INVESTIGATING CHILD LABOUR

Guidelines for Rapid Assessment

A FIELD MANUAL

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PREFACE

Part I gives an overview of the basic method of Rapid Assessment (RA), of its uses and also its limitations, so that potential users can see whether or not this method might meet their needs. Part II guides the reader through the RA process topic by topic, step by step. It is divided into two sub-parts, one related to preparing for RA research and the other to actually carrying it out and finalizing it. Part III addresses some of the issues involved in how to research special populations of child labour, including children in "hidden" occupations. Part IV contains annexes to provide more detailed guidance, through examples, of some of the suggested techniques for use in Rapid Assessment.
INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a global phenomenon of massive proportions. The ILO estimates that around 250 million children 5-14 years old in the developing countries worldwide are each working in one or more economically productive activities, both paid and unpaid. Some work for or with their families; others work for outside employers, who may or may not be relatives; still some toil as independent workers. Although not directly estimated, the number of children of the same age group, particularly those between 7 and 14 years of age, who are engaged in activities of a domestic nature or household chores in their own parents’ or grandparents’ homes could be considerable and the large majority of them would be girls.

Children carry out a very wide range of working activities and occupations. Many of these activities limit or completely impede school attendance. Much of their activities are exploitative or hazardous or both, in varying degrees, and are performed under conditions which violate many of the provisions of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the 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). At the International Labour Conference of June 1999, the delegates unanimously adopted a new Convention, ILO Convention 182, and an accompanying Recommendation 190 on the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour for all persons under the age of 18. This provides for the immediate prohibition of , among
others, all forms of child slavery, child labour in the sex industry, child work in illegal activities or in occupations hazardous to a child's health, safety or morals. There are also the ILO Minimum Age Convention (138) and the Minimum Age Recommendation (146) both adopted in 1973 prohibiting the admission into employment of school-age children under 15 years of age.

To address the problem of child labour, and especially its worst forms, we need to know much more about it. National statistics about the population and the labour force are increasingly collected in practically all countries by means of censuses and labour force surveys, but such data on working children either do not exist or are incomplete in almost all countries and territories since these traditional survey methodologies are not suitable to cover school age children whose activities are for the most part “invisible” or “hidden”. Under the auspices of the Interdepartmental Project and the Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) which were launched in 1992 with financial assistance from the German Government, the ILO began to experiment specially designed surveys for recommending more appropriate methodological approaches for carrying out national-scale investigations on child labour. Pilot tests were undertaken in Ghana, India, Indonesia and Senegal, with technical assistance from the ILO Bureau of Statistics. The results of those experiments were published in 1996 with a recommendation for a household-based survey, supplemented by surveys of establishments/employers, street children and schools. Consequently, household-based surveys have been conducted in an increasing number of countries. In 1998, a new project entitled “Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour” (SIMPOC) was launched to establish a much wider and more solid information-base, through the use of the recommended methodologies and with financial contributions from a number of donor countries. However, this programme has still not been carried out in most countries, both because SIMPOC is very young and also due to the limited resources and capacity of ILO/IPEC. Also, the assistance provided to the countries has so far been used to conduct household surveys only. While such surveys are very useful in the production of comprehensive statistical data on the various aspects of working children, because they are based on samples, they do not provide great depth regarding the daily lives and problems of the children in their many different kinds of jobs. Moreover, detailed
information on small geographical areas or localities cannot be obtained through these kinds of inquiry particularly where the sample size is quite small. Nor can certain types of children’s activities be fully encompassed by structured or statistically designed household surveys, for example, prostitution, trafficking in children, bonded child labour, etc; where more qualitative information is required (Ashagrie, K. 1999).

For a fuller understanding of child labour, both quantitative and qualitative information is needed. These two kinds of information are not mutually exclusive, and in well rounded research they complement each other, sometimes even within the same research project, and therefore function together to give a more complete picture of the subject or area being researched. It is clear that if both quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined, and if no artificial distinction is set up between one kind of approach and the other, our understanding of child labour in specific societies and settings will be much richer and the information will lead to better project formulation or other interventions.

To assist countries in obtaining a more exhaustive and complete information-base on the more ‘hidden’ or ‘invisible’ forms of child labour so as to be able to design appropriate local and community or village level programmes, and also to research child workers in the most dangerous or unhealthy kinds of jobs, a few years ago the ILO and UNICEF agreed to develop a rapid assessment manual for child labour. This manual, which has been through several phases since it first originated, is for programme managers, administrators and researchers in national and international institutions, governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations. These individuals and agencies need accurate and detailed research in order to understand the nature of the child labour problems in their particular areas or in specific occupations. This manual is intended to help them obtain such information, in preparation for programme intervention.

The method described in the pages that follow is known as Rapid Assessment (RA) because it is intended to provide relevant information relatively quickly and cheaply which will serve as a tool
for in-depth research. It is ideally suited for obtaining detailed knowledge of the working and life circumstances of children by means of discussions and interviews. As a methodology it is well adapted for gathering information in a rapid and simplified way within small, clearly defined geographical areas, for example small individual communities, towns, villages, urban core, etc. Its scope is therefore limited and local, and it focuses on areas which are known to have substantial concentrations of children involved in activities difficult to identify and quantify. Its output is primarily qualitative and descriptive. Some numerical data may be obtained as background information or through interviews, but these usually can not be generalized to larger populations. RA does not use structured questionnaires administered to large population samples and then later elaborated by sophisticated statistical manipulation using computers for making estimates, such as would be found in a national census or nationwide household or establishment/enterprise surveys. It uses instead semi-structured questionnaires or none at all; in-depth interviews and conversations; careful and attentive observation; and background information derived from a variety of sources, such as key informants or knowledgeable persons. It can provide detailed qualitative information that is not only useful in planning and starting programmes to help working children on a local or more limited level, but which is frequently required.

Rapid Assessment seeks to strike a reasonable compromise between statistical precision and impressionistic data gathering. It can generate information, for selected localities and occupations, that is realistic and useful. Its first output can be compared to an early topological sketch of a territory, made by pioneer explorers who provide sufficient detail so that travellers can orient themselves but onto which new information will continue to be added by later arrivals, it can depict a profile quickly and at low cost, which is crucial where such information is needed within a short time frame or where resources are limited. The RA can then be repeated at a later date for the purpose of comparison.

There are now some research reports that show evidence in one way or another of the influence of this manual. Intentional RA pilot studies were carried out by the ILO and UNICEF during the 1990s in Pakistan, Colombia and Bangladesh while other researchers using RA ideas from
various sources also began to research limited geographical areas, or else specific occupations, in their own countries. Sometimes they called their research approaches Rapid Assessment, sometimes not, but these research efforts all have much in common, and slowly it has come to be appreciated that these could be useful ways for gathering information relatively quickly and at low cost to describe the specific child labour situations; these could be utilised immediately for action programmes, and also serve to complement the findings of large scale surveys which, together, facilitate the formulation and implementation of both specific or focussed regulations and activities as well as national policies and large scale programmes for combatting child labour in all its different forms, particularly the worst forms. Among the studies that now exist having at least some characteristics of Rapid Assessment (in addition to the pilot studies mentioned above) are those in half a dozen Asian countries, covering children in occupations ranging from football and footwear manufacture to deep sea diving to carpet weaving to prostitution and domestic work, among others. The current revision of this manual, in late 1999, is intended to facilitate even more information gathering along those lines.
PART I

RAPID ASSESSMENT RESEARCH FOR CHILD LABOUR

1. What is Rapid Assessment?

Rapid Assessment is a research methodology that uses several data-collecting strategies contemporaneously in order to achieve an understanding of a specific social reality or situation in a particular sociocultural context. It is usually done with the objective of formulating a project or some other kind of intervention. Its methods may be a blend of the quantitative and qualitative, and its findings may be partly descriptive, partly analytic and partly statistical, depending upon the particular aims of a given research investigation. If the research has been done well, the findings will be reasonably accurate and representative of the issue that was investigated. They can even be replicated, with a fair degree of reproducibility. They will never have the validity of scientific inquiry, however.

The method is called Rapid Assessment because it is expected to last no more than three months from beginning to end. RA researches populations by observing or interviewing small groups of individuals; it does not employ scientific sampling methods or use control groups. It also does not engage in the intensive long term participant observation that characterizes anthropological field work. In most cases, in fact, even repeat interviews with the same individual do not (or cannot) take place.

In recent years RA has been used increasingly in the social sciences, particularly in research dealing with rural development issues. Many Rapid Assessment workshops have been funded by UNICEF as well as by the ILO. RA data-gathering methods have also been applied extensively in the fields of health and nutrition, resulting in better design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes. RA has also been used by various other agencies for the assessment of environmental and disaster-related impacts and needs, as well as in relation to poverty-alleviation projects. When
RA has been used in the field of child labour, as in the instances mentioned above in the Introduction, this has been mainly in order to assess the general condition of child labour in particular areas before any projects were planned; it has not been used for evaluations of ongoing projects, as has frequently occurred with the use of RA in other fields. In keeping with this history, the present Guidelines are also not intended for the ongoing evaluation of existing projects. They are intended for use mainly in areas where child labour exists but is particularly difficult to quantify through structured sample surveys, thus, is little understood, and also where no special projects have so far been initiated.

2. Why does child labour need to be researched?

Not very much is known about many of the economically productive or "work" activities children carry out (either because they have to do them or because they want to). Why children work in a particular industry or sector is not always well understood, and there is frequently an absence of reliable information about the social, economic and cultural dynamics that have led the child to the activity, or into the work force (including homework) in the first place rather than to school. It may not even be known how many children work in a particular area or occupation, and it will be the task of the RA to make an approximate estimate of their numbers in a specific locality or activity.

The research issues suggested below in Section 4 give some idea of the range of topics on which specific and detailed information is needed. Especially urgently needed is information about the hazards and dangers, both physical and psychological, to which many working children are exposed, and why they are exposed to them, and about the unfree (bonded or forced) conditions in which many children work. Urgently needed, too, is research about the many working children who are invisible to the public when they work, either because they are intentionally kept from public view or because, although they work in public places, those around them take them for granted to the point of not even noticing their presence. Often, the work activities that are the most dangerous
or unhealthy or morally demeaning are also those about which we possess least information. Children in various sexually exploitative situations need to be researched, children in domestic servant situations, children working in isolated rural areas, children in illegal factories making dangerous products, even children exploited in various ways by their own families, all especially need to be researched perhaps as a prelude to project formulation.

3. Why should Rapid Assessment be used to research child labour? What can it produce?

As a means of accessing information about working children, RA offers great promise because it is an eclectic methodology, drawing what it needs from different research traditions and techniques, and it can be used by researchers who have not had extensive training in highly formalized research procedures. It is thus an unpretentious methodology.

The findings of RA research can be used to pave the way for later and more intensive investigations or else for similar comparative research in other parts of a country, so that a picture of child labour in, for example, different cities or across an entire region can be achieved. Or they can lead directly to project formulation or to raising public awareness, as the material derived from the RA, including case descriptions of working children observed in the field, may be vital to bring the local child labour situation into public view and indirectly prod policy-makers to take action.

The findings can affect the allocation of resources, given that information on the needs of working children and on the resources available to meet them is vital when planning a programme directed to where the need is greatest. For example, if a critical choice between allocating scarce resources among various populations of working children in an area needs to be made, the RA may help decision makers choose whether to direct them to the highly visible working children in the city streets, to children in backstreet workshops, to "invisible" child workers in domestic service, or to children working in the rural environment.
4. What should Rapid Assessment research focus on, regarding child labour?

These Guidelines are intended only to suggest some ways for reaching an understanding of a child labour situation within a particular area. However, even within a single area there may be different reasons for researching child labour. Even in a small area it is not possible in a short time span to research everything there is to know about working children, and choices must be made. Here are some possible issues that researchers may want to investigate using RA (there are also others). Researchers may want to:

- Derive an initial estimate of the incidence of child labour in an area, and a preliminary understanding of the kinds of work children do there.
- Identify and describe the actual working conditions of children in the area or in a particular occupation within it, including work processes and their physical effects, hours, rates of pay, relation to the employer, living conditions, etc. (This can include children working as family workers as well.)
- Learn about some characteristics of the working children, their families and communities, their migration and work histories, and the influences that resulted in their working.
- Learn about the relation between school and work, the attitudes toward education of children and parents, the forces, pressures and attitudes that push children in one direction or the other, and the condition of the schools in an area.
- Assess the extent of hazardous, unhealthy or morally unsound or illicit conditions in child work in the area, the numbers of children involved in them, the pathways that led to those occupations, the chances for improvement or removal of the children from those conditions, the desire for rehabilitation, etc.
- Determine the possible existence of "hidden" or "hard-to-access" working populations of children in the area, and/or the possible prevalence of "bonded" child labour.
- Determine suitable bases for initiating programmes and interventions by governments, NGOs,
etc., including an appraisal of existing resources and agencies that can help address problems.

5. Rapid Assessment research is "flexible" research

The fact that there may be different reasons for carrying out an RA implies that there are also different ways to carry it out. Rapid Assessment methodology must be flexible; indeed, adaptability is a hallmark of this kind of research. This has implications for the present Guidelines: It is not a practical possibility to provide fixed rules for how to write interview questions or how to carry out interviews that will cover all the objectives for which RAs may be carried out in the field of child labour and that will apply equally to all the many categories of individual researchers will encounter. What we are attempting to provide in this manual are suggestions and resources upon which researchers can build. (Researching some specific populations such as "hidden" populations is so delicate, however, that we consider them separately in Part III of the Guidelines).

6. Who does a Rapid Assessment?

Two categories of people and organizations are needed and must be involved in any Rapid Assessment research from the beginning: (a) Those who need the information and will use it, and (b) Those who actually carry out the research. The first category might be the research sponsors: International, governmental or non-governmental agencies planning to work on a problem or issue related to child labour. They will initiate the research idea, oversee its realization, receive the collected and processed information, and ultimately perhaps put the findings and recommendations into action.

The collectors of the information are those with professional research training and their
assistants and field interviewers. Combining people with good interpersonal skills and those with a strong research background in a research team makes good sense. It is in some cases important that a RA be led by more than one principal researcher, and that the professionals chosen come from complementary backgrounds depending on the requirements of the research; e.g. if a health assessment is part of the research, qualified medical personnel will be needed. A team of as many as ten assistants might be needed for some research. The payment of researchers and assistants, and the cost of their transportation, are the major expenses likely to be incurred by RA research. In general Rapid Assessment is intended to be not only rapid but inexpensive, which is why it is considered possible to carry it out again at some later time as a follow-up study of the same population, to assess any changes that may have occurred.

7. Sources of information for Rapid Assessment

Rapid Assessment uses the sources of information below in varying proportions, depending on the focus of the particular research and the resources that are available in a given geographical area:

· Existing information

Searching the published and unpublished literature; reading any studies that may have been done; examining all available statistical data, etc. to find information that would be useful for providing background knowledge and helping to "focus" the research.

· Discussions and consultations with knowledgeable individuals and organizations

Discussions and consultations with individuals and organizations familiar with the details of the child labour in the area. This may include government agencies, NGOs, women's organizations, trade unions, religious groups, charitable associations, elected officicials (politicians), appointed administrators and managers, etc. in order to identify the principal features of child labour in the area.
· In-depth discussions with key informants
  Intensive discussions with individuals who are carefully selected because of their knowledge of child labour in the area. These interviews help to focus the study, in terms of both locations to be researched and topics to be examined.

· Mapping
  Making approximate drawings, or "maps," of the area under investigation, showing its major physical features and layout and the relative locations of child workers of various kinds within it.

· Observation
  Systematic observation of child workers and of work places in various parts of the area being researched, to obtain visual information on their work activities and working conditions.

· Individual interviews and conversations
  Formal and informal interviews and discussions with working children, where possible, and with employers, parents, teachers, and all other individuals who can help us to understand the child's occupation and what it entails, why the child is working, details about working conditions, wages, schedules, and work experiences, the relation between work and school, and what other activities the child carries out within and outside the home. (Various techniques may be desirable in the interviews with children, including personal histories, recall of the activities of the previous day, story narration, and drawing).

· Group interviews
  Discussions with small groups of adults and/or children may be productive. They may sometimes be spontaneous and not necessarily formally structured.

· Questionnaires
  Short questionnaires may be used in various settings, either to obtain items of information or to
cross-check the information obtained through interviews. They are also used for collecting information on a broader scale, for example via specific networks or when administered through larger organizations such as school systems.

8. What are the difficulties of researching child labour?

Researching child labour is not always easy, even with a Rapid Assessment. Certain occupations and certain categories of working children are easier to research than others. For example, the populations of working street children in many urban centres have been the object of a number of studies of various kinds for more than a decade; they are an easily visible and identifiable, and usually approachable, population. Other categories of working children present more or less degrees of difficulty to research, depending on many different factors some of which will be addressed in the pages that follow here. Not all the research procedures listed above in Section 7, or the research steps discussed in Part II of the Guidelines, will be possible in every RA. Nor will all RA research be equally successful in uncovering the information the sponsors of the research need to know. All, probably, embody some share of frustration in the end, and the researchers may feel when the work is done that there were some things that could have been done differently and more successfully. It is important to point out here that since each RA is carried out under different conditions, these Guidelines should not be looked upon as a fixed recipe or prescription for doing research that a subsequent research team could mechanically replicate if it chose to. The application of the Guidelines presupposes both flexibility and creativity.
BOX 1

Some of the difficulties encountered by RA researchers may include problems accessing enterprises, and fear of reprisals felt by child workers and their families. "Enterprises employing children may refuse to be interviewed, or deny employing children. Working children and their families may be unforthcoming, fearing reprisals from employers, and so on." (Malcolm Falkus, "A survey of child labour in Southeast Asian manufacturing industries: Summary and reflections", IPEC Asia papers No. 2, Dec 1996. p. 3).

Again, parents may not want to admit that their children work. Here is a hands-on example of what one researcher encountered in the area of gold mining. The researcher interviewed working parents in focus (discussion) groups. He writes, "Sixteen parents were interviewed -- 12 mothers and four fathers. All mothers were involved in mining, most working in the ball-mill and in the processing of gold from mercury. Nine fathers were working as abantero/atrasero; the rest did carpentry, farming and driving. Initially the parents pretended that their children were no longer working in the mines. In the course of the discussions, however, it became clear that children still participated actively, with about 23 children involved in one type of work or another. The youngest working child was 8 years old; the average age was 10 years. Seven parents had one working child, six had two and three had three children at work" (Norman Jennings, ed. Child Labour in Small-scale Mining: Examples from Niger, Peru, & Philippines, ILO, 1999, p. 58)

9. What are the limitations of all Rapid Assessment findings?
One principal limitation of Rapid Assessment findings is the fact that they cannot necessarily be generalized to other populations of working children. Unlike a national survey, which uses statistical samples selected to represent the general population being researched, RA tells us only about a much smaller scale reality. Even though we may strive to select our subjects of study locations, occupations, working children to be representative of others that are left out of the study or who exist elsewhere, we cannot be sure that they are representative because we lack information about "the others" left out of the study, and we must therefore assume that they are not of course unless further studies of other similar areas and occupations are made, illustrating a high degree of overlapping findings.

Thus the fact that RA is more of a qualitative than quantitative (numerical) research methodology, and that it investigates small scale areas, means that its findings have more limited applicability. If it is well done, it makes up in richness of detail and depth of understanding for its lack of broad applicability. In the field of child labour this is important, since most programmes and projects are introduced at local and community levels and it is important to understand the existing situation in order to create and operate them.

However, RA can not be expected to produce the intricacy of detail and understanding that can be obtained through long term anthropological fieldwork (ethnography). For example, RA could not be used very successfully to research a drug selling and using population where the children are used as drug runners. There are communities whose activities are so secret, and where children's participation is so sensitive, that they can be captured only by a researcher who is accepted gradually into the community over a period of some months, and who uses intensive ethnographic fieldwork techniques.

Finally, RA research can be well focused but its drawback is that it can also be subjective. Since it utilizes observation and guided conversations as well as semi-structured interview instruments, the researchers' or assistants' own assumptions, biases or cultural blind spots can cloud the findings, and ways must be found within each research project to diminish this. One way is to
discuss research findings frequently within the research team as a whole while the research progresses. Another is to weigh research results carefully for accuracy and representativeness, and to understand (and also make clear to end users) that they are not intended to be generalized beyond the research area.

10. The difference between Rapid Assessment and "Fact Finding"

Sometimes there may be a rather fine line between an RA properly understood and a process sometimes called "fact-finding." In some unusual instances, in fact, the difference may be one concerning the scale rather than the shape of the research, or may lie in the representativeness of the sample of people interviewed. The box on this page illustrates the methodology used by a fact-finding mission conducted during only sixteen days in May-June 1999 in the refugee camps in Albania to assess the possible trafficking of Kosovar Albanian women and children for prostitution. As those who wrote the mission report for the International Organization on Migration are themselves aware, "It should be noted that an exhaustive systematic quantitative or a qualitative study in a few days was not possible and the results are not statistically representative of the total female refugee population in Albania" (see box).

**BOX 2**

The methodology for this fact-finding exercise included discussions with representatives from several Albanian women’s associations that address trafficking issues; informal discussions with Kosovo Albanian refugees, both men and women, discussions with international humanitarian workers working in Albania and 150 interviews with randomly selected Kosovo Albanian refugee women in the camps around Tirana and Durres, Albania. Fourteen Albanian interviewers [who were] experienced social workers [and students of social work and sociology] carried out the interviews. These interviews were organised in co-operation with [an Albanian NGO]. All
One hundred fifty women of all ages distributed over 13 refugee camps were interviewed; and if we take as the entire universe from which the sample was drawn all Kosovar women and children then in refugee camps, the sample was certainly extensive if not actually representative. If we consider, too, the fact that these young girls and women were interviewed by professionally qualified interviewers all of whom had had previous experience working in refugee camps, the results of such a fact-finding survey can probably be taken as adequate to provide a basis for formulating recommendations and generating action programmes. This example is useful for child labour research. It illustrates what can be learned in a very short time about child labour if the local area is sufficiently restricted, if researchers have adequate access to the children and other individuals for interviews, and if the researchers themselves are experienced in interviewing the population in question under the existing conditions. While these remarks do not intend to minimize in any way the requirements for carrying out a competent RA, this case does illustrate the close parallels between RA research and other rapid research along analogous lines. Or, to put it somewhat differently, RA methodology proves useful even in fact-finding missions.

11. A note on children's participation in Rapid Assessment research

The chances of the success of an RA effort are greater the more the research involves the children being researched. This can happen in several ways. First, RA makes children the centerpiece of its research methodology since as individual informants they are the principal (in the sense of most important) sources of its data. Second, in many RAs they can also contribute to the
information gathering process through participation in group discussions. Third, they can act as key informants whose views and opinions may contribute to the formulation of interview questions, and they also help (often unintentionally) in cross-checking the data obtained (a process that will be described further in Part II). In some cases, the presence if not the active participation of working children as members of an interviewing team can be highly effective (see Footnote, p. 24).

The involvement of working children in data analysis and the preparation of a final report, however, must necessarily be limited due to the lack of the levels of education and skills needed for these tasks. But this by no means prevents them from making valuable contributions to later stages of the process. Some children can, and often do, participate in the informal presentations of the results of the RA to various user agencies; by relating their own personal experiences, they become advocates for all their peers. And of course later, as members of the "beneficiary population", children should voice their opinion about the efficacy of programmes put in place.
PART II

THE BASIC STEPS TO DOING A RAPID ASSESSMENT

Part II consists of two parts, each divided into several steps. The first section tells how to prepare to do a Rapid Assessment, and the second section sets forth the actual research procedure. It may be necessary to occasionally move back and forth between the two sections, while by and large observing the overall structure of steps.

The sequence in which the steps are presented here is the recommended sequence to follow, but this may vary depending on the specific research situation. Rapid Assessment research should be flexible, and a different order of steps may be necessary. Some steps may even need to be done simultaneously, because of time constraints.

SECTION A: PREPARATION

Section A consists of five steps. Together they help researchers to lay the groundwork for the research and to accomplish the following tasks: How to find sponsors for it; how to choose and
train researchers; how to deal with language problems; how to collect background information and then identify a research area; how to choose a research focus; and, finally, how to assess the possible need for household inquiries. All these tasks are preparatory to actually carrying out the research.

STEP ONE: The Role of Research Sponsors

Some prior knowledge of the general shape of the research problem is essential, and this will probably be present from the earliest planning stages of the research. Those interested in doing or sponsoring RA research must have some general ideas in advance partly because the nature of the child population or the kinds of occupation and activities in question will set boundaries, constraints and limits on what can be achieved during the research and on how to achieve it.

The other reason for having an idea of the general shape of the research problem is in order to seek (additional) sponsors for the RA both those who will lend their moral or professional support to the research and those who are willing to finance it. The planning of the research should take place with the support and if possible the actual participation of knowledgeable individuals who occupy positions of responsibility in the region. These individuals will usually be government officials or officials of other established organizations. It is particularly important to involve people in positions of political responsibility who can use their influence on local individuals and organizations to improve the effectiveness and outcome of the research. They should therefore be asked to play some role. Those who stand to use the research later, through political or social action, should also be involved at all stages so that they have some "ownership" of the undertaking. There are two reasons for this. First, having participated, they may be more likely to use the findings to help the child workers who were the object of the research. Second, having learned the research procedure, they are more likely to themselves want to carry out subsequent follow up research or tracer studies. Similarly, statisticians and social scientists from local universities should be drawn into the research effort, at least to some extent. Care must be taken that none of these individuals or agencies be allowed to "co-opt" the research, however, even if they are sponsoring the research financially, and the researchers themselves must maintain operational independence in their activities.
They must make this clear from the beginning. The researchers should also avoid seeking sponsorship from "opposing" camps in other words, from two different agencies or organizations known to have incompatible goals or agendas. If this occurs, competitiveness and argument among sponsors can bog down and diminish the actual help and support the researchers are given.

Before the research starts, there should be consultative meetings with the supporting agencies that have most stake in the research and in any programme that might eventually be set up to help the working children. These meetings should discuss the purpose of the research, its design and conduct, and the broader national perspective into which it fits. If the agencies have commissioned the research with a view to later project formulation, they should clearly specify what kind of information they need to obtain, so that the researchers can shape the research as usefully as possible.

STEP TWO: Selecting and training research personnel

*Choosing the principal researcher*

Choosing a principal researcher carefully is crucially important to the success of an RA. The principal researcher has a number of allied responsibilities: He/she must select the other researchers and their assistants; oversee the shape of the research effort from start to finish and deal with administrative details; make sure that the other researchers and assistants understand and carry out their assignments adequately and that precious research time is not wasted; liaison with the sponsors and supporters of the RA; and certainly not least understand the difficulties presented by the context and the topic being researched. He/she must therefore understand the problems inherent in
researching child labour, which are many even in the best of circumstances, and must know how to interview and observe children, their families, and their employers, as well as other adults. It is therefore essential to engage an experienced and knowledgeable researcher. It might not be an exaggeration to say that the success of the research stands or falls above all on the proper choice of this individual. And, as will be apparent below in the section on team research, the principal researcher has a special role to play in this area, too.

Selecting researchers and assistants

As pointed out above, the principal researcher will have a major say in selecting researchers and assistants. Several factors must be borne in mind in doing so. One is, of course, the qualifications of the researchers. First come their "formal" qualifications: Schooling, field experience, linguistic ability, ability to understand the goals and modalities of the research, their age relative to the ages of those to be interviewed, their maturity, etc. The second is their more intangible qualifications, which are well summed up in a recent ILO-IPEC report, in whose words researchers must be "committed, culturally sensitive, have good listening and interviewing skills, 'be open to unheard voices', be friendly and nonjudgmental, and work with heart and loving the topic" (Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in the Mekong Sub-Region, A proposed framework for ILO-IPEC action and proceedings of a Mekong sub-regional consultation, ILO, October 1998, p. 27).

There are other qualifications to be considered as well. Where possible it will be advantageous to select researchers already familiar with the area to be researched; it may help further if they are ethnically and linguistically similar to the rest of the population, although this is not always possible. Undoubtedly the sex of the researchers will be taken into account: For some kinds of research males are needed, for others females. The ages and physical appearance of the researchers and interviewers will also play a role in how successful they are as information-gatherers in specific
situations.¹

Next, in making their selections the principal researcher and those who help select researchers and assistants will want to bear in mind that RA research is team research, as described in the next section. This sets up an additional set of requirements in selecting research personnel.

Working in teams

Rapid Assessment emphasizes team research because only through teamwork is it possible to collect sufficient information in such a short time period. Team members are commonly assigned to different sites and different areas of observation, so as to maximize their coverage of people and places. It is advisable for the teams to be multidisciplinary wherever possible, combining at least two types of expertise. For example, combinations of backgrounds in any of the following disciplines anthropologist-sociologist-psychologist-economist-trade unionist might be suitable. If a team can include one or more members familiar with the area to be researched it would be useful, on condition that prior local knowledge does not dominate the research process and preclude uncovering new findings.

There are some research populations where the team must include mainly individuals fully conversant in the language or dialect of the area and familiar with the modes of thought and behaviour of the ethnic group being researched, without which the research will not achieve its objectives. In researching, for example, those communities where children at risk of being trafficked reside, such as in the ethnically distinct and economically disadvantaged hill areas of Southeast Asia, "ethnic fluency" is essential to breaking barriers of reserve and mistrust.

¹

Some researchers working in especially difficult environments have had promising results using local people, including children, to help them as research assistants. This has been found to be the case by a researcher working in Yunnan, China and another working in Southern Mindanao in the Philippines, where the local high school honors class did some of the interviewing of others in their own age bracket, an activity welcomed by the school principal. However, this "child-to-child" approach to data collection is relatively new and has not yet been tried out enough for us to present it as a viable method in these Guidelines.
The principal researcher has a special role to play in fostering good teamwork. He/she must follow the work of the individual researchers and assistants as it proceeds, and draw what each of them is learning about the issue or problem into the circle of general findings. He/she is, therefore, the manager of the team’s information gathering and of its cross-fertilization, so that a reasonable group research product can begin to emerge and reflect the work of all the team members. This implies that the principal researcher him- or herself will have to spend time on mastering and communicating the research output of others and may not have much time for actual research of his or her own.

Training

Researchers will always require training, and this consists of at least two separate major kinds. First, they must be made aware of the political, economic and social context of the area in which they will be carrying out their research. Some period of time (perhaps two days) must be devoted to an introduction to the principal characteristics of the area, even including visits to various parts of it. For this training the principal researcher can draw upon the knowledge of those researchers already familiar with the area and also that of other local individuals, where they are available to (or can be convinced to) devote time to the training process; these people might be representatives of local NGOs, town or city officials, trade union officials, teachers, social activists, etc. Depending upon the goals of the RA, the information imparted may need to be quite detailed. Researchers should be made aware of subjective and cultural factors, economic factors such as incomes and poverty, and they should learn something of the dynamics of the community or area to be researched. They should also learn about the profile of the people they will be observing and interviewing, especially if they will be working with a special population that is unfamiliar to them. They need to be taught about the various occupations and work activities they can expect to encounter, and their hazards, dangers, and likely effects on the child labourers who perform them. They need to understand the focus of the particular RA in which they are involved and why collecting certain kinds of information rather than others may be especially essential.
The second kind of training that researchers need to be given, which may take a further two days or even more (depending on the sensitivity of the situations being researched), is in actual observation and interview skills, and fieldwork techniques. They must be trained to observe as well as to interact with their informants, and must learn to write down their observations and interview notes as soon as possible. Their observations must include the locale where work takes place, the physical conditions in which it occurs and the physical position of children while working; cleanliness, lighting, and ventilation of the work area; the use of toxic substances, etc. The interviewers must be told what they should look for in particular, as they may need to make observations while also carrying out other activities such as interviews with children or adults in the immediate environment. The method usually used for training in interviews is role-playing, followed by "test" interviews in a real "pilot" situation in the field analogous to those the researchers-interviewers can expect to encounter later. Very useful feedback for such training can come from the use of video cameras and tape recorders. Practice within a group is essential for learning nonjudgmental, nonmisleading and respectful ways of interviewing, questioning, listening, and observing.

BOX 3

This account of training in fieldwork methods comes from a WHO Tropical Disease Research Workshop on Qualitative Research Methods held in Tanzania in April 1994. Although it relates to the health field, as a description of method it is equally useful to illustrate training procedures for any RA.

"In order to arm the participants [prospective researchers] with the required research instruments for the field study, they were exposed to lectures on the basic qualitative research tools such as in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, group discussions and focus group discussions and observations. Lectures on the use of key informants, role playing and free listing were also presented. At the end of each [pilot test or training] field trip, a plenary session was held to discuss salient findings and problems encountered in the field. This enabled each
A note on language problems

It will not always be possible to find researchers and interviewers fluent in local languages. This will be all the more true if a research team is covering several widely dispersed communities in areas difficult to access, where different languages or dialects are spoken. Translation services will be needed, and transportation services for both researchers and translators. These will inevitably add to the research cost. In addition, translators must be given at least minimal training regarding the research focus, in view of the sensitive subject matter they will be required to translate.

All survey schedules and research questionnaires may also have to be translated into all the local dialects, and researchers (or their translators) will need to be trained in asking questions and interviewing in those dialects.

STEP THREE: Collecting Background Information

Some of the early days of preparation must be devoted to collecting (and digesting) the background information necessary for planning the actual research. The sources of this information may include the following, each providing some small part of the "picture" needed before the research can begin. The sources listed below are mainly written materials, and there may be others as well:

- National surveys, whether demographic or labour force household based surveys. Where such national surveys have taken place, they offer indispensable information that must be studied, along
with other available information, before planning any RA research. However, they will most likely provide information that is not adequate or reliable enough about working children in specific geographical regions, circumstances and occupations to permit adequate contextual understanding, much less the formulation of appropriate intervention measures. (This is one reason why the RA is necessary in the first place, as already noted above).

- Population census reports that contain information about the economically productive activities of household members in different age groups.
- Reports (published and unpublished) made by and/or obtained from international organizations, NGOs, government agencies or trade unions concerning various aspects of children’s work.
- Special reports on particular industries, where they exist, including trade and export statistics and the productive structure of the industry, especially if it is an industry in which large numbers of children are known to work. These may have been made by government agencies, by trade unions, or by some other individual or organization.
- Case studies (descriptive studies) that may be available in books, monographs, and unpublished theses and dissertations concerning specific occupations or specific categories of working children, as well as any community studies that deal with children’s economic activities.
- Information on national legislation and enforcement measures on child labour and education, since this has a major impact on the child labour situation.
- Newspaper and magazine reports and special articles about working children.
- Related data gathered from other written sources. For example, studies of school attendance and absenteeism may include information or clues about working children or about children working and attending school at the same time. Some NGOs and government offices in the field of education are likely to have useful information.

**STEP FOUR: Elaborating a Research Focus**

We already pointed out earlier in these Guidelines that the **focus** of any particular RA research
effort must be decided upon beforehand by the researchers and those sponsoring the research. There must be a clear answer to the question: Why is this Rapid Assessment being done? What is its purpose? What do the researchers and sponsors want to find out about? This needs to be clarified at the outset because, given the time constraints of RA research, it is not possible to address the full range of questions to which it might ideally be desirable to have answers. Choices must be made about what to research and what to overlook. This does not mean that the focus is “written in stone”. On the contrary, it should always be subject to modification and refinement as the work proceeds.

In Part I, Section 4 above, a list of possible focus topics was given. Now, at this point in the research preparations, the researchers need to decide how they want to narrow their focus and approach the research topic(s) they and their sponsors have decided to emphasize. Do they want to confine their investigations to a specific industry, a specific mode of work or occupation, a specific population of child workers, a specific geographical area or community, or a specific kind of workplace hazard? Do they want to focus only on children in rural areas? Children working in their own homes? Children working in "hidden" (or dangerous) occupations? Children working in servitude? Etc. Their decision will determine the research sites they choose, the questions they ask, the individuals they interview or observe, even the equipment they bring with them; for example, if assessing the physical condition of, and dangers to, children working in a particular industry or occupation is one of their objectives, they will need to bring various kinds of measuring instruments with them, and the expertise to use them.

It is at this stage, if not earlier, that a decision must be taken about whether to target principally enterprises or workplaces employing working children, working children themselves outside their workplaces, the families of working children, or key informants willing to divulge information about children in inaccessible or "hidden" occupations. These Guidelines have been designed with the working children as the principal research focus, but that does not mean that all the research activities can involve them or center around them. Other categories of individuals must always be observed and interviewed, as will be seen later in the Guidelines. And for each category,
what is looked for during observation will be different, and different sets of issues will be raised during interviews.

Travel will also be necessary, throughout the area where the research takes place, and perhaps "backwards" as well, to the (rural) places of origin of children now working in urban areas. Travel may also occur in the other direction, following the path to town of young people who have migrated (whether voluntarily or by coercion) from a village in search of work, or to become child domestic servants. The travel and movements of the research team around the area must be planned and provided for, or else sufficient flexibility for them must be provided for as the research develops. It is at this stage, in other words, that the concrete spatial implications of the chosen research focus actually take shape. And of course the research budget must include the appropriate allocations as well.

STEP FIVE: A Place for Household Inquiries

As already noted earlier in these Guidelines, large scale statistically based household surveys of child labour have been carried out nationally in a number of countries in recent years. The RA research method described in these pages differs greatly from these kinds of large scale survey instruments. However, there is a place for local, community, or provincial household inquiries as part of an RA, as a way of helping to learn about certain limited populations of working children. Interviews with household members, where feasible, can help to identify the specific localities and occupations where there are children working, including perhaps the households' own offspring. This procedure might actually save research time, as it can provide information about areas known to have many working children while at the same time redirecting research attention away from areas or occupations which were thought to have more children working than is in fact the case. Questioning household members and local community residents can even help in listing the whole range of predominant occupations in which children work in an area, as well as their structure (e.g., who creates them, where the work comes from, who does it, who profits from it, etc.) It then becomes possible to follow up the working children more directly in other ways, using the
information provided by local households as a point of departure.

These limited household inquiries can be especially important as "research starters" in those geographical areas where no national survey exists and where no specific information on the work of children in an area can be obtained from other existing sources. It is likely that such quick local surveys will provide an undercount of an area's working children, but they will nonetheless provide some approximate baseline data on their numbers, their locations, and some of their work activities. A rough and tentative sample can be constructed from such data. Limited household inquiries can also provide needed information about the size and structure of families with working children, their current school attendance patterns, educational levels of both children and parents, number of hours children spend doing domestic work within their own family household, number of children living elsewhere perhaps in domestic servant arrangements, and also number of children "working elsewhere" in undefined places and activities (which may point to children in "hidden" or illegal occupations).

**BOX 4**

The anthropological research started with a study of urban poor families living in a Dhaka slum (bustee). The purpose was to find out about family composition, work and income, and
generally how children grow up in a poor urban environment. The bustee study provided a good introduction to categories of children which were followed in subsequent studies. These include street children, child beggars and children assisting adult beggars, market porters, waste pickers (tokai), male and female children engaged in prostitution, adopted and sold children and domestic servants. The bustee study gave us useful background information and insights on a large number of issues. The contrast, as well as the economic interdependency between the urban middle class and the poor bustee dwellers was put in sharp focus. The impact of urban migration on families and children in particular was observed, as well as the fragility and the resilience of bustee communities, some of whose children turn to the street. (T. Blanchet, Lost Innocence, Stolen Childhoods, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1996, p. 9.)

Such limited surveys in some instances may therefore be the only way to arrive at some picture of the work of children in a local area where prior statistical data is lacking or outdated and where little else is known. These findings may prove to be of great importance for planning the rest of an RA team's activities in the most cost-effective way, since they will indicate those rural villages or urban environments where most of the working children are to be found and where subsequent research should take place. Household interviews may also reveal the precise identities and working addresses of child labourers so that they can be approached for observation and interview, and the precise locations of work sites and enterprises previously unknown to the researchers can be visited. Last but hardly least, approaching households provides key information in localities where children work at home alongside other family members.

It is estimated that a rapid household inquiry of the kind we suggest here could be done by two researchers in a few days. However, the utility of such limited surveys will be tempered, in many cases, by the fact that many children, and especially those in "hidden" occupations, will be overlooked and also that not all populations approached at the household level will be equally receptive or forthcoming. This is also the case with other research approaches, and it is why these Guidelines focus on a combination of ways of doing rapid research about children who work.
SECTION B: DOING THE RESEARCH

Section B consists of eight parts. It helps researchers to select and identify informants, identify and map research locations, observe children at work and at other times, interview informants, and cross-check, compile and analyze findings. Finally, it addresses the question of how to present findings to the research sponsors and to others, and how to aid the transition from research to action.

In practice, it is very hard to separate some of these processes from each other, since they occur at the same time and provide continuous feedback and stimulus for the ongoing research. This is especially the case with the identification and interviewing of informants, the counting of how many working children there are and the identification of the areas where they are most concentrated and require most research time, and the observation and interviewing of children and those in their work or living environment. The different steps outlined below are therefore somewhat artificially distinguished from each other, and it is unlikely that they will be carried out precisely in the sequence that is presented here.

STEP SIX: Selecting Informants

We derive much of our RA information from individuals who know about the subject of working children and about the area we are researching and its economy, as well as relying on our own observations and interviews.

Usually, Rapid Assessment researchers start their interviews by talking with those informants who are most "obvious" and easy to identify and contact: Government officials, police officers, trade union officials, and the administrators and personnel of governmental organizations. Often the positions these individuals occupy put them in contact with working children or the adults who
employ them; this may be the case even in areas where (certain kinds of) child labour is illegal or where children are performing illicit or immoral activities. These informants will probably be at least broadly familiar with such local situations. Administrators and officials at the district or community (local) level are important contributors to the research effort in several ways. First, because they function in an official capacity their expertise and support should be sought, and it is a courtesy to approach and consult them about their knowledge even if this knowledge should turn out later to be partial, flawed, biased or simply not useful. Second, they may be able to provide introductions to other individuals in their organizations who are in closer contact with "the reality on the ground" but who would otherwise be reluctant to cooperate with the research team without their superiors' permission and encouragement. Third, they may be able to facilitate the research by providing introductions to other individuals outside their field of competence and outside of government, for example influential people within the research localities.

Another very important category of informant may be the head of the local business or employers’ organization (there may be several), the chamber of commerce (there may be several), the trade union (there may be several), and any other organization involved with the area's economic life.

We tend to sometimes have the impression that many of these informants have "middle class" or professional biases, or that they have negative attitudes toward working children, many of whom are uneducated and come from impoverished backgrounds. The beliefs and attitudes of these informants are nonetheless important, even though not all members of this informant category will be equally helpful. (There may be some resistance, for example, on the part of the employers' organizations, some of whose members may be employing children or profiting from child labour in one way or another; and also on the part of some members of the police, who may be deriving financial benefit from certain "protection" activities associated with illicit child labour).

Researchers will also need to keep in mind, when researching in some regions and cultures, that child labour (even that of quite young children) is considered "normal" and it is not always
frowned upon. In other areas, it is considered unfortunate but rendered inevitable by circumstances. Parents and employers will not always be aware of the physical and psychological dangers incurred by the children. It is better, therefore, for researchers to suspend their own personal views when approaching certain categories of informants and to avoid engaging in discussions that might lead to disagreements or the expression of the researcher's personal opinions. These would make it very difficult to continue to collect the data and information upon which successful research depends.

A particular role as informant may be occupied by the government labour inspector, who is in a position to know about where much of the child labour is taking place and under what conditions. "If we are to combat it effectively, we need to know which groups are particularly vulnerable, where working children are to be found, what their working conditions are and what hazards they are exposed to. Labour inspectors carrying out their regular duties can often be a valuable source of information in this regard" (ILO Report for Discussion at the Meeting of Experts on Labour Inspection and Child Labour of September 1999, p. 25). However, the potential for labour inspectors to help the research effort will be limited in some circumstances. For example, if a country has the practice of monitoring only "registered, established, large or medium-sized and, in many cases, exclusively urban enterprises" and not "small businesses in the informal sector of the economy it is difficult to track down cases of child labour" (p. 24). Moreover, in the case of "private homes employing domestic servants, out-workers, homeworkers, and the like usually the occupier's permission is required before these premises may be entered [and] if permission is refused there is usually little the inspector can do, despite the fact that a large number of people may be involved whose conditions of work could be quite unsatisfactory" (p. 24).

Another type of informant important to the research is neither an official nor associated with the kinds of associations mentioned above. This category is composed of outreach workers of social service agencies, teachers, members of women’s groups, community organizations and leaders, NGO organizers, religious and church-linked workers, health centre workers, etc. These individuals are especially important because they can frequently provide direct avenues of contact
with child workers. For example, there are often small NGOs that sponsor outreach programmes for child workers in towns and cities. These outreach workers, who are often volunteers, may be willing to give information-gatherers "guided tours" of relevant local community settings, and can introduce them to some of their own contacts among the population. For this reason these kinds of informants may be important sources of liaison in local areas for actually being able to interview children. Through them, researchers may succeed in directly contacting working children they might otherwise never meet or be able to interview.

Some of the official and unofficial informants described above should be interviewed more than once, if possible, in the hope of establishing a relationship of mutual trust and cooperation with them. This relationship, if constructive, will continue throughout the research project. In its later phases, the interviewer might find it useful to return to the same informants to discuss ideas and interpretations he or she has formed about the subject at hand. In some cases, interviewers may even ask their key informants to comment on drafts of reports. Sometimes key informants play such a useful role that they are asked to help in the data gathering and interpretation; and in such cases, they may even be paid.

Finally, another category of informants is made up of the working children and those around them: parents and employers and other significant adults. In interviews or group discussions, we may find one or two individuals particularly informative and can then try to arrange more in-depth interviews and discussions with them. The underlying idea here is that wherever possible there should be repeat interviews and conversations with good and useful informants (see ahead, Step 9, for more on the subject of interviewing).

Listing

One of the chief initial aims of informal, open-ended interviews with some of these informants is to prepare the ground for subsequent data-gathering. We can try to form a preliminary idea of the
situation of working children in a given area by making lists of items about which we seek information, for example about occupations, working conditions, the concerns of the working children, etc. The following is a format for four different "lists," which are presented along the left hand side of the chart. The middle column from top to bottom gives the possible sources of information on each "list" or subject, and the right hand column gives the purpose of collecting the information.

**BOX 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List (Information Sought)</th>
<th>Information obtained from whom</th>
<th>Likely use of the information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of occupations of children in a particular setting.</td>
<td>NGO outreach workers, “street people”, child workers.</td>
<td>To identify groups that may be at risk -for future data gathering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of specific tasks or activities in an “occupation.”</td>
<td>The children who do the work; adults in the same workplace.</td>
<td>To explore variations in exposure to physical and psychological harm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of “problem events.”</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>To learn about the children’s concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous people</td>
<td>Children, NGO outreach workers, “street people.”</td>
<td>To learn about the children’s fears and apprehensions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These "lists" are guidelines as to what to ask some of the informants; they can be asked to list, for example, the different tasks children do, but in a conversational way. Further information is elicited by prompting and ask more questions.

Listing is useful because it tends to bring out quickly a good deal of related information. For example, informants may comment about characteristics that distinguish one type of work from another. Children's work may differ from the work of adults in relation to one or more of the
following features, or one kind of economic activity performed by children may differ from another:

- The amount of direct surveillance by employers.
- Danger from aggressive persons, gangs, thieves, etc.
- Direct risk of injury from machinery, etc.
- Skills and knowledge needed.
- Amount and frequency of pay, and to whom it is given.
- The possibility of learning a trade.
- Hours of work.
- Characteristics of work environment (air quality, noise level, dirt, dust, heat, etc.).
- Possible access to education.
- Possibility of leaving the work situation.
- What happens in case of sickness or absenteeism.
- Frequency of eating, sleeping.

Listing, as a technique used with selected informants, can therefore get at certain underlying issues concerning working children, some of which may form the basis for policy intervention later. Which of these basic questions are asked of the informants will depend, obviously, upon the issues the researchers and their sponsors have chosen to focus upon in the RA.

STEP SEVEN: Identifying and mapping key locations

Part of the process of identifying and mapping the principal locations for research has to do with "counting" the children who work in those locations. This can be done through the judicious combined use of official figures, the interview of informants, and field visits. How one researcher did this is described in the box below.
Neera Burra in her book *Born to Work: Child Labour in India* devised the following procedure for estimating how many children are working in an industry: Take into consideration all the previous official figures of numbers of people in an industry, or the town's population, ask informants to estimate what percent of the workforce is made up of children, and use that percentage to calculate how many children are working... "She used this procedure for the brass ware industry of Moradabad. She then wanted to know how many of these children were working in their own family's enterprise, since she was aware of the tendency to pass off children working in small enterprises and workshops as family labour, which appears less serious. "But twelve days of seeing and visiting several hundred small units in the by-lanes of Moradabad convinced me that in virtually no case were children working as part of family labour. To the last child, they were all hired by others." (p. 163. See also ahead, Step 8 of these Guidelines). Investigating the glass industry of Firozabad, she wrote: "Interviews with workers, factory owners and the local MLA revealed that there are almost 50,000 children below the age of fourteen years working in the glass industry at Firozabad: the total labour force is estimated at 200,000. A visit to any glass unit shows at a glance that at least 25 percent of the workers present are children... Official figures are considerably lower than what was reported in the field. Firozabad would then appear to have one of the largest concentrations of child labour in India." (p. 43) (New Delhi, 1995)

The second box provides an example from a different country of how researchers and their sponsors carried out site identification and selection for their RA. Their chosen research focus was children working in or near new manufacturing areas, and the identification of sites and working children was a multi-stage process again involving several steps and a number of informants. (The RA is referred to here as a "Rapid appraisal").
BOX 7

"The first action of the Committee [composed of government officials and non-governmental agencies] was to identify problematic types of child labour and the areas where they are prevalent in the region... The bases for the selection of sites [was] as follows: a) A known sizeable population of child labour below 15 years old; b) the presence of informal sector enterprises... and c) children are known or suspected to work [in these areas]." (Later one area was abandoned because little child labour existed there, but several more were added). "At the start, a Directory of Exporters and Manufacturers prepared by the Department of Trade and Industry was provided by the Department of Labour and Employment during a consultative meeting with the [committee]. It was logical to presume that although at varying levels of production, [Areas A and B] had become manufacturing and industrial centers of the province. As such, working children could be found close to the location of specific factories. The addresses of the different firms became the basic source of information upon which a listing of [villages to be] covered by the rapid appraisal survey was drawn from." Next, "the... team conducted a reconnaissance survey prior to the rapid appraisal survey proper, since available information regarding working children in [Areas A and B] was inadequate. The activity employed every possible effort to identify and locate the areas notorious for child labour. Key city and [village] officials, as well as reliable persons and sources of secondary data, such as the Directory of Exporters and several others, were used as major sources of information during the reconnaissance. Verification, confirmation and correction activities followed" and the resultant towns to be researched "were purposely selected after the... survey... found that [they] had a large number of working children below 15 years of age and, more importantly, each represented a different craft." (From "The 'hidden' workers of Cebu's booming industries" by researchers from the University of San Carlos (joint authors), *Philippine Labor Review* XVIII, 2, July-Dec 1994, pp. 5, 7)

In another example from the same country but a different sector of economic activity, the final report states: "[The area] was identified by the local officials, in an orientation meeting with [the researchers], as an agricultural area with many families which are contract growers for the Plantation.. Contract growing involves a small family enterprise in which contract growers for the Plantation... Contract growing involves a small family enterprise in which all family members, irrespective of age, are often active participants. In some cases, each family member is given a wage commensurate with his duties and responsibilities..." (H. K. Gloria, "Early to Work: A Closer look into Child Labor in Southern Mindanao", *Philippine Labor Review* XVIII, 1, Jan-June 1994, p. 7).
Below is a short list of the parts of cities or towns, communities, or neighbourhoods where concentrations of children involved in economic activity are usually to be found, starting with the manufacturing or industrial areas mentioned in the first two boxes above.

· Manufacturing or industrial areas. Manufacturing activity tends to take place in four types of work settings: 1) Real factories, which often look like factories and may have high walls, gates and principal entrances; 2) Backstreet industrial enterprises, informally constituted and in fact part of the informal sector of economic activity; 3) Home production, as family enterprise or cottage industry; and 4) Rural industry, which is not as unusual as may sometimes be thought but which is often isolated, difficult to learn about and to access. (The loomsheds of carpet weavers are an example of this. So are mines).

· Urban commercial areas where there are concentrations of children who work in the streets in a variety of economic activities.

· Marketplaces, where there are child vendors, runners, scavengers, assistants, and domestic servants accompanying or doing errands for their employers.

· Transportation centres, including harbours, ferry landings, railway terminals and bus stations, where child beggars, vendors, and sex workers may be found.

· Commercial sex areas (streets, bars, tourist areas, dance halls, brothels) that may have children who are active as sex workers.

· Agricultural areas, which have high concentrations of children doing all kinds of agricultural and/or farm linked activities. Some of these children may be working on plantations, as in the third example above; others may be migrant or occasional agricultural labourers, working with or without their families.
· Dumping areas, garbage disposal and refuse areas, where child scavengers and ragpickers may be found.

· Other "temporary" locations, e.g. city parks where large numbers of child domestic workers gather on their weekly day off. (Other child domestics are kept indoors and constitute one of the forms of "hidden" child labour, to be discussed separately in Part III of these Guidelines)

· Finally, there may be other concentrations of working children in ocean areas, working in fishing from shore or on boats out at sea; in diving or the gathering of seashells, etc.

Some key locations will be more densely populated, for example major market or transportation centres, while others may have a specific cottage industry dispersed over a wide rural or semi-rural area. Such spread-out locations require extra data-gathering efforts, perhaps including visits to scattered villages or households to research the children employed in those areas.

The table below lists the categories of children's work in one part of a major city, and the numbers of children estimated to do them. It is provided as an example.
### Box 8

#### Examples of children’s occupations in a key location in Dhaka, Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Category</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistants/sellers, etc. in shops; hotel boys; grocery assistant, etc.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-scale sellers, including roving vendors.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts/manufacturing/repairs: welding shops, sewing machine operators, etc.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation: van helpers, rickshaw-pullers, etc</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porters at transportation centres, marketplaces</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory workers (small and large factories)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various &quot;recycling specialists&quot; incl. rag-pickers, collectors of firewood, dung.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural work, including animal tending</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beggars and beggar’s assistants</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some environments, such as densely packed major cities or widely scattered rural areas, it will be important to draw maps of each of the key locations. These maps do not need to be highly detailed or precise at first, and can be improved upon later if need be. Such maps may help researchers to orient themselves in the area they are researching, and to physically divide the area and assign different tasks to different members of their team. If this is done, different areas on the map will correspond to different members of the investigating team, so the team can be sure of having covered the whole area in the end. If two teams are working in the same area they should plan to join their maps up again during the exchange of findings later.

With map in hand, it is useful to walk around an area so that you have a clear idea of how to read the map easily in relation to large streets or landmarks. Mark with asterisks those sites where working children are to be observed. It is advisable to return to the area several times at different hours, including evening and again night time. Use different coding (different colored ink, for example) to indicate the presence of working children at different hours and carrying out different activities. (The result of repeated visits at different hours might well be revealing. For example, if a morning street market in a major town square contains children working as vendors, porters, beggars, etc., the same area "captured" at night might contain child sex workers).

The map that results from this orientation exercise may contain information that will subsequently be useful to NGOs and government agencies, or to others planning to construct new facilities, services or schools in the area. The research team should not expect to be able to cover all key locations in equal depth, unless there are very few in all. Normally, in each city, town or rural area a sample of key locations is selected for study so that different kinds of geographic locations, with different types of economic activities as already identified by informants, are included.
It might be desirable to assign a research assistant to write descriptions and analyses of the various localities where children tend to live and work in large numbers (type of locality, its physical appearance, available facilities, typical house appearance, school proximity, transportation facilities, etc.). This person might also include a few lines about the socioeconomic role of the locality in the region's economic life, based on both observation and secondary sources.

In choosing research locations, other factors affecting research must also be taken into account, such as the accessibility of the area to researchers, the kind of work children are doing that may make them more or less approachable for interviews, and prior information known about the area. Attention must also be paid to seasonality: Mines and quarries, for example, are not worked much during the rainy season, and the same goes for agriculture. Occupations linked to hotels, tourism and entertainment are less busy in the off-season and there may be fewer child workers on hand. Yet it may be just at such times that the daily work load is less and that children working in hotels, tourism and red light districts can best be interviewed.

**STEP EIGHT: Observing working children**

Nothing can replace first-hand observation for gaining knowledge, understanding and "empathy" for the children who work. In a child labour RA, observing children at work is one of the main ways of getting information. All other means interviews, for example tell how children and others think about how they behave; the children give their conscious responses to the interviewer. Observation is the only means of finding out how the children's work and their lives actually are; it is small scale and limited in time. Of course, even observation is not neutral it is inevitably filtered by the preconceptions of the observer, and two observers seeing the same work setting may notice different features of it. Although this cannot be avoided, it is one reason why, if two researchers are present at the same site, they should compare notes immediately afterward so as to form a more balanced and complete picture.
BOX 9

Here is one description of how several researchers can collaborate together to produce a more accurate picture of what they have observed.

"Members should have clear and complementary responsibilities, and mechanisms should be in place to share observations and interpretations... Systematic sharing of observations and regular ongoing interpretation of their meanings are essential to successful team research. Observations may be shared in several ways. One way is that observers may witness the same event and then discuss it afterward. Second, researchers may read each other's field notes and offer comments, add information, or challenge interpretations. A third way is that teams can hold regular debriefing sessions to present and analyze members' findings." (From K. Erickson and D. Stull, Doing Team Ethnography: Warnings and Advice, Qualitative Research Methods Series 42, Sage Publications 1998, p. 18).

For most types of child labour, conducting observations in an open way so that the children know they are being observed and why, if the researcher has the opportunity to explain it to them works best. Surreptitious observation may be noticed in the end, and may detract from the general atmosphere of trust. It is also important for the children to know that the researcher, although he/she may show up in the company of officials or the employer, is not necessarily one of “them”, although it may not always be possible to communicate this openly. In most observations, it is a
good idea as well not to take visible notes but to hone one's memory for writing things down immediately afterward, a process that tends to improve with practice. Note-taking during the observation might draw attention and arouse suspicion; so might the use of video cameras, although these are often used in other kinds of research activities. (A video camera to record scenes in a locality or neighbourhood would be very helpful, for example, if used unobtrusively).

Here are several basic "rules" for observing children in work settings:

- The initial observation should last at least one hour.
- For most sites, the observation should be repeated if possible at least once at a different time of the day, or conducted once during the day and once at night.
- Where there are known to be seasonal variations (e.g. in agriculture, or slack and boom periods of factory production), observations should be repeated at different times to take them into account.

The observation process will be different in different work settings. Here are some suggestions about how to observe children working in industry. Such observations will probably tend to focus on industrial or manufacturing areas and operations. If children are working in a technical multi-process activity, a diagram of its various stages can accompany a description of the activities carried out by children and under what conditions. A table listing the various substages of the manufacturing operation, and the sex and ages of the children who work in them and the actual activities they perform, provides a great deal of information in a very condensed way. This information is especially important to obtain because in some settings children are assigned the highest-risk (in the sense of most hazardous) tasks in the industrial process, which they do without adequate safeguards or protection. This is why careful observation of children working in industry is so important even if they cannot be accessed for interviews.

This process needs to be repeated for the different kinds of industrial process, unless the RA happens to have only one industry as its focus. If possible, choose a selection of enterprises
representative of the different industries in which children work, even if only a small number of them can be visited. Include enterprises of different sizes (large, medium and small) and especially try to include small-scale subcontracting firms, because it is these that often employ the largest numbers of children.

It will not always be easy to gain access to locations (factories, shops, etc.) in order to observe child workers. Employers are often reluctant to grant access, and even more so if the child labour is illegally employed. However, sometimes obstacles can be overcome if the researcher is accompanied by labour inspectors, or arrives by arrangement with representatives of employers’ or trade union organizations with whom prior contact has been made by people known to them. Of course, if such prior arrangement has been made and the visit is known about in advance, it is also very likely that any underage child labourers who may work there will have been told to "stay home" that day (or to reply, if asked by the visitor, that they are older than they really are or else family members of the employer. In such cases the observer has to use his/her careful judgment to guess what the real situation probably is.)

The following table gives a partial list of what to look for at a work site:
### BOX 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>WORKING CONDITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Premises:</strong></td>
<td>Daily working hours:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dirty, badly maintained</td>
<td>Daily Working hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- weak walls, roof, floor</td>
<td>- &gt; 5 hrs/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dangerous traffic</td>
<td>- 5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unprotected heights</td>
<td>- 8-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- exposed wiring</td>
<td>- 10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- flammable surfaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- excessive heat, humidity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- excessive cold, drafts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- insufficient ventilation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- dust, gases, bad smell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- noise, vibrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- poor or inappropriate lighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- slippery floors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools, machines:</strong></td>
<td>Constraint and abuse:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unsuitable hand tools</td>
<td>- isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unguarded equipment</td>
<td>- locked doors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- power machinery</td>
<td>- under debt bondage/advances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tractors, vehicles</td>
<td>- illegal situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- hoisting machinery</td>
<td>- sexual harrassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- ovens, smelters</td>
<td>- beatings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- hot irons, welding torches</td>
<td>- verbal abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pressure tanks</td>
<td>- fines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- grinders, polishers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- freezers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergency and personal care:
- unsuitable clothing, shoes
- insufficient protective gear
- no drinking water
- no toilet or water for toilet
- no separate eating place
- no medical professional
- no first aid kit
- no fire extinguishers

This list is important for any work site but particularly for industrial sites.

We have already given some indications of how to observe children in town and city public places at various times of the day and night, and in Part III we will discuss the problem of children working in "hidden" occupations. Other indications of the numbers and occupations of children working in towns and cities can come from careful observations of the outlying areas surrounding the towns at those times of day when there is most movement of workers from their homes in the villages, suburbs or slum areas to workplaces in the town or back again. Here is one example:

BOX 11

Neera Burra describes for the town of Moradabad in India the mainly Hindu children coming into the town in the very early morning (the majority of workers, Moslem children, tend to live in the town itself, near the factories). [They are] "20 to 25 per cent Hindus... from adjoining villages in a radius of five to six kilometres from the town. [They] can be seen at the railway station in the morning sitting on top of the carriages of the Amroha and Chaumasia passenger trains. The age-range of the child workers is between eight and twelve years. The Bagvans, Jatava, Lokhes and Khagis are the castes to which the children normally belong" (from Born
From an observation like this, some estimate of numbers can be made and some of the children can be followed tracked, in other words, to their actual work places. The researcher will already have learned much about the quality of their lives by doing this, and may subsequently want to approach the workplaces themselves for observation, or approach the children for interviews in the general vicinity at the end of the work day.

A word of warning is appropriate before ending this section. Once child labour sites are identified, there may be some temptation to have policy makers, other officials and representatives of the media go and see for themselves the conditions in which the children work, so they can understand the reality which it is so difficult to convey in words. This may heighten public awareness resulting in action, but it is not what is needed while the research is in progress. For one thing, it might be viewed by the public as some kind of "child labour tourism". For another, it will certainly put other employers "on their guard" against allowing researchers onto their premises for either observation or interviews, and further research will become that much more difficult or even impossible.

STEP NINE: Interviewing

Together with observation, interviews form the core of the RA. This section concerns how to approach children for interviews and how to carry out the interviews (additional material can be found in the annexes). (Children are not, however, the only people who need to be interviewed; in Step Six above, we have given several other categories of informants whose information and views will contribute to RA findings).

Interviewing children
Although researchers are very different in their interpersonal styles and consequently their interviewing skills, the techniques of interviewing child workers can be taught to individuals ranging from the highly educated to the slightly literate. The most effective training methods are usually a combination of role-play, trial-and-error, and continued practice under supervision. Friendliness and understanding, expressed sincerely, can also go a long way toward breaking the ice with children, as with other informants as well.

However, interviewers need to remember additional characteristics of children. Perhaps the most important is that in many societies where children have gone to work at a very young age, or worked in very difficult or repressive environments, the "seen and not heard" expectations placed on them from early on will have gravely affected their behaviour. They will probably have learned to make themselves as inconspicuous as possible when adults are present, and for them, an adult who is a stranger and who has come to ask them questions about their work poses an additional threat. A sensitive interviewer will be aware that children interviewed in or near their work situations, or who work most of their waking hours and who rarely if ever get the chance to play or to sleep enough, cannot be expected to act in a free, easy, trusting or spontaneous manner.

For most workplaces it will not be possible to approach children while they are working, and the interviewers should seek them out for conversations after the work day is over, and preferably at some distance from the workplace and not within sight of the employer (unless the employer has previously shown some receptiveness to the interviewer). By and large, children interviewed within earshot of the employer will not be able to talk openly. Similarly, if children are approached at home or near their homes, their families may tend to interfere in the interview, either by impeding it or by interjecting themselves in it.

More girls than boys are found in such often hidden occupations as domestic work in the homes of others and in prostitution. More girls are trafficked as well. This means that by virtue of the kinds of work many girls do, which is often more concealed from public view, girls may be
harder to approach to interviews than boys.

There is also considerable benefit to talking with children in small groups, where they often become more talkative and spontaneous. The interviewer can introduce him or herself and learn about their lives, their work, and any number of related issues. With the increased confidence that comes from numbers, they may be willing to talk about working conditions and about their employer. Several informal meetings are advisable; and if the children are outgoing, they may bring their friends and their friends' friends so much so that the interviewer is overwhelmed with children and with information. At this point it will become necessary to limit the interviews and attempt to obtain some semblance of sampling, which should be done by age, sex, kind of work place, etc. There is also much information to be gained by letting children socialize among themselves while the interviewer eavesdrops; this can be a very productive form of observation-cum-interviewing, which may well occur once the interviewer has become an accepted or trusted "fixture" in the environment.

Barring unforeseen success of the kind described above, access to working children for interviews can be gained through:

1. Meetings arranged by a community/NGO outreach worker who works in or near a particular key location and who may be personally acquainted with some of the working children. This individual can assure the children that the interviewer is someone who can be trusted, and he or she can explain the reason for the interviewer's presence. Such outreach workers may also be able to locate several children who have recently worked in the various workplaces but no longer do so, and they may talk more freely about working conditions there. The researcher should interview the children in an open-ended, informal manner, and should not begin to probe immediately for "bad conditions"; let the child bring hazards and other negative information into the discussion spontaneously. By and large, the interviews should be relatively short, especially if the child worker has very little free time or if the interviewer sees the child getting tired or bored, or if the child is quite young. (We do not broach here the question of paying child informants, but we note only that
this has been done by some researchers as a way of compensating children for wages they may lose by spending time in interviews).

- Casual contacts with working children. Many key locations are very public, and the researcher can simply "hang out" in the area while making unobtrusive observations. When an opportunity arises, the interviewer can approach one of the children and enter into conversation. However, care should be taken not to alarm the child or arouse the suspicions of any employers or authorities in the area.

- In some residential areas, certain city slums for example, researchers may find (perhaps with the help of key informants) large numbers of children living who are currently employed in types of workplaces to which access would be difficult to obtain. These working children might be agreeable to supplying information about specific workplaces that the researchers cannot themselves visit.

- Much child labour is household-based, and as such it is hidden from view, although it can sometimes be revealed through household inquiry. But in other cases, some domestic servants can be approached in the local parks on their day off in many towns and cities, where they tend to congregate in groups.

**Finding children through casual conversations with adults**

- In some poorer residential areas, adults can be asked in casual conversations to identify those nearby locations that are especially likely to have concentrations of child workers. These local residents may be able to suggest the best times, days and places for finding the children when they are not working (after working hours, on their days off, etc.).

- In some locations, researchers can enter into conversation with rickshaw pullers, taxi drivers, or perhaps shopkeepers, who can indicate the kinds of activities children do in the immediate area and
where some can be located for interviews. The researcher must explain to the "contact" the nature of his or her interest.
Interviewing in rural locations

Children working in rural cottage industries or doing agricultural work are more difficult to access and interview; approaching loomsheds, mines, quarries, construction sites or the work areas of large farms and plantations is unlikely to be very productive, due to employer or overseer resistance. The interviewer's presence will arouse suspicion, and even observation may be difficult or impossible at some of these sites. If there is a general store or community hall in the area, or a religious temple, or a central agricultural market, it may be possible to strike up conversations that will lead to interviews with some children. This depends very much on the specific circumstances, and there is no fixed mode of access that will work in all situations.

As a result, children working in rural industry or agriculture can most easily be found at individual land-holdings or family farmsteads, or in households or informally constituted cottage industries. The preferred way to locate them is through their places of residence, but if they are present there, it may not be immediately evident whether they are economically active or not. When approaching households, interviewers should be careful to take note of any children seen to be working at the moment of arrival (they may or may not be members of the family). After suitable introductions and explanations, ask the householder about the numbers of children living in the household and their ages, and then ask questions such as "Where is the child right now?" "Is the child in school?" "Is the child doing any kind of work?" Researchers should note down whether the child is in school, playing, visiting, or economically active, and what type of specific activity is involved. (There are likely to be different understandings of the word "work," including productive activity around the household itself, and because of this the researcher should try to use descriptive phrases rather than labels. The question "Does the child work?" may be the wrong question to ask; and if the child has been sent to another household as a domestic, even this may not be viewed as "work" by the respondent so much as a "favour" being done by the individual who has engaged the servant and is providing food and clothing for her).
If possible, an interview with one or more children should take place, away from the house if it can be at all arranged (e.g. under a tree, in the street, at the corner park, etc.). The conversation should not take place within the range of hearing of the other members of the household. The child should be asked not only about his/her own activities but also those of others in the same age group, and siblings. He or she should also be asked whether any children have left the area to go and work elsewhere, and if so, whether he/she knows where they are and what they are doing.

Are samples possible?

It will usually not be possible to have long or very structured interviews with children (fifteen minutes will probably be the maximum). Ideally, it would be good to interview a proportional sample of working children in each locality as well as in each occupation, as well as a sample of parents and other informants. In this way the researchers could be sure of having a representative sample from all the major areas where there are large numbers of working children, and from each occupation as long as this coincides with the specific research focus of the RA, obviously.

But these ideal conditions are unlikely to be met in this kind of research, and statistical reliability will not be one of its hallmarks. Some attempt should be made, however, to obtain some numerical estimates of types of work done by children in the region as a whole, and some representative interviews with those doing the principal kinds should take place. Thus if the region contains agricultural, industrial and service occupations, it would not be desirable to interview only children involved in agriculture and not the others, unless this coincided with the focus chosen for the RA.

"Sample selection", insofar as it can be made representative, should also reflect the desire to obtain examples of the various kinds of work relationship and work sites that predominate in the area, e.g. homework, work in enterprises, work for subcontractors, street work, concealed and/or illicit occupations, hazardous labour, bonded labour, and so on. Under ideal research conditions
these would be represented by interviews in proportion to their incidence in the work life of the region's children, but this is unlikely to be achieved in practice. Obtaining interviews with working children is difficult, more so in some occupations than others, and when children are selected directly in the field there is bound to be some "haphazardness" to the process.

**Interviewing children is not always "risk-free"**

Most children will be interviewed only once, and researchers can expect to subsequently fill out their "picture" of the research topic through interviews with other children and adult informants. Nonetheless, it is tempting to try to obtain a second (or even a third) interview with a very helpful, informative or reflective child. The interviewer might say at the end of the first interview, for example, “This is so interesting that, if it’s OK with you, I’d like to come back tomorrow. Then we can have more time to go into these details.” Sometimes time or logistics make this difficult, but sometimes it does become possible.

The interviewer may find that, given more interview time, the conversation begins to turn to subjects painful for the child, subjects the child has tried not to reflect on or talk about in the past, perhaps because there was no one interested enough to listen or care. The child may become very disturbed by these painful thoughts and reflections. If this shows signs of occurring, the researcher must not press on with more questions but instead be prepared to draw promptly upon the expertise of psychologically skilled professionals to help the child recover his or her emotional equilibrium. Interviewing a child can, in such circumstances, become harmful and lead to serious depression if not handled with great sensitivity. Including a team member with psychological competence in the research project is a very good idea if interviews are expected to touch on sensitive topics and arouse deep feelings on the children's part.

**Interviewing adults**

Adults can be interviewed either individually or in focus groups. Individual interviews can
be semi-structured or else informal conversations; if preformulated questions are used, they should be "open ended" and they must be "pilot tested" on small numbers of individuals before being declared reliable for broader use. If only a few highly structured questions are needed, however, and if the technology is available and its use will be accepted by the respondents, the interviewers can use microcomputers (laptops and now palmtops) which are pre-programmed with a short questionnaire to capture the responses in personal interviews. It would be difficult to use this device with focus groups, however, and tape recorders offer more promise. Group consent to use them must be obtained beforehand, and in all interview circumstances those interviewed (whether children or adults) must also be assured of total confidentiality.

**BOX 12**

*Here is the way in which focus groups were organized for one research project in the health field.*

"Materials needed for fieldwork included cassette tapes, recorders, batteries and sodas for focus groups... The focus group participants were selected on the basis of purposeful sampling. Two focus groups were studied; both were comprised of seven participants. All participants were provided information about the study, how they were selected and how the results will be utilized. The focus group discussion was conducted through a Swahili translator and aided by cassette recording. This information was later transcribed and the results were entered into a [computer] package, coded, and stored and analyzed." (WHO/TDR, op. cit., p. 2)

In the field of child labour, focus groups can be composed of various categories: Older children who understand their purpose, parents, outreach workers, neighborhood residents, local officials, labour inspectors, employers, etc. A mixture of categories might also produce some interesting results.

The interviews should be transcribed and tabulated as soon as possible after they occur. The tabulated results and any tentative interpretations can then be discussed with the most trusted and knowledgeable informants (the NGO individuals and other community people, for example) and they can be asked about the accuracy of the findings. Are the results obtained consistent with what
they know about working conditions in similar workplaces in the area? With the general situation of child labour in the area? With the general situation of children?

**STEP TEN: Cross-checking and verification of findings**

Discussing the interview findings with trusted informants, as is suggested above, is a sort of cross-checking or verification of the findings. In RA we try as much as possible to use multiple sources of information in order to cross-check the validity and credibility of our information (in some of the literature on RA this is referred to as "triangulation"). Cross-checking to see that different sources of information "match up" or agree with each other includes the following steps:

1. Comparing the statements of two or three different informants, to see if there is basic agreement about “the facts.”
2. Comparing informants’ statements with our actual observations in key locations. If we find that a key informant’s information is at variance with what we have observed concerning children’s working conditions, kinds of occupations in the area, etc., then we try to discover the reasons for the discrepancy. Is the informant distorting information for some reason? Is the information old? Have things changed (and if so, how and why)? Was the informant correct for one small sector but “overgeneralizing” to the entire area, the entire industry or other groups of children?
3. The information obtained directly from the children themselves may contain significant details that were not obtained from other informants, but they now need to be checked with those informants, or with other children if possible.
4. Informants’ statements should be compared with written sources, including newspaper accounts and unpublished studies, and with what is already known.

Each time we find discrepancies during the process of cross-checking, we must search out more information in order to verify which of the conflicting sources gives us more valid and credible
information.

Repeat interviews

Often you will get more thorough information from certain informants when you return for second and third discussions with them. This repeat interviewing is not just asking the same questions again; it is an attempt to dig deeper for more details and additional information. At the same time, the key informant can be asked to verify the earlier interview. Was his or her information heard and interpreted accurately?

In a similar way, you return to a key location a second and third time, to make sure your maps are correct and complete and to see if there are important details about the children’s work in that area that you may have missed. You will notice many more details during a return visit, and especially after having talked with and interviewed adults and children in the area, because you have a frame of reference which enables you to understand and relate the different pieces of information to each other.

STEP ELEVEN: Data review and analysis

One of the dangers of RA, or virtually any sort of field work, is to amass a great deal of data and information that are never properly analysed. This means that no conclusions, or the wrong conclusions, are drawn from it, usually in an unsystematic way at the end of the research. To avoid this unreliable procedure, from the earliest stages of the research coding and analysis should take place. From very early on, the researcher should sift through the material being collected, looking for findings that are relevant to, or can shed some light on, the research focus that was chosen at the start. (Also from very early on, the researcher should discuss findings frequently, even daily if possible, with the other researchers on the RA team).
A first stage in the process of analysis is the tabulation of observations and of interview reports. This is a relatively standard and simple procedure that involves breaking up the information obtained into its component parts and assigning numbers to them. An example of how this is done is presented in Annex 5.

Sifting through the material, certain themes may begin to emerge. Some topics and statements may reappear in observations and interviews again and again. The researcher should make a note of them, and begin to wonder about their meaning and place in the larger picture.

These themes may group themselves into patterns. For example, in regard to child labour there may be a pattern of distribution of children across occupations and productive activities in relation to sex and age. Another pattern may relate to working children's neighborhoods of origin in relation to the kinds of jobs they take, and their location, or to how they find their jobs. A third might be the economic level of children as evidenced by their housing conditions and parental income, and the presence of the children in certain occupations at an early age. Amount of schooling, and frequency of school attendance if the child is in school, is a variable that can be related to the kind of economic activity or occupation the child performs (e.g. which occupations tend to be taken by children who have had no schooling at all, which occupations tend to be done by children who drop out after several years, which occupations tend to be carried out in combination with schooling). Which occupations tend to be combined with each other, children doing more than one within a single day or during a week? How often are certain children combining less dangerous activities with more dangerous ones? Or legal work such as vending with illegal and immoral work such as prostitution? What are the dominant pathways that children follow as they move from one occupation to another, e.g. from one less hazardous or harmful to one more fraught with dangers for them, and why? How could this be modified by outside intervention?

The identification of such themes and patterns can provide guidelines as to which populations of working children need most help, and what kind of help whether measures to encourage or render
possible school attendance, ways to withdraw completely from hazardous or illegal occupations, ways to return to their family home from areas and occupations that separate them from their families, ways to reintegrate into the community after immoral and/or coercive treatment elsewhere, ways to diminish the dangers of an industrial work place, ways to create safer alternative living environments for themselves, and so on.

This kind of content analysis is not difficult, and it can be done with simple notations and tabulations (which eventually can be computerized). It involves writing down themes, noting patterns, and setting up a simple coding system for them. Subsequent observations and interviews will also contain themes and patterns, and the same codes can be used, or if additional subject topics emerge, new codes can be added to the code list. Eventually, the researcher may even feel a certain "satiety" a point when so much of the additional material simply agrees with the material already collected, and contains the same themes and patterns and refers to the same codes, that it seems "fruitless" to continue to collect "more of the same" information. That is the point when this kind of data collection should stop, and deeper analysis begin. The rich and descriptive material already collected should at this stage be considered reference material that can be referred to, and used as examples, on an ongoing basis during the search for a more complete interpretation.

One procedure that can now be carried out at this stage is the identification of areas of programme priority, by comparing material from various parts of the research area. This can be done by examining the variations across study sites in a particular area. Are there consistent differences? Similarities? Is this comparative perspective across the different parts of the research area a good perspective for analysis, or are there other findings that now stand out as being more important? And what findings are likely to be most useful for programme planners?

**STEP TWELVE: Writing up and presenting the results**

**Writing up the results**
The preparation of draft reports, or parts of them, should be going forward while the research itself progresses: Researchers should not wait until all the field work and coding has been done before writing down some of the tentative results. Yet at this stage there is no formal draft report, nor will there be for awhile. It is now time to consider what the formal report should contain.

However brief the RA research, the final report should try to address the following topics and issues, even if some are only dealt with in a few sentences. If the report was written with a specific issue/occupation/intervention in mind, it will assign different weights to these topics as dictated by its overall research focus.

- A description of the research methodology, in some detail; most existing RA studies only provide cursory references to it. This section should describe the reasons for the research and its sponsorship, the formulation of the research plan, the selection of researchers and their backgrounds and training, interviewing procedures, the time factor, etc. It should also mention any difficulties encountered, their causes, and their effects on the research results.
- A general description of what is meant in this report by "child labour", including the age boundaries of the children interviewed. Does child work include working within the household at activities for economic gain, e.g. homework? Helping at family chores?
- A description of the social and economic features of the region and the larger economic context within which it exists. The organization of industry, agriculture and the service sector within the area (if all three are relevant). The organization of work, including the predominant kinds of work available and how they are generated, the position of the labour force, and the principal ways in which employers and employees are connected, including working adults. The stability of employment in the predominant activities, for adults and for children. Unemployment statistics and patterns. Any recent migration or economic shifts or civil unrest or other changes that may have affected the labour market and the work of adults and children. The role played by child labour in this general picture.
- A brief picture of the educational services in the area, how well they are equipped at various levels and how much use is made of them. How many children are both working and attending school?
· The legal framework within which child labour is carried out, previous studies that have been made, the history of child labour in the area if known, plus any organizations (official and non-governmental) that address the needs of working children. Much of the necessary background information can be obtained from documents and from conversations with NGOs, government officials and other individuals and agencies active in the region. This information should be familiar to researchers before the actual research begins.

· A brief description of the families in the research area, including their residential, economic and educational level. What role is assigned to child labour by parents? What is parents' actual knowledge of their children's current occupations or income-earning activities? Their views about the relation between work and school? This information will come from interviews with families when they have been possible, and with individuals active in helping working children.

· A detailed description of the kinds of work children perform, their principal characteristics, who performs the various occupations and on what basis, rates of remuneration and what happens to it, the average educational levels of the working children, the present relation between work and school and between work and skills training, the children's future goals and prospects, etc. This section will contain the core of the research. Where relevant, information should be presented here on children working in hazardous occupations, in two or more occupations, as bonded or unfree labourers, in "hidden" occupations, children living on the employer's premises (whether as private domestics or working in the hotels, catering and entertainment industry or on plantations), children living far from their families, street children, younger children, girls, children in sexually exploitative (or potentially exploitative) circumstances, etc. This section, then, will be large and comprise many parts, depending on the scope and focus of the RA.

· Is the child labour of the area researched representative of that in the region as a whole? It may be difficult to do any more than hazard a guess on this topic, unless similar studies have been made of other parts of the region. If the research area or focus of the RA targets a particular industry or category that does not exist anywhere in the region or country other than in the area researched, this should be clearly stated.

· Recommendations for consideration by policymakers should form part of the report's conclusion. Mention might also be made of measures to improve data collection and research capability if the
research is replicated in the future.

Paragraphs should be numbered and clearly "signposted" (labelled) for the reader. Case histories and examples, where available, should be directly relevant to or illustrative of the text, and put in boxes. Tables should be used, and pie charts are even more effective. For example, there can be pie charts on the respondents' age groups, types of occupations, income and its expenditure, reasons for working, etc.

BOX 13

This box contains a pie chart on reasons for working, taken from a study on child labour in small-scale mining. It effectively summarizes a great deal of information in one small chart.

- Support to family 46.2%
- For schooling 7.7%
- Means of living 23.1%
- Easy money 7.7%
- Work available 15.4%
The language and terms used in the final report should be very clear and unambiguous. The importance of this can be illustrated by giving a negative example. We read in one RA report that the employers gave "some form of welfare" to the children. To the reader unfamiliar with the specific situation this is quite unclear. From the context we can perhaps assume that the report's author meant food, accommodation, or medical care, but we do not know; nor is further explanation given in the text. To avoid such linguistic ambiguities it is wise to have the report read by several people who are mother-tongue writers in the language in which the report will be presented to the research sponsors and to potential project donors as well as other interested parties. This reading should take place well before the report is due to be formally presented, so there is time to make all the necessary corrections and clarifications.

Those individuals who write the final report should remember one other thing: Rapid Assessment means also a rapid report and a short one. An entire volume is not necessary, or even desirable, to summarize such brief research, which should be summed up in less than fifty pages including charts and diagrams. What this means is culling the information carefully and separating what is essential, or needed as illustration of what is essential, from what can be saved on the shelf or in the computer and made available later to decision makers by special request.

Informal Presentation

When the research is almost completed, an informal meeting of those directly involved with it in one way or another should be scheduled, to give a status report
to the research sponsors. This is a chance for the team to discuss the research with supporters and sponsors while it is still fresh in their minds but not yet finalized, and to describe its successes, limitations and any problems that it might contain. It may be, at this point, that as an enlarged group the researchers and the research sponsors will decide on some further field work to fill in critical gaps in the material. More likely than not, they will decide the modalities of the report and what is to be done with it when it is finally completed. They will decide how the results are to be presented to the public. Depending on the findings, this may be a charged and sensitive issue and the object of considerable discussion.

The formal report will soon be prepared for submission to particular interested parties (the ‘users’ of the information, including probably govermental and non-governmental agencies), so that programmes for action can be planned (see ahead, Step 13). This written document, however, should be accompanied by less formal presentations for maximum public impact. These informal presentations can take the following forms:

- A verbal presentation by some members of the interview team about their experiences in the field and their recommendations for action.
- A visual presentation with slides or video tape, showing children at work. (These will probably not be the same children who were interviewed.)
- An audio presentation of children describing in their own words their circumstances, conditions of work and aspirations for the future (if they consented to have all or part of their interview taped).
- A short briefing paper produced for the press, outlining the key findings and recommendations.

Before these steps are taken, however, a joint decision about them must be reached and the research sponsors and collaborators must agree that such publicity
The Final Report

The effectiveness and credibility of the Rapid Assessment will depend a great deal on what is contained in the final report, as well as how carefully it is organized. Above, we presented some of the research topics it should include. The report is intended to be read by policy-makers and planners in government agencies, as well as a variety of users among NGOs and other agencies. The report is not intended to map out specific action projects for working children, but the descriptive details should be sufficiently rich to give a good idea of (a) where the major concentrations of working children are to be found, (b) which work activities are physically and psychologically the most hazardous, and (c) what features of the children’s working conditions and life styles should be taken into account in planning programmes for the betterment of their lives.

For convenience, we list here the suggested major sections of a report:

Background

This introductory section describes the people involved in the Rapid Assessment exercise and the events which led to its initiation. It can speak in general terms about the child protection provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ILO Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138) and ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention 182), and include reference to past or present legislation and other government actions concerning child labour.
Statement of Objectives

Why was the research done? What was its principal focus?

Research method

Include here information about the field workers, and present the day-by-day schedule of your training activities, particularly those that included field data-gathering practice.

Selection of the study sites

Describe the various geographical sub-divisions of the country, and how the area of the research was selected. List and describe the various localities (urban and rural) in which the Rapid Assessment was carried out. A map should be included, in order to show the distribution of data-gathering locations.

Methods of data collection

Give descriptions, with examples, of the main data gathering operations. If the research team used computers for data entry and data management, give details of the procedures. On the other hand, if all data were managed without computers, explain the processes by which field notes, maps, etc. were originally transcribed, and how data were tabulated from them.
Results

For this section, it may be useful to group working children into major categories for purposes of comparison. Describe the differences between rural and urban working children (differences in types of occupations, working conditions, etc.), as well as any major contrasts from one region to another, or differences between major cities. Describe the differences in levels of schooling among different categories, as well as their aspirations for more education.

Describe the key locations in each category, noting such features as the presence or absence of schools, health facilities, and other services.

Mention the main kinds of economic activities and types of working children found in these key locations. Give inventories of occupations for some of the locations described.

Rank the occupations in terms of relative size if possible, based on your tallies of children in the various key locations. Magnitude can be categorized as small, moderate or large. Note any significant differences between the key locations within the same area.

Mention any resources or institutions located in the area that can be tapped. Note also if there are none.

Describe the children who appear to be at physical, psychological or other risk, and the situations which engender that risk. Present specific evidence to show the nature of the risk and the way the children felt about it.
Starting with work situations that are in the high risk category with relatively large numbers of children involved (category A in the table below), present descriptions of each occupation with sufficient detail so that policy makers and others can have a fairly clear idea of the working conditions, surrounding circumstances, and other characteristics. Use direct quotations from children’s interviews as well as direct observations made by field workers, where relevant as illustration.

**Child Work in Terms of Relative Numbers and Relative Risks**

*(where A, B, C, etc. represent occupational categories)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers/Risk</th>
<th>High Risk</th>
<th>Moderate Risk</th>
<th>Low Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large numbers of child workers</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following outline is suggested as a way of presenting the information:

1. *Nature of the occupation*: Describe the occupation in terms of the work it involves and the usual ages and sex of the children engaged in it. Give its “prestige
rating,” i.e., its standing or value in society in terms of high, medium and low.

2. *General working conditions*: Include the usual working hours, terms and amounts of pay, privileges, social contacts, responsibilities, and other aspects of the work. Describe the work environment: opportunities for leisure, rest and recreation; toilet and washing facilities; and tools and materials worked with.

3. *Physical, psychological, and moral hazards*: Describe as precisely as possible the risks and hazards usually found in this occupation. Be sure to note whether they are intrinsic to the work or are a result of variable factors such as physical abuse by some employers.

4. *Positive attractions and motivational features*: Drawing especially on statements by the children who are engaged in the occupation, describe some of its positive features.

5. *Factors regarding schooling*: Describe the levels of schooling, if any, attained by the children in this occupation, as well as their educational aspirations and possibilities for schooling. The latter has to do with flexibility in work and school schedules.

6. *Resources available*: Discuss what agencies or institutions are available to assist working children, if any, and their constraints.

Each of these aspects of an occupational profile should be described fully, in two or three pages. In addition to occupations that are particularly hazardous (A,B and C in the table above), also provide these descriptions for any occupations with large numbers of children (categories A,D and G) as these may be important foci for
policy planning.

*Lifestyle Profiles*

Select a few case studies that portray the lives of working children in order to present a vivid picture of what it means for these children to work for a living.

*Suggestions for additional work*

Include recommendations about next steps and types of occupations for which the data are still rather sketchy. This section also gives a chance to point out areas of weakness, or sectors of under-reporting.

**STEP THIRTEEN: From information to action**

Rapid Assessment has a practical aim: To obtain sufficient information on the state of working children to improve their situation. The longer the time-lag between RA research, the presentation of the report, and its practical follow-up, the greater is the danger that the momentum for action will be lost and the findings will gather dust on a shelf. This is why it is advisable to hold two types of meetings between researchers and users of the information as soon as possible after the preparation of the final report: (a) A series of informal regional or area meetings to discuss its findings, and (b) A major meeting with all interested parties to plan for action. In these meetings, it may be useful to have a rapporteur whose role is to record the points made and to summarize them for follow-up.

**Informal regional or area meetings**
Several of these might be held, if the Rapid Assessment covered more than one area. Responsibility for organizing these sessions might be turned over to those who would be most likely to take a lead role in future child labour work (a government agency, for example). It is very important to have a good balance of trade unions and employers’ organizations, government representation, and NGOs. In addition, any resource agencies existing in the research area, and which were identified and interviewed during the research, should be invited. The participation of some of the main informants, particularly child informants, is also useful.

To be most effective, the discussions should be led by a moderator who elicits comments, questions, or additions from the participants. The actual presentation should be made by interviewers from the team, who can add anecdotes, explain nuances, and most of all present dilemmas or ask clarifications on points which are still poorly understood. The rapporteur lists the points made and later sends out a summary to those who participated.

The discussion (and if possible, decision) should center around the best focus for possible action in the area. Therefore the output will hopefully be a definition of priorities. However, even if nothing else happens the participants will come to know more about child labour than they did before, and will be aware that more information is available should they wish to take further action.

A formal national planning meeting

These regional or area discussions can provide a good foundation for a national planning meeting, whose underlying objective is not information-sharing but according formal national recognition to the child labour problem if this has not
already been done, and a formal commitment to an agreed-upon course of action. All those who attended the regional or area sessions should be invited to this broader meeting, as well as other national agencies (governmental and non-governmental) and any donors of development assistance who may be involved in sponsoring action projects concerning child labour.

Such a meeting can present the results of the Rapid Assessment research unless the latter contains sensitive data, in which case it may be better to give highlights of the regional discussions. Above all the presentation should not be antagonistic to any party, including employers who may be using child labour. Experience has shown that more progress can be made by gaining the positive cooperation of employers of child labour than by attempting to pillory them in a public forum.

If there is a lack of public interest in or awareness of the child labour problem, then a high-profile meeting may be in order. If this is the case, it may be desirable to invite senior ministers and top NGO officials to attend. The meeting can be held in a formal setting (e.g. a hotel conference hall, etc) and the format agenda should be a formal one. The outcome of this type of meeting may be press reports and news articles, a policy statement, or the announcement of a donation for programme action.

If on the other hand lack of direction is one of the issues of concern, then a low-profile meeting may be preferable. In that case, those in a position to advise top officials on policy and programmes should be the ones invited. The meeting, although no smaller, may be held in a simpler working environment, with a discussion group as its format. The output from this type of meeting should be a plan of action for specific regions or areas, with specific courses of action agreed upon for each participating group.
PART III

RESEARCHING HARD TO REACH POPULATIONS

Introduction

Many countries have some populations of child workers who are especially difficult to locate, identify and research. They may be hidden from public view by being kept indoors and out of sight, even if they work in towns and cities; or they are isolated in scattered rural work sites; or they are manipulated by employers who are careful to limit their contacts with clientele and others.

Many, although not all, of these children have been trafficked into the economic activities in which they now work. Many are very young, and many are female. In recent years the evidence from many different sources and a number of countries indicates that the trafficking of children for labour appears to be increasing, and that children are being trafficked in more areas, across more borders and into a growing range of occupations. There has, as a result, been increased interest on the part of governments, NGOs and various international organizations in learning more about these populations through research, especially since many of the occupations carried out are exploitative, morally compromising, psychologically damaging, and/or dangerous and unhealthy.

To the numbers of trafficked children must be added other categories of children who have not been trafficked but who have been consigned to work (usually by their parents) as domestic servants for others, often at the cost of their freedom (or the possibility of schooling) and often without remuneration. There are yet other categories of children working in unregistered workshops or else in rural locations
virtually inaccessible to the outside world, again without their freedom of movement or any recourse against hazardous or unhealthy work, poor or nonexistent pay, and ill treatment. Collectively these hard-to-find children, whether trafficked or not, are now referred to as "hidden populations" of child labour.

It is not known how large such populations of working children are, since counting them would be very difficult. Not a great deal is known about their conditions. The task of a Rapid Assessment in this field is to attempt to gain some knowledge of the presence and activities of such children in certain limited geographical areas, and how they can best be helped. Because of the wide range of occupations represented, including prostitution, live-in domestic service, helpers in small scale private back-street enterprises, as well as child workers in mines or rural industries and many others, it is not possible to formulate a single RA strategy that will cover all their diverse circumstances. No single set of rules can explain how to access and observe them or how to interview them.

In the two sections that follow, we concentrate on only two very large categories of such children, those trafficked into prostitution or other related work and those working as domestics for others in strictly controlled circumstances. We indicate some possible sources of information, some research procedures and requirements, and some of the difficulties researchers can expect to encounter. Our treatment of these populations does not exhaust what can be learned, since each population and each environment or context is different and specific. Our discussion is therefore only the beginning of an approach to the subject.

The rapid assessment of such populations, like other RA research, is limited in time depth: Research lasts at most three months from start to finish. It can only take place within a small area, for example a group of villages, a city neighbourhood or urban area, a district of rural farms or scattered industries, etc. It may not be
possible to gain interviews with the children concerned, given their inaccessibility in many cases, and much of the analysis may have to rest on two approaches: Observation and description of the children's circumstances, and interviews with other individuals. For these "hidden" populations, observation is however much more difficult than for other kinds of child labour. The research must sometimes depend heavily on locating and accessing a broad range of "peripheral" knowledgeable individuals who can "speak for" the children by providing information about them when they themselves cannot provide it and when they themselves cannot be talked with.

We begin with some research ideas that may help make possible the Rapid Assessment research of children trafficked into prostitution.

1. Children Trafficked for prostitution and other work

Why trafficked populations are generally hidden populations

An operational definition of trafficking has been elaborated by the International Organization on Migration (IOM) in regard to trafficked women: "Trafficking in women occurs when a woman in a country other than her own is exploited by another person against her will and for financial gain. The trafficking element may cumulatively or separately consist of: arranging legal or illegal migration from the country of origin to the country of destination; deceiving victims into prostitution once in the country of destination; or enforcing victims' exploitation through violence, the threat of violence or other forms of coercion." (Gramegna 2 p.7) In general, trafficking is the involuntary transportation of women and children for purposes of forced labour, most often in the sex industry. Trafficking need not be cross-border but very often is, and involves the forcible removal of the child (or other victim) from her place of origin and her family. (We use the feminine pronoun here because more victims of trafficking are
Children (usually girls) and women who have been trafficked remain part of a hidden population until they have been identified by health workers, judicial institutions, the police, workers from NGOs and aid organizations, researchers, or others. This is because they do not themselves voluntarily come forward, as they are usually prevented by fear and trauma or by the resulting social stigma from doing so. They may also fear legal consequences if they are without any identity documents, either because they never had them or because (as is often the case) they have been taken away by the traffickers. They may fear violence from traffickers and their current employers, or may wish to keep their work activity unknown to their families. They may also have contracted HIV, with all its "shameful" connotations. Researching this population that has so many reasons to remain hidden, and so many fears, is therefore one of the more difficult of RA tasks.

Existing research on trafficking

Some research on trafficked populations has been carried out, however. The IOM has researched trafficked women (including young girls) from Eastern and Central Europe to Western Europe and has looked at the trafficking of women westward from Albania. The ILO has looked at the trafficking in children especially in the Mekong sub-region; but a report of 1998 on this subject states that although "The understanding of the nature and magnitude of the trafficking in children [in this region] is increasing... Nonetheless, many unknowns still prevail, partly due to the sensitivity and illegality of the phenomenon." ("Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in the Mekong Sub-Region," October 1998). Child trafficking for sexual purposes is categorized by the ILO as exploitative child labour, in addition to its violation of human rights. It is considered one of the "worst forms" of child labour in that it forcibly separates children from their parents and exposes them to
psychological and physical harm.

Any researcher or organization contemplating doing RA research on trafficked children would do well to embark on a period of preparation that includes familiarization with the work already done by concerned organizations, even though this research was not actually done as RA. Below, we offer a brief discussion of what RA research can be expected to entail in the field.

**What RA research on trafficking for prostitution entails**

In general, there are two distinct geographical areas where RA research concerning trafficking for prostitution can take place: Areas of actual sex industry activity, or "receiving" areas, and the sending areas from which children are trafficked. (Occasionally these areas may overlap in the following way: Children may be trafficked from one sending area to a receiving area in a neighbouring country, while the sending area is itself the recipient of trafficked children from a third area in yet another country. In other words, a specific geographical area may be both a sending and receiving area, often with groups of different ethnic origin involved in the transfers.)

Below we observe this general distinction between "receiving" areas and sending areas.

**Research in areas of sex industry activity**

**Possible informants in areas where the sex industry is active ("Receiving areas")**

The initial task in these areas is to attempt to identify the presence and make
a rough count of trafficked children. If they are found to be present in significant numbers, the task of RA researchers is then to explore the circumstances of their trafficking and their current living and working conditions. It is highly unlikely that interviews can be obtained directly with trafficked children while they are working in the area.

A list of potential informants who might be knowledgeable about the presence of trafficked children, and might be able to give some estimates of their numbers and circumstances, includes:

- Prostitutes or former prostitutes (some of whom may have been trafficked themselves in the past);
- Locally operating NGOs and women's groups;
- Police;
- Immigration officials;
- The personnel of courts and tribunals concerned with minors;
- Labour inspectors;
- Hotel owners and workers, and café and restaurant workers;
- Health clinic personnel;
- Other official and private individuals in the area.

Since trafficking is however illegal, as is prostitution in many areas, interviews with most of these informants must be considered delicate and will have to take place in carefully selected venues. All informants must be guaranteed complete confidentiality and anonymity, and will undoubtedly need to feel sufficiently confident of this before agreeing to be interviewed. RA interviewers will need to also give assurances of their non-judgmental (and non-prosecutory) intentions.
The RA researcher in this situation should attempt to obtain information from a number of different sources. Contacts that are predominantly concentrated in only one area, e.g. law or immigration enforcement, or labour inspection, will bias the findings. Where privacy violation is not an issue, informants should be asked to suggest other informants for interview, so that a chain-link access to informants can occur. The persons interviewed should be asked to give as much detail as possible, whether this is about the current conditions of trafficked children, their geographical villages of origin, known trafficking routes, mechanisms and means used by the traffickers, conditions in which trafficked children are kept, inducements given to them, etc. In this way a composite picture of the trafficking that is occurring and the numbers of children involved can be constructed. Multiple informants from different spheres will also have the function of providing cross-checks or corroborations of data already collected.

*Special problems of this research*

However, the considerable difficulty of locating informants operating within the sex industry who are both knowledgeable and willing to be interviewed about child trafficking does not exhaust the problems posed by Rapid Assessment on this issue. Obviously it is not an easy or rapid matter to gain the confidence of such valuable informants; this research may therefore tend to be more time-consuming than anticipated.

As noted above, obtaining interviews with trafficked children is highly unlikely, and will probably only be possible if these children have been rescued and placed in rehabilitation or foster care, or returned to their community of origin, and if they are willing to talk about their traumatic experiences, which cannot be assumed to be the case. While still engaged in sex work, child prostitutes (and older prostitutes as well) may well be under the influence and domination of traffickers or those individuals to
whom they were turned over and who are profiting from their labour. They may be too fearful to talk with strangers even if contact can be made with them. Any interview with a trafficked child prostitute is therefore likely to be a "post facto" event in other words, taking place long after the events narrated. (The interviewer must also remember that talking about and reliving past experiences, undoubtedly painful, may bring to the surface in informants feelings that require skilled therapeutic intervention.)

Pimps and protectors can not be interviewed and it could well be dangerous for interviewers to approach them at all, at least qua researchers. Traffickers and their agents constitute a criminal element, and even individuals working a long time in this field say they would not attempt to locate and interview them because of the high risk. It might seem like a more obvious ploy for (male) researchers to contact child prostitutes directly by posing as clients. This is not advisable either, according to knowledgeable opinion, because if the researcher's true motives are found out it could be seen as a provocation by the prostitutes' protectors. Nor would it yield enough interviews with (or about) child prostitutes to constitute a viable sample.

The information gained about the trafficking process itself will be partial at best. It cannot be the task of any RA to try to identify trafficking networks in any detail, despite the fact that ILO-IPEC feels that "the economics of trafficking networks, including profit margins and the size of the industry, are priority areas for future research" ("Combating Trafficking...", op. cit.). At best an RA can acquire some knowledge about how a network has trafficked and has impacted the lives of a number of children (victims) who have been trafficked to - or from - particular localities.

_Best avenues for research_
1) The role of observation. Some observations of working child prostitutes can occur in bars and certain other public places, for example of those whose work assignment is nominally dancer, hostess, bar companion, etc. A researcher who spends some time in these places can judge the ages of those present and obtain some general idea of the frequency with which children appear to be present within the larger universe of sex workers in certain areas. However, very young and recently trafficked children, being financially more valuable and preferred by many clients, may be more carefully guarded and therefore not visible in these more public settings. Observation, though essential, may undercount the presence of younger children.

2) The importance of contact with NGOs and women's associations. Contact with these organizations and with the health services may be the most important source of information, in at least two ways. Some organizations have operated among local girls and women, including those working in the sex industry, for years, and are well aware of the trafficking of women, their treatment, their sociocultural and geographical background, their working conditions, their health status, etc. Some of these organizations may even run classes for women, and this is an excellent contact point for those among them who may consent to be interviewed in neutral locales and for specific purposes. It may be rewarding, too, to interview older women who observe trafficked children coming into the sex industry or who themselves were trafficked when younger; they may provide information not only regarding trafficking routes and the conditions of trafficking but also the "debt" burden, degree of parental knowledge (or actual arrangement with the traffickers), children's current geographical areas of origin and relation to their families, relations with the police and other official agencies, degree of police corruption, etc.

Assessing services and intervention requirements
It should be possible by means of these avenues to assess what services are currently available to children working in the sex industry and how to target and reach them with (additional) services. Could they be especially helped by personnel or facilities in any field, e.g. medical, psycho-social, educational (non-formal schooling), training for alternative income generating activities, etc.? What is their health status? Their propensity for return and reintegration in their communities of origin, etc.? A particular RA cannot collect information on all these issues but must focus on one or two.

**Interviews**

It will be difficult to locate and interview a single identifiable group of respondents or a representative sample of this sub-population. Also, most informants are unlikely to be trafficked children even though the research is about such children. The reliability of RA research under these circumstances will derive from the number and variety of interviews carried out with a variety of informants and from the degree of agreement or internal consistency of the information obtained. This is especially important given that the informants will be drawn from a number of different but interacting populations. Each interview should be approached with a list of tentative questions, so as to elicit information on the same topics that other informants were also asked about.

**Analyzing the findings**

Analysis of the findings must include some background information that will place them in context, especially since trafficked children are very likely to come from a different ethnic, religious, racial or socioeconomic context than those among whom they now live and work. A broad analysis of the various populations living in the larger area, their traditional relations, the social and economic changes that have
ensued over the years, and the effects of major increases in tourism and travel on the various populations and also on the sex industry needs to be made. The interviews that take place need to be reviewed in a search for narrative (longitudinal) accounts, facts and common themes that will paint an understandable picture of the situation experienced by these young people, and their future prospects. If specific questions and issues are intended to be addressed, for example type of treatment by employers, health condition, potential for repatriation, etc. and if questions on these issues were included in interviews, the responses should be tabulated according to themes, just as has been described earlier in these Guidelines. As a last step, the findings should be presented to all relevant private and public organizations in a striving for recommendations and proposals for action. All those who work among the trafficked children, and such children themselves if they are willing to come forward, should participate in a discussion forum concerning the conditions and what can be done to change them.

**Research in border areas and sending communities**

**Potential informants**

Research along border areas which are known migration routes will help to determine the flow of trafficked and illegally transported children, the routes used, the identification of the communities of origin or where the families currently reside, etc. Such research may however end up by being more revealing of the trafficking process and the general pattern of migration than of the sociocultural and economic context out of which children are trafficked. The research is however necessary, and it can be carried out through conversations and interviews with government personnel, border guards, shopkeepers familiar with the ebb and flow of border traffic, small innkeepers, people who cross the border frequently for work or other purposes, etc. Interviews with traffickers should not be sought, as was already noted above. Conversations with
children being trafficked would be rare indeed.

*Research in the sending communities*

What is needed even more by policy formulators is research in the sending communities themselves, namely, those communities from which children have been trafficked or might be trafficked in the future. In some areas, sending communities (often in a different country from the sex industry locations referred to above) tend to be inhabited by ethnic or tribal minorities of diverse linguistic and cultural background, and well-below-average living conditions relative to the general population of the surrounding area.

Research in such environments places unusual demands on the linguistic competence and the sociocultural adaptability and sensitivity of researchers. The populations of such communities may not necessarily be receptive to interviews, especially on certain subjects. Or they may not understand questions posed to them, however willing they might be to cooperate with researchers from outside. This can be illustrated by reference to research carried out in the refugee camps in Kosovo, where researchers found two problems that probably occur more frequently in many different sending communities than is generally reported.

**BOX 14**

*The cultural reserve of interviewees may make interviews on certain subjects difficult.* "Kosovo Albanians were reluctant to speak to strangers about sensitive or difficult issues such as trafficking in women. Traditionally, they have dealt with difficult issues only within the family network. All interviewers reported that the interviewed women generally considered questions on
trafficking as a 'hard topic' to discuss." The researchers also reported that "some of the interviewed women did not have sufficient knowledge to answer the questions asked. They did not understand words such as 'trafficking' or 'prostitution' and consequently were not able to state if traffickers per se approached them or not." From Report of a Fact-Finding Mission to Albania, "Trafficking in Kosovo Albanian Women from the Refugee Camps in Albania," May 1999, for the IOM, not paged.

Despite these and other difficulties, research in sending areas must be carried forward in order to learn enough about the causes and mechanisms of trafficking to implement preventive strategies.

Trafficked children do not come exclusively from such areas, however. Trafficking of children is presently occurring in southeast Asia, in southeastern Europe and eastern Europe, in Latin America, in Africa, and in many other parts of the world. In most of these areas the victims are mainly female children. Because rehabilitation of children already trafficked is very difficult for various reasons, great reliance must be placed by policy makers on prevention. Each sending context must be explored in order to find ways to identify vulnerable children at risk and to determine the best preventive measures for building up the community defenses against future trafficking. RA research in the communities themselves is probably the most cost-effective way to delineate some of the specific risk factors that may lead some children to become victims in future. By interviewing representative village or town families and their female members, wherever possible, plus local and district authorities and other knowledgeable individuals, RA can help to identify the pressures that might make villagers give in to traffickers, so that a more defensive set of measures can be encouraged.
Research procedures and difficulties

Once a geographical area has been identified as a potential target of traffickers, and before research is initiated there, some selection of specific communities must be made. This may be done by relying on information provided by NGOs, local or provincial government representatives, or other individuals. The box below describes research among residents of a border area of Yunnan from which young women and children have been trafficked. Worthy of notice is the immense land area involved and the need to narrow down the size of the research area; the need to obtain local cooperation; the use of multiple ways of collecting data; and the ways in which the data collection process can be hindered.

BOX 15

Six counties were finally selected for study which altogether share a border of over 1200 kilometres with Myanmar along the western and southwestern parts of Yunnan Province. The six counties include a vast territory. The focus was therefore concentrated on the border regions where migration is more prominent. Great effort was made to obtain the full support and cooperation of the local government agencies, especially the women's federations. Through them, other related agencies such as the public security bureau were well informed about the project. For primary data collection, face to face interviews, field observations, as
The focus and content of research

Unless recent ethnographies of the region concerned are already available, RA observations and interviews should focus on the sexual division of labour and the specific economic pressures on children and young women, changing attitudes toward work, schooling, marriage, sexuality, consumerism, and the sex trade, among others. Researchers should be alert to signs of the possible truth of certain assertions frequently made in the recent literature on trafficking, to the effect that trafficking is now becoming more "voluntary" (on the part of the children trafficked) (and by implication less coercive) and that families are adjusting their moral values and accepting it for its financial returns, impelled by the general pressure of growing consumerism and materialism. Researchers should therefore be on the lookout for any marked deterioration of traditional cultural norms of behaviour that would make trafficking almost "acceptable" -- even desirable in certain communities, if the accounts are to be believed (we refer to the lure of lucre posed by the highly materialistic lifestyle of certain successful prostitutes as they return to their communities of origin to build houses and live a comfortable cut above their fellow villagers). Researchers may also want to assess present knowledge of and attitudes toward sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, etc., and if this is their focus they should consult beforehand the literature in the field of HIV Rapid Assessment.
Interviewing trafficked children and their families

It is clear that a research team needs to be carefully trained and to center on a small group of towns or villages to collect information of this type. Interview topics need to be carefully worded and preceded by testing for effectiveness, given the delicate nature of these issues. Interviewers should preferably be women, even if the informants are occasionally males, and interviews should be held alone with female children, if this can be arranged. Obtrusive note taking during interviews is to be avoided, as are tape recorders unless permission has been given; and if notes are taken, this should be done by a second female interviewer seated unobtrusively in a far part of the room. If interviews can be held individually, with no one else present but the researcher(s), the results are likely to be better.

Researchers should attempt to ascertain whether any trafficked children have returned to the area, and if so, in what condition they returned and how they were received. In particular, researchers should look for any indications of contact of trafficked repatriated women with local children who might now be vulnerable to the solicitations of traffickers, to see what role is played for young girls by direct knowledge of a formerly trafficked girl or woman. They should also note whether young girls are aware of trafficking and, if so, how they perceive it.

Direct interviews with the family of a trafficked young person, or with a trafficked young person who has returned or been repatriated, are highly desirable but may be difficult to obtain, undoubtedly in part because of the feelings of shame, embarrassment, secrecy or stigma that may be for many the social and psychological consequences of having been forced into prostitution, however involuntarily. Repatriated trafficked children may now also be suffering from social isolation, impoverishment and medical problems. From the research point of view, interviews with these individuals would help to identify the process that led up to the trafficking
event, as well as the way the event is now perceived. Such interviews would also help in planning rehabilitation measures for returned children.

The information collected in this kind of research will come from a relatively limited number of families and respondents and will not be significant from any statistical standpoint. However, researchers can make the effort to obtain interviews with several different categories of "actors" in the trafficking drama: Parents, siblings, young children at risk, village and other local authorities, etc. Interview responses will embody different viewpoints of the same phenomenon, and a composite picture of how trafficking occurs, what forces and pressures lead up to it or are most likely to lead to it in future can be built up by careful weighing and cross-checking of responses. Repeat interviews with a small number of individuals or families are not precluded.

**Analysing the findings**

Analysis must follow two paths: An account of the actual trafficking history of the sending communities concerned and an estimate of the numbers and percentages of children trafficked from them, and a socioeconomic and sociocultural analysis of the current state of vulnerability of the communities, their families and their children. The interview materials collected from different family members and other individuals, whose content may overlap, needs to be sorted by issue and perspective and presented in an orderly rendering of events and attitudes. An assessment then needs to be made of the role of the community, the family, and the individual child in regard to trafficking. If the researchers have been fortunate enough to interview repatriated trafficked girls, their histories need to be presented followed by an analysis. The current conditions of these girls need to be assessed and presented, but not in a mechanical way. Throughout their research activities, researchers need to be continuously and sensitively aware of the dynamic interplay of many factors. These
may include the possible role of cultural change and breakdown in the communities concerned, the political and social sensitivity of the child trafficking topic for the inhabitants, the economic destitution experienced by many families pursuant upon economic dislocation, the uncertainty generated by unstable or repressive political systems, and the changing status of women, to name just a few factors.

**Trafficking of children for other labour purposes**

Children are also trafficked, or forcibly removed from their families, for reasons other than prostitution. More and more frequently, young children are trafficked either across borders or from one part of a country to another to be beggars or for other exploitative work in construction sites, small shops, factories, and as domestic workers. There is evidence of such trafficking from various countries; and female children who have been trafficked for other purposes are known to often end up in the sex industry.

When we say that these children are trafficked involuntarily, we do not necessarily mean that their parents were not in agreement about their removal, although in most cases parental agreement was undoubtedly not a factor. Where possible to research the sending community, it is (as in the topic above) important to research the composition and economic status of the family, the degree of family cohesion, and whether other siblings have also been trafficked or have been sent to work elsewhere. It is also important to establish whether the children have been given as bonded labourers and whether the family is profiting from the child's labour in any way. (There is also evidence from some locations of whole families being trafficked into bonded labour.)

Children trafficked for these varied purposes are usually undocumented and
constitute part of "hidden" child labour -- unless they are sent to work as beggars in streets and markets. Many are confined to enclosed workplaces, whether small workshops or private homes, and treated like slaves. Some may have been transported to work in a distant country, such as occurs with very young camel riding boys trafficked from Sri Lanka to the Middle East often with their parents' consent or acquiescence.

Accessing and researching such populations by means of an RA presents a series of special challenges, some of which have already been discussed in the section above on trafficking for prostitution. We list them here in general form, for the sake of brevity. The researcher will need to:

· Identify and interview a range of informants who are able to roughly "locate" or describe the relevant child population within a specific geographical area, and provide some background information perhaps including estimates of how many children are involved;

· Determine avenues for accessing and interviewing some of the children concerned. The modes chosen for access will be different depending on the particular case, the nature of the occupation, the closeness with which the children are watched over or guarded, etc. It is impossible to know from visual evidence whether a child was trafficked or not, and only interviews with the child or with other informants will reveal a trafficking case. This is where conversations containing appropriately worded questions become particularly important;

· Determine ways to gain the cooperation of and perhaps also to interview the employers of such children;

· Determine ways to observe the workplaces, so as to obtain visual evidence of the
circumstances in which such children work, the dangers and health hazards to which they are subject, and psychosocial aspects of their environment;

- If research can also be carried out in the child's community of origin, this should involve:
  - accessing and interviewing parents, where possible, to determine the nature of the child's relation to his/her employer (whether the child is bonded), parental knowledge of (or even complicity with) the trafficking, how much parental knowledge there is of the nature of the child's work; nature of relations within the family, and so on.

- obtaining school and education data, where available;
- obtaining sociocultural information concerning general attitudes to child labour, education, and other factors that may be relevant.

In sum, RA research into specific occupations suspected of hosting large numbers of trafficked children (or bonded children) who may be working in unfree conditions is delicate research which must be tailor-made to suit each individual social context. This requires the collection of as much background data as feasible and the interviewing of informed individuals. NGOs will be an important source of information, as will some government employees. Local school authorities may be able to indicate which children are known to inhabit the area but do not attend school. Labour inspectors may be willing to indicate workplaces where large numbers of (migrant) children are known to work. Market stall and shopkeepers may be able to provide some numerical idea about children who are working in the area but who are rarely allowed outside, and who are known to come from outside the area.

The actual research will involve travel to work places that may be isolated or
else inaccessible for observation due to the lack of cooperation of employers or other individuals. The children themselves can not be expected to cooperate with researchers and interviewers; if it is at all possible to approach them, they will only be responsive if introduced to the interviewer by someone known to them who assures them of the "safety" of the situation and the confidentiality of their responses. Observation is probably the main source of information in such locales.

**What the final report will contain**

The final report is likely to contain physical descriptions of workplaces and the physical appearance of the children, an estimate of their numbers, descriptions of the occupation concerned, followed by the roles played by trafficked or bonded children in the work place and in the occupation. The report should provide information regarding the health, physical and psychological consequences to the children of working in this occupation, the remuneration received (or any sent to parents), and information about working hours, leisure time (if any), living conditions, contact with families, contact with schools and education, etc. A complete report will also refer to the legal environment within which the children work, what laws or regulations are not being observed, and what organizations or avenues there are for improving conditions for such children. These topics will form the backbone of any RA report on a geographically delimited population of working children; the difference for an RA on trafficked (or bonded) children is that much of this information will not come directly from the children but from other "surrogate" informants and, where possible, visual observation, and special additional topics will also need to be researched.

2. **Children working as live-in domestics in the homes of others**

This very numerous population of child workers is mainly female and is partly
hidden from public view. Many of these children have not been trafficked but have been sent by their parents to work as domestic servants in the homes of others. Some of the employers are better-off relatives, others are strangers. Most of these children, working far away from their parents, may be separated from their families at a very tender age and have little or no contact with them thereafter. The parents’ motivations in placing their children in domestic service can include deprivation stemming from acute poverty and the desire to place the offspring in a home where they will be sure of receiving some sustenance; the constraint of bondage where the child's labour is contracted out for a period of years to repay the parents’ debts; the threat of imminent destitution following upon the death of the family's principal earner; and the desire to lessen the family burden of having to support daughters, whereas if they are sent into domestic service they can learn about housekeeping and prepare for a possible future marriage. These motivations can coexist and can also be accompanied by others, and only specifically targeted research can identify which predominate in any particular region or locality.

The motivations usually ascribed to those who employ live-in child domestics, usually upper- or middle-class urban dwellers although increasingly working class families as well (as more child workers are made available at low cost), are to obtain cheap (or often free) and very malleable labour and to acquire a status symbol, a servant. In many areas where child domestics are employed, their labour and exploitation in this occupation -- even at a very young age -- is not frowned upon and cultural attitudes do not discourage it. (Why this is the case in many societies could be one focus for RA research in this field, as a prelude to creating projects that affect social awareness and the supply and demand for this occupation.) Moreover, when a relative of the parents is the child's employer there appears to be a tendency of the child's parents to view the arrangement not as an employment relation at all but a favour that the wealthier relative does to "take care of" the poorer one's child, for which (unpaid) household help from the child is considered a fair exchange. There is,
in brief, much of the aura of patronage and clientelism around this relation.

We pointed out earlier in these Guidelines that many children who are domestic servants can be approached while they socialize together in public parks and open places on their day off. This is only the "visible" segment of this population, and usually those most fortunate. For numerous other child workers life offers no such congenial moments. If the children were granted days off, they would not be allowed to stray far from the close supervision of their employers. It is well documented, too, that sometimes when the employer family absents itself for holidays the child servant is left behind and locked in alone, often for long periods of many days and despite the attendant fire hazard.

**What needs to be learned about child domestic workers**

One task of a Rapid Assessment of child domestic servants is to attempt to estimate this occupation's size in a particular locality -- both those allowed to congregate occasionally with friends and those kept under close watch. This "counting" task is important because so little is known about such children, including their numbers. This does not mean the task is easy or that it can achieve anything more than a rough approximation in any particular area. However, this is one area where baseline numbers and situational studies are lacking and badly needed.

In addition, the RA can have several other goals, which are also not easy to achieve:

- To establish the nature and details of the employing relationship: Is the young employee paid? Are the parents paid? How much and with what frequency? Is bonded labour involved? The box below illustrates the importance of these questions, since so many of these children constitute an unpaid labour force:
BOX 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
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<td>Seventy-six per cent of child servants we interviewed work without fixed monetary compensation. Seventy percent of the employers occasionally give clothes to the parents or guardians and, upon request, may also help with cash if there is an illness in the child’s family. Of the 24 per cent of the children who get fixed salaries, only 2.5 per cent receive the money themselves. In the other cases, the money is remitted to the parents.</td>
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- To learn about working conditions: How many hours per day does the child work? What tasks does the child perform? Is the child allowed to rest adequately? Given sufficient food and of reasonable quality? Is there time off for leisure? What does the child do during this time?
- To learn about dangerous or hazardous household tasks performed: Does the child carry heavy loads? Use a hot iron or hot water? Have contact with sharp knives? Come into contact with electricity? Work in extreme heat or cold?
- To learn about school and education: Is the child allowed to attend school? If so, how much? Is the child encouraged to combine schooling with servitude?
- To learn about coercion and liberty: Is the child worker permitted to leave the house? Receive visits from family members, or make them? Meet and socialize with other children? Is the child's life isolated? Is the child developing normally?
- To learn about violence and threats of violence: What is the status and role of
the child domestic vis-à-vis the children of the employing family? The adults, and particularly the mother? What kind of punishments are given? Are beatings given? If so, by whom, and what reason(s) are given? What consequences, if any, await an employer family member who acts violently against the child servant?

- To explore the subject of sexual violence, which is central to the well-being of young female domestics: Has sexual violence been practiced? Is it likely to occur? What defenses can the child workers marshal against its occurrence?
- Finally, to find out what the child domestics can do to improve their situation. What laws cover them? What organizations and associations are available to help them? Do children know about them? How can outside projects or programmes access and help these children?

**Best avenues for research**

There are clearly substantial differences between researching child (and older) domestic workers who congregate on a Sunday afternoon in a local park and those never allowed out alone. What follows will be primarily concerned with the latter, who constitute a growing population in many countries and one very difficult to research.

1) The role of observation. Whereas the groups of domestic workers who meet to socialize together in open public places on the weekend can be both observed and approached, this is impossible to do with the second group since they are never allowed to venture out on their own. Researchers working in a specific area must rely on other less apparent evidence. They should take note of any children accompanying adults in what appears to be a servant capacity to the local market or other public places and shops. Market workers can also be asked whether there are any (migrant?) children who are now living in the area perhaps in the homes
of other residents, or even whether there has been an increase (decrease) in hiring children as servants.

This "sporadic" observation can be expected to result in a serious undercount of the numbers of child servants in the area. However, in an area where most young children attend school (school attendance figures are important data to collect in this regard) the presence of children not in school but doing errands at the market in the company of adults, or in place of adults, speaks somewhat for itself. Child domestic servants are also sometimes used as companions to accompany the younger children of the employer's household to school but do not enter the school building because they do not attend school. A researcher observing school arrivals and departures will be alert to children present but not entering the school, and who then turn away and leave as school begins.

2) The role of potential informants. It is in learning about the hidden population of child workers that informants become essential.

- Most important of all informants are locally operating NGOs and women's groups, who will have an idea of the extent of children working in the area as domestic servants. They are also likely to know the status of such children, whether they are paid, how much they are sought after by the various socioeconomic strata of the local area, whether there is active recruiting and if so who is doing it. These organizations may also tend to have some detailed information about the children's working situation, geographical and social origins, use of violence and sexual force, etc.

- Health clinic personnel will know whether any children pertaining to employer households who are not offspring of the employer have been brought in for treatment, or have come by themselves for treatment (whether for illness or else due to violence perpetrated by the employer). This avenue for collecting information will result in an
undercount of the child domestics who have fallen ill, because many are either not treated at all or are treated at home. But it will provide some indication of the health status and working conditions of some of the child domestic workers.

· In areas where there is a non-hidden population of child domestic workers, they may be aware of children working in similar circumstances who are not allowed out. These children may live in the same building, on the same street, etc. Groups of domestics gathered together on their day off can be approached for information about others not present, and impromptu focus interviews can be held in which they can be asked about such children, followed by a second stage of questioning if this seems promising. It may be that through such workers contacts can actually be made with "hidden" children. The non-hidden population is likely to know something about the geographical and social origins, approximate ages, family, type of pay or work contract, of the hidden population that lives and works nearby. They also have no reason to be recalcitrant in providing such information.

· Shopkeepers and the workers in the local market, and the individuals who provide services rendered in homes (plumbers, electricians, deliverymen, garbage collectors, etc.), building maintenance employees, and concierges and building elevator operators, will all have some idea of where there are children living in a household in a servant capacity.

3) The problem of interviewing "hidden" children. There are considerable obstacles to interviewing working children in their employers' households. An RA in Bangladesh attempted to use household surveys to identify such children and then interview them. The box shows that this approach is not promising.

BOX 17
In Dhaka, Bangladesh, a Rapid Assessment team chose a residential area with households ranging from upper-middle to working class families. The group then surveyed approximately 900 households, in order to find all the children employed as domestic servants. From the numbers of domestic servants found in this manner, the data-gathering team was able to carry out informal interviews with 25 of the child servants, concerning their working conditions, educational backgrounds and aspirations, and other information.

The lesson of this passage is that a large house to house survey may yield comparatively few interviews; and it is not clear that it will even provide any accurate count of such working child domestics in the locality. In retrospect this approach appears to be too labour-intensive for researchers to be useful.

Another reason to avoid such "survey plus interview" approaches is that children questioned in the presence of their employer are not free to express their feelings and answer the interviewer's questions openly. They may not even know the answers to some of the questions the interviewer would like to ask, as this box from Nepal demonstrates.

**BOX 18**

In Nepal, most of the children are unaware of their employment contract, especially when they have been employed through brokers. Brokers often cheat the parents as well as the child, keeping for themselves the bulk of the child’s earnings. Many children work for just food and shelter and find the idea of payment in cash absurd. Even when the child is supposed to be paid, it is not uncommon for the employers to have the money in ‘safe-keeping’, promising to buy gold or jewellery. The child may never see the money. From O. Sattaur, *Child Labour in Nepal*, ASI/CWIN, 1993.
Another study also carried out in Dhaka shed additional light on the difficulties of interviewing children. Either employers gave a flat refusal to permit interviews of the children, or the employers themselves refused to agree to be interviewed because they did not want to "reveal certain unacceptable behavioral patterns" [on their part] or reply to "the sensitive questions on family incomes, salaries of the child domestics, level of satisfaction …and the mode of discipline. On the other hand, the child domestics were rather reluctant to disclose the mode of maltreatment and violence inflicted on them as they were either afraid of losing their jobs or being abused further after the researchers [left]."²

Two other approaches are however possible. Again in Dhaka, observations of and interviews with 80 children in domestic service were carried out by a single Bengali researcher who used "her personal network of relatives, friends and neighbours... to gain access into" middle class homes. The box describes how this was done, and it obviously takes some patience as well as connections.

BOX 19

"It is not easy to gain access into a middle class home.. it was not possible to enter the homes and gain the trust of unknown people. One had to be introduced somehow even if it was through a chain of relatives or known people. Otherwise, suspicion and distrust were raised not only in the employers, but also in the servants. . . Domestic servants do not have the freedom to stop work for any length of time and there were several meetings with each child. Also, it was important to meet the children while their employers were absent and this could not be achieved on the first visit." From T. Blanchet, Lost Innocence, Stolen Childhoods, op. cit., p. 98.

It is apparent that this approach is not only quite time-consuming but also requires the right contacts. Perhaps more promising is an approach through employers. This can be done through informal meetings or focus groups of middle- and upper-class women, held in their natural milieu using other pretexts, where the conversation can be steered toward "their" child domestics (and those of their neighbours as well). Such conversations can go a long way toward revealing the prevailing cultural attitudes and social behaviour that characterize this particular employer-employee relation. The information will go at least part way toward providing answers to some of the issues listed earlier. The fact that having a child servant (or more than one) is considered "ultra-acceptable" in many circles rather than something shameful or illegal bears repeating here and may also bear research fruit. This avenue may be particularly productive if the researcher is herself a woman of similar social background to the female employers, has been introduced by a trusted contact, and can find some other non-child-labour-related "reason" for being present at or even organizing the discussions.

4) *The problem posed by the domestic work site.* We have not listed the government labour inspectors as essential informants on children in domestic service. The reason for this is that even though labour inspectors should have the right to inspect any employment site anywhere, even private domestic premises when they contain employees, the inspectors face difficulties when legislation does not provide them with a clear mandate to enter and search private homes and apartments. In many countries "there may be no clear instructions as to how they should proceed, or the right of entry may be limited in some ways, with the result that inspectors are unsure [about what their rights are relative to] private premises." Access to places of work is particularly relevant in relation to child labour because so many children engage in domestic work and homework in private homes, where the inspectors' theoretical right
of entry may come up against laws protecting people's right to privacy.

Thus any information the labour inspector can provide will be based more on his or her general knowledge of the area than on the specific inspection of household premises and cases. Nor do we suggest approaching the police and court system, the reason being that in cases of sexual or other violence against a child worker, members of the employing family, and neighbours, even when they realize what is occurring in a household, are loathe to contact the authorities. Therefore the probability that the authorities are fully aware of conditions is low.

5) A false lead. It would be tempting but probably ultimately fruitless to follow another line of research: Having identified the geographical source area for child domestics working in a particular urban neighbourhood (many come from specific villages surrounding an urban center, or from particular slum areas, or from one of a few upcountry locations where they have been specially recruited by the employer's contacts) it might be tempting to try to locate and interview a child's parents. This would appear to be productive if the researchers' aim is to identify, as in trafficking, those forces that caused a child to be consigned to an urban employer or an intermediary in the first place. But it does not further the research knowledge about actual working and living conditions in the employing household. Nor would instances of bonded labour or other disadvantaged relationships necessarily be revealed, as parents might be unwilling to discuss them. Relevant here is the lack of frequency or even total absence of contact between parents and children after the children have been taken over by an employing household. Parents are therefore often ignorant of the actual working and living conditions of their offspring.

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3 ILO Report for Discussion of the Meeting of Experts on Labour Inspection and Child Labour of September 1999, p. 30
3: Other hard to reach categories of working children

There are at least two other work locations where children are found that need to be researched: Export processing zones, and children under arms. Both pose serious difficulties. We can only allude to those difficulties here.

RA research on child labour in export processing zones

Carrying out research in export processing zones is especially difficult because of the heightened exploitation of all workers that occurs there. Even labour inspections are very difficult in such zones. The ILO Report for Discussion at the Meeting of Experts on Labour Inspection and Child Labour, September 1999 states that "[the presence of labour inspectors] tends to be hotly contested by private investors [in export processing zones]. Yet working conditions in these zones -- especially of young workers -- need to be carefully monitored, as the undermining of regulatory controls can have a negative impact on employers in other sectors of the economy." (p. 30). This is, then, a geographical area where researchers can not rely on labour inspectors to facilitate their research or provide the information needed to orient them. This does not exclude the possibility that labour inspectors have acquired some knowledge from other sources about what is occurring.

Export processing zones are often hedged around by barriers to physical access, as are the factories in which most of the work occurs. The chief mode of introduction to the physical setting is through connections. Once these are made, the same procedures can be followed as for observing and interviewing child factory workers in other areas. The results of the research will probably not be as satisfactory in terms of quantity or quality of contacts and interviews, both with
children and other informants. Partly this may be because many children (and others) may not live in family units in export processing zones but in dormitory or makeshift arrangements with many similar workers, and it may be difficult to get to talk alone with younger workers. It will also be necessary to find a way to be introduced into these residential environments. At the same time, it is advisable to keep a very low profile so that the goals of the research do not become generally known and employers’ suspicions raised. This means that the researchers should preferably be of the same ethnic background and age as the bulk of the workers, so as to blend in. Researchers should also be alert to the use of child labour in non-factory work in these zones, which can be captured through observation. It may be easier to approach such children for interviews before they arrive at or after they leave their jobs.

To date, there appears to have been no Rapid Assessment carried out in an export processing zone, although there is a need for them. It will be easier to arrive at a workable methodology for such areas once we can draw on some actual experiences that tell us what works best and what works least.

**RA research on children under arms**

This research concerns children, including children as young as 10, who are conscripted into military units, sometimes by force, and taught to fight, or who serve the units in other ways (as cooks, orderlies, porters, prostitutes). The units themselves may belong to the government or to the armed opposition. It is estimated that there are around 300,000 children currently participating in armed units prepared for conflict, or actually fighting, in a large number of countries around the world, although more precise figures are not possible to obtain.

The majority of child soldiers are between 15 and 18 years old, but a large
number are recruited as young as age 10, and as a conflict continues more children tend to be drawn in at younger ages. They "are usually from the poorest and most vulnerable sectors [of society]. Armies and armed groups often view children as a cheap substitute when there is a lack of adult soldiers. Children are indoctrinated to be obedient; are easily manipulated and are considered cheap to keep."  

Many case studies now exist of different countries where children either are or have been active participants in armed conflicts or have been recruited into armed forces, whether of government or opposition, and much information about them has been collected and disseminated. The information gathered about such children has come from a variety of sources, but primarily from NGOs, international organizations, journalistic accounts and inquiries, and governments. Much of this information tends to be post facto, that is, collected from children who have been demobilised. There appear to be few examples of direct research among children while they are under arms. A recent survey of a number of countries by Radda Barnen (Save the Children Sweden) was based on two sets of questionnaires submitted to various sources, but it also contained a plea for "discussions with the child soldiers in order that we can incorporate their views about the factors that contribute to their reintegration into civil society and the difficulties they are experiencing."  

What needs to be learned about child soldiers

There are many questions that need to be researched about children under arms in any particular locality or region. Here are some of the more fundamental ones:

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5 R. Brett and M. McCallin, op. cit. p. 265
What are the legal stipulations surrounding recruitment age and the use of child soldiers in the region or area concerned?

Is the recruitment of underage children forcible or voluntary? At what ages does it take place?

If recruitment is by force, under what circumstances does this tend to occur and who does it? With whose backing or tacit approval? Is it collective (i.e. a group of children) or individual? Is there any recourse or defense (by children themselves, by parents) against its occurrence? Is there a continued threat of recruitment of other children by force in the same area? Has there been any protest against it? If so, what form has this taken?

If recruitment is voluntary, what particular circumstances encourage children in the area to join the military forces (whether governmental or opposition)?

From what socioeconomic context do recruited children tend to come in the area? From what family background and responsibilities? What level of education? What family political or religious convictions?

Under what circumstances do the children live and work in the military? Are the conditions more (or less) hazardous and extreme than the living and working conditions of adults serving in the same formations? Do the children have any avenue to bring about change or improvement in their conditions?

Girl soldiers: What is the relative treatment of girls serving compared to boys serving? In what capacities do girls serve? At what ages?
. Are the children involved in active military operations? If so, what kind? What position do the children play in these operations? Is this by choice or command? Are they given increasingly dangerous tasks? What has been the recent rate of injury or death of children in this unit or area? What happens to injured children - how are they treated? Where are they sent, if somewhere else, and for what kind of help?

. Are children in the area paid for working in the military? If so, how much and how frequently? What happens to this money?

. What happens to demobilized children? Are they received back in their villages? If not, where do they go and what do they do? What is the children's view of their situation? What kind of help do they most need?

. What are the long range effects for children in this area of having served in military operations or units at a young age, if there is a local history of such service?

The need for a research focus

Because of the many different questions and issues surrounding the use of child soldiers, and the time constraints of a Rapid Assessment, as well as the difficulty of investigating this particular topic, researchers must carefully identify their research focus. Even within a small area, it will be impossible to research the whole context in which children are used as soldiers.

Preliminary research
It is also important for researchers to be adequately prepared for their task by doing as much of the following background research as time will permit:

. Look at the extensive background literature on children under arms put out by specialist organizations and NGOs.

. Examine all relevant local, regional and national legislation.

. Talk with all concerned governmental and international agencies, NGOs and women's associations.

. Read all relevant reports about the area and its conflict, including news reports.

. Talk with local authorities and medical personnel in the general area, to understand the nature of the conflict and the role of the military units.

. Talk with school authorities.

**Best avenues for research**

1) *The role of observation*. Observing children in conflict, or in preparation for action, would be difficult unless the researcher is him- or herself willing to go into a war or conflict zone, or a place where the military is billeted. In such locations it may be possible to see children serving as sentries, including at night, or as weapon-carrying "advance men" stopping cars to examine the occupants' papers while the adult members of the military unit stay at a distance. It may be possible to actually observe children in military action if the researcher is in a position to look for it.
Observation in the absence of conflict is somewhat easier. Whatever the situation, the observing researcher should take note of the tasks performed and how old the child appears to be who is carrying them out. The tasks may include a broad range (guard duty, espionage, portering, cooking, providing sexual services, cleaning and loading guns, etc.).

2) Interviewing. It is very difficult to interview children while they are serving in military operations, although this has been done by some journalists and others; young-looking soldiers on military bases can be approached and interviewed if the situation permits. In areas of more or less permanent conflict but sporadic confrontations, a network of contacts in paramilitary operations may provide avenues to reach child recruits for interview. It may also be possible to interview groups of young soldiers in situations where there is a conflict and the use of children is openly acknowledged. In other cases, however, "armed forces may be ashamed of their use of children, or else fearful of the political consequences of admitting to the practice, [and] frequently attempts are made to hide the fact that children have been serving as soldiers."6

The following are the ways most commonly utilized to find children for interview:

1. Locate children in rehabilitation centers and hospitals operated by local authorities or international organizations and NGOs.

2. Make contact with children or families that have been affected, again through local and international organizations and NGOs working on demobilization efforts that involve children.

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. Contact the public legal offices that exist.

. Interview children held in POW (Prisoners of War) camps. This could be dangerous in some circumstances both for the children and for those interviewing them. Moreover, the children should always be interviewed outside the presence of their military superiors or any military-related persons, and respect for the children’s privacy and confidentiality must always be ensured.

*Special problems concerning interviews with children who are serving or have served in conflict*

As with other interviews with working children doing difficult or hidden work, interviewing these children requires special sensitivity. Indeed, only certain types of researchers are psychologically prepared to interview children who have served in war zones. Such children may have witnessed atrocities and may have committed them themselves, or been the victims of them, and highly skilled interviewers need to recognize that moral condemnation or revulsion will not further the research purposes and may be deeply upsetting to the child, who may already be reluctant to recount the experiences he or she has had. It is likely that the child may have been coerced or that there were strong pressures of other kinds, including the use of drugs and alcohol and the reward of food or privileges, to encourage the child to engage in aggressive behaviour. It is the task of the interviewer to establish to what extent this was the case, among other issues. It is the task of the interviewer, too, to establish what is (or may be) involved in rehabilitation or reintegration, and how this can be furthered.

This kind of interviewing is best done by persons with special training and psychological insight. Unfortunately, there is little chance to engage in pilot interviews in this field, and role-playing exercises are recommended under the supervision of experienced interviewers of such children, preferably people who have had field
experience in the same geographical area or among the same ethnic or cultural grouping.

Additional considerations concern the interviewing of demobilised girl soldiers (and some boys) who may have experienced prolonged sexual abuse and are likely to have sexually transmitted diseases. Interviewing amputees or other visibly injured children who have special problems also requires additional training.

**Interviewing families**

A less demanding but not necessarily easy type of interview will be with families, those whose child(ren) enrolled or was abducted into the military. Informants among families may be located in villages or communities known to have yielded up children (willingly or unwillingly) to military operations; introductions to such families may be obtained through local officials and/or NGOs. Short questionnaires may be used in such circumstances, although here too sensitivity to the special situation the family has experienced is required. Moreover, if the family is living in an area of endemic military conflict, it may also be incurring some risk to permit interviews at all.

**Analyzing results**

This subject will not, in all likelihood, produce a large number of interviews or observations that could be considered in any way numerically representative. This is very clearly qualitative research, and the researcher's objective is to provide insight into the participation and problems of young people under arms in a specific locality. Reading and rereading interview data, and combining interview material with the perhaps considerable material derived from background studies, should provide a relatively complete and reliable picture of the actual situation of children under arms in the region. Cross-checking is however essential, and can be done by approaching
once again the principal (non-child) informants and requesting their comments on the interpretations and understandings arrived at. Only when this step has been taken can the researchers be sure they have understood at least some of the complexity of the subject before them, which is one of the most difficult and thought-provoking that can be attempted today in the area of child labour.

PART IV

ANNEXES

ANNEX ONE
General interview topic guidelines

The topics below are simply suggestions for use in interviews; they are not intended to be fixed topics that must be covered in every conversation or interview. They should be used as "reminders" for the researcher rather than patterned questionnaires, and which parts are used should depend on the focus of the specific RA being carried out.

Topic guide for obtaining some information about a child

Family context:
. parents alive, whether living together
. number and age of siblings
. who is the primary care-giver
. good and bad things about the family social and economic situation

Schooling:
. ever attended school (type), and if so, for how long, when
  attending now (how many hours per day/week)
. why stopped if no longer attending, whether wants to return, and reasons (yes/no)
. good and bad things about school

Present living situation:
. living with family or others
. sleeping, what times, where, how long, what conditions
. eating what times, what, how much, where
bathing - where, how often

toilet - what kind

good and bad things about current situation

Background:
.age at which child started to work for the first time
.length of stay at this work, and age started
.doing how many jobs now, and which kinds
.work history
.parents' work history, if relevant

Personal Data:
.sex
.stated age, estimated age.
.language or ethnic group
.migrant status
.hurts, sicknesses, accidents
.fears and worries
.main needs, problems
.future plans and desires

Identifiers:
.name
.location (relative to researcher's mapping if possible)
current predominant occupation

**Topic guide for obtaining information on health risks of specific occupations or economic activities done by children**
Physical risks:
- power machinery
- toxic chemicals
- noise
- air (smoke, fumes)
- temperature and exposure (sun, elements)
- weights carried/lifted
- physical position while working
- dangerous animals
- accidents to any worker during past year
- illness or death of any worker during past year
- how treated, who pays for medical care
- closeness of medical help to work place
- protective gear (welding shields, gloves, boots, glasses, hard hat, ear plugs)
- physical abuse by employers, supervisors, fellow workers
- sexual abuse by employers, supervisors, fellow workers
- workplace isolated and unprotected
- perception of danger, threat, risk

Emotional and mental risks:
- repetitiveness of tasks
- time stress
- quality stress (failures, mistakes)
- opportunities for learning, advancement
- opportunities for creativity
- high/low prestige of industry or task
- scape-goating, harassment
. verbal abuse by employers, supervisors, fellow workers
. sexual abuse or harassment by employers, supervisors, fellow workers
. incentives to do well
. punishments, including insufficient food

The work environment:
. working alongside immediate family
. relatives at same workplace
. other people present (if so, whom)
. isolated workplace
. ratio of adults to children
. adequate food
. clean drinking water
. acceptable toilet facilities
. lighting
. first aid kit/ trained person
. freedom of movement permitted
. freedom to interact permitted
. good and bad things about the situation

Identifiers:
. name
. location (relative to researcher's mapping if possible)
. occupation

**Topic guide for obtaining information about the work**
Occupation:
- common name/slang term of industry, occupation or activity
- is occupation or activity legal
- location (e.g. field, household, factory, marketplace, shop)
- location and type of any secondary economic activities
- is occupation or activity legal
- size of enterprise
- is enterprise legal

Tasks:
- list of specific work performed at this work site
- list of jobs or tasks performed by children – names and slang terms
- description of each job performed by children
- good and bad things about each job

The employment process:
- work for family or relative or third party
- how was employment arranged, through whom
- formal contract, verbal agreement, neither
- obligations (advance to family, debt of family to employer)
- loan or repayment required for equipment
- freedom to leave

Terms and conditions of work:
- hours and times of the day
- shifts, part-time/full-time, days per week, overtime, seasonality, irregularities, etc.
- timing of the child’s payment (when/how often paid/to whom)
. mode of payment (wages, in-kind only, by piece, paid by each client etc.)
. benefits
. transportation to and from the workplace, and time required
. good and bad things about the terms and conditions

Identifiers:
. name
. location (relative to the researcher's mapping)
. occupation

ANNEX TWO

Interview topic guidelines for child domestic workers

We already referred in the text to the sensitivity surrounding interviews with children who work as domestic servants in private households. The suggestions below may be useful for interviewing children who are allowed out alone and can be interviewed, or for interviewing "hidden" children after some mode of access has been achieved.

Questions about the household:
Number of members, size of the house, description of the rooms, water and sanitation facilities available, furnishings.

Questions about the child worker
Approximate age, sex, place of family residence, ethnic origin, kinship relationship to the household, if any.
Questions about recruitment:
Method of recruitment, approximate date of recruitment, any previous job, degree of continued contact with parents or guardians, any visits home.

Questions about terms and conditions of employment:
Tasks performed, working hours, rest breaks, chance for leisure time, and time off. Activities available for leisure within the household (e.g. TV). Payment issues.

Questions about accommodation, meals and living conditions.
Where child sleeps, sleeping conditions and hours, meal preparation and consumption, quantity and quality of food, quality of living conditions, clothing received.

Questions about relations with members of the employing family.
How child is treated and dealt with, questions about respect and freedom from violence (including sexual violence). Child's fears and feelings.

Questions about education and health
Child's health status, child's schooling or potential schooling.

Questions about the child’s future
How child perceives future, what forces shape choices.

Questions to ask the employers
Level of satisfaction with the child domestic, views and ideas about child domestic labour, schooling of child domestics, use of discipline, modes and frequency of payment, mode of recruitment, contacts with parents.
Questions about knowledge of child rights
Child's awareness of rights, existence of organizations and associations that can help, existence of laws for protection, etc.

(Source: Adapted from Child Domestic Workers, by Maggie Black)

ANNEX THREE

A selection of topics for research consideration

It has been emphasized in these Guidelines that any given RA must choose a research focus, as all topics are not equally relevant or necessary to the purpose for which the RA is being carried out. The topic suggestions below duplicate to some extent those in Annex One but the information should not be obtained only from the children. It should come from both observation and interviews with a range of respondents, and should cover a range of occupations within a specific area or locality (as long as this coincides with the focus of the RA).

Lifestyle issues:
. Housing and housing standard, leisure time if any, contact with other children, frequency of sports and recreational activities and with whom
. How much time do children spend helping at home, and with what sorts of tasks
. Life experiences over time

Work issues:
. Which person(s) most influential in sending the child into the work force
. Which person(s) must influential in the way the child found the job
. Who influences the child to continue to work in this job
. Who directs a child in his/her work,
. Which adults or older children support/protect/watch over the child (at work, during transit)
. What cultural values influence whether a child works
. How great is parental influence; How much parental choice is/was possible

**Specific work activities of the area's children:**
. Are children working in known, "visible" locations or isolated locations difficult to access (and inspect)
. Are children doing more than one job outside the home in a day? A week? How do they travel from one job to another, and time required?
. What consequences would there be if one of these jobs were lost or given up
. What are the possibilities for alternative sources of livelihood in the area
. What are the possibilities for obtaining training or skills to permit other employment or self-employment

**Conditions of employment:**
. Rates and features of pay (relative to adults) and to whom given
. Are the children bonded
. Are the children free agents or responsible in some way to others, e.g. parents

**Use of child labour in the area**
. Why are the employers using child labour? What cost is there to the employers for using children, e.g. illegality/penalties?) What benefits?
. Degree of law enforcement and labour inspection in the area
Actual presence and effectiveness of law enforcement officers, labour inspectors in the area.

Schooling
Do working children attend school, do employers allow or encourage school attendance
How often do the children actually go to school? Seasonal?
Condition of school, teaching quality, costs of school attendance, accessibility
Prospects for schooling if currently not attending (and desire for)

Hazards and health dangers of the occupations
Use checklist given in Guidelines for specific characteristics about the work
Explore how data can be collected systematically and frequently in the field.
(E.g. "Although accidents and illnesses have been frequent among child workers, there is no systematic method of reporting." (Norman Jennings, Small-Scale Mining, op.cit. p. 60)
Short-term and long-term impacts on health and psycho-social development, and on future work possibilities and life chances (inc. longevity)

Girls who work
Do they work in independent or dependent relations, and if so with whom, in what occupations
Are there particular dangers for working girls or are they working under constraint; if so, who is instrumental in promoting and maintaining this kind of work relationship
Are they working in physically arduous or morally compromising activities; if so, prospects for change, rescue or rehabilitation
ANNEX FOUR

Some ground rules for interviewing children

BOX 20

Children are “capable of telling [me] about their work and their situation as worker. They, better than anyone else, should be able to describe their life situation, and, furthermore, there is no evidence at all to suggest that working children should hide or distort information more than adults might do in an interview situation.” (A. Aragão Lagergren, Working children in the informal sector in Managua, Uppsala : [s.n.], 1997, p. 101)

This quote says a great deal about the attitude with which a good researcher should approach the children who are the subject of his or her research. Here is a list of points to remember during interviews.

. Be as respectful to the child as to an adult. Often, child workers will have a maturity beyond their years, as it has been imposed on them by their experiences and responsibilities.
. Do not try to act like a child yourself. If a child is approached by an adult interviewer, he/she does not expect childlike behavior.
. Do not try to "mother" the child.
. Be delicate in approach and careful in selecting the appropriate topics and questions to ask. For example, do not simply assume that the children have parents, or toys, or live in a (nice) house.
. Show that you are genuinely interested in what the child has to say.
. Give the child as much reassurance about confidentiality as you would an adult, whether the country has regulations protecting the rights of subjects or not. Make clear that the child’s information as well as his/her identity will remain confidential.
. Explain to the child at the very beginning why you are asking questions and what it is that you want to know about. Assure the child that you are not working as an agent of the employer, or the police, and that you want information that will help to improve his/her conditions. Answer any questions about this that the child may ask you.

. Avoid long interviews. Tell the child at the very beginning that the conversation (do not use the word *interview* as this will be meaningless to most children) will only last ten or fifteen minutes and only include a few questions. Then if the interview happens to last a bit more, the child will not hold it against you. (The interview length will depend partly on the child's age. If the child seems restive or bored at any time, end the interview promptly.)

. Limit your questions, and simplify them. Let the child respond in his/her own words; do not try to force the responses into a Yes/No/Maybe mold.

. Do not assume that a repeat interview will be possible. Arrange one only if the child seems receptive to the idea; do not insist.

. Do not interview a child within sight or hearing range of the employer, or if possible the parents. If this is unavoidable, be careful to word your questions so that the child can give responses that do not compromise his/her position. You do not want the child to have to "pay a price" afterward for having been forced to say things he/she did not want others to know.

. Take notes only after the interview is over: You cannot give the child your full attention if you are also writing things down.

. Practice interviewing children you know, in role-playing, so that you improve your ability to ask questions and to remember the answers (so that you can write them down later).

. Use pilot interviews in the area before beginning the actual field work. Reword questions and change your approach if necessary on the basis of these pilot interviews.

. If you are overwhelmed by children who want to be interviewed, which can happen in some situations, arrange focus groups and then select some children for individual interview. Explain that your research supervisor (or research time) "will not permit
you to interview more than $x$ number of children individually", or give some other understandable reason why you cannot interview them all.

. If there is enough time, ask the child to recount some specific episodes that have occurred to him/her or to other children. Sometimes it is easier for a child to narrate events that have occurred to others, or to let the interviewer think they occurred to others rather than themselves (This is a psychological device used to avoid shame, the pain of recalling what happened to them, embarrassment in front of the interviewer, etc.). Do not inquire whether it was really the child in front of you who lived this experience; do not try to expose the child, who after all does not know you.

Here is an example of narrative episodes and how the researcher can use them. The episodes listed here are only a sample of many different kinds of narratives or "stories" that you may find useful.

**Some Types of Episodes or Narratives .**

**BOX 21**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EPISODE</th>
<th>FROM WHOM?</th>
<th>INTENDED USEFULNESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An accident causing injury in the workplace</td>
<td>Child who was injured, or child who saw the event.</td>
<td>Understanding the health risks in the workplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encounters or &quot;pick-ups&quot;</td>
<td>Child sex workers.</td>
<td>Understanding their powerlessness and/or negotiating potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traveling to another city</td>
<td>Street boy or girl.</td>
<td>Understanding patterns of migration among child workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual harassment episode</td>
<td>Domestic servant or NGO person with close relationships to domestic servants.</td>
<td>Understanding the vulnerabilities of the female child domestic servants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First entrance to an informal school.</td>
<td>Child worker who has just joined a school program. Or the parent</td>
<td>Understanding the motivations, and the points of difficulty in going into schooling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious sickness of</td>
<td>NGO worker or parent.</td>
<td>Understanding how</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
working child. | Health care workers. | parents/households manage illness in the case of a money-earning child.

Other specific approaches

Daily activity log

Some researchers like to ask the child to give a step-by-step description of everything he or she did yesterday, morning to night, so as to form an idea of what daily activities are carried out. This is called a daily activity log. There are, however, drawbacks to this kind of approach. A serious one is that the daily activities of one day may not be similar to those of another, and in the course of a week/month/year a child may do many different activities which this approach does not capture. A second drawback is that the child will not enjoy being asked to remember everything he or she did, and may even forget or overlook things.

An additional drawback is that this approach is time consuming for both the researcher and the child. Unless the researcher uses a tape recorder, which might make the child uncomfortable and stilt the account, the researcher will not be able to write down the entire content of the child's day. Used as an introduction into a more general conversation, however, the approach might prove useful provided there is enough time for it.

Longitudinal work history

Most studies of child workers do not delve into past history, even though a child of, say, twelve or fourteen may already have been working for some years (some children start to work as young as age five). Depending on the focus of the
RA, the collection of longitudinal accounts from older children might be very useful in showing the progression from one kind of job to another and one kind of skill to another -- or the lack thereof, which could be a major research finding in itself. The collection of such histories presupposes longer or repeat interviews with children, and these must be arranged for appropriately. (If the child is missing a day's earnings because of the time spent with the researcher, he or she must be remunerated.) In this framework it may also be useful to interview parents. It is advisable, if longitudinal accounts lasting one half hour or more are being collected, to ask the child for permission to use a tape recorder, giving all necessary assurances about the use and disposition of the tapes later (you can even offer to provide the child with the tape after you have copied it or transcribed its contents).

ANNEX FIVE

Tabulating interview reports

1. Example of a report with codes

(Below is a report of an interview with a child worker. It represents a hypothetical case, adapted from actual interview sources for the purpose of illustrating the process of tabulation. Please keep in mind that actual reports are often handwritten and are not as narratively complete as the presentation here might
Name: Ahmed
Key Location: B
Occupation: Errand-boy/mechanic’s assistant

Ahmed is an 11-year-old boy working in a machinist’s shop (for the past two years) in an area of town dominated by light industry: cabinet making, truck and automobile repair, plumbing supplies, and so on. His father is dead, and he lives with his mother, sister and two brothers. One of his brothers is eight years old and goes to a primary school, the other is only four and looked after by his mother and sister. Both his mother and sister (who is 14) work at home, doing piece-work alterations on second-hand clothes.

Every morning, his mother wakes him up at six. He washes his face and puts on his work clothes. Then he has tea, prepared by his mother, and eats a lentil dish with bread. Then he sets off to work, which is 25 minutes away by foot, and arrives at 6:45 and waits for one of his bosses (one of two brothers) to help him open the shop. His first task is to sweep the floor, covered with dust and grime. He is a general helper and errand-boy, serving the needs of those above him in the shop (his bosses, an adult worker, and a 14-year-old apprentice). He is frequently sent to fetch parts or to make coffee. Otherwise, he helps with simple tasks such as filing a piece of metal, holding a piece while it is soldered or sawn, and giving a hand in lifting a heavy object.

He takes his lunch break when someone remembers to give him permission, which is usually around noon. Then he sits on a stool on the sidewalk in front of the shop and watches the street activity while eating a small helping of rice and vegetables brought from home. Sometimes his boss offers him a soft drink or a fruit.
His half-hour lunch break is often interrupted when he is sent on an errand or must help with a job. At other times during the day, he is allowed to sit down whenever his help is not needed. Even so, by the end of the day at 6 p.m. Ahmed feels exhausted. He works six days a week.

Ahmed told the interviewer that he has to work in order to help his family. He considers his wages good. The money is paid directly to his mother, who comes to the shop once a week for it.

Ahmed went to school for two years and knows the alphabet. He did not like school, as he sometimes got a beating from the teacher for not having learned the lesson. When asked whether he would like to continue his education, he said: “How could I? I have to help my family.” He said that if he did not have to work he would consider going to school, but to a different one. He said announced he wants to become a machinist with his own shop.

Sometimes, Ahmed said, he feels sick on the job pointed to his stomach. He has never been to a doctor or a health centre. Once a machine part fell on his foot and his big toe was swollen “for a long time”. He says he likes one of his bosses but that “the other one beats me sometimes. He hits me on the head when I come late from an errand or if my hand slips while I’m holding something.”

Interviewer’s Observations: The work environment is dirty. The earthen floor is covered with metal shavings and the air is full of dust and metal particles. The shop is pervaded by the odour of petroleum (from machine oil). The lavatory is very unsanitary. There are exposed electrical wires on the walls and around the work benches.
2. Codes for tabulating interview results

Any coding method can be chosen, as long as it is used consistently and uniformly by all members of the Rapid Assessment team. The following is the coding process that was used in the preceding interview report. It does not attempt to take into account all questions of interest concerning a working child, but only some, presented here for illustration. For example, another Rapid Assessment team may need to introduce finer gradations in occupational categories or levels of work hazard (perhaps in terms of low, moderate and high); or it may wish to code children’s stated educational aspirations, (why they do not attend school), and so on.
**BOX 22**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A= AGE</th>
<th>O= OCCUPATION</th>
<th>L= LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1=below 5</td>
<td>O1=rural/agricultural</td>
<td>L1=1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2=5-6</td>
<td>O2=cottage industry</td>
<td>L2= 2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3=7-9</td>
<td>O3=manufacturing</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4=10-12</td>
<td>O4=service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5=13-14</td>
<td>O5=informal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5=15-17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX:</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RENUMERATION/DAY</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Currency per day:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalence to US$ per day:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| HE=HAZARDS (WORK ENVIRONMENT) |                 |                         |
| HE/Y=hazardous               |                 |                         |
| HE/N=non-hazardous           |                 |                         |

| H W = H A Z A R D S (NATURE OF WORK) |      |                         |
| HW/Y=hazardous                |      |                         |
| HW/N=non-hazardous            |      |                         |

| W = WORKING HOURS/DAY |       |                         |
| W1=1-2 hrs.          |       |                         |
| W2=More than 2-4 hrs.|[       |                         |
| W6=10-12 hrs.        |       |                         |

| R= REST PERIODS |       |                         |
| Example:        |       |                         |
| R1/2=half hour rest/day |       |                         |

| F= FAMILY SITUATION |       |                         |
| F/Y=living with family |       |                         |
| F/N=not living with family |       |                         |

| T= TREATMENT BY EMPLOYER |       |                         |
| TR=respectful treatment  |       |                         |
| TI=inconsiderate         |       |                         |
| TC=cruel                 |       |                         |

| L= LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT |       |                         |
| L1=1 year               |       |                         |
| L2= 2 years             |       |                         |
| Etc.                    |       |                         |

| D= WORKING DAYS/WEEK |       |                         |
| Example:             |       |                         |
| D6=6days/week        |       |                         |

| S= SCHOOLING |       |                         |
| SC=currently attending school |       |                         |
| S0=no schooling |       |                         |
| S1=one year of schooling |       |                         |
| Etc.         |       |                         |
3. Tabulating the results

Without a coding process, it would be impossible to tabulate the reports of interviews and to draw any quantitative information from them. After a Rapid Assessment team has conducted its interviews with working children in a particular area, it needs to proceed from individual cases to a general picture of the child labour situation in that location. It needs to know, for example, what percentage of the children who work also attend school, how many are maltreated by their employers, etc. If a code (an arbitrary symbol) for this is devised so that the interview reports can be marked and identified quickly, then it becomes possible to answer that question for a given key location.

Ideally, an interviewer should write his/her report as soon as possible after completing the interview, and code it soon after, or else the job becomes unmanageable. It is a good idea to then write on top of the report sheet all the coded information obtained from the report (in our example there were thirteen such categories of information.) When all interviews are completed, the interviewing team meets to tabulate the results. Taking each category at a time, say whether the child lives with her/his family, they count how many of the reports have the F/Y code on top, how many F/N, and so on for all the questions the Rapid Assessment wanted to investigate.

We need to emphasize that the coding process is only as simple, or as comprehensive, as the information the RA research needs to find out. The same holds obviously, for the questions asked by the interviewer in the first place.
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