

Is domestic work a *worst form* of child labour? The findings of a six-country study of the psychosocial effects of child domestic work

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In this paper, we report on a study of the psychosocial effects of child domestic work (CDW) in six countries and the relevance of our findings to international legislation. Our results suggest that CDW is highly heterogeneous. While some young child domestic workers work long hours, suffer physical punishment and are at risk of psychosocial harm, others are able to attend school and benefit from good relationships with their employers and networks of support. Child domestic workers in India and Togo were most at risk of psychosocial harm. We conclude that classification of this employment as hazardous would not be appropriate and could be counterproductive and instead propose that legislation focuses on protective factors such as a social and community support.

Keywords: child labour; psychosocial well-being; domestic work; international legislation; punishment

Introduction

Child labour, as classified by the International Labour Organization (ILO), is described as work that deprives children (aged 5–17) of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that can be mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful and interferes in some way with their schooling (ILO 2002).

Almost 15 years have not passed since the ILO legislated on the *Worst Forms of Child Labour* (WFCL), defined in article 3 of ILO Convention 182 as forms of child labour that are a 'priority to eliminate without delay' yet controversy continues to exist regarding whether certain types of child labour work should be classified as de facto worst forms. Among these particularly controversial types of work are Agricultural employment which accounts for 60% of child labour worldwide (Diallo et al. 2010), mining, construction, manufacturing, domestic work and some of the service industries. These are forms of employment that fall into the category of Hazardous Child Labour, 'work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children' (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and International Labour Office 2013). The key difference between

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a worst form and hazardous child labour is that the former (which includes employment in prostitution, pornography, armed forces and other illegal professions) are considered unacceptable in any form, while classification of the latter is left up to the discretion of individual countries to decide whether the manner in which these jobs are carried out makes them a 'worst form'. There is much theoretical and empirical debate both about whether we should be classifying certain types of employment as worst forms, a classification paramount to banning child participation in that activity, or whether to retain the current flexible/relativist approach of leaving this up to individual countries to determine legality in the knowledge that children may be unprotected as a result (Boyden, Ling, and Myers 1998; White 1999; Bourdillon, White, and Myers 2009; Gamlin and Pastor 2009; Bourdillon, Levinson, and Myers 2011).

According to the most up to date estimates, over 52 million children are employed as domestic workers worldwide. Nearly 44 million of these children are girls (ILO 2012, policy brief). In recent years, there has been much debate about whether child domestic work (CDW) should be included in the WFCL, as Bourdillon states 'Some argue that it is one of the WFCL, to be eliminated as a matter of urgency' (Bourdillon 2009, 5). A growing body of qualitative research evidences the potentially harmful nature of CDW on children, in particular the risks faced by young child domestic workers working for abusive employers in exploitative conditions akin to slavery (Jacquemin 2004; Black 2005; Blagbrough 2008). But this probably represents an extreme, and some argue that classification as a worst form could be counterproductive, forcing many young child domestic workers from reasonable working environments into worse forms of employment (Bourdillon 2009; Bourdillon, Levinson, and Myers 2011).

The aim of our study was to explore the experience and well-being of children employed in CDW across a range of settings in order to provide a broader understanding of the effects of domestic employment on their well-being. The research builds on more than a decade of collaborative work between the UK-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Anti-Slavery International (ASI) and six local NGOs supporting child domestic workers. Child domestic workers are usually defined as children under 18 who work in the household of people other than their closest family, doing domestic chores, caring for others, running errands and sometimes helping their employers run small businesses from home. They include boys and girls who are paid, those who are not paid and those who receive 'in-kind' benefits, such as food and shelter. It is estimated that more girls under the age of 16 are employed in domestic service than in any other area of work. According to the most recent estimate, more than 15 million children under the age of 18 are employed in domestic work worldwide (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and International Labour Office 2013) with estimates of several million in India, one million in the Philippines and 110,000 in Peru, (Anti-Slavery International 2013). Significant numbers of boys are also engaged in domestic work, comprising approximately 10% of the total (ILO, 2004).

There is a dichotomy of views about domestic work. On the one hand, it is often thought of as one of the 'safer' occupations for children (Graunke 2003; Klocker 2011). Child domestic workers in Tanzania were asked to describe the benefits of their work and these descriptions included good working and living conditions, being cared for and future opportunities (Klocker 2011). There is also evidence that child domestic workers have access to better education (Ainsworth in Bourdillon 2009) and that they are more well-nourished while working away than while living in their family homes (Garnier and Benefice 2001). On the other hand, because child domestic workers are hidden from view, the degree of harm to which they are exposed is not clear. Regulations to protect child domestic workers are extremely difficult to enforce because the workplace is a private dwelling, effectively giving the employer total control over the person in their 'service', consequentially domestic workers are uniquely vulnerable. Qualitative studies suggest that young women and men working in domestic employment are exposed to physical, psychological, verbal and sexual abuse, are 'treated worse than dogs' (Blagbrough 2008), usually work extremely long hours and

feel intensely subordinated to their employer (see, for example, Camacho 1999; Jacquemin 2004; Bourdillon 2010). There is no research that specifically explores how these abusive and exploitative situations affect their psychosocial well-being, but a cross-sectional study of 3139 Brazilian children and adolescents found domestic service to be a risk factor for 'behavioural problems' (Benvennú et al. 2005) while a study of child labour in Kenya found child domestic workers to be prone to an array of psychosocial problems manifest as bedwetting, insomnia, nightmares and depression (Bwibo and Onyango 1987). In general, the effect of domestic work on children's well-being has been documented little, mostly using qualitative methods and often focusing on the extremes. While these studies provide rich evidence of context and experience, there is a lack of a broad understanding of how specific combinations of working conditions and arrangements affect the wellbeing of these child domestic workers.

Methods

This multi-site study was conducted with a total of 3062 children: 1465 child domestic workers and 1597 neighbourhood controls. Data were gathered by local NGO partners in each country by researchers specifically trained to use the questionnaire and interview techniques, in the following regions: (1) The district of San Juan de Miraflores, Lima, Peru; (2) Alajuelita and Carpio, districts of San José, Costa Rica, (3) Mwanza, Mara and Shinyanga regions of Tanzania; (4) Lomé, Sotouboua, Sokodé and Kara in Togo; (5) the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Kerala and Chennai in India and (6) the cities of Manila, Batangas, Bicolod, Cebu, Davao, Dumaguete and Iloilo in the Philippines. Indicators of gender equality, human development and the minimum age for employment in each of the six countries are provided in Table 1.

A 100-item questionnaire was developed by a Research Coordination Team (RCT) of The Psychosocial Support and Children's Right's Resource Centre, University College London, London, and Anti-Slavery International building on, firstly, previous research into the psychosocial effects of child labour, specifically the framework developed by Woodhead (2004), and secondly, a systematic review of tools that can be used to assess psychosocial wellbeing of child domestic workers (Brewer 2003) and thirdly, qualitative research with domestic workers previously conducted by ASI (Black 2005; Blagbrough 2008). It was not possible to fully validate the research tool within the timeframe of this project, but the questionnaire was pre-tested with 60 child domestic workers in the Philippines and then piloted in each of the six countries. The tool was then reviewed by members of each local research team and revised collaboratively by the

Table 1. Indicators by country.

	India	The Philippines	Togo	Tanzania	Peru	Costa Rica
Minimum employment age ^a	14	15	14	12	12	15
Gender Equality Index (GEI) ^b	0.610	0.418	0.566	0.556	0.387	0.346
Human Development Index ^b	0.558	0.654	0.459	0.466	0.741	0.773
Primary school completion, female ^c	95% (2008)	94.2% (2007)	57.6% (2009)	87% (2009)	98% (2009)	97% (2009)

^aUnited States Department of Labour.

^bHuman Development Reports, UNDP (2013). For comparison and clarification, in Sweden, a country with very good gender equality, the GEI is 0.055 and HDI is 0.916.

^cWorld Bank Data, Development Indicators.

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of child domestic workers and control children.

	India		The Philippines		Togo		Tanzania		Peru		Costa Rica	
Total number of child domestic workers and controls (C)	Child domestic workers 500	C 500	Child domestic workers 200	C 200	Child domestic workers 200	C 200	Child domestic workers 153	C 226	Child domestic workers 199	C 205	Child domestic workers 213	C 166
Female (%)	89	89	88	55	90	90	84	72	70	69	58	41
Mean age	14	14	16	15	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	14
Age when began working as child domestic worker (%)	13	NA	14	NA	12	NA	12	NA	13	NA	10	NA
Live-in (with employer) (%)	16	–	32	–	35	–	37	–	0.3	–	NA	NA
First-generation migrant (%)	67	91	72	33	78	45	74	56	97	97	46	58
From a single-parent household (%)	35	30	31	33	60	59	57	47	39	36	51	38
Orphan (death one or more parents) (%)	11	12	16	12	35	16	45	39	8	10	4	6
Parent ever a domestic worker (%)	75	61	70	38	63	38	35	21	70	64	49	62
Currently attending school (%)	35	100	87	86	41	96	32	97	99	99	93	96
Doing well or very well in school (%)	11	47	69	77	32	49	55	72	41	41	NA	NA
Participates in community activities (%)	17	20	48	52	27	73	47	56	47	35	30	51
Good or very good health (%)	36	49	65	70	46	65	80	70	51	52	NA	NA

Table 3. Working conditions.

	India	The Philippines	Togo	Tanzania	Peru	Costa Rica
Total (child domestic workers)	500	200	200	153	199	213
Work for a relative (%)	0	36	7	8	40	94 ^a
Clean (%)	62	99	98	90	45	91
Care (%)	44	41	45	42	71	43
Cook (%)	84	58	80	54	17	62
Family business (%) ^b	18	16	75	12	8	13
Days worked per week (average number of days)	7	6	6	6	4	4
Work more than 10–12 h per day (%)	95	19	52	65	11	NA
No free time at all (%)	49	18	72	25	12	5
Able to visit family (%) ^c	29	68	52	54	93	NA
Paid in cash or kind (%)	100	69	35	63	89	14
Punished if do something wrong (%)	35	7	49	24	0	15
Beaten as punishment (as % of above)	24	2	100	29	0	0
I like my work (%)	27	84	63	65	72	79
I am proud of my work (%)	30	91	22	56	91	79

^aThese Costa Rican child domestic workers work for their own family (parent or guardian).

^bUsually a home-based business such as preparation of food products.

^cLive-in child domestic workers only.

RCT and local partners at a workshop held for this purpose. The final tool was translated into local languages using the translation–back translation technique for accuracy.

The psychosocial assessment section of the questionnaire is based around four of the five psychosocial domains identified by Woodhead (2004) as being areas that are likely to be affected by child labour. These domains, personal security and social integration, personal identity and valuation, sense of personal competence and emotional and somatic expressions of well-being, were proposed as the result of an analysis of instruments that have been used in the past to assess the psychosocial well-being of child workers (Ennew 1994), and those gathered by Anti-Slavery International specifically for assessing the psychosocial well-being of CDW (Brewer 2003) and are described in full in his Framework for Research Monitoring and Intervention (Woodhead 2004). The accuracy of Woodhead's proposal has yet to be validated, and this research was a first attempt at this. The instrument was designed to include questions based on four of the five domains (shown in Table 3). Answers were Yes, Don't Know or No, which scored 2, 1 and 0, respectively, to create a unitary score for psychosocial well-being. The maximum theoretical score is 20, indicating very good psychosocial well-being and the minimum 0 indicating, very poor psychosocial well-being. In the results section, we will not be making reference to specific scores but make a comparison on the basis of high or low country scores.

The tool also included questions on socio-demographic background, school attendance and achievement, physical health, information on working and living conditions and arrangements and punishment, physical and sexual abuse ('do you know of anyone who has been physically/sexually abused?'), family structure and support, friendships, community and social support and support services provided by CDW support organizations.

Ethical approval was obtained locally through partner organizations and the ethical committees of their respective academic partners.

Data were gathered between April and October 2009 by specifically trained local research teams working through each of the six country's partner organizations. Approximately 80% of child domestic workers in each country sample were children who had not previously been

contacted by the local organization; these children were identified using school and neighbourhood snowballing techniques. Thus, in Tanzania the identification process began with a community leader or elected ‘street leader’, while in Peru school teachers identified child domestic workers who then identified others. In Togo, the research team used door-to-door contact to identify their first child domestic workers, who then led them to others. In Costa Rica, the Philippines, India and Peru, control group children were identified in schools in the same area as the CDW population, while in Tanzania and Togo control group children were identified as part of the snowballing process in the same communities as the CDW children. The questionnaire was designed to be either self-administered or conducted as a one-to-one interview. School-based control groups mostly used the ‘self-administered’ method, while the majority of child domestic workers were interviewed face-to-face on an individual basis. Interviews were in community spaces, school yards, empty classrooms and in some cases the employer’s home, when the employer was absent. In Costa Rica where educational attainment is highest, most child domestic workers also used the self-administered method.

Sampling was opportunistic and with huge differences between the quantity, visibility and accessibility of child domestic workers in each country; it was not possible to identify equal numbers of the more difficult to reach younger child domestic workers (under 14 years), boy child domestic workers or live-in child domestic workers. For the same reasons, not all partner organizations managed to contact a full sample of 200 child domestic workers, with Tanzania reaching only 153, while in India, which has the world’s largest population of child domestic workers, 500 were interviewed. Finally, in Costa Rica, the context of CDW is particularly different from everywhere else. The sample in this country drew mainly on children who work in their own parental home. Although these children do not fall within the definition of CDW given above, they represent the local situation regarding CDW, a task that in many Costa Rican households is systematically taken on by one child member of the family. A small number of child domestic workers in Peru also work in their own homes. Considerable care was taken by researchers to ensure that each child understood what the process of the research involved before they consented to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured and partner organizations were able to provide follow-up support if this was deemed necessary.

Each country’s CDW population had different characteristics and the questionnaire was applied in 14 languages (in India alone there were six different language versions). Because of this diversity, under our overall supervision, each of the six NGO partners were invited to adapt a very small number of questions, where necessary and appropriate, in order to give them the same meaning in their own local context. Possible different meanings were discussed in depth at the tool development workshop but further piloting or validation was not possible with the available time and resources. Where it was clear that a shared meaning had not been achieved these questions were omitted from overall data analysis and inter-country comparisons. Considering these issues, it was not appropriate to conduct a global or pooled analysis of the data from all six countries.

Findings

We aimed to interview young domestic workers between the ages of 11 and 17, although no lower age limit was set. The mean age of our CDW population was 14.6 years, with a range from 6 to 18 years (Table 1). The mean age of entry into domestic work was 12.3, but child domestic workers started working earlier in Togo, Tanzania and India, where the youngest reported age for starting work was six years. In four of the six country samples, approximately 10% of child domestic workers were boys, in contrast with 42% in Costa Rica and 30% in Peru. Between 32% (Tanzania) and 99% (Peru) of the child domestic workers were currently attending school though their own

perception of their school performance was considerably lower than that of non-child domestic workers.

Child domestic workers are slightly more likely to be from a single parent household than control children. Orphaning (the death of one *or* both parents) was most common in Togo and Tanzania and in both of these countries child domestic workers were considerably more likely to be orphans than were control group children. We also found a strong overall tendency for one or both of the parents of child domestic workers to be or to have been domestic workers themselves.

Working conditions

Cleaning is the main task for the majority of the child domestic workers interviewed. More than 90% of CDW in the Philippines, Costa Rica, Tanzania and Togo said their main task was to clean while in Peru a large proportion claimed their main task was caring for others. Tasks such as cooking and helping with a small business were also common. The majority of child domestic workers in India, Togo and Tanzania worked long hours: 10–12 h per day, six or seven days. A large proportion (91%) of child domestic workers in India, and Togo (72%) reported that they do not have any days off in the week. It is also common for child domestic workers to work all day without breaks, with the extreme being India, where 49% of child domestic workers reported that they have no free time at all in their working day.

There were wide variations in payment. In India, all child domestic workers reported being paid for their work, and in Tanzania 93% said they were paid, although in both cases there were frequently problems with payment (late payment, deductions for 'agent's commissions' or days off, payments given directly to a third person). In contrast 31% of the Philippine child domestic workers are unpaid, in Togo only 35% receive payment of any kind (monetary or 'gifts') and just 13% of Costa Rican child domestic workers are paid for the work that they do but 94% of them are working in their own home.

Punishment and abuse

Many of the child domestic workers stated that their employers use physical punishment. In Togo, 49% said that they are beaten if they make a mistake, and in India, 35% of child domestic workers report being physically punished. In contrast, in the Philippines, 58% of child domestic workers reported that their employers 'just talk to them' when they make a mistake and strikingly none of the Peruvian child domestic workers said that they had been physically punished by their employers.

Because of the nature of this questionnaire, we did not ask for further details of types of punishment or abuse, but we did ask child domestic workers and controls whether they *knew* anyone who had been physically or sexually abused. Again Togo and India show the most striking differences between control and CDW children, with twice as many Togolese child domestic workers knowing of someone who had been abused, compared to control children, while in India nearly a quarter of child domestic workers said that they 'knew someone' who had been sexually abused compared to only 1.2% of control children.

Psychosocial well-being

Psychosocial outcomes are shown for 10 questions indicative of the four domains by percentage of affirmative responses (Table 4) for child domestic workers and controls in each country. The highest psychosocial scores came from control group children in the Philippines, while the worst

Table 4. Psychosocial outcomes.

Domain	India		The Philippines		Togo		Tanzania		Peru		Costa Rica	
	Child domestic workers 500	C 500	Child domestic workers 200	C 200	Child domestic workers 200	C 200	Child domestic workers 153	C 226	Child domestic workers 199	C 205	Child domestic workers 213	C 166
<i>Personal security and social integration</i>												
I have good friends	21%	66%	74%	80%	23%	54%	78%	83%	74%	68%	54%	71%
I can count on adults for help and support	28%	42%	68%	83%	37%	72%	83%	90%	58%	62%	49%	63%
There is nobody I can go to if I need help	58%	18%	16%	14%	39%	19%	38%	20%	27%	27%	48%	38%
<i>Personal identity and valuation</i>												
I feel proud of myself	23%	49%	90%	92%	47%	94%	75%	78%	89%	89%	51%	74%
I am happy with who I am	33%	36%	90%	90%	22%	86%	82%	82%	94%	89%	55%	77%
<i>Sense of personal competence</i>												
I feel that other people make all of my decisions for me	46%	25%	17%	9%	66%	34%	34%	32%	27%	27%	29%	21%
When something bad happens, generally it is because I have bad luck	15%	31%	16%	11%	57%	39%	50%	76%	26%	22%	30%	23%
<i>Emotional and somatic expressions of well-being</i>												
I am shy	64%	13%	56%	47%	70%	29%	42%	41%	53%	48%	38%	39%
I feel a lot of stress	55%	22%	71%	52%	68%	28%	50%	41%	39%	29%	37%	32%
I laugh easily with friends	21%	56%	84%	85%	58%	83%	84%	87%	81%	80%	59%	73%

were from child domestic workers in Togo. Control group totals were similar in all six countries. Consistently similar responses for child domestic workers and controls in Peru, the Philippines and Tanzania contrast dramatically with wide differences in Togo and India.

While a very striking aspect of these questions is the consistency of negative answers among Indian and Togolese child domestic workers in comparison to the other four study sites, the positive outcomes of Peruvian, Philippine and Tanzanian child domestic workers are also noteworthy, since they suggest that the child domestic workers studied in these countries demonstrate particularly high levels of psychosocial satisfaction with their answers.

In the domain of 'Personal Security and Social Integration', we found a clear division between child domestic workers and control children everywhere except Peru, although this division is far more marked in India and Togo. These trends are repeated in the two remaining domains: 'Sense of personal competence' and 'Emotional and somatic expression of well-being', where, with the exception of Peru, more child domestic workers answer negatively to the questions than control children, with differences more marked in India, Togo and to a lesser extent Costa Rica.

Because pooled analysis could not be justified (for reasons explained in the methodology section), we compared the overall results from each country, in particular the working conditions and socio-demographic characteristics (shown in Tables 2 and 3) of children with the worst psychosocial scores, and from this we concluded that particular factors were likely to be indicative of poor psychosocial outcomes. We found that five factors: non-school attendance, poor family ties and or family separation (including orphaning), poor working conditions, absence of social support and poor self-reported health were likely to be associated with *poor psychosocial outcomes* in child domestic workers in all six countries; these are discussed in the following section.

Discussion

Investigating CDW is fraught with practical, ethical and methodological difficulties, many of which stem from the clandestine and often illegal nature of the worst forms of this work and the fact that work places are private houses. As a consequence, it is likely that the children we interviewed are *not* those who experience the most difficult and abusive situations, since these are likely to be the hardest to access. We did not specifically measure socioeconomic status and so were unable to make a direct comparison between CDW and the control groups. A degree of socioeconomic parity is assumed between these groups since they live in the same neighbourhood there was little difference between groups in terms of parental employment and education.

As mentioned in the methods section, there were also some differences in the methods of recruiting control children between countries: some controls were identified through schools, others in the neighbourhood. The questionnaire was either self-administered or conducted as a one-to-one interview, although most child domestic workers received the latter. All of the above may have introduced some bias. We accept that a quantitative questionnaire is not conducive to interviewees expressing their worries or confiding aspects of their life that they may find difficult or distressing. For ethical reasons, the questionnaire was not designed to elicit these types of responses, and for this reason we recognize that our findings are of necessity a preliminary view of the situation. The psychosocial tools were not formally validated although they were piloted for comprehension and acceptability. The scale developed provides an overall indication of well-being in these children and has value for comparative purposes.

This is the first study to look at CDW and psychosocial well-being across a range of country settings. The most striking finding is the diverse nature and conditions under which children are employed in domestic work. This has clear implications for policy and interventions. In India and Togo, a significant proportion of child domestic workers suffer physical abuse, work very long

hours, often for no pay and report low self-esteem, stress and feelings of incompetence. In contrast, in the Philippines and Peru many child domestic workers manage to combine education with work, appear to have a good and respectful relationship with their employers, are proud of what they do and happy with their lives. In Peru where all of the child domestic workers were aged 12 or over, some children appear to benefit from domestic work through gaining friendships and self-confidence. These good experiences coincide with earlier research conducted in the Philippines (Camacho 1999) which concludes that CDW is a ‘coping strategy’ where a child assumes some of the responsibility for family well-being and survival. In Zimbabwe, Bourdillon (2010) found that 40% of older child domestic workers and 81% of younger child domestic workers were ‘happy’ with their work and in Tanzania Klocker (2011) documents the many benefits of CDW. There is also great diversity in the nature of this employment as has also been noted by both Klocker (2011) and Bourdillon (2009). For many children, this is largely a paid job with a non-family member, while children in Togo and Costa Rica mostly work for family members and a very large proportion of these children are not paid at all. Jacquemin (2004) in fact suggests that a particular group of child domestic workers, referred to throughout West Africa as ‘little nieces’ actually represent a kind of category of fostered children. Thus, there appears to be overlap in many countries between the CDW as a family member and the CDW an unpaid domestic worker. In some countries it is common for Child Domestic Workers to live in the home of their employer and work solely for them while in others, few children live with their employer and some child domestic workers work in several different households. Such diverse working and living contexts suggest that international policies aimed at eliminating CDW are not appropriate.

A second key finding is that the most influential factors in the psychosocial well-being of child domestic workers are not necessarily work-related, but are constituted by a series of socio-economic, socio-cultural (gender, caste or racial equality, school attendance, social support) and personal and family characteristics (orphanhood, single parenthood, relationships with family members, lack of good friendships). These characteristics operate as ‘push factors’, risk factors for entry into domestic work and for poor psychosocial outcomes or ‘support factors’, factors that generate greater resilience among child domestic workers, these are assets or resources that can help children cope with difficult situations. Very often, as Woodhead also notes, it is the support of a significant adult – parent or teacher – that is key (Woodhead 2004). These push factors also suggest that household poverty is an important determinant of psychosocial outcomes and this is a question that warrants further exploration. The greater the combinations of these ‘push factors’ and the fewer ‘support factors’ a CDW has, the more likely they are to experience psychosocial problems.

The relationships between education, entry into domestic work and well-being are more complex. Some children enter work as a means of continuing their studies while others must leave school in order to work. National or local levels of school enrollment in Peru, Costa Rica and the Philippines are mirrored by domestic workers, making child domestic workers far more likely to attend school if they are from a country or region with high school enrollment rate and higher levels of education (Table 1). Social attitudes towards schooling are important here, and it is evident that where a high value is placed on schooling, child domestic workers are more likely to attend. Many child domestic workers combine school and work, and in the Philippines many child domestic workers attend night school. In the case of Peru and Costa Rica, the system of morning and afternoon ‘turns’ means that children can work in the morning and attend school in the afternoon, or vice versa. Attending school necessarily makes children visible and in this sense alone it is a form of protection. School also generates some of the other factors that we found to be ‘protective’ including good friendships, social activities and the presence of other supportive adults. Perhaps most importantly, school attendance

probably improves a child's self-esteem; child domestic workers who attend school may have more options for the future, and perhaps more importantly can see themselves doing something other than domestic work.

That fact that we did not find migration itself to be a risk factor for poor psychosocial outcomes is also revealing and it cannot be taken for granted that child domestic workers who live at home will have a better outcomes than those who live with their employer. Although these children who live away from their home and their family may be more isolated and have less social support, they may also have better access to health and educational services than they did in their place of origin, and increased options for the future, making migration both a risk and a protective factor.

Thirdly, these 'push' and 'pull' factors are largely unaffected by the *nature* and conditions of their employment as domestic workers. The home-based nature of domestic employment is such that it is a highly convenient form of employment. Many children are sent into domestic service as a means of lightening the burden on their parents or guardian. Bourdillon (2010) refers to the 'idiom of patronage' wherein a 'wealthier person bestows favours on the poorer person'; in this case, a wealthier relative or acquaintance takes in the child of a poor family as their domestic help. This also coincides with findings from the Ivory Coast where Jacquemin (2004) described the phenomenon of 'little nieces', daughters taken in by other family members as domestics on the understanding that their expenses, education and often a dowry-type gift will be provided in return, a situation that we identified in Togo (although several of our Togolese CDW also reported that a promise of school attendance had not been fulfilled).

Finally, the working and conditions and arrangements associated with domestic work and the private home as a place of work can be positive and negative. Children with worse psychosocial scores were more likely to be washing dishes and cleaning than caring, helping with a family business or cooking, suggesting that these latter tasks give more satisfaction or status than cleaning activities. We also found an association between self-reported health and psychosocial well-being, suggesting either that the poor self-reported health of child domestic workers may be psychosomatic or that the physical complaints that result from long hours of work also contribute to their psychosocial wellbeing (these associations are reported in full in Hesketh et al. 2012). In some cases, living arrangements and health are better than in the child's own home, because this is provided by their employer or simply because they are living in a city where food and health facilities are more easily accessed (Garnier and Benefice 2001). Many of our child domestic workers, particularly in Tanzania, said that the food was 'better' in service than at home.

These very contrasting results provide evidence which challenges the proposal for an outright ban on CDW and we believe that the prohibition of CDW would not be in the interests of the majority of child domestic workers. Much research on child labour, particularly when policy-driven, has given excessive attention to the outliers, including testimonies of abuse and suffering, and has excluded the day-to-day stories of normal child work experiences. Domestic work, as with other types of childhood employment, has different meanings for different children. Our findings demonstrate that, for many, work is an essential part of their life, a survival strategy for poorer families, a means for children to contribute to family incomes and for themselves or their siblings to attend school. Although some CDW are very young, we found the majority to be in their teenage years. For these children, domestic work can be an apprenticeship or a part-time job, a step up the social ladder as they learn skills, move to the city, a chance to earn money or to attend better schools. However, for many child domestic workers, domestic work is forced upon them and they must work very long hours without payment, while at the extreme end children may be exposed to verbal and physical abuse on a very regular basis.

We know from other forms of child labour that removing children from employment can cause more harm than good as children can end up working in more risky situations than

before (Boyden 1997; IWGCL 1998; Ivanova, Getova, and Zehleva 2007; Bourdillon, Levinson, and Myers 2011). There is also a growing consensus that outlawing even the WFCL can drive these children into more hazardous and *unregulated* forms of employment (Bourdillon, White, and Myers 2009, Gamlin and Pastor 2009, Morrow 2010). The prohibition of child labour is difficult and has historically been unsuccessful. One reason for this is the difficulty in enforcing such legislation. Another is that it generates an obvious and worrying contradiction: work which is prohibited cannot also be regulated. So by legislating against child labour, children can actually end up with less support from the law. Protecting child domestic workers is further complicated by the fact that the place of work is a private home. Good, effective regulation is needed but this should be one of many levels from which to approach CDW.

While we recognize that this study under-represents child domestic workers in the more harmful forms of domestic work, the authors of this paper do not consider that a ban would protect these children. On the contrary, introducing a further layer of illegality into this area or work could push already ‘at risk’ children further from view, force the majority of ‘average’ child workers into illegality or force them out of work. Some of the child domestic workers in this study certainly need to be removed from the risky situation that they live and work in, but what defines this need for protection and possibly removal from their employment is not domestic work *per se*, but a series of circumstances and conditions that occur on individual, family and social levels thus, as Woodhead also concludes, the importance of assessing work alongside family, school and community (Woodhead 2004).

As Leiten and White point out, the urgency to tackle child work has become entangled with a wider –sometime unhelpfully polarized – debate about the desirability of child work in general (Leiten and White 2001). Although an outright ban may not be suitable, some form of regulation is necessary, particularly if we approach child labour from a rights-based perspective, where full-time work is viewed within the context of children’s right to education, and their right to be protected from economic exploitation, among other things (see Jacquemin 2006). There is definitely a need for programmes and legislation that focus on *preventing* children from entering domestic work in the first place, this could be based around their right to education and the conditional cash transfer schemes that exist in several Latin American countries are an example of such programmes. It needs to be ensured that children and young people who are working have the support of legal bodies and access to education as well as the means of supporting and facilitating their transition into other forms of employment. This is particularly important for older and teenage child workers, many of whom are no longer required to attend school formally and whose income is a vital contribution to their families and their own futures. Such actions need to be accountable at a local level and have a clear strategy for ensuring enforcement, a strategy that will require important financial and political commitment on a national and international level (ILO 2006, Gamlin and Pastor 2009). Since work place inspections of domestic work are exceedingly difficult to instigate, legislation could focus on, for example, incentivizing school attendance by improving the quality and accessibility of education and finding a means of replacing lost household income, while developing and implementing a system of community based surveillance, possibly working directly through agencies and support organizations. Clearly such strategies are resource-intensive and low-income countries could not implement such legislation without additional support, making this a matter for international and multilateral development aid. Bourdillon (2009) uses words that very precisely describe the key findings of our study: ‘The reality is that the boundary between harmful and benign work for children lies not in the place of work, but in what is demanded, and in whether the children and their interests are respected by controlling adults’. Here we must return to the socio-cultural factors mentioned above and recognize how equality and empowerment play a role in the powerlessness of children in an adult controlled society. Clearly, these are wide-reaching issues, solutions to which do not lie

in legislation but in long processes of social and attitude changes. Such changes are not impossible and several of the NGOs that participated in this study campaign for a change in attitude towards domestic employment and worker, promoting a dignified image of both. In terms of individual needs, non-legislative community and social programmes need to focus on protective factors: providing social contact and support, facilitating contact with families, mediating between education institutions and employers to facilitate school attendance.

Conclusions

The study we have presented here has made a significant contribution to our understanding of CDW and adds to a growing body of work which argues that CDW in itself is not harmful and should not be banned, as Klocker concluded, 'this is a complex occupation that cannot automatically or solely be identified as harmful' (Klocker 2011, 209). Our findings suggest that CDW is not a WFCL that should be subject to unconditional elimination as this would not be in the best interests of the majority of child domestic workers. These conclusions are reiterated by the recent report 'Ending child labour in domestic work', which suggest that 'Children's work in domestic work below the general minimum age for employment, or in a situation considered to be a worst form of child labour – such as hazardous work or slavery like conditions – should be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. In addition, young domestic workers of legal working age should be provided with *adequate protection against abusive working conditions*' (our emphasis).

What is now needed is good and well-designed legislation and regulation that focuses on the *protection* of child domestic workers, most of whom do not want to lose their jobs (Bourdillon 2010). In this paper, we identified a series of protective factors – education, social support and family stability – which could form the starting points for developing intervention programmes that aim to prevent children from entering domestic work and protect those who are in work. Serious discussion with stakeholders on how to integrate these into policy and legislation is now an urgent requirement.

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