

International Labour Organization  
Decent Work Team and  
Office for the Caribbean



# Rapid assessment of child labour in Guyana





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## Foreword

The Government of Guyana welcomed the support of the Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative from which the South-South Brazilian-funded Cooperation Project was derived and thanks the ILO for having this Rapid Assessment conducted.

The Rapid Assessment on Child Labour and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Practices in Guyana comes at a time when there is a renewed commitment by the Government of Guyana towards enhancing the social and economic conditions especially as it relates to the quality of education, poverty reduction and social protection.

In its effort to address child labour, the Government has been taking several initiatives including:

- The review of existing Child Labour Laws, 2005 to present. This review addressed the status of Guyana's Child Labour Laws vis-à-vis the ILO Conventions relating to child labour and the worst forms of child labour (WFCL).
- Continuous sensitization through training of employers and employees.
- Routine monitoring of our work places by Labour Officers / Inspectors for any child labour violations.

We are happy for the opportunity to be a part of this regional platform as we join hands to prevent and eliminate child labour by 2025 in keeping with the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Special thanks to the ILO, Latin America and Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative, South-South Cooperation and other supporting partners in facilitating this process.

This Report will serve as a guide to us in the development of Guyana's National Policy on Child Labour.

The Honourable Amna Ally,  
Minister of Social Protection,  
Ministry of Social Protection,  
Guyana

August 2017



## Acknowledgements

This Rapid Assessment is part of a South-South Cooperation initiative funded through the Brazil-ILO Cooperation Programme, within the context of the International Labour Organization's Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour (RI). The assessment was undertaken with the active collaboration of the Government of Guyana, and in particular, the Ministry of Social Protection.

The Rapid Assessment was conducted by Alessandro Conticini under the supervision of Diego Rei, Employment and Labour Market Specialist, and Resel Melville, RI National Project Coordinator, both of the ILO Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean..

Several professionals, Government officials, social workers, NGOs, inspectors, and teachers have dedicated time and efforts in providing data, sharing knowledge and allowing access to informants for the purpose of the study. As it would be impossible to individually acknowledge each contributing informant, a full list of institutions and individuals having taken part to this assessment is provided at the end of this Study. Our deepest admiration for the work they are conducting in their daily fight for a better world.

Two people deserve a special mention for the support they have extended to this assessment. In particular, the researchers are indebted to Mr. Charles Ogle, Chief Labour Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Officer, for coordinating our field work and visits in Guyana, and for having lobbied a collaboration with the ILO on this initiative. The researchers are also particularly grateful to Ms Karen Vansluytman-Corbin, Assistant Chief Labour OSH Officer and Child Labour Focal Point, for her invaluable participation to all aspects of field research, setting meetings, organizing field trips, providing data, and identifying key informants. This research would not have been possible without her time and full commitment to the cause of combating child labour and eradicating the worst forms of child labour in Guyana. Their passion and commitment mirrors the leadership that the Hon. Volda Lawrence, Minister of Social Protection, is showing in tackling issues affecting the wellbeing of children in Guyana.

Finally, we would like to thank the several parents, youth and children who made this research possible by sharing their views, opinions and experiences with the authors. By providing their ideas on the priority actions to be established against child labour and the worst forms of child labour they have expressed the firm hope that future interventions will be relevant to their socio-economic conditions, and tailor-made to their living predicaments.





## Executive Summary

1. Guyana is a member and host country of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Its population stands at 760,000 (2014) and it is classified as a low income country. The Guyanese economy is based largely on agriculture and extractive industries and has shown moderate economic growth in recent years (3-5 per cent). Lower export commodity prices (sugar) and budget delays slowed economic activities in 2015, but the opening of two new large gold mines helped support overall economic growth. The macroeconomic outlook is generally positive, growth is projected at 4 per cent for 2016. In 2015, large reserves of oil off the Guyanese coastline were discovered. Guyana faces a very high emigration rate. Official unemployment is estimated at 11 per cent (2013), but one third of the population lives below the poverty rate.
2. The legal arsenal on child labour that is available to the Government of Guyana is not fully harmonized with ratified international standards presented in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Status of Ratification by Guyana of the Most Relevant International Conventions and Protocols**

Most Relevant Conventions and Protocols	Convention on the Rights of the Child	ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	Protocol on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children	Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict	Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
Year and Status of Ratification	14th January 1991	15th April 1998	15th January 2001	9th August 2013	14th September 2004	11th August 2010	30th July 2010

3. Provisions relevant to child labour or WFCL are scattered within different Acts and Laws without proper coordination among the several monitoring and implementing authorities. The current plan of the Government to develop a full Child Labour Policy could be an occasion to harmonize and collect all relevant provisions within a single Act. And yet, given the weak implementation and monitoring resources available to the Government, new or better legal standards will not quickly translate into a better protective environment for children. A normative approach based on legislation reform and law enforcement has been proved partially successful with the issue of trafficking, and yet we have observed that child labour is deeply rooted within cultural beliefs that it will be difficult to eliminate with an exclusively normative approach.
4. Child work in Guyana is a common feature across sexes, age groups, ethnic origins and areas of settlement. It is a pervasive phenomenon that sometimes takes the shape of child labour, hazardous work, or WFCL. The total child labour prevalence in Guyana for children 5-17 years is 18.3 per cent. The Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006-07 had measured a total child labour prevalence of 16.4 per cent within the 5-14 age group. This same proportion had decreased to 13.5 per cent in the recent MICS, suggesting a positive trend within that age group. Yet, both historical measures suggest that the prevalence rate in Guyana is still significantly higher than the average Latin American and Caribbean rate (9 per cent prevalence rate for the 5-14 age group).

The MICS 2014-15 also reports a generally high 83 per cent of children aged 5-17 years who are engaged in some forms of economic activities, while 22 per cent are in child labour situations because they are performing such tasks for long hours (above the age-specific number of hours). Similarly, a very high proportion of children (57 to 83 per cent) perform household chores for various lengths of time, and yet only a negligible proportion of them perform above the age-specific threshold in all three age groups.

5. The strongest predictors for high incidence of child labour are the areas of settlement (urban/rural/interior/coastal), and location in specific regional areas. Interior areas have an incidence of child labour which more than doubles that of coastal areas (37.1 per cent against 14.2 per cent respectively). This is a clear demarcation of significant proportion and it is also explained by differences in culture, identity and spirituality among the populations living in the forested areas of the interior.

The phenomenon of child labour also has a visible urban/rural divide: Rural areas, whether in coastal or interior regions, experience a higher incidence of child labour (Approximately 30 per cent higher in rural areas than urban areas). The interior/forest regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 have, by far, the highest incidence of child labour and children working in hazardous conditions. In Region 9, more than seven out of every ten children are involved in child labour activities regardless of their age specific category, representing a clear area of particular concern with an incidence of nearly four times the national average. Regions 7 and 8 have a combined total of 35.3 per cent child labour, which is double the national average. The combined total child labour incidence in forest regions (Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9) is 43 per cent, nearly three times higher than the combined total child labour incidence in coastal regions (Regions 2, 3, 4, 5) of 15.7 per cent. Region 9 has also a percentage of hazardous work (56.6 per cent) more than 4.5 times higher than the national average of 12.5 per cent. Thus, children living in rural or forest areas of interior regions experience a double vulnerability for child labour and are therefore significantly more likely to engage in economic activities or domestic chores in excess of the age specific threshold.

6. Another predictor of child labour is the economic quintile of the household. However, interestingly, this is mainly true for the poorest quintile. The four richest quintiles do not show significant differences in the prevalence of child labour and they are all relatively high, suggesting again that culture and traditions play an important vulnerability role in Guyana. The same can be said for the ethnic origin of the household. While Indigenous peoples (Amerindians) have an incidence of child labour 2.5 times higher than other ethnic groups (40 per cent), Indo and Afro-Guyanese both suffer an equally very high proportion of child labour (16 per cent).
7. Barriers such as the lack of access to schools, and poor quality of education are important push factors that make parents, and children, more attentive to viable economic options. Fifty per cent of children in labour conditions also attend school, while the remaining 50 per cent are exclusively dedicated to labour.
8. No proper data analysis system exists to ensure that appropriate policies against child labour are evidence-based and directed by qualitative and quantitative findings (As opposed as being directed by common perceptions or myths). However, the fact that reports on the WFCL came

from a wide variety and majority of sources, including social workers and indigenous people, stands as a worrying signal of the magnitude and possible depth of the problem, even in the absence of specific statistics.

9. Previous coordination mechanisms specific to child labour existed but they have gradually been abandoned. The Trafficking in Persons Task Force and the Commission on the Rights of the Child are two existing and fully functioning bodies able to periodically coordinate interventions, advocacy, research and dialogue on child labour in Guyana.
10. Worrying reports by informants to this assessment have been independently made on systematic WFCL perpetrated mainly within three industries that have a strong gender component. Girls are highly exposed to abduction, trafficking, bonded labour or slavery for sexual purposes, mainly in the interior areas of the country, and around gold trading centers of forested regions. And yet, the phenomenon is also very visible within a few night places in the capital city of Georgetown.

Boys in the interior are highly vulnerable to hazardous working conditions in gold mining that entails the use of mercury to separate gold from other residuals. They are doubly exposed to the health hazards of mercury as the practice contaminates water and fishes. The excessive use of alcohol and drugs also compounds the general vulnerability of these boys. Logging, carrying heavy weights and operating machinery are also hazardous tasks performed by children in mining areas.

Finally, boys have also been reported to be used in organized crime, smuggling of arms, drugs and goods in coastal boats operating between Guyana and other Caribbean countries. They are rewarded either with cash, drugs or arms.



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## Acronyms

CANTA	Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBSI	Caribbean Basin Security Initiative
CDB	Caribbean Development Bank
CL	Child Labour
CPMS	Child Protection Monitoring System
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EDMI	Enumeration District Marginality Index
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
LCI	Living Conditions Index
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
MOL	Ministry of Labour
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
RI	Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour
SKYE	Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment
TACKLE	Tackle Child Labour Through Education
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
USAID	US Agency for International Development
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour



## Section One

# Framing the Research

### Background of the Rapid Assessment

The present undertaking is part of the activities financed under the framework of the Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour (RI), an intergovernmental platform for cooperation with active participation of employers' and workers' organizations. Twenty-five countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, including five Caribbean countries—the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago—formed the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour in October 2014.<sup>1</sup> The Regional Initiative was mandated to “accelerate the pace in the prevention and eradication of child labour and its worst forms, through institutional cooperation within and among sectors, and among the various levels of government”.<sup>2</sup> By signing, the countries also signalled their commitment to take action “in line with the overall goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and the regional goal... to eliminate all forms of child labour by 2020.”<sup>3</sup> With the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the inclusion of Target 8.7, which calls, inter alia, to “put an end to child labour in all its forms by 2025”, the proposal of the Regional Initiative has been strengthened and consolidated, and the issue of child labour is no longer only a regional concern, but has been mainstreamed into the global agenda.

The Government of Brazil is supporting the Initiative with funds from its South–South Cooperation Programme. Specifically, the Programme’s aim is to share the Brazilian Government’s good practices and experiences in the areas of both child labour and school-to-work transition for youth, with Caribbean members of the Initiative. The Programme was agreed upon and developed with the goal of enabling the governments, and workers’ and employers’ organizations to develop capacity in these areas.

Within the above-mentioned framework, the present Study aims at analyzing the child labour situation in Guyana, outlining existing measures and programmes that address the situation, while making suitable policy and programmatic recommendations. The Study provides a summary description of the main quantitative indicators available to characterize the young labourers and highlights pull and push factors related to the phenomenon and to specific occupations. Root causes are investigated, together with historical trends, cultural mechanisms, and social dynamics according to data available. The impact and consequences are assessed, and some perceptions and experiences of child labourers presented before identifying and assessing selected Government, non-governmental organization (NGO) and international agency interventions.

Section One of this Study, starts by presenting a short background to relevant definitions, international legal standards, and the methodological context. Section Two elaborates on the legal and policy environment of Guyana when it comes to provisions relevant to child labour and WFCL.

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<sup>1</sup> The Regional Initiative (RI) was formalized in October 2014 with the signing of a Declaration by 25 Ministers of Labour in the Latin America and Caribbean Region. Of the 25 signatories, five are Caribbean states: Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. In 2016, two more Caribbean states, Grenada and Saint Lucia, joined.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/pictures/declaracion-IR-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Section Two also presents applicable coordinating and data sharing mechanisms that allow for a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional collaboration between Government agencies, civil society organizations, and representatives from employers' and workers' federations.

Section Three presents the main findings of the Study by starting from an analysis of current knowledge concerning the extent and practices associated with child labour. Whenever possible, an age and gender analysis has been conducted to assess specificities of the phenomenon, as well as data is presented by area of settlement (rural vs. urban), by regions, by wealth groups, and by ethnic groups. Analysis on trends has been provided and supported by the information received from participating informants using their retrospective views on the evolution of child labour practices in their communities. Typologies of work performed by children have also been presented in this section.

The WFCL have been considered in Section Four. Due to the limitations in the quantitative datasets available for this research component, the analysis presented is mainly based on primary and secondary qualitative information. This Section elaborates on the socio-economic and ethnic issues surrounding WFCL in Guyana that provides fertile ground for the recruitment of children into exploitative labour conditions. This Section also presents the views of communities, children and youth on the different enabling or protective factors that increase vulnerability to the WFCL.

While no current programme specifically designed to prevent child labour or the WFCL has been found in Guyana, the assessment reviews a small number of selected current or previous practices that are of interest in the fight against this phenomenon in Section Five. This Section assesses practices that directly or indirectly help in reducing children's exposure to child labour or WFCL, and therefore constitute positive preventive interventions or good practices to be brought to scale.

Main recommendations of the rapid assessment are presented in the concluding Section Six, where policy and programmatic considerations are summarized for future action. A concluding list of bibliographic references are presented in Section Seven.

## Definitions and International Legal Standards

According to internationally recognized treaties and conventions, **child labour** is defined as work that deprives girls and boys of their childhood and dignity, and which is harmful to their physical and mental development. For a particular kind of work performed by a child to be considered child labour it may depend on the child's age, the type and conditions of work, and the effects of the work on the child. Some kinds of work are always child labour.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, specifies that child labour is a breach of a child's right to be protected *"from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development"* (Article 32).

**Children's economic activities** refer to all sorts of work performed by children, whether for the market or not; paid or unpaid; full or part-time; on a casual or regular basis; or in the formal or the informal sector. Children's work includes work in family enterprises and in household-based production activities, as well as domestic work performed in another household for an employer.

These activities are often incompatible with children's full school attendance or performance in school but are not outright banned.

ILO Convention No. 138 stipulates that the **minimum age** of admission into employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling or less than 15 years of age. Convention No. 138 makes an exception to the age limit of 15 years in ILO member countries in which the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. In such circumstances, the minimum age of admission into employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than 14 years of age. The Convention also makes provisions for national law to further delimit categories of employment/work where the minimum age can vary, once there is agreement among tripartite constituents. In particular, it is understood and that children between the ages of 13 and 15 may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.

**Worst forms of child labour** are deemed to be particularly harmful to children and their future development, thus qualifying for immediate elimination under the terms of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).<sup>4</sup> ILO Convention No. 182 states explicitly in Article 3 that WFCL comprises *"all forms of slavery or similar practices like the sale or trafficking of children, debt bondage...forced or compulsory labour...including use for armed conflict; use or procuring of a child for prostitution, pornography...; use or procuring of children for illicit activities...for production or use of drugs..."*.

**Youth underemployment and unemployment** exist when young persons have not attained their full employment level in keeping with the conditions set out in the ILO Employment Policy Convention, No. 122 adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1964. According to this Convention, full employment ensures that (i) there is work for all persons who are willing to work and look for work; (ii) that such work is as productive as possible; and (iii) that they have the freedom to choose the employment and that each workers has all the possibilities to acquire the necessary skills to get the employment that most suits them and to use in this employment such skills and other qualifications that they possess. The situations which do not fulfill objective (i) refer to unemployment, and those that do not satisfy objectives (ii) or (iii) refer mainly to underemployment.

## Research Methodology

### **Quantitative Data**

Child labour statistics are hard to find within traditional national censuses, labour market surveys, or labour force surveys. Specifically designed child labour surveys or multiple indicators cluster surveys, are usually a better source of information when it comes to economic activities performed by children. And yet their contents tend to be very limited to only a few well established child labour indicators, falling very short in providing a more comprehensive explanation of the socio-economic dynamics surrounding the phenomenon. Child labour often entails complex and multidimensional dynamics that cannot be reduced to simple statistics. It is now widely recognized

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C182](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C182)

that a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches is needed to better understand child labour and to guide innovative and successful policies.<sup>5</sup>

Statistically, an unemployed person is defined as someone who does not have a job but is actively seeking work. In order to qualify as unemployed for official and statistical measurement, the individual must be without employment, willing and able to work, of the officially designated “working age” and actively searching for a position. The Youth unemployment rate is the number of 15-24 unemployed divided by the total number of people in the labour market. The youth unemployment ratio is the number of 15-24 unemployed divided by the total population aged 15-24 in a given economy.

It is important to highlight that differences continue to exist, however, in the way many national statistics programmes define a young person. Definitions of “youth” are based in part on the end use of the measurement. If one aims to measure, for example, the age span at which one is expected to enter the labour market then the statistical definition of 15 to 24 years may no longer be valid, given that today more and more young people postpone their entry into labour markets to well beyond the age of 25. Alternatively, if one was to aim for the broader characteristic-based classification of youth (as opposed to a simple age-based definition), then a more sociological viewpoint on what constitutes “youth” is needed. For example, one might wish to define “youth” as the transition stage from childhood to adulthood, in which case the age at which this transition begins will vary greatly between societies and indeed within the same society. From the perspective of a critical stage in the lifecycle, the relevant age could be as low as 10 years (e.g. street kids) to as high as mid to late 30s.<sup>6</sup>

Given the considerable difference in the secondary data already available, the use of qualitative methodologies proposed for the current study will differ in their ultimate application.

### ***Qualitative Research***

While some initial form of quantitative child labour and youth employment research work has been previously conducted in Guyana, a deep qualitative understanding of the dynamics surrounding children in economic activities is widely recognized as of paramount importance to further direct programmes and policies in this country. To arrive at such an understanding, the following approaches were employed during and after the seven-day field missions and subsequently:

- **Non-probability sampling.** A sampling design where conditions of probability sampling are not fulfilled (as opposed to “probability sampling”).
- **Opportunistic sampling.** Taking advantage of people encountered during research by involving them as research participants. Particularly useful for hard-to-reach groups such as street children and sexually exploited children.
- **Purposive sampling.** Targeting specific (named) people known to have information or to be opinion leaders.

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance: Child labour statistics; Manual on methodologies for data collection through surveys; (Geneva. ILO 2004). Manual for child labour data analysis and statistical reports. (Geneva. ILO 2004). Child labour survey data processing and storage of electronic files: A practical guide. Geneva. (ILO 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Global Employment Trends for Youth. (ILO Geneva, 2006).

- **Snowball sampling.** Selecting people by asking one participant or respondent for suggestions about, or introductions to, other possible respondents. Especially useful in research where respondents are difficult to locate or contact by other means.

Officials designated for the Regional Initiative as Focal Points within Ministries responsible for labour served as the entry point for compiling an initial list of participants to the research. The secondary data analysis conducted by the researcher also suggested additional institutions or informants to be included in the respondent's list. During field research, snowball sampling and opportunistic sampling were used to complete the list of respondents considered for the Study.

Informants were sought among the following groups: Government officials and representatives, including at the district or local level; Government labour inspectors; police officers; trade union officials; teachers; employers; community leaders and members; representatives of NGOs and international organizations who have worked in the area; former child labourers and their families; parents of current child labourers; and parents of boys and girls who do not work; children involved in labour activities and youth themselves currently underemployed or unemployed.

The initial research design aimed at interviewing a minimum of 40 informants including children/youth, parents of working children/youth, employers, and informants from official institutions and NGOs. In Guyana, 36 informants from Government offices, civil society organizations, employers' and workers' federations, social workers and education professionals were consulted through interviews, semi-structured interviews and snow-ball questions. An additional 10 children and youth also provided qualitative information on subjects relevant to the assessment. Direct observation of children and youth in their working environment was undertaken in Georgetown's market, restaurants, bars and streets during the day time. Special investigations were also conducted at night in nightclubs and bars in Georgetown known to have an active night life for both young boys and girls. An entire list of institutions and key informants contacted for the purpose of this assessment is presented in Annex 1.

In terms of the geographical focus of the research, an important caveat was established that, while the research would try as much as possible to collect material from all geographical areas of the identified country, primary or secondary data may only be collected from specific geographical areas, or specific occupations or industries, according to what was accessible during the short field work to be undertaken. This was considered as an open variable to be determined and refined only during field work. A field trip to one pre-selected rural/remote area outside the capital city was also planned. The researcher undertook field visits to Parika, a small town in the Essequibo Islands-West Demerara Region, known to have recorded several cases of child labour in the transport industry (boats, ferries and busses), in the trade industry (market stalls and street vending, including begging), in the construction industry, and in the restoration and entertainment industry (restaurants, bars and night clubs).

In Guyana, the field mission was mostly entirely executed according to the research plan and entailed meetings with officials from the Ministry of Social Protection, the Rights of the Child Commission, the Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Indigenous People Affairs, the Trade Union Confederation and the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry, among others. Structured focus group discussions with children and youth were also organized, and the researcher was also able to approach children and youth roaming on the streets of Georgetown to hold discussions with them about their dreams, predicaments, and current education and work habits.

## *Areas of Investigation*

As required in the Terms of Reference for the initial Rapid Assessment, research was undertaken to determine responses to the following:

- Which quantitative and qualitative data related to child labour and youth underemployment/unemployment is available in the selected countries?
- Which is the nature and extent of child labour and youth unemployment/underemployment, including pull and push factors related to specific occupations in the selected countries?
- What are the characteristics of the working conditions performed by children and youth and their related hazards in the selected countries?
- What are the socio-economic descriptors of child labourers and unemployed/underemployed youth in the selected countries?
- What programmes are in place to prevent child labour and to rehabilitate children who are victims of the worst forms of child labour? What programmes are in place to promote youth employment?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of child labourers on all the above mentioned topics? What are the perceptions of underemployed/unemployed youth on all the above mentioned topics?

Additionally, an analysis of the findings was required to address relevant issues in the following areas:

- Education including but not limited to the educational attainment and educational enrolment rates, by age, gender and geographical location in the selected countries.
- Apprenticeships/vocational training programmes including what is available to the youth in selected countries and what is the degree of participation by youth in these programmes.
- Policies including policies in place to improve access to decent work for children and youth and for monitoring mechanisms that are in place to eliminate child labour.
- Gender whether there is a gender bias in the identified thematic and if so, what are the underlying factors driving gender differences in child labour and youth employment in the selected countries.

Additional details of the planned research methodology including sample questions used for interviews are provided in the Inception Report and Data Collection Methodology for Rapid Assessment on Child Labour and Youth Employment at Annex 2.



## Legal Environment and Coordination Arrangements Relevant to Child Labour

### Country Context

Guyana is a member and host country of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Its population stands at 760'000 (2014) and it is classified as a low income country. The Guyanese economy is based largely on agriculture and extractive industries and has shown moderate economic growth in recent years (3-5 per cent). The constant decline of sugar production has accelerated in 2015 which led to big job losses at State-owned GuySuCo. Lower export commodity prices (sugar) and budget delays (election-related) slowed down economic activities in 2015, but the opening of two new large gold mines helped support overall economic growth. Recent years have seen the Government's stock of debt reduced significantly.

The macroeconomic outlook is generally positive, growth is projected at 4 per cent for 2016. In 2015, large reserves of oil off the Guyanese coastline were discovered (shared with Venezuela). Guyana faces a very high emigration rate. Official unemployment is estimated at 11 per cent (2013), however, one third of the population lives below the poverty rate.

### Legislation and Policies

In Guyana, the Ministry of Social Protection is the Authority responsible for issues related to child labour and the employment of children. It is also the Ministry in charge of the monitoring and enforcement of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act (1999), which defines a child as every person under the age of 15 years. No child should be admitted into employment or work in any occupation. A young person is defined by the same Act as a person under the age of 16 years. The Act prohibits young persons from working at night in an industrial setting (e.g. mining, quarries, transportation and construction), subject to exceptions (for instance transport of goods by hand by children is specifically excluded from previous provisions). When exceptions exist, a full registry by the employer should be kept of the employment of young persons, and be open for inspection. Parents and custodians also have full accountability and responsibility if by wilful default or by habitually neglecting to exercise due care, they have taken the child into employment in contravention of the Act's provisions. The Act also prohibits any form of hazardous work before the age of 18 under the Ministry's regulation. Even though there is no specific definition of hazardous child work provided in the Act, the Government of Guyana has issued a list of 22 hazardous occupations and processes which was compiled by its tripartite committee, and which also is applicable to child labour. In instances where the Ministry makes provisions for it, commerce and agriculture can benefit from the same Legislation covering industrial settings.

The Act specifically excludes from the previous provisions, all working and economic activities where only members of the same family are employed. It also excludes all households and small-scale operations oriented to self or local consumption of a seasonal nature or not permanently employing workers. The Act also allows children above the age of 16 to work at night when the work requires continuity through day and night. This specifically includes gold mining reduction

work, the production of iron, steel, glass, paper, and raw sugar, without adequate safety and health regulations to protect children's health and development. Young persons can also be requested to work at night in cases of extraordinary and unforeseen needs.

Education is compulsory until the age of 15. Article 17 of the Education Act allows children under the age of 15 to be employed by their parents under condition that this practice is not done during school hours. It also allows children to be employed when this employment is framed within the context of professional or technical education programmes not harmful to children.

In 2009 Guyana passed a comprehensive package of children's Legislation with the intent to limit child labour and increase the protection of children. These included the Child Care and Protection Agency Act No. 2 of 2009; the Protection of Children Act No. 17 of 2009; the Adoption of Children Act No. 18 of 2009, and the Status of Children Act No. 19 of 2009. All these provisions envisage providing children with a protective environment, preventing early exposure to abuse and exploitation, including child labour.

In terms of prosecuting child labour, the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act (1999) does not provide any details for the processes or procedures to be followed in instances where persons are found to be in contravention of the Act, except to specify the fine that persons will have to pay -- typically between US\$50 to US\$100; and there is no explicit provision for children found in situations of employment prohibited by the Act, to express or have their views and opinions heard during matters considered by the Courts.

However, the Protection of Children Act of 2009, is fairly detailed and specific about the processes and level of involvement of children (18 years and under) in cases before the Court. This Act makes reference to persons who facilitate or otherwise employ children for prostitution, sale of drugs, alcohol etc., and other WFCL. It therefore provides legal grounds for the opinions and views of children 12 years and older on their care and welfare to be heard and considered in (child labour) matters before the Court.

Ultimately, a reading of both laws does not make a case for the consent of the child/victim to be required for the laying of charges (in Guyana), but otherwise permits for the young victim to have input on their future care/welfare.

The legal framework is further complemented by a number of sectoral policies (See Table 1) and action plans relevant to children and young people. The Ministry of Social Protection has recently recruited a consultant to start working on a comprehensive Child Labour Policy after having approved the Child Protection Act, and following the recommendations of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act.

Another step to strengthen the protective environment for children and youth is the presentation to Parliament of the long awaited National Youth Policy. This Policy was initially started in 1993 by the Ministry of Education, with the support of the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and yet the Policy and its many subsequent changes were never presented to Parliament for final approval. The new Administration started regional consultations with youth shortly after entering into power in 2015 and revised earlier drafts of the Policy, focussing on crime prevention, security, employment, productivity and growth. An Implementation Plan of the Policy will soon be presented under a rigid and effective framework suited for the development of Guyanese youths.



**Table 1: Main Policies Related to Child Labour Adopted in Recent Years by Guyana’s Government**

Policy	Description
Five-year Strategic Plan on the Rights of the Child (2012-2017)*	Protects and promotes children’s rights in Guyana and advances the UN CRC. (4)
National Education Policy*	Aims to provide equal access to quality education for all children and eliminate barriers to education, especially for the poor. (41)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour (2014-2020)+	Aims to increase regional cooperation on eradicating child labour by 2020 through signatories’ efforts to strengthen monitoring and coordination mechanisms, government programmes and South-South exchanges. Reaffirms commitments made in the Brasilia Declaration from the Third Global Conference on Child Labour (October 2013), and signed by Guyana at the ILO’s 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014). (42, 43).
Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons (2014-2015 Action Plan)+	Aims to prevent and raise awareness of human trafficking, provide direct assistance to victims, improve law enforcement’s capacity to identify and respond to human trafficking, and strengthen interagency coordination and referral mechanisms. (36, 44).

*Source: USA Department of State, 2014*

There appears to be a great disconnect between the legal framework available and the implementation capacities and procedures available to law enforcement agents. This is partially due to the very limited operational budget accessible for policy monitoring and implementation. For instance, the funding needed for a labour inspector to conduct a visit in the remote and hard-to-reach forestry lands is equivalent to the entire annual budget for legal inspections. Education inspectors, OSH representatives, social workers, and youth officers have similar limitations in accessing remote forestry areas.

## Coordination and Data Sharing Mechanisms

The only functional Inter-ministerial Task Force related to child labour is the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Task Force. The TIP Task Force meets regularly with representatives from education, social services, labour, the interior and national security, and civil society also participates in the meetings. The Task Force maintains statistics related to people that were reported to be victims of trafficking, and coordinates on the management of the victims’ cases.

A first Child Labour Committee, chaired by the then First Lady, was established in Guyana in as early as 2003-04. This Committee became part of a USA-funded EDUCARE Programme specifically aimed at reducing child work and eliminating the worse forms of child labour through education. This Programme was then followed by the ILO-IPEC Project, Tackle Child Labour Through Education (TACKLE), funded through collaboration with the European Commission. A National Steering Committee on Child Labour was established under this Programme to review and recommend policies to prevent child labour, however, when the Programme ended in 2012, the Steering Committee was dissolved.

Current policy issues on child labour are reported to be addressed within the National Tripartite Committee and the Commission on the Rights of the Child. The Rights of the Child Commission is an independent Government Body reporting directly to the Speaker of the House of Assembly

in Parliament. They are the Body responsible for compiling all human rights periodic reports concerning children. They organize training for partners and teachers, they run information and sensitization campaigns, and they present an annual report highlighting issues of concern to Parliament. When, during training, they discover individual cases that necessitate individual follow-up, they report the cases to the Ministry of Social Services. Currently, they are undertaking a review of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act to suggest changes that will bring it in line with international ratified standards. They were also the promoters of the Protection of Children Act recently adopted by Parliament.

Finally, the Rights of the Child Commission is also coordinating the child protection monitoring system that was established in 2005. The Child Protection Monitoring System (CPMS) was implemented to assess the incidence and issues of abuse against children, however, with no specific focus on child labour. It is a database that enables the Ministry to gather regular feedback and information, and collate data on child abuse from all line agencies across Guyana. The CPMS is being expanded to all the Regions in Guyana with the support of the UN and the British High Commission.

Data collection and sharing on child labour has been a very sensitive issue in the past, and as a result, some assessments previously undertaken by the Government, in collaboration with the ILO, were not widely disseminated.

## Section Three

# Findings on Child Labour

### Extent and Practices

The first localized or area specific baseline study on child labour was undertaken in 2004 in Parika (Region 3), in a collaborative effort between the Guyana Bureau of Statistics and the ILO. The survey revealed that there were 133 children working in mainly vending, farming, sorting fish and shrimp, and fishing. These working children were associated with a further 185 siblings who were at risk of joining the group of child labourers in the area. The working children were mostly boys of East Indian ethnicity between the ages of 7 to 17 years. As a result of the study, a programme was implemented to eradicate this situation of child labour in Parika.<sup>7</sup> The study is, however, too outdated and geographically confined to be used for general modern statistics. On the contrary, the undertaking of the MICS 2006-07 and 2014-15 shed new light on the phenomenon.

The total child labour prevalence<sup>8</sup> in Guyana for the age group 5-17 years is 18.3 per cent according to the recent MICS 2014-15. The total prevalence of child labour is higher for the youngest age group of 5-11 years (9 per cent) compared to the older groups of 12-14 years (4.5 per cent) and 15-17 years (4.7 per cent).

The MICS 2006-07 had measured a total CL prevalence of 16.4 per cent within the 5-14 age population. This same proportion had decreased to 13.5 per cent in the recent MICS, suggesting a positive trend within the same age groups. Yet, both historical measures suggest that the prevalence rate in Guyana is significantly higher than the average Latin American and Caribbean rate (9 per cent prevalence rate for the 5-14 years<sup>9</sup>).

The MICS 2014-15 also reports a generally high 83 per cent of children aged 5-17 years who are engaged in some forms of economic activities,<sup>10</sup> while 22 per cent are in child labour situations because they are performing such tasks for long hours (above the age-specific number of hours). Similarly, a very high proportion of children (57 per cent to 83 per cent) perform household chores for various lengths of time, and yet only a negligible proportion of them perform above the age-specific threshold in all three age groups.

It is noteworthy that the MICS 2014-15 asked questions on child labour and economic activities of children between 5 and 17 years of age. Given that the minimum age for employment is 16 in Guyana, the MICS does not provide any indication concerning the 'legality' of the forms of employment for children between 16 and 17 years of age. It only assesses the performing of paid or unpaid economic activities or household chores by the child, and it verifies if those activities are undertaken for a number of hours appropriate for the age specific group.

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<sup>7</sup> Government of Guyana's Contributions to the OHCHR Study on Children Working and/or Living on the Streets. OHCHR background paper. GoG (2011).

<sup>8</sup> This result cumulates the incidence of child labour recorded for children performing economic activities, as well as the incidence of child labour for children performing household chores.

<sup>9</sup> Global Statistics. Available at <http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/child-labour.html>. Consulted on August 2016. (UNICEF 2016).

<sup>10</sup> The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) defines economic activities as any paid or unpaid work on plot / farm / food garden; looking after animals; helping in family or relative's business, running own business; producing or selling articles / handicrafts / clothes / food or agricultural products; or any other activity in return for income in cash or in kind.

When comparing the evolution of child labour within the age specific groups between MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15, we observe that the percentage of children 5-11 years engaged in child labour has decreased passing from 21.4 per cent to 19.7 per cent.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the percentage of children 12-14 years engaged in child labour has significantly increased passing from 4.5 per cent to 15.3 per cent. For the 14-17 age group, the percentage of child labour is 18.4 per cent, but this cannot be compared to earlier trends as previous surveys only focused on the 5-14 age group (See Table 2). Overall, the above points to a high prevalence of child labour since the early years of life for Guyanese children, with a marked increase of child labour incidence starting at around the age of 12. This is compatible with the feedback from a number of interviews with informants who indicated 12 as the age at which ‘it is good for a child to start working’, or the age ‘at which parents start to educate children into work’. Individual cases of children below the age of 5 years engaged in child labour were also observed during the field visit.

**Table 2: Incidence of Child Labour and Hazardous Work**

Category	MICS 2006-7		MICS 2014-15		
<b>Child labour</b>					
	5-14 years		5-17 years		
Incidence of child labour among children	16.4		13.5 (5-14 years)		
			18.3		
	5-11 years	12-14 years	5-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
	21.4	4.5	19.7	15.3	18.4
<b>Hazardous work</b>					
Total percentage of children working under hazardous conditions <sup>12</sup>	5-17 years		5-11 years	12-14 years	15-17 years
	12.5		9.5	13.8	16.9

Source: MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15

The remarkable worsening of child labour for the children aged 12-14 years recorded by the two MICS (4.5 per cent and 15.3 per cent respectively) could be partially explained in the context of the many advocacy interventions to prevent child labour carried out by the Government and its partners in the past decade. These advocacy programmes have been partially successful at preventing the recruitment of new children into child labour at an early age (the percentage of child labour for the 5-11 years has decreased from 21.4 per cent to 19.7 per cent between 2006-07 and 2014-15); and yet, these programmes of sensitization have not benefitted children that, in 2006-07 and the immediate following years, were already in labour situations. These children have simply grown-up without abandoning their labourer status. This is confirmed in a number of interviews held with children, where it was explained that once a child starts engaging in work activities, it is extremely difficult for him/her to abandon same, as the work allows for some form

<sup>11</sup> The comparison between the two Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is done in a simplistic manner as slight differences exist in the methodology and definitions adopted by the two data collection exercises. The recent child labour module of the MICS 2014-15 has been developed with the support of the ILO and it includes the Resolutions and Standards adopted by the 2008 Conference of Labour Statisticians. This includes age specific thresholds for number of hours a child can be performing economic activities or household work/chores.

<sup>12</sup> Hazardous child labour conditions are defined by the MICS as per Article 3 (d) of ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182): Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

of financial independence, and creates a feeling of freedom and partial empowerment. Similarly, parents experiencing the financial help provided by child labourers will be particularly reluctant to renounce the financial contributions received at the level of household income, and reverse it into a situation of exclusive school attendance by the child. Overall, the decrease of child labour incidence observed for the 5-11 age group is a positive development, however small in nature, compared to the magnitude of the problem.

Hazardous child work progressively increases with the age groups, passing from 9.5 per cent, to 13.8 per cent, to 16.9 per cent. Hazardous working conditions is defined in line with the 2008 Resolution concerning statistics of child labour<sup>13</sup> and it includes work requiring carrying heavy loads; working with dangerous tools; operating heavy machinery; exposure to dust, fumes, gas, extreme cold, heat or humidity, loud noise or vibrations; working at nights; working with chemicals or explosives; or exposure to any other processes or conditions deemed bad for the child's health or safety. No historical comparison is possible on this indicator as it was not collected for the previous MICS.

## Gender Analysis

A total of 19.7 per cent of boys and 17.0 per cent of girls between 5 to 17 years of age perform work or chores that fall under the definition of child labour<sup>14</sup>. This finding is comparable with the average situation recorded in Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) whereby girls are less likely to be involved in child labour than boys. However, the gender divide observed for Guyana is less significant when compared to the average gender divide recorded for children ages 5-14 engaged in child labour in the LAC region (12 per cent for boys against 7 per cent for girls on average<sup>15</sup>). Another interpretation is that Guyanese girls are more at risk of child labour than average Latin American/Caribbean girls. This means that both boys and girls have similar probabilities of performing work in child labour situations in Guyana. However, boys are more exposed to hazardous work than girls. The percentage of boys recorded working under hazardous conditions is higher than the percentage of girls (14.5 per cent vs. 10.5 per cent respectively), suggesting a gender difference in the types and conditions of work faced by boys when compared to same age girls. This data was confirmed by the general perceptions of respondents who reported that boys and girls were equally at risk of performing economic activities that might result in child labour.

**Table 3: Percentage of Children Engaged in Child Labour and Hazardous Conditions by Sex**

Category	MICS 2006-7		MICS 2014-15	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Percentage of children in child labour by sex <sup>16</sup>	17.3	15.5	19.7	17.06
Children working under hazardous conditions	NA	NA	14.5	10.5

*Source: Author, starting from raw data from MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15*

<sup>13</sup> International Labour Organization (2008). Resolution concerning statistics of child labour. Retrieved from [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms\\_112458.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_112458.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> MICS5 2014-15. Department of Statistics. Georgetown. (Government of Guyana 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Global Statistics. Available at <http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/child-labour.html>. Consulted on August 2016. (UNICEF 2016).

<sup>16</sup> The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006-07 reports on children between 5 to 14 years of age, while the MICS 2014-15 reports on children aged 5 to 17, thus making a gender comparison over time a simplistic approximation of real trends.

Looking at the evolution of child labour through a gender lens, a straightforward comparison between the MICS 2006-07 and the MICS 2014-15 is not possible because the latter only reports the combined incidence of child labour by gender for the 5-17 age group, compared to the combined incidence of child labour by gender for the 5-14 age group recorded by the previous MICS. Yet, what the results still suggest is that in both studies boys were slightly more likely to be recorded as child labourers, and that this gender divide has not changed over time for both surveys (Boys have a small difference of roughly a 2 per cent higher probability of becoming involved in child labour than girls).

This result is at odds with the results from the focus group discussions that, on the contrary, would suggest that more boys than girls are exposed to child labour when performing work outside the household, while more girls than boys are at risk of child labour when performing household chores.

By using the data from the MICS 2014-15, it is possible to disaggregate the above results by making a gender analysis of children engaged in child labour, looking exclusively at the data for economic activities performed by children in the different age groups; thus excluding from the cumulative gender analysis the incidence of child labour occurring for household chores. With this approach, we obtain an interesting picture (See Table 4). Girls are more likely than boys to be engaged in child labour, for all age groups. Again, the gender divide is negligible as the percentages are very similar for both sexes, and yet girls appear to be more at risk than boys of being trapped within child labour when performing economic activities outside the household. It is true that boys engaged in economic activities, for an acceptable number of hours, in the categories 12-14 and 15-17 age groups, significantly outnumbered girls by 6.7 and 10.2 percentage points respectively. This suggests that for boys the experience of light and acceptable forms of work in economic activities is a more common feature than for girls, but girls have a higher probability than boys of experiencing abuse in the same working contexts.

**Table 4: Percentage of Children Involved in Economic Activities by Age and Sex (%)**

	Percentage of children age 5-11 years involved in economic activity for at least one hour	Percentage of children age 12-14 years involved in:		Percentage of children age 15-17 years involved in:	
		Economic activity - less than 14 hours	Economic activity - 14 hours or more	Economic activity - less than 43 hours	Economic activity - 43 hours or more
Total	16.9	28.4	2.7	32.5	2.4
Male	16.1	31.7	2.4	37.7	1.9
Female	17.6	25.0	3.0	27.5	3.0

Source: MICS 2014-15

If we now focus our analysis on child labour occurring while performing household chores -- thus excluding from the cumulative gender analysis the incidence of child labour occurring for economic activities -- we obtain another interesting result: Boys are more at risk than girls of performing child labour activities in household chores, despite this risk being very modest (See Table 5).

Household chores reported by informants include cooking or preparing food, cleaning the house or the yard, washing clothes, shopping, fishing or hunting, caring for siblings or old people, repairing household equipment, collecting firewood or fetching water.

Again, the mainstream belief of girls being more exposed to a higher burden of household chores is not confirmed by the statistical data gathered. On the contrary, for all age groups, boys are subjected to a higher prevalence of child labour within the household. In addition, we notice that slightly more boys than girls are introduced to household chores at an early age, while these latter are protected and preserved for some more years from heavy household work. Yet starting from age 12, girls are more likely to work within the household for an acceptable number of hours.

**Table 5: Percentage of Children Involved in Household Chores by Age and Sex (%)**

	Percentage of children age 5-11 years involved in:		Percentage of children age 12-14 years involved in:		Percentage of children age 15-17 years involved in:	
	Household chores less than 28 hours	Household chores for 28 hours or more	Household chores less than 28 hours	Household chores for 28 hours or more	Household chores less than 43 hours	Household chores for 43 hours or more
Total	56.5	0.1	75.5	1.1	82.6	0.5
Sex						
Male	58.2	0.3	74.1	1.4	78.0	0.9
Female	54.9	0.0	76.9	0.9	87.0	0.2

Source: MICS 2014-15

We could advance an explanation for this apparent counter-intuitive result, as clarified by some informants. Typical gender stereotypes would suggest an ‘intrinsic vulnerability’ of girls to high number of work hours performed to satisfy the household’s immediate needs. While boys would be more vulnerable to child labour when undertaking work outside the household to contribute to the household’s income from an early age. And yet, in Guyana the ‘typical’ division of labour has been challenged by the progressive melting of cultures and traditions over the years. The same gender stereotypes have also been challenged and adapted to the living environment of Guyanese households. For instance, for the indigenous families it is common for women (including girls) to transport heavy loads on their shoulders/front while men proceed with machetes to clean the walking path. For the Indian communities, women and girls are more likely to be involved in trade than men and boys, in addition to the household chores, exposing them to very long and tiring hours of work, sitting on small stalls on the side of the roads. African girls are likely to be employed as domestic workers at an early age. Again, for indigenous children, hunting and fishing for self-sustenance with their fathers would often fall under the category of ‘exploitative household chores’ because of the number of hours involved, the dangers faced, and because they would perform these activities as opposed to going to school. These are all examples of how the stereotyped gender roles can be challenged by the statistics at hand due to the very nature of the Guyanese multi-ethnic society and expansive geography.



## Analysis by Areas of Settlement

In Guyana, a marked difference exists for the areas of settlement. In common discourse, informants constantly make remarks by juxtaposing the living situations of children, youth and families living on the coast, against those living in the forests/the interior. This distinction is further deepened by the difference between families living in urban settings and families living in rural areas. What characterizes Guyana from other Caribbean countries is that this distinction is not just related to livelihood options and habits, but it surpasses economic processes of life to include an ethnographic and anthropologic discourse of culture, identity, and spirituality. The areas of settlement define social relationship processes as well as the very structure of Guyanese societies. This is particularly evident if we think about indigenous people and their relationship to nature and community life. The forest is not where they live, the forest is their life.

As a direct consequence of the above, the nature and incidence of child labour is drastically different between rural and urban areas, coastal or interior settlements. Interior settlements are, by far, the most exposed to the phenomenon of child labour compared to coastal regions. Interior areas have an incidence of child labour double of coastal areas (37.1 per cent against 14.2 per cent respectively). This is a clear demarcation of significant proportion and it is mostly explained by the above-mentioned divide in culture, identity and spirituality. The phenomenon of child labour also has a visible urban/rural divide: Rural areas, whether in coastal or interior regions, experience a higher incidence of child labour (Approximately 30 per cent higher in rural areas than urban areas). Thus children living in rural or forestry areas of the interior regions face a doubled vulnerability for child labour and are therefore significantly more likely to engage in economic activities or domestic chores in excess of the age specific threshold (See Table 6).

The same can be said by looking at the percentage of children working under hazardous conditions in the interior (30.7 per cent) compared to those working on the coast (8.6 per cent); or those working under hazardous conditions in rural areas (13.6 per cent) compared to those experiencing hazardous work in urban areas (9.5 per cent).

For both indicators, the percentages for child labour and hazardous work in the interior are more than the double the national average. For both indicators, the percentages for child labour and hazardous work in rural areas are only very slightly higher than the national average. This suggests a clear element of vulnerability to child labour and hazardous work that lies first of all in interior areas, and secondly in rural settings.



**Table 6: Percentage of Children Engaged in Child Labour and Hazardous Work by Area of Settlement (%)**

	Children involved in economic activities for a total number of hours during last week:		Children involved in household chores for a total number of hours during last week:		Total children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour
	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold		
Total	19.1	9.7	67.9	0.5	12.5	18.3
<b>Area</b>						
Urban	17.4	6.8	65.5	0.8	9.5	14.5
Rural	19.7	10.7	68.8	0.4	13.6	19.7
Coastal	17.2	7.5	65.9	0.5	8.6	14.2
Urban Coastal	14.6	5.8	63.5	0.9	6.0	11.4
Rural Coastal	18.2	8.1	66.8	0.3	9.6	15.3
Interior	27.9	19.8	77.2	0.6	30.2	37.1

Source: MICS 2014-15

The deep rural/urban divide resonates with previous measures of poverty and marginality in Guyana. In 2005, as a follow-up to the Population and Housing Census, the World Bank calculated the incidence of poverty in Guyana using both the Living Conditions Index (LCI), and the Enumeration District Marginality Index (EDMI), see Table 7.<sup>17</sup> The first Index looks at the access and quality of a household's source of water, the source of drinking water, the type of toilet facility, the main method of garbage disposal, and the extent of crowding in the household. The second Index looks at the degree of education of household members, the employment status and sector, the electricity, water and sanitation facilities, the method of garbage disposal, and the extent of crowding within the household. For both Indexes, rural areas are far poorer than urban areas, and yet, this difference is particularly accentuated for the EDMI Index which incorporates some employment variables for the members of the household above 15 years of age.

**Table 7: Poverty Map of Guyana by Areas of Settlement<sup>18</sup>**

	Poverty Score based on LCI	Poverty Score based on EDMI	Total CL (%)
Rural	341	0.333	19.7
Urban	426	-0.782	14.5

Source: World Bank 2005 and MICS 2014-15

<sup>17</sup> A Poverty Map for Guyana: Based on the 2002 Population and Housing Census. Georgetown. (World Bank 2005).

<sup>18</sup> See World Bank 2005 for a complete methodology on the LCI and EDMI scores. Available at: [www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/pubs.html#povertyind](http://www.statisticsguyana.gov.gy/pubs.html#povertyind)

## Analysis by Marginality and Regions

Interior regions are characterized by a very low population scattered in an area of approximately 18.4 million hectares of Amazonian forest and savannahs, resulting in a total average population density of only 3.42 inhabitants per square kilometre (amongst the lowest in the world), mainly concentrated around the Georgetown area (20-30,000 inhabitants per square kilometre) and away from the interior (0-1 inhabitants per square kilometre). On the coast, excluding the greater Georgetown area, the density is 2-3 inhabitants per square kilometre.<sup>19</sup>

Both MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15 have collected statistics covering child labour by regions, and yet again, a straight comparison between the two studies is not possible as the grouping of the regions is substantially different in the two surveys.<sup>20</sup> All regions dominated by forests have a much higher incidence of child labour as opposed to regions bordering the sea (See Table 8). In Region 9, more than seven children in every 10 are involved in child labour regardless of their age specific category, representing a clear area of particular concern, with an incidence of nearly four times the national average. Regions 7 and 8 have a combined total of 35.3 per cent child labour, double the national average. The combined total incidence of child labour in Regions (1, 7, 8 and 9) is 43 per cent, nearly 3 times higher than the combined total child labour incidence in coastal Regions (2, 3, 4, 5) of 15.7 per cent. The incidence of child labour in Regions 1, 6, 7 and 8 has increased by 3 percentage points between the MICS 2006-07 and the MICS 2014-15.

Region 9 also has a 56.6 percentage of hazardous work -- more than 4.5 times higher than the national average of 12.5 per cent. The other highest incidences of hazardous work are recorded in Regions 7 and 8 (30.2 per cent), and Region 10 (24.9 per cent), showing a direct correlation between child labour and hazardous work by region of analysis.

Again, by looking at the LCI and EDMI Poverty scores by regions, we observe that the poorest regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 fully overlap with the regions that have the highest incidence of child labour and hazardous working conditions by children (See Figure 2).<sup>21</sup> Regions 4, 5 and 6 are wealthier regions with a low incidence of child labour and hazardous conditions of work by children (See Table 9).

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<sup>19</sup> Calculated from Bureau of Statistics (2012). Population and Housing Census, Guyana.

<sup>20</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006-7, grouped together Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9; Region 2 with Region 1\*; and Region 5 with Region 6.

<sup>21</sup> Both Regions 9 and 8 are poor and in forested areas, yet Region 9 has a significantly higher incidence of child labour. This might be because in Region 9 there are two major mining sites, while in Region 8 there are no major mining sites.

**Table 8: Percentage of Children Involved in Child Labour and Hazardous Work by Region and Economic Activity (%)**

	Children involved in economic activities for a total number of hours during last week:		Children involved in household chores for a total number of hours during last week:		Total children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour
	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold		
Total	19.1	9.7	67.9	0.5	12.5	18.3
<b>Region</b>						
Region 1	22.1	7.8	66.3	1.2	15.0	23.0
Region 2	19.1	12.7	63.2	0.0	15.0	21.5
Region 3	20.6	7.5	72.4	0.3	11.3	16.3
Region 4	13.0	6.4	65.9	0.8	6.2	11.2
Region 5	30.0	4.7	63.9	0.0	10.0	13.8
Region 6	21.0	10.3	61.7	0.0	9.9	18.0
Regions 7 & 8	25.3	16.1	77.1	1.0	30.2	35.3
Region 9	26.1	47.0	91.4	1.0	56.6	70.7
Region 10	31.5	9.8	75.1	0.0	24.9	27.8

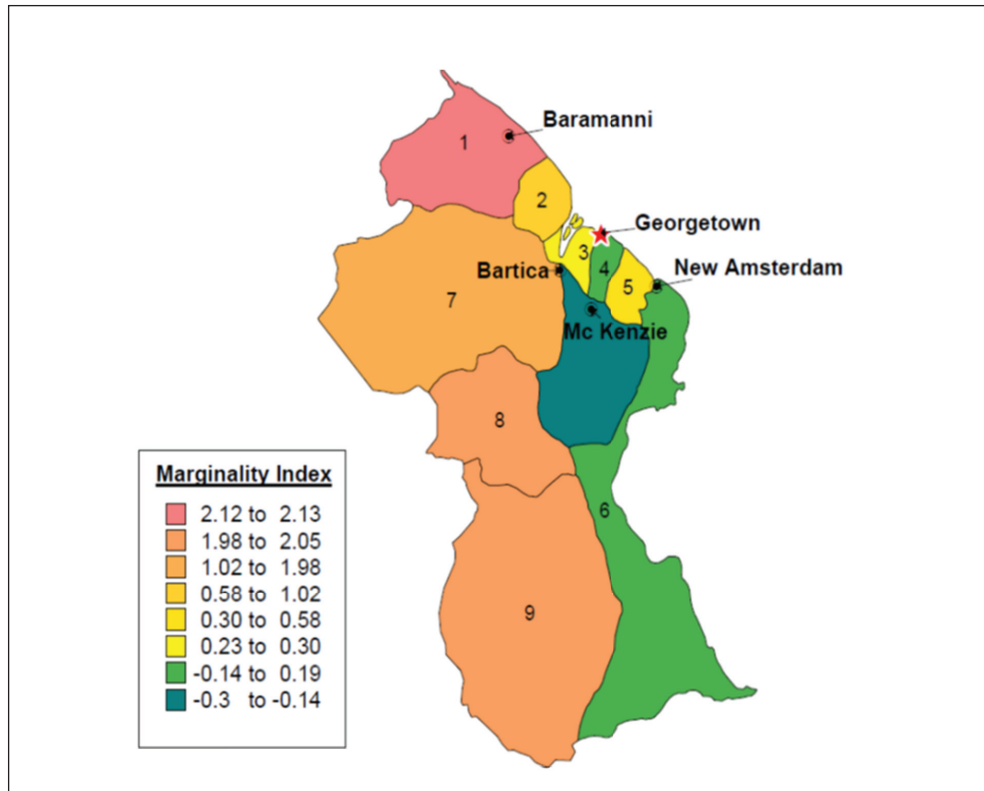
Source: MICS 2014-15

**Table 9: Poverty Map of Guyana by Regions**

Based on LCI		Rank (Poorest on top)	Based on EDMI	
Region 8	162	1	Region 1	2.125
Region 9	184	2	Region 9	2.049
Region 1	207	3	Region 8	1.982
Region 7	259	4	Region 7	1.023
Region 2	278	5	Region 2	0.583
Region 3	352	6	Region 5	0.303
Region 5	355	7	Region 3	0.234
Region 10	364	8	Region 6	0.188
Region 6	373	9	Region 4	-0.137
Region 4	375	10	Region 10	-0.299
Georgetown	453	11	Georgetown	-1.0204

Source: World Bank 2005

**Figure 2: Marginality Index by Regions**



Source: Guyana Bureau of Statistics 2002

## Analysis by Household Wealth

The previous section already highlights great economic disparities in the country, and how those are intrinsically related to marginality, geography, and the prevalent economy of the different regions. The same analysis can be undertaken at household level. Household wealth plays a very important role in decisions concerning whether or not children of the family will be involved in economic activities, the number of hours of work, the typology of work, and the perception by parents of the importance of child work. The poorer the family, the higher the probability and proportion of child labourers recorded in the household. The MICS 2006-07 has revealed that the percentage of children from the poorest quintile who are involved in child labour activities (29.4 per cent) is nearly double that of the second poorest quintile (17.3 per cent), and more than 7.5 times that of children from the richest quintile (3.9 per cent). Furthermore, children's involvement in family work (farm or business) is most prevalent among the poorest households.

This predominant narrative, confirmed by respondents and supported by previous statistics, has been strongly supported also by the recent MICS 2014-15 that confirms hazardous work and child labour being directly correlated to the wealth quintile of the household. This last research shows that families from the poorest quintile are two and three times more likely to have children in child labour than families of the second poorest quintile or of the richest quintile respectively (32.0 per cent against 15.0 per cent and 11.6 per cent). The data, however, also shows that there is little difference in terms of percentage of child labour amongst households from the four richest quintiles. This suggests that culture and social norms, together with household wealth, are playing an important role in the decision of parents to ask their children to start working at an early age.

Similarly, the percentage of children in hazardous working conditions from the poorest households is nearly two and five times higher than that of second poorest and richest households respectively (24.0 per cent against 11.5 per cent and 5.0 per cent).

**Table 10: Percentage of Children Engaged in Child Labour and Hazardous Conditions by Wealth Index Quintile (%)**

	MICS 2006-07		MICS 2014-15	
	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour
Wealth index quintile				
Poorest	NA	29.4	24.0	32.0
Second	NA	17.3	11.5	15.0
Middle	NA	13.1	8.7	14.8
Fourth	NA	11.5	8.6	12.8
Richest	NA	1.9	5.0	11.6

*Source: Author, from data of MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15*

The fact that cultural and social norms play an important complementary role in families' decision to allow their children to enter economic activities that might take the form of child labour in Guyana is also confirmed by looking at the level of educational attainment of mothers and primary caretakers of child labourers. Educational attainment is inversely correlated to the level of wealth of a household, as well as the reduction of practices that can harm children. And yet, in Guyana, the educational attainment of the child's main caretaker is not a strong predictor of the vulnerability of children to either hazardous work or labour.

In 2014-15 the percentage of children involved in child labour is slightly lower for households whose primary caretaker has a secondary education (19.2 per cent) than for those who have no education (19.6 per cent) or primary education (18.0 per cent). Children whose mothers have a higher education also have a markedly lower involvement in child labour (12.6 per cent) and work in hazardous conditions (6.9 per cent), compared to those whose mothers have lower or no education. Yet percentages for mothers with high levels of education are still remarkably high (See Table 11).

**Table 11: Percentage of Children Engaged in Hazardous Work and Labour by Educational Attainments of Primary Caretaker (%)**

	MICS 2006-07		MICS 2014-15	
	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour
Mother/Caretaker's Education				
None	NA	26.4	16.8	19.6
Primary	NA	17.6	13.8	18.0
Secondary	NA	17.9	12.3	19.2
Higher	NA	14.8	6.9	12.6
Undetermined	NA	23.3	13.5	16.1

*Source: Author, from data of MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15*

Another variable that has often been associated with the economic status of the household is the nature of the family, whereby the single female-headed household is usually reported to be predominant in the poorest quintiles. Respondents have often mentioned that *'the loosening of social and family ties is a pushing factor for Guyanese children to enter working conditions at an early age'*.<sup>22</sup> In the 2011 Ministry of Labour Survey, 75 per cent of child workers were found to be coming from single female-headed families (Widowed, separated, single, or divorced).<sup>23</sup> Most of the guardians are between 30 and 50 years of age (80 per cent), but a significant proportion of elderly women were also found to be in charge of the households (17 per cent), or young women and adolescent girls below the age of 30 (3 per cent). Fathers have been reported to be generally absent in the lives of these children, having migrated away or abroad. When the father is present, the educational role is still nearly entirely delegated to the woman.

## Child Labour and School Attendance

The prevalence of child labour among children attending school and children not attending school is nearly identical (See Table 12). This represents a small improvement from the data available within the MICS 2006-07, where there was a lower prevalence of children combining school with child labour, especially for the lower age groups. This is probably the positive effect of a number of educational programmes which focused on increasing the enrollment and the retention of children in primary education, even if the vast majority of these programmes were undertaken in urban coastal areas.

Interestingly, the prevalence of children involved in economic activities at or above the age specific threshold, combining school with child labour -- two out of every three -- is significantly higher than for children involved in household chores at or above the age specific threshold -- one out of every three. This would suggest that household chores performed by children are often incompatible with school attendance, or that children employed for household work are not allowed to attend school. Of the children 5-11 years of age, 17.4 per cent combine school with economic activities. This proportion increases with age, becoming 31 per cent for children 12-14 years of age; and 32.8 per cent for children 15-17 years of age. One out of every three children not attending school is involved in economic activities for both the 12-11 and the 15-17 age groups.

**Table 12: Children Combining Work and Schooling (%)**

	Children involved in economic activities for a total number of hours during last week:		Children involved in household chores for a total number of hours during last week:		Total child labour
	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold	Below the age specific threshold	At or above the age specific threshold	
Total	19.1	9.7	67.9	0.5	18.3
<b>School attendance</b>					
Yes	17.8	10.2	67.4	0.4	18.2
No	11.29	5.5	72.5	1.1	18.9

Source: MICS 2014-15

<sup>22</sup> Guyana Women Miners Organization. Personal Interview. (August 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Guyana National Child Labour Rapid Assessment. Department of Statistics and ILO. Georgetown. (Ministry of Labour 2013).

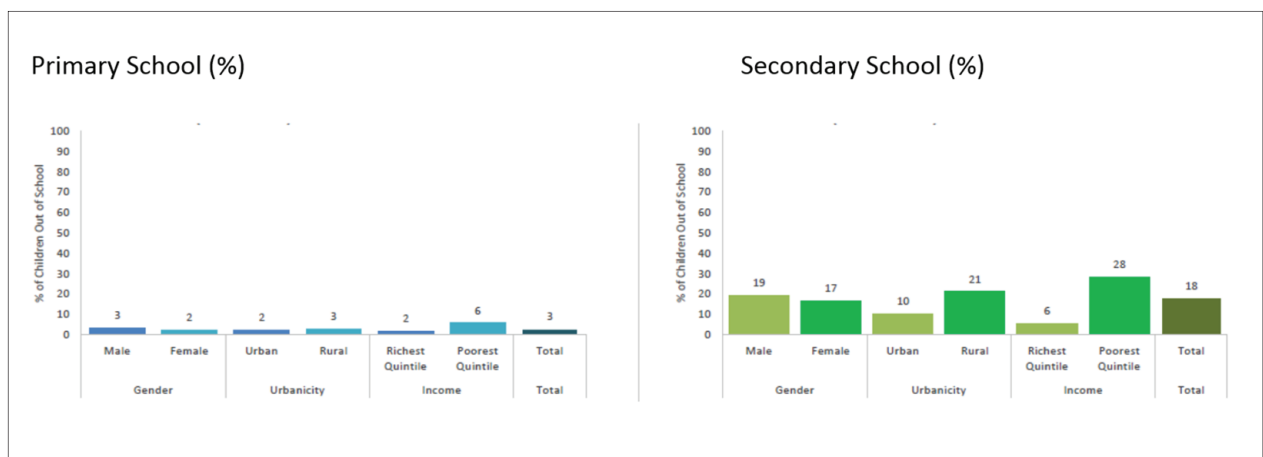
Looking at the evolution of child labour through a gender lens, a straight-forward comparison between the MICS 2006-07 and the MICS 2014-15 is not possible because the latter only reports the combined incidence of child labour by gender for the 5-17 age group, compared to the combined incidence of child labour by gender for the 5-14 age group recorded by the previous MICS. Yet, what the results still suggest is that in both studies boys were slightly more likely to be recorded as child labourers, and that this gender divide has not changed over time for both surveys (Boys have a small difference of roughly a 2 per cent higher probability of becoming involved in child labour than girls).

This result is at odds with the results from the focus group discussions that, on the contrary, would suggest that more boys than girls are exposed to child labour when performing work outside the household, while more girls than boys are at risk of child labour when performing household chores.

Figure 3 provides initial data on children who are out of school at the primary and secondary levels, by gender, income and area of settlement. It is also interesting to note that one of the main reasons for the high number of out-of-school children, especially at the secondary level among the rural and the poor population, is a negative trend of public spending on education by the Government of Guyana. Public spending on education as a percentage share of total Government expenditures passed from 17.5 per cent in 2000, to only 10.5 per cent in 2014, with obvious implications in the capacity of the country to promote social programmes in support of education attainment.<sup>24</sup>

While the MICS does not provide any information on full-time or part-time schooling or attendance at training institutions, previous data has indicated that in Guyana 38 per cent of working children are enrolled in full-time schooling, while 22 per cent are attending school part-time.<sup>25</sup> Similar results were obtained by the USA Department of State which indicated that 23.2 per cent of children are combining work with school.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 3: Percentage of Children Out of School in the Primary and Secondary Levels**



Source: FHI360 2014. National Education Profile Update

<sup>24</sup> Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All. Global Education Monitoring Report. Paris. (UNESCO 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Guyana National Child Labour Rapid Assessment. Department of Statistics and ILO. Georgetown. (Ministry of Labour 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Statistics on Children’s Work and Education for Guyana. (USA Department of State 2014).



Informants to the Study have reported that while all working children are enrolled in school, labourers have to often compromise attendance or performance in classes due to the very nature of their economic activities. Working activities have been presented of four different forms: 1) weekly working activities happening during school hours; 2) weekly working activities happening after school hours; 3) weekly working activities happening during the weekend; and 4) periodic working activities that are triggered by seasonal businesses, economic opportunities, or needs. While all activities have the potential to be detrimental for children's capacity to concentrate during classes, only seasonal summer jobs or weekend activities do not directly clash with school attendance.

During a UNICEF-funded Workshop held in January 2016 on Business and Children in Guyana, participants have reported early teenage pregnancy as an important factor for girls to drop out from school and enter into early work.

Access to schools has also been reported as an issue facing a number of children, especially in the interior. Not all villages have primary schools, and secondary schools are often very far away from villages. Children reported of having to travel long distances to access schools. It is not uncommon for children of indigenous communities to walk for more than two hours to go to school in the morning, crossing large rivers with boats, and walking in forests to finally arrive at their destination. Previous surveys indicate child labourers walking in excess of 10 miles per day to access schools, or having to take multiple forms of transport including boats, bicycles, busses or taxis.<sup>27</sup> The problem of access to school increases with the age of the child as secondary schools are even rarer and strategically established in catchment areas that could actually be very difficult to reach. Children of the interior wanting to continue their tertiary or professional education will have no other option than migrating to coastal areas and are invariably required to look for work to support their living and schooling expenses.

The costs associated with education are also reported to be a barrier for children attending school full-time. Despite public schooling being free, it has been reported that some schools charge families a fee. This led the Ministry of Education, in 2014, to publicize guidance to families explaining that only the Parent-Teacher Association has the authority to approve and collect fees from parents, and that no child may be excluded from school for non-payment of fees.<sup>28</sup> School uniforms have also been reported to be a barrier for school attendance by poorest families, as well as transport costs and costs for books. It is common, during the holiday seasons, for children to engage in economic activities to save enough money to register and attend school the following year/term.

The role of the parents in sending children to work instead of to school, and the quality of educational programmes, have been flagged by children as the two main reasons for their part-time or none attendance at school. Some children, parents and social workers have openly questioned the utility of school programmes that do not offer options in life, and the current model of education that seems to be able to offer only limited, life-changing opportunities to youth and children through the building up of their skills and competencies.

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<sup>27</sup> Guyana National Child Labour Rapid Assessment. Department of Statistics and ILO. Georgetown. (Ministry of Labour 2013).

<sup>28</sup> Guyana Regular Country Progress Report on Child Labour. (USA Department of State 2014).



Some respondents also highlighted the very limited, economic opportunities available to some of the graduated children in rural and interior areas, due to the poor state of economic development, manufacturing and industrialization. This suggests a situation where children who do complete secondary education, do not seem to be able to systematically access jobs that are different or better remunerated than those accessible to school drop-outs, unless they migrate to coastal areas. For these reasons parents value early working experience as a quicker and more effective way for children to gradually contribute to the household's economy.

The degree of commitment of some teachers in urban and rural areas has also been called into question by some of the respondents to the Study. Best performing teachers are migrating abroad or applying to work at the few private institutions that exist. The vast majority of teachers employed in public schools are not willing to take up service in the interior. Teachers do not seem to systematically engage parents, and if they observe a working child often tired during classes, they prefer to punish the child instead of talking with parents to better understand the causes associated with the child's lack of attention. In some villages, primary schools do not have the personnel needed to run classes, or the existing personnel are often absent and inconsistent. In some secondary schools, classes have been equipped with laboratories and computers, and yet there are no teachers to put the facilities to use to benefit the children. Finally, the majority of public spending for education and donors' support in the last 10 years has been directed towards rehabilitating education infrastructure and not towards improving the quality of the curricula, working conditions, or teachers' training, resulting in a pupils'-teachers' ratio of over 40-1 in the interior areas.

All this information seems to point to a double problem of access to, and quality of school programmes that could constitute push factors for parents and children to look for economic activities as an alternative to education. The often low reputation that teachers might have in the eyes of some parents also limits the advocacy role that teachers could have to prevent child labour. All the above push factors could explain why in Guyana there is no large variation in school participation of student labourers compared with general school participation by sex, place of residence, household wealth, mother's education and mother's ethnicity.<sup>29</sup> In July 2016, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education launched a national survey on children out of school that will investigate more on the barriers to education faced by children in Guyana.

## Analysis by Ethnic Groups



Indigenous peoples (Amerindians) are the ethnic group most vulnerable to child labour (40.9 per cent). It is also the ethnic group most exposed to hazardous work (33.5 per cent). Children from descendants of East Indians and Africans are equally vulnerable to both child labour and hazardous work (See Table 13).

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<sup>29</sup> Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2006-07.

**Table 13: Percentage of Children Engaged in Child Labour & Hazardous Conditions by Ethnic Groups (%)**

	MICS 2006-07		MICS 2014-15	
	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour	Children working under hazardous conditions	Total child labour
Ethnicity of household head				
East Indian	NA	13.4	9.4	16.0
African	NA	11.7	10.8	16.0
Amerindian	NA	37.1	33.5	40.9
Mixed Race	NA	15.7	8.8	13.1

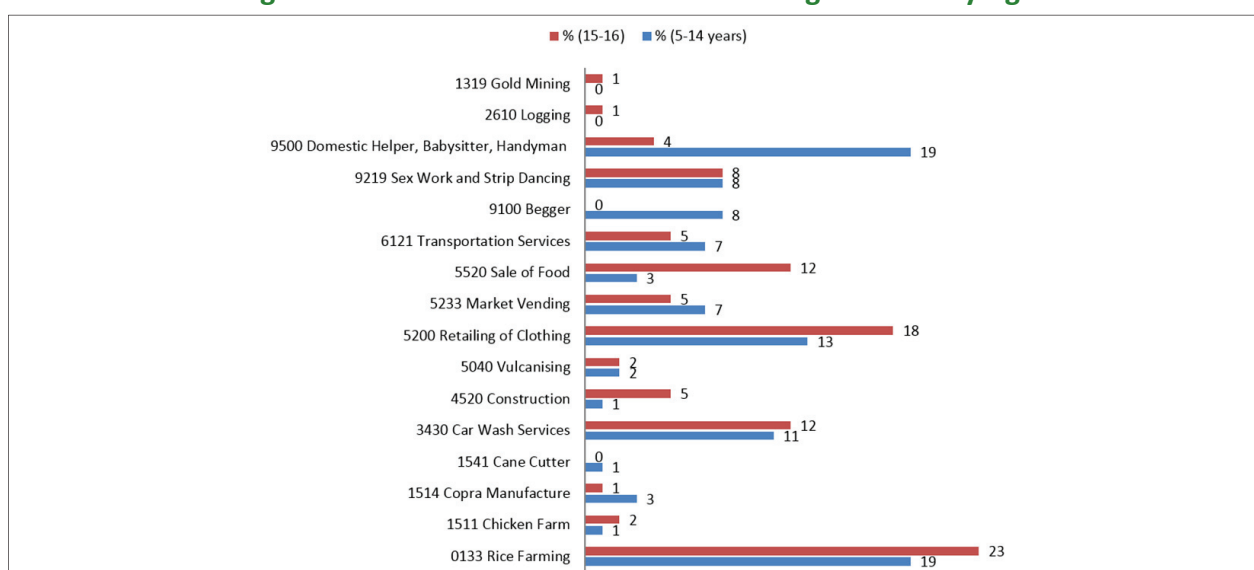
Source: Author, from data of MICS 2006-07 and MICS 2014-15

Ethnic origins also determine, by large, the typology of economic activities performed by children. Agricultural work, farming, forestry and hunting are economic activities predominantly associated to indigenous children, while Afro-Guyanese children are more exposed to services and Indo-Guyanese children to trade activities.

## Typologies of Work Performed by Children

A range of economic activities performed by children have been reported by informants. These include work in agriculture, work in rice field, at sawmills, planting and processing vegetables, animal farming, collecting and selling fruits, domestic work, and work in sugar cane fields all of which have often been presented as the predominant occupations of children. In the interior, children have been reported to engage in mining (mostly gold mining), cooking, prostitution, strip dancing, restaurant vending, forestry work, hunting and fishing, and logging. In urban or coastal areas children have been reported to engage in shop trading, market trading, working in boats or ferries as cleaners or helpers or to load luggage and goods, street vending, car washing, fruit selling, fishing, welding, attending clients in bars and restaurants, prostitution and strip dancing, retailing of clothing, domestic work and babysitting. Some statistical information on the typologies of work performed by children is available in the survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour and presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Industrial Classification of Working Children by Age**



Source: Author, starting from data presented in MoL 2013. Guyana National Child Labour Rapid Assessment.

## Section Four

# Findings on Worst Forms of Child Labour: Green Boys and Fresh Girls

No specific statistics were found on the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) beyond the statistics concerning trafficking or some hazardous work. A child protection help line exists and it records data on abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect, but does not specifically record if the abuses took place in situations that fall under the definition of WFCL.

However, several independent reports, news articles, human rights reports, direct experience by social workers or respondent youth, all suggest a relatively high incidence of cases of WFCL. The Guyana Women Miners Association and the Amerindian Peoples Association are two NGOs that have worked to prevent abuses towards children, women and men in mining for several years. Both NGOs report systematic cases of children -- and in some exceptional cases girl -- involved in mining. Age determination is extremely difficult in the absence of birth certificates, but some of these children are as young as 12 or 13 years old.

Small family mining is predominant in Regions 1 and 8, where families and communities have property titles or concessions for the land. In other areas or regions mid- and large-scale mining is, on the contrary, more predominant. There seems to be no issues of children working in gold mining for the large scale, often international, exploration or exploitation operations. These are formal employers that are periodically subjected to labour inspection and no report of child labour has been filed for these establishments. Informal and small-scale mining is, on the contrary, where the majority of incidents are reported. The recruitment of these children happens in different ways, however, parents are usually aware of the life awaiting their children in the mines, and many youngsters still actively look for employment in this field.

Children, like the other workers, are organized in shifts that typically last 4 to 6 weeks. They would work an average of 12 hours (from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.) and mostly in pits washing the gold or as 'donkey man', transporting the gold to and from the washing well. Children are typically paid very little compared to adults, they would earn between USD300-340 compared to adults who are paid between USD700-950. This is because the payment often consists of a percentage of what the worker can extract during the quarter, and 'green' children will typically extract less than adults. Once the shift ends, children and adolescents will go to the nearest trading centre to exchange gold into cash, and they will typically spend a sizeable amount of their income for alcohol, drugs, and prostitution. Children will typically use mercury to bind gold, forming an amalgam. The amalgam is then heated releasing toxic vapours and purified gold, exposing the children to direct health consequences as well as indirect pollution of the drinking water and poisoning the fish. Children working with mercury have high levels of intoxication that shows in all biometrics. The use of missile dredges and other heavy machinery is sometimes a source of injuries and creates devastating consequences for the environment. Oftentimes the only safety equipment available would be plastic boots.

Mining camps will typically depend on one or more cooks. While often these are men, some cases of young boys or girls employed as cook have also been reported. If the cook is a girl, she will also typically provide sexual services to the males in the camp, usually under coercion or pressure by clients.

The economy of gold mining is a recipe for the flourishing of a night life in trading centres characterized by debt bondage, abduction, trafficking, prostitution, violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Young adolescent girls are the involuntary victims of this economy. Most of the minors working in bars as strip dancers, bar attendants and sex workers have been illegally recruited, abducted or detained. They are promised cleaning, household or restaurant jobs by traffickers, community people or relatives, then find themselves lured or forced into prostitution. The trafficker -- sometimes a bus driver -- would typically lend the transport money to the girl who would then be forced to work in the sex industry to repay the loan. Payment is typically negotiated by the client directly with the bar owner, the pimp or the bus driver. Girls don't know how much their services are worth, and they will only typically receive around USD28 per night, out of a profit of USD95 that would go to the pimp. International trafficking has also been recorded, where the young girls are not only Guyanese but are also from the bordering countries of Suriname, Brazil and Venezuela.

The distance of these *'fresh'* girls from their communities of origin prevents them from seeking help and refuge. Law enforcement agents and policemen have been reported by social workers to be part of the problem as they would not act on the reported cases of child prostitution or child labour.

Finally, boys have also been reported as being used in the smuggling of arms, drugs and goods in coastal boats operating between Guyana and other Caribbean countries including Trinidad and Tobago. The boats approach the coast or the interior of navigable rivers at night, and within a short period of time, they load or unload their illicit cargo by using gangs of children who are then kept on the boat to complete the work at the port of destination. These gangs are rewarded either with cash, drugs or arms.

## Section Five

# Learning From Practice

### Some Programmes of Interest<sup>30</sup>

Between October of 2004 and November of 2005, a Pilot Programme for the Rehabilitation of Child Labourers and Prevention of Child Labour in Parika, was implemented by the Government through the Varqa Foundation. The Programme targeted children involved in urban economic activities, e.g. vending; logging and transporting; and agriculture. It worked directly with child workers and their families, and the communities to:

- withdraw and rehabilitate working children from exploitative and hazardous employment by providing remedial education -- literacy, numeracy and life skills -- to prepare them for placement in mainstream education and/or apprenticeship programmes; and
- prevent almost 200 children who were 'at risk,' from entering child labour.

In 2005, the EDUCARE Guyana Project, implemented by Partners of the Americas with funding from the United States Department of Labor, came on stream with the aim of reducing the incidence of child labour in Guyana by focusing on withdrawing and preventing the entry of children into exploitative or hazardous child labour. The Project consisted of a total budget of USD2 million with an implementation period of 42 months. Activities under the Project were grouped under three objectives:

1. Raising public awareness of the threat of child labour at both the national and community levels;
2. Strengthening policies and institutions to support direct interventions; and
3. Strengthen educational systems at both the primary and secondary levels.

The Project reached over 3000 children, and it *'has demonstrated that an extended school day with additional academic support and opportunities for structured recreation (afterschool clubs) are more effective than material support alone (primarily school feeding). The Project has also highlighted the critical role that local churches, NGOs, and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) must play in working with households and in the ongoing monitoring and support of school attendance. Interviews with participants and their parents suggest that reincorporating marginalized young people into a training or educational environment requires a comprehensive program that provides academic and psychosocial support rather than an exclusive focus on vocational skills. Through training and ongoing support for improving program management and reporting capacity of grantees, EDUCARE has created new community-level resources capable of managing educational initiatives designed to combat child labor' (xi).*<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Information on these programmes to prevent child labour was collected from the GoG 2011 contribution to the OHCHR Global Study on Children in Street Situations. Unfortunately, this information could not be verified as institutions that were involved did not have any historical memory of it, resulting in previous experience being lost or forgotten.

<sup>31</sup> Independent Final Evaluation of EDUCARE: Combating Exploitative Child Labour Through Education in Guyana. Partners of the Americas. (MACRO 2009).

From 2005 to 2012 the Government, in partnership with the ILO, started a TACKLE Programme to eliminate child labour. The initiative aimed at tackling and eliminating child labour through education and poverty reduction. The key objectives were to:

- reduce poverty by providing access to basic education and skills training for disadvantaged children and youth;
- strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities in the formulation, implementation and enforcement of policies and legal framework to tackle child labour; and
- design and put into place targeted actions to combat child labour and initiate awareness-raising, sensitization and public advocacy on this issue.

The Project also focused on child labour in the informal sector and it linked the issue of school dropouts in Guyana through skills training and places emphasis on keeping children in the school system. It was commended by local officials as the first positive attempt to tackle child labour through an interdisciplinary and inter-ministerial approach. This last Programme was particularly effective as reported by ILO, and yet the institutional memory associated with it was compromised by the change in key Government figures.

## Good Practice: The Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment

The Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE) in Guyana is a USAID-funded Programme which has a direct relevance to the prevention of child labour and WFCL, through the offer of education, skill-building, and employment for at-risk youth, with the overall goal of reducing youth crime and violence. It is a five-year initiative that provides targeted alternative sentencing, work readiness training, literacy strengthening, microbusiness development, and coaching for more than 1,500 youth ages 15–24. The Programme operates in urban and rural areas in six of the country's 10 regions. The Programme was largely designed taking into account the partnership between Caribbean countries and the United States under the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) and the priorities set out under that initiative.<sup>32</sup>

The main activities provided by the Programme are to:

- train youth in work-readiness, literacy and entrepreneurship, using Education Development Center Inc's (EDC) innovative Work Ready Now! Curricula;<sup>33</sup>
- improve youth livelihoods through job placement in new/better employment or in-kind financing for micro-business start-up;
- create a cadre of professional trainers and coaches to support at-risk youth;
- support youth through 6-12 months of one-on-one coaching including creation and implementation of an Individual Livelihood Plan;
- promote use of alternate sentencing and legal diversion options for youth within the juvenile justice system;
- develop and implement non-formal education courses for functionally illiterate at-risk youth; and

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<sup>32</sup> See more on the CBSI Initiative here: <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/rt/cbsi>.

<sup>33</sup> See more on EDC's Work Ready Now! Initiative here: <http://idd.edc.org/resources/publications/work-ready-now-wrn-fact-sheet>

- collaborate with the Government, local NGO partners, and the private sector to increase the capacity of local institutions to provide literacy and livelihood services to at-risk youth.

The results so far achieved are that more than 1,800 youth (71 per cent male/29 per cent female) have successfully completed the programme, and 700 youth (76 per cent male/24 per cent female) found new or better employment. Ninety five per cent of employers report satisfaction with their entry-level employees trained under the SKYE Project. Of 92 youth alternatively sentenced through SKYE, only two have returned to prison. Eleven local organizations and Government institutions have received technical assistance around work readiness, literacy strengthening, self-employment, or alternative sentencing.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Skills and Knowledge for Youth Employment (SKYE). Guyana. Georgetown. (USAID 2015).





## Section Six

# Recommendations

Positive recognition is given to the efforts by the Ministry of Social Protection to strengthen the existing policy environment by considering the development of a child labour Policy (or Act), and for having accepted the publication of previous key research findings in the area of child labour. In line with the work already commenced, this assessment recommends continuing the systematic dissemination of data and analysis to increasingly sensitize the public on matters concerning child labour and WFCL. Yet the development of a new child labour Policy, or the amendment of existing Acts should be carried out within the context of legal reform programming to harmonize domestic Legislations and definitions with internationally ratified Standards.

Child labour programming has suffered from the formal closure of the Child Labour Coordinating Task Force once the TACKLE Programme came to an end. Coordination and information exchange should be valued independently from their formal attachment to specific programmes that are funded by external donors. The current TIP Task Force is an existing inter-sectoral and inter-ministerial structure that has the potential to also address issues concerning child labour, hazardous work and WFCL. This assessment recommends the expansion of the current TIP Task Force's mandate to also systematically and formally cover the coordination of child labour programming and data sharing. The expansion of the focus of this existing task force will be to the benefit of the very same members that are already a part of it, with minimal or no cost.

This assessment also recommends increasing tripartite collaboration and dialogues and to expand these dialogues by periodically consulting with civil society organizations such as the Guyana Human Rights Association, or Government independent bodies such as the Rights of the Child Commission, on matters concerning child labour or WFCL. This will allow the tripartite structure to speak with a unanimous and stronger voice well beyond the ad hoc sensitization campaigns conducted in the past. This approach could also provide an opportunity to effectively mobilize additional financial and other resources needed for greater implementation of child labour preventive initiative by leveraging the inputs and networks of the private sector -- business, and workers.

Another key recommendation calls for the Government of Guyana to better recognize the nexus between child labour and other inequality factors such as poverty, vulnerability, exclusion, and degree of education. Given the multi-faceted nature of child labour, preventing the phenomenon will imply a deeper review of the role that inequality plays both as a cause and consequence of child labour. As a consequence, and following the example of previous interventions in Guyana, child labour programming will have to be based on several interconnected priorities aimed at addressing poverty, marginality, barriers in education, gender/ethnic/geographic inequalities and child labour prevention.

In addition, as the data and interviews have suggested, the areas most affected by school drop-out, child labour, hazardous work activities and WFCL are nestled in hard-to-reach regions and ethnic groups such as indigenous peoples living in the interior or rural areas. Given the weak presence of Government offices and infrastructure in these hard-to-reach areas, a proper programme of decentralization and outreach will need to be developed to ensure continuity and consistency in

response programming. The recent choice of the Ministry of Social Protection to decentralize its services to regions that were not traditionally covered is an important step in the right direction, despite budget limitations and programmatic constraints. But even with a decentralization process undergoing, it will be unrealistic to expect social services or labour inspection to be close to the communities where child labour is more prevalent. As a consequence, it is recommended that the Ministry of Social Protection seek to establish systematic partnerships and collaborations with the other Ministries that have a more decentralized structure and operational capacities. These include the Ministry of Indigenous People Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Police force, the social workers stationed within the Neighborhood Democratic Councils, the Ministry of Education, and NGOs such as the Guyana Women Miners Organization, or the Amerindian People Association. In a context of budget and capacity constraints, the most rapid and successful course of action to respond to child labour in remote and hard to reach areas is the establishment of effective partnerships.

A number of previous initiatives to prevent child labour were successfully tested in Guyana with positive outcomes. These include the EDUCARE Project, the ILO-IPEC TACKLE Project and the SKYE Programme, all of which were positive interventions that achieved positive results towards the initial objectives. And yet the legacy of these Projects is threatened by the weak sustainability and institutional memory, making it difficult for those interventions to be visible nowadays. An essential lesson learnt in Guyana is that previous experiences, methodologies and results should be used to guide and inform future planning and interventions, allowing greater efficiency and ensuring the sustainability of positive outcomes. In addition, previous programmes have also showed the need for specific child labour programming and interventions, beyond general advocacy interventions.

After discussion with officials including the Minister of Social Protection and the Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection, this assessment highly recommends a follow-up study on children in the WFCL in Guyana to better understand the magnitude of the problem, its dynamics, and its policy implications. The consistency of the reports gathered, the diversity of the informants, field visit reports, and the evidence collected by social protection, police and social workers, all point to a serious problem of WFCL, and the need to better understand the dynamics surrounding it to better respond to the problem. The proactive leadership role, and the openness of the current Ministry of Social Services in advocating and seeking assistance for a follow-up action research able to better guide policy and programmatic interventions against the WFCL, is commendable. 'We don't intend to sweep problems under the carpet to say we have solved them'.<sup>35</sup> This is the level of commitment that will be particularly indispensable as the phenomenon surely also has cultural roots that will need time to be properly changed.

Finally, this assessment recommends the focus of this follow-up analysis to be on children in (gold) mining (including ancillary work as well as cooking, logging and machinery operation); children involved in the sex industry (including victims of sexual abuse, exploitation, debt bondage, and trafficking); and children involved in gangs and other illicit activities. The follow-up research should be focused on better understanding the dynamics associated with the WFCL in Guyana, as well as exploring the feasibility of initial response ideas such as the establishment of a certification procedure for gold mining free of child labour.

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<sup>35</sup> Participant Interview. Personal Communication. (August 2016).

Section Seven  
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Annex 1:  
**People and Institutions Contacted in Guyana**

Agency and contact number	People	
Amerindian People Association Tel: 592-227-0275	Laura George, Governance and Rights Coordinator	
Bureau Of Statistics Tel: 592-226-0982	Ian Manifold, Head of Department Survey	Jacqueline Tull, Senior Officer
Canadian International Development Agency Tel: 592-227-2081	Daniel Joly, Head of Aid	
Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry Tel: 592-225-7170	Samuel J. Goolsarran Director	Bibi S. Ramchan Secretary
CUSO International Tel: 592-226-8242	Roberta Ellis, Director	Nicole Bowen, Programme Support Officer
Guyana Girls Guide Association Tel: 592-227-6516	Senior Secretaries	
Guyana Women Miners Organisation Tel: 592-223-6978	Ms Urica Primus, President  Stephanie Miguel, Region One Representative	Marina Charles, Head of TIP Unit
Guyana Human Rights Association Tel: 592-227-4911	Mike Mc. Comack Co-President	
International Organization for Migration Tel: 592-225-3745	Nathalie Hanley, Project Coordinator for the Caribbean	
Ministry of Indigenous People Affairs	Pauline Klelch, Senior Social Worker	
Ministry of Social Protection Tel: 592-225-7302	H.H. Velda Lawrence Minister of Social Protection  H.H. Keith Scott, Minister within the Minister of Social Protection  Charles Ogle, Chief Labour OSH Officer	Karen Vansluytman-Corbin, Assistant Chief Labour OSH Officer  Ivelaw Henry Chief Statistical Officer  Gweneth King, Advisor OSH
Neighborhood Democratic Council of Parika Tel: 592-662-2574	Jaideo Kowsilla Chairman	Shamaine John Assistant Overseer
Rights of the Child Commission Tel: 592-2181916	Rosemary Beijamin-Noble Deputy Chairperson  Sandra Hooper	Andre Gonsalves Investigative Officer
Trade Union Confederation Tel: 592-226-2481	Norris Wilter Vice President	Pancham Singh
United Nations Children’s Fund Tel: 592-226-7083	Marianne Flach Representative  Paolo Marchi Deputy Representative	Jewell Crosse Youth and Adolescent Development Officer
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