

In Indonesia, official numbers of child labourers are relatively low. Nevertheless, scattered, and somewhat outdated sources mention considerable numbers of children and teenagers who are working in agriculture, fisheries, in street trade, and in the entertainment industry. Many of these youngsters are dropouts who failed to continue education after elementary school and come from poor families. Typically, child labour in Indonesia tends to be somewhat hidden from the public, publicly underestimated, and poorly documented.

In an attempt to fill this gap, Irewoc and Plan Indonesia have started a research project on the study of child labour in Indonesia. This research takes a contextual approach oriented on the understanding of the causes, mechanisms and conditions of child labour in Indonesia. A team of ten – mostly young – researchers study the lives and works of children in both urban and rural contexts in Indonesia. (From 13-27<sup>th</sup> August 2008 IREWOC organised a successful **Child Labour Research Capacity Training Workshop in Bogor, Indonesia** in cooperation with Plan International, Dr. Gerben Nooteboom of the University of Amsterdam and Prof. Pujo Semedi of the University of Yogyakarta. During this two-week-workshop fourteen enthusiastic participants were introduced to the theoretical insights in the child rights and child labour discussion, and the practice of doing research on and with children. All participants formulated a research proposal of which ten were accepted for implementation.)

In April 2009, at the Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Pujo Semedi and Gerben Nooteboom from the University of Amsterdam, organised **a workshop to discuss initial research results**. In this three-day meeting, case studies from factory workers in Tangerang, seashell peelers in Jakarta, street sellers in Bandung, asphalt collectors in Java, female domestic workers in Yogyakarta, gold miners and oil palm workers in Kalimantan, and street children in Papua and Timor were discussed at length. A historical study, on the rise and demise of working children at a Javanese tea plantation, has been written by the organisers.

From this initial meeting, **some early conclusions can be drawn**. Although in general the percentages of working children in the sectors studied are low (2 to 5 percent), children are found at many places, in many sectors and some of them are working under dangerous and harmful conditions (asphalt collection, gold mining, diving). In all sectors studied, some of the worst forms of child labour, as described by the ILO, were found. In general, more often boys than girls are working and boys tend to drop out from school at an earlier age. In seashell peeling, the Tangerang recycling factories, in domestic work, and in the entertainment industry, girls are the dominant workers.

In January 2010, the final results of these studies will be presented at the Plan-Irewoc-organised **workshop on child labour in Indonesia**. This workshop will take place in Jakarta. The aim of the project is to publish two books afterwards; one in Indonesian and one in English. Scholars and policy makers with an interest in the workshop can contact IREWOC through [info@irewoc.nl](mailto:info@irewoc.nl)