



Child Labour in Mining and Quarrying in Cajamarca, Peru

An Appendage to:

Child Labour in the Mining Sector of Peru

The IREWOC Research Project on the

Worst Forms of Child Labour in Latin America¹



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2008

¹ Ensing, A (2008) *Child Labour in the Mining Sector of Peru. The IREWOC Research Project on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Latin America*. Amsterdam: IREWOC

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Photos: Marten van den Berge

Web-ISBN: 978-90-79078-14-1

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IREWOC, the Amsterdam-based Foundation for International Research on Working Children intends to generate more theoretically informed research on various aspects of child labour and child rights, as well as to raise awareness and to motivate action around this complex issue. IREWOC is associated with the University of Amsterdam, with the International Institute of Social History and it has a strategic alliance with Plan Netherlands.

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In 2007 the IREWOC Foundation carried out a research project on The Worst Forms of Child Labour in Latin America in 3 countries, Guatemala, Bolivia and Peru. This report is an appendage to the study of the mining sector in Peru, conducted by Anna Ensing [Ensing 2008], and focuses on the mining and quarrying activities in the Cajamarca region of Peru. A choice was made to carry out additional and specific research in the Cajamarca region because of its large scope of mining activities. The data was collected by means of anthropological research from 1-09-2007 to 14-09-2007 (in Cajamarca province) and 14-09-2007 to 30-09-2007 (in Chota province).

This report will first present a general view of child labour in the region and the organisations working on the issue, after which it will examine the relationship between child labour and the biggest goldmine on the Latin-American continent, Yanacocha, and discuss a project aiming to improve the situation for child and adolescent workers in the stone quarries of the province of Chota. The report concludes with a number of recommendations.

Cajamarca: the poor sitting on a throne of gold

Cajamarca is one of the 24 regions of Peru, located in the north of the country. It has an estimated 1.5 million inhabitants of which 28% live in the cities and 72% in rural areas. The region comprises 13 provinces², which are again divided into 127 districts. The capital of the region is also called Cajamarca, which is located in the province of the same name. The capital city of Cajamarca lies approximately 2,720 meters above sea level and has a population of about 165.000 people. There is a lot of cattle breeding, for cheese and other dairy products. Two of the countries largest dairy factories, Nestle and Leche Gloria, are located just outside the city. Many families also breed guinea pigs. Agricultural products include potatoes, wheat, maize, barley, rice, and sugar cane. Besides agriculture the following income generating sectors are important: construction, government services, manufacturing, commercial, hospitality and rental homes [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:14].

However, the most important sector, which has had the most dramatic effect on the socio-economic development of Cajamarca in the last two decades, is the mining sector. The Yanacocha³ mine, is located 48 kilometres north of the city of Cajamarca and is the biggest goldmine of Latin-America. It is considered to be one of the most profitable goldmines in the world. The mine was discovered in 1980, and production began in 1993. Nowadays it is owned by the US mining corporation Newmont (which owns 51.35 % of the mine) and the Peruvian company Minas Buenaventura (which owns 43.65 %). The International Finance Corporation (IFC), an arm of the World Bank, holds the

² Cajabamba, Cajamarca, Celendín, Chota, Contumazá, Cutervo, Hualgayoc, Jaén, San Ignacio, San Marcos, San Miguel, San Pablo, Santa Cruz.

³ The name Yanacocha comes from the Quechua (local language) word Yana Qutra: “black lagoon”.

remaining 5%. Yanacocha has been producing over US\$7 billion worth of gold to date; in 2005 alone it produced 94.000 kg of gold [Wikipedia]

As stated in a report from the Peruvian Ministry of Energy and Mining, Yanacocha has generated a lot of mining work opportunities for people in the region of Cajamarca and has indirectly stimulated income for local undertakings supplying services to the mines and miners (hotels, restaurants, etc) [Ministerio de Energía y Minas de Perú 2006]. When the mine opened, macroeconomic statistics showed that the departmental GNP improved 3.5 times in the period 1992-1996, which amounts to a per capita improvement of US\$5.400 a year as a direct consequence of the mine [M. Arana in ILO/IPEC 2003]. However, critics state that this improvement has only been for the happy few, especially those directly involved in the mining project. Their criticism is supported by national poverty statistics. These show that, despite the US\$7 billion worth of gold extracted from the Yanacocha mine, Cajamarca is still one of the poorest regions of Peru. According to the Ministry of Women and Social Development (MIMDES) more than 77% of the inhabitants live under the poverty line⁴ with almost 51% living in extreme poverty⁵. 71% of the homes in the region Cajamarca don't have access to electricity and, in addition, 52% don't have access to clean running water [Ministerio de la Mujer y Desarrollo Social]. The people of Cajamarca are exemplary for the popular saying that in Peru many poor are seated on a throne of gold.

NGOs and local environmentalist activists state that the mining project has led to serious social and environmental problems. Regarding environmental consequences the mining operations use large quantities of a dilute cyanide solution that have contaminated the water sources, leading to the disappearance of fish and frogs, illnesses among cattle, air pollution, and loss of medicinal plants [Ingetec S.A.]. The environmental damages and the threat of possible contamination have led to several social protests by local communities against the mine⁶.

Despite the negative environmental consequences and social protests, representatives of NGOs claim that the mining activities of Minería Yanacocha have led to massive migration to the city of Cajamarca because of the mining opportunities and secondary jobs found in the hospitality services. Unfortunately, the influx of people has led to an increase in homeless and jobless people who live on the streets and beg for their living. In addition, Minería Yanacocha bought land from several hundreds of farmers in the region so as to exploit their land.⁷ Many of these ex-farmers (ex-

⁴ Set at an income of 159.1 Sol per month (equivalent of 35.7 euros or 52.9 US dollars a month)

⁵ Set at a monthly income of 99 Sol a month (equivalent of 22.3 euros or 32 US dollars a month)

⁶ In 2000 there was an international public scandal and social protests when 151 kilograms of toxic metals used for the Yanacocha mining activities and transported by a contracted truck was spilt. According to government estimates, more than nine hundred people were poisoned [Anaya 2001]. Numerous local outcries against further expansion of the mining sector in the area have led to varied successes and failures. Locals protest the mines because of the serious health consequences and environmental contamination. They have blocked off bridges, roads and dams in an attempt to foil the mining companies' plans, which have led to serious clashes with police and privately contracted security forces, resulting in many injuries and even deaths. Those who attempted to investigate the killings and who supported the protestors reportedly received death threats, allegedly by individuals with ties to the security firm FORZA, which Newmont (US mining company) hired to provide security at Yanacocha.

⁷ The environmental NGO Grufindes claims that purchases of land were made far below the market value, as companies used the farmer's lack of knowledge against them.

propietarios) also migrated to the city of Cajamarca, which led to various social problems in the countryside, because of the breakdown of rural communities, as well as in Cajamarca, such as increased poverty and criminality [CIEL The Center for International Environmental Law 2000; Bury 2007].

The children of Cajamarca: growing up in poverty

The fact that Cajamarca is still one of the poorest regions in Peru also has its effects on the context in which children grow up. A study of the National Statistical Institute in 2002 found that 43% of the population in the region of Cajamarca was chronically undernourished (45% of women and 52% of children). According to the same study child mortality was 51 per 1000, and maternal mortality was one of the highest in Peru with 183 women dying for every 100.000 births [INEI & OIT 2002].

In the Cajamarca region there are 3,247 primary schools, in which 252,778 children aged 6-11 were enrolled in 2003. This was 90.6% of the total number of children in that age group in the region. 9.4% (30,296 children) were thus not in school, of which the majority originated from the provinces Chota (38.6%), San Miguel (33.6%) and Jaén (28.2%) (see Table 1).

There were also a number of children (20% in 2002) who were enrolled, but who either failed or repeated the year, or who dropped out of school. (See Table 2)

In some provinces, strategies to prevent school dropouts are being implemented; these include school enrolment campaigns and awareness raising workshops for parents and school principals⁸. A Regional Government report relates the high incidence of dropout with the phenomena of child labour. It states that, "it is important to note that repeating the year has to do with the quality of education, while dropping out of school has to do with poverty, as the child has to contribute to family income or seasonal agricultural tasks, which obligates children to abandon school [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:41].

Child labour in Cajamarca: the numbers

According to the results of the last national study on child labour, one quarter of the children and adolescents aged 6-17 in Peru work⁹ (1,987,000 in absolute numbers) [INEI & OIT 2002:33]. The same study states that in the Cajamarca region, in 2001, almost 445 thousand children were working [INEI & OIT 2002:35]. In percentages this means that more than half (50.2%) of all children in the age group 6-17 works. Table 3 shows how 36.9% of the children aged 6-17 combine work with study, whilst 13.3% work fulltime.

⁸ This is the case in the provinces of Celendín, Cajabamba, Cutervo, San Marcos, Hualgayoc

⁹ Children and Adolescents Code of the Peruvian government of 2001 puts the minimum age for legal work at 14 years of age. Peru signed the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which wants to secure the prohibition and elimination of certain worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. See appendix A for a specific list of these worst forms.

Table 1: Percentage of children of the age group 6-11 not in school, in the region Cajamarca, according to province. In the provinces not mentioned, 100% is registered. [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:39]

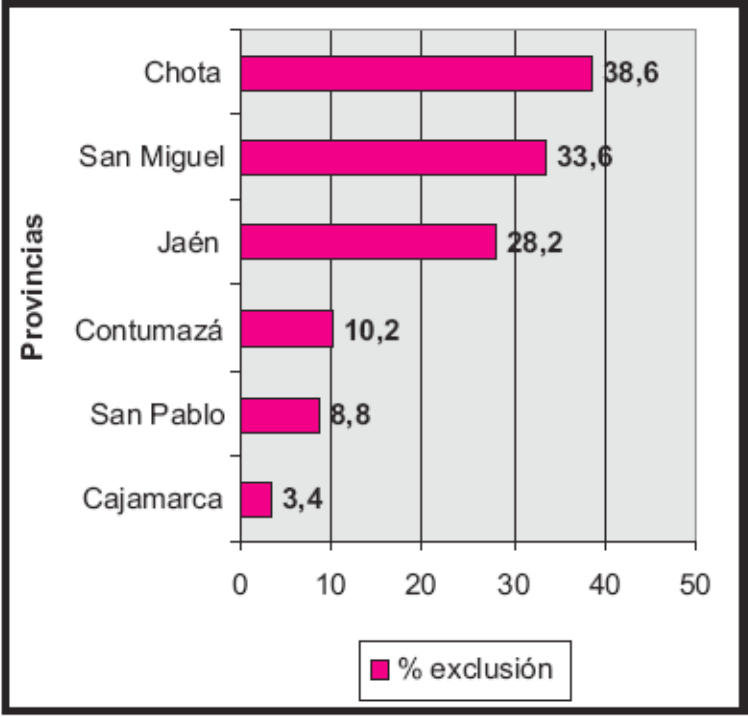


Table 2: Dropouts (deserción), repetition (repetencia) and passes (promoción) for students aged 6-11, per province in the region of Cajamarca, in 2003. [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:41]

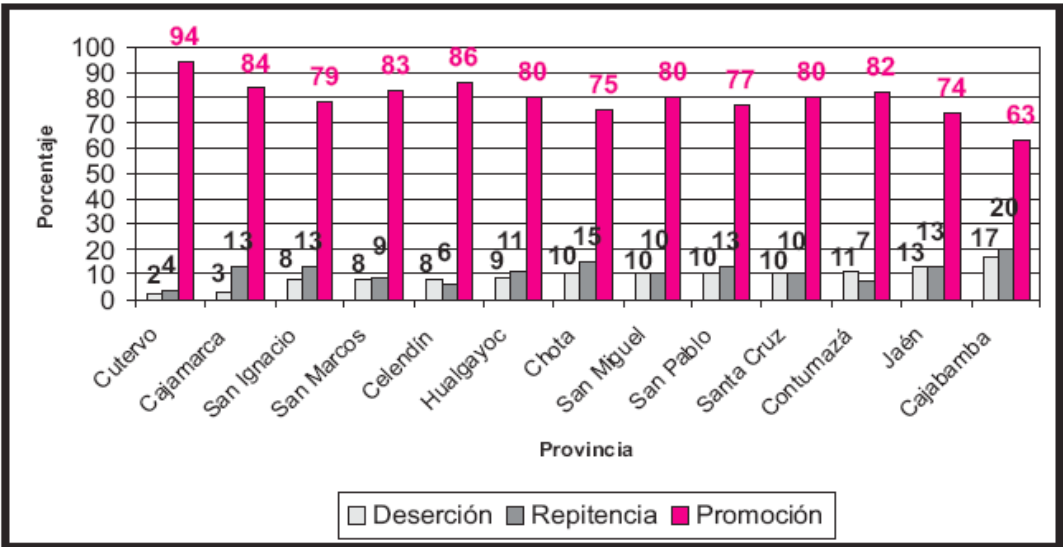


Table 3: Activities of children (aged 6-17) in Cajamarca [INEI & OIT 2002:22]

Region	Combines school and work	Only work	Only study	Neither
Cajamarca	36.9%	13.3%	46.3%	3.6%

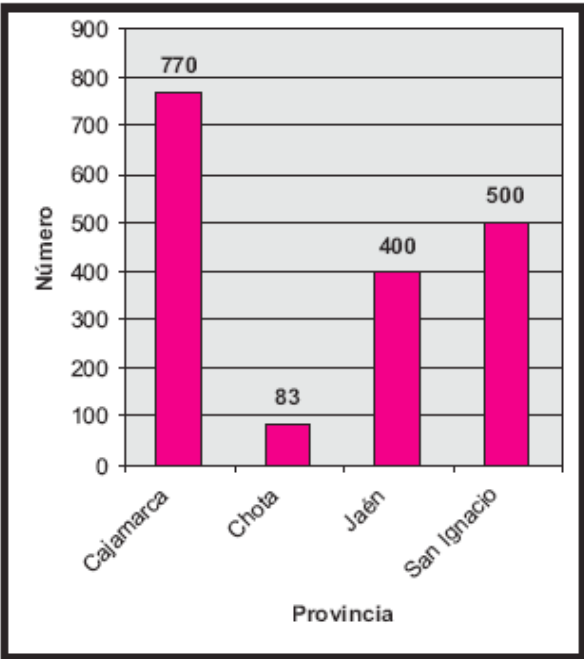
The INEI study also shows an incredible increase in the number of child labourers in the Cajamarca region. Where in 1993 only 12.3% of the children aged 6-17 were working, in 2001 this was 50.2% [INEI & OIT 2002:28].

According to a regional government study in 2003, approximately 1,753 children between 6 and 11 work in the Cajamarca region, but the numbers differ per province. Table 4 shows that most child labourers are found in the Cajamarca province. They wash cars, sell on the streets or in markets, work as housemaids, are babysitters, and so forth.

In reference to the causes of child labour, the report states in a very general way that:

Child labour probably has its roots in family abandonment, alcoholism of the parents and a low family income, that forces the child to work from an early age. In the rural areas work for boy children is traditional and therefore it is normal or natural that they perform agricultural tasks from an early age on, in the meantime girl children are responsible for pasturing the animals, carrying water, and looking after younger siblings [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:43].

Table 4: Child labourers (aged 6-11), in the Cajamarca region, per province [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:43]



The regional government states that adolescents aged 11-18 constitute more than one-fourth of the population, but are the least looked after [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:44]. There is,

however, no data on numbers of working adolescents and in what conditions they work. NGOs in the region report that adolescents work as street sellers, construction workers, market porters, car washers, shampoo sellers and housemaids. The report goes on to state that the majority of adolescents have lots of available time for work as 60% (155,000 in absolute numbers) of the age-group 12-17 don't go to school anymore [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:46].

No data has been compiled on the worst forms of child labour; the regional government report only mentions a serious problem with prostitution among adolescents. In the city of Cajamarca alone, there are an estimated 46 brothels with adolescents accounting for 30% of the staff [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:51]. There is no data about the other activities on the national worst forms list, including mining and quarrying. The regional government report does, however, state that "the region of Cajamarca has to face this serious problem and has to prioritise education and to prevent the exploitation of children in their working context" [Gobierno Regional de Cajamarca 2003:43].

Organisations working on child labour in Cajamarca

State organisations

The Peruvian government delegated some of its responsibilities to regional governments, including the task of eradicating child labour on a local level. Unfortunately though, the effective establishment of the regional governments has not been completed and exact tasks and responsibilities have not yet been defined. In practice one sees that some regional governments actively prioritise the issue and others don't.

The Cajamarca regional government has four departments: natural resources and environment, economical development, social development and infrastructure. The department of social development works on four permanent themes: education, healthcare, housing and labour. Child labour is considered to traverse the 4 themes. The regional government has established the Regional Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour (CERPETI). CERPETI is a local department of the Directive Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour (CPETI) that exists on a national level.¹⁰ In CERPETI the regional office meets with local NGOs working on child labour and other governmental institutions that touch upon the theme of child labour in the region (such as the local representative of the Ministry of Labour, INABIF¹¹ and the national police force). Together they set priorities and discuss strategies regarding the eradication of child labour

¹⁰ This committee, under the guidance of the Ministry of Labour, comprises state and non-state institutions that coordinate, evaluate and follow up the efforts made towards the eradication of child labour on a national level. Its most important task is to enhance the National Plan of Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour with detailed plans of action [CPETI & MTPE 2005].

¹¹ INABIF = National Programme for Family Well-being (Instituto Nacional para el Bienestar Familiar). INABIF is part of the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (MIMDES). It is an entity that is specialised in the construction and execution of social programmes directed towards that part of society that is vulnerable because of poverty, social exclusion, or victims of family violence or social and political discrimination. For poor (working) children in Cajamarca they offer lunch services and some scholarships. However, they only operate 2 days a week. See for more information <http://www.inabif.mimdes.gob.pe>.

in the region. The CERPETI is still in the process of formulating these plans; however, the basic idea is to implement the objectives of CEPETI on a local level.

The regional government wants to also implement a research project on the cultural views on child labour in the countryside of Cajamarca; these are relevant for the new governmental programme Juntos, which will allocate funds of 100 sols (23 euros) to people living in extreme poverty, on the condition that they send their children to school and remove their children from labour activities.¹²

A member of the planned research project commented:

In the countryside people have different views on what exactly child labour entails. Therefore, if we want the farmers to comply to our criteria and get their children out of labour activities, we need them to know our interpretation and we need to know theirs. Otherwise we will have constant miscommunication.

Non-governmental organisations

The most significant NGOs working in the field of child labour in Cajamarca include:

- IINCAP Jorge Basadre¹³ = IINCAP has several projects for child labourers in different provinces of the Cajamarca region, specifically in the provinces of Cajamarca, Chota, Jaén, and Celendin. The activities of the children they work with, as well as the projects, differ per province. In the city of Cajamarca they work mainly with children involved in street trades and with child porters at markets. In the district Baños del Inca¹⁴ in the province of Cajamarca they have a project for children selling shampoo. In Jaén they target children working in garbage dumps and in prostitution. In Celendin the children in the project are occupied in agriculture and construction. Lastly, in Chota their project is directed towards children who work in stone quarries. IINCAP supports the objective of the eradication of child labour under 14 years of age. However, it is their opinion that it is impossible to eradicate all child labour immediately. According to the director, “you should make a difference between long term and short term strategies. In the long run we want children to stop working, but in the short term it is impossible that children stop working. That is why we strive to improve working conditions, getting children into school and improve their healthcare situation.” Improving working conditions does not count for children engaged in prostitution. Regarding strategies, IINCAP Jorge Basadre works with education, offering workshops for enhancing self-esteem of working children and improving their working capacities, awareness raising workshops and micro-financing programmes for the parents of working children.
- Asociación Mujer Familia (AMF) = AFM has existed for 20 years and has been focusing the last 9 years more and more on housemaids. They work above all within the city of

¹² See for more information on the programme and its criteria: <http://www.juntos.gob.pe>

¹³ IINCAP = Institute for Investigation, Capacity Building and Promotion (Instituto de Investigación, Capacitación y Promoción).

¹⁴ The district Baños del Inca is famous for its hot water sources, where several Inca kings bathed themselves. Hence the name: Baths of the Inca.

Cajamarca. The central objective is to get housemaids into school and to improve their healthcare and working conditions. To improve their working conditions, the housemaids get child rights education in the AMF office. The assumption is that with their child rights knowledge the children demand these rights from their employers. Additionally, AMF teaches housemaids other trades such as sewing and weaving. By teaching these trades AMF hopes that the girls in the end can change their working situation, and go from being a housemaid to selling their handmade products. Another aspect of their project is contacting the parents of the housemaids and teach them child rights education, in the hope that they will withdraw their children from work. Where possible, AMF itself also functions as an intermediary between employers and housemaids. Their stance on child labour is basically that under the age of 12 children should not work; above the age of 12 their working conditions should be improved.

- Manthoc Cajamarca¹⁵ = The central objective of Manthoc Cajamarca is to organise working children and offer them child rights education so that they themselves can improve their own working conditions. In addition, they offer an alternative educational programme recognised by the local government and specially designed for working children. Lastly, they also offer a “labour programme” in which children work in a bakery workshop for a limited amount of time, under good working conditions and learn how to make and sell baked goods. Groups of children perform a variety of activities, from domestic tasks to selling in the streets, carrying loads at markets and washing cars. In the countryside of Cajamarca Manthoc groups are engaged in agricultural and domestic tasks and, as will be elaborated on below, they also have a group of children producing golden necklaces and bracelets. Regarding child labour, Manthoc is anti-eradication, and mainly focuses on the improvement of working conditions.

Cooperation among organisations

Most organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, work together in the CERPETI. The different groups, however, do tend to criticise each other. A critique from the NGOs towards the regional government is that the regional government does not prioritise the theme of child labour enough. A representative of IINCAP stated: “The regional government does not seem to be very much interested in the theme of child labour. They always prioritise projects such as building roads, parks and lanes. Also when we organise activities on child labour they often don’t even come”. Another representative stated:

When 3 years ago Unicef gave the regional government funding to organise capacity building workshops for local government officials, they were willing to take up the theme of child rights. However, when funding stopped their interest also seemed to stop, because they did not do any follow up whatsoever.

¹⁵ MANTHOC = Movimiento de Adolescentes y Niños Trabajadores Hijos de Cristianos (Movement of Working Children and Adolescents from Christian Working Class Families). It is a national working children’s organisation with representation on local, national, and even international level [Van den Berge 2007].

Yanacocha and civil society organisation in Cajamarca

The presence of the Yanacocha mine has a profound effect on the functioning of civil society organisations in Cajamarca. Many NGOs in Cajamarca are critical towards the mine, fearing environmental pollution and social tensions. The NGOs included in our research reported that the mining companies offered them funds to implement their projects, but only on the condition that they do not participate in any social protests against the mine. A representative of MANTHOC explained: “The mine actually tries to buy us. They say they will fund your projects, but then you can’t participate in the protests anymore. Additionally you have to say that the mine is positive for the development of Cajamarca”. An AMF representative related:

The mines tried to buy us when we were without financial means. They said they wanted to work with youngsters as well, but at the same time they tried to impose their will. We did not accept, as we want to be a free and independent organisation. Apart from that, the mine destructs life, and we want to construct life.

Most of this funding is offered through an NGO founded and owned by the Yanacocha mine, called Asociacion los Andes de Cajamarca (ALAC). ALAC forms part of the social responsibility programme of Yanacocha through which part of the profit of Yanacocha is to be converted into social programmes for the region. This NGO sometimes gives scholarships and school materials to poor children in the region. Through this help, the opinion of locals about the presence of the mine is influenced, as a representative of the environmental NGO Grufindes explained: “Once I was present when a woman of ALAC was at a school giving away backpacks with pens and school notebooks. The woman said: ‘This is a present of the mine Yanacocha, I hope you will think twice when you are asked to participate in a demonstration again it’ ”. Working with civil society organisations in Cajamarca thus automatically means being involved in the discussion on the presence and consequences of the Yanacocha mine.

The regional government finds that it is bureaucracy of the central government that restricts the regional government from implementing programmes and projects for child labour. The person responsible for child labour issues commented: “if you compare dynamics in decision-making processes, NGOs go with the speed of a fancy car or an airplane, we of the regional government go over muddy roads; it takes an eternity to get a project approved and funded in the central government in Lima”. However, besides bureaucracy, he also admitted to other themes having priority over child labour. “It is true that we give more importance to themes such as malnutrition and maternal health. The reason is that these themes are less controversial. Everybody favours better health, but on the eradication of child labour there is no consensus”. However, most seem confident that the department of social development is finally making child labour an important theme again. In the words of a representative of IINCAP:

There definitely is some progress as we have constructed a work plan for the coming semester. We have committed ourselves to organising an activity for a national day for

the eradication of child labour, where we want people to realise that child labour is a problem. This cooperation is a good start.

A representative of AMF stated: “Although within CERPETI we have our differences, it is good that this regional government has taken up its responsibility again with the CERPETI and that we are all discussing the theme again”.

Whereas most NGOs working on child labour are organised in the CERPETI, MANTHOC decided not to participate in this forum. This decision was based on ideological differences. A representative of MANTHOC explained:

We think it is important to work in networks, however, everyone has their own ideology. The CERPETI want to eradicate child labour. For us that objective does not make sense in a context where there is no work for parents, and children have to work to survive. As a consequence we are not against child labour, we want to improve working conditions. Therefore it would make no sense of joining a platform which is directed towards the eradication of child labour.

Child labour in mining and quarrying in the Cajamarca region

Child labour in the mining plants of Yanacocha

Although mining has a large economic and social significance in Cajamarca, studies on child labour in Peru make no mention of child labour in this sector. One of the reasons appears to be that a large percentage of the mining sector in Cajamarca concerns large-scale mining. Most child labour in mining is, however, found in small scale artisanal mining, as this primarily non-mechanised, family based labour with a lack of control systems. Large scale mining on the other hand is highly mechanised and controlled, which makes the possibilities and need for children to work in this type of mining very small. This is also the case in the Yanacocha mining plant, the largest, most important and most mechanised mine in the region Cajamarca, and in fact the whole of the Latin-American continent. Yanacocha explicitly upholds the Conventions 138 and 182 of the ILO, as well as the national laws on child labour, which all clearly prohibit the entrance of minors under the age of 18 into the mining plant. These regulations are strictly controlled. Carlos Scerpella Cevallos, responsible for communication and human rights of the Yanacocha mine, explained:

It is impossible that minors enter the mine. First the age is checked at a health control of the workers. Then identification is checked when contracts are signed. Then last there is a fence with a strict border-control around the whole mining plant. Upon entering you have to show your entrance pass of Yanacocha, which will only be supplied when you are above the age of 18.

During the research several visits to the mines were carried out and indeed this strict control was observed and no child labour was found in the mining plant of Yanacocha.

Yanacocha and the relation with child labour in Cajamarca

Although no children are found working in the mining plant itself, several NGO representatives stated that there is a more indirect relation between the phenomena of child labour in Cajamarca and the way in which mining cooperations of Yanacocha operate. An often-mentioned example is how, in the beginning of the mine exploitation, the mining company bought land off the farmers, living and working on land rich with minerals, at extremely low prices. According to a representative of the environmental NGO Grufindes the farmers agreed with low prices as they were not aware of the true value of their land. She also explained: “The mining companies came with lawyers to the farmers to buy their land; can you imagine how intimidated they must have felt. This intimidation must have helped in buying the land at low prices”. These farmers migrated to the city of Cajamarca, where they soon became impoverished from a combination of low income and an incapability to adapt to a new environment. According to NGO representatives a large percentage of the children working in the city of Cajamarca come from these impoverished migrant families. Nowadays the mining company has social programmes for the farmers of which they buy land. These programmes offer alternative work and integration into the labour market in the city so that they don’t fall into poverty like their predecessors.

Additionally in the face of an improved economy because of mining activities, many rural families have migrated towards Cajamarca. Here they hoped to find work at the companies supplying services to the mine or in houses of individuals working for the mine. These companies or persons are said also to contract children. Representatives of AMF stated that many housemaids in their projects work for miners working in the mine of Yanacocha. They cook, clean and wash the clothes of the miners¹⁶. NGOs also claim that many children work in the restaurants, hotels and catering companies that offer services to the mine or to the people working for the mine. However, there is no exact data available on the numbers of children involved, nor on the exact activities they perform. Therefore these statements on the indirect relation between child labour and the mining companies should be better investigated on their exact validity.

There was one child labour activity related to the presence of the mine that was actually observed during the fieldwork period. Through the NGO Manthoc children were encountered in the rural village Pullucana, near the city of Cajamarca, who were producing gold bracelets and necklaces. It concerned a group of around 15 boys and girls in the age group 8-18. Also the parents of these children were often (partly) involved in this work. The labour activities consisted of getting silver or golden links from jewellery workplaces and connecting them into bracelets and necklaces with little iron tongs. It is informal work and performed in or around the houses of the children. When the bracelets and necklaces are ready, they are sold back to the workplaces. The amount of work depends on the demand of the jewellery shop. Usually children and their parents go to the shops to ask for work but, in cases of a direct and large demand, the jewellery shop owners come to Pullacana to distribute the work.

¹⁶ It must be stated that AMF feels that these housemaids work under the best conditions. As a representative commented: “miners earn quite a lot, so they offer the best wages and labour conditions. It’s the girls who work for the relatively poor families who are most exploited”.

The labour activities are considered by most children as painstaking and boring. According to 14-year-old Sara: “You are sitting there all the time doing the same stuff over and over again. It seems to take an eternity to finish a bracelet, it’s quite boring”. 11-year-old Irina commented, “you have to be quite precise as the links are really small, so you need hours working on one bracelet, which is pretty tiresome”. Some children reported specific physical complaints that seemed to be due to the nature of the work. Connecting the little links into bracelets requires quite some concentration and leads to eye irritations. 13-year-old Edwin explained: “Sometimes my eyes hurt after 3 hours of work, as you have to work with very little links, which have to fit neatly”. Lesly, 16 years old, similarly commented: “It’s very precise work, therefore you need to focus really well, which makes your eyes sometimes hurt after working some time”. Another physical consequence of this work is muscle aches, especially in the back. Aralia, a 10 year old girl commented: “Sometimes I work so concentrated that I don’t notice time goes by. Then when I stop I notice I have been working bent over and that my back hurts a lot”.

Although some children complained about occasional physical inconveniences, they added they did not experience any long lasting physical disorders. This was affirmed by adults who had been doing this work for years. Arcely, mother of Lesly and 33 years old, stated: “It is boring yes, but dangerous not really. You can divide your own time, so if your back or your eyes hurts you can just stop”. Furthermore, making bracelets and necklaces is combined with school; children work before or after school hours with a maximum of 4 hours a day. So, although the work is painstaking and boring and badly paid, it need not necessarily be considered to harm the health, safety or morals of children. As such it can also not be considered a worst form of child labour according to ILO Convention 182.

When confronted with the fact that children are involved in the production chain of jewellery, the human rights officer at the Yanacocha mine stated that he doesn’t hold Yanacocha responsible. He explained:

I can’t guaranty for 100% that there is no child labour in the production chain from Yanacocha gold into jewellery. However, Yanacocha basically sells *doré* [a gold and silver amalgam], and what happens when we sell it is not our direct responsibility. But if we find out we will definitely report it.

Child labour in artisanal mining

Although there seems to be no direct relation between the large scale mining in Cajamarca and child labour, several representatives of NGOs and the regional government claim that there are children working in artisanal mines in the provinces of the Cajamarca region. Specific mines include those in Huallcayoc (in the province with the same name), Algamarca (in Cajabamba province) and Huamachucu (in the Huamachucu province). Child labour projects have been implemented in the latter two mines.¹⁷ It is unknown if children are still working there as no impact studies are available. Due to the fact that these mines are located in remote areas, and access is further hampered as no organisations are active there, it was impossible to incorporate them in the IREWOC research project. However to get a clear indication on child labour in the region it seems very

¹⁷ In Huamachucu it concerns an ILO project and in Algamarca an initiative of the Catholic Church

relevant and pertinent to investigate if these reports on the prevalence of child labour in these mines are true, and if so in which quantity and capacity.

In addition to the somewhat speculative comments on child labour in artisanal mining, there is more concrete and reliable information on child labour in quarrying in the Cajamarca region. The NGO IINCAP Jorge Basadre, works with programmes on child labour specifically in the provinces of Cajamarca, Chota, Jean, Celendin. In the province of Chota the project concerns children working in stone quarries. Although no official statistical information is available on child labour in this sector and region, IICAP Jorge Basadre estimates that around 50 working children participate in this project. As this sector was more accessible and, because of the project of INCAP, more interesting from a best practices point of view, it was decided that this sector was to be studied in more detail.

When travelling to the city of Chota it was also discovered that dozens of children work in chalk quarries along the road from Cajamarca to Chota. Again, there is no official statistical data available, nor is any governmental or non-governmental organisation working with these children. Therefore it seems relevant and pertinent to investigate more on the numbers of children involved, their ages, the types of activities they perform, and so forth.

Child labour in the Chota quarries



Photo 1: Chipping stones in La Cangana

The children working in stone quarries in the province of Chota, do so just outside the city of Chota, alongside the road leading to Bambamarca. The IINCAP Jorge Basadre project concerns itself with the children working along that road near the rural villages of La Cangana (see photo 1) and Santa Rosa. In both places there are approximately 25-30 working children; in total the NGOs estimate that about 100 children are working in stone quarries in neighbouring villages.

It was remarkable that most of the children working in La Cangana were very young. More than half of the children were younger than 14; the youngest child was a boy of 4 years of age (see photo 2). Additionally remarkable was the fact that there was no big gender difference; an equal number of girls and boys were involved in the work. The parents of the children also perform this work in addition to their other working activities.



Photo 2: Four-year-old boy working alongside the road

The activities

The main activity of the children is to crush the stones to gravel with a hammer. The children sit on a little bench, a stone or a tin can and hold the stones between their feet. The stone is then repeatedly hit by a hammer using a two-handed grip (see photo 3). The size of the hammer correlates with the child's age and own size. The stones are taken from a hillside on the opposite side of the road. They are hard, non porous stones; heavy to carry and difficult to break.

Tasks are divided among the children according to age. The older children retrieve the stones from the hillside and carry them across the road in cloth sacks or in sheets of plastic (see photo 4). There they crush them to little stones. These are given to the younger or less strong children, which, together with the older children, process these stones into gravel. There is no clear gender division in the tasks; boys and girls perform the same activities (see photo 5 and 6).



Photo 3: Boys with heavy hammers.

Children are paid 0.7 sol cent per tin can¹⁸. They can fill between 5 and 10 cans a day. Adults can produce 40-50 jars a day. All the gravel is collected in one big pile (see photo 7), and then sold to construction companies per *tonneladas* (500-600 cans); the companies remove the gravel by truck. Wages are paid when a large pile of gravel is sold; cans that are filled and added to the central pile are registered by the parents. When the gravel is sold, the money is divided.

One adult couple, living in the house beside the road, supervise the daily activities. They do so in between their own daily household chores in and around their house. Their supervision is neither institutionalised nor remunerated. They take on the work as they live nearby and are worried about the well-being of the children. They also make contact with potential buyers. The female supervisor, Carla, commented: “I have to do all the household chores and in the meantime I keep an eye on the kids. In this way I can help them in case of emergencies, if they hurt their fingers or their feet or something”. Carmelo, the male adult, added: “The children don’t know how to negotiate, so I do the negotiations. At the same time I keep an eye on them, to pull them apart when there are fights, or to see they don’t get into traffic accidents”. Carlos, a 13-year-old boy

¹⁸ 1 sol = 21 euro cents

working in the quarry, commented: “Carla and Carmelo help with the clients and watch over us. Sometimes we have a fight and they pull us apart or they check to see that no one steals stones from others”.



Photo 4: Carrying the stones across the road



Photo 5: Young girl chipping stones



Photo 6: Three adolescent girls working alongside the road



Photo 7: Girls standing by a tonnellada



Photo 8: Young girl helping out with agricultural tasks, in La Cangana

Children mostly work in the weekends, and then normally only on Saturdays. Some, however, also work during the week before and after school. All children combine their working activities with school. On a weekday some children work 2 or 3 hours before and after school and on a Saturday up to 8 or 9 hours. On Sundays children usually go with their parents to the market in Chota to do the weekly shopping, or they watch over the house or family shop while the parents go the market.

Children perform many other types of activities as well. Mostly they help their parents with agricultural activities (see photo 8) and household chores. The amount of time spent on either of these activities depends on the agricultural season. In harvesting or sowing seasons, children are more occupied by agricultural activities than with crushing stones into gravel (this is also the case for the parents). Time spent on household chores and agricultural activities also depends on the composition of the family. Children from one-parent families, or from families in which one of the parents has temporarily migrated, have to help more in the household. However, they have to combine this help with work in the quarry, to contribute to the household income.

The consequences of the activities

The main consequences reported by children and parents include wounds on hands, legs and feet, fractures and eye injuries. When the children hit the stones with the hammer they occasionally miss and instead hit their own legs or feet, causing cuts or even fractures. 16-year-old Juana commented: “Our work is quite dangerous, every day there is someone who hits himself with a hammer, sometimes it’s not that bad, but sometimes it is and one has to cry and sometimes you can’t work anymore because of the wound.” Carlos, a 8-year-old boys, recalled: “Once I hit myself with a hammer and I had a limp for three days”. Nelson (11) reported: “I broke two of my toes *chancando* (hammering), which was horrible because my parents had to take me to the doctor, pay

for the consult and I could not work anymore”. One of the parents also commented: “This work is actually not good for children because of the risks. Above all the risk of hitting their feet and legs with these heavy hammers, one is afraid that one’s child hits and hurts itself”. The high probability of missing the stone is seen in the worn patches on the shoes (see photo 9), and all of the children exhibit work-related injuries in the form of scars on hands, feet, legs and eyes (see photo 10). Eye infections and injuries occur when shards of rock fly into the eyes. Many of the children complained of itchy or painful eyes because of their work. Pedro, a boy of 12 years old stated: “What happens the most is that the little stones get into our eyes. We try to wash them out with water, but sometimes they won’t leave and we can’t see straight because of the irritation and tears.” 10-year-old Angel remarked: “These stupid little stones get into your eyes really easily and sometimes won’t get out. Every day it irritates and we have to wash them out with water.” One mother recalled: “Once I had a stone in my eye, and I could not get it out. My eye was infected for more than a week and I could not see, because I could not open it well”. These eye infections were observed during the research, as seen in photo 11.

Other physical complaints included muscle aches, due to the strenuous use of heavy hammers and sitting in awkward positions all day. 14-year-old Elvis commented: “These stones are quite heavy to carry and to crush, so you have to do your best. Especially in the beginning and after a full day of working this gives one muscle aches”. Nelson (11) added: “When I first started I had muscle aches every day and also blisters on my hands. But you get used to it, and now I only have this after a full day of work”. Carolina, a 14-year-old girl, complained: “It’s my back that suffers the most, having to sit bent over all day and hitting these miserable stones”.

The physical consequences are exacerbated by the fact that access to good medical care is limited for children and their parents. A healthcare post is located in Chota, 25-30 minutes away by public bus, which comes by irregularly. Parents also regret that they often lack the financial means to help their children (or themselves) in case of a (labour) accident. “We have to pay for the transport, for the doctor and for the hospital, which can add up to 50-60 sols for a consultation and medicines. That’s quite expensive for people who earn 5 sols a day. So sometimes, when we have an eye irritation I just wait to see if it goes away”.

Many parents and children proved unaware of the risks of their work. For example, eye infections are considered to be highly uncomfortable and inconvenient, but not dangerous. “It’s irritating that you can’t see for a while and have this itch in your eye, but we are already used to it, and usually it goes away after a while”, stated one parent. A 14-year-old boy reported: “It always irritates me, but in the end it’s something that passes”. However, a doctor in Chota warned for long term physical consequences as inflammations can result in conjunctivitis, which causes reduction in and loss of eyesight. Indeed in the village of La Cangana there were several adults whose sight had severely decreased because of the work; others mentioned “black spots” in their vision.

The working activities of children and adolescents also have non-physical consequences, including negative outcomes for education. According to NGO personnel, the children who are active in quarrying perform poorly in school. They suffer from aches and pains, are continuously tired and have weak concentration skills. The children themselves confirmed this; 14-year-old Juan commented: “When I have worked 4 hours before school, I don’t really feel like going to school. More like going to bed, because it’s pretty heavy working like this”. And 15-year-old Julia added:

“Sometimes I feel pretty tired at school and have problems to pay attention to what the teacher says. But I guess that it because sometimes, when we are short of money, I have to wake up early to work”. Repetition is, for these reasons, higher among the children who work, and IINCAP Jorge Basadre registered more dropouts among children who work than those who do not.



Photo 9: Broken shoes



Photo 10: Wounds on hands and legs



Photo 11: Eye infection

The work has also been shown to negatively effect the self-esteem of those children involved. Working in the quarry is considered a “poor man’s job”, and has a low social value. People involved in these activities are often victims of condescending behaviour, such as verbal insults, gossip and disdainful looks, which is why most adults prefer chipping the stones at more concealed areas, out of sight from the public road. Children do not have this choice, as they are unable to carry all the gravel back up to the road for sale, and are thus more visible and vulnerable to condescending behaviour of passers-by. The children mentioned that they do feel ashamed and dislike the negative attention they get when exposed on the side of the road. Julia (15) commented: “It is pretty embarrassing having to sit here, so that everybody can see you are poor”. Elvis (14) added: “When there is a lot of traffic I am quite embarrassed to be here. Sometimes they scream things at you from the busses; that’s really not nice”.

The severe physical, emotional and educational consequences of the activities in the stone quarries in the Chota province, harm the health, safety and morals of children, and can therefore be classified as a worst form of child labour as defined by the ILO Convention 182.

Reasons for working: economics

The main reason for children to be active in the stone quarries is that they have to contribute to the family income. The otherwise insufficient income is a result of a lack of job opportunities in the region. La Cangana is a small rural village with about 25 families. The main activities in which most adults are engaged are agricultural and livestock farming. All families have a little piece of land (0.5 or 1 hectare) on which they grow corn or potatoes. Most also have one or two cows, guinea pig (*cuys*), or some chickens or pigs. These agricultural and livestock activities are mainly for self-subsistence. Some of the surplus is sold, such as milk and butter. However, this is not sufficient to cover the costs of daily expenditures. For example, Pablo’s family consists of father Angel, mother Veronica, and 4 children aged between 5 and 12. Their assets include a small piece of land (1.5

acre) on which they grow corn, a small number of chickens, a cow and guinea pigs. Their daily lunch consists of corn and eggs from their land and chickens; occasionally they will eat one of their guinea pigs. The rest of their food - such as bread, potatoes, other vegetables, oil to cook in, and so forth - and expenditures such as their healthcare and children's education, is mainly paid from whatever profit they can make from their cow. The cow gives 5 litres of milk a day, which can be sold for 4 sols (about 1 euro). This is their only fixed income, and insufficient.

As income from agricultural and livestock activities are inadequate parents are engaged in many different economic activities to earn an additional income. Men, for example, occasionally work in carpentry and construction work, women are also engaged in weaving. However, these activities are only occasional and referred to as *chamba*, informal occasional work, for which you have to be constantly on the lookout. At times women also travel to Chota to wash clothes, but it is never guaranteed that this activity will generate a profit because the bus ride to Chota is so expensive. Most women prefer looking for work in La Cangana itself, such as weaving.

Besides the *chambas*, quarrying is the only additional income generating activity in the region. It is accessible as it does not require much investment (only a hammer) or any special knowledge. Unfortunately, in addition to the negative consequences, quarrying does not generate an immediate income as one has to wait for buyers to come by. But at least it is an activity one can do when there is no other *chamba* and it secures a bit of income for the (near) future. As it has physical and non-physical risks, this *chamba* is only used when all other options fail. Exemplary of this situation are Emmy and Felix; they have 3 children aged between 10 and 14. They and their children were found working during the research; Emmy and Felix near their house and their children near the road. Their land was fallow, awaiting the new sowing season. Felix and Emmy tried to find other jobs, but could not find any. Emmy wanted to start weaving, but did not have the money to invest in the wool. Felix tried to get another job but was offered none: "I want to work as a carpenter or construction worker or anything that has to do with manual labour. I have been on the lookout, but there is no work. Hopefully it will come soon". In the meantime they chip stones with their children: "We have to have some income, to buy food to eat, pay the school. The only option for work now here is to chip stones".

It also happens that parents work in the other mentioned activities, but that the income generated by this work is not sufficient. This at times is determined by the agricultural season. For example, Jaime and Eva have a small parcel of land, on which they grow corn. In sowing and harvesting periods, they need all their time to work on their land. There is no time to look after the cow and to work in additional *chambas*, to earn an income. Therefore their children, besides helping out on the land, are economically active as well, by chipping stones. Jaime commented: "It is not an ideal situation, but what else can we do? We have to sow, to be able to eat in the future. But in the meantime we also have to earn an income to be able to eat now. Therefore the kids have to help us out for a while, chipping stones is the only thing here with which they can help us".

Child labour in quarries in Chota is also influenced by migration. To contribute to the family income, many men migrate each year from La Cangana to the rice plantations in the coastal areas. There they may participate in the sowing (in the months of December to March) or in the harvest (from May to August). This migratory work is considered to be a last solution, because it destabilises family life and increases the tasks for the women and children who stay behind. Angel explained: "I

only go if it is absolutely necessary. My wife does not want me to go as it will make life harder for her and the kids. She and the children have to do all the household chores, take care of the land and livestock and make money while I am gone". Another father, Jorge, added: "I went when we really did not have any money anymore. Our cow died and we could not buy a new one as we did not have money to invest. We tried to get a loan but that was denied as we don't have any property or fixed income as collateral. There was no other opportunity to get money to get a new cow so I went to work on the rice plantation".

When fathers migrate, those who stay behind have to replace the temporary loss of income until the father comes back again with what he earned. At the time of research one family, a mother with 5 children, was found working because of the migration of the father. They had taken out a loan to buy a new cow with the help of a sister, who had a permanent job at the local school. However, the cow died and they were left without an income and with a dept. In this pressing situation the father Manuel, decided to migrate, leaving behind his wife Elvira and their 5 children. Elvira now works in the quarry with 2 of her children. Elvira said: "Until Manuel comes back, we are forced to work like this. What other jobs are there to earn a temporary income? As we have no money we need to work".

A more permanent loss of one or more family members, after, for example, a death, also results in a financial situation in which children have to work. Three girls in the community were found to be working because their parents both died in a terrible car accident. They are now living with their uncle, who has 4 children of his own. Although their uncle helps them, they have to work to survive. 16-year-old Marilyn explained: "Our uncle can't take care of us, as he has his own children to look after. He helps us out with food and school, but it's not enough. So we basically have to earn money for ourselves, to buy clothes and help out with the food."

There are thus a number of different reasons for children to have to contribute financially; a lack of job opportunities for adults in the communities, a temporary migration and a more permanent loss of a family member. The choice of stone chipping is a result of few other activities available in which children are able to work. The fact that children work is mainly financial, because children from economically better-off families in the same village, or surrounding villages, don't participate in the quarry activities. Better-off families mostly have one or both parents with a permanent job, such as a teacher or a local government or NGO employee, or they have larger parcels of land and/or more cattle. All the children found alongside the road come from the poorer families in the community.

Reasons for working: norms, tradition and education

In the previous section it was mentioned that some parents don't have a realistic view of the risks that working in the quarries entail. They underestimate the physical and non-physical consequences of the production of gravel. In fact, some of the accidents that happen are seen as "normal labour-related incidents". For example Ana, a mother of one of the children recalled an accident: "Once I broke two of my toes, and I could not wear my sandals for over 2 weeks. But then they healed. These things happens you know, and by time you get used to them". Another mother stated: "The rotten thing is that you often get the stones into your eyes. In the beginning that is really frustrating, but in the end you know you will get over it". The children themselves expressed similar

thoughts: “When you hit yourself with the hammer, it’s really painful. But then again the first time is more painful than the second one or the third one”. The fact that parents and children appear to think relatively lightly of the risks, may facilitate the entrance of children into this sector. The hypothesis here is that if parents and children would be better informed of the consequences, perhaps children would not start working so easily anymore.

Besides the misinterpretation or underestimation of the risks there also exists a positive norm for children working. For example, it is considered to be normal that children help the parents during harvest and the sowing season. Children may help to plough the soil, weed, sow the seeds, harvest the potatoes and corn, and so forth. Children are also expected to help milk and pasture the cows (although pasturing is age-dependent and requires a certain level of strength), collect eggs, and care for the chickens and guinea pigs. And, of course, children are expected to help in the household. Mother Emmy explained: “I think my daughter should help me out a bit. Why should I clean the whole house by myself if she as well makes it dirty. She should learn that what she makes dirty she should clean as well”. Father Felix commented on his son helping him on the land: “When it’s harvesting season I ask my sons to help me on the land. In the end the food they harvest, is the same food they eat”. Mother Ana added: “I don’t think there is anything bad with my children working on the land a few hours a day. Actually it’s quite nice; we all do it and therefore spend more time together.” Jaime commented: “I want my kids to help me once in a while, then they are occupied and at the same time learn some valuable things, which will help them to be a good farmer”.

Parents thus think children can and should perform certain activities. They see the tasks as a way of strengthening social ties and learning certain valuable skills. However, when talking about the activities in the stone quarries, parents used very different, above all economical, arguments to justify the presence of their children: “We don’t have any alternative income, so they have to help us; how else can we pay for food and education if they don’t help us”. Another parent added: “It’s not an ideal situation, but the circumstances force us to do this”; and another: “I do not like my children to work like this, but considering our economic situation, there is no way out”. All these comments suggest that parents have a different view of an ideal childhood for their children; one that does not include working in the stone quarries. The children also justify their work with financial needs: “It’s good having some extra money”, or “I have to help my parents as they don’t make enough money”. The motivation for children to work in the stone quarries does not so much depend on cultural or traditional norms, as does helping out in agricultural or domestic activities, but has a more profound economic reason.

A significant note to make here is that parents find it important that labour activities only be carried out for short lengths of time, and never at the expense of education. Mother Eva explained: “Yes I want my children to help me out here in the house. There is so much to do, and they have their responsibility as well. However, they should not be working like adults. They should go to school as well and prepare themselves for later.” Father Manuel commented: “It’s good they help us out on the land a few hours. Then they are doing something useful and at the same time learn some skills as well. However, I do always ask them if they have homework, because it’s school that is most important for their future”. Father Jaime added: “I ask my sons to help me when they don’t have homework to do. There they can learn something and learn some responsibilities in the

household. After all they are also eating what they are harvesting. But never at the expense of their education”.

Some labour activities thus persevere among children because of cultural norms, but they mainly concern the less harmful activities on the land and in and around the house. When it concerns the stone quarries there is a general consensus that children and adolescents should not do this type of work, but are forced to do so because of economic necessity. In any case, the activities children perform to help the parents should not be at the expense of their schooling.

The project and lessons learned

Supporting participation in formal education

The NGO IINCAP Jorge Basadre implements a project to get children out of the quarrying sector in Chota. One of the main strategies is to pull the working children into the formal educational system, to support them in their studies, and to keep repetition and dropout rates as low as possible. The assumption is that when children are in school, they have fewer hours to spend in the quarries. In the words of the director of IICAP in Chota, Hernan: “It’s quite logical: when children are in school, they are not working. So when they spend more time in school, we hope they work less”. To stimulate children to spend more time in school IINCAP helps parents to pay some of the educational costs, including enrolment fees and utensils. By helping the parents to meet these costs IINCAP hopes to lower the bar for adults to send their children to school and to alleviate the economic needs that push children into working activities. Hernan explained: “Many children work to be able to pay school costs. So we thought, if we help the families to meet school costs we might solve part of the child labour problem”. IINCAP also set up a control and monitoring system in schools. Many teachers appeared not entirely aware of the problem of working children in the area and how this might affect the children’s educational performance. Therefore IINCAP pays visits to the local school and informs the teachers and school principal on this topic. Hernan commented:

Teachers do see that some children have lower results than others, but don’t know why. Therefore we go there to explain the situation so that they will pay extra attention to the working children and adolescents. With this extra attention we want to motivate the working children to come to school and have better results.

It was difficult to verify the exact decrease in working hours of the children and adolescents due to the mentioned interventions. The main problem here was the absence of an institutionalised monitoring system. The observations made by the educator of IINCAP Chota in the rural villages of Santa Rosa and La Cangana are the main source of information for IINCAP to establish whether or not children are working less and spend more time in school. Although the educator has good social ties with the communities, she spends only one day a week there, which makes it difficult to have an exact overview. Monitoring the impact on a more structural basis would help to get an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the IINCAP interventions.

Based on their own observations, the educator and director of IINCAP in Chota stated that children are working less because they are motivated to go to school. “The children and adolescents used to

work during the week, before and after school. However, now that we stimulate them more to go to school and do their homework, they now usually only work during the weekends". The project educator added: "The children used to get up very early to chip stones, however, now that we stimulate their school performance they can't afford that anymore. This reduced their working time considerably".

Parents themselves seem only partly to agree with the effectiveness of this specific strategy. First they stated that their children had always gone to school and that therefore the time that their children spend in school had not increased significantly because of the project of IINCAP. "Also before IINCAP came here I sent my children to school, so actually they are passing the same time in school as before", clarified one of the parents. "My children are not going more to school, as they always went to school, so I don't know to what they are referring", stated another. Some of the parents did mention that because of the increased control in the schools, their children were now more stimulated to do their homework. "As the teacher gives a lot of attention to Carlos, and checks his homework every time, Carlos is more attentive to his homework and spends more time doing so". Spending more time making homework has had a positive influence on a decrease in working hours of the children, as becomes clear by the following statement of 15-year-old Juliette: "Now that the teacher has an extra eye on me, I have to leave other stuff and spend extra time on my homework instead. Sometimes I don't even have time to help my mom in the household or with working in gravel, because the school now demands a lot from us".

The extra attention given at school might also have reduced the number of dropouts. Knowing that the teacher has an extra eye on them makes the children feel more appreciated and motivated to go to school. 14-year-old Elvis commented: "Sometimes I used to stay home one day or two days when there was a lot of work to do on the land. But now that the teachers are checking us, we can't afford this anymore" Julia (15) added: "Sometimes when my mom needed help, I stayed home. Now that's more difficult with the teachers checking up on us, so I do that after I come back and have done my homework".

Many parents appreciate the economical incentive of IINCAP and how they help with educational costs, but find the amounts too small to compensate for the income generated by the children.

It's quite nice IINCAP decided to pay the enrolment of my kids, however, in comparison with all the other expenditures we have it is quite an insignificant amount. We still have to pay the uniforms, the books, the parents' fees and of course all the expenses which come with the household and being a farmer. In comparison with these expenses what they give us is a tip.

The strategy thus successfully reduces working hours by stimulating hours spent on homework and being at school; it reduces levels of dropout and repetition, but does not seem to offer a structural solution to child labour.

Informal child rights education

Another strategy IINCAP uses to tackle the problem of child labour in the quarries is informal education on children's rights and the dangers involved in working in the quarries. This informal

education is supplied by an IINCAP educator who organises workshops for parents as well as for children. These workshop are held in La Cangana, in an empty barn that the community has made available to IINCAP.

During these meetings the educator explains several articles of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The parents are asked to meet once every month, the children once every week. The basic idea for the meetings with the parents is that with their new knowledge parents will change their attitudes towards allowing their children to work. The coordinator of IINCAP in Chota explained:

Parents have a responsibility towards the work their children perform as they are the ones who know how much the children work, give them money when the gravel is sold and give them their hammers. We have the impression that some parents are not aware of all the dangers that working has for the children. Sometimes parents say easily, “well it’s better that my child works than that s/he is involved in developing bad habits and doing nothing”. That’s why we teach them about risks and also the rights of the child, that children have the right to play, for example. In this way we hope to encourage them not to send them out to work

IINCAP educates children about their rights and on the laws and official institutions¹⁹ that exist to safeguard their rights. The education is done in a playful manner using role play, songs and children’s books. With these classes IINCAP hopes to encourage children to file charges with these institutions in case their rights are violated. In addition to the education, IINCAP wants to motivate the children to become organised as a group, and to stimulate certain leadership capacities. These capacities are stimulated by getting children involved with the organisation of excursions. Children are also given certain responsibilities in the weekly workshops, such as keeping order in the classroom and being responsible for children’s attendance. By helping the children to get organised IINCAP hopes that children will act collectively when their rights are violated. The IINCAP coordinator explained: “Through their organisation we hope children will become more assertive and speak up for their own rights. If this is done collectively, that would even be better because a collective can reach more than an individual”. One example of a collective action is the participation of the working children of La Cangana in a demonstration in Chota in favour of child rights in 2007. Here children, together with parents and representatives of child rights organisations, marched through the streets of Chota, claiming more respect for children’s rights.

Children and parents alike appreciate the informal child rights education offered by IINCAP, especially to complement the formal education. “I stimulate Jorge to go there as they teach him things that they don’t teach him at the normal school he goes to”, commented one parent. The children themselves enjoy participating in the weekly meetings, especially because of the games and activities. “What I like about the meetings is that we organise trips; to swim or just to make a

¹⁹ Such as the police force, the national ombudsman and the municipal committees in defence of children and women (Defensoría Municipal del Niño y el Adolescente, DEMUNA), that have the responsibilities to look after women and children’s rights in case of abuse and mistreatment.

nice daytrip. We play and sing and laugh, that is what I like about it. I like the stories our educator tells us and the songs we sing.”

However, it is unclear if these activities actually stimulate the children to act as a group in claiming their rights and thereby reducing their working hours. For example, the organisation of the child rights march, mentioned above, was viewed differently by the children and adolescents. The director claimed the march to be the initiative of the children and adolescents, but the children claimed that the event had been planned by IINCAP. “IINCAP asked us to participate in the march and gave us free t-shirts to do so. We had to form groups and be there at a certain time to march through the city”, explained 12-year-old Juan. 15-year-old Julia commented: “It was a nice march IINCAP organised for us, there were a lot of kids, we all went as a group, it was great fun to participate”. In addition, not one child or adolescent has reported a case of abuse or mistreatment. Marilyn (16) questioned: “But whom do I have to report if I don’t have a boss?” This statement reflects how all children in La Cangana work in a family context, and don’t find themselves in a classical relationship of the (exploited) worker and the (exploiting) employer. In a situation of informal labour in a family context it is more difficult to hold someone directly responsible for the situation of child labour, which makes it difficult for the children to report someone to an official institution. Demanding better prices for their products, which is also advice given by IINCAP, is seen as impossible by the children and adolescents: “The problem is that there is a lot of competition. If we start to demand better prices the buyers will just go to the next village,” complained 15-year-old Julia. Some children stated that they have become more careful when working because they had been made more aware of the dangers and risks involved. However, this has not automatically led to a reduction in working hours.

Parents mentioned that their attitude towards their children had indeed improved. This was especially the case with sensitive subjects as sex education. As one mother explained: “The educator lately informed us that we should talk with our children about taking care not to become a young mother. That they should keep their future in mind before starting a family. This helped me to start this conversation with my Mariela”. Another mother stated:

It used to be difficult to talk about sex, as nobody here ever talked about it in an open way. But now our educator told us about the risks and that we should inform our kids if we want them to have a better future. So I informed Jorge that he should complete his study and look for a good job, before starting his family, otherwise, with what will he feed his children and wife.

However, the informal education about the specific child rights that protect children from work did not seem to have generated any new insights among parents. This seemed to have stemmed from the fact that, in La Cangana, the belief already exists that children should not work in the quarrying sector. “I also think children have the right not to work, but if they don’t help us how will we pay our food”, asked one of the parents. Another parent added: “We adults don’t send our children to work because we think it is good for children to chip stones, but because we need money to buy food”.

There is no established norm for children to work in the quarries, probably because it is a relatively new sector (in La Cangana people only started working in the quarry sector three years ago). A

certain activity usually only becomes a “norm” or “tradition” after it has been performed over several generations and, consequently over the years, has become an acceptable method of making a living. Parents and children still feel that quarry work is not “normal”, and still hold other wishes and expectations for their children.

Additional strategies

In some exceptional cases IINCAP pays for certain capacity courses for children. This is the case for 3 girls from La Cangana, for whom IINCAP pays a tailoring course. IINCAP helps these specific girls because they are orphans. By facilitating their participation in these courses IINCAP hopes to broaden their possibility of a job outside the stone quarries. “By giving them additional knowledge, we hope they can find a job in another sector in the future”, explained the director of IINCAP Chota. At the time of the research, however, the girls were all still working in the quarries to meet their basic needs. This is a long-term strategy, and had not been implemented before, and thus the actual impact was difficult to measure.

IINCAP has also established a platform of local organisations who work on child rights issues, comprising both governmental and non-governmental organisations (UNICEF, the national police force, local representatives of the Ministry of Education and Labour, and so forth). The platform has successfully initiated an awareness raising campaign, so as to improve the situation for child labourers in Chota. They did so through several radio commercials, informing the public on the rights of children to be protected against exploitation and to receive education. They were also involved in the March for Child Rights in Chota. Although any joint action has been limited to the radio commercials and the March, this strategy seems to have a lot of potential to combat child labour in Chota. Through this platform, organisations have learnt more about child labour, have incorporated the theme into their work, and the general public has become more aware of the topic. The director of IINCAP Chota elaborated: “The police, for example, was never sensitive about this subject. They used to see the working children as thieves and instead of protecting them, they bothered and harassed them. Now that they have been educated on child labour they have a more service oriented approach to the children, and now try to help them by protecting them from others”.

Future plans

Several future strategies were also discussed with the director of IINCAP Chota. For example, IINCAP is considering negotiations with the municipality to obtain a better price for the gravel. It is debatable, however, in how far this will contribute to the eradication of child labour in the quarries, as some children and parents stated that working hours would actually increase if prices improved. It would deserve recommendation that this strategy only be implemented in clear collaboration with the parents on the condition that, if the price of gravel were to increase, they should work towards getting their children out of the production process.

The director also let it be known that they are thinking of improving the working conditions of the children by buying them protective materials such as goggles and sturdy shoes. These measures would be an improvement to conditions, obviously not a strategy towards eradication: “Of course we want to eliminate child labour, however, the children won’t be stopping from one day to the

next. The long-term structural solution will always take a while. In the meantime perhaps it is an idea to improve their working conditions”. Despite their awareness of the fact, the strategy is in stark contrast to their ultimate goal of eradication. In addition, it will only partially eliminate some of the dangers; consequences such as backaches and low self-esteem will not be solved.

At the time of the research IINCAP was also negotiating with the municipality of Chota to employ the parents in more safe and stable working activities. As explained above, one of the most important reasons that children work in the stone quarries is related to the lack of job opportunities for adults. As the parents don't have permanent or well-paid jobs, their children are forced to contribute. Therefore, in the words of the director IINCAP Chota: “A sustainable solution to the problem of child labour would include solving the problem of the absence of job opportunities for the parents”. This strategy seems very promising as parents expressed they would not need the financial contribution of their children if the income of their current jobs would be more stable, or if they would find another job with a stable and higher income. According to one parent: “If agriculture would give more income, or if I would get another well-paid job, then it would not be necessary for Jorge [his 14 year old son] to help us.” “Actually it is quite frustrating; we do want to work, but there is nothing here. If I had a better job, that would pay slightly better, then I myself would be able to support my family and my kids would not have to help me like this,” another father stated.

The IINCAP Chota director, however, commented on the difficulties of implementing this strategy: “The most important problem is that it is very difficult to find financing for this type of project, as it is not specifically directed to children. Most funding NGOs want their money to benefit the children directly and not so much the parents”. Parents themselves mentioned the impossibility to materialise the necessary funds to expand their agricultural activities and livestock. Mother Emmy stated:

We would very much like to buy some more land to be able to sell what we sow, and not only eat it. But we can't get a loan at the local bank. They want to see contracts of personal property or a labour contract. But we don't have such a thing, so from whom do we get money to expand our economical possibilities?

Mother Anna told a similar story:

We went to the bank to get a loan to buy us another cow. But the bank asked us to bring a labour contract. We are farmers, how can we show a contract! So we actually hope our current cow gives birth to a baby cow and multiplies herself like this. However, this takes risk and also a lot of time for the cow to grow up. In the meantime we have to chip stones.

An alternative method to increase income, mentioned several times by the parents and director of IINCAP alike, is the purchase of a stone grinder. This machine would contribute to the reduction of child labour in several ways. First of all, mechanisation would increase production and therefore income. With an increase in income the financial contribution of children would become less

necessary. Secondly, mechanisation would replace the tasks done by children and therefore would make child labour redundant.

Although parents and IINCAP see a lot of potential in the mechanisation of the sector, they also mentioned several limitations. Most had to do with the organisational structure of the community. The director explained:

Mechanisation would be an ideal solution, but an essential condition for this strategy to work is good and clear agreements on the division of tasks regarding the maintenance of the machine and rules on how the profit is shared. And for this you need a well-organised community, which is not the case of La Cangana.

This view was also shared by some of the parents: “We would like to have a grinding machine, but I think we would have problems with the division of the profits; we would have to organise ourselves better and make clear agreements on this”.

The director of IINCAP Chota did point to the fact that the necessary level of organisation could easily be stimulated as this region has a long history of self-organisation. In Chota, during the 1980s, the so-called *ronda campesinas* (Peasant Rounds) were formed in several farmer communities. Originally the *rondas* were formed as a protection force against theft, especially cattle rustling. However, they were particularly a response to the coercion and violence exerted in the countryside by the guerrilla groups Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*), the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement²⁰ and the Peruvian army during the 80s. The history of self-organisation could be helpful in a possible project on child labour in the region. As explained by the director of IINCAP Chota: “Since the threat of terrorist groups is gone, the *rondas* are not that active anymore. However, many adults have participated in them and therefore have a history of self-organisation that could help with the implementation of a mechanisation project which would make child labour unnecessary.”

Recommendations and conclusions

Based on the observations made and data collected, the following recommendations to improve the situation for children working in the stone quarries in Chota can be made:

- Fieldwork showed that improving school attendance by setting up a monitoring system at the school helped to reduce the time children spend working. However, it also showed that most children working in the stone quarries combine their labour activities with school. This means that an emphasis on improving the participation of the working children within the formal education system, as the only strategy to get children out of working activities, is not sufficient. This strategy has a limited effect on diminishing child labour as it does not address the main reason why children are working in the first place: a lack of family income because of a lack of job opportunities for the parents. Therefore, educational support should be accompanied by plans to combat the structural and economic reasons for children to work.

²⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BApac_Amaru_Revolutionary_Movement

- Informal child rights education for children and parents might have contributed in reducing the working hours of children, especially as it taught parents and children alike about the dangers of child labour. Parents indicated their attitude towards their children had improved, for example, regarding matters such as sexual behaviour. However, it was also discovered that an improved knowledge about their rights and the institutions that can protect them, does not automatically mean that children will actually demand these rights. Children often experience structural constraints that prevent them from claiming these rights, such as the absence of a traditional employer-employee situation and the necessity of earning an income, which impedes them from demanding higher prices for their goods, as buyers would simply look elsewhere. Any strategy directed to end child labour should take these structural constraints of poverty into account, which are related to a lack of family income.
- Following the logic of the previous two points a pertinent recommendation would be to address the lack of job opportunities for the parents. An option could be to offer financial aid to expand existing agricultural activities and livestock farming. Parents expressed the belief that the contributions made by children would not be necessary if they had more land and/or livestock of their own. Unfortunately, until now, both parents and IINCAP have not been able to materialise the necessary funds. Parents earn too little to save and taking out a loan is difficult without assets or a labour contract; IINCAP has not been able to find financial backers who are willing to fund this possible solution to local child labour. An alternative strategy could be to lobby the local government for permanent and well-paid jobs for the parents of working children.
- Another concrete strategy is to mechanise the activities children (and adults) perform; in this specific case of Chota this would entail the purchase of a stone grinding machine. Mechanisation makes child labour redundant, but the loss in income is compensated by the higher prices obtained for machine-ground gravel, and increased production. Local adults and IINCAP staff agreed that mechanisation would be a good idea, but the community is as yet unable to raise sufficient funds, and at the present time does not have the sufficient level of organisation to form a cost-, profit- and responsibility-sharing cooperation. Thus, initial support would have to focus on organisation, and could be done based on existing *rondas campesinas* (traditional forms of peasant self-organisation).
- A last recommendation based on the IINCAP Chota project would be to increase investments in the local child rights platform. The platform, comprising various interested players on a local and regional level, has the potential to bring together and streamline existing knowledge, and to coordinate strategies and activities to eradicate the worst forms of child labour in the region. As a group it has more power to lobby the (regional) government and demand compliance with and better control of national labour laws.

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