is the child treated by the employer and members of the family?
How satisfied is the employer with the child?
How is the child disciplined?

3. Socio-economic background of child domestics

Child domestics are likely to come from poor, often large, rural families, but there are other factors which, depending on the region, determine the likelihood of children working as domestic servants. There might, for example, be a disproportionate number of children in domestic service from a certain religious or ethnic group. Local customs which

decree that one social or ethnic group is subservient to another may increase the likelihood of a child becoming a domestic servant. In some countries, children from indigenous peoples or from nomadic groups are routinely sent to work as domestics in the households of the majority social group.

Undoubtedly, the poverty of a family and increasing need for cash as a form of household income are important precipitating factors for sending young members off to work. Rapid commercialisation and consumerisation of life in countries undergoing economic transition is linked to the growing market for child domestics.

Breakdowns in traditional family structures through wars, disease or changing social structures increase the possibility of children being sent into domestic service. Many are sons and daughters of women who have been widowed, abandoned, or for some other reason are forced to raise the family without support.

Sri Lanka

The demand for children in domestic service has continued and has even grown over the years. Though access to electricity in rural areas has been progressively expanded and television and radio or video facilities have become accepted 'needs' in low income homes, few families have access to labour saving domestic appliances. (...) many families, whether they are affluent, middle or low income, feel dependant on some form of domestic help to ease the adult burden of performing even simple household chores. Obtaining such help has become increasingly difficult due to established education policies as well as new policies on overseas migration of women for domestic service, industrialization, and women in development. Inevitably there is a steady demand for destitute, displaced or abandoned children whose parents can be persuaded to hand them over for foster care and informal adoption. These euphemistic terms in fact conceal a desire to obtain cheap unpaid domestic service.

Children in Domestic Service in Sri Lanka, Dr. S.K.E. Goonesekere, ILO, Geneva, 1993.

The demand for child domestics in many regions of the world has never been greater. While adult workers prefer to take higher status jobs in factories or go abroad to earn more money as migrant domestics, younger and more malleable workers find themselves in demand to work as domestics. The children concerned are rarely consulted regarding the work they are about to undertake, or on their working conditions. Instead, adults make decisions on the children's working roles based on their own needs and wants.

Socio-economic background: things to find out

Where is the child's home? What is the income of the child's family?
What is the child's family situation (mother/father still living? step-mother/step-father?)
What is the occupation of other household members? Is father unemployed?
Have older children/brothers and sisters also been sent to work?
Who is head of the household? Does any adult household member have a long-term illness (e.g. HIV/AIDS)?

What is the child's ethnic origin? Is it different from the employer's?
Is there a racial difference between the child domestic and the employer?
Are there religious or linguistic differences between the child domestic and the employer?

What factors affect the demand for child domestics in your area (job market, poverty)?
Why did the child/the parents decide that the child should take up domestic work?
Did the child want to take up the job or have any say in the decision?
Does the child/parents know others who have done the same? A lot? A few?

4. Impact of his/her employment on the child's physical, intellectual and psycho-social development

Separation from parents. Children often live large distances away from their homes and parents. Although employers may allow visits from parents and relatives, few can afford to travel or be away from home. The only contact with a member of the family or of the home village may be with the 'auntie' -- informal guardian and/or recruiter living nearby. This relationship may be caring, but it may also be exploitative as already explained. Often, the child worker does not see a parent or close relative for many months at a time. Live-in child domestics are rarely given enough time off from work to be able to go home. Often they make the journey home once a year, usually at major festivals.

Physical health. The long hours, poor food, overwork and the hazards implicit in the working conditions may affect the child domestic's physical health. When the child becomes sick, the doctor may not be called. Routine preventive health, such as immunisations, may not be given to the child. Similarly, first aid in the case of an accident may be cursory.

Psycho-social health and development. The isolation and discrimination the child domestic frequently experiences may have negative effects on her self-esteem, sense of identity, ability to socialise and make friends. Where the child experiences actual abuse, verbal or physical, the effects may be more severe. Very little attempt may be made by the employer to assume the 'parental' role in other than a disciplinary way, failing to offer the child encouragement and guidance to develop personally and to understand the world. Denial of play and recreation, and of socialising with peers, inhibits normal childhood development.

Typically, child domestics work for several different employers before they reach adolescence, having to adapt to each family's distinctive tastes and outlooks. This lack of permanence generates a fragile sense of security and little opportunity to form lasting relationships. Just as other children are establishing a sense of identity the child domestic finds herself constantly changing to suit the personalities of others. Her experience may make her believe that she exists only to serve others, and she may be very frightened of the world, reinforcing her vulnerability to manipulation and exploitation.

Kenya - psychological effects of domestic employment on children

Research conducted in Kenya found that child domestics experienced significantly more psychological problems than other children (both working and non-working children). Frequent headaches, eating problems, nightmares, tiredness and unhappiness were found to be very common amongst child domestics.

The Final Report of Child Labour and Health Research, Bwibo and Onyango, University of Nairobi, December 1987

Boy domestics living with an employer may feel less isolated than girls, since their work is often based outside the house -- looking after the car, tending the garden or helping in the employer's business. Part-time child domestics living at home are also less likely to feel isolated than live-in child domestics.

Education. Few children in domestic service attend school while working in employers' households. In contrast to the children of their employers, child domestics rarely get the opportunity to finish primary school and almost none reach secondary level education. As well as having implications for the child's future options, children with a low degree of literacy may find themselves even more isolated in the household because of their inability to write and receive letters from home. Even when child domestics are allowed to attend school, they must fit their studies around their domestic duties. Thus, they are often too tired and have too little time for homework to keep up with other children.

Togo

In Togo it has been found that parents prefer to send girls rather than boys into domestic service, not only because household chores are traditionally seen as 'women's work', but also because the girl's income helps to support the schooling of her brothers. Since most child domestic workers in Togo begin work before puberty they rarely have the chance of more than some years of primary schooling. Once they begin working for a family their heavy domestic duties prevent them from continuing with their education. The findings show that, far from being the advantageous 'training for life' perceived by their parents, few child domestics see their job providing them with any useful training for the future, except to confine them to more poorly paid and servile domestic work.

Children Working in Domestic Service in Togo, ASI/WAO Afrique, Lomé, August 1994.

Access to non-formal education and vocational training opportunities is also rare, although some child domestics are allowed to attend classes if the training is seen by the employer as improving the child's performance at work.

Indonesia

All of the child domestic workers interviewed in this study no longer went to school, and about half of them had not completed their primary education. Most of them were keen to continue their studies but were unable to do so because of their need to earn money.

Most of them were very pessimistic about their future. They could not tell how long they were going to work with their present employers, and what they were going to do afterwards. They were not enthusiastic about their futures because of their lack of training and experience in anything other than domestic work.

Employers are likely to feel an interest in denying child domestics their right to education, since the child might then develop other aspirations than serving the household. The child is likely to become less dependent on the employer and more likely to leave domestic service. The employer may feel that the child's value does not increase as a result of schooling as domestic duties do not require formal education. However, some employers recognise that a young domestic may become tidier, cleaner and more efficient if she goes to school.

Impact on child domestics of their situation: things to find out

Who in the household is the child closest to? Who outside?
Is the child informed or aware of what goes on outside the household?
How often does the child see her family? How often does s/he communicate with them?
Does the child have friends of its own age?

Does the child suffer from sickness or ill-health? How often?
Is the child prone to accidents? Examples?
What treatment is given when the child is sick or hurt?

Does the child like his/her working situation?
What is the child's mood? Happy or sad?
Does the child behave well?
What is the child's attitude (to work, to employer, to parents, etc.)?
How does the child respond to discipline?
Does the child receive training, instruction or counselling from the employer other than for her duties?

What level of schooling has the child reached?
Can the child read or write?
Does the child have any access to non-formal education and/or training?
Does the child have any knowledge about her/his rights?
What are the employer's views about education/schooling?

What are the perceptions of parents, employers and the children themselves about the child's future?
What would the child **like** to do in the future?

Summary

It is helpful to have a 'framework' for analysing the situation of child domestics. One framework is offered by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, starting with all actual or potential losses of rights. But it also helps to group concerns and give them a logical set of relationships. The 'framework for analysis' suggested here starts by looking at *terms of employment*, including the degree of servitude; then looks at *working conditions*, including hours, hazards, and time off; then at *socio-economic background*, to see what role the child's origins and home circumstances play in his/her employment; and lastly at *impact on childhood* of all of the above.

Chapter three

What are we going to research, and why?



I've decided to do some research



- W: 'I've decided to do some research into child domestic workers.'
- M: 'What do you want to know about them?'
- W: 'Everything. Who they are, where they come from, the terms and conditions of their jobs, the treatment they receive ...'
- M: 'What about the employers?'
- W: 'I'd like to know about them too.'
- M: 'Who they are, why they employ the children, how they treat them?'
- W: 'Yes, all of that.'
- M: 'What is the research going to lead to?'
- W: 'I don't know yet -- it depends on the findings.'
- M: 'Then you have a serious problem.'
- W: 'Do I?'
- M: 'You don't know where to begin!'

Setting the research agenda

For an NGO or other organisation concerned with child well-being, the whole point of doing research is to find out the facts of a situation so that whatever action we undertake will help the children concerned. We all know examples of well-meaning projects which, because they were based on faulty assumptions, failed to do any good. In cases where they led to a child being thrown out of a job and landing on the street, they were actually harmful.

Research is time-consuming, costs money and should be done carefully. Nobody wants to find out half way through that an essential piece of information is not going to emerge from the results. Nor do they want their report to end up on a shelf gathering dust. Unlike academic researchers, practitioners do not undertake research in order to add to the general body of knowledge. The research must lead somewhere immediately useful. This means making sure at the beginning that the research is well-designed to suit its purpose. Also, that those who ask for it are committed to acting on the findings -- whatever they turn out to be.

Although we may want to retain an open mind, inevitably we set out with certain information already in our minds and a general idea of what we are going to do about the situation. If we didn't have this motivation, we would probably not be doing research in the first place!

These ideas and information may come from actions already underway -- such as a project which assists working children. We may feel, for example, that we need to collect systematic data about child domestics attending a drop-in centre. Alternatively, our ideas and information may have come from media stories of serious abuse, or from friends and colleagues.

Our reaction to this information will depend not only on the nature of the information -- which may be very partial -- but also on our own professional orientation. If we are social workers, we will have different reactions from, for example, teachers or trades union officials. One organisation might anticipate starting an educational programme for child domestics. Another might think of running a publicity campaign -- something to sensitise employers and the public. Who we are and what we think of doing for the children concerned -- or have already done -- will influence what we want to know about them.

There is nothing wrong with that. In fact, it's important to be clear from the beginning where the research fits with our organisation's mission and agenda. There is no point in spending a lot of time researching something you are powerless or unsuited to do anything about.

Therefore, before we can answer the question: *What do we need to know about child domestic workers?* we must first answer the questions: *What do we already know?* and *What will we do with the information when we have it?*

What do we already know?

One thing we already know is that in societies where child domestic employment is common, it is not generally frowned upon. On the contrary, it is often thought of as benefiting the child. Overcoming ingrained social acceptance of the practice may require us to collect evidence which shows that child domestic workers do suffer from specific disadvantages.

Another thing we know is that the practice of employing child domestics varies a great deal from country to country.

Case example - Haiti: Children as young as five years old are given or sold by very poor rural families to families in town. These children are known as *restaveks*. They receive no pay, eat leftovers, work round the clock, are cut off from their families, and live at the mercy of their employers. They are regarded as inferior beings and expected to wait upon the family's children. They have no place within the house of their own, and rarely receive praise or approval. In Port-au-Prince alone, there are an estimated 40,000 *restaveks*, two-thirds of whom are girls.

Case example - Bangladesh: Very young child domestics are also found in Bangladesh, but typically they are somewhat older; nine or 10 is usual. Often, the child is found a job by a woman from her village -- an 'auntie' -- who works in town. The child is on duty from dawn till dusk, rarely allowed out, and is treated as inferior to the family's children. The child is paid but the wages are often given to the 'auntie'. The child usually goes home once a year at the Eid festival. At least 80 per cent are girls.

Case example - Philippines: Girls in their teens from poor rural areas but with some education leave home to find work in the city. They are hired as live-in maids and child-minders. They work very long hours for very little pay. They suffer from low self-esteem, severe loneliness, and feel powerless in the face of maltreatment. They prefer to be called 'household workers', not 'domestics', to promote their own self-respect.

Case example - Senegal: In Dakar, girl domestics as young as nine are found but 12-13 is more common. They come from deprived rural areas, and around a quarter have some primary education. An older female kin group member helps them find work. They usually live with this 'auntie', not in the household of the employer. Most problems concern maltreatment, sometimes including sexual abuse, and low pay.

From these case examples, the following **types of abuses** relating to child domestic employment can be identified. The degree of their severity varies from setting to setting:

- Loss of liberty; effective slavery or servitude.
- Loss of adequate physical and emotional care.
- Loss of parental contact, family life, and ties of affection.
- Lack of personal and social development, play and recreation.
- Lack of education.
- Loss of self-esteem and sense of worth; psychological distress.
- Economic exploitation, no or low pay and overwork; lack of time off.
- Lack of alternative opportunities.
- Verbal and physical abuse, including sexual abuse.
- Lack of redress against an exploitative or violent employer.

Identifying priority concerns

Practical tips: 1

If you are thinking of doing some research why not stop for a minute and do the following exercise. Think about what you already know, and give each of the types of abuses listed above marks out of ten depending on their relative importance.

This exercise will help you to work out what you think are the main concerns regarding child domestic workers in your setting. When it comes to planning the research, you can check whether the information you intend to collect matches the concerns you have identified.

The factors which influence whether a concern is a priority in a given setting include the following:

- The age and sex of the child domestic.
- The terms and conditions of work.
- The degree of contact with close family members.
- The degree of dependency on the employer household.

Some other factors may also be important. If the child never goes out or is not allowed to have friends, he or she may be totally withdrawn and depressed. This might affect relations with the employer and ability to do the work. The illiterate child will be more cut off than the literate because no letters can be exchanged with home or friends. So these factors could also be added:

- The degree of contact with peers and the outside world.
- Level of education or literacy.

Perhaps there are others. Have we thought enough about health and safety? Some people think that residence in an employer's household must mean that he or she eats better and is less exposed to infectious disease than at home. Is this true? And what about strain from tiredness or overwork? Is the child expected to do hazardous things, such as carry heavy pots or go out at night? The employers' attitude towards the child -- whether kind and caring, or strict and abusive -- will make a great difference to the child's well-being as well. You might want to add:

- Degree of exposure to hazard and/or health risk
- Employers' attitudes towards child domestics

It might be worth a quick mental exercise to see which of these factors seem to you most important in your setting. Some may be important in more than one way -- age, for example. To send a very small child out to work must be damaging. But a girl who is older may be more at risk from sexual abuse. Stories of teenage girls being thrown out onto the street because of pregnancies forced upon them are common.

I've decided what I need to know



- W: 'I've decided what I need to know about these child domestic workers.'
- M: 'Oh yes? What do you need to know?'
- W: 'Ages, sexes, hours of work and educational qualifications.'
- M: 'Suppose they haven't any educational qualifications?'
- W: 'That's the point! I'm intending to start an education programme for them!'
- M: 'What about the employers?'
- W: 'What do I need to know about them?'
- M: 'Their attitudes. Or none of the children will be allowed to come!'

What are we going to do with the information?

Turning to the question: ***What will we do with the information when we have it?*** we also need to think very carefully about this in advance.

There are moral and practical dimensions. The research will almost certainly require the cooperation of some child domestics and employers, and possibly parents or 'aunties' too. You have to be able to explain to them what the research is for. You will not win their confidence if they think that you are trying to make the domestics unhappy about their jobs. As for the children, it is not fair to make promises that the research will lead to improvements in their lives unless you are sure it can do so.

For your own organisational purposes, it is also important to have some specific end in view. Some organisations conduct research, but never manage to incorporate its findings into their actions. Research, whether it consists of a small-scale enquiry or a large-scale study, should be part of a wider programme of analysis and action, into which it feeds. The cycle is: research --> action --> new research --> new action. (Some people start with action, and then --> research --> new action, and so on.)

So both from an ethical point of view, and from a practical point of view, you must have a tentative answer to the question ***What are we going to do with the information?*** from the outset. If you are receiving funds from some other organisation to do the research, you should discuss the proposed outcome before you start.

Why are they interested?



- W: 'I've been given some funds by an international NGO to undertake a survey of children in domestic work.'
- M: 'Why are they interested?'
- W: 'They want to do an international campaign to show that child domestic workers are exploited and abused.'
- M: 'What are they going to do if they turn out not to be exploited and abused?'
- W: 'I don't know. I better ask them ...'
-

Before we move on to the possible **types** of action that you might be thinking of undertaking, let's remind ourselves that the **aims** of such action are to repair children's loss of childhood rights. These can be put into a framework, corresponding to the 'framework for analysis' in the previous chapter. We may, for example, aim to improve the child domestics' *terms of employment* so as to reduce actual or potential exploitation and servitude; we may aim to improve their *working conditions*; or we may aim to prevent children going into this kind of work, by improving their family life and *socio-economic* situation; finally, we may aim to reduce or counteract negative *impacts of employment on the child's physical, intellectual or psycho-social development*.

Although we may not know exactly what kind of action we are going to take until the research is finished -- in fact it is necessary to keep an open mind because the research may suggest something better -- we are likely to have a general idea. So, while keeping our aims in mind, let's look at the likely options for action:

Advocacy about child domestic employment:

- A publicity campaign about the exploitation of child domestic workers, directed at the public.
- A programme of sensitisation about certain aspects of the practice, directed at employers.
- A programme of sensitisation directed at children and their parents who send them into jobs in town without being aware of the consequences.
- A programme of sensitisation in the main 'sending' provinces in rural areas directed at community leaders, teachers and health staff.

Services for the child workers:

- A programme which would allow child domestics to meet others in the same situation.
- An educational programme structured to meet the practicalities of their working lives.
- A vocational training scheme to open up other job options.
- A drop-in centre, which can also take in runaways and conciliate between domestics and employers in conflict.
- A programme for regular health check-ups, including psychological tests and counselling.

Regulatory action:

- The establishment of a voluntary code of practice about the employment of child domestics.
- A legislative ban on the employment of children below a certain age as domestic workers.

This list is not exhaustive, but it covers most types of possible action. Some organisations may chose to do several activities. What you intend to do has an important influence on what you want to know.

For example, if you are planning to open a drop-in centre (with the aim of counteracting negative impacts on childhood development), it will not be necessary to know where the child workers come from originally; you need to concentrate on their current locations so that the drop-in centre is put in a place accessible to them. But if you want to sensitise parents to the problems their working children are likely to face (with the aim of preventing children going into domestic work), the places children come from will be very important.

What do we need to know?

Let us now ask: ***What do we need to know about child domestic workers, and why?*** and see if we can get a sensible answer.

You ought to be able to formulate what you need to know in a reasonably succinct form. If you cannot do this, it suggests that you have still not finished thinking things

through. Or it suggests that the intended scope of your research is too vague and possibly too ambitious. You can always do some more research later.

Let's look at some more examples. What are the **priority concerns** regarding the child domestics we are going to research. Is it their lack of status and poor treatment? Their working conditions? Their lack of educational and social opportunities outside the household? It may be all of these, but let us try to be focused.

Suppose our priority concerns are lack of educational, personal and social development, and we intend to set up learning and recreational groups. We will then think about the factors specifically influencing these concerns: ages, existing levels of education, whether their employers allow them to go anywhere outside the house.

We might decide that what we need to find out is the following: Is there a large number of child domestic workers of school-going age in (town, district or neighbourhood) who are not receiving education? Would their employers be willing to grant them time off to attend classes?

We will want to know about the children's ages, sexes, existing literacy, and some information about their jobs such as their working hours. But we won't need to know about their health status, for example. There is no point in collecting information we do not need -- it all takes time and effort which should not be wasted.

Take another example. Suppose our priority concern is the low status of the child workers and the impact on their self-esteem of overwork and harsh treatment. The response we intend is a drop-in centre.

We decide we need to find out the following: What are the terms and conditions on which child domestics work in households in (city, town) and what effect do these have on their physical and mental well-being? What happens to child workers who run away?

Perhaps our priority concern is the same low status, but that instead of a drop-in centre we want to run an advocacy campaign. The campaign will be more effective if we can show that the problem is widespread.

So we will re-phrase our research questions as follows: How many child domestic servants in (city, town) work in households on terms and in conditions which jeopardise their childhood? What are the typical indignities and disadvantages they suffer?

Finalising the research statement

In order to give your research project a title, turn the principal question into a statement. The previous example would be: **The extent of child domestic employment in (city, town) under terms and conditions which jeopardise childhood.** This is technically known as the **research statement**.

Before finalising the research statement, ask yourself the following questions and make sure you have satisfactory answers:

- How will undertaking this research help the child domestic workers?
- Does the research statement match the capacities of my organisation? If not, do I change the research, or do I change the organisation?
- Is the research focused, or is it rather too general?
- Is the research practicable or might it run into obstacles? If so, can I foresee them and what will I do about them?
- Can I do this research without deceiving children, employers or parents?
- If the research produces some findings which are unexpected, am I prepared to redesign my intended activities?
- Who will I please with this research? Who will I offend? Does it matter?

You may be able to answer these questions more easily when you have read the following chapters!

Summary

Any piece of research should be guided by what we already know about a situation, and what we intend to do as a result of the findings. Specific objectives for the research must be established. It is very important to think everything through carefully before answering the question: *What do we need to know and why?*

Chapter four

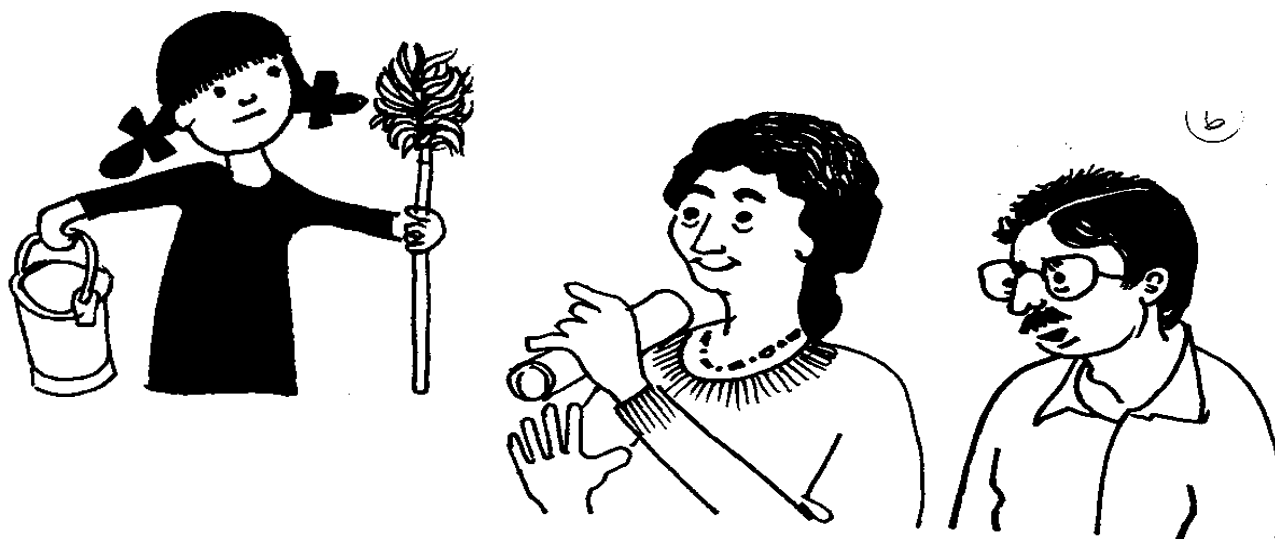
How do we find out what we need to know?

Exploring existing sources and expertise

Having decided what we need to know, we now need to develop a strategy for collecting the information. Some kinds of information are only available from 'primary' sources -- in this case, child domestics, employers, parents, informal guardians or 'aunties', and other intermediaries such as recruiters. Others are available from existing studies, records and well-informed individuals -- 'secondary' sources.

All research will require some exploration of secondary sources whether or not primary research -- such as a survey -- is planned. This will be the case whether a simple investigation is envisaged or a full-scale study with a team of researchers. It is also important to explore secondary sources before doing primary research so as to be sure that you are not going to find out something already established by someone else.

I thought you were going to do some research



M: `I thought you were going to do some research into child domestic workers?'

W: `I've already done it!'

M: `That was quick! When will your data be processed?'

W: `It's already been processed!'

M: `Miraculous! And when will your report be coming out?'

W: `It already is out!'

M: `You must be making this up.'

W: `Not exactly. I discovered that another researcher has done an almost identical piece of work. So we're using that instead!'

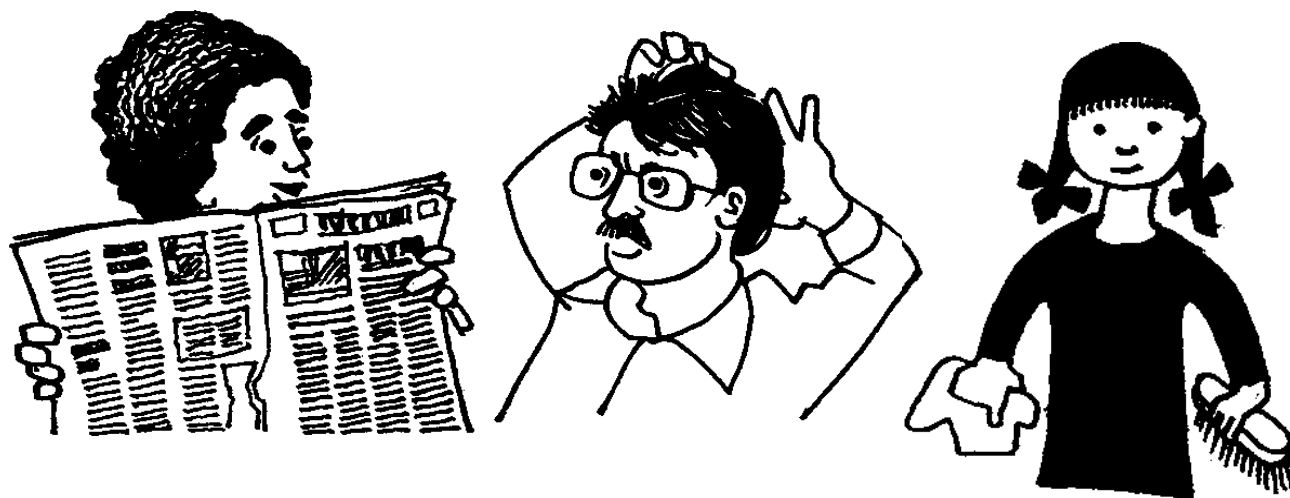
Secondary sources

Here is a list of **secondary sources** of information:

- **Newspaper and media reports.** If there have been reports of abusive treatment of child domestics, you might approach the news department of the newspaper concerned and speak to the reporter. Some organisations keep newspaper cuttings and may also be able to help.
- **Libraries.** Public libraries, libraries in universities and other institutions are an important source of information. Literature on social studies, social history and social anthropology, even folktales, can provide useful insights. Most research is improved by a historical perspective; for example, it may show whether employing child domestics is a traditional practice or entirely modern.
- **Social research institutes and university departments.** Visit all research institutes and places of advanced learning where social studies are taught. Some researchers are bound to express interest and could be useful collaborators as well as informants. They can direct you to existing research on connected subjects, such as women and work.
- **NGOs.** It is worth checking up systematically with other child- and women-related NGOs whether they have come into contact with children in domestic work. Those who run such services as shelters for street children, centres for unmarried pregnant girls and non-formal neighbourhood schools may have done so.
- **Workers' Associations and Trades Unions.** Associations of domestic workers and trades unions, at local and national levels, can be useful sources of information -- particularly relating to general working conditions and employment terms.
- **Labour and Social Welfare Departments.** The national labour department can provide information on the existence (or non-existence) of national and municipal laws and regulations governing children in domestic service. The Governmental or municipal social services department is responsible for government-run child care institutions. It may also keep a register of all such institutions run by NGOs. Such departments are important sources of information concerning children who have been abandoned, or who have suffered abuse and run away, landing up in care.
- **ILO or UNICEF country offices.** The country offices of relevant international organisations, notably the ILO and UNICEF, may have conducted studies into working children which shed light on the situation of children in domestic service. (The ILO's IPEC programme, now operational in more than 20 countries, could be a particularly useful collaborator). The mandates of these organisations include helping UN member governments meet their obligations under international treaties such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This may be a very important framework of legitimisation for whatever research and action you undertake.
- **Bureau of Statistics.** It is important to find out from the central statistical office what kind of information is collected in censuses and household surveys. Do they capture

information about non-kin household residents and do they collect information on their age and ethnicity? If so, analysis of existing data may shed light on the prevalence of children in domestic work.

- **Well-informed individuals.** Many of those who can be regarded as potentially well-informed on this subject have already been mentioned under other headings above. Who have we left out?



I've been to see everybody involved

- W: 'You know that case of cruelty against a child domestic worker that was reported in the newspaper?'
- M: 'The one where the employer scalded the girl with boiling water?'
- W: 'Yes. I've been to see everybody involved. The reporter, the girl in hospital, the medical staff who treated her. Only the employer refused to talk to me.'
- M: 'That is hardly surprising! She must be in trouble. Are the police going to lay a charge against her?'
- W: 'Oh ... I don't know, I forgot to go and talk to them!'

Police and lawyers may have special information; also community leaders; community workers, such as primary health care volunteers; human rights activists; also religious leaders -- priests and sheikhs; doctors or paediatricians; proprietors of small guest-houses. Recruiters of girls, or anyone acting as a recruiter or 'employment agent' (such as market vendors), can also be very valuable sources of information.

Practical tips: 2

If we review all the possible sources we have suggested, you will see that they all fall into one of the following categories. Use this checklist to see that no-one has been left out:

- People with a professional connection of some kind to children, not forgetting lawyers who specialise in cases concerning children;
- Academic experts and researchers in relevant disciplines;
- Caring organisations and individuals, religious and secular;
- Activists, either in NGOs, the media or professional politicians;
- Civil servants employed by various government departments, including police, magistrates, probation officers;
- Yourself! Your own ability to ask questions is an important research asset. Develop it and let it flourish!

Planning the research: defining key words

Let us take one of the case examples we have already developed and see how we are going to set about planning our research.

Here are our research questions: **How many child domestic servants in (city, town) work for private employers on terms and in conditions which jeopardise their childhood? What are the typical indignities and disadvantages they suffer?**

Let us unpick these questions for a moment. Let us take all the key words and examine each one to see all the things we need to find out about, and where we might be able to get the information.

Here are all the key words: *how many, child domestic workers, town/city, private employers, terms, conditions, jeopardise, childhood, indignities, disadvantages.*

In some cases, what you need to do is to decide what *you* mean by the words in question. For example, *child domestic workers*: it is obviously essential to have a definition of what we mean by a 'child domestic worker'.

Even though the words in this phrase seem simple and self-evident, each one must be carefully thought about. And we may need to look up the words -- in the dictionary, in existing laws and policies -- to see how they are usually defined.

The first word we must address is 'child'. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 'child' means anyone under 18. So does that solve our problem? Maybe, but probably not. The minimum age of employment is lower than this (usually 14 or 15). And in many places, children much younger than this are employed as domestic workers, and the loss of parental care and loss of schooling must surely be more serious. The

'jeopardy to childhood' faced by a girl of 7 is surely much greater than that faced by 17-year-old.

The simplest approach may be to have separate age-groups: for example, below age 9, 9-12, 12-15, and 15-18. This breakdown would find out about very young children, below primary school age children, below minimum employment age children, and below 18 years. You may want to use some qualifying terminology: 'young children', 'pubertal children', 'adolescents', and 'young persons', for example.



What is a child?

W: `What is a child?'

M: `Surely you know what a child is?'

W: `The Convention on the Rights of the Child says that a child is under age 18. But when a boy or girl becomes mature, sexually and in other ways, he or she is no longer a child.'

M: `My daughter got married at 16. So she was a child bride!'

W: `The word 'child' is very confusing. School-leaving age, working age, and age of sexual consent are all lower than 18 in many countries.'

M: `Look at it like this. Everyone under 18 needs some special protection because they have not yet reached full adulthood -- physically, emotionally and intellectually. That means that, where they have embarked on adult activities, it should be under some adult guidance.'

W: `So what is the upper age limit of 'child' labour?'

M: `That depends on the legal minimum age of employment -- usually 14 for non-hazardous occupations.'

W: `Is domestic service hazardous?'

M: `That's another question!'

What about 'domestic worker'? Does the child have to be remunerated to be described as a 'worker'? However, an unremunerated worker is a slave. What if the child has been 'taken in' to help his or her family? What if the employer is a relative? It may be sensible to define a 'child domestic worker' as *'anyone below age 18 working in a*

household for pay, keep, or as a result of a transaction between the employer and the child or his/her guardian or parent.

Does anything else need defining in this kind of way? Look at *town/city*. You must decide exactly what geographical area you are going to cover. Are you going to concentrate only on a specific neighbourhood? Or are you trying to gather information which will allow you to make statements about a whole city, or about urban locations in the whole country?

What about *employers*? Are we including relatives of the child's family? Or are these informal guardians? Going back to the definition of 'child domestic worker', the simplest test may be: *does the child receive pay or has there been a transaction concerning his/her labour?* If so the person is an 'employer' according to your definition.

Matching key words to sources

Now let us look at the remaining words: first, *how many*. How will we find out about the numbers of child domestic workers in the age-groups we have identified? The only possible secondary sources in the list already given above are (a) **existing research studies** conducted by academics or NGOs; (b) **household survey data** available from bureaux of statistics.

Now *terms* and *conditions* of employment. The word 'terms' refers to the pay or whatever is given to the child or parents/guardian in exchange for his/her work. 'Conditions' refers to such matters as working hours, rest, provision of own space or bed, meals, time off, freedom to leave the house, opportunity to play and enjoy social interaction, opportunity for education, arrangements for seeing parents or guardian on a regular basis.

The terms and conditions on which child domestic workers are employed are key to problems relating to the practice. They exert a strong influence over whether the child's situation is akin to slavery, is mildly exploitative, or reasonable; they will also greatly affect the child's physical, psychological and emotional health and opportunities of personal, intellectual and social development.

'Terms' will probably be easier to define than 'conditions'. 'Terms' will include all the payments and goods the child worker receives in exchange for work. To work out all the 'conditions' in which the child lives and works it may be worth thinking through the child's entire day: what time does he/she get up, when does he/she have breakfast, how many hours of work does he/she perform before breakfast, etc., through the day.

It may be worth spending some time finding out what **well-informed individuals** consider to be reasonable terms and conditions of employment for child domestic workers. Then you will have a set of 'norms' to compare existing terms and conditions with.

Information may be obtainable from (a) **existing research studies**; (b) **NGOs and child care workers**; (c) other **well-informed individuals**, and (d) **personal knowledge and observation**. Some supplementary information may be available from the media and anecdotal sources. However, to get really good information, you will probably need to go to 'primary' sources -- child workers and employers.

Now we come to the question of what is meant by *jeopardise their childhood*. For *childhood*, the CRC definition of life up to age 18 should be the guide. When considering whether the worker's childhood is likely to be *jeopardised*, you may find it helpful to consult child health and/or psychology experts. They can tell you what special needs and problems are associated with different age groups. For example, the very young child may be physically more vulnerable to over-work and carrying heavy loads. Older girls will be more vulnerable to sexual pressure.

So the secondary sources for *jeopardising childhood* will be (a) **documentary analysis** of authoritative information concerning childhood development; (b) **well-informed individuals** on childhood development at different ages and stages.

Finally we come to *indignities* and *disadvantages*. These two words have their own meanings in the context of child domestic work. 'Disadvantages' could include such things as eating leftovers, having no personal space or bed, working very long hours, and isolation.

The word 'indignities' implies something else: damage to one's sense of self, and to one's existence as a free, independent and equal human being. These 'indignities' could include: receiving only complaints and never praise, being verbally or physically attacked, being treated as inferior to the children of the household, being held virtually captive, being regarded as a creature with no individual will or viewpoint whose quality of existence is entirely at the mercy of the employer's family.

Secondary sources of information about 'indignities' include (a) **media stories**; (b) **NGOs**; (c) other **well-informed individuals**, such as community leaders and child care personnel; (d) **personal knowledge**. Note that, in the past, **existing studies** have not been particularly good sources of information regarding 'indignities' -- although recent studies have more frequently included such information. Again, primary sources are probably going to be more important -- in this case, the child workers themselves. But secondary sources may give you useful information for planning your research in this area -- the most sensitive and difficult area of all.

The research outline

In order to be sure that you have looked at everything from every important angle, it is useful to write out all the *key words* in your research questions in a list. Then you can write opposite them what *source* you will go to collect information, with the *technique* you will use if relevant -- for example, 'by interview', 'by observation', 'by personal discussion'.

Practical tips: 3
Matching key words to sources (example)

This might help you plan your research:

<u>Key words</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Technique</u>
How many?	Census data Household surveys Existing studies	Visit Bureau of Statistics University depts.
Terms of employment	Employers Personal contacts Child domestics	Discussion Personal observation Interview
Jeopardising childhood	Studies on child growth and development Child psychologists and other experts	Research in library Interviews

What you have developed is a **research outline**. It may be a good idea to pin it up on the wall, and regularly refer to it to see that you are keeping to your plan and covering everything systematically. This will be a great help when information starts to accumulate and you begin to feel you need to organise it.

Practical tips: 4
Recording and organising your information

As you look at books, consult newspapers, and read reports, you will be taking notes and collecting copies of material which you will consult when you come to write up your research. Very soon, this material may become voluminous and threaten to swamp you.

If you don't have a good method of organising what you have, when you come to write the report you may entirely forget about some source and the information it contains.

One method of filing your material would be to use the same *key words* you have already used to analyse your project. When taking notes, leave some space at the top of the page to write in the appropriate key words for the material on that page. For example, if you have been reading a report on pregnant unmarried girls who became pregnant while in domestic employment, you might write in at the top of the page: *jeopardised childhood* and *indignities and disadvantages*. When you come to file the information, make two copies of these pages and put the copies in files marked with those key words.

Where you want to remind yourself to consult a document on a particular topic, write its name on a sheet of paper and where you have put it. Then write the key words of the topics it covers at the top of the page, make the necessary number of copies of this piece of paper, and file them in the appropriate files.

Of course, this can all be done on a computer. But that means extra work in putting it all on the computer, and you may get overwhelmed with the task. Whatever you do, use a straightforward system, one that you can put your material into conveniently. Rely as little as possible on memory. Memory is bound to let you down!

When you come to write up the report, order your files in the order of the topics you are going to address, and consult them systematically.

Final adjustments

After collecting information from secondary sources you will probably see the whole subject rather differently than when you started. You may need to make some adjustments to the research questions or statement.

You may have made some discoveries. For example, contrary to your assumption that child domestic servants mostly live in the households where they are working, you have found that many go to work each day. Perhaps you may now decide to alter the research question to read: **What are the numbers of *live-in* child domestic servants in (city, town) working on terms and in conditions which jeopardise their childhood?**

You should now be in a position to know what kinds of information cannot be obtained from secondary sources, but require special research from primary sources. You also ought to know what the major obstacles are to finding out what you need to know, and will already have discussed with well-informed individuals how to overcome them.

If, on the other hand you have collected enough information to answer your research questions, you will have saved yourself the trouble and expense of undertaking

a survey to find out the same things over again. Or you may be more than ever convinced that primary research is needed ...

Summary

There are a number of existing or 'secondary' sources of information which may provide answers to your research questions. When working out who or what to consult, it is important to adopt a questioning attitude to every element of what you want to know. It is also important to record information systematically. The process of obtaining answers from secondary sources may radically alter your perceptions. It will also prepare the ground for the 'primary' research.

Chapter five

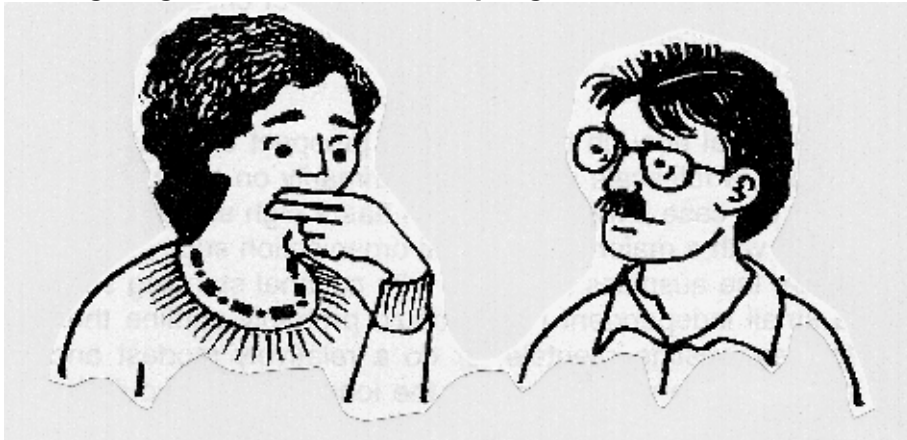
Collecting first-hand information - 1: Surveys

There are two kinds of first-hand information that you will need to give you a full picture of the situation of child domestics in your chosen geographical area. The first kind is nuts and bolts, or **quantitative** information which will tell us some basic things about child domestics in order to provide us with the wider picture. This chapter shows you how to go about collecting this sort of information. The second kind of information that you will

need is individual testimony from the child workers themselves (**qualitative** information) and this is the focus of Chapter six.

We need basic information -- about the children's ages, sexes, numbers, home origin, reason for working, pay, living conditions -- in order to design the right kind of help in the most suitable locations. We also need it because, without it, we cannot talk about the problems facing child workers with any credibility. Without the facts those who think that child domestics are lucky to be placed in 'good households' can say that we have not proved our case -- even accuse us of stirring up problems unnecessarily. We ourselves will be tentative in what we do and say if we actually know very little about our subject.

I'm going to mount a campaign



W: `I'm going to mount a campaign about the way people treat their child domestic workers. The number who beat them or verbally abuse them is appalling.'

M: `How many habitually treat their child servants like that?'

W: `I don't know exactly, but I'm sure it's a huge number.'

M: `I don't agree. I expect it's only a few.'

W: `And then there are all those employers who exploit their girl servants sexually, and they get pregnant and end up on the street!'

M: `How many child domestics end up on the street?'

W: `I don't know exactly ...'

M: `You better be careful, or influential people will discredit you. Don't you think you better campaign about the things you *do* know something about?'

An important part of the information needed for 'the wider picture' is an estimate of the numbers of children involved. Where the practice is very widespread, it demands attention by virtue of the numbers of children involved. Until people realise how many children worldwide are engaged in this kind of work, as well as its implications for their well-being, this issue will remain in the child labour backwater.

We already examined in Chapter four where to collect demographic data from secondary sources, including household surveys. In this chapter we will examine how to collect basic information from primary sources.

Surveys: the key to basic facts

There is really only one way to collect basic facts from primary sources: by conducting a survey. Traditionally such surveys are conducted house-to-house. But you can also conduct a survey by telephone. Since in many developing countries only households in the top socio-economic class have telephones, our main focus is on house-to-house methods.

Three organisations which have conducted surveys on a significant scale into child domestic employment are: WAO-Afrique, Togo; SCF (Australia), Bangladesh; and CWIN, Nepal. These surveys all formed part of overall studies of child domestic labour, and are among the most significant 'situation analyses' into child domestic employment to have been undertaken anywhere in the world.

Where an organisation is influential enough to have some prospect of making an impact on national child welfare policy, a full-scale study based primarily on a household survey is appropriate. This would be the case if the organisation has a high standing with government, is working in conjunction with a major international organisation such as ILO-IPEC or UNICEF, or is working under the auspices of a body with national standing such as a 'Child Rights Forum'. But a small independent NGO should probably confine their collection of basic information to their existing clientele, or do a relatively modest and specifically focused survey, at least to begin with, even if in the longer term it would be appropriate to have an impact on national policy.

If a full-scale city or national study/survey is envisaged, a professional team will need to be employed. The Togo and Bangladesh surveys supported by ASI chose to employ multi-disciplinary teams. These included experienced social scientists to ensure academic rigour, as well as NGO personnel, legal experts, and -- in the case of Togo -- a journalist.

A word of warning. An essential element of both quantitative and qualitative surveys is information from the child workers themselves. But collecting information from children is often difficult because of the sensitive nature of what is being asked and the difficult setting it may be asked in (such as in the employers' household). So, before designing a survey please consult Chapter six for information on how to go about collecting information from the children concerned.

Undertaking a survey in employer households

The purpose of an independent survey carried out in employer households would be to build up a general picture of the practice of child employment in the society at large. A connected purpose might be to establish the prevalence of the practice in the society at large.

Organisations operating on a more modest scale might want to conduct a survey in the households of their project area, or among families that they are in contact with. The results of such a survey would be generally illuminating, and specifically helpful for the programme of the organisation in question -- assuming that the survey is designed to

achieve this end. This is where careful establishment of the purposes of research -- ***What do we need to know, and why?*** -- as described in Chapter three is important. But a survey among a pre-determined group, such as families in a project area, will not produce results which are valid for the society as a whole.

Note: Access to child domestic workers will be much easier if you can enlist the support of their employers. Although employers are likely to be sceptical at first, experience from the ILO's IPEC programme suggests that employers can be committed to what you are doing if they have been involved at an early enough stage. By informing employers of what you are doing -- and why -- it might be possible to obtain support from some of the more progressive ones -- they may even help you to convince more reluctant employers to support your work. You could also try some more indirect approaches to employers; contacting local clubs or associations attended by employers is one option, or there may be networks of adult domestic workers who know the child workers in the area.

Choosing a sample of households to be surveyed

The first task is to choose the sample of households to be surveyed. You want your sample to be as representative as possible so that when you analyse your data and say: 'X% of the child domestics were under 14', or 'X% were illiterate', it will be as valid as possible for child domestics in general.

The aim must be to choose a sample which will be as neutral and as representative as possible. Doing this is a technical matter with which you will almost certainly need professional help. There are different methods of picking samples, some of which are known as 'random', some of which are 'non-random' or 'purposive'. To be truly 'random', a method has to be elaborate, the exact opposite of haphazard. The purpose of making it truly random is to reduce bias in the sample -- for example, to avoid over-stressing a certain ethnic group or social category of respondent. 'Non-random' methods are more judgmental; they exclude from the sample subjects which will be very expensive, time-consuming or difficult to survey, and whose inclusion is likely to add little to the survey results. While such samples are useful in indicating key issues and can be extremely valuable when designing programmes for child workers, they do allow biases to creep in and, in general, such information should not be used to generalise for a whole population. So most samples represent a compromise.

In order to develop a good sample, you will need to consult with statisticians in the national or municipal Bureau of Statistics. They may have a 'sampling frame' -- based on neighbourhood mapping, population figures, and socio-economic designations -- that you can use. Or else they can help you develop one, as was done by CWIN in Nepal.¹

Almost certainly, the development of the sample will require a mixture of random and non-random selection methods. For example, the local areas, wards, or streets could

¹ If you want to consult a manual on survey techniques, including how to do 'random' sampling in its many variations, consult the Oxfam book: [Social Survey Methods: A Fieldguide for Development Workers](#), by Paul Nichols, published in 1991, available from Oxfam offices.

be selected using a random method (there are techniques for this, using random number tables); at the same time, you would ensure that all social categories of neighbourhood are included in proportion to their numbers in the city and their population figures. This would be 'systematic random' method, and might lead to, say, 20 wards representing four different socio-economic groups being selected.

Within each of the wards, you would then decide that a certain number of households would be surveyed -- say, 10. The actual households could be selected by random or non-random method. In Nepal, for example, researchers in the wards selected households where they knew child domestics were working, so this was non-random.

If a random method was used, then you would again use a statistical technique to make a random list of households, and you would have to go on visiting households on the list until 10 had been found with child domestics. Then you would conduct interviews in those ones. This would produce valid prevalence figures: you would discover the proportion of households with/without child servants in the sample neighbourhoods and this could be correlated with their population figures. However, studies that have estimated prevalence so far have done so by a simpler interview process among a special sample (see below, for Nepal and Indonesia).

This explanation of sampling is intended to do no more than illustrate the complexities to be considered. This is why we are stressing the point: obtain professional help with sampling. Obviously, data is not 100% accurate unless the whole target population is surveyed. This is impossible. The larger the number of interviews, the more accurate the results. But you cannot conduct interviews in hundreds of households. So you increase your validity by good sampling. If the sample is well-selected, between 100 and 200 interviews should be enough to produce useful, representative basic information about child domestics.

There's pressure in numbers



Child: 'I wonder how many children there are like me?'

W: 'I have to admit, we don't know their numbers.'

M: 'You ought to know if your campaign is to be effective.'

W: 'It's the children's situation that matters, not how many there are.'

M: 'But if people realised how many there are, they'd pay more attention.'

Child: 'There's pressure in numbers!'

Establishing the prevalence of child domestic work

In a minute we will go on to consider other aspects of how to conduct a general quantitative survey. But first we'll pursue the theme of samples in relation to the difficult question of **prevalence**.

Working out how many child domestics are employed in a city or a country has proved very elusive. However, it is not impossible. And it is necessary. Without estimates of numbers, we cannot make the point that this is a large group of child workers and deserves serious attention. Developing the sampling and surveying method requires the help of professional statisticians. And it needs advice from experts who have worked on censuses and previous household surveys and have population figures and detailed maps at their disposal.

Case example: Nepal

In Nepal, a separate methodology from that used to select households for interview was developed to find out the child domestic worker prevalence. The method used is known as 'cluster sampling'. Five urban wards from among the total wards in Kathmandu Valley were selected, taking into account the number of households and population; then 25 households were selected in each ward. Each of these 125 households was visited, and one single question was put: did the household contain a domestic worker under the age of 16, yes or no?

From these responses, the prevalence of child domestic workers could be calculated for the urban population as a whole: it turned out to be 19% of households. From this and knowledge of population figures, the numbers of child domestics as a whole could be estimated. But the exercise revealed nothing else -- not sub age-groups, not sexes, not literacy rates. The exercise for the more detailed information via interviews was kept separate. This compromise allowed for the rounded collection of basic quantitative data, and the calculation of a crude prevalence rate, on the basis of different samples.

In Nepal, CWIN believed that it was essential to know how widespread the practice of child domestic labour was in order to campaign about it. Therefore, they put extra effort into the study and undertook a special exercise to find this out. There is no doubt that more information about prevalence rates at national and city level would be useful, as much for international as for local campaigns.

The interview schedule or questionnaire

There are a number of issues relating to the interview schedule -- the questions to be put to employers and child domestics -- which need careful thought. All researchers stress how difficult it can be to gain the co-operation of the employers -- without which the whole survey will collapse. So employers must be treated with great respect. The

questions must be chosen with care. They must not be offensive, and they must not be superfluous or waste the employer's time.

It is also important to be concise from your own point of view. You do not want the interviews to go on for longer than 45 minutes or so per household, otherwise it will not be possible to do several in a day. This will mean employing more researchers, taking more time, increasing costs; and it will mean more time entering and processing data.

The length of the questionnaire and the time spent in interviewing depend on the aim of the survey. So every single question you consider for inclusion you must ask yourself: *Do we really need to know this?* You must also ask yourself: ***Is there any other way we can find this out?*** -- especially if the question might cause offence. For example, if you already have a socio-economic profile of the neighbourhood you are surveying, you may not need to ask about the employer's own income, educational level, or profession.

All key words will need a definition, as already described in Chapter four: *child domestic worker* (with age breakdowns), *employer*, *terms and conditions*, and so on.

The interview schedule should be filled out by the researchers; to make this as quick a process as possible and to enable the data to be easily entered later, the questions should be set out in multiple choice or either/or format so that boxes can be ticked and answers easily filled in.

Practical tips: 5 **The full range of questions**

The questions can be grouped according to topic. Here is the full range:

- Questions about the household; number of its members, size of the house, number of rooms of different kinds, type of equipment relating to domestic work e.g. water and sanitation facilities.
- Questions about the child domestic; age (by group, previously established), sex, home address, ethnic origin, relationship to the household.
- Questions about recruitment; method of recruitment, date of recruitment, previous job, length of employment, on-going contact with parents or 'auntie'.
- Questions about terms and conditions of employment; including the nature of tasks performed, working hours, rest breaks, leisure opportunities, and time off.
- Questions about accommodation, meals and living conditions.
- Questions about behaviour, attitude, performance and relations with other members of the family.
- Questions about health, educational status and well-being.
- Questions about the child worker's future.
- Questions to ask the employers; their level of satisfaction with child domestics and ideas about child domestic labour generally.
- Questions about knowledge of child rights.

Much thinking needs to go into what these questions should include, what they should leave out, how they should be put, and so on. If you are not careful, the questionnaire will end up 20 pages long. That is an important trap to avoid. It will be created by not focusing on the key things to know in each area.

Go over everything several times and ask: ***How is a response to this question going to affect policy and advocacy work in this area?*** If there is no clear answer, leave the question out. For example, do you need to know the educational level of employers? Do you really need to know the marital status of the child domestic's mother? Or the number of his/her siblings? You may need to -- but you must know why.

When it comes to carrying out the interviews, maximum involvement should be sought of the child worker, either by asking the questions to both employer and child domestic, or by asking the child a separate set of questions. Because of the sensitivities, this may have to take place in the presence of the employer.

Some research studies do ask the child domestics about their level of satisfaction in the job and subjects such as abuse, but accurate responses cannot really be expected and problems may be caused by asking. However child workers can give a frank reply about their reason for leaving the previous job, and something may be deduced by length of time in the current one.

All interview schedules and questionnaires need to be pre-tested before they are finalised.

Selection and training of enumerators/research assistants

All those who have worked for NGOs undertaking research into child domestic work stress the importance of recruiting suitable team members. Even if they will not have to interview children in-depth, which requires special training and skills, they will have to persuade reluctant employers to participate in the survey, and to allow their child workers to participate; and they will have to elicit some information which many people will not be enthusiastic to impart.

Since the large majority of employers and child workers interviewed will be female, it may be wise to recruit female research assistants and enumerators. However, the survey's importance may also gain weight if men are involved. Enumerators can work in pairs of one male, one female. The best gender make-up for the team will vary from setting to setting. Think about it carefully in your own setting.

All enumerators need to be given careful sensitisation and training. They can conduct the questionnaires in role-plays with one another. They can prepare themselves for obstructive or unresponsive employers by having reassuring things ready to say. They need to know their neighbourhoods, or have good maps, and to practice planning time-saving routes and schedules. They also need to understand the system for feeding their information in, or entering questionnaire data on the computer if that is a part of their responsibilities.

Enumerators also need to be given the opportunity for feedback from their household visits on a regular basis. Their reactions to what they learn about child domestic work may turn out to be an important element of the survey process.

The telephone survey

In cases where resources are lacking for a house-to-house survey with teams of enumerators, a telephone survey may be a practicable alternative. However, this is really only an option if telephone ownership amongst households is relatively high.

Case example: Indonesia

In order to estimate the prevalence of child domestic employment in the Greater Jakarta Area (Jabotabek), the Atma Jaya Research Centre in Indonesia decided to conduct a telephone survey. Only around 25% of the households in Jabotabek had telephones, biasing the survey in favour of middle- and upper-income groups. This probably led to an under-estimation, rather than an over-estimation, since child domestic employment is probably as, or more, common among lower-income households.

A sampling frame was developed from the 1995 Jakarta Telephone directory, using systematic and random methods to select the sample. Telephone calls were made to 287 households. They were asked whether they had, or ever had had, children working for them as domestics; if the answer was 'yes', they were asked about age-group, where the children came from and how they were recruited; and about their own socio-economic status.

Of those households contacted, 50% (151) employed domestics; of these, 29% (44 households) employed child domestics under the age of 15 (school completion age). This allowed the researchers to calculate that over 400,000 children in Greater Jakarta worked as domestics. This in turn implied that the national figure of 2.4 million economically active children in the country was probably an under-estimate by a factor of at least three.

Information gained from the telephone survey was co-related with in-depth interviews undertaken face-to-face with a small sample of children and employers to gain a picture of the practice in Indonesia as a whole.

Recording and analysing your findings

The advantage of undertaking a quantitative survey in which questionnaires or interview schedules are used is that the data collected is already organised in such a way that it is pre-set for analysis.

Data has to be fed into formulae such as tables, normally with the aid of a computer. Here is another instance where professional expertise in statistical analysis may be needed in order to produce the relevant interpretations and deductions.

However, the organisation of findings for the writing of the report will be relatively straightforward, following the topics on which questions were asked.

The specific survey among a small group

Now, let us return to the possibility we earlier outlined: that you may want to conduct a survey among an existing pre-determined group -- for example, the child workers who attend your drop-in centre or education programme; the households where they work; or the families of child workers back in the 'sending communities'.

In this case, the first thing to do will be to go through all the stages of asking yourself ***What do we need to know and why?*** as earlier outlined so as to develop a clear statement of the purpose(s) of your research. You are naturally going to ask about questions such as age, sex, home address; but the emphasis on other elements -- educational level, status in the household -- will depend on the answer to this central question.

Then you can follow through the other activities described above, with the exception of sampling. You do not need to do this because your population to be surveyed is already established.

The important areas will be the contents of the questionnaires and the preparation of the interviewers. Even if you think that this is a modest survey, to be conducted among 'people we know', you must still think everything through carefully and make sure it is properly done. Otherwise you will spend a lot of time and find out very little you did not know before.

The answers you get to your research may point you in the direction of new research. For example, if your responses tell you that many of the child domestics in your group come from one community or district, this may suggest that the next scene of both action and research should be in that location.

Summary

Conducting a survey is the best way to develop an accurate picture of the practice of child domestic employment in a society, including its prevalence. As you will probably be aiming to change the way people treat child domestics at both local and national level, you should expect in the long term to have to conduct a fairly large and complex survey in order to influence national-level policy. However, a small organisation can start with a smaller-scale survey in order to have an effect at local level. Apart from developing a *sample*, the key areas requiring time and effort are *developing the questionnaire*, and *training the team*. Analysis of the results will be very important, for which you are likely to need professional help.

Chapter six

Collecting first-hand information - 2: Interview

The need to involve children

This chapter is about collecting data about child domestic work from the child workers themselves.

Today, it would be almost unthinkable for an organisation concerned with children to carry out in-depth research into their situation without involving the children themselves. The Convention on the Rights of the Child says that children have the right of participation in activities which affect them, to the extent of their ability. It is clear that child domestics must be important actors in our research process.

For many practitioners, this is the most important chapter in the book. Often, a project to help child domestic workers -- or a project to help child workers which happens to include domestics in its clientele -- has been set up by a concerned individual or NGO anxious to do something to help them. From there, the NGO progresses to wanting to persuade an indifferent society to change their attitudes and domestic employment

practices. (Sound familiar?!) So its staff want to find out from the children attending their project what their main problems are so as to make the project more relevant. They also want to collect evidence that these children are suffering real childhood damage for use in advocacy. Basic demographic data and the kind of survey described in the last chapter are unlikely to reveal this effectively. In-depth work with children and their confidantes (including 'aunties' and older servants in the same household) is probably the only way.

Basic demographic data can easily be collected at the same time. If you have solved the problem of how to find out about children's inner feelings and experiences, you are certainly able to find out about matters such as age, sex, home address, and other questions which mostly require straightforward 'yes/no' answers.

Sensitivities of collecting first-hand information by interview

Information about some 'terms and conditions' of employment can be regarded as basic information. It is not very difficult to ask employers and workers about tasks and free time, for example. Salary and personal satisfaction are more delicate, and when we get to the employer's behaviour towards the child, we are entering the 'in-depth' area. We will help ourselves to think clearly by deciding what we regard as 'basic information' and what we regard as 'in-depth information' ahead of time.

Before we examine how to collect in-depth information directly from child workers, we must go back to the central problem affecting all research into child domestic employment. This is the scattered nature of the work-place -- the fact that each child is employed in a separate household, and that they are therefore difficult to reach as a group.

If we overcome this problem by gaining access to households where child domestics are employed, the children we talk to are certain to feel constrained. Even if the employer is willing for the child to talk to the researchers in private, it is very unlikely that the child will confide his or her intimate feelings or experiences to strangers. Even obtaining descriptive answers to questions may be difficult, especially from younger children who have little experience in self-expression and whose main fear in life may be upsetting the employer and losing their jobs.



She didn't open her mouth

- M: 'Is your study revealing cases of maltreatment of child domestic workers?'
- W: 'Yes it is. But at this rate they won't be reflected in its findings.'
- M: 'Why is that?'
- W: 'The other day I was in a household, and from her reaction to my questions I was convinced the girl domestic was terrorised by her employers and fearful of verbal or physical abuse.'
- M: 'I'm surprised she was willing to say so.'
- W: 'That's the problem. She didn't open her mouth.'

For the purpose of illustrating how best to collect in-depth information from child domestic workers, let us take up a research question familiar from the previous chapter. **What are the terms and conditions of child domestic employment in (city, town) and what effects do they have on children's physical and mental well-being?**

First, let us adopt the routine of listing the key words: *terms, conditions, child domestic employment, (city, town), effects, physical and mental well-being*. Beside each one, write down a definition or some extra description if necessary. Note where you are going to consult secondary sources. And then note where you need to consult child domestics as primary sources. (Employers, parents and guardians are also important primary sources, and you may want to note them down too.)

Very quickly you will realise that there are complications about collecting information from children. You have to think about their level of comprehension, their capacity to express themselves, and whether questions should be put to children on certain subjects, given that they may cause distress.

Problems of interviewing children

Among the questions we want answers to, child domestic workers are key informants for those about 'terms and conditions' and the 'effect' their working situation has had on them. They may not be able to judge whether their well-being is damaged, but they can -- if willing -- give a description of their experiences and feelings.

The obvious way of collecting this information is by interview. A standard context for research interviews is the house-to-house survey. But for reasons already explained, it is impossible to conduct in-depth interviews with child workers inside an employer's household. The atmosphere is wrong, the time-frame is wrong, the employer may be obstructive; the child is most unlikely to be forthcoming and may even be fearful.

She told me the most painful story

- W: `A child domestic worker at my drop-in centre told me the most painful story.'
- M: `Really?'
- W: `Yes, it seems that a teenage boy in the household was sexually molesting her, and when she tried to get him to stop, he told his sister she was a thief. And then the sister, who was already jealous of her brother's interest in the girl, decided to tell stories against her, and ...'
- M: `This sounds like a very complicated story. How long did it take the girl to tell it?'
- W: `Six months.'
- M: `Six months!'
- W: `Yes. That's how long she's been coming to my centre.'

In-depth interviews with children should therefore be conducted in a setting outside the place of work, preferably a place where the child feels safe and comfortable. Unless the interviewer has a great deal of experience in interviewing children, it will also be necessary to build up the child's confidence in the person concerned. Training in working with children will also be needed because creativity is needed to elicit information.

Creating the right setting

Thus interviewing children in depth, as opposed to asking basic questions, is best done over a period of time in a relatively unstructured and informal way. The ideal setting is an existing project in which child domestic workers are participating; for example, a drop-in centre or an education programme.

If no such project currently exists, we suggest that any attempt to collect in-depth information from the child workers is postponed until it does. Here is a case where 'action' should precede 'research'. However, there is no need to feel the task is impossible. Some NGOs have set up projects with the twin purposes of action and research in mind, and have trained those who work with the children how to collect information from them as part of their job. Alternatively, researchers might identify -- with help from social welfare departments and carers -- an existing institution such as a children's home where some child domestics or ex-domestics are to be found, and conduct research among them. It cannot be stressed enough that in-depth qualitative research work with children, especially with those whose situation makes them extra-vulnerable and pre-disposed not to trust adults, cannot be conducted by strangers in a cursory manner. The findings will be inaccurate and useless.

Case examples:

In Bangladesh, an NGO called Shoishab persuaded employers in certain vicinities of Dhaka -- such as a large apartment block or a street network -- to permit their young domestic workers to attend an educational class several times a week. During the course of learning to read and write, opportunities were used to encourage the child domestics to talk about their situations. Drawing and story-telling were used for self-expression. When confidence had been built up, in-depth interviews could be conducted.

In **Haiti**, an NGO called Foyers Maurice Sixto has set up 'family centres' for *restavek* children. The children may be sought out by enquiry among the local church congregation, or recommended by their parents. The centre provides a caring environment for the child domestics where they can rediscover their childhood, develop their talents and self-esteem. This setting is suited to in-depth research into the children's predicaments.

In the **Philippines**, an NGO called Visayan Forum in Manila made contact with young domestic workers in the park where they went on their day off. This led to the establishment of an Association of Household Workers. Visayan Forum conducted interviews to analyse the domestics' situation, and brings together those in the same ethno-linguistic group so that they can share their problems and give each other support.

The interview process

Let us now return to our research question: **What are the terms and conditions of child domestic employment in (city, town) and what effects do they have on children's physical and mental well-being?** We are going to interview child domestics about the *effects of terms and conditions* on their *physical and mental well-being*. Please note that it would be a good idea to seek advice from professional child care workers, as well as following these suggestions.

First, if you ask a child questions in a way which expects the answer yes or no, you will probably only get the word yes or no. If you say: 'Please tell me about ... ' or 'Please describe to me ...' you are likely to get more information.

Second, much information can only be gained indirectly.

Terms and conditions: A child will not understand these words very well. So ask him or her to describe the whole day's activities, from the moment he/she gets up the morning, right through till bedtime. Questions can be included about what the employer says and does; and about meals, sleeping space, rest breaks, etc. From the very specific, the child could then be asked more general questions about visits from family members, holidays, outings, pay, etc.

Effects on well-being: This is more difficult. As far as health impact is concerned, you could include 'before' and 'after' questions: How does ... compare to ... at home? (Food, bedtime, getting up time, aches and pains). For psychological impact, you could ask about 'my happiest times', and 'my saddest times', and about contact with friends and relations. The most important thing to do is to create an atmosphere in which the child feels sufficiently comfortable to tell stories about his or her intimate experiences and reveal his or her feelings. There may be some subjects -- such as sexual abuse -- which are especially hard to bring out. This is why time, trust, and the advice of child specialists are needed.

It should be borne in mind that this kind of investigation can be highly stressful for the child. Some researchers have found that an interview can make a child depressed, or cause him or her subsequently to run away. Therefore, they do not undertake in-depth interviewing without being prepared to provide help for the child -- from their own NGO or some other child care source -- if help is sought.

Bearing in mind the delicacy with which interviewing should proceed, work out ahead of time what kind of subjects are relatively easy to open up, and what kind of subjects should not be opened without caution. You can then proceed from one to another, depending on the child's reaction. For example, you can start with questions about tasks, pay, and 'gifts' such as shelter, clothing, fare home, medical expenses. Then proceed to working hours, where the child sleeps, food and care, how often he/she has a day off. From these responses you may spot natural openings to questions about the treatment the child receives and how he or she feels about it. If at any time the child becomes distressed you can stop.

You may also want to write a descriptive piece of observation: 'observation' is a useful research technique. Immediately after the interview is over, write a few paragraphs about the child. If you are working with a colleague, the colleague could write the observation while the interview is going on. But in this case the colleague should be very unobtrusive and sit somewhere off to the side. If the interview is conducted in a separate room with just the child present, there should only be one adult interviewer or the child is bound to feel overwhelmed.

Have your observation headings ready ahead of time. For example: dress, cleanliness, facial expression, willingness to speak up, body language, signs of emotion, personality, ability to express him/herself, etc. You may think you will remember all these things later when you read over your interview notes, but very quickly one interviewee blurs into another.

Practical tips: 6
Recording and organising your interview material

Material collected from an open interview does not naturally lend itself to systematic organisation. So you will have to invent your own recording and organisation system. You can use the one already described in Chapter four, for secondary sources.

In the case of secondary sources, when taking notes you put in a space at the top of each page the *key words* to which the information related. Then you made enough copies of each page to put in all the appropriate files. In this case, you could either do the same with your interview notes, putting the key words at the top. The name of the interviewee, and the place and date of interview should also be recorded at the top of each page. Keep one full set of notes of each interview separately. Then you can write up your report person by person; or topic by topic. The latter will be more analytical and useful.

Other in-depth techniques: focus groups

In-depth techniques which elicit information from children without subjecting them to the rigours of questioning have already been touched upon in the example of Shoishab, Bangladesh. **Drawing, painting, acting out and story-telling** are revealing methods of eliciting information. They are especially useful in cultural settings where people are not used to being bombarded with questions.

Many NGOs use these kinds of techniques within non-formal education programmes. In Indonesia, **drama** and **role-playing** are used as a strategy for 'breaking the silence' when working with children and young people socialised not to speak up in front of adults.

Another technique is the **focus group discussion**. This is normally a semi-structured session with 6-12 participants picked for their special knowledge of the subject. Here, the participants could be child and adult domestics -- split into two separate groups. Each group should have a facilitator trained in creating the kind of atmosphere which helps people speak up with confidence. A set of questions can be explored in depth.

Case example: In **Senegal**, ENDA conducted a research project with young women domestics by focus group discussion or '*entretiens participatifs*'. Each group discussion was treated as a social event -- a *thé debat* or 'tea debate'. Around 50

participants attended. They were mainly girl domestics, but also included some of their 'aunties' and some older women domestics.

The ENDA facilitators found that the young girls were constrained and would not speak up. The older women automatically saw it as their role to dominate proceedings and act as a controlling influence. The facilitators therefore broke the groups up, and put the youngest domestics together. In a position of peer solidarity they could bring out their intimate problems, including sexual abuse by employers, and the fact that they felt forced into prostitution because their wages were so low.

I'd like to know what she thinks

W: `I'd like to know what the little girl thinks about her own situation.'
M: `The employer says she always smiles and says `Good Morning Madam' in a friendly way.'
W: `Yes, but I'd like to know what *she* thinks about her situation.'
M: `Her Auntie says the girl has never complained of ill-treatment.'
W: `But I still don't know what *she* thinks.'
M: `Well that's a big problem. You know these village girls are very shy.'
CD: `They want to know what *I* think. So why don't they ask me?'

As a result of these findings, a programme against sexually-transmitted diseases was launched by ENDA. Group solidarity also developed, and many of the young domestics have become members of a movement campaigning on behalf of the rights of young workers.

Growing confidence and capacity for self-expression are the product of a sensitive research process, which is itself part of ongoing action. The ENDA experience illustrates both the action --> research --> action cycle, and the value of putting the voices of young people at the centre of research on their behalf.

Note however that, in Dakar, only one-third of domestic servants live in. This makes external meetings practicable. There is also a network of urban community organisations based on people's original localities to provide a 'way in'. The older women in these organisations, while they may have tried to dominate proceedings, were those who ENDA originally enlisted to make the *thé debat* take place. So their contribution was important.

In-depth scientific data

Almost all the information collected from child domestics using the techniques described above will be of a descriptive or what is technically known as a 'qualitative' kind. It will not provide a scientific answer to the question: **What effect does their employment have on the physical and mental well-being of child domestic workers?**

In order to obtain a scientifically proven answer to the question, we would need to conduct a research study conducted on scientific principles. Norms would have to be established about physical and mental well-being with which the condition of the domestic workers could be compared. Or a control group of children would have to be physically measured and psychologically tested as well as the child domestics. Comparisons between the various measurements would reveal whether, objectively and scientifically, child domestics had specific health and personal development disadvantages.

Case example: This kind of study was performed in **Kenya** in the mid-1980s by a team from the University of Nairobi with help from the World Health Organisation (WHO). All those conducting the survey were fully trained in anthropometric measurement and psychological counselling.

The results of the study showed that the child domestic workers had psychological problems -- for example, headaches, nightmares, crying often and feeling constantly tired. These findings provided the researchers with proof that the practice was harmful to childhood. This was a very important stepping stone in developing a programme.

This kind of study is, however, probably beyond the reach of the average NGO, or other small organisation. It is too elaborate, expensive and its technical requirements are too grand. However, if there is great scepticism within the society that the practice of domestic service is harmful to childhood, it may be worth considering. Co-operation will be needed with a University Department, and international backing would probably need to be sought.

Summary

Collecting in-depth information from child domestics themselves is needed to obtain a full picture of the practice and its potentially harmful effects. But interviewing children presents special difficulties. Programme actions which create the right environment may be needed first. Indirect techniques which utilise children's natural forms of expression should be used to the maximum.

Chapter seven

Reporting the findings

While you were in the planning and data collection stage of your research, it may have seemed as if writing up the report was going to be easy -- a downhill ride after the main job was over.

You will probably find when you get there that the report seems like a mountain you are never going to climb. There is so much more to put in it than you ever envisaged, for a start. The historical scene-setting, social and cultural context, changing employment and economic setting, growing vulnerability of women and children, and how and why you came to undertake the research goes on for pages. When will you ever get to the substance? And how will you draw conclusions from the mass of material? After all of this, will anybody read your report and take notice of it?

I'm trying to write my report

W: `I'm trying to write my report.'

M: `That should be easy - you've got so many interesting things to say.'

W: `That's what I thought, but I don't seem to be very good at saying them!'

M: `Who is your audience?'

W: `People like you!'

M: `Then make it short, snappy and to the point.'

W: `I was afraid you'd say that!'

Child: `I want to be able to read it too!'

Organising the report

If you have taken time in the early stages to think about aims, set objectives, develop your research questions and plan your outline, the organisation of the report contents should not be too problematic. The headings of chapters should naturally follow the *key words* you identified in the planning stage, and according to which you have organised and filed your material.

If you have carried out both primary research and secondary research, you will have to decide whether to combine the material under the topic headings, or keep the primary research distinct. If you have done a lot of in-depth interviews, again you will have to consider whether to combine this 'qualitative' material with the 'quantitative' material under the topic headings, or to keep them separate. One solution is to combine them, and then provide some of the most striking interviews -- either with domestics or employers -- separately in an annexe.

Only you can make these decisions. But before you settle down to produce the report, there are some other overall considerations you need to address. This report is not going to be produced in a vacuum. Its production is part of the research --> action --> new research --> new action cycle.

The first thing to do is to go back to the question: ***What do we need to know and why?*** What did you decide about the ***why?*** What was the proposed activity into which the research was supposed to feed? The purpose of the research will act as a guide about who your key audience is, and therefore what kind of style and length of report you should select.

If your main purpose was to help a given programme improve its outreach or scope, there is no point in providing a long discourse on the historical and cultural practice of employing child domestic servants -- a paragraph will do. If, on the other hand, you want to engage the attention of professionals and academics in the social welfare and educational sectors, a longer introductory section of this kind would be useful. If you are primarily aiming at journalists and using the report for a public advocacy campaign, you should remember their short attention span and need for headlines, and get straight on to the meat of what you have discovered.

People do not read long reports. So think carefully about every passage you write. Don't think that because you researched something you must put it in. If nothing much came of that part of the research, leave it out. But don't make the report thin or 'slight' -- it's got to be substantive.

Translating research into action

The roles completed research can play in activities to tackle child labour problems fall into three main categories:

1. Advocacy: If you refer to Chapter three, you will find that a number of possible activities listed there fell under this heading, such as publicity campaigns and programmes of sensitisation. Obviously, you will now be able to design activities of this kind using the research findings. For example, if you have found that child domestic workers have psycho-social problems, this will be a theme to focus on. You may want to run a poster campaign using images that emphasise loneliness, heartache, fearfulness and discrimination. If a main finding was over-work, you will want to depict the child's tiredness and state of physical stress.

If getting a dialogue going with employers and parents proved to be extremely difficult, you may decide that indirect methods of sensitisation, such as plays and dramas staged in the community, are the most suitable techniques. These can be designed in such a way that they become vehicles for further information gathering, thus feeding naturally into the research --> action process.

Publication of the report may be used as part of an advocacy strategy intended to familiarise opinion-leaders, government, trades unions and members of society at large with the negative impact of child domestic employment on childhood. This will support the aim of reducing the practice of employing child domestics or bringing about changes in terms and conditions of work.

The research findings should themselves indicate what the target of such a campaign should be: they might suggest, for example, a campaign which aims at removing all children under a certain age from domestic work; or a campaign to have all child domestics given time off to go to educational classes and recreational groups.

Attention should be given to how best to present the research findings so as to gain the attention of decision-makers and attract support for a specific policy agenda. This could include the introduction of regulations or legal restraints regarding the practice, as described in Chapter three.

2. Planning and design of services for child workers: A list of these kinds of activities also appears in Chapter three. Here again, the research findings will enable you to design, or re-design, projects and services to assist children and young people in domestic work. Obviously, future activities to reduce or counteract the negative impacts on childhood implicit in domestic employment should correspond to the needs identified by the research findings. These include activities undertaken with children, as well as with employers.

For example, a previous project may have concentrated on educational activities, but ignored recreational needs. If the research showed that the children suffered an acute sense of isolation and lack of friends, a re-design of activities to cater for this is

called for. A previous project may have given the domestics a nourishing meal. But the research may reveal that nourishment is not a problem the child domestics face, whereas self-esteem is very important.

The research may have revealed that there are certain monitoring activities which could be built into new or existing projects. For example, a simple psychological test could be applied to all new entrants at a drop-in centre, and re-administered in six months' time. Or a questionnaire could be developed to assemble basic data according to extra indicators than have been used before. The aim must be to be able to assess over time both the growth and development of the child workers, and the usefulness of the project in helping their development and protecting their childhood.

3. Feedback and sensitisation: It is important that all those who were involved in the research, especially those who took part in surveys and interviews, should know what the findings are. This is an ethical consideration as well as a practical one. Feedback of the research findings to those in a position to influence the future well-being of child domestic workers, including parents, employers and workers themselves, is an important opportunity for sensitisation and attitudinal change among key actors.

Research in Action

The following are just a few examples of how valuable research can be in ensuring that effective action is taken:

In **Kenya** a study of the health of child domestics which found that child domestics suffered from a number of psychological and emotional problems as a result of their work, opened the way to convincing parents, young girls and the society at large that a problem existed and must be tackled.

In **Indonesia** a survey of some households in Jakarta which found evidence that a large proportion of domestic workers were under 15-years-old helped to persuade researchers and activists to initiate action on the issue. Other aspects of the research are assisting in the design of targeted action programmes and facilitating the development of policies at the national level to prevent and protect child domestic workers.

In **Bangladesh** research into the situation of child domestics in Dhaka has led a number of organisations to work directly with child domestics, as well as to provide government officials and rest of the population with the basic facts of the situation. The research also highlighted the need for an estimate of the numbers of children in domestic service to help strengthen campaigning and lobbying work.

The actual publication process

The amount of effort you put into the publication of your report will depend on how much importance you attach to your research findings and the impact you want to make on public policy and attitudes. These will depend, at least partially, on the scale and sophistication of your research project.

If you undertook an independent survey and have produced a significant 'situation analysis' under the auspices of an authoritative NGO or international organisation, you have a good chance of using it to influence public policy and getting government to take notice. In this case, you should have the report properly printed and publish it with as loud a bang as you can manage.

This will mean holding a special seminar, press launch or other event with big name speakers to discuss the report's contents, and trying to have it covered by press and television. It will mean having available 'information notes' and press releases in the form of synopses.

I see you've achieved a great deal

M: `I see you've achieved a great deal with your report into child domestic service. You must be very pleased!'

W: `Yes, we had a most successful launch. There was a long item on TV. All the newspapers covered the story.'

M: `Has the government paid any attention?'

W: `The Minister of Social Welfare has promised to show it to the Prime Minister. He may say something in one of his speeches about not employing child servants or seeing that they go to school part-time.'

M: `These results must be very satisfying, given the lack of interest - even hostility - the subject originally provoked.'

CD: `They may be very satisfying for you, but now what about ME?'

The report should be distributed to a list of individuals, government officials and organisations who are in a position to influence policy, and should be made available for sale through an academic publishing house, or NGO imprint, if possible.

Some international distribution should also be arranged. This might be done through the network of NGOs and international organisations initiated by Anti-Slavery International in January 1996 (see Annexe1). Country offices of international organisations such as ILO-IPEC and UNICEF in countries where research is underway should be fully involved in all efforts to publish research findings and see that they are put into effect.

Although a research report inevitably has a finite shelf life, the important point to remember that this life is probably several years, not the two or three weeks around the publication of the report itself. Ongoing programmes, conferences, seminars and campaigns connected to children's rights, children's well-being or child labour all provide further opportunities when the report or its findings can be further publicised.

In conclusion

No-one who becomes heavily involved in a piece of research, and excited about its findings, wants those findings to be simply put on a shelf and ignored. Whether or not those findings are put into action very much depends on the work of the NGO or other commissioning body and the research team to see that this happens.

And even this is not the end of the story. After the 'new action' comes the 'new research'. When all the excitement is over, and interest in the subject is in danger of flagging -- both your own and that of others, this would be the moment to return to the beginning and ask: What *more* do we need to know in the light of what we know *now*? Why do we need to know it; and how will we find it out?

By now, you'll know all about how to answer these questions.

ANNEXE 1:

Participants at international meeting on Research into Child Domestic Servants, held at Charney Manor (United Kingdom), 22-24 January 1996

Practitioner participants:

Bangladesh

Helen Rahman
SHOISHAB Bangladesh

Muzammel Hoque
Save the Children Fund Australia

Guatemala

Dr Guillermo Monroy
CHILDHOPE Guatemala

Haiti

Père Miguel Jean Baptiste
Foyer Maurice Sixto

Indonesia

Dr Irwanto
Atmajaya Research Centre
(Centre for Societal
Development Studies)

Mohammad Farid
SAMIN

Kenya

Dr Philista Onyango
ANPPCAN

Nepal

Gauri Pradhan
Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN)

Philippines

Ma Cecilia F Oebanda
Executive Director
Visayan Forum Inc

Senegal

Cheikh Amadou Bamba Diaw
ENDA Jeunesse-action

Togo

Cléophas Mally
Director
WAO Afrique

Victor Aladjj
Faculté des lettres et des
Sciences Humaines
Université du Benin

Participants from international organisations:

Pannuda Boonpala
ILO-IPEC
SWITZERLAND

Birgitta Ling
Rädda Barnen
SWEDEN

Edda Ivan-Smith
Save the Children Fund UK
UNITED KINGDOM

Rapporteur of the meeting:

Maggie Black
UNITED KINGDOM

Seminar convenor & organiser:

Jonathan Blagbrough, Child Labour Officer
Mike Dottridge, Director

Anti-Slavery International
Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard
Broomgrove Road
London SW9 9TL
UNITED KINGDOM

Tel: +44 (0)20 7501 8920
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7738 4110
E-mail: antislavery@antislavery.org

In many countries children working as maids, child-minders, garden boys, and general helpers-about-the-house are a familiar sight. Domestic work is, in fact, one of the most common forms of child employment. But we do not know how many children are involved. Nor do we know much about other characteristics of the practice, such as the age range of the workers, what led to their employment, the terms and conditions of their work, and their feelings about it.

Child Domestic Workers: A handbook for research and action explores ways of finding out about the situation of these children - some of the most invisible and vulnerable of all child workers. Produced by Anti-Slavery International with technical and financial assistance from the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) this practical 'how to' guide draws on the experiences and views of non-governmental organisations and others working with child domestics in Asia, Africa and Latin America - offering useful insights for anyone who wants to help the children concerned. Examining the reasons why children working as domestic servants deserve attention, the handbook's step-by-step approach focuses on solutions to practical problems such as 'where to start?', 'how do we find out what we need to know?', 'how to collect the information needed', and 'translating the research findings into action'.

No. 15 in Child Labour Series

Anti-Slavery International
Thomas Clarkson House
The Stableyard
Broomgrove Road
London SW9 9TL
United Kingdom

Price £6.00
ISBN 0 900918 41 1

Tel: +44 (0)20 7501 8920
E-mail: antislavery@antislavery.org
Registered Charity Number: 1049160