



Annual Report 2009

Some indicators suggest that the position of children in the world has improved over the last decade, at least in a number of countries. Other indicators, however, are less positive and show that the financial crisis, political decisions and natural disasters have caused a setback.

The need for detailed knowledge thus remains paramount. IREWOC has contributed to the knowledge base and to the direction of the debate. It has continued to partner with other child-centred organizations in the attempt to provide the necessary knowledge. Research projects have maintained an academic rigour, but have also been attuned to the need for policy information.

IREWOC redefined its mission statement during 2009. In a nutshell, it states that IREWOC, through intensive field research, aims to capture the perception of the working children and their families within the context of socio-economic poverty, educational opportunities and the established international standards on children's rights.

The mission of IREWOC is to contribute to awareness of and action against child labour by carrying out empirical research on the incidence, causes and consequences of child labour. IREWOC also strives to strengthen research capabilities on the subject in all regions of the world. It bases its work on the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child (1989) and on the internationally agreed norms as contained in ILO Conventions 138 (on the minimum age of employment) and 182 (on the worst forms of child labour). The goal of the foundation is to study the plight of child labourers and of deprived children in general, to publish the findings, to organize colloquia and workshops and to generally inform policy makers, practitioners and the public in general.

In order to do this, IREWOC has established a working relationship with NGO's, with academics and academic institutions working on child rights and child labour, and with international organizations, such as the International Labour Office and with

"Understanding Children's Work". It has academic links with the University of Amsterdam and the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam

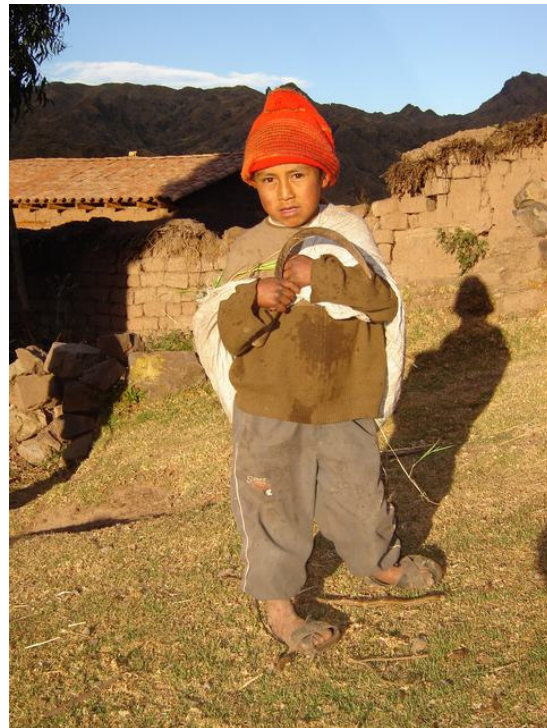
The office continued to operate from the Child Rights Centre (together with DCI and ECPAT). At the end of the year, the office moved to the Child Rights House in Leiden (Hooglandse Kerkgracht 17-h). In 2009 project subsidies were more difficult to secure, probably as a consequence of the financial crisis, and the small but efficient team of 6 was reduced to 5. Firstly, three long-term staff members (Marten van den Berge, Luisa Quiroz, and Laura Baas) left the organization and headed for new opportunities. But luckily two new enthusiastic young scholars joined the team (Talinay Strehl and Nanna Baum).

IREWOC functioned as a resource partner for Plan Netherlands, but also co-operated with Cordaid and maintained a working relationship with various national and international child-centred development aid organizations. Research funds were also provided by the Doha International Institute for Family Studies & Development.

Research Projects

On the research front, IREWOC has conducted a number of large scale research projects on child labour. Earlier, research projects were completed on child agency, child labour unions, on deprived children and education and on the worst forms of Child labour in three Latin American countries. The summary and the reports have been published electronically and have been made available on the website.

In 2008, with a grant from the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs, research was started on **rural child labour in Bolivia and Peru**. The research findings, which compare the extent and type of child labour in the traditional and in the export-oriented modern sector (sugar cane and asparagus), were presented in February 2009 at a workshop of the Violence Against Children meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague. Agricultural activities of children living within traditional agricultural structures, the report stated, need not directly interfere with a child's education and with a proper childhood. However, since a number of activities, like herding, did interfere with the schooling of the children, such work, in combination with many other activities children are expected to carry out, in some cases form a heavy burden on the physical and emotional wellbeing of the children, resulting in exhaustion. The agricultural activities of youths on commercial plantations are all damaging to the children's health, safety and moral development and must therefore be labelled as a worst form of child labour.



Young children in Peru, equipped with traditional agricultural tools

The research on the **Worst Forms of Child Labour in Asia**, commenced in 2008.

In Nepal, the focus was on brick-kilns, child porters, street sellers and restaurants. The Nepal reports will be ready in early 2010.

Anna Ensing has completed her fieldwork reports on child labour in Bangladesh. She studied the working conditions of children in the leather sector and the conditions of working girls in Dhaka. To complement our research in the leather sector additional research was carried out by labour hygienist Mariette de Graaf, with support of the Dutch Society for Labour Hygiene. She focused specifically on the health consequences for children working in the leather sector in Dhaka. The report on the leather sector presents important findings, including data relevant to the discussion on combating child labour with trade-related measures. The findings indicate that child labour in export-oriented factories has been seriously reduced, but that it is next to impossible to differentiate between the products from these factories and those from the informal workshops and home-based production, where child labour remains abundant.



A ten-year-old boy working fulltime in a tannery

The second report on Bangladesh addresses girls working in informal industries at home, girls working in the streets and girls working in formal industries such as garment factories. It shows how working girls in Dhaka suffer a triple burden because they are young, poor and female. The report reveals that, after the outcry in the early 1990s about child labour in the garments industry, and the resulting trade boycott, girls below the age of 14 are no longer found in the export-oriented factories, but the adolescent girls still working there, do so under harsh circumstances, which nevertheless classify them as child labourers under ILO norms.



Young girl showing the saris she makes at home

Nanna Baum conducted a follow-up research on '**Supply mechanisms of Child Domestic Workers**' in three different rural areas in Bangladesh. Two reports are currently being finalized. 'Girl Domestics in Dhaka: Betrayal of Trust' discusses children's emotional grievances as the consequence of neglect. Children, from age 5 onwards, have to work very long hours under very strenuous conditions, but even worse, in the perception of the children, is the inhumane treatment they receive. Many studies have documented the quantitative aspects of child domestic labour, but this study adds important insights from the real life experience of the child domestic labourers themselves.

The study 'Supply of Girl Domestics: A Matter of Semi-Feudal Relations' looks into the dependency relations between rich and poor, and parent's motives and considerations when sending their daughters to work in another household. It reveals the mechanism of semi-feudal dependence and poverty that feeds into the vast army of child domestics, possibly 200.000 in Dhaka alone.

In **Indonesia**, research has been carried out by eight local researchers, selected from among the participants at a child labour research capacity training workshop in 2008. The sectors that have been studied include fisheries, oil plantations, industrial waste collection, gold mining, street sales and domestic labour. Reports will become available in 2010.

A new research project on **Street Children** was initiated. During the past decade the 'phenomenon' of street children has increasingly disappeared into the background. Although the problem may have increased, compared to the early 1990's there has been less research and less project intervention. A new research programme was therefore considered necessary. The objective of the proposed study is to give a thorough analysis of how the situation of street children is influenced by intervention programmes by GOs and NGOs and how the street child is related to child labour and to education. In a study undertaken in Cusco and Lima, the focus was on coping mechanisms, the urgent (self-declared) needs, their (perceived) aspirations, and the effects of the different GO- and NGO interventions on the street children.

The research combined quantitative methods (documenting the presence of street children throughout the entire city) and qualitative methods (studying the individual street child). The study by Talinay Strehl confirms that exclusive distinctions between children on and of the streets are difficult to make. In both cities street children are highly marginalized from mainstream society, and have no access to basic education or health care. While the local governments try to remove them from the city's streets through a violent policy of "social cleansing", NGOs and religious organisations follow a policy of 'asistencialismo', a policy that in fact facilitates street life, making it hard for the children to break the vicious circle of drug abuse, prostitution and criminality.

In November, Anna Ensing and Talinay Strehl, together with local partners, conducted training workshops in Lima and Cusco, and coordinated a major survey of street children. After the training workshop, 18 local researchers carried out a survey among a total of 1200 street children in Cusco and Lima. The documentation will provide unique information and an overall view of the magnitude of the street child and child labour problem, filling the void which has existed since the early 1990's.

The report will be completed in 2010.

Possible extensions to this project are on the anvil for Guatemala and a number of African cities.

In May, a new project on **Violence Against Girls in Kenya** was initiated. The project is being financed under the Millennium programme of the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation. IREWOC participates in this project ("Fighting Violence to Ensure Education for All") in an alliance including DCI/ECPAT, ICDI, Child Helpline International, Plan Nederland and Plan Kenya. The programme aims to fight violence against girls in the poorest communities in the capital Nairobi and in the Kwale coastal districts of Kenya. IREWOC will be conducting the benchmark research at the start and mid-point of the project, as well as the impact study.

In September, professor Lieten, jointly with professor Ratan Khasnabis and Sharmistha Banerjee, both from the University of Kolkatta, trained 12 local researchers in research techniques and research sensitivities. Nanna Baum, together with the colleagues from the University of Kolkatta, facilitated the survey logistics and collaborated with Plan Kenya to coordinate the initial phase of the quantitative benchmark research. Between October and December 2009, 550 questionnaires were collected in Nairobi and Kwale district and the process of analysis is now in progress. The outcome will provide important insights into the extent of violence. Nanna Baum also prepared for a participatory research methodology, by which children in 2010 will be trained to do peer research on violence in 10 schools.

Reports and Publications

During 2009, the following reports were finalized and posted on the website:

- Marten van den Berge and Laura Baas: Rural Child Labour in Andean Countries: problems and solutions (ISBN: 978-90-79078-18-9)
- Laura Baas: Child Labour in Guaraní Communities in Bolivia (not published)
- Laura Baas: Child Labour on Sugar Cane Plantations in Bolivia (ISBN 078-90-79078-20-2)

- Marten van den Berge: Rural Child Labour in Peru. A comparison of child labour in traditional and commercial agriculture (ISBN 978-90-79078-22-6)
- Anna Ensing, Hazardous Child Labour in the Leather Sector of Dhaka, Bangladesh (ISBN: 978-90-79078-21-9).
- Froukje Gaasterland: Being a Good Girl. The Construction of Childhood in Tirupur, India (ISBN-978-9-79078-19-6 (This study examines the relation between reality and desires of girls working in the garment industry. Based on fieldwork findings, the argument is that in Tirupur, where so many of our garments are made, the principles of the CRC are not western values, but are what the working girls, from traditional backgrounds, aspire to.)
- G.K. Lieten Child Labour and Child Rights. Dhaka: University Press, 2009 (194 pp.). ISBN 978 984 8815 05 2 (The book addresses various issues related to child-based policies, using anthropological, economic and political approaches and draws on field work conducted in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Topics related to the most marginalized children of the world include agency, the universality of rights, rights versus needs, the definitions and causes of child labour, and child labour and education. The publication also looks at the impact of globalisation and the various policy options, including child labour unions and trade related measures.)

The following English-language articles have been published in **The World of Child Labor. An Historical and Regional Survey** (New York/London: M.E. Sharpe), edited by Hugh Hindman. This collection of more than 200 essays by scholars, researchers, policy-makers and activists, provides an overview of various dimensions of the child labour problem in each region of the world, and on institutions and organizations combating child labour. IREWOC has contributed to this volume with essays on various subjects and regions including theoretical issues and specific entries on child labour in South Asia, China and the Andes Region, on child labour unions in Africa and India, and child trafficking in West and Central Africa:

- Lieten, G.K.: Towards an Integrative Theory of Child Labour. An historical and regional survey.
- Lieten, G.K.: International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC).
- Lieten, G.K.: Child Labor Unions in Africa'.
- Lieten, G.K. and Hugh Hindman: Child Labor in China: An Overview.
- Albertine de Lange: Trafficking for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa.
- Albertine de Lange: Child Labor in Burkina Faso
- Marten van den Berge: Child Labor in Bolivia.
- Marten van den Berge: Children's Social Movement in Latin America

- Marten van den Berge: Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Andes region
- Afke De Groot: Rural Child Labor in South Asia.
- Afke De Groot: Challenges for Tribal Schooling in India
- Heike Roschanski: Working Children's Unions in India.

During the year, the following Dutch-language articles were published:

- Anna Ensing: 'Leerproductie in Bangladesh veroorzaakt milieuvervuiling en slechte arbeidsomstandigheden'. Updaid Nieuws over Ontwikkelings-samenwerking en Ontwikkelingslanden 25 May 2009
- Anna Ensing en Kristoffel Lieten. Verbod op kinderarbeid is niet genoeg. Eindhovens Dagblad 9 July 2009.
- Laura Baas, Marten van den Berge, Anna Ensing, Luisa Quiroz. Onderwijs als tovermiddel. Kanttekeningen bij de bestrijding van kinderarbeid. In: La Chispa. Maandblad over Latijns Amerika en de Cariben. Nummer 342. Mei 2009
- Kristoffel Lieten: 'Branche Wil Controle tegen Kinderarbeid'. Vakblad voor de Woninginrichting, Augustus 2009, p.20.
- Kristoffel Lieten, 'Handelsboycot werkt niet bij kinderarbeid'. NRC Handelsblad, 4 april 2009.
- Kristoffel Lieten, 'Kinderarbeid Bestaat nog Steeds'. Interview in Vakblad voor de Woninginrichting, June 2009, pp. 12-14.
- Kristoffel Lieten, 'Kinderarbeid, Ook in onze Branche'. Interview Home and Living, September 2009, pp. 8-10.
- Kristoffel Lieten, 'India laat kinderen gratis naar school gaan'. Trouw, 06-06-09, p. 8.

Conferences and working groups

The sharing of the results with staff members of alliance organizations and with the wider public in general has received considerable attention. At the University of Amsterdam, IREWOC continued its involvement in the international **MA Child Rights course** and supervised 6 students doing research in India, Philippines, Indonesia and Nepal.

In June, in collaboration with bachelor students from the University of Amsterdam, IREWOC organized a panel discussion on **Child Labour Policies**, with panelists from War Child, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Terre des Hommes, ICCO and Stop Child Labour. Themes that were discussed, among others, were practical solutions to the worst forms of child labour, current western policies to ban child labour worldwide

and the idea of a boycott of child made products. The panel agreed that solid primary education worldwide is the only structural answer to the exploitation of children on the labour market.

IREWOC staff also participated actively in the working group on **Violence against Children** and in the advisory group to the May 2011 **International Child Labour Conference in the Hague**.

IREWOC in November also participated in the **Expert-meeting on Child Labour and Education** organised by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a presentation based on the findings of various studies.

An international conference planned for June, on the occasion of 10 years ILO Convention 182, which planned to focus on girl child labour, had to be cancelled due to organisational issues, but IREWOC then played a major role in the Round Table on child labour at the major international conference **Children's Rights at a Crossroads. A Global Conference on Research and Child Rights** organized in late November in Addis Ababa by Childwatch International, The African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) and the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre. The conference was an opportunity to engage the relevant actors in reflection and dialogue for a better and more relevant knowledge base for future child rights strategies and to formulate specific recommendations for policy makers, UN agencies, academic institutions, development agencies and NGOs. The round table was moderated by IREWOC board member Mr. Frans Röselaers. Presenters were Prof. Hugh Hindman, Prof. Peter Dorman and Prof. Ana Lucia Kassouf. The significant recommendation was that there should be more qualitative and quantitative research on child labour in agriculture and rural settings, in the informal economy including street trades, and that research should give priority attention to those children exposed to the worst conditions and the especially vulnerable, with the goal of reaching those who are hardest to reach and thus least likely to avoid or escape exploitation and abuse.

Assessment and Prospects

Moving the office to Leiden will bring IREWOC in still closer cooperation with other child-focused organizations and will provide new opportunities.

The structural support, which IREWOC has been receiving from Plan Netherlands during the last 6 years, has come to an end. IREWOC expects to deepen its alliance and to continue its association with like-minded NGO's and INGO's. The position in the field as a unique child labour research institute has allowed IREWOC to formulate its research priorities and then to align them with the requirements of the child-focused organisations, assessing the relevance within a wider perspective of knowledge generation. It is hopeful that new strategic alliances will emerge, either with the NGO sector or with the corporate sector.

IREWOC's unique selling point is the field-work based quantitative and qualitative research, which answers to the need for knowledge-based information and insights.

IREWOC has developed its expertise on the various aspects of deprived childhood, such as child labour, street children, illiterate children and migrant children, and has established a good relationship with various child-centred organizations, nationally and internationally. It intends to further develop its expertise and its consulting role.

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