



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



International Labour Organization



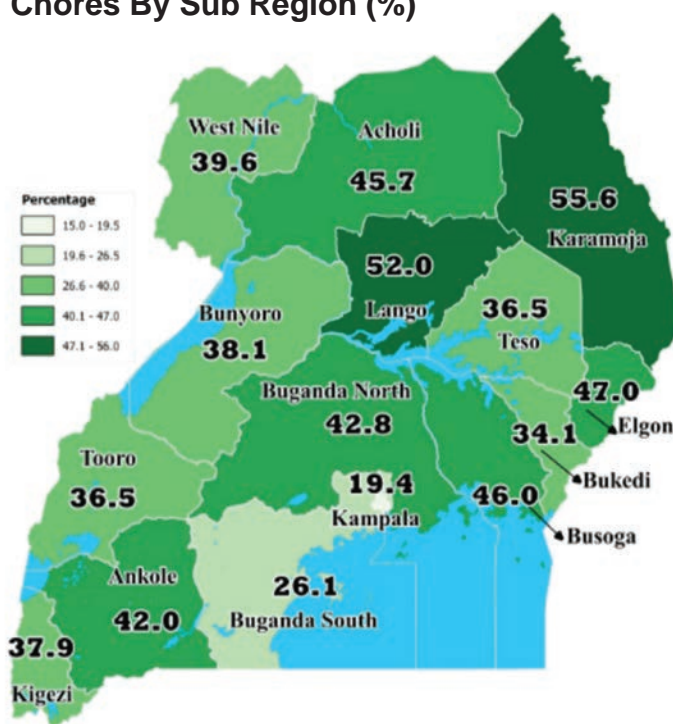
CHILD LABOUR IN UGANDA: TRENDS AND STRATEGIES



CHILD LABOUR IN UGANDA

- 6.2 million children are engaged in Child Labour in Uganda
- 10.4 million children equivalent to (67%) are involved in Child Labour including household chores
- 40.9 percent boys are engaged in Child Labour more than girls (30.0%)
- 59.8 percent of children engaged in Child Labour are found in rural areas, more than urban (44.4%) areas
- 61.8 percent of children engaged in Child Labour are orphaned, more than non-orphaned (55.3%)
- 55.7 percent of children engaged in Child Labour are aged 5-11 years.
- 55.6 percent of children mostly affected by Child Labour come from the Karamoja region. Followed by Lango (52.0%) with the least affected being central region - Kampala (19.4%) & Buganda South (26.1%)
- 70 percent, which is an equivalent of about 112 million children globally engaged in Child Labour are in agriculture sector.

Child Labour Excluding Household Chores By Sub Region (%)



The figure above shows Child Labour by region, extracted from UBOS presentation of 16th November 2022

Figure 12.10 Trends in Child Labour Estimates excluding household chores, (%)

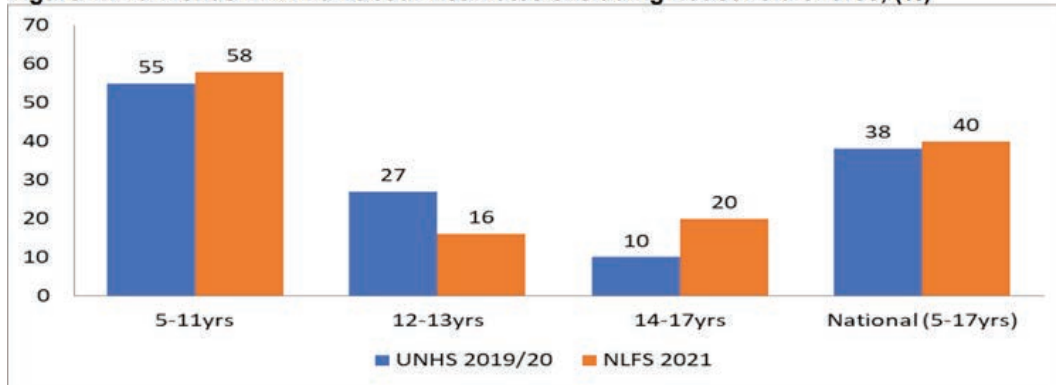


Figure 1: Trends in child labour in Uganda 2019/20 and 20/21 extracted from UBOS 2021:191

Introduction

Globally, the rate of child labour is alarming. Global estimates indicate that 160 million children-63 million girls and 97 million boys were in child labour globally at the beginning of 2020, accounting for almost 1 in 10 of all children worldwide (ILO & UNICEF, 2020:8)¹. Seventy-nine million children which is almost a half of all those in child labour were in hazardous work that directly endangers their health, safety and moral development (Ibid). Global progress against child labour has stalled for the first time and ILO and UNICEF expressed concern that if urgent actions are not taken, COVID-19 pandemic could push millions more children into child labour.

Indeed, the Uganda national labour survey which was launched in November 2022 reveal a sharp rise in the rate of child labour. The numbers of children engaged in labour has taken a sharp rise in Uganda, from 2,048,000 children constituting a total of 14% of all Ugandan children in 2018 (UBOS, 2018:152) 2 to 6.2 million constituting a total of 40% Ugandan children aged 5-17 years (UBOS, 2021:188) 3. Evidence reveals that, while child labour reduced among children aged 12-13 years from 27% in 2018 to 16 percent in 2021, it has raised among the youngest cohort of 5-11 years from 55% in 2018 to 58% in 2021 (Ibid, p. 191). What is evident is that younger children aged 5-11 years have continued to bear the highest burden of child labour in Uganda, but also globally (see ILO & UNICEF, 2020:8). Agriculture sector is responsible for the most numbers of children engaged in children, estimated at 70% an equivalent of 112 million children globally (ILO & UNICEF 2020:8). Moreover, this is work which is harmful to children's physical, social, or psychological wellbeing.

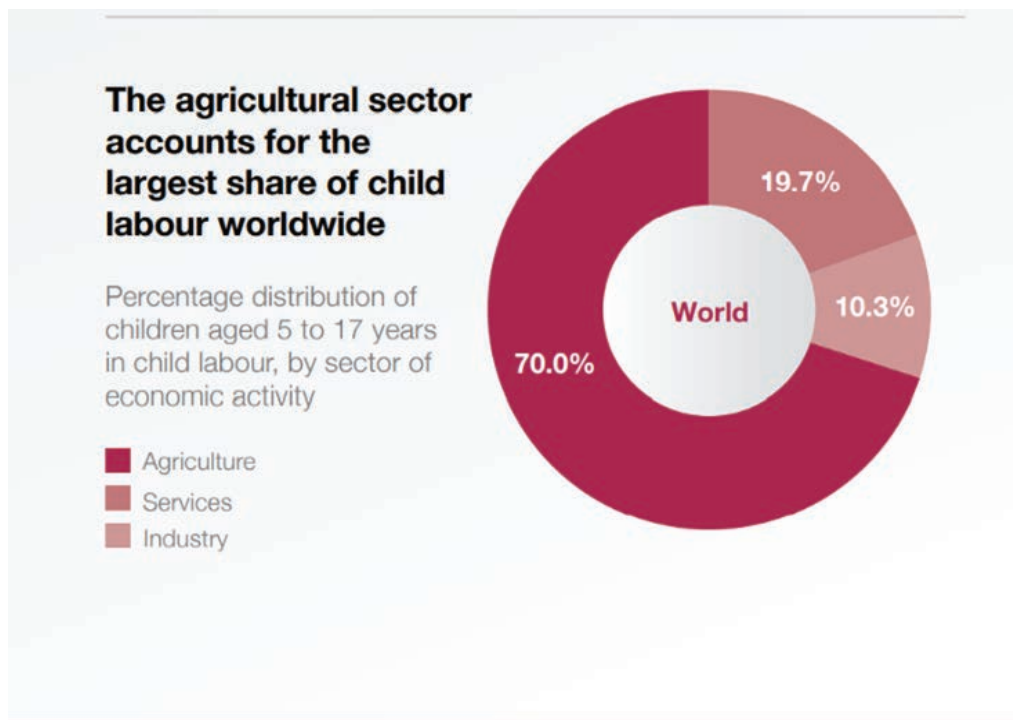


Figure 2: child labour by sectors globally, extracted from ILO and UNICEF, 2020:13

¹ International Labour Office and United Nations Children's Fund, *Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward*, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. License: CC BY 4.0.

² Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2018. *Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017*. Kampala, Uganda; UBOS

³ Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2021, *The National Labour Force Survey 2021 – Main Report*, Kampala, Uganda

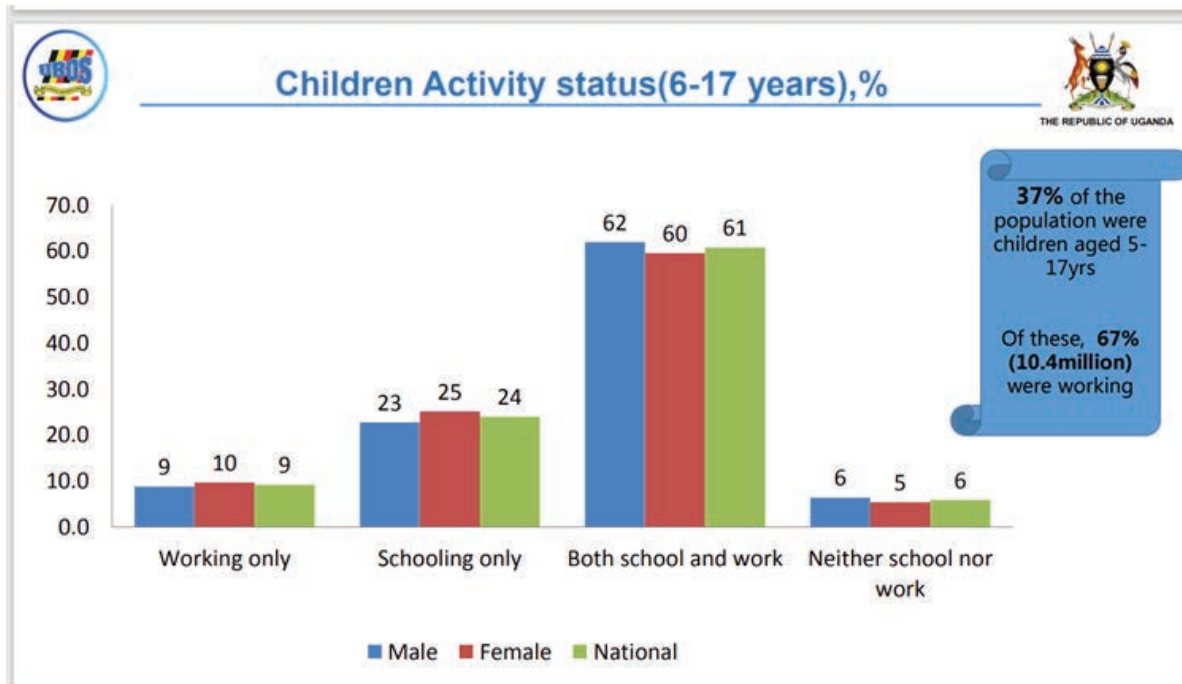


Figure 3: child labour in Uganda as at 2021 extracted from UBOS presentation made on 16th November 2022

Child labour as a social economic development concern

Child Labour refers to work that is hazardous or exploitative and threatens the health, safety, physical growth and mental development of children and therefore constitutes an urgent policy priority. Child Labour constitutes a key obstacle to socio-economic development to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all through Universal Primary and Secondary Education (UPE & USE). It not only harms the welfare of individual children, but also slows broader national poverty reduction and development efforts. Children who are forced out of school and are into Labour to help their families to make ends meet are denied the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for gainful future employment, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty (UBOS, 2021:187). The impacts are multifaceted including:

- Child labour is not only a disadvantage to the affected children, their households and communities, but national as child labour poses a risk of having a deficient workforce in future (UBOS, 2021:205).
- Child labour constitutes one of the greatest sources of child abuse and exploitation and it's a fundamental violation of the rights of the children (ILO & UNICEF, 2020).
- Child labour can result into extreme bodily and mental harm, or at worst even death. Most saddening, it deprives children of the right to education (Amuriat, 2021) ⁴.
- The isolated nature of domestic work renders children particularly vulnerable to physical, verbal and sexual abuse (ILO & UNICEF, 2020:37).
- Some forms of child labour put children at risk of being drawn into illicit activities.

- The UBOS 2021 report indicates that there are many children in Uganda who double both as learners and child labourers. They struggle to balance the demands of work and schooling. Children who combine child labour with schooling generally lag behind non-working peers in grade progression and learning achievement, and are more likely to drop out prematurely (ILO & UNICEF, 2020).

Global and national actions

Even with these indicators, the international community made a commitment to end child labour by 2025.

SDG TARGET 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

⁴ Amuriat Bernard (2021). What Government is doing to end child labour, The Daily Monitor, October 2021. <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/oped/commentary/what-govt-is-doing-to-eliminate-child-labour-3589174>



At the national level, Uganda has taken numerous steps to end child labour, notably:

- National Action Plan (NAP) II on the elimination of Child labour 2020/2021-2024/2025, a master plan that details Government efforts aimed at ending Child Labour.
- National Policy on Elimination of Child. The policy under the institutional framework provides the establishment of the National Steering Committee on Elimination of Child Labour as a policy organ which has been constituted.
- Uganda is a pathfinder country. This is a commitment to go further and faster to achieve Target 8.7 by accelerating efforts, trying new approaches and collaborating with others to end all forms of child labour. Being a pathfinder country means a dedication to turn all commitments into actions.

Strategies to reduce Child Labour in Uganda

Nascent Research and development organization Uganda is cognizant of the many efforts that a range of state and non-state actors including developing partners have put in place to accelerate efforts against child labour. We draw from our progressive and evolving strategies that we have continuously refined through intentional reflexivity to propose key approaches with great potential to reduce child labour. We pick lessons from three of our projects namely:

- Piloting Income Generating Activities (IGAs) for beneficiaries in Amudat and Moroto Districts (August 2021-December 2021). A collaborative project with Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- “Work”: No Child’s Business project (September 2019-December 2023), a five-year project implemented in a consortium of partners led by the Stop Child Labor coalition Netherlands, UNICEF and Save the Children. In Uganda, the Alliance is coordinated by Hivos in partnership with Save the Children Uganda, Nascent Research and Development Organization and Uganda National Teachers’ Union (UNATU) and EWAD
- Livelihoods Enhancement, Education and Skilling as a pathway to eliminating child labour in Uganda (LIVES), a component that is part of ACCEL Africa. This is a collaborative project with the ILO, MoGLSD and the Local Governments

High impact interventions

Skilling youth: We use the CHEAL Model (Choose to earn as you learn) among youth. Youth learn from within their communities supported by local artisans who not only train them to complete the course but also facilitate and monitor them as they implement their projects. As they learn, they earn from their contribution to the business of the trainer.



Supporting Village Savings and Loans Associations: Groups of 15-30 people are formed and trained in savings and financial literacy. The group members save money and can access loans at low interest rates so that they support their households. All VSLA members pledge that none of their children will be engaged in child labour.



Supporting Child Labour Committees: They are responsible for mobilizing children to go to school and also support other children affairs. They also ensure sustainability of program efforts past the project period.



Supporting school clubs: The school clubs bring children together and engage them in several activities that create awareness about Child Labour and encourage them to stay in school. They also make solidarity groups among peers that enables them to be accountable to each other



Livelihood enhancement & Diversification skills: Groups are trained to jointly carry out Income Generating Activities. Individuals also expand or diversify their projects. This helps them to generate income to support education of the children and also save in their respective VSLA groups.



Youth hubs: The youth come together to discover their talents, abilities and leadership. The youth hubs are a great tool for social mobilization, capacity building and business growth



Life skills training for youth: Youth are trained in life skills that help them understand their purpose in life and make right choices.



Community dialogues & Interactive session: These platforms are used to interact with communities to understand the causes of Child Labour and also create more awareness. It is through these dialogues that norms on children's education, child labour and other social ills are rethought, reconsidered and community strategies agreed.



The Integrated Area Based Approach (IABA): What is foundational is that all community members irrespective of any social, economic defining factors are all engaged in rebuilding new norms that promote children's education.



A brief about us

Nascent Research and Development Organization Uganda (NRDO-U) is a non-governmental organization working in the East African Region to promote social change. NRDO-U has existed since 2008. In Uganda, it has her operations in Karamoja region (Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Amudat), eastern region (Mbale, Sironko, Bulambuli, Iganga), central Uganda (Buikwe, Kampala) and Western region (Kikuube and Kabarole).

NRDO-U aims to achieve social justice for underserved people, especially children and youth. Our work is guided by principles that include the primacy of human and living rights, social justice and inclusion, critically reflexive practice, community engagement, integrity and living consciously with the environment.

Research is a crucial component of our work and an avenue through which we seek to provide evidence-based practice on how local perspectives play a key role in sustainable development. We aim to highlight the nexus between theory and practice underscoring how research and practice are not dichotomous but strengthen each other. Young people are owners of essential knowledge, and research should not just be about them but with them. When it comes to understanding the needs and perspectives of young people, a peer-to-peer-oriented approach in research is our niche.

Our partners





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