Kids at Risk: Plight of Child Workers in the Tourism Industry in Cebu

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> "Everyday, millions of men, women and children around the world are forced to labor. They work under inhumane conditions, suffer constant fear and threats, and work for little or no pay." (ILO, 2001)

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Child labor

Child labor seems to be a fact of life in many parts of the world. As such, millions of girls and boys around the world are being exploited every day. They are an estimated 250 million in total, 50% of them working full-time and not attending school, while 50 million children at least are involved in the worst forms of child labor (ILO-IPEC, 2001). These children are those under 18 years of age.

In the Philippines, the rights of the child are violated because of social, cultural, and economic factors. It is particularly pronounced in the form of child labor, which is the participation of

children in a wide variety of work situations, on a more or less regular basis, to earn a livelihood for themselves or for others. Children's work may be paid or unpaid, and remuneration for their efforts may be made to adults rather than to themselves, or assessed in non-material ways (such as food, education, shelter, or clothing). Very rarely are children able to determine the prices of their own labor.

Child labor does not refer to all types of children's work. Strictly speaking, it may refer to only those activities that are socially useful and remunerable, requiring manual and/or intellectual effort, which result in the production of goods or performance of services (Ballescas, 1987). It pertains particularly to efforts of children to earn a livelihood, on a more or less, regular basis, for themselves, their families, or others who employ them. It includes work in family enterprises (in agriculture, services, or industry), debt peonage, employment and self-employment. Child labor excludes household chores for one's own household or family. It excludes mendicancy, which is not a socially useful means of livelihood, and does not entail the production of goods or services.

While all these activities encompass child labor, the major concern is to address the worst forms of child labor as defined by Convention 182. According to ILO (2001), the Convention specifies three "absolute" category of "worst forms of child labor" and one "relative" category, which are as follows:

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

The first three are "absolute", in the sense that harm is inherent in the nature of the work, so that children must under no

condition be admitted to them, and withdrawn if their involvement is established. The fourth category of work – commonly referred to as "hazardous work" — is "relative", in that it may be sufficient to remove the hazard for a child to be allowed to continue to carry out the work (provided, of course, the minimum ages established in accordance with ILO Convention 138 are observed). Protecting a child's reproductive health, for example, does not make prostitution any mere acceptable; replacing toxic glue with a harmless substance for the production of footwear may, however, turn a worst form of child labor into a lawful occupation.

Hazardous work is defined in the Convention not so much by its nature, but by the effect the circumstances under which it is carried out may be on children, i.e., harm to their health, their safety or morals.

Working Children in the Philippines

In the Philippines, children had been engaged to work even before the Spanish colonial period. Such work was part of education while growing up and was a means by which children made certain contributions to community life. In more than three centuries of Spanish domination, children were forced to work. They took the place of adults in the fields, plantations, handicraft shops and were recruited to fill in gaps or beef up the ranks of exploited laborers.

Under the American regime, various forms of child labor continued to be used, amidst the rapid expansion and development of the plantations and factories and the colony's more active participation in international trade.

After the Philippines gained independence from America in 1946, more and more children had to work as the country undertook rehabilitation and reconstruction after the Second World War. Many of them ended up in the streets to beg, vend or render services for a living. Medium and small-scale plantations, factories and service undertakings flourished and hired cheap child labor.

Over the years, the number of working children has gradually risen. According to the 1995 National Survey of Working Children of the Philippines, implemented by the National Statistics Office (NSO), there are 3.7 million working children in the country, of which nearly half were between the ages of 5 to 14 and the other half between the ages of 15 to 17. Labor force participation rate dipped, with working children forming 16% of the overall population

of children between ages 5 to 17 (Abrera-Mangahas, 1999). Nevertheless, this means that one out of six children aged 5 to 17 works.

After the Asian economic crisis, however, the labor force participation of children increased. From October 1997 to October 1998, the labor force participation of children aged 10-14 rose from 9.6% to 10.6%. The participation rates of youth of ages 15-17 rose from 21.2% in 1997 to 23.2% in 1998. The increase in the labor force participation rates is highest for young males 10-17 years of age in both rural and urban areas and for females aged 10-17 in urban areas (Abrera-Mangahas, 1999).

The country's working children are predominantly from rural households (67.1%). Consisting of more boys (65%) rather than girls, the highest numbers of working children are found in Regions 4, 6, and 11.

Children of the cities work on the streets—in the marketplace and food stalls, in small-scale industries, or in the tourism industries. Children in rural areas work in family farms, haciendas, uplands, and along coastal areas. Rural children also work in small industries that entail traditional skills for crafts, or utilize natural resources of the community to produce newly-developed marketable commodities. These enterprises may be in their own homes, or in small workshops within their residential communities.

Working children are practically found in all sectors. They cut across all major occupational groups and cover a wide range of economic activities. The 1995 NSO Survey shows that 64% of the working children are in agriculture; 16.4% are in sales; 9.2% are in production work; and 8.8% are in service trades. Statistics also show that while almost all children who wish to work do find employment, 60% do so without remuneration—as family workers. These data validate the framework which points out that family expectations—and children's internalized feelings of obligation to the family—predispose them to join the workforce (Duran, 1994), and that as they grow older, more of them become interested in seeking jobs that will give them remuneration.

The 1995 NSO Survey also reveals that among the overall population of working children, there are 2.2 million children who are engaged in hazardous and dangerous work, or are found in hazardous workplaces, or are in economic activities that impair their natural growth, health, and access to schooling.

Working children are exposed to specific health risks by the nature of the work they do. Among the most physically exacting for children are those in agriculture, where children are exposed to heavy loads, different chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides, and to natural elements such as rain, sun, and strong winds. Children engaged in prostitution, on the other hand, are vulnerable to physical pain and injury especially when maltreated by sadistic customers. They are constantly exposed to contagious diseases, particularly those which are sexually transmitted. Psychologically, they are likely to suffer from low self-esteem and other problems like distorted sense of values and a materialistic world view. Many are extremely sexually promiscuous.

According to the 1995 NSO Survey, working children who are most at risk include those who:

- **Work long hours.** 19.5% work more than five hours a day; 5% work more than 10 hours per day
- **Work regularly.** 30% are in permanent work
- **Work at night.** While not prevalent, 4% of those between ages 10-14 and 7% of those between ages 15-17 worked at night. Affected children are those in retail trade, personal services, and fishing.
- **Have no days off.** 309,000 working children or 8% of the total have no day off.
- **Work without adult supervision.** 17% of working children do not have adult supervision; of the children below 15 years of age, 20% have no adult supervision.
- **Do not attend school.** 30% or 600,000 working children are not attending school. Of children who do not attend school, half experience problems of high costs of education (28.7%), distance (23.8%) and difficulty in catching up with lessons (22.1%). Working students complain of low grades (41.4%), absenteeism (25.3%), and tardiness (26%). Working students tend to be chronic dropouts.
- **Are exposed to hazardous environments.** 60% (2.2 million children) are exposed to hazardous work environments, consisting of physical difficulties and chemical exposures.
- **Experience work-related problems of exhaustion, stress, risk, and danger.** 80% of working children have

work related problems. The most significant problems involve exhaustion (63.3%), stress (55%), physical burden (47%), and boredom (52%). 17% find work, or aspects of it, risky and dangerous.

- **Suffer injuries and illnesses from work.** 24% or 869,199 working children have at least one work related injury or illness.
- **Work and live away from home and parental supervision.** 409,849 children are living away from home. Only 25% are studying only. Most (72.2%) are girls; 64% come from rural households and work in urban centers; a great majority work in households. The largest numbers come from Regions 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11.

Causes of Child Labor

While several references on child labor point to poverty as its cause, some scholars caution people from concluding that the phenomenon of children at work is due to their impoverished conditions. They argue that poverty is merely symptomatic of larger societal problems—an effect rather than a cause. Child labor may be indicative of poverty but is not a result of it.

Rodgers and Standing (1981) and the International Labor Organization (1986) point to the structure of the economy, as well as the pace of development, as influence factors over child labor. Exploitative child labor in the Philippines is also caused by factors such as parental neglect, peer influence, family expectations from children, the need to save money to continue their education, and opportunities to work in their respective communities.

Children are often prompted to work by their parents. In fact, it is possible that parents in developing countries decide to have children because their ability to work can be profitable for the family. Lindert (1976) as cited in Siddiqi and Patrinos (1996) found out that children in developing countries also contribute more to a household than they deplete as compared to their counterparts in developed countries.

In the case of many Filipino working children, work is perceived as a means to move up in the social ladder because it can help educate them for future jobs. Many Filipino working children are enrolled. Nevertheless, some drop out from school after a year or two due to financial constraints. These children

then work to be able to finance their studies in the succeeding year.

For children who are enrolled, work enables them to buy the needed school materials, and to cover transportation and meal expenses in schools. This is consistent with studies showing that school attendance by a child is highly correlated with family income. When children drop out of school, it may be due to the family's financial situation, and not necessarily due to irresponsible parenting (Ilon and Moock, 1991 in Siddiqi and Patrinos, 1996).

In some cases, children seek employment because there is no access to schools. When there is access, the low quality of education often makes attendance a waste of time for the students. Schools in many developing areas suffer from problems such as overcrowding, inadequate sanitation and apathetic teachers. As a result, parents may find no use in sending their children to school when they could be home learning a skill and supplementing family income.

According to the "Roots of Child Labor" in UNICEF's 1997 State of the World's Children Report: "In many countries, public education has deteriorated so much that education itself has become part of the problem—because children work to avoid going to school" (www.childaborphotoproject.org/childlabor.html, 8/27/2001). Poor families, however, are able to recognize good quality schooling and are frequently prepared to sacrifice child labor in order to invest in a good education for their children (Siddiqi and Patrinos, 1996).

Uneven urban-rural development strategies also contribute to the problem of child labor. Rapid rural-to-urban migration is a major cause for the increasing rate of child labor in urban areas of developing countries. Families leave the rural areas because they look for economic opportunities in the cities, leading to an increase in urban population and, subsequently, unemployment.

In the Philippines, the number of unemployed people increased by 36.53% from 2.195 million in 1996 to 2.997 million in 1999. Despite the perceived economic opportunities in the cities, the actual number of unemployed in urban areas increased by 37.85% as compared to 34.66% in the rural areas over the four-year period ending 1999. The number of unemployed in the National Capital Region alone increased by 53.14% from 461,000 in 1996 to 706,000 in 1999.

Because urban industries are unable to absorb a high percentage of the labor force, this leads to the upsurge of the

informal sector. The informal sector serves as a buffer zone to absorb excess labor, on the one hand, and to provide affordable products and services to impoverished urban households, on the other. The informal sector includes family-owned small-scale operations which depend heavily on indigenous resources, simple technologies and cheap labor (Ballescas, 1987 in Duran, 1994). Its production requirements hinge on simple skills, a situation well-suited to the utilization of unskilled children still in their elementary grades. Since it is unregulated by provisions of the Labor Code, it can absorb many child workers without facing legal problems.

Child labor is seen to be most problematic under conditions in which the production of goods or services by children benefit the employer (or adults) more than themselves; thus, discriminating against their personal development, in violation of one or several of their rights as children. Unfortunately, children's employment in the formal sector has remained largely unmonitored despite the efforts of government. This is particularly true in the tourism industry.

Tourism in the Philippines

As an economic concept, tourism is defined in "demand side" terms, as it comprises all services and goods consumed by tourists as well as all investments made to satisfy that consumption. A tourist has been defined by the United Nations as a traveler or visitor, or any person who travels to and stays in places outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months, and whose main purpose of visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the travel and tourism industry is defined by the economic activities (personal, investment, government, business and net exports) associated with travel as measured by the wide variety of current and capital expenditures made by or for the benefit of a traveller before, during, and after a trip.

Tourism is one of the major industries in the Philippines, which, the WTTC noted, is positioned at the epicenter of global travel and tourism growth and development. In 1997, tourism contributed 8.7% of the country's GDP, generating 2.3 million jobs (or one in every nine nationwide), and accounting for some 10.5% of Philippine investments. The trade surplus from tourism in 1997 was estimated at P22 billion, driven mainly by visitor spending.

The WTTC expects tourism to contribute 10.9% of the country's GDP by 2007, and to generate as much as 1.4 million more jobs between 1998 and 2007.

According to the Department of Tourism, international arrivals in 1999 stood at 2.17 million, a slight increase from the previous year's total of 2.15 million visitors, but still below the 2.22 million registered in 1997. Because of the economic crisis suffered by its Asian markets, the Philippines' foreign exchange receipts from tourism declined by 14.77% from $2.83 billion in 1997 to $2.41 billion in 1998, but increased to P2.55 billion in 1999. The Philippines enjoys one of the highest repeat visitors in Asia, indicating that the tourism sector can survive external threats and competition in the region.

In 1998, the USA continued to supply the biggest volume of arrivals at 21.81%, followed by Japan and Taiwan, which accounted for 16.83% and 8.65% of the total traffic, respectively. Other high yielding markets include Hong Kong (7.57%), U.K. (4.55%), Australia (3.99%), Korea (3.81%), and Canada (3.11%).

The general increase in visitor traffic over the past decade has also resulted in the growth of the hotel and restaurant industry, which has managed to flourish even as it struggled to cope with difficult challenges.

According to the 1994 Census of Establishments of the National Statistics Office, the hotel and restaurant industry accounts for 37.4% of the establishments, 46.2% of employment, and 43.6% of gross revenue of the Philippines' service sector. The restaurant subsector dominates the industry, accounting for more than 95% of the establishments, employment, and gross revenue of the sector.

As of December 1998, there were 192 hotels with 21,594 rooms and 193 restaurants nationwide accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT). These hotels employed approximately 24,587 people and the restaurants employed 6,169. As of October 2000, there were only 148 accredited hotels employing 18,461 people, and 135 accredited restaurants employing 6,322 workers. Obviously, these numbers do not constitute the entire universe of hotels and restaurants in the country because the DOT only accredits hotels and restaurants that comply with its minimum standards to ensure tourists' safety, comfort, and convenience.

During the past five years, more than 50% of foreign tourists used hotels for accommodation. In response to the demand for hotel accommodations, there was a steady expansion of every segment of the hotel industry. On the average, the total number of hotel rooms grew from 11,321 in 1994 to 13,320 in 1998. Hotels belonging to the standard category experienced the largest growth at an annual average of 17% from 1,542 rooms in 1994 to 2,946 in 1998.

Average occupancy rates steadily grew from 59.4% in 1994 to an all-time high of 70% in 1996. This dropped to 69% in 1997 and hit bottom in 1998 at 57%. By classification, de luxe hotels fared well, consistently posting the highest occupancy rates, an average of 67.5% from 1994 to 1998.

According to the 1994 NSO Census of Establishments, there were 45,220 restaurant establishments in the domestic economy and about 80% of them belong to the fast food subsector.

In the local fine dining and specialty restaurants subsector, the top ten restaurant chains account for 70% of the local market. The biggest player is Max's Inc. with a 50% share, followed by Aristocrat with a 20% market share. In the fast food segment, Jollibee remains at the top with an estimated 50% market share, followed by McDonald's with about 28% of the local market.

Child Labor in the Tourism Industry

Around the world, very young children work in all kinds of hotels, catering and tourism occupations, particularly in family-based enterprises. Child work is particularly prevalent in semi-organized and informal occupations. Because of the extraordinary degree of irregularity of the industry, the low pay and status of most employees, and the lack of controls operating in its unofficial fringes, young people are found everywhere within it, especially in the developing world. In fact, the International Labor Office (ILO) estimates that at least 100 million children worldwide perform tasks classifiable as "labor" to earn money for themselves or their families.

A simple reason for the employment of children in work related to travel and entertainment as opposed to other types of earning activity is opportunity. Those seeking work—or parents seeking jobs for their children—naturally gravitate towards establishments with a demand for unskilled labor. Work that has to be performed at odd times—such as in the evenings and at weekends and

during the holidays when school-goers are released from the classroom—may be perceived as an advantage. For city-dwellers or those living around a resort, proximity of the workplace is an attraction. And although pay is low and volatile, tips may considerably enhance it.

Alternative economic opportunities for young people may be non-existent. Or they may be confined to even worse-paid domestic service, or to helping parents on their farm or in their fishing-boat, for which they receive no financial reward. Parents may encourage their children in the money-making alternative (including sex-for-sale) because it produces extra household cash.

In the Philippines, the tourism industry has proven to be a lucrative one for child workers because of the great demand for their services as waiters/waitresses, cooks, dancers, bar hostesses, receptionists, janitors, and prostitutes among others. While many of them do not earn regular wages, they earn from commissions (usually from drinks) or earn retainers per performance (usually as dancers). The lowest paid among the children in hotels and restaurants are those who have no direct contact with customers, notably the kitchen crew (i.e., cooks, dishwashers and other kitchen helpers). The highest paid are the dancers, bar hostesses, and receptionists, occupations requiring constant customer contact and where the primary qualifications are physical appearance and youthful charm.

Child workers in the tourism industry are often viewed as victims of sexual exploitation. These children are thought to be engaged in commercial sexual activity because of their employment in a bar or in a nightclub; however, this view fails to notice the primary occupation, motivation and self-image of the worker. There are also working children who are associated with the "street"; children working in the informal, open-air economy—in markets, at tourist sites, on beaches, in amusement arcades, transport terminals and shopping malls—are described as "street children". This term, consciously or otherwise, implies that they are vagrants, not that they work or earn.

Similar to other working children, those in the tourism industry come from families where adults occupy irregular and low-paying jobs, or are mostly unemployed. Many of these children are between the ages of 13 and 15, although some (especially among the prostitutes) can be as young as seven years. Both boys and

girls work in the tourism industry, although the comparative proportion is unknown.

A special category of working children employed in urban centers is that of child entertainers, who are also involved in the sex trade. Because of the peculiarities of the industry, no comprehensive study on the incidence of child prostitution has yet been accomplished. Available research tend to be case studies limited to areas known to harbor child entertainers and prostitutes. Specifically, the presence of child prostitutes has been noted in the Ermita area of Manila, Rizal Park, Robinson's Complex, Harrison Plaza, Pasig, Caloocan, Plaza Moriones and Araneta Center. They are also in Puerto Galera, Mindoro; Poro Point, San Fernando, La Union; Mactan Airport; Boracay, Aklan; Bacolod City; Buhi, Camarines Sur; Bulusan, Sorsogon; and in Angeles City and Olongapo City, when the U.S. bases were still there.

Many of the child prostitutes are runaways from families who dissociate themselves to escape parental abuse, extreme poverty and neglect. In many cases, these children form their own child-headed households (Torres, 1991). In some reported instances, children are prostituted because of trickery. There are also cases wherein children are pushed into the business by their parents, or else follow in their footsteps—usually of the mothers—into prostitution (Simbulan, 1992; Cruz, 1987; Magno, 1984). Their parents "sell" them to recruiters supposedly to be employed as domestic helpers in the cities. Instead, they find themselves working as sex slaves in what is called "white slavery" (Jocano, 1975; Simbulan, 1992).

Some children, however, go into the entertainment trade willingly, as bar hostesses, waitresses or receptionists. They "graduate" to prostitution in their desire to earn more than commissions from drinks or food. In addition to cash payments, child entertainers cum prostitutes receive tips, gifts, and enjoy other luxuries with their customers, as well. To children whose home situations consist of single rooms in slum areas, to be able to sleep in cleaner hotel rooms with adequate food, and possess money are sufficient incentives to prostitute themselves.

Categories of child prostitutes are similar to those observed for older workers (Miralao, et al., 1990). One group includes those kept virtually as prisoners in brothels or "casas". Among these children are workers in bars, clubs, and beer houses. Officially designated as waitresses, hostesses, or receptionists, they render

"extra services" to their customers for a fee. The third category would be the streetwalkers. They are not attached to any establishment but hang around places where they are most likely to be picked up, with or without their pimps. This category has been estimated to number as many as 20,000 (Simbulan, 1992).

Cebu: Queen City of the South

Cebu City, located in Central Visayas, is the Philippines' second busiest city. It is located in Cebu island, which is flanked on the west by Tanon Strait, which separates it from Negros Island, and on the east by the Cebu Strait, which one must traverse to reach Bohol island. The province of Cebu had a population of about 3.2 million in the year 2000.

Prior to Spanish colonization, Cebu was a hub of trade. Trade restrictions imposed by the Spanish caused the rapid decline of Cebu as a port, but when these restrictions were lifted during the 19th century, Cebu again became a thriving commercial city. Today, Cebu is one of the leading centers of trade in the country.

In 1999, agriculture, fishing and forestry accounted for about 13% of the gross regional domestic product (GRDP) of Central Visayas (to which Cebu belongs). Corn, sugar, mangoes, grapes, coconuts, and tobacco are the main crops, even if Cebu, itself, is too arid to produce much rice. People in coastal villages engage in fishing.

Industry accounted for 31.2% of GRDP in 1999. The industry includes manufacturing; construction; electricity, gas, and water; and mining. Cebu's primary handicrafts include costume jewelry, rattan and buri furniture, guitars, and porcelain. Copper, coal, and cement are also important industries.

Services accounted for 55.8% of GRDP, accounting for the biggest slice of the regional economy in 1999. The service sector includes trade; private services; transportation; ownership of dwellings and real estate; and finance.

Trade (exports and imports), in particular, contributed significantly to the economy. The region's total export earnings in 1999 reached over US$2.42 billion, with more than two-thirds (US$1.63 billion) coming from the industrial zones of the region. The Mactan Export Processing Zone (MEPZ) I continued to be the region's top exporter, accounting for almost 64.0 percent of the total exports; Cebu Port exports contributed 32.0%. Electronic

products continued to be the region's biggest export earner, contributing 29.0% to the total exports in 1999. Furniture ranked second with 8.0% share, followed by other industrial goods with 7.0% share.

The value of imports in 1999 was placed at $993.50 million. The total value of imports that entered the port of Cebu alone amounted to $986 million. With exports valued at $2.42 billion and total imports valued at $993 million, Central Visayas realized a positive balance of trade of $1.43 billion in 1999.

Not surprisingly, employment in Cebu increased from 1.103 million in 1998 to 1.136 million in 1999 and to 1.164 million in the year 2000. It ranked second among the different provinces in terms of the number of employed persons in 1999, and ranked first in the year 2000. The number of unemployed persons, on the other hand, decreased from about 213,000 in 1998 to around 205,000 in1999. It further went down to about 187,000 in the year 2000.

In terms of contribution to employment, agriculture accounted for only 38% while non-agricultural industries accounted for 62% of total employment in 1999 for the whole of Central Visayas. The total number of unemployed was higher in the urban areas in 1999.

Overall, the economy of Central Visayas fared well, growing from P52.3 billion in 1995 to P62.9 billion in 1999 (at constant 1985 prices), growing by about 20 percent in real terms over the five-year period. Central Visayas accounted for 6.86% of gross domestic product in 1999.

The average annual family income in Cebu increased from P68,547 in 1994 to P101,474 in 1997. The average annual family expenditures also increased from P56,509 in 1994 to P80,266 in 1997. About 54% of family expenditures in 1997 went to food; 7.4% went to rent; 3.4% went to education; 1.8% went to medical care; 1.4% went to tobacco; 1.4% went to alcohol; and 0.3% went to recreation. Inflation rate in the province increased from 4.8% in 1997 to 11.0% in 1998, but went down to 5.2% in 1999. The purchasing power of the peso decreased from P0.84 in 1997 to P0.75 in 1998 to P0.65 in 1999 (PPP for 1994=100).

Because of the robust economic activity in the region, the incidence of poverty decreased significantly from 41.7% in 1991 to only 32.7% in 1994, but inched up slightly to 34.5% in 1997. Nevertheless, the absolute number of poor families decreased from 377,448 in 1991 to 360,159 in 1997.

Aside from being a center of trade, Cebu is also a center of education in the Visayas. As of January 1997, there were 12 public and 40 private higher educational institutions in Cebu. In SY 1999-2000, there were 2,981 elementary schools, 2,799 of which were public schools; and 520 high schools, of which 310 were public and 210, private.

Cebu is also a premier tourist spot in the country. Its tourist attractions are varied, and spread out from the city proper to nearby areas like Mandaue City and Mactan Island.

According to the latest Census of Establishments (1994), there were 2,677 restaurants, cafes and other eating and drinking places in Central Visayas, employing a total of 10,853 people, and 117 hotels, motels, and other lodging places, which employed a total of 558 people.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

With the end in view of helping in the elimination of child labor in the tourism industry, this research was undertaken to: (1) describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the child sex workers; (2) identify their work situation; (3) determine the joys and pains experienced by the child sex workers; (4) describe the assistance extended to them by various groups; (5) recommend courses of action to combat child labor; and (6) document actual cases of the experiences of the child sex workers

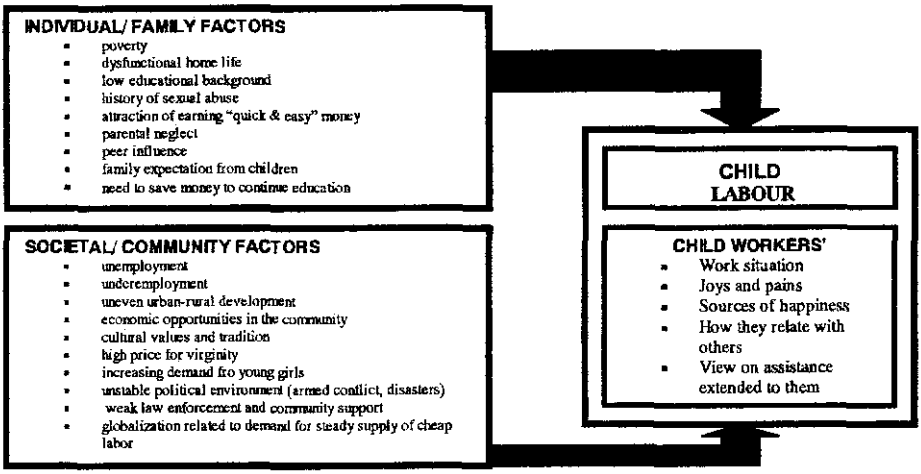
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on two theoretical underpinnings. The PUSH-PULL factors and the Symbolic Interactionism. The PUSH-PULL factors is a migration theory that suggests that circumstances at the place of origin (such as poverty and unemployment) repel or push people out of that place to other places that exert a positive attraction or pull (such as a high standard of living or job opportunities). Current researches on child labor done in Asia and Latin America (ILO, 2000) have consistently presented a group of factors that make children more vulnerable to labor exploitation. Generally, these forces which push and pull these children to work, can be divided into two categories: (1) those at the individual or family level; and (2) those operating at the community or societal level. (Refer to Figure 1.)

The second theoretical perspective of this study is known as "Symbolic Interactionism" by Max Weber. This theory focuses on

social life and human behavior from the standpoint of the individuals; in this case, the child workers are involved in day-to-day interaction. This interactionist perspective assumes that people like the child workers bring into each social situation (e.g., work performance; relationship with friends; relationship with family) certain ideas about themselves (self-perception whether positive or negative) about the meaning of their behavior (motivations in life), about the nature of the situation (joys and pains; desire to stay in the job), and about others (acceptance or rejection). These ideas play a crucial role in determining how and why child workers act as they do. Thus, from this model, to explain the child workers social behavior fully, one must go beyond a knowledge of their age, marital status, social class and so forth. One must find out how they interpret the world, especially, what their behavior and their social situation symbolize to them (Hebding and Glick, 1994).

Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework of Child Labor*



4. Methodology

This descriptive study builds on the baseline information gathered from the Phase I of the project, which covered child labour in the tourism industry in Metro Manila.

A survey among 221 firms and a total of 237 child workers from Cebu actually participated in the survey. Out of the 237 respondents, the data of the 53 child workers who indicated that they render sex work was also segregated to highlight their plight.

The triangulation across-method approach was utilized in this study. This involved the use of a variety of research techniques, such as survey, focus group discussions and observation, within the research project. This is to increase the validity of research exploring the many complex dimensions of social life of the child workers in the context of the work setting.

The purposive sampling technique utilizing the sample within sample method was used due to the sensitive nature of the needed information and because of the illegal nature of child trafficking and prostitution. Due to these conditions, several difficulties were encountered especially during the data gathering stage when interviewers had to stay late to search for, and get hold of wiling respondents. The child workers were also unwilling to relate their experiences, and some establishments refused to allow interviews of their child workers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of child workers

Rosalie is one of the 237 child workers from Cebu who shared their life experiences and work struggles for this study. Plying their trade in the dark alleys and the smoke-filled nightclubs of Cebu City, these workers are only 12 to 17 years of age. Many of the child workers are born in Cebu City (32%) or in other municipalities/ cities within the province (27%) such as Mandaue City, Lapu-lapu City, etc. The others come from Luzon (11%), in places such as Cabanatuan, Mountain Province, Banawe, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Pampanga, and Quezon. Ten percent come from Mindanao, in provinces such as Camiguin and Cagayan de Oro. Fourteen percent originate from the other parts of the Visayas, such as Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Aklan, Siquijor, Leyte, Tacloban, etc. The rest come from Metro Manila (3%). Majority of these workers are Catholics (93%), female (70%), and single (75%). Although, they are still considered to be children, 19% of them now have a child of their own.

In terms of academic background, 74% of these child workers have stopped going to school like Rosalie. They are either still in high school (38%) or have finished high school but never stepped into college (30%). There are some who have completed a few years in college (14%). Seventeen percent never even reached high school. This is the sad fate for the child worker, especially in Philippine society which puts a very high premium on education.

The picture becomes more bleak because when these child workers stop going to school, they lose their chance to be more educated and better trained making it difficult for them to find work that is less exploitative and more socially acceptable.

One hundred thirty eight of the 237 child workers still have parents who live together while the others have parents who are separated (24%) or who have passed away (12%). It is disheartening to note that even if a child still has parents who live together, they are still "forced" to work. Some of the children claim that they work not because their parents forced them to but because they want to help their families. It is, ironically, the Filipino value of caring for the family no matter what which drive these children to work. Fifty seven percent of the children interviewed in this study are either the eldest or second to the eldest in the family. In the Philippines, the elder siblings have the traditional responsibility of caring for the younger siblings and taking on the role of the parents if they are absent or incapable. It must be noted that close to 50% of the child workers have three to five siblings. Fifty eight percent of the children still live with their families. The child workers of Cebu use their earning to provide financial aid, buy food, and spend for the day-to-day needs of their loved ones.

The child is expected to work because the parents have jobs that are unstable and offer low wages, if they have jobs at all. A quarter of the children's fathers are unemployed. Twenty five percent of the fathers are involved in providing personal services as drivers, tailors, barbers, and the like. Fourteen percent of the fathers are office workers, while 12% work in the agricultural sector as farmers or fishermen. The rest have odd jobs or manage a small business.

On the other hand, approximately 50% of the mothers work. They are engaged in providing personal services (14%). The rest work in the office, or do sales work, or have their own small business. Fifty percent of the mothers are housewives who stay at home bound by cultural expectations. They bear the responsibilities of rearing the children and of managing the scant resources of the household.

Thirteen percent of the child workers have their own families – they have a partner, not necessarily married, although some have their own child or children. In a situation like this, the desperation and the need for survival becomes more stark, as

the child worker bears the heavy burden of rearing kids and maintaining a household. Another 13% live with friends, who usually are also their colleagues at work. The rest either live alone or live with relatives.

Life has not changed for the better in the eyes of 62% of the child workers of Cebu. From the time they started to work, the challenges of coping with the demands of daily living has remained the same or even more difficult and impoverished. The money is not or never enough. Life is more difficult because these children now have to raise their own families or must take care of invalid or old parents. And since most of the jobs are in the city, many had to leave their families in the rural areas and live on their own or with friends.

Thirty one percent said that their standard of living slightly improved and only 5% stated that their life has greatly improved because of their work. Life is better now, they say, because they can now buy what they want. They are now more capable of supporting their family. Some relish the independence and freedom and a few enjoy the "support" of customers.

Worker Profile of Child Workers

Child workers in Cebu spend most of their youth, not in the learning environment of school or in the safe haven of home but in the unwholesome smoke-filled rooms of bars and nightclubs of the city. The state of child exploitation in the city is the worst compared to Bacolod, Pampanga, Davao, and in some respects, even Metro Manila, in terms of the extent and "openness" in which child prostitution is rampant on the streets of certain parts of the city. Two hundred twenty one establishments in Cebu City were visited in the course of this study. Forty one percent are bars, pubhouses, nightclubs, gay bars, disco houses; 26% are videoke or karaoke bars, 17% are food establishments and restaurants; 5% are hotels, motels, and inns; and the rest are resorts, spa/ massage centers, and sports centers.

The owners of 70% of these establishments are typically Filipinos. Fourteen percent of the establishments are Japanese-owned; 13% have Chinese owners; the rest are owned by Taiwanese and other nationalities. Forty three percent of the establishments where the children work have 10 to 20 employees, while 22% have less than 10 employees. Another 22% of the establishments have 21 to 30 employees, and the rest have 31 to

100 employees. It is obvious that the child workers are not employed by large-scale establishments such as the large hotels in the area but by the smaller entertainment centers. This explains the fact that half of the workers in these establishments have no job security. They are paid on a commission basis or only when they come to work. Only 31% of the child workers are considered to be "regular" or "permanent" employees.

There is an establishment in Cebu City that does not employ any child worker but allows them to enter and sit with the guests. In exchange for the company that these kids provide, the guest pays for the meal of the child or children. If the guest wants more than company, for Php 50 or less, the guest can take the child to one of the small cubicles located in the inner area of the establishment where he can do what he wants with the child.

In Cebu City, one can find a wide array of businesses that exploit children – from very expensive establishments where customers pay hundreds of pesos to the seedy and filthy rooms where the entrance fee is only Php 5.

Similar to the establishments in Metro Manila, the service industry in Cebu, generally, has not been called upon sufficiently to exert peer-group pressure upon those members of the industry who abuse the system, especially those who encourage or facilitate child prostitution. Where investors, employers and workers in establishments and tourism permit or encourage the sexual exploitation of children, they cooperate in a form of commerce that offends laws and universal notions of morality, and brings disrepute to the entire sector.

Only four of the 221 establishments have a labor union. It therefore follows that less than a handful of the child workers are under the protection of unions. Ninety eight percent of the child workers are not labor union members. It is disheartening to note that 73% of the children believe that the presence of a union in their place of work would not be beneficial to their welfare and security on the job. Twenty six percent, however, feel that a labor union would have a positive effect in their status in the company. The presence of a labor union would ensure that employees are protected and have better pay. The rest are apathetic saying that they do not consider the labor union to be effectual since there were very few employees working for the company, anyway. A few more children said that they don't care since they were not going to stay in their present job for long.

It is on the job where these child workers face the greatest risk. Forty six percent of all the children interviewed in this study work as entertainers. Twenty eight percent are restaurant workers who wait on tables, clean or cook in the kitchens, or run errands in the food establishment. Ten percent are sex workers. The rest of the children work in hotels and similar establishments, and on the streets.

Entertainers usually work in videoke/ karaoke joints, restaurants, and bars, as well as in nightclubs, disco houses, and gay bars. The exact nature of the job differs from one establishment to another although they are all there to please the customer for the money or for fear they might get fired or beaten. Work heavily depends on the child being able to engage the customers in conversation, drinking with them, often allowing very close and intimate physical contact with them. Kissing, mild petting, and hugging usually go with the job depending on the preference of the customer. Male GROs sometimes initiate the caressing or touching because, according to them, this is what the customers want. In videoke/karaoke bars, the GROs also sing along with the customer.

Similar to cases found in other provinces, one of the temptations for children who work in the tourism industry is the very high risk for these workers to shift from the seemingly wholesome jobs (e.g., GRO) to the darker side of the business – prostitution. The late night schedules, the kind of customers, the nature of the establishments, and the surrounding areas, including the opportunity to earn quick and easy money make children vulnerable to the attraction of prostitution. These include the so-called "fashion models" in bars, the GROs of videoke joints, the dancers and dance instructors, and other workers with similar jobs. Although these sex workers are usually found in establishments, a number are also found on the streets around these establishments.

The sex workers have jobs which are very similar to that of the entertainers. The only difference is that they also provide sexual services. Some of the establishments provide rooms for the said service.

In downtown Cebu, there is an area known for prostitution where sex is sold on the streets and in broad daylight. This is actually a residential/commercial area that potential customers can freely enter, and once there, pimps and prostitutes would

literally swarm around the customer selling themselves. They do not care if the potential customer might be a sadist or a pedophile or even a murderer, all they want is to earn. Aside from sex, this community is also known for peddling drugs. And in many cases, the children here use the money they earn from prostitution to buy the illegal drugs their young addicted bodies crave.

In the so-called oldest bar in Cebu, there is a large yet very dark room where one can find a whole harem of women (mostly child workers) sitting on wooden benches waiting for customers. To enter the establishment which also has a videoke bar and restaurant for those who prefer more "wholesome" pursuits, customers pay Php 5. If they want a little more action, they can buy a string of six tickets (Php 5 per ticket) to "dance" with one of the ladies for a duration of six songs. These young women wear nothing but a blouse and a very short skirt without any underwear. Once the young ladies are chosen by their respective customers who are usually blue collar workers from the factories and construction sites, and once the songs begin, so does their exploitation and sexual abuse.

The next group of workers are those in the hotel and restaurant business, including the resorts. Their jobs are usually as a waiter/ waitress/ food attendant, helper/ cleaner/ janitor, bartender, assistant cook, cashier, and other support functions. Their service basically involves the preparation and serving of food and drinks. They prepare the bill and receipts. They also clean and arrange the dining areas, as well as the tables and table settings. They also do sundry work depending on the demand of their superiors. They usually work in bars, pubhouses, nightclubs, disco houses, gay bars, and also videoke and karaoke restaurants and bars.

For 65% of the children, this is their first job. Although a substantial number are already 17 years old (53%), many have been working since they were 15 (42%) and 14 (22%) years old. The average child worker has been on the job for a year. But there are a few (3%) who worked since they were very young. Some have been working for the past nine years. The average child worker gets to work 8 hours a day, although some report that they work for 12 hours straight. The poor ones work everyday. There is even one child who wears the same set of clothes to work for several days at a time, probably because no one looked after her.

Consistent with the child workers who were studied in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Bacolod, and Davao, the children of Cebu work primarily to help their family escape from poverty (45%) and to ensure self-survival and financial independence (41%).

Indeed, it is the money that drives the child to work. High income earners make approximately Php1,500 per night. Although, on the average the daily earnings of a child worker is estimated at Php 388. Sometimes, if business is slow at night, then they do not have any earnings. There is even a story of a child worker who sold sex to a stranger in exchange for a cup of rice and a few slithers of pork barbecue. On the other extreme, there are children who can earn as much as Php 5,000 on a lucky night.

The rest of the children chose to work because they did not want to go to school anymore and they wanted to become more "productive" and "useful" by working. Some work in order to escape a domestic life where they are abused and neglected. In the bulk of the cases (93%), the children said that their parents did not force them to work. Sixty percent said that it was their friends who influenced them to start working. They say that their friends flouted their "easy" money and their experiences. This lured them to follow their peers on the same path.

On the job, 36% percent of the child workers became victims of abuse, in one form or another. Eleven percent were sexually abused; 10% experienced verbal violence; 8% were physically abused, and the rest, although they did not suffer any direct harm, became ill because of the working conditions.

Surprisingly, close to half of the child workers are happy with their jobs despite the oppression and risks they face. Forty one percent have mixed feelings about their work — sometimes they feel happy, sometimes they don't. Only 12% said that they were unhappy with their jobs.

The factors that have been identified which make the child workers happy with their jobs are the following: (1) income, (2) good interpersonal relationships in the workplace, (3) challenges offered by the work itself, (4) comfortable and safe working conditions, (5) increased responsibility and influence, (6) sense of achievement, (7) effective and friendly supervisors, and (8) recognition for the worker's contributions on the job. For most of the children, money is the major driving force that kept them in their jobs. This is the reason that they worked in the first place. They are happy that they can buy food for their families or pay for

the tuition fee of a younger sibling who goes to school. The second most frequently cited factor is the good interpersonal relationship with colleagues and friends at work. Some child workers say that their friends make them laugh, their friends listen to their personal fears and hurts, and help them reduce the hardship of work. The third factor is the challenge and fulfillment derived from the work itself.

On the other hand, there are also factors that make the child workers unhappy in their jobs. These factors are: (1) low or insufficient income, (2) conflict with colleagues and abusive colleagues, (3) the "immoral" or "lowly" stature of the job, (4) unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, (5) too much or very little responsibility at work, (6) lack of a sense of achievement, (7) abusive supervisors and customers, and (8) lack of recognition. Among all of these factors, it was the work itself that make the children unhappy. Often, it is the sex workers who give this reason and the other children who believe that their work lacks dignity and respectability.

The sex workers feel and know the stigma attached to them because of their work. They feel guilty because of the "immorality" of their jobs.

Poor working conditions are also a major source of distress. In the kitchens of food establishments, children deal with poor ventilation and lighting, the harmful effects of cleaning materials, slippery floors, noise, and heat.

Other workers complain of headaches caused by cigarette smoke in rooms with very poor ventilation. Those who carry heavy items suffer muscle pains in the legs and back. Some experience cuts and scalding, accidents probably caused by the constant pressure to work fast and keep customers from waiting. In all cases, workers are under considerable stress. Those involved in the sex trade, of course, face greater risks in the form of physical and emotional abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, drugs and alcohol. Fourteen child sex workers detested the chronic fatigue and the "dirty" feeling of being in that line of work. Some talked about how they disliked the rude and foul-mouthed customers.

There are also customers and bosses who are considered to be "sex maniacs", while others are very impatient and rude. *There are also abusive supervisors who not only hurl insults but* also physically hit the child workers.

Indeed, one very real and visible negative effect of child labor on the workers are those which stem from working conditions. Children employed in the tourism industry have to deal with work hours that are long, irregular and include evening or night-time shifts. These pose hazards to the physical and mental development of young workers, particularly in establishments where there are no set rest periods, which, in most cases, is often the rule rather than the exception. Waitresses and "receptionists", who typically report for work between 6 and 8 p.m. and go home at 5 or 6 a.m., complain of fatigue and lack of sleep. Some do not even have rest days; "rest" comes only when business is slack.

The impact of the tasks on child workers cut across the different areas of their lives — the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. Among all these aspects, the impact of work on the health of the child is relatively the most apparent and immediate. Among all the physical changes that have taken place, 52% of the children mentioned that now they work long irregular hours, which are often scheduled at night. Thirty one percent said that they have learned the vices of smoking and drinking from their adult customers. Nine percent learned how to use condoms and other contraceptives to avoid getting pregnant and/or getting sick. Some complain about the fatigue and long hours of work which cause their health and academic performance to suffer. The rest talked of bruises, cuts, and illnesses brought by the unfavorable working conditions.

Although unseen, the psychological effect of exploitative labor seem more damaging on the child. Majority of the sex workers are ashamed, full of self-hate and guilt. They resort to substance abuse to escape these negative emotions. In addition, 11% fear that someone might discover what their "real" job is.

However, there are those who feel good about their work. Noteworthy is the fact that 70% of the children recognized how work made them more independent. Twenty six percent gained more confidence in their capabilities. Sixteen percent are less afraid to face the challenges of life head on. They find themselves to be productive and useful to their families.

Socially, child workers have to deal with physical separation from their loved ones, particularly in the case of children who had to leave their families in the rural areas to work in the city. It could also be an emotional separation in cases where the child

discontinues relations with familiar friends and families, or avoids contact with them for fear of being found out and stigmatized. Eight percent said that they miss their friends. Aside from estrangement, the child also suffers in terms of being away from interactions gained in school. Eighty three percent of the child workers had to stop going to school because of their work. On the other hand, there are some child workers who have adapted better socially. Eleven percent are happy because they now have more friends.

On the spiritual aspect, very few mentioned that the difficulties of life only made their faith stronger. Most of them said that their faith wavered. Many of the children say that they no longer believe in God and the teachings of the Church. There are also those who still believe in God but no longer attend religious services. They work almost everyday and the time that they stay home are spent resting and doing household chores. Only 11% said that they still attend mass.

Even if the child workers say that they are 'happy' with their jobs, 64% of them have no plans to stay long in their line of work. Sex workers are especially worried about their future. They know that as each day passes, their youth and beauty fades, and so does their 'value' in the marketplace. One sex worker was afraid of what her own child will think of her when the child becomes an adult. A few will stop from their present job once they have their own families. The others complain about the little income and the absence of benefits and job security. Others are simply tired of the work. Some mentioned that they will quit their present jobs once they finish school. There are other child workers who will quit once they find the opportunity to go abroad or save enough money to start a business of their own. All in all, many just believe that there are better jobs which offer more dignity and higher income. And given enough time and hope they will transfer to these jobs.

Only 12% said that they are going to stay in their present jobs. The rest are unsure, saying that everything depends on the situation which in turn would greatly hinge on economic and financial considerations.

The joys and pains of living of the Child Workers

Judith's story is a reflection of the joy and pains of the typical child worker. The happy and sad moments in the life of the child

worker pertain to their sense of achievement, acceptance, and affection. The happiest moments of a child worker in Cebu arise from affection (39%), or the extent by which the child worker feels loved and respected. This is often centered around their relationships with their family and friends. Thirty seven percent of the child worker's happiest experiences are related to achievement, or to successes in work, number, and extent of activities, and the ability to overcome problems and challenges. On the other hand, 25% of the children relate their happiness to acceptance, or to the extent by which the child worker feels that one belongs and is seen as a valuable human being.

The rare occasions when they find time to spend with friends or eat dinner with their family momentarily blot their fears and pains. The presence of a "special someone" or a partner serves as an inspiration to lead a better life and acts as a buffer from stress and difficulties. Memories of celebrations of family and friends such as birthdays, the birth of a child, winning in contests, graduation, bring a smile to these children's faces. A few who are still in school are happy and thankful for the opportunity.

On the other hand, the saddest moments in life are due to the lack of achievement (48%), followed by the lack of acceptance (30%), and the lack of affiliation (22%). The child workers are saddened by those times when they lost a loved one or had to leave their family because of work. A number of children still remember those heart-rending moments when they were disowned by their own parents and friends, most probably because of their work. They feel terribly unhappy when they separated from their spouse or partner due to conflict. There are also those times when they have no customers and no income, which only serve to heighten their desperation.

In dealing with other people, 45% of the child workers describe themselves as assertive. Twenty-two percent deal with others in an aggressive way. Twenty-one percent are shy and passive. Eleven percent say that they have a combination of styles when it comes to dealing with others.

Child workers who deal with others in an assertive manner feel that there is nothing to be ashamed of, about themselves and about their work. They also know how to adapt to different personalities. In fact, they have made many friends and view themselves to be outgoing and friendly. Some say that the way they relate to others depend on the situation and how these people

treat them in the first place. Often they are comfortable and happy with who they are.

The aggressive child workers have learned to become fighters. They aggressively deal with their customers to make more money. Some are flirts who will not take no for an answer. They become very angry with customers who are very rude, and with people who try to take advantage of them.

In the opposite extreme, the passive child workers refuse to mingle with others. A few are talkative when dealing with customers but when they are with their family, they become quiet. One child is fearful every time she deals with other people. In most cases, this fear is brought about by her past when she was in the hands of abusive customers, supervisors, and even family members.

These experiences affect the self-perception of these children. Among all of those who participated in the study, 19% view themselves in a negative manner. Many of these workers feel that they are dirty. They are unhappy and ashamed of their job. The other workers feel that they have become jaded and uncaring. Others complain of a complicated love life and family life. In fact, life for them is difficult to deal with. Some of them think that they lead a meaningless existence without any direction.

Thirty two percent view themselves both positively and negatively. It is enough that they know that they are not hurting anyone or taking advantage of others. These workers, however, are unsure of their future and the decisions that they have made. These children do not know who they are and what they want. There are good times and also bad times for them.

However, there are children whose inner strength has enabled them to weather the trials. Forty nine percent of the child workers of Cebu continue to have a positive regard for themselves. These children feel good about their accomplishments because they no longer feel that they are a burden to their family. In fact, they even get to support their loved ones and make their lives better. They are proud of their job and the money they make. The others are simply happy about themselves and their situation. For them it is just a matter of how one copes with life's challenges. They feel that they have become stronger and more mature.

These dreams or goals of the child worker in Cebu may range from the basic and material (e.g., a car) to the complex and intangible. The aspirations of the child workers can be classified

into the physiological, safety and security, self-esteem, and social dimensions.

The dreams of the Cebu child workers frequently revolve around basic wants. Ninety-three of the 237 child workers have a simple dream, and that is to have their own home and their own car. The second most frequent type of dreams are those that aim to satisfy safety and security needs. Fifteen percent of the child workers dream of having their own family someday. Others want to marry a rich man or go abroad and earn dollars (or yen). The third dimension pertains to the self-esteem of the child workers. A number of children have dreams of finishing college and embarking on a career. There were also a few kids who are not very materialistic. They look forward to the day when they can be very confident and proud of themselves and their achievements in school and at work.

Assistance to the child workers

Only 68 of the 237 child workers claim that they were offered assistance in the past to escape from their plight. Out of the 68, only 38% accepted the outside assistance. The rest refused the offer.

In those few cases that help was offered to the child workers, 57% originated not from government or other organizations but from individuals who have a close relationship with the workers. They are often the customers (38%), friends (25%), a suitor or a special someone (13%). This is an indicator of a lack of unified and systematized activity to assist the child workers.

It is sad to note that only 3% of the child workers who were offered help mentioned the government as a source of assistance. In comparison, the non-government organizations were relatively more active as indicated by 28% of the children who said that they were approached by representatives of NGOs. FORGE and other organizations have been active not only in providing help to the child workers but also in issue advocacy and education in the province.

The situation above is an indicator of the difficulty of providing effective solutions to the plight of the child workers. It is difficult to assist the child workers to get out of their predicament when they themselves resist or refuse the help.

These child workers refuse for practical reasons. They refuse to leave their present work because of the money that it

provides the children and their families. Their lack of education is a major limitation when it comes to providing options for alternative jobs. No other job (especially in the case of sex workers) will pay as much considering their level of education and skills.

They believe that their work is justified by the financial needs of their family and by their need to survive. In exceptional cases, a few child workers said that that they no longer need to worry about paying for the bills because they have 'loyal' customers who are willing to spend for all their needs and wants.

A few workers expressed their wariness in accepting help because they doubt the intentions of the one providing the help. They have had experiences of people who asked for something in return. Others feel that the help is offered only at the beginning, but is never sustained. A few feel that the efforts of others to help them is not true, or a worthless exercise, even a disturbance. Some also value the independence and freedom which come from earning one's own keep. They are proud to live on their own and do not need others to depend on. However, these are all good for the short-term.

When the children were asked if they will accept help if it is offered again, 63% answered that they were willing. They were also asked to provide the specific areas in their lives where they needed assistance. Many of the children wanted someone to provide them educational assistance and almost the same number want another line of work. Some mentioned an alternative means of living. They also want a home for their siblings and help to be provided to their families. A few needed counseling, not only for themselves but for their partner. There are also those who need legal assistance. The rest needed financial assistance for medical expenses and capitalization for a business.

The children discussed the means by which the different institutions and groups could possibly help them. It was mentioned that government could help mainly by providing them decent jobs that would enable them to continue helping their family. Another frequent answer is scholarships. Other forms of assistance that the government could provide is through support of studies of siblings, help in working abroad, free housing, capitalization for business, and livelihood programs.

According to the child workers, NGO's could support by providing jobs and free condoms. The Church could help by providing spiritual guidance, scholarship, prayer and forgiveness.

Schools could provide scholarships. Labor unions could help by fighting for the rights of the child workers. Counselors can provide guidance on what decisions to make.

CONCLUSION

Despite the existence of a national and local legal regulatory framework governing child labor and the efforts of institutions and individuals to stem this growing national problem, the number of child workers continue to rise steadily everyday. The incidence of abuse, exploitation, and maltreatment of child workers is seen as a necessary evil in the economic survival of families, industries, even the nation. The incidence of child labor is caused by poverty, parental neglect, peer influence, work opportunity, and family expectations.

The findings revealed that the child workers in the Cebu tourism industry are, indeed, prone to exploitation. Majority are young, single, and female. They are not well-educated considering that only a few completed high school. Generally, these children were accepted in their jobs not only for their youth, but more importantly, their docility. They do not know how to voice out their rights since for many this is their first time to work and are very young. Their lack of education, desperate financial needs, and family expectations make it more difficult for them to find alternative jobs or fight for their rights in the workplace.

All in all, working children are the objects of extreme exploitation in terms of toiling for long hours for minimal pay. Their work conditions are especially severe, often not providing the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. Many of these children endure lives of deprivation. Even if there are some positive effects of work in the children, the overall result is not beneficial to the child in all the different aspects, a sense, they are robbed of their youth because they no longer have time for play and for rest. They lose their chance to study. They no longer have time to fulfill religious obligations, not even to pray. Their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development considering that these children are deprived of the simple joys of childhood, relegated instead to a life of drudgery and abuse.

Given these alarming and disturbing conditions, various sectors such as government, non-government organizations, trade unions, professionals, and media have undertaken courses

of action to eliminate the exploitation of child workers. Child labor in the tourism industry, as confirmed by this study, is indeed a complex problem that has no easy solutions. Reducing, if not eliminating, its incidence as well as dealing with its adverse effects on child workers, are difficult goals that nonetheless deserve the commitment and involvement of the government, employers, trade unions, non-government organizations and other sectors of society. No less than concerted efforts implemented in an integrated and systematic manner are needed to enhance the likelihood of success of such efforts. Protecting the rights, and fostering the welfare, of children are imperative, if a more productive and humane society is desired.

RECOMMENDATION

The following proposed agenda for action are based on the framework of the Stockhoms Declaration.

Coordination and Cooperation

7.1.1 Enhance international cooperation and/or assistance among UN and ILO members for the prohibition and effective elimination of the worst forms of child labor to complement national efforts, including the mobilization of resources for national or international programs, mutual legal assistance, technical assistance including the exchange of information, and support for social and economic development, poverty eradication programs and universal education.

7.1.2 Promote and recognize good practice and self-regulation efforts among players in the tourism industry. This includes the mobilization of the private sector against the use of its networks and establishments for the commercial sexual exploitation of children. It may also include recognition and sharing of best practices.

7.1.3 Create the Tourism Industry Child Labor Committee to coordinate, implement, and evaluate programs and activities for the elimination of child labor. This also includes assistance in monitoring compliance to international commitments.

7.1.4 Strengthen the capacity of trade unions, which work on behalf of working children, to influence the government and other concerned institutions/groups to regulate and or abolish child labor, and help enforced in unionized establishments the basic labor standards for the protection of children.

Prevention

7.2.1 The Department of Education, Culture, and Sports and the Commission on Higher Education should require the schools to include the child labor issue in the curriculum.

7.2.2 The Government should allocate a bigger share in the national budget for the protection and development of children. This can be done by increasing the budgets of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports, the Bureau of Women and Young Workers of the Department of Labor, and the Department of Health so they can provide programs centered around the child.

7.2.3 Involve and train leaders and members of workers of employers', workers', and civic organizations in the campaign against child labor and child prostitution.

7.2.4 Provide appropriate training for government officials concerned, especially labor inspectors and law enforcement officials, social workers, and other relevant professionals.

7.2.5 Sensitize parents to the problems of children working in exploitative conditions and promote the value of children as human beings rather than commodities.

7.2.6 Inform, sensitize, and mobilize policymakers, political and organization leaders, and the general public on the issue of Child Labor. This involves the dissemination of information regarding best practices on the elimination of child labor and through social mobilization. This also serves to increase public attention on child labor issues and the need for legal instruments to protect the working children.

7.2.7 Publicize legal provisions and related information on child labor in different languages and dialects.

7.2.8 Compile and update detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labor. There is a need for more comprehensive national census on working children with more systematic desegregation of data.

7.2.9 Monitor the struggle against the sexual exploitation of children within the tourism sector. This will serve as a basis for determining priorities for national action for the abolition of child labor, in particular for the prohibition and elimination of its worst forms as a matter of urgency. Such information should include data disaggregated by sex, age group, occupation, branch of economic activity, status in employment, school attendance, and geographical location.

7.2.10 Compile and keep up to date relevant data concerning violations of national laws, policies, rules and regulations for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor. The compilation and processing of the data and information should be carried out with due regard of the right to privacy.

7.2.11 Provide children with access to education as a means of improving their status and make primary education compulsory and available free to all and improve access and offer relevant health services, education, training, recreation and a supportive environment to vulnerable children and their families.

7.2.12 Encourage media professionals to develop strategies which strengthen the role of the media in providing information of the highest quality, reliability and ethical standards concerning all aspects of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Protection

7.3.1 Include a provision on Joint Responsibility for the Prevention and/or Elimination of Child Labor in all Collective Bargaining Agreements, particularly in the tourism industry.

7.3.2 Enact pending bills that seek to eliminate child labor. Foremost of these are House Bill 6785 "An Act Penalizing the Employment of Children in any Public or Private Undertaking or occupation which is hazardous to his/her life, safety, health, and morals, or which unduly interferes with his/her normal development, and for other purposes" and Senate Bill 1530, "An Act Providing for Stronger Deterrence and Special Protection Against Child Labor and Providing Penalties for its Violation and for other Purposes". Other house bills are House Bill 189, a bill which sets penalties for those employing children in hazardous work, House Bill 620 which provides for a Children's Welfare Fund for abandoned, abused and sexually exploited children, House Bill 3264 which sets heavier penalties for pedophiles and House Bill 7837 which recognizes rights of the child. Public-opinion makers and political leaders must actively lobby for the passage of these laws. They should also legislate a law that will penalize those who will undertake sex trafficking of child workers. The lawmakers, in turn, must provide clear implementing guidelines for the proper enforcement of such laws.

7.3.3 Ensure strict enforcement of existing laws. The Philippines is acknowledged within the international community to have a strong legal framework on child protection. However, the main weakness in the system is the poor implementation of this framework as seen in the numerous children who are employed in exploitative environments. The concerned government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and responsible citizens must work together to ensure that the existing laws which are in place are strictly enforced and the corresponding sanctions are justly and promptly meted out on the offenders and violators.

7.3.4 Detect and prosecute those involved in the sale and trafficking of children, or in the use, procuring or offering of children for illicit activities, particularly prostitution. Legal and other support services for child labor pursuing cases against abusive employers and their agents should also be strengthened.

7.3.5 Simplify legal and administrative procedures, including special complaints procedures for case involving child labor and child prostitution. Provide protection from discrimination and reprisals to those who legitimately expose such violations, as well as establish helplines or points of contact and ombudspersons

Recovery and Reintegration

7.4.1 Expand genuine community and sectoral organizing for children and their families, allied workers and concerned citizens.

7.4.2 Strengthen support to the psycho-social services to child labor victims of the Sagip Manggagawa program.

7.4.3 Identify, reach out, and work with communities where children are at risk. This includes providing for social, medical, psychological counseling and other support to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and their families, paying particular attention to those with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

7.4.4 Train more dedicated people on psycho-social counseling interventions to help child labor victims and their family to recover and reintegrate to society.

7.4.5 Ensure access to quality education for child workers by reducing fees and improving delivery systems; provide services for children ages 10-14 in non-formal education and skills training programs.

7.4.6 Set quantitative targets to assist child workers and their families in poverty alleviation and social development programs.

7.4.7 Adopt not only legal sanctions against the perpetrators of sexual crimes against children, but also socio-medical and psychological measures to create behavioral changes on the part of the perpetrators.

Child Participation

7.5.1 Inform the children themselves of their rights, through the formal educational system and through other media. Adopt appropriate measures to improve the educational infrastructure and the training of teachers to meet the needs of boys and girls.

7.5.2 Create a special fund under the Bureau of Women and Young Workers for the scholarship of child workers to pursue their education.

7.5.3 Identify or establish and support networks of children and young people as advocates of child rights, and include children, according to their evolving capacity, in developing and implementing government and other programmes concerning them.

7.5.4 Form children's council at the municipal and regional levels which will serve as consultative bodies regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs that will affect their lives.

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