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# ANNUAL REPORT

2023



**GLOBAL MARCH**

Against Child Labour  
Contra el Trabajo Infantil  
Contre le Travail des Enfants

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# About Us

The Global March Against Child Labour (Global March) is a worldwide network committed to eradicating the root causes of child labour. We harness the collective strength, resources, and experiences of our network to tackle systemic inequalities, reduce socio-economic barriers, and mitigate vulnerabilities that perpetuate children's exploitation. Our collective efforts are strategically aligned with the UN global vision of eradicating child labour through Target 8.7.



Photo Courtesy: Which Event? add later



# FORWARD NOTE

The year 2023 demonstrated that despite continued remarkable achievements by Global March member organisations and activists around the world, the fight against child labour is still on, and more critical than ever. Coming out of the COVID crisis, it was obvious the pandemic contributed to a rise in child labour, but it was also crystal clear that despite years of declining numbers, child labour was once again on the rise even before the COVID emergency. The necessity of a comprehensive approach to the issue was never more apparent. Utilising a holistic philosophy that maximised impact at the community, district, provincial and national levels, Global March continues its top-to-bottom/bottom-to-top approach, integrating its advocacy efforts with the members' grassroots work. You will encounter several exciting and innovative examples of this work in this report, but allow me to highlight just a few:

The Catalyst Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, puts the Global March in a leading position with its members to make significant impacts in Peru, Nepal, and Uganda. Using the Area-Based-Approach (ABA), which integrates all relevant aspects of child labour in a community, Global March member Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal (SAN) pulled together nineteen leading organisations including the three most powerful Nepali trade unions, to advocate for and improve Nepal's Alliance 8.7 roadmap priorities to eliminate child labour. This comprehensive approach reached down to district levels to identify the specifics that could be impacted by national policy and vice versa. In Uganda, continued advocacy around ABA has resulted in the mobilisation of 30 child rights CSOs working together to strengthen the voices of children, survivors, and child labourers in advocacy and policymaking.

In Peru, Global March member Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (CESIP) and Desarrollo y Autogestion (DyA) convened additional CSOs to strengthen and extend the government's system of child labour elimination certification to five more municipalities. The ABA approach, as it dovetails with various efforts to establish Child Labor-Free Zones (CLFZs) can also integrate Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation Systems (CLMRS) as Global March member General Agricultural Workers of Ghana (GAWU) is doing in West Africa, acting as a model for others in the chocolate industry and surrounding countries.



In Bangladesh, the RESOURCE project is focused on the impact of climate change on child labour. New and diversified forms of livelihood such as alternative crops and livestock raising were introduced among communities (shrimp fry collectors) in climate-vulnerable areas where the risk of child labour is higher and has already put significant numbers of children back in school. Internationally, the Global March continues its advocacy role on the Global Coordinating Group of Alliance 8.7 and with national governments, connecting those policy discussions with the work being done through the ABA on the ground. This connection is essentially a democratic impulse and process – to address a fundamental human rights issue for the most vulnerable in our society and engaging whole communities in feedback and voluntary change that gives voice both to children’s plight and aspirations.

To support its members, Global March continued in its Alliance 8.7 advocacy capacity through participation in the Monitoring Working Group, Supply Chain Action Group and the Survivor Engagement Working Group. During these meetings, we shared experiences and challenges faced by CSOs in the Pathfinder countries while contributing to Alliance 8.7 commitments, including roadmap priorities and annual reporting processes, dialogue with European countries on their proposed Human Rights Due Diligence legislation, and creating the space for Global March members to do their work. 2023 was beset by challenges, but the members of the Global March network stepped up to the task, redoubling their efforts with an innovative, creative and engaged commitment to our ultimate goal – the elimination of child labour and an opportunity for every child to get a quality education. I commend our members for their incredible work in difficult circumstances and look forward to continued progress to turn the tide.

**- Timothy Ryan**  
**(Chairperson, Global March Against Child Labour)**

# IMPACT THROUGH INTERVENTIONS

## Catalyzing Civil Society to Accelerate Progress Against Child Labor (Catalyst)

In 2023, the Catalyst project played significant role in unifying Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Uganda, Nepal and Peru to advance the fight against child labour and accelerate progress on SDG 8.7. In each Pathfinder country, Global March collaborated with the CSO partners to build their capacities and strengthen the CSOs network at the local, national, regional and global levels to promote evidence-based advocacy through Area-based Approach (ABA). The CSOs network and their participation in leading advocacy efforts fostered cooperation between the governments, trade unions, and the private sector. Their collaborative efforts facilitated dissemination of knowledge, innovative practices and helped shape policies and practices that protects children's rights and prevents child labour.

### Key Highlights: Uganda



Photo Courtesy: ANPPCAN Uganda

#### CSO Capacity building and Mobilisation

Leveraging the existing structure of the Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN), Global March and ANPPCAN Uganda established a CSOs coalition with over 30 child rights organisations to build their capacity on good practices, advocacy and related skills to address child labour and engage with the government. Ranging from organisations at the international, national and district levels, the CSOs work across broad thematic areas including child labour, child protection, sexual violence, child trafficking, street children, and safe migration. Four quarterly meetings were held to build the collective capacity of the CSOs, strengthen their collaboration and identify issues, and key priorities.

The overarching capacity-building efforts for this year broadened the conceptual and technical understanding of the Area-Based Approach (ABA), equipped CSOs with practical knowledge and skills, and built innovative advocacy initiatives. The key strategies included advocating for stronger child protection laws, promoting Child Labour Free Zones (CLFZs), pushing for increased budget allocations for remediation and enhancing collaboration between government agencies, businesses, trade unions, and employers.

### **Strengthened Child and Youth Participation**

In June, ANPPCAN Uganda Chapter organised inception meetings with children to identify their needs, priorities, and effective ways for them to engage with relevant stakeholders such as the government, MPs, local leaders, and other duty-bearers. Eighteen children from Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) from Kyotera and Rakai districts, areas with the worst forms of child labour were convened to identify key advocacy priorities and designed a child-led advocacy document (charter of demands). The charter highlighted critical issues affecting children's well-being, including child labour and protection from violence. The demands were presented to government leaders, CSOs, parents, and teachers on the Day of the African Child (DAC), as well as on national and international days, through interactive mediums like radio talk shows. This initiative ensured children's voices, and their demands are incorporated in the larger advocacy efforts. It led to improved identification and reporting of child labour cases.



Photo Courtesy: ANPPCAN Uganda



## Midterm Review of Pathfinder Country Roadmap Priorities

In 2023, The Catalyst Project supported Uganda's Alliance 8.7 committee in reviewing National Roadmap Priorities. The collective advocacy efforts of the CSOs coalition, holding the government accountable to act on its commitments, led to the successful integration of the ABA into Uganda's Pathfinder priorities, with particular focus on robust implementation of CLFZs.



Photo Courtesy: ANPPCAN Uganda



## Key Highlights: Nepal

### Formation of CSOs Forum on SDG 8.7.

The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Nepal established the CSO forum on SDG 8.7 in December 2021 to take collaborative actions to tackle child labour, forced labour, and human trafficking. In 2023, the forum brought together 19 NGOs, three national NGO networks, and the three largest trade unions in Nepal (GEFONT, NTUC, and ANTUF) to expedite efforts and mobilise different stakeholders including the government. The key objective was to develop national advocacy strategies and support the Alliance 8.7 mechanism, with a specific focus on eliminating the worst forms of child labour in Nepal and implementing roadmap priorities.

Additionally, with the support of the CSOs forum, Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal (SAN) established SDG 8.7 sub-committees at the provincial level including three Catalyst provinces. The sub-committee includes representatives from 45 NGOs, the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI), the NGO Federation, and trade unions. The sub-committees have developed action plans to guide their implementation efforts in their respective provinces. Regular meetings were conducted to share best practices, organise technical meetings to integrate Area-based Approach (ABA) and accelerate the expansion of Child Labour Free Municipalities.



Photo Courtesy: SAN, Nepal

## Collaborative Advocacy Efforts and Actions

The CSO forum on SDG 8.7 spearheaded various advocacy actions at the federal, provincial, and local levels. In April, the NGO Federation, in collaboration with Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal (SAN), organised a National Dialogue on SDG 8.7 and Child Rights. The discussion focused on policy issues, promoting the ABA, and integrating Child Labour Free Businesses and Industries. During the session, SAN also presented a strategy document for CSOs with detailed action plan aligned with the project's pillars i.e. capacity building, advocacy and policy implementation with specific focus on strengthening children's participation and youth leadership.

In June, the CSOs forum developed a common position paper on child labour providing coherent and collaborative perspectives on ABA implementation and collaboration with trade unions and the government. The paper highlighted the emphasis on corporate social accountability and the adoption of child labour policies by the private sector. Additionally, a concept note for a handbook on child labour elimination was developed, covering legal provisions, ABA implementation, and monitoring and evaluation to support national priorities. The CSOs forum played vital role in ensuring collaboration, fostering accountability and shared learning experience among key stakeholders. SAN provided crucial technical, logistical support to ensure continued participation and guiding implementation of ABA (Child Labour Free Municipality) in various municipalities.



Photo Courtesy: SAN, Nepal





Photo Courtesy: SAN, Nepal

### **Expansion of Child Labour Free Municipalities**

The CSOs and local governments have collaborated to submit proposals to the Ministry of Labor Employment and Social Security for Child Labour Free Municipalities declarations. This yielded successful results with 18 municipalities joining the CLFZ campaign. Additionally, the joint advocacy of CSOs at the provincial and local level has led to the inclusion of child labour and Area based Approach in the government's annual policies, programmes and budget allocation.



Photo Courtesy: SAN, Nepal

## Key Highlights: Peru

### Enhancing Collective Capacities and Advocacy Actions

In Peru, significant progress was made in strengthening the capacities of Grupo Impulsor (Catalyst CSOs). The Catalyst project members, including our partners Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (CESIP) and Desarrollo y Autogestión (DyA) participated in a series of capacity-building workshops on diverse topics including communication for advocacy and legislation and public policies on child labour. These workshops followed a continuous, long-term approach to enhance the collective capacities of Peruvian CSOs, integrate advocacy actions and accelerate child labour prevention and eradication policies.

The workshop on communication for advocacy was attended by 8 Catalyst CSOs aimed at improving their capacities to implement advocacy actions at the local, national and regional levels. The workshop led to the development of an advocacy communication tool, containing essential information for joint advocacy actions directed towards the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations. The advocacy tool systematically incorporates crucial information such as the national and regional status of child labour and possible intervention strategies and mitigation measures. In November, training on the implementation of the Municipal Model and the Child Labour Free Seal (SEITI) was organised in collaboration with the Regional Labour Directorate of Lima Regional Government in Barranca to further guide implementation actions.

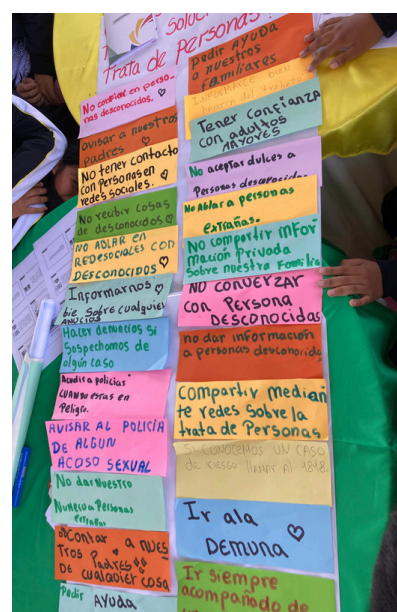


Photo Courtesy: CESIP



Consequently, the collaborative efforts between the Catalyst team and the Directorate of Fundamental Rights within the Ministry of Labour, have led to the successful adoption of the Municipal Model across five municipalities in Peru. The Catalyst team guided them on the local child protection system such as the Defender of Children and Adolescents (DEMUNA) through workshops conducted for municipal officials, the regional manager of the Social Development Office, and representatives of the Regional Directive Councils for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour (CDREPTI). These initiatives provided input and recommendations on the effective implementation of the Municipal Model.



Photo Courtesy: CESIP

### Strengthening advocacy communications

Following the communication for advocacy training, the CSOs developed advocacy materials for a digital campaign that addressed the risks of child labour and advocated for the elimination child labour in schools. The digital campaign featured series of testimonial interviews with different stakeholders which demonstrates Grupo Impulsor's mobilisation efforts. The testimonial videos were launched during the World Day Against Child Labour as a joint advocacy between the Catalyst CSOs and the Ministry of Labour and Promotion of Employment (MTPE) to bolster inclusion of children's participation and their demands.



# Integrating Area-based Approach (ABA) to Address Child Labour in Bangladesh and Uganda

Global March is implementing the RESOURCE (*Raising economic and social security in agriculture for child labour eradication*) project in Bangladesh and Uganda, towards addressing child labour in the shrimp and coffee sector respectively. The project will use ABA by setting up a Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) to address the economic root causes of child labour. In Uganda, two coffee cooperatives in the Bududa region have come on board as project partners. Their farmers were trained on good agricultural practices to improve the coffee output as well as explore other means to enhance income. Two schools in the region have also been identified to set up school kitchen gardens to address food insecurity which was a key contributor to child labour. The schools received training on agricultural practices and seeds were provided to enable distribution of cooked meals in the school premises, made of locally grown crops. This led to the reduction of school dropout rates and promoted attendance.

Additionally, setting up of a child labour monitoring and remediation systems in the plantation areas helped in making the coffee plantations child labour free zones. In Bangladesh, capacity building training on saline farming was initiated among smallholder farmers. New and diversified forms of livelihood such as livestock rearing were introduced among communities (shrimp fry collectors) in climate vulnerable areas where the risk of child labour is higher. The project will work with 360 aquaculture households and 540 school aged children.

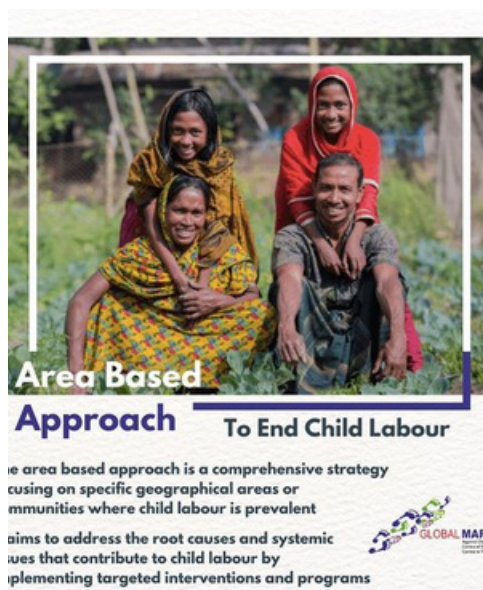


Photo Courtesy: Global March

# Protecting the Rights of the Children in the Coconut oil Supply chain in the Philippines



Photo Courtesy: Asia Farming

In 2021, Global March became one of the implementers of a project investigating the possible existence of child labour in the coconut supply chain. We are now leading the second phase which focuses on preventing and remediating child labour in the coconut supply chain.

We are working closely with smallholder coconut farmers, farm workers, school authorities, and local government in setting up an effective multidimensional (Child Labour Monitoring and Remediation System) CLMRS that allows them to track whether children attend a school or flag up when child labour occurs enabling relevant stakeholders to act. The project will also focus on capacity building of smallholder coconut farmers to increase their income and strengthen their livelihoods.

So far, the project's multi-dimensional CLMRS has been set up in the two Barangays in the Philippines to help identify cases of child labour in coconut farming. The CLMRS Municipal Technical Working Group has been organised to enhance coordinated efforts to combat child labour through resource sharing and government support. Concurrently, a baseline survey profiled 406 coconut farmers, with 25 children identified for monitoring, though only one was confirmed engaged in child labour. Trust-building sessions were regularly conducted, securing community support and local traders have pledged to support child labour advocacy. Capacity-building sessions to train CLMRS monitors, and profiling, reporting, referral, and remediation mechanisms have been developed. The efforts highlight a holistic approach to child labour prevention, leveraging community structures and multi-stakeholder collaboration.





Photo Courtesy: Fairtrade

Additionally, consortium members worked on enhancing knowledge exchange and collaboration in standards awareness training on human rights, due diligence, and coconut sector issues in the Philippines, including child labour. Companies are setting up mechanisms to improve and reduce CSR risks identified in the project proposal and local impact assessment along with updating policies on human rights, labour rights, and child protection. Consistent efforts were put into building capacity of smallholder coconut farmers and workers for facilitating trainings, consultations and dialogue on improving product quality and enhancing knowledge on alternative forms of livelihood for farmers and workers to be eventually sustainably included within programmatic interventions of stakeholders such as the Philippines Coconut Authority.



Photo Courtesy: Livelihood funds



# GLOBAL UPDATES

## Regional Symposia on Promoting Area-based Approach (ABA) to Eliminate Child Labour

In 2023, Global March organised the Africa Regional Symposium and the South Asia and Southeast Asia Regional Symposium on promoting the ABA to eliminate child labour. The events were held in Uganda (Kampala) on the 13th of June and in Nepal (Kathmandu) on the 19th of December, respectively. The symposia brought together various stakeholders to exchange experiences and strengthen ABA as a key tool to address child labour in diverse contexts. The Africa Regional Symposium fostered comprehensive discourse on child labour, urging members of Alliance 8.7 and Pathfinder Country governments in Africa to prioritise ABA in planning, policies, and actions to eradicate child labour through Child Labour Free Zones. The commitment was endorsed by civil society organisations (CSOs), teachers' unions, academia, media, and employers' organisations from Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

During the South Asia and Southeast Asia Regional Symposium, the delegates from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Indonesia collectively endorsed the adoption of ABA and its expansion in various contexts. This included promoting ABA in education, implementing resilient livelihoods, ensuring decent work, and promoting integrated social protection and accountability practices. Region-specific Call-to-Action documents were generated, providing practical and policy recommendations to diverse stakeholders including the Government, Private Sector, Global Community, CSOs and Trade Unions.



Photo Courtesy: Global March

## Engagement with Alliance 8.7

Global March participated in the Alliance 8.7 meetings organised for the Global Coordinating Group, Monitoring Working Group, Supply Chain Action Group and the Survivor Engagement Working Group. Our involvement aimed to strengthen our engagement with Alliance 8.7 and to represent the voices of civil society organisations (CSOs) within the Alliance 8.7 structure. During these meetings, we shared experiences and challenges faced by CSOs in the Pathfinder countries while contributing to Alliance 8.7 commitments, including roadmap priorities and annual reporting processes. In August, we also arranged a meeting with the new Chair of the Alliance, Chile. In the Survivor Engagement Working Group which was led by the U.S. Department of Labor, we ensured that survivor voices were effectively represented within the Alliance 8.7 structures.



Photo Courtesy: Global March



Additionally, we organised capacity building workshops on Alliance 8.7 and its Accountability Framework. These workshops were organised in collaboration with our regional members in Uganda, Peru and Nepal. These sessions aimed to broaden the understanding of Alliance 8.7 and enhance the capacity of civil society organisations (CSOs) to effectively engage in the reporting process and support implementation. The key outcomes have been summarised in a short paper, *"CSO's Experience and Recommendations towards the Alliance,"* and was submitted to the Alliance Secretariat advocating for better integration of CSOs and to ensure more robust implementation of the PFC processes.

## Assessment of Human Rights Risks in the Production and Processing of Rice in Cambodia

As part of the Dutch IRBC Agreement for the Food Products Sector, Global March, together with CNV International hosted a [webinar](#) that delved deeper into the rice supply chain in Cambodia. Along with The Centre for Child Rights and Business, the Sustainable Rice Platform, and other partners, we had a conversation around the insights from the findings of the Human Rights Assessment on this supply chain and explored collaborative pathways towards a more transparent and sustainable rice supply chain. Some conclusions of the webinar were to bring attention to the inter-related issues of health access, child rights, livelihood, and gender to understand the root causes of the risks better and therefore provide comprehensive solutions. This will help find greater collaboration among the stakeholders in the rice supply chain and address the human and labour rights that were identified.



**Assessment of Human Rights Risks in the  
Production and Processing of Rice in Cambodia**

*Report for The Global March and CNV International*

**THE CENTRE**  
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

*May 2023*



# AROUND THE GLOBE: MEMBER UPDATES

## Collaborative Forces to End Child Labour in the United States

In response to the horrific attacks on child labour standards in the U.S., the Global March along with our members Child Labor Coalition and the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation convened a series of meetings and working groups with over forty non-profit organisations, trade unions, academic institutions, migrant workers organisations, working in the fields of children's rights, child labour and exploitation, labour rights and rights of the unaccompanied children to form a campaign to end U.S. child labour. The campaign's shared agenda includes perspectives of survivors and provides clear recommendations to end child labour in all its forms. The principal demands call for the protection of unaccompanied migrant children, closing the child labour loopholes between agricultural and non-agricultural work, regularly reviewing hazardous order regulations, creation of strong legislation to hold corporations accountable for child labour law violations and calling for stronger labour rights by raising the minimum wage and ending discrimination against farmworkers.

**IN THE UNITED STATES,  
THERE IS NO LIMIT ON THE  
NUMBER OF HOURS KIDS  
CAN WORK ON A FARM,  
STARTING FROM THE  
AGE OF 12.**



**#EndUSChildLabor**

**[enduschildlabor.org](http://enduschildlabor.org)**

## Educators Against Child Labour in Uganda

In Uganda's Masaka district (Kyesiiga sub-county), awareness and sensitisation workshops led by the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) and Education International (EI) have significantly increased school enrolment. This initiative, supported by Mondiaal FNV and Algemene Onderwijsbond (AOB), aims to combat child labour by establishing an effective monitoring system in schools. A key component of this effort is the establishment of "pupil's clubs," which empowers teachers and students to identify and support children who were forced to work and consequently miss school leading to high levels of absenteeism among school-going children. Several key interventions have contributed to mitigating absenteeism and developing child labour-free zones. These include awareness-raising campaigns to inform communities about the importance of education and the detrimental effects of child labour, home visits by teachers to discuss issues of child rights and child labour with parents and the adoption of local by-laws banning child labour to enforce the community's commitment to eradicating the practice. Over the years, EI affiliates across 15 countries have enabled more than 8,000 former child workers to return to school demonstrating the power of collaborative force to address child labour.





## World Day Against Child Labour Celebration in the International Labour Conference (ILC)

On World Day Against Child Labour, a high-level side event was organised by the ILO during the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference. The discussion was focused on the link between social justice and the eradication of child labour. As a panellist, Global March's founder Kailash Satyarthi remembered the origins of the Global March as a movement that started in that venue. He mentioned that in a world where numbers of child labourers are increasing rapidly, mainly in Africa, a speedy response to revert injustices is needed to secure social justice for all which eventually will have an impact in ending child labour. He highlighted the need for duty bearers to followed up on their commitments paving the path to social justice, considering its crucial link with social protection systems that must include children. [Event recording](#).



## World Day Against Child Labour Campaign in Latin America

The Global March members in South and Central America developed the social media campaign “*social justice for all*”. Social justice for all is crucial to eradicating child labour as it means decent work for parents, education and opportunities for children to grow up with rights, in a safe and favourable environment. Digital Campaign on : [X](#) & [Facebook](#)

## Collaboration between NGO and Government to Address Child Labour in Costa Rica

In October 2023, DNI signed an agreement with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MTSS) for a sustainable prevention and eradication of child labour and the protection of adolescent workers in the country. With this agreement, both DNI and the MTSS commit to carry out actions to address protection issues of adolescents in the informal sector and intervene in cases of child labour in the agricultural sector. The collaborative actions include training processes and development of tools to strengthen the work of labour inspectors. Additionally, both parties agreed to support any other programme that enables the objectives of this agreement to be achieved. Virginia Murillo Herrera, executive president of DNI and GM Regional Coordinator for Central America, mentioned that 90% of child labourers do so in the informal sector, specifically in the agricultural sector.

## Parliamentary Initiatives to End Child Labour in Nepal

To have a parliamentary action to end child labour, the CSO forum on SDG 8.7 and our member Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal (SAN) interacted with parliament members at the federal and provincial levels. SAN collaborated with the Industry, Commerce, Labour, and Consumer Welfare Committee at the federal level and with the Ministry of Social Development at the provincial level in Sudurpachim and Lumbini province and discussed the need for amendment of Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 2056 along with necessary initiatives by the federal and provincial government for the elimination of child labour in Nepal. The parliamentarians and government officials committed to raising the issues of child labour in the House of Representatives and making it one of their agenda in the committee meetings.



Photo Courtesy: SAN Nepal

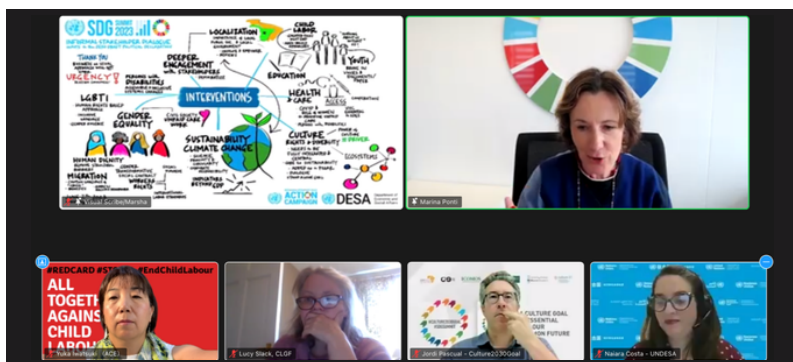


## World Day Against Child Labour Celebration in Uganda

African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) and Global March collaborated with the Government of Uganda to commemorate the World Day Against Child Labour on June 12, in Kampala. During the event, ANPPCAN collaborated with other partners in the country including NASCENT, Platform for Labor Action, and UCRNN to develop a Call to Action, which the Government of Uganda and key stakeholders will adopt as part of the theme "Social Justice for All." This commitment reinforced the role of the government in eradicating child labour and implementing the Pathfinder roadmap priorities. The state minister for Children and Youth, representing the government, CSOs and other stakeholders, endorsed the commitments outlined in the Call-to-Action on three key priority areas aimed at eliminating child labour nationwide. These priorities include establishing universal access to social protection; accelerating the elimination of child labour in agriculture and; enhancing legal enforcement mechanisms to combat child labour. This initiative has increased the government's focus on child labour issues at the national level.



Photo Courtesy: ANPPCAN Uganda



## Strengthening Child Labour Elimination in Ghana through Area based Approach

In March, Global March board members along with our member organisations Action against Child Exploitation ([ACE-Japan](#)), Defence for Children International (DNI Costa Rica), General Agricultural Workers' Union of Ghana (GAWU) and, Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (CESIP), co-organised a webinar “Area-Based Approach Experiences towards Tackling Child Labour” to amplify continuous efforts to strengthen the CLFZ mechanism in Ghana. The webinar showcased innovative solutions and best practices from various projects that adopted ABA from Uganda, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, and Peru to demonstrate the adaptability and effectiveness of ABA in various contexts.

## Awareness Campaign to Combat Child Labour in Pakistan

In our ongoing commitment to combat child labour, our member organisation GODH ([Grassroot Organization for Human Development](#)) organised an interactive puppet theatre to build awareness on the issue of child protection and child labour on International Girl Child Day. Over 300 community members participated in the awareness session highlighting critical themes on the rights of street children, and female empowerment, with a specific focus on child labour involving girls. These puppet shows captivated audiences and serves as a dynamic tool for stimulating awareness of children’s rights in Pakistan and mobilising community members.



Photo Courtesy: GODH, Pakistan



# PUBLICATION

## Child Labour and Climate Change issues in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's shrimp sector is a grim reminder to address the economic root causes of child labour in climate-vulnerable communities. In an article published across several Bangladeshi e-papers, Gazal Malik (Programme and Advocacy Manager, Global March) and Timothy Ryan (Chairperson, Global March) delve into the increasing complexities of climate change and its impact on child labour. They emphasised the importance of investing in innovative and climate-responsive solutions to protect millions of children and their communities from the worst impacts of climate change.

The article further explores how Global March Against Child Labour, in collaboration with [Cordaid](#), is utilising saline farming as an innovative solution to tackle child labour in Bangladesh's shrimp supply chain. [Read the full article](#) to learn more about these efforts.

### 8 EDITORIAL MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2023, BHADRA 20, 1430 BS

#### Banks must put more capitals in technology to protect money

BANKS continue to ignore security issues that they need to seriously attend to, especially at a time when cyber attacks have become commonplace. Most of the banks are reported not to have the resources, strategies and computer infrastructure to head off cyber threats such as hacking, phishing, malware, one-time password bypass and the risk of exposure of banking data to dark web, where private computer networks can communicate and conduct business anonymously without divulging identifying information. Banks also lack human resources required to take care of cyber security issues. All this, in turn, leaves the banking sector vulnerable. Amidst threats of cyber attacks, the Bangladesh Bank had kept some web-based services offline for 36 hours beginning from 8:00pm on August 14, causing inconveniences to individual and institutional service-seekers. The study of the e-government Computer Incident Response Team of 2022 says that almost all banks run one or more vulnerable services and have weak authentication systems, which could lead to potential cyber attacks, noting that financial services are at 300 times higher risk of falling victim to cyber attacks. An Institute of Bank Management study of 2022 shows that 52 per cent of the banks are at high cyber security risks.

The theft of \$81 million of the Bangladesh Bank from its account with the Federal Reserve Bank in New York in February 2016 largely spawned off discussions on cyber security in the banking sector, but there has hardly been any desirable progress in effectively securing the systems that the banks use. A cyber security firm managing director says that the installation of security operations centres was an important instruction of the Bangladesh Bank as hackers are found to steal money by using malware and ransomware. Such a centre is an in-house or outsourced team of information technology security professionals to monitor an organisation's entire IT infrastructure round the clock to detect cyber security events in real time and address the issues as quickly and effectively as possible. But most of the banks have yet to set up such centres, resulting in an increase in cyber attacks. Computer Incident Response Team data show that the Bangladesh Bank and other financial institutions had 31 cyber threat alerts in 2021, which increased to 46 in 2022. Experts say that such risks are integrally associated with low investments in technology. A police official, involved in the investigation of the central bank reserve theft, says that while banks are unwilling to invest in security system and skilled human resources, they are also unwilling to divulge incidents of cyber attacks they faced in fear of losing their reputation. The police say that a poor security system at times entices insiders to get involved in manipulating the system to swindle money.

Banks must keep putting capitals into technology to stave off evolving hacking patterns and they must be proactive in this, not waiting for the attacks to take place. And, the central bank as part of its regulatory responsibility must keep a constant watch on the security systems and force banks to improve ways to protect money.

#### Authorities mustn't allow LPG price manipulation

### Child labour and climate change

by Gazal Malik and Timothy Ryan

ACCORDING to the National Child Labour Survey 2022, the number of children engaged in child labour in Bangladesh increased by 4.5 per cent in the last decade to 1.7 million from 1.61 million in 2013. This signals the need for urgent and effective action to improve livelihoods in climate-vulnerable regions where children are engaged in hazardous work.

Twelve-year-old Aaliyah lives with her family on the Baluwan River delta in coastal Bangladesh. On any given day, she has a fishing net twice her size down to the riverbank to catch shrimp, she skips school for days to catch fish at the high tide of the river, especially during the peak season from March to June. Her father and older brother migrated from their home district of Khulna to Karamganj, about 200 kilometres away, to find work in the garment readymade after the floods washed the little land they owned.

Aaliyah now lives with her mother in a shanty with no access to water or electricity and works as a shrimp catcher to make ends meet for less than a dollar a day.

Approximately six million farmers and horticulturists are engaged in the shrimp sector in Bangladesh, including children at the absolute bottom of the supply chain. Children like Aaliyah spend at least 4-5 hours a day in saline water and contract illnesses and syndromes, including skin allergies, gastric and muscular pain, weight problems, and neurological health issues. All these have severely debilitating and especially health-threatening impacts for growing children. Medicines to treat such conditions are too expensive, and the families can hardly afford them.

Aaliyah is subsided in one of the most complex supply chains, causing harm not only to children's well-being but also to the environment. The collection of shrimp causes enormous damage to marine resources and the aquatic biodiversity of the harvesting areas. In the process of collecting the shrimp, around 70-80 other fish species are also killed.

The southwestern coastal belt of Bangladesh has long suffered from saline intrusion and waterlogged in arable land, which leaves a growing number of farmers unemployed. The worsening climate change is further exacerbating the local environmental problems with increasing droughts, floods, soil salinity, and rising sea levels. The inundation of all these elements leaves communities along the Baluwan and other coastal regions of Bangladesh in a precarious position.

Additionally, a lack of knowledge



Child workers on a building site in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

### NEWAGE

Founder Editor Enayetur Raheem

and resources around saline land cultivation eliminates the last opportunity to grow food for self-sufficiency. As a result, marginal households, including children, turn to hazardous shrimp fry collection, further magnifying the child labour crisis in climate-vulnerable areas and forcing desperate choices for survival.

According to UNICEF Bangladesh Child Protection Specialist Kristina Westlund, climate change is one reason why an estimated 3.45 million Bangladeshi children are involved in child labour. More than 19 million children in Bangladesh, from 20 of the country's 64 districts, are most vulnerable to the disastrous consequences of climate change, warned UNICEF in a 2019 report. Worsening conditions drive vulnerable communities, including children, to migrate.

In the case of Bangladesh, a child-friendly upazila can learn a lot from the Child Labour Free Zones based on the area-based approach, which focuses on vulnerable regions and sectors with significant cases of child labour and works towards making the area child labour free. Area-based approach models such as Child Labour Free Zones are increasingly focusing on addressing the economic root causes of child labour along with other

issues such as school feeding and social protection. This approach is being promoted by Global March Against Child Labour, a worldwide network of trade unions, community-based organisations, and teachers' unions, in partnership with Cordaid, an organisation with technical expertise in promoting innovative livelihood solutions in fragile regions.

The organisations plan to expand the work in the next three years to benefit at least 1,000 households and 3,000 children in the Khulna region, with a focus on the most vulnerable shrimp-catching communities and their children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. The technical tools are critical, but the real heart of sustainability in addressing child labour is the area-based approach and strengthening it with innovative livelihood solutions. By focusing on vulnerable regions and bringing marginalised communities together to increase their bargaining power, building local collaboration, and sharing knowledge, it is possible to tackle the root causes of child labour in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh can benefit immensely from child-friendly upazilas that envision building a unique, cross-cutting solution-oriented approach that builds community resilience and integrates child labour concerns with climate and livelihood issues in Bangladesh. It ensures holistic collaboration among civil society organisations, the government, the private sector, unions, and donors and amplifies efforts to combat child labour.

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# GLOBAL MARCH

Against Child Labour  
Contra el Trabajo Infantil  
Contre le Travail des Enfants

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