



International
Labour
Organization

CHILD LABOUR *in Fiji*

A SURVEY OF WORKING CHILDREN IN COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ON THE STREETS, IN RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES, IN INFORMAL AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS AND IN SCHOOLS



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International
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(IPEC)

ILO Country Office for South Pacific Island Countries

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List of Abbreviations

C138	ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138
C182	ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) Convention No. 182
CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) of Children
CSW	Commercial Sex Work
ECREA	Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy
ERP	Employment Relations Promulgation 2007
ERAB	Employment Relations Advisory Board
EU	European Union
FEF	Fiji Employers Federation (now known as the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation)
FGD's	Focus Group Discussions
FSPI	Foundation of the People's of the Pacific International (Regional NGO)
FTU	Fiji Teachers Union
FTUC	Fiji Trades Union Congress
HoH	Homes of Hope (NGO)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
KI	Key Informants (KII- Key Informant Interviews)
LLEE	Live & Learn Environmental Education (NGO)
MOL	Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
NCCC	National Coordinating Committee on Children
NGO's	Non Governmental Organisations
PAC	TACKLE Project Advisory Committee on Child Labour in Fiji
RA	Research Assistant
SCF	Save the Children Fiji
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TACKLE	Tackling Child Labour through Education Project
USP	University of the South Pacific

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- Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment
- Ministry of Education
- Fiji Employers Federation
- Fiji Trades Union Congress
- Department of Social Welfare
- Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics
- All other Government Partners, including Poverty Monitoring Unit, Juvenile Bureau, Department of Housing and Squatter Settlement, Ministry of Agriculture
- Tri- partite Plus Members of the Fiji Child Labour Forum Group including Homes of Hope, Kids Link, ECREA, People's Community Network, Regional Rights and Resources Team, Fiji TV and Fiji Times Limited, Citizenship Education Project and Regional Family Life Programme, Provincial and Divisional Offices and all other Fiji Child Labour Forum group members
- Members of the National Coordinating Committee on Children

- **Leading Child Labour Research Agencies**
 - Save the Children Fiji
 - Foundation of the People of the Pacific International
 - Live & Learn Environmental Education
 - School of Government, Development and International Relations, University of the South Pacific
 - Fiji Trades Union Congress and Fiji Teachers Union
 - Research Teams and Committees established for each research sector

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PREFACE

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) was created in 1992 with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labour. This was to be achieved through strengthening the capacity of countries to deal with the problem and promoting a worldwide movement to combat child labour. IPEC currently has operations in 88 countries, and is the largest programme of its kind globally and the biggest single operational programme of the ILO. IPEC's work to eliminate child labour is an important facet of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

Child labour not only prevents children from acquiring the skills and education they need for a better future, it also perpetuates poverty and affects national economies through losses in competitiveness, productivity and potential income. Withdrawing children from child labour, providing them with education and assisting their families with training and employment opportunities contribute directly to creating decent work for adults.

In 2008, ILO-IPEC, in agreement with the Committee of Ambassadors of the ACP Group of States and with financial support from the European Union (EU) launched a major project aimed at tackling child labour through education (TACKLE) in 11 countries across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Fiji is one of the eleven countries identified for the project.

The overall objective of TACKLE is to contribute towards poverty reduction by providing equitable access to basic education and skills development to children involved in child labour or at risk of being involved in child labour.

TACKLE works to build the capacity of the national and local authorities in the formulation, implementation and enforcement of policies to fight child labour in coordination with social partners and civil society.

The TACKLE Project in Fiji, after consultation with stakeholders during the First National Forum on Child Labour agreed to support research to examine and identify the extent of child labour in Fiji, as there was minimal data available on this issue.

The Consolidated Report of Child Labour in Fiji provides an overview of the processes, key findings and recommendations of the Child Labour Research Surveys, supported through the TACKLE Project, in five sectors in Fiji, including:

- **The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Fiji Survey (CSEC)**
- **Street Children in Child Labour Survey in Fiji (Street)**
- **Child Labour Survey in Rural Agriculture Communities in Fiji (Agriculture)**
- **Child Labour Survey in Informal and Squatter Settlements in Fiji (Informal and Squatter)**
- **Fiji Child Labour School-based Survey (Education)**

FOREWORD

Our memories of childhood are among the most powerful tools we carry in our toolkit for life. Adults, who have so much influence on the experience of children, should reflect deeply on this truth. As policymakers, educators, parents, relatives, and the many others who come into contact with children, we should challenge ourselves to use our power and resources to help children build up a supply of happy memories that will sustain them through the inevitable trials of adolescence and adulthood.

The research “*A survey of working children in commercial sexual exploitation, on the streets, in rural agricultural communities, in informal and squatter settlements and in schools*”, tells us that too many children in Fiji are being put at risk of exploitation. Too many children are missing out on their childhood and the benefits of education. Many children are victims of the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation and hazardous work. *Among the important voices heard in this research are those of children themselves. We salute their courage in sharing their experiences.*

The ILO congratulates the Government of Fiji, trade unions, employers and non government organizations for being prepared to expose the plight of Fiji children to the scrutiny of this research. Without a willingness to acknowledge that there are real child labour problems in a country, and remain committed to addressing them, it is then impossible to co-operate to find solutions. This research has already led to the implementation of programmes implemented by ILO partners, including the ‘*Start Your Own small Business*’ training programme with the Ministry of Education; World Day Against Child Labour Awareness raising with the Fiji Employers Federation and Fiji Trades Union Congress; and Supporting Children’s Rights through Education, Arts and the Media (SCREAM) in Fiji.

A main outcome of the research has been the resourcing of three action programmes which will begin to tackle some of the issues identified in the research. The three action programmes are titled:

- **Establishing the Child Labour Unit & National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour in Fiji**, coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment;
- **Building the Capacity of Communities to Tackle Child Labour and Poverty in Squatter Settlements**, coordinated by the People's Community Network;
- **Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour: Preventing and Removing Children from Commercial Sexual Exploitation in Fiji**, coordinated by Save the Children, Fiji

Additional action programmes are being designed to be implemented in the near future in response to the research findings. It is also hoped that this research will lead to many more private and public actions to ensure that every child in Fiji can grow up with happy childhood memories, through their experience of education, family and community life. This requires us to examine priorities at all levels - from the household to public policy.

Let us accept that challenge.



Ms. Laila Harré, Strategies for Decent Work Specialist, Officer in Charge
ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a summary report of five Child Labour Research Surveys conducted through the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The research surveys were coordinated and funded through the Tackling Child Labour through Education (TACKLE) Project, and included:

- Survey on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Survey of Street Children in Child Labour
- Survey on Child Labour in Rural Agriculture Areas
- Survey on Child Labour in Informal and Squatter Settlements
- Child Labour School- Based Survey

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by all the five survey teams:

- 1611 children were interviewed using children's questionnaires for the five different surveys
- 1136 adults including Parents, Teachers, Adult Sex Workers and Street Workers, were interviewed using household or adult questionnaires
- 226 Key Informant Interviews were conducted with representatives from Government, NGOs, Community Leaders, and sector- relevant stakeholders
- 58 Focus Group discussions were conducted
- 160 people participated in 7 Conferences (3 community sessions and 4 school sessions)
- Over 60 Case Studies and 48 Research Diaries were collected.

In identifying the child labour activities the following key indicators were used:

- Child's age
- Time – when was the activity carried out and for how long (hours of work)
- Nature of the activity/ type of activity including tools/equipment/chemicals used
- Whether the child was in school/ not in school
- Place/location of the activity carried out/ surrounding environment

From these indicators the studies were able to identify child laborers, those who were involved in light work, and those doing hazardous work.

The Child Labour Research Surveys established that there are an increasing number of children involved in child labour, and in the worst forms of child labour in Fiji.

- Over 500 children involved in the worst forms of child labour in Fiji were interviewed.
- 109 children in the worst forms of child labour were engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, in particular in child prostitution (the use of girls and boys in sexual activities remunerated in cash or in kind, otherwise referred to in this report as 'sex work'). Specific research on the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation and child sex tourism is needed.

Box 1: School dropout gets into CSE

Fran (not her real name) is a sex worker. She is fifteen years old and is a school drop out. She stays home with her parents in a squatter settlement. Her parents do not know what she is involved in. She says that she has been involved in sex work over the last two years. In a week she gets an average of \$100. She started getting involved in the business through her peers and she states that the main reason for doing this is because she needs money to pay for her personal wants.

From Informal Sector Survey Report, USP, 2009

- Although the majority of respondents started sex work between the ages of 15-16 years, the CSEC Survey also found that some children started sex work as early as 10 years old. Children who live with extended families, children who suffer parental neglect, children who live in violent households and children who have been victims of physical and sexual abuse are very vulnerable to this form of exploitation.
- There are some cases of children involved in drug trafficking and begging.

Box 2: Class 8 child trafficks drugs

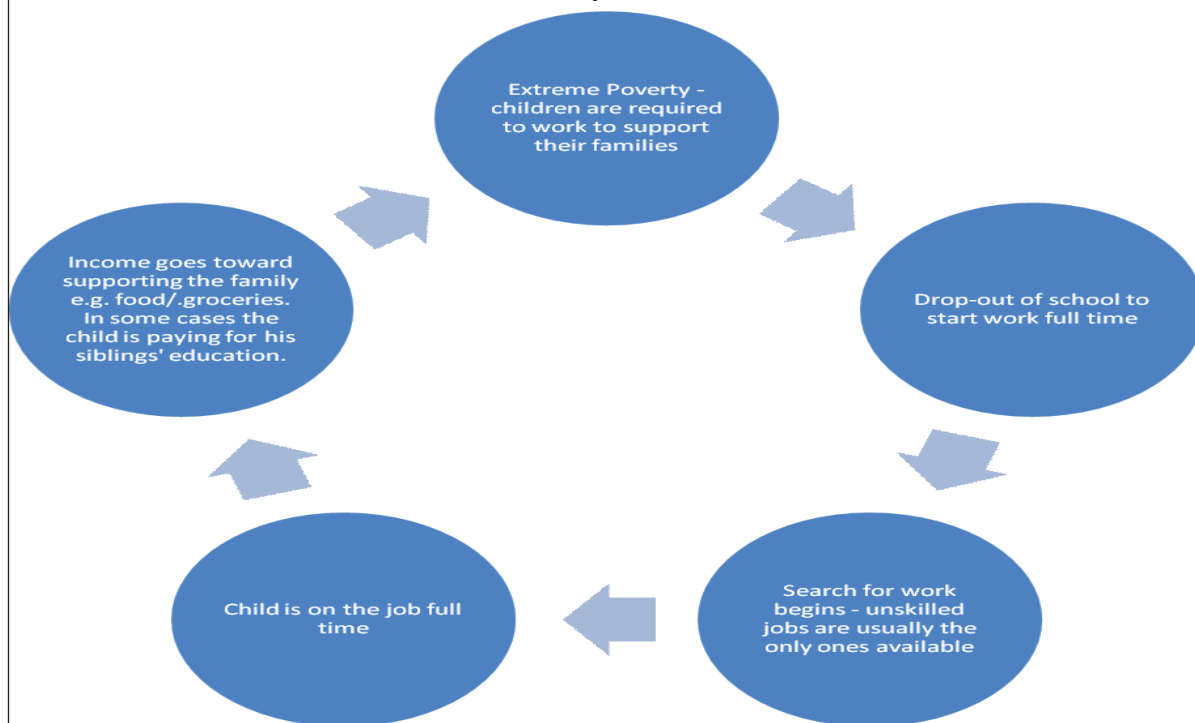
James is a class eight student. Last year on his way back from school he was picked up by a man in a taxi who offered to give him a ride home. On their way home the taxi stopped at a house and James was told to deliver a package to the lady in the house. The lady gave him a parcel in return. The packages they exchanged had drugs and money. For the last year this has become a regular activity for James. James is now working with another child to traffic drugs. The two children are from 'well to do' families. They are paid \$20.00 for every package they deliver. James is now thinking of leaving but does not know how to leave because he cannot find another way of getting the \$20.00. He spends the money on games, DVDs, and watching movies. He wants to withdraw but does not know how to do it.

From School-based Survey Report, FTUC, 2009

- Over 300 children are involved in hazardous work such as collecting and handling scrap metals, chemicals, carrying heavy loads, scavenging, working very long hours and subjected to psychological abuse.
- 75% of the children participating in the Street Children Survey were reported to be in work they considered hazardous. 26.1 % of children participating in the Informal & Squatter Settlement Survey stated that they were engaged in hazardous work and 55 % of children participating in the Rural Agricultural Survey reported that their working conditions were hazardous.
- Some hazardous work identified by children included working with heavy machineries and pesticide sprays, collecting scrap metals and carrying loads ranging from 20kg to 50kg. Children also reported working very long hours (some over 12 hours per day). Children who work on the streets may work from 6am to 12 midnight, and children providing seasonal labour or working during peak periods such as weekends or during major events also work very long hours.

- It must be clearly stated at the outset that the data did not capture much of the necessary details to allow for further indulgence into the specifics and parameters of each mentioned hazards pertaining to each individual child. This was compounded by the absence of a hazardous work list for children in Fiji.
- Children at-risk of child labour and dropping out of school, are engaged in seasonal work, either combining school with work or leaving school to work for 1-2 days during the school week, or for a few weeks during harvesting or other seasons.
- About one quarter (25%) of the school children interviewed through the School-based Survey, who are known to be working are at risk of dropping out of school because they want to leave school for various reasons. The children also highlighted that the education system, teachers, and facilities in the schools need to be improved in order to attract children to remain in school.
- Children who have dropped out of school early are more likely to be engaged in child labour. Although most school dropouts were in the 15-17 age range, a significant number of children below the ages of 12 and 15 years have dropped out of school and are in child labour. Of the 588 children interviewed through the School-based Survey, 25.5% are school drop-outs.
- The majority of persons who facilitate and are involved in the exchange of either cash, goods or kind for the exploitation of children below age 18 for sexual purposes are male, and are usually known to the victims, either as family members or family friends, and also include local and foreign residents in mostly urban areas of Fiji.
- More children are seemingly involved in work as ‘migrant labourers’, moving internally to selected areas around Fiji as seasonal farm labourers, sex workers or as street workers. Children working on the streets, for example, tend to be highly mobile and are exposed to numerous risks which range from conditions of work through environmental risk factors associated with a life lived on the streets, to participating in illicit activities including petty theft and drug trafficking.
- **The Child Labour Surveys found that various factors such as geographical location, education opportunities and ‘perceptions’ influences the type of child labour activity that exists.**
- Poverty, parental or family neglect and other social problems, combined with the need for cash for personal wants, remain the key factors that push children into child labour, including the worst forms of child labour.
- In rural areas agricultural activity is the most common activity that children do while in the urban areas there are other types of job opportunities available to the child, such as collecting scrap metal, working as wheel barrow boys and in small backyard mechanically workshops and small scale businesses. The work that urban children do is clearly identified in the Street Survey and the Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey presented in the later part of this Report.

Box 3: Child Labour Cause Scenario – Poverty



From Street Children Survey Report, FSPI; 2009

- The high number of school dropouts is a contributing factor to child labour. The Agriculture and School-based Surveys found that some children leave school during the cane harvesting season to harvest sugar cane and when the season is over they do not return to school. Some children in agricultural areas miss school for 1-2 days a week to help their parents harvest produce for the market, and to accompany their parents to the market to sell their produce. Some children who had started working as casual labourers and ‘helping hands’ eventually left school to continue with the work they were engaged in, mostly attracted by the cash they received.

Box 4: Community concerns on children in child labour

“If you walk around Lautoka you see kids selling beans during school days. Some of them are our clients. They will travel to Nadi and return. Some we even see in Suva. Some children are used by parents to beg. We see child sex workers in the evening” (NGO respondent, Lautoka 7 July 2009)

“Most of the young children in this settlement that are involved in work are involved in the business of scrap metal – particularly copper and aluminum - where they can get very quick money within the day. That helps them and their families.” (Community respondent, Suva, 22 July 2009)

“I have seen them (children) in marketing areas- in particular selling bean and peanuts - but a few others may be in shops – not sure of numbers” (Government respondent, Savusavu, 15 July 2009)

From Informal and Squatter Survey Report, USP; 2009

Box 5: Casual workers to child labourers

A group of boys aged between 13 and 17 were found harvesting sugar cane in the cane field. When asked why they had dropped out of school, the two interviewed stated that they left because they started harvesting cane a few years earlier and did not return to school because they had missed out on a lot of school work. What they started as a week's activity during the school holiday has now become a routine during harvesting season. They were lured by the good money/cash that was paid to them.

From School-based Survey Report, FTUC;2009

- In the urban areas, some children miss out on school to collect and sell scrap metals or work as wheelbarrow boys, as supermarket packers, in small scale businesses and work in the informal sectors collecting and buying bottles, and doing mechanical and construction work.
- Many children work as street vendors, in particular during major events such as sports tournaments and festivals.
- The collection of scrap metal is becoming a larger scale activity, now involving an increasing number of street children and children from squatter and informal settlements.

Box 6: Scrap Metal Collecting Communities

The trade of scrap metal has grown so much in the last few years that specialist 'communities' have evolved. These communities are squatter settlements that are located on the periphery of major towns and cities. The communities of Navutu (Lautoka) and Nanuku (Vatuwaqa, Suva) for example are situated in and around industrial areas while the community of Vunato sits right beside the rubbish dump at Lautoka. Some families within the community have set themselves up as buyers or middlemen for scrap metal. This service is well used by collectors who don't have to travel the extra mile to the buyers.

From Informal and Squatter Survey (USP) and Street Kids Survey (FSPI) Reports; 2009

- The incidence of children engaged in sex work and drug trafficking is a matter of concern. Although the survey interviewed one child engaged in the trafficking of drugs, statistics from the Drugs & Substance Abuse Unit of the Fiji Police Force reveal that more children are used as drug peddlers and traffickers.
- It is generally assumed that sex work only exists in urban centers and that sex workers do not live at home. The survey findings revealed that there are children in commercial sexual exploitation operating in rural areas. It was interesting to note that more than half (59%) of the child sex workers interviewed were living at home with their parents/guardians. A similar finding was noted in the Street Children Survey.

- The Child Labour Surveys emphasized the need for the communities to be educated on child labour and its impacts, and on the relevant national laws governing children's work. Many community members acknowledged that they do not think of the types of work children do in the context of child labour, but rather view children's work as 'learning new skills and helping out with the family'. Some parents allow their children to work because they bring in additional income to the family. Some parents know that their children are involved in commercial sexual exploitation, and have left school to work on the streets or in small businesses.
- Stakeholders at community level have observed the increase in school dropouts in some communities, and increase in student absenteeism. Children are seen loitering around the community during school hours. Some parents stated that children who dropout are academically weak or are not interested in learning, whereas some children 'blame' parents for not meeting the financial and material demands of the school, therefore resulting in drop out and child labour. All parents and stakeholders agreed that education is important and that child labour has a negative effect on education.
- Overall it was recommended that interventions are designed to support the removal and prevention of children from child labour, training and capacity building of communities and relevant stakeholders, strengthening institutional systems and community safety nets, and strengthening monitoring and law enforcement mechanisms.
- There is a critical need to promote interventions to withdraw or prevent children from becoming 'trapped' in child labour, especially in the worst forms of child labour.
- The ILO tripartite 'plus' approach, provides the government, workers and employers, supported by the initiatives, actions and networks of civil society groups, with a holistic and effective structure to lead actions to eliminate child labour.
- More government effort and commitment is required in strengthening and enforcing legislation, creating child labour monitoring mechanisms, allocating resources to rehabilitation, education and training, particularly for children in child labour and out-of-school youths. Government must also lead the effort to determine the list of hazardous work for children in Fiji, in consultation with all stakeholders.
- Targeted programmes are required for families to improve their working conditions and income earning capacity to have the means to be able to send and keep children at school. There is a need to ameliorate the conditions of work for young workers and provide training and skills for out-of-school youths.
- Awareness and education on child labour legislation is required, and efforts to involve communities and all stakeholders in the development and implementation of appropriate strategies should be promoted.

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The link between child labour and poverty, poor living conditions, poor nutrition and ill-health is evident in many countries including Fiji. Children are primarily affected due to their vulnerability. Children in poor households most often go without many of the important things that they need, such as adequate housing, water supply and access to education.

Education is critical in getting secure employment and decent work. With current trends of increasing school drop outs, many children have fewer opportunities to achieve their full potential in securing better paid jobs (salaries) when they are adults. Early school dropouts are usually associated with, among other factors, child labour.

In Fiji, the child drop-out rate in schools increases from primary to secondary level. According to the Minister of Education, Mr. Filipe Bole, the survival rate of students shows that about 15% of Fiji's children do not survive the full eight years of their primary education. An average of about 74.9% of those who start secondary education in Fiji get to Form Six and a smaller percentage make it to Form Seven ¹.

Many of those who drop out of school before completing their education in urban areas have tended to become shoe-shine boys, bottle boys (working on trucks collecting bottles), wheel-barrow boys, assistant market vendors, scrap metal collectors, car washers, street vendors, baby sitters, household helpers, and more increasingly, children already involved in commercial sexual exploitation.

Many of these young boys and girls often contribute food for the family or help with the school fees of their younger siblings. Life as school drop-outs on the streets often leads to the use of drugs (smoking cigarettes, marijuana, or snuffing glue). In rural areas school dropouts – both boys and girls – help in the family farm or garden or the household or in village activities.

One of the few industry studies on child labour in the Pacific conducted in Fiji's tobacco industry found that two percent of farm children in the tobacco growing areas miss school on a regular basis to work on the farm, 18% of farm children miss school occasionally on a seasonal base. 12% of children working on tobacco farms used knapsack sprayers that may contain hazardous chemicals or are heavier to carry than is believed safe.

Combining excessive or hazardous work with schooling and regular absenteeism increases the risk of children dropping out of school and entering into child labour.

¹ Dropouts rise: 15 pc of our kids don't survive primary school, 2008, www.fjitime.com/story.aspx?id=87209

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

In the last twenty years numerous efforts have been made at a global level to ensure that children are protected from work that harms their development. Much of this work has relied heavily on information gathered at the local or national level. Information about working children is often scattered across many departments and organizations working either with or for children, providing no central location for all information concerning children who work and child labour.

National stakeholders involved in sectors of work involving children have for a number of years highlighted the need to carry out child labour research studies and baseline surveys to assess the child labour situation in Fiji and the Pacific. Although there are no official statistics available on the scale of child labour at a regional or national level, given the numbers of children who are not attending school, it is likely that the child labour problem is significant.

The availability of detailed data on the various aspects of working children and their analysis on a continuous basis are essential to establish targets, formulate and implement interventions and monitor policies, regulations and programmes aimed not only at minimizing the negative consequences of child labour in the short-term, but more importantly at contributing to eliminating the practice. Statistical information can also be used to mobilize and raise public concern and interest in the issue of child labour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The general objective of the Child Labour Research Surveys was to obtain constructive information on the extent of child labour in Fiji. As a result the five Child Labour Research Surveys were initiated with the following specific objectives:

To examine the extent of child labour and the nature of children's work through research conducted in the following sectors of the economy and of society:

- Rural Agricultural Communities
- Informal and Squatter settlements
- Commercial sexual exploitation of Children
- Street Children
- Schools

To identify the factors that contribute to child labour (causes and pathways) and the impacts of child labour through:

- Asking the children
- Interviewing parents, teachers, community members and stakeholders
- And through observations and case studies

To identify factors that may cause children to be at risk of dropping out of school, and entering into child labour and examine the following:

- The factors contributing to students being at risk of dropping out of school
- How the school system can be improved to encourage children to remain in school
- The attitude of parents, teachers, employers, child labourers and others towards education and child labour

To assess the socio-economic conditions of the families that the child labourers are from and their perceptions with regards to:

- Work that children do
- Education
- Available services and opportunities

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into **three parts**.

Part 1 provides a general overview of the international child labour conventions and standards, and national legislation, used as guidelines to inform the research, particularly in categorizing children's work.

Part 2 provides an overview of the research process including research methodology, sampling, research ethics, research tools, data processing and analysis.

Part 3 presents the key findings from each of the five Child Labour Research Surveys. The research findings for each of the surveys are arranged according to the main objectives of each survey, and include background information on the target groups participating in the research.

Each survey report ends with concluding comments and recommendations reflecting the views of stakeholders, including children, teachers, parents, workers, employers, civil society, community leader, community groups and government representatives, who participated in the surveys.



Part 1

OVERVIEW OF LABOUR STANDARDS IN RELATION TO CHILD LABOUR

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR LEGISLATION REGARDING CHILDREN

The ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) continues to be the fundamental international standard on child labour which requires ratifying states to: “undertake to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons”. Recommendation No. 146 provides guidance on a wide range of necessary measures to be taken to achieve this.

The Minimum Age Convention applies to all sectors of economic activity, whether or not the children are employed for wages. It is a flexible instrument allowing for progressive improvement, and most importantly, for developing countries to set a lower minimum age for employment to start with. Exceptions are allowed for certain sectors, such as non-commercial agriculture in developing countries, and for limited categories of work, for education and training, and for artistic performances.

Fixing the minimum age for admission to employment is a basic obligation of ratifying member States, and the Convention establishes three categories for this:

- The minimum age should not be less than the age of completing compulsory schooling, and in no event less than 15 years of age. Countries whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may initially fix the age of admission to employment at 14.
- A higher minimum age of 18 is set for hazardous work “which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of young persons”. It is left to the individual countries to determine a list of hazardous work.
- A lower minimum age for light work, i.e. work which is not likely to be harmful to children’s health or development or to prejudice their attendance at school may be set at 13. For a country that initially sets a minimum age of 14, the minimum age for light work may be set at 12.

The Minimum Age Convention does not forbid all child work. Age appropriate work that does not affect a child’s health and development or interfere with schooling is generally regarded as positive.

The ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182, calls for “**immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.**” The convention applies to everyone under the age of 18 years.

Effective, time-bound preventative action is demanded of ratifying states, including the identification of children at special risk and taking into account the special situation of girls. Children in the worst forms of child labour must be removed and rehabilitated, and have access to free basic education or vocational training.

The Worst Forms of Child Labour are listed as:

- a) **All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery**, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, as well as forced labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- b) The use, procurement or offering of a child for **prostitution**, for the production of **pornography** or for pornographic performances;
- c) The use, procurement or offering of a child for **illicit activities**, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties;
- d) Work, which by its nature or circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to **harm the health, safety or morals of children**, such harmful work to be determined national authorities.

The types or conditions of work that are likely to be harmful or hazardous must be identified at the national level in close consultation with employers and workers organisations and other stakeholders. ILO Recommendation 190, which accompanies Convention No. 182, provides a list of broad categories of hazardous work, which can be used as a basis for consultation, including:

- Work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse;
- Work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights, and in confined spaces;
- Work with dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- Work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; and
- Work under particularly dangerous conditions including long hours, night work, or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer.

NATIONAL LABOUR LEGISLATION REGARDING CHILDREN

In 1993, Fiji ratified the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, which seeks to protect the interests and rights of children in relation to their development, participation, protection and survival. Fiji ratified the ILO Child Labour Conventions: No. 138 in 2003; and No. 182 in 2002.

The principles of these conventions are addressed in Fiji's labour legislation, the **Employment Relations Promulgation 2007 (ERP)**, which has provisions for the protection of children from child labour. **Chapter 10**, of the ERP defines the child to be any person below the age of 18 years.

The ERP prohibits 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. Under Section 91 of the ERP, the worst forms of child labour are prohibited for all children below 18 years. This includes:

- a) all forms of labour slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and any form of forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children in armed conflict;
- b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties; or
- c) the use of procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.

The ERP establishes the minimum age for the employment of children at **15 years**. In addition children between **13 to 15 years** of age may be engaged in employment or light work or in a workplace in which members of the same family or of communal or religious group are employed, provided that:

- a) the employment is not likely to be harmful to the health or development of the child;
- b) the employment is not such as to prejudice the child's attendance at school, participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by a competent authority, or capacity of the child to benefit from the instruction received.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM CHILD LABOUR

Other relevant international treaties which relate to child labour and which have been ratified or adopted by Fiji include:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989;
- Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980 ²;
- International Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Women & Children 1921;
- United Nations Human Rights Conventions including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 (“ICESCR”), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (“ICCPR”) and Optional Protocols. These Conventions protect, inter alia, the right to decent work,³ family life,⁴ and free, compulsory primary education.⁵ The engagement of a child in child labour infringes these basic human rights.

There is some overlap in the provisions of the CRC and ILO Convention No. 138 and 182. The CRC includes provisions which: -

- prohibit hazardous work for children under the age of 18;
- requires the law to criminalize the worst forms of child labour including trafficking, forced or compulsory labour and forced prostitution;
- requires that the minimum age for employment to be not less than 15 and at least equal to the age of completion of compulsory education.

Fiji has other policies which are consistent with the elimination of child labour, including an education policy to ensure “that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a complete free and compulsory education of good quality.”⁶

Children are also protected against abuse and exploitation under the Crimes Decree (former Penal Code), the Family Law Act, the Immigration Act, Adoption of Infants Act, Marriage Act and the Juveniles Act.

The Crimes Decree (No.44 of 2009), protects children from trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. According to Section 114 of the Crimes Decree, a person commits an indictable offence for transnational trafficking of children, and Section 117, for domestic trafficking of children, for the purpose of sexual services, abuse or other forms of exploitation. The penalty for trafficking offences is 25 years imprisonment.

² Section 200 of the Family Law Act provides that regulations (which have been passed as the Family Law Regulations 2005 (LN.49)) may make such provision as is necessary to enable the performance of the obligations of the State, or to obtain for the State any advantage or benefit under the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980

³ Article 6 of ICESCR

⁴ Article 10 of the ICESCR provides that “parties must take “special measures” to protect children from economic or social exploitation, including setting a minimum age of employment and barring children from dangerous or harmful occupations.”

⁵ Article 13 of ICESCR and Article 26 of the UDHR

⁶ “Education for All” Mid Decade Assessment Report 2008 from the Ministry of Education, National Heritage, Culture and Arts, page 40

The Crimes Decree, Section 226, prohibits the selling of minors under the age of 18 years for immoral purposes (prostitution or illicit sexual intercourse with any person). Section 227 prohibits the buying of minors under 18 years for immoral purposes (prostitution or illicit sexual intercourse). Additional clauses are found in Sections 229 to 233 which further protect children against commercial sexual exploitation.

The amendment to the Juveniles Act, 1997 makes it illegal to make and trade in child pornography. The punishment for a guilty offender is 14 years imprisonment, a minimum fine of \$25,000.00, and the confiscation of all equipment used in the offence.⁷

The Juveniles Act also states that “any person having the custody or care of a child who causes, procures or allows him to beg is liable to conviction.”

The passing of the Family Law Act 2003 enabled provisions for divorce and the implications that this may have on children. Under Division 8, Subdivision C, Allegations of Child Abuse are addressed and the rights of the child’s wishes are taken into account.⁸

A detailed legislative review titled “Legislative Compliance Review of Child Labour Laws in Fiji” was commissioned by the ILO TACKLE project in 2009 and conducted by Siwatibau & Sloan Barristers and Solicitors. The Siwatibau & Sloan Report which includes the review of Fiji’s legislation in relation to child labour and recommended amendments, can be obtained from the ILO Office in Suva.



⁷ *Save the Children Fiji, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Fiji: A Situational Analysis, 2006, 33*

⁸ *Family Law Act 2003, Parliament of the Fiji Islands, 6 November, 2003*

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Child-centered approach: A research approach that concentrates on children and on what is deemed to be in their best interest. This approach takes into account the children's own views, experiences, and perspectives in the light of relevant social, economic, cultural, and political factors.

Child domestic work: A wide variety of tasks performed by children in a private household, including cooking, cleaning, and the care of other children. The household is often not the child's own, and the child, usually female, tends to live where she works.

Child economic activity: Almost all production activities performed by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time (for at least one hour during the reference week), whether on a casual or regular basis, in the formal (organized) sector or the informal sector.

Child labour: Work undertaken by children under the legal minimum working ages, and includes work that:

- is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children;
- interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely;
- or requires them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long hours and heavy work

Whether or not particular forms of work can fairly be termed child labour depends on the child's age, the type of work performed, the time at which it is carried out, the conditions under which it is performed, and the national objectives pursued by individual countries.

Child Sexual Abuse: The sexual activity/ abuse- either actual, or attempted or threatened- between a child or a young person and an older, bigger or more powerful person, which usually includes a betrayal of the child's trust.

Children at Risk: children aged between 5 and 17 who are at risk of engaging in child labour, including the worst forms.

Client-Exploiter: refers to persons who exploits children through commercial sexual exploitation either as pimps or customers.

CSEC: Commercial sexual exploitation of children- is the exploitation by an adult with respect to a child or an adolescent – female or male – under 18 years old, accompanied by a payment in money or in kind to the child or adolescent (male or female) or to one or more third parties. Commercial sexual exploitation in children includes:

- The use of girls and boys in sexual activities remunerated in cash or in kind (commonly known as child prostitution) in the streets or indoors, in such places as brothels, discotheques, massage parlors, bars, hotels, restaurants, etc.
- The trafficking of girls and boys and adolescents for the sex trade.
- Child sex tourism.
- The production, promotion and distribution of pornography involving children.
- The use of children in sex shows (public or private.)

The Stockholm Declaration adopted at the World Congress against Commercial sexual Exploitation of Children (1996) defines the commercial sexual exploitation of children as “a form of coercion and violence against children (that) amounts to forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery”. The **UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol)** defines the term “exploitation” to include “the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”

Convention: An international treaty, subject to ratification by States. Countries that ratify a Convention become legally bound by its terms and conditions, and are obligated to honor its requirements. This is the case, for example, with ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 (No. 182).

Economic Activity: an activity in which the child is engaged in for pay, profit or family gain. A child could be engaged in an economic activity while also attending an educational institution and/or engaged in housekeeping activities. A child is considered to be engaged in educational activities if the child is attending school or any other educational establishment which provides regular education, technical or vocational training.

Forced labour: “All work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily” (Article 2 of the ILO Convention on Forced Labour, 1930 [No. 29]). This Convention requires countries to adopt the means of abolishing forced labour, while ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) prohibits the use of forced labour as punishment for taking part in a strike or as a means of racial, social, national, or religious discrimination.

Gender: A social construct of sex: the different social status, power, and social expectations of girls, as such, as opposed to boys, or women as opposed to men. Work tasks are commonly assigned according to gender considerations, which can vary widely across cultures. All research into child labour must take gender perceptions into account, since these have real consequences in the lives of the girls and boys concerned. Different patterns, causes, and consequences of child labour have important gender implications.

Hazardous work: Work that jeopardizes a child’s health, safety, or moral development. This includes work that exposes children to physical, psychological, or sexual harm or abuse; that takes place underground or under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces; that involves using dangerous machinery or tools or handling or transporting heavy loads; that exposes children to harmful substances or agents, processes, temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations; that takes place under particularly difficult conditions; that occurs for unduly long hours or during the night; or that unreasonably confines the child to the premises of the employer.

i-Sevusevu: Traditional Fijian presentation of either the roots or pounded powder form of the plant *Piper Methysticum* or Yaqona, which when infused with water is drunk from scooped out coconut shells at both social and traditional occasions.

Informal Settlement: A settlement of dwellings and inhabitants occupying land that is classified in Fiji as “Native land” (land held under customary tenure). The occupants of the settlements do not possess any legal form of tenure but have an informal, often verbal rental agreement to occupy land from the native landowners. The ‘Informal and Squatter Survey’ differentiated between informal settlements and Squatter Settlement, which is a settlement of dwellings and inhabitants occupying State or Freehold land without any form of security of tenure.

Participant: Person (child or adult) who takes part in participatory research. In conventional research referred to as ‘informant’ or ‘respondent’.

Perpetrator: Refers to persons who facilitate and are involved in the exchange of either cash, goods or kind for the exploitation of someone below age 18 for sexual purposes.

Pimp: person who organize the ‘sale’ of sex workers to clients/customers. Also known as Middlemen, Middlepersons or Madams.

“plant” includes-

- any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement or tool;
- any component, fitting or accessory used in conjunction with any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement or tool;
- steam boilers, pressure vessels, hoists, lifts, cranes, lifting equipment, handling devices, amusement rides or scaffolding.

Qualitative data: Information gathered in narrative (non-numeric) form, such as information collected from focus groups or key informant interviews. Research approaches concerned with collecting in-depth data about human social experiences and contexts.

Quantitative data: Information gathered in numeric form, such as survey data. Research concerned with the collection of data in the form of various measures, and its description and analysis through statistical methods.

Research Protocol: Instruction booklet for data collection, including definitions of key terms, all research tools, ethical procedures and other details of research design. The Protocol contains the descriptions and instruction for the use of the research tools i.e. the different data collection methods used in the field to collect the needed information.

Sample: In general, the group of research participants who will be targeted to provide answers to a specific research question. In research tools, the precise characteristics and numbers of participants who will be asked to work with researchers on this tool. In certain cases, a selection of people (or places, or objects) chosen to represent the target population, using a variety of techniques.

School Drop-out: children aged between 5 and 17 who have dropped out or prematurely left the formal schooling system.

Seasonal Street Children: For the purpose of the Street Survey, refers to those Street Children age 5-17 years who only come into town to work on the street during certain times of the year, for example, during the school holidays.

Sex Workers: A non-judgmental term which avoids negative connotations and recognizes that people sell their bodies as a means of survival, or to earn a living. In the case of children, ‘child sex workers’ (CSW).

Street Children: For the purpose of the Street survey, Street Children refers to those children aged 5-17 years who are living and working (i.e. sleeping, eating and working) on the street of a particular city, and or town; or living at home and regularly working on the streets. These children are floating in nature and they may live in one place for some time and then move to other places. They usually sleep at night on the roadside, park, abandoned houses and public places. These children are primarily seen in major centers of the country.

Stakeholders: People and organisations that have an interest or role ('stake') in an activity, event or organisation. Stakeholders can include clients, development agencies, donors, relatives, professionals, community leaders, agency administrators, volunteers, or child labourers.

Trafficking: The recruitment and/or transportation for labour exploitation by means of violence, threat, deception, or debt-bondage. The recruitment and movement may appear voluntary initially but then take on aspects of coercion by a third person or a group. The relocation may be across borders or within a country.

Triangulation: The use of a combination of research methods, sources of information and researchers in a study to examine a topic from different points of view. Triangulation is a way to cross-check data and to increase the reliability of research results.

Vakavanua: Literally "the way of the Vanua". The term "Vanua" is broad in meaning. Apart from its connotation with "the land" it also refers to a Fijian social unit and is more often used holistically to include all things tangible, abstract and spiritual that are part of man's universe. In the context of this study it refers to the arrangement according to customary Fijian norms in terms of land tenure agreements between indigenous Fijian landowners and residents of informal settlements.

Working Child: child aged between 5 and 17 who was engaged for 1 hour or more in the reference period of the past 7 days in an economic activity is defined as a working child.

Worst forms of child labour: Forms of child labour that are most damaging for children and that must be the priority of interventions. They include for example, child slavery, trafficking of children, sexual exploitation of children, and hazardous work, and are defined in ILO Convention 182 and in ILO Recommendation 190.



Part 2

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This section of the report outlines the research methodology and the research tools used. The research surveys were conducted in accordance with the research guidelines provided by the ILO-IPEC Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). Below is a detailed explanation of the survey coverage, the research tools used in the five surveys conducted, how quality control was ensured, and the important ethical considerations guiding the research process.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2008, ILO tri-partite partners and key stakeholders at the first Fiji National Child Labour Forum committed to conducting child labour research surveys to understand the nature and extent of child labour in Fiji, and develop effective and appropriate strategies and actions to tackle child labour.

April 2009 marked the beginning of a series of Child Labour Research Surveys, conducted by various organizations, including:

- Child Labour Survey in Rural Agriculture Communities in Fiji (**Agriculture**)- Live & Learn Environmental Education (NGO)
- Street Children in Child Labour Survey in Fiji (**Street**)- Foundation of the People of the South Pacific International (NGO)
- Child Labour Survey in Informal and Squatter Settlements in Fiji (**Informal and Squatter**)- School of Development Studies, University of the South Pacific
- Fiji Child Labour School-based Survey (**Education**)- Fiji Trades Union Congress
- The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Fiji Survey (**CSEC**)- Save the Children Fiji (NGO)

RESEARCH COVERAGE

The research was aimed at ensuring that there was a nationwide coverage to examine the current situation and obtain concrete and factual information on child labour in Fiji. However due to transport problems and the limited time frame provided, the research concentrated in three of the four divisions in Fiji.

AREAS RESEARCHED

The three divisions covered were the Central, Western and Northern divisions. The Eastern division was not covered because of transport difficulties and the limited time available. Although each research sector targeted areas in each of the three divisions, care was taken to avoid overlapping in the areas covered, and to ensure the same respondents were not interviewed by two different research teams. The research coordinator monitored all the five surveys and ensured that the children interviewed by one research team, was not interviewed by another team.

Map of Fiji

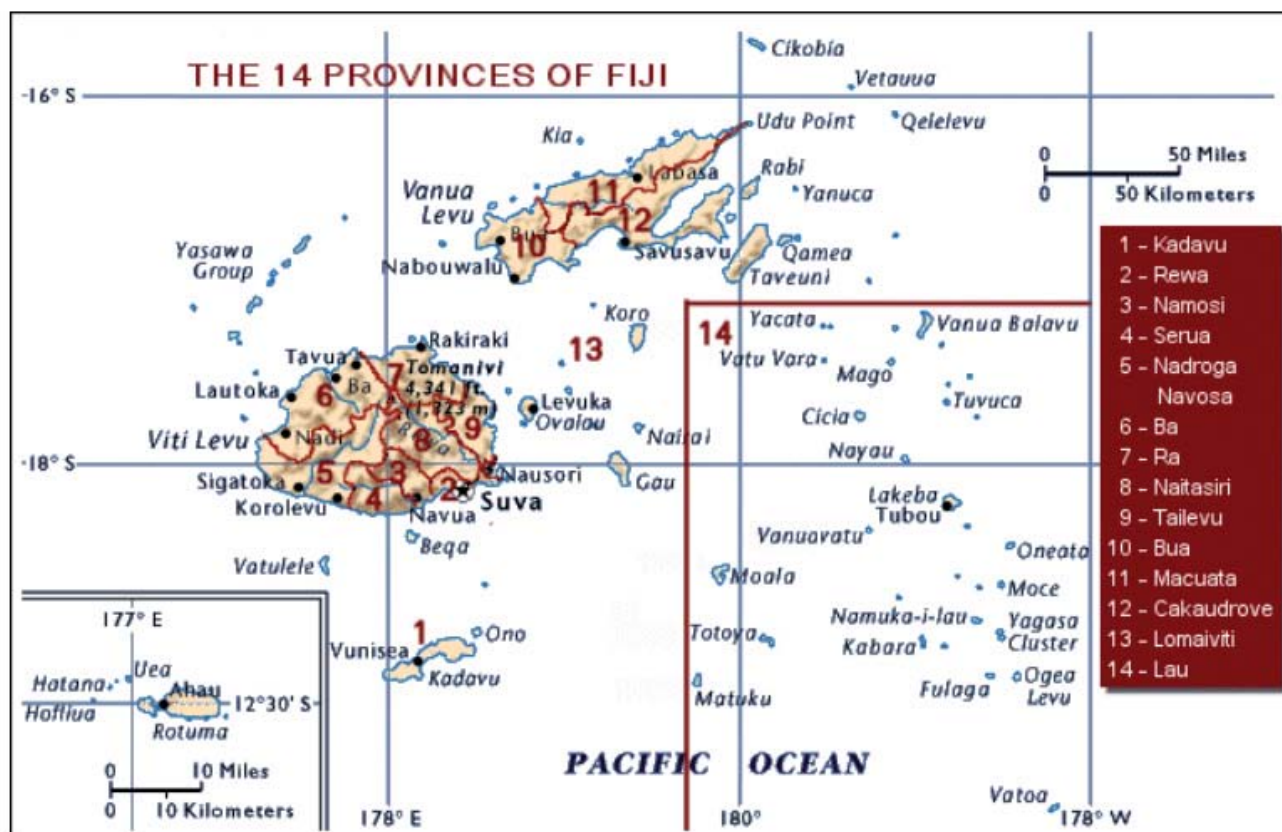


Table 1.0 Research Sectors and Locality

Division/ Sector	Central Division	Western Division	Northern Division
Street	Suva- Nausori Corridor	Nadi/ Lautoka/ Ba Sigatoka	Savusavu Labasa
CSEC	Suva-Nausori Corridor	Nadi, Lautoka Coral Coast	Savusavu Labasa/Macuata
Informal & Squatter	Suva- Nausori Corridor	Nadi/ Lautoka/ Ba	Savusavu Labasa
Agriculture	Tailevu/ Naitasiri (Piggery/Dairy/Poultry)	Ra (Sugar cane/ Fishing)	Cakaudrove (Yaqona/Dalo/Coconut)
		Nadroga (Vegetable/Tobacco)	Macuata (Rice/Sugar cane)
Education	Suva- Nausori Tailevu/ Naitasiri/ Rewa	Nadroga Nadi/ Lautoka/ Ba Rakiraki	Labasa Cakaudrove

TARGET GROUPS

The main target group was children between the ages of 5 to 17 years. The age of the child respondent was measured in complete years, for example, a child is 17 years old until her/his 18th birthday. Other research participants included household members, teachers, parents, employers, community leaders, government, civil society and other key informant stakeholders.

SAMPLING

Different sampling procedures were followed by each of the five survey groups.

Agriculture: the agricultural survey used both snow-ball and random sampling to identify the households that are likely to have children who are child labourers. Interviews were conducted with the head of the household and the working children (5-17years) in the family. Where the head of the household was unable or unavailable to respond, the most knowledgeable respondent present was interviewed. From the household questionnaire children involved in child labour were identified and interviewed using a child questionnaire when consent was given by the parent or guardian.

Informal and Squatter Settlement: The households (household respondents, children and parent/guardians) were chosen at random during the first phase of the survey. The samples visited during the second phase were taken from those identified already in the first phase. Children were the main sample audience interviewed in the second phase. Local government and NGO key informants were chosen from those available to be interviewed during the survey and community key informant interviews were conducted with those willing to be interviewed during the site visits.

Education Survey: Non- random sampling was used because it was difficult to identify the students at random. The students who participated in the survey were identified by their teachers as at risk students and as children likely to be involved in child labour, while the school drop outs were identified from the communities closest to the schools. Children who identified themselves as being engaged in child labour or at-risk were also interviewed.

CSEC: Non-probability snow ball sampling was the only effective method used to identify and secure interviews with children involved in commercial sexual exploitation. This technique provided the researchers an effective means of identifying children who are engaged in commercial sexual activities. Additionally, adult sex workers who had started sex work as children (below 18 years) were identified during their working hours on the street. Identifying commercial child sex workers was not easy due to its illegal practice and its sensitive and hidden nature. The research team identified the respondents when they were working on the streets and through establishing contact with local officers in the selected sites.

Street: Non probability snow ball sampling was used to identify the children who are working in the streets. Once the children were identified interviews were arranged with them or with those who had identified them. Some of these children were interviewed on the streets, some were identified in some squatter settlements and interviews were arranged with them. Most of the children were identified when the research teams scouted the streets and look for working children. The research teams were also tipped off that some children were spotted while working so they visit the children at their work site. Some stakeholders were also instrumental in arranging for interviews. The research teams collected the sample from the urban areas only.

Table 1.1 Number of child respondents 5- 17 years old

Sector/ Age & Gender		Agric.	School	Street	CSEC	Informal	TOTAL
Age group	≤10	173	72	21	-	148	414
	11	22	41	10	-	31	104
	12	29	42	12	-	22	105
	13	32	53	14	1	42	142
	14	20	75	26	2	28	151
	15	29	79	27	10	27	172
	16	19	91	39	22	36	207
	17	19	135	65	69	28	316
	TOTAL	343	588	214	104	362	1611
Gender	M	157	395	171	23	170	916
	F	181	193	43	81	192	690
	Not specified	5	-	-	-	-	5

Table 1.2 Number of Quantitative Research Tools Administered

Questionnaires	Survey	Central	Western	Northern	TOTAL
Children	Agriculture	10	124	209	343
	Education	314	169	105	588
	CSEC	42	44	18	104
	Informal/Squatter	151	124	87	362
	Street Kids	185	24	5	214
Household	Agriculture	34	80	173	287
	Informal/Squatter	74	65	59	198
Parents/guardian	Education	63	84	94	241
	Informal/Squatter	70	48	42	160
Teachers	Education	69	36	42	147
Adult S/Workers	CSEC	23	43	21	87
Employers	Informal/Squatter	6	6	4	16

Table 1.3 Number of Qualitative Research Tools Administered

Tools/Sector	Key In- formant	FGD	Confe- rence	Case Study	Observation	Research Diaries
Agriculture	15	-	7	14	RAs Personal research note	7
Informal/Squatter Settlements	26	-	-	15	RAs Personal research note	12
Education	51	19	-	20	RAs Personal research note	11
Street Kids	59	4	-	11	Personal note	6
CSEC	75	35	-		RAs Personal research note	12

RESEARCH TOOLS USED

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected by all the five survey teams. Different research tools were used and how the tools were used is detailed in each survey report. Below is a list of data collection methods used during the survey:

- Questionnaires – Household/children/parents/teachers/employers
- In-depth interviews with key informants and stakeholders
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs); Conference method; Informal discussions
- Observations/Research notes; and Case Studies

DATA PROCESSING & ANALYSIS

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the field was processed and analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists) software. Data entry experts of the University of the South Pacific were contracted to enter all data. The Predictive Analytical Software assisted to:

- Capture all the information needed about people's attitudes and opinions
- Predict the outcomes of interactions before they occur
- Act on insights by embedding analytic results into research processes

Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected was processed and analysed thematically. All interviews, FGDs and observations were read through and common emerging themes noted. Emerging themes from the transcribed conversations obtained from the interviews, FGDs and observations that showed similar patterns were listed and crosschecked for confirmation of common trends, concerns, issues.

QUALITY CONTROL

The following steps were taken to ensure the quality control of the data collected from each survey team.

- Child Labour Research Training conducted by SIMPOC and the development of a sector- specific Research Protocol.
- Establishment of Research Committees per sector to provide technical input into the research design and process, including the research protocol, data collection, findings, analysis and reporting of findings.
- Essential to each Research Committee, was the participation of a representative of the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, relevant government departments and other sector- specific stakeholders.
- Training of Research Teams on the use of the Research Protocol, including the research methodology and tools.
- Pilot testing of research tools, in particular the questionnaire and addressing issues arising from the pilot- test.

- The presence of check questions on the questionnaires allowed the research team the opportunity to check responses recorded. Questionnaires were thoroughly checked to avoid discrepancies.
- Debriefing meetings were held at the end of each day in the field to check questionnaires, discuss key findings or issues, and keep the team leaders informed and aware.
- Presentations made by Research Teams to Research Committees progressively during the survey, reporting each stage of the research process.
- Presentation of initial and final findings to Research Committees and during two stakeholder dialogue forums and incorporating stakeholder feedback into data analysis and reporting.
- Appointment of a Research Specialist as Research Coordinator to provide technical advice and support to research teams and field data collection process, ensure quality of research data, and check data analysis, and reporting and presentation of research findings.
- Engagement of Research Consultants, Research Assistants and Research Counselors by research teams to assist with research design, field research, data processing, data analysis and completion of final report.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A list of research ethics were followed per research team providing general guidelines on appropriate behaviour and attitudes when conducting field research and the way that the researchers must behave when working with children. In general, ethical guidelines contained in the research protocols included some of the following:

- All research team members had experience in working in, and were familiar with the sites that they were conducting the research in.
- Research Assistants signed contracts and codes of conduct from the various organizations they were contracted to.
- The research team received training on ethical issues for the research but also became familiar with the research protocol which they could refer to on a daily basis.
- Each research team was required to have a counselor who was available to provide counseling to both the researchers and also the children who may need counseling and referral.
- When in rural communities, research teams were expected to start all visits to each community with the traditional protocol presentation (*I sevusevu*).
- Research teams were to greet the respondents and identify themselves as a field researcher, and obtain objectives of the research clearly.

- Consent from the child and parent/guardian was sort at all times from the research team.
- The research teams were to ensure that before commencing with the interview or discussions, the child was informed about the importance of the research, confidentiality, the kind of information to be collected, how it will be collected and how it will be used.
- The research teams were to ensure that the child was able to stop taking part in the research at any time.
- Majority of the children interviewed wished not to be identified therefore only age and sex were used to identify respondents.

LIMITATIONS

Some of the limitations of the research included:

- The official contracts were delayed for some teams and as a result the period for conducting the research was reduced.
- The lack of technical expertise in some survey teams in data processing and analysis resulted in a delay in the compilation of the final report.
- The timing of the field research with certain events which made it either difficult to identify respondents or to interview relevant stakeholders.
- Some key informants were not available although prior appointments were made.
- The uncertainty in some cases regarding the age of the respondents, in particular, some informants were not honest with their age and therefore the researchers had to use probing techniques to ascertain their age.
- The research teams needed more time to identify informants, convince them of the positive aspects of the research and gain their trust.
- The un-favourable weather conditions in some sites deterred would- be informants especially when the researches used the streets as a first point of contact.
- The reluctance from respondents to participate in the research resulting from past experiences with other researches who had abused their trust.

PART 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section provides a general summary of the findings from the five child labour surveys conducted. The research findings for each of the five surveys are arranged according to the main objectives of each survey, and generally outline the characteristic features of the groups of children involved in child labour, the types of work that children do, reasons why child labour exists, and community attitudes and perceptions. Each research survey 'report' includes some background information on the target groups participating in the research, and ends with concluding comments and recommendations reflecting the views of stakeholders, including children, teachers, parents, workers, employers, civil society, community leader and groups, who participated in the surveys.

Research Study 1:

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Research Study 2:

Street Children in Child Labour

Research Study 3:

Children's Work in Rural Agricultural Communities

Research Study 4:

Children's Work in Informal and Squatter Settlements

Research Study 5:

School Based Survey to Understand Children's Work



Research Study 1:

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

RESEARCH STUDY 1: THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

There are many forms of sexual exploitation, but the three primary forms include prostitution, pornography, and sex trafficking. More often than not, children involved in any one of these arenas are unfortunately involved in them all. In the last twenty years, numerous efforts have been made at a global level to ensure that children are protected from work that harms their development.

Much of this work has relied heavily on information gathered at the local or national level. Information about working children is often scattered across many departments and/or organizations working either with children or for children, providing no central location for all information gathered concerning children who work, and child labour. Reports in the local media and through research (as shown below) indicate that CSEC exists in Fiji and has existed for the last ten years.

Box 7: Media Reports Confirming The Existence Of CSEC In Fiji

A boy who was neglected by his mother and was not aware of who his biological father was, usually attended school without food. To provide for his essential basic needs he was prostituting himself. He came for help as the situation he felt forced into was really disturbing him. Family Support and Education Group. A Social Perspective of Students in Western Fiji. 1998, 2001: 58.

There are reports of parents offering the sexual services of their own children for money to sailors from Korea and Taiwan who come to Fiji for refuelling.

UN Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Report on Fiji , 27 December 1999

I resorted to working as a prostitute out of boredom. I do not come from a poor family. Both my parents work and so I am left on my own most of the time. 17 year old girl;

Save the Children Fiji, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Fiji: A Situational Analysis, 2006:1

She dropped out of Class seven some years back because she was not interested in classes anymore. She then befriended some young girls in town, which led her to a life of prostitution. The Fiji Times, June 29, 2009

From CSEC Survey Report, SCF; 2009

Urban migration, poverty, homelessness, and living away from parents are factors that increase a child's chance of being sexually exploited.⁹ The commercial sexual exploitation of children is through prostitution, pornography, and sex tourism.¹⁰ According to the U.S Department of State 2007 Report, children are also trafficked within Fiji for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.¹¹

9 U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports – 2007: Fiji." See also ECPAT International CSEC Database, Fiji Save the Children Fiji, The Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse of Children in Fiji: A Situational Analysis, 2006, 15-20.

11 U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report – 2007: Fiji."

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the findings from the CSEC survey conducted by the Save the Children Fiji, which focused mainly on children involved in prostitution (commercial sex work-CSW), which is an ‘unconditional’ worst form of child labour. This section examines the demographic characteristics of the children engaged in CSE, and outlines the nature of CSEC, including causes and consequences. This information is integrated with the key informants’ views, research team observations and results of focus group discussions.

AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A total of 104 children in commercial sexual exploitation (78% females and 22% males) were interviewed. 88% of the total number (104) of children interviewed were 16 and 17 years olds. The youngest interviewed was 13 years old. Although the total number of 13 year olds participating in the research was low, research findings suggest that there could be more children in commercial sexual exploitation in the younger age bracket.

Overall only the western division had a wider distribution of the children’s age. In the western division children as young as 13 year of age are engaged in CSEC. The research team was unable to interview any 13 and 14 year olds in both northern and central divisions.

Although the majority of children interviewed were female, through observations on the streets and in the nightclubs in the research location sites, the research teams noted that the age of the sex workers are decreasing and there is also an increase in the number of young boys in sex work. Of the children interviewed, all the males were single however some of the females, about 7%, were living with their partners.

From the survey it was noted that the children engaged in CSE were from different ethnic groups in Fiji, with the majority of child sex workers participating in the survey of indigenous Fijian origin, 82%. All the children interviewed, aged 13 and 14 years are school students (still in school). Some of the children aged 15 to 17 years are not in school, and of the 66 children aged 17 years, about 80% of them are not in school.

The FGDs revealed that the communities were aware of the presence of CSEC. There is a general concern as to how to effectively address this issue that is affecting young people. All the communities participating in the research acknowledged that although CSEC has been present for decades, there has been a steady increase within the last 15 to 20 years.

A total of 87 adult sex workers who had begun sex work as a child (below 18 years) were interviewed. Ages of adult sex workers ranged from 18 to 59 years old. Most (85%) of the adult respondents interviewed were less than 33 years old, with the majority from the western division.

Table 3.1: Age & Sex Distribution of Children in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Age	Divisions			Total (n)
	Central (%)	Western (%)	Northern (%)	
13	-	2.3	-	1
14	-	4.5	-	2
15	9.5	9.1	11.1	10
16	23.8	18.2	22.2	22
17	66.7	65.9	66.7	69
Sex				
Female	88.1	59.1	100.0	81
Male	11.9	40.9	-	23
Total (n)	42	44	18	104

Table 3.2: Ethnic Distribution of Children in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Ethnicity	Divisions			Total (n)
	Central (%)	Western (%)	Northern (%)	
Fijian	71.4	86.4	77.8	82
Indian	16.7	9.1	-	11
Part Chinese	2.4	-	-	1
Part European	7.1	-	5.6	4
Other	2.4	4.5	11.1	5
Refused	-	-	5.6	1
Total (n)	42	44	18	104

Figure 3.1: Ethnic Distribution of Children in Commercial Sexual Exploitation

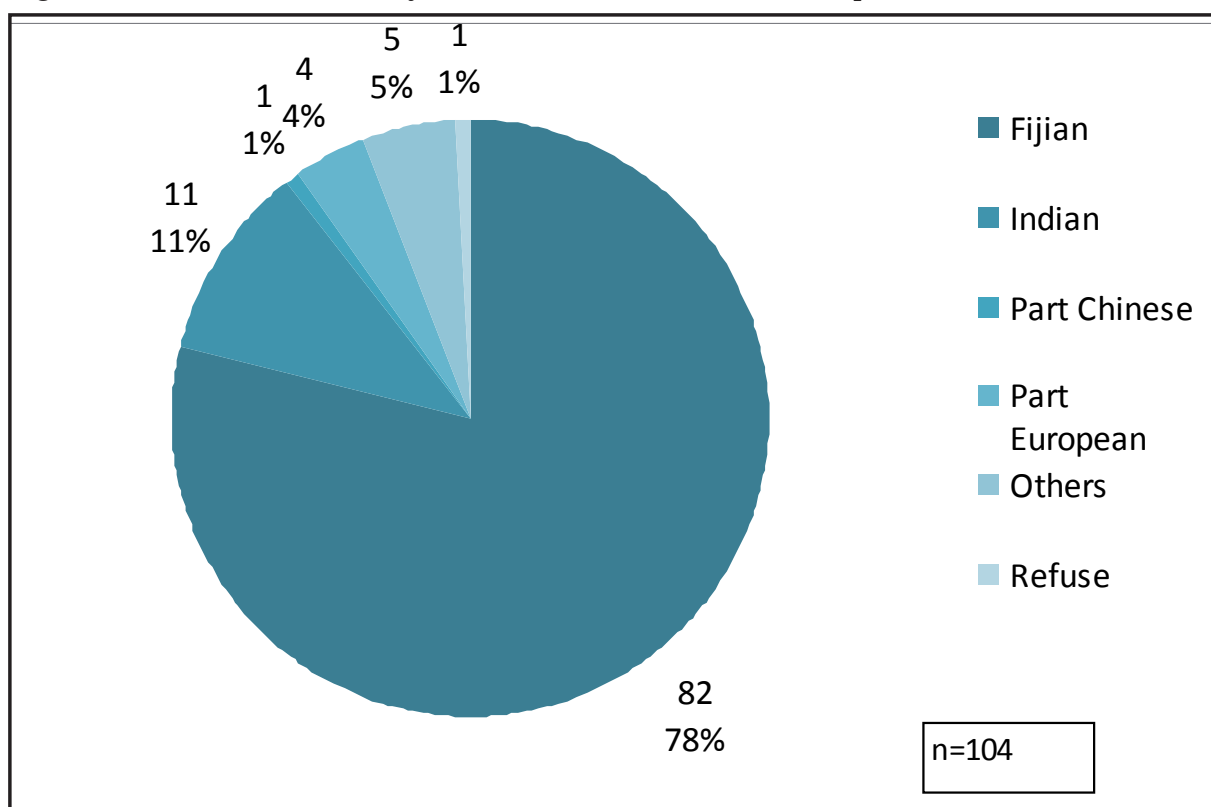


Figure 3.2: Children's Age by School Attendance

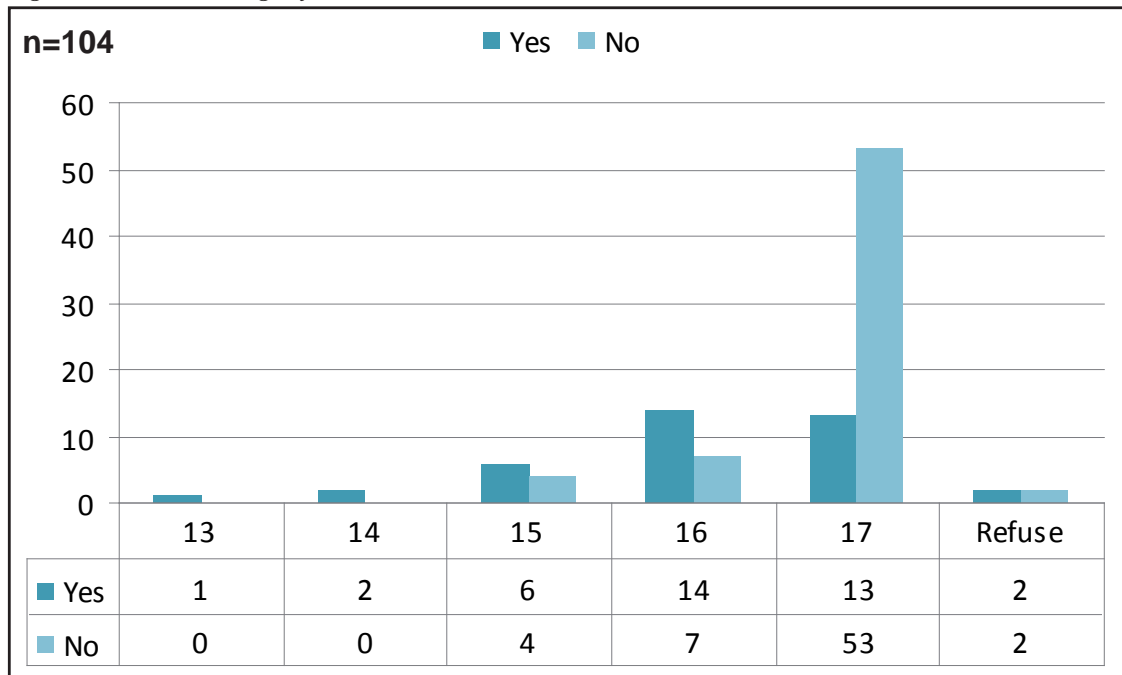
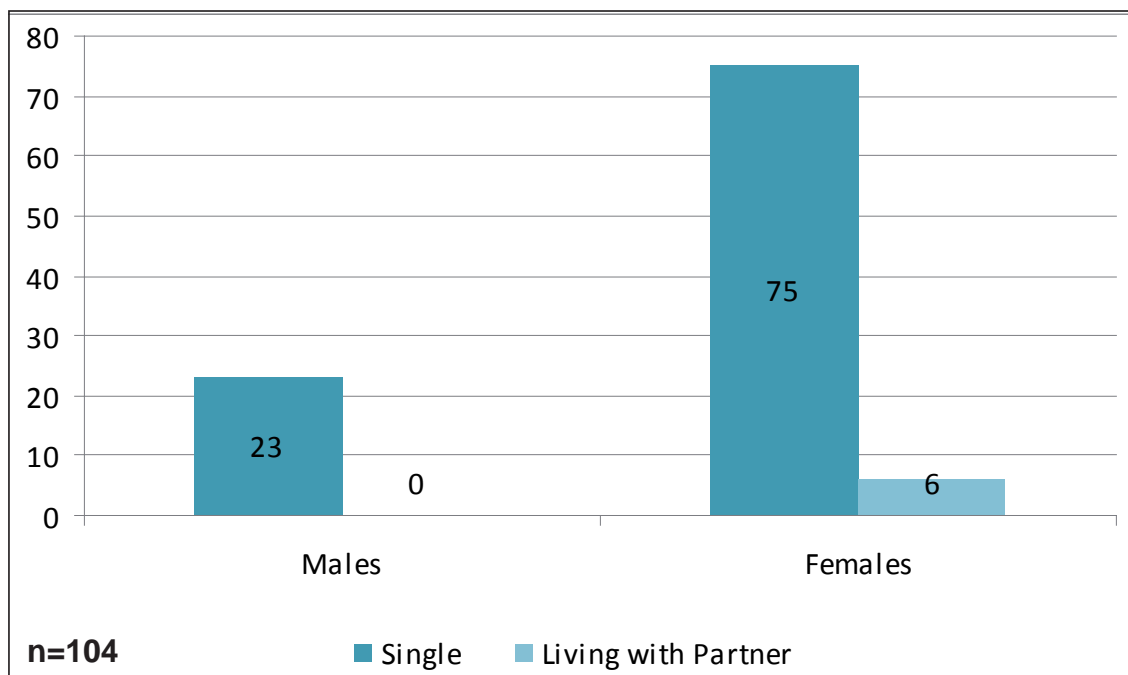


Figure 3.3: Children's Gender by Marital Status



Overall, as with children in CSE, there were more adult female than male sex workers participating in the survey, and the majority of adults were interviewed from the Western Division.

Most of the adult sex workers were young women (in all divisions) age 18 to 32 years, with a significant number of males in the western division. Over 60% of the adult sex workers interviewed were Fijian, followed by Indians and Part Europeans.

Table 3.3: Age distribution of adult sex workers by division (%)

Age group	Divisions			Total (n)
	Central (%)	Western (%)	Northern (%)	
18-22	34.8	25.6	47.6	29
23-27	34.8	44.2	33.3	34
28-32	17.4	14.0	4.8	11
33-37	-	7.0	4.8	4
38-42	-	4.7	4.8	1
43-47	-	2.3	-	4
48-62	-	2.3	-	1
Not Stated	13.0	2.3	-	4
Total (n)	23	43	21	87

Table 3.4: Gender distribution of adult sex workers by division (%)

Gender	Divisions			Total (n)
	Central (%)	Western (%)	Northern (%)	
Female	78.3	53.5	76.2	57
Male	21.7	46.5	23.8	30
Total (n)	23	43	21	87

Table 3.5: Ethnic distribution of adult sex workers by division (%)

Ethnicity	Divisions			Total (n)
	Central (%)	Western (%)	Northern (%)	
Fijian	30.9	49.1	20.0	55
Indian	16.7	66.7	16.7	18
Chinese	100.0	-	-	1
Part Chinese	-	-	100.0	2
Part European	20.0	30.0	50.0	10
Other	-	100	-	1
Total (n)	23	43	21	87

Note: As snowball sampling was used in the survey, the data applies only to the survey sample group and is not representative of the total population. The majority of respondents who were willing to be interviewed were indigenous Fijians .

AGE OF RESPONDENTS WHEN THEY STARTED SEX WORK

The youngest age for starting commercial sex work for children interviewed was 10 years old. 21% of the children began commercial sex work between the ages of 10-14 years, and 57% of the child children started commercial sex work between the ages of 15-16 years old. A small number of adult sex workers interviewed indicated that they had entered into commercial sex work from ages 8 and 9 years old.

Table 3.6 : Age of Child when started Commercial Sex Work by Child's Current Age

Current Age of Respondents	Age of Child when started Sex Work									Total (n)
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	refused	
13	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
14	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
15	-	-	-	3	2	5	-	-	-	10
16	1	-	-	1	2	10	7	-	1	22
17	-	-	3	1	6	10	27	20	2	69
Total (n)	1	-	3	6	12	25	34	20	3	104

LENGTH OF TIME INVOLVED IN SEX WORK

74% of the children had been involved in commercial sex work for less than two years and 34% less than one year. The longest time identified by a child for involvement in commercial sex work was 6 years. The number of years involved in commercial sex work identified by adults ranged from 1 to 42 years. 73% of adult sex workers have been in commercial sex work for at least 15 years. All the sex workers interviewed have remained in this profession since entering into it.

WHERE DOES CSEC TAKE PLACE

The most common place of CSEC activity are motels as identified by almost half of the children, particularly those in the 16-17 year category. The second most commonly mentioned place of activity was 'the house nearby', which supports stakeholder statements that CSEC activities exist in the community. One can assume that child sex workers in this situation are familiar with the perpetrators, who are possibly people living in the neighbourhood. As most of the younger children identified 'the houses nearby' as their normal place of activity, it may be concluded that this is one way by which children are introduced into CSE.

Figure 3.4: Place of CSEC Activity

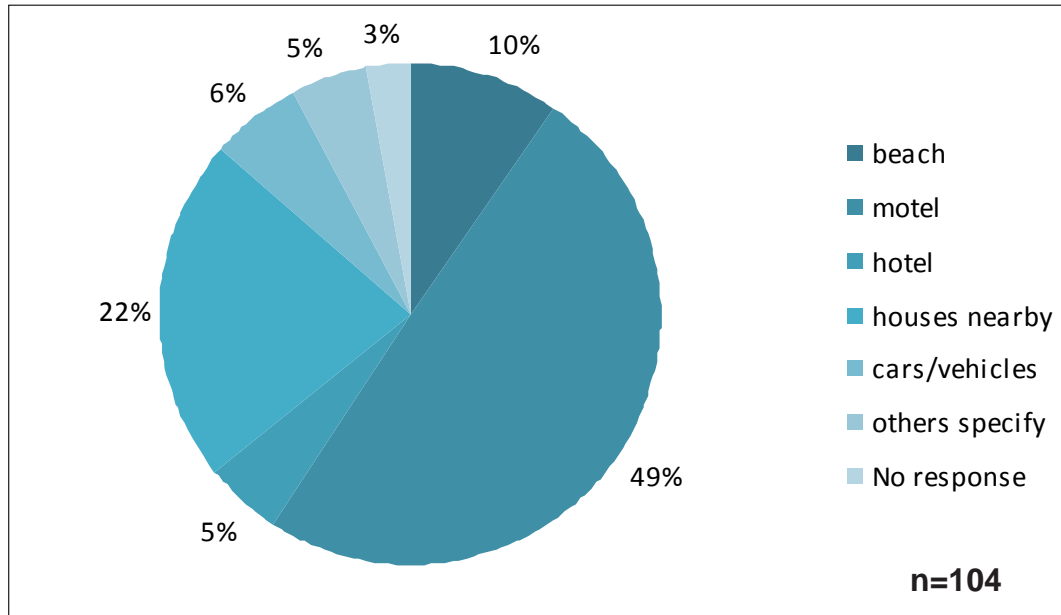
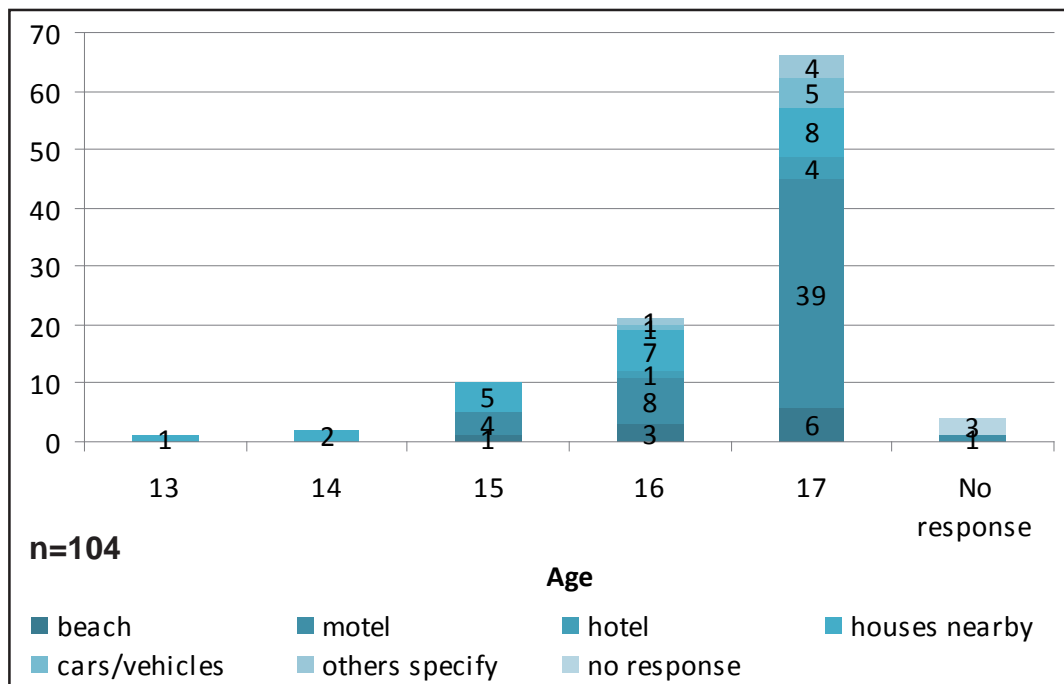


Figure 3.5: Place of Activity by Age



THE CLIENT- EXPLOITERS

Observations and interviews with key informants and FGDs in the northern, central and western divisions revealed that majority of the client-exploiters were local men of different races living in the same division as their victim, followed by men who came from other divisions. There are also client-exploiters who are foreign tourists and foreign men residing in Fiji.

Women were also mentioned as client-exploiters who facilitated the sexual exploitation of children, largely playing the role as ‘pimps’, searching for children and providing children to clients.

The children identified five different ways of identifying and engaging with their clients. Most of the children stand on their ‘demarcated spot’ in the streets to attract clients (43%). These children own their ‘spot’ on the streets, from where they are picked and dropped by clients. Some children get their clients from bars and clubs (18%), and some children go through middle-men or madams who identify the client for them (16%). A very small proportion of children (1%) were found to be working at brothels. It should be noted that access to brothels and motels was not readily granted during the survey.

Box 8: Example of limitations faced during CSEC survey

The Research Team had just arrived into their accommodation and the Research Assistants were paired up ready to scout for informants in their designated areas. The two RAs walked to the end of town and decided to make the well known brothel in town to be their last stop. The male RA went up to the brothel where he was greeted by an attendant who immediately said, ‘Yes? It’s for \$25’. He thought for a second and before he could reply, another attendant walked in saying, “Come on boy! Don’t you want to have a good time?”. He nodded and indicated that he would be back, returning to his partner downstairs to relay his discovery. After much discussion, the female RA walked up to chat to the attendants to explain what the research was all about and request if she could have time for an interview or a focus group discussion. However the two attendants had changed tunes and “had no idea if “that” type of business existed in their small town, let alone a brothel”. One of the attendants quickly lifted up a curtain to the nearest room which had three elderly men, stating that these men are cared for there and that no such business happens in the premises. When the male RA returned upstairs he was abruptly and rudely confronted and accused by both attendants for lying and “spoiling their name!

**Extracted from Research Assistants Diaries, Western Division
CSEC Survey Report, SCF; 2009**

Other ways children in commercial sex work acquired clients included going through contacts, including personal and hotel contacts; through friends and aunts; and also by having an established set of clients and being on call (through mobile network group). The important dynamic of the mobile communications network in assisting children to acquire clients was evident.

Figure 3.6: Ways of getting client- exploiters by location and ethic group

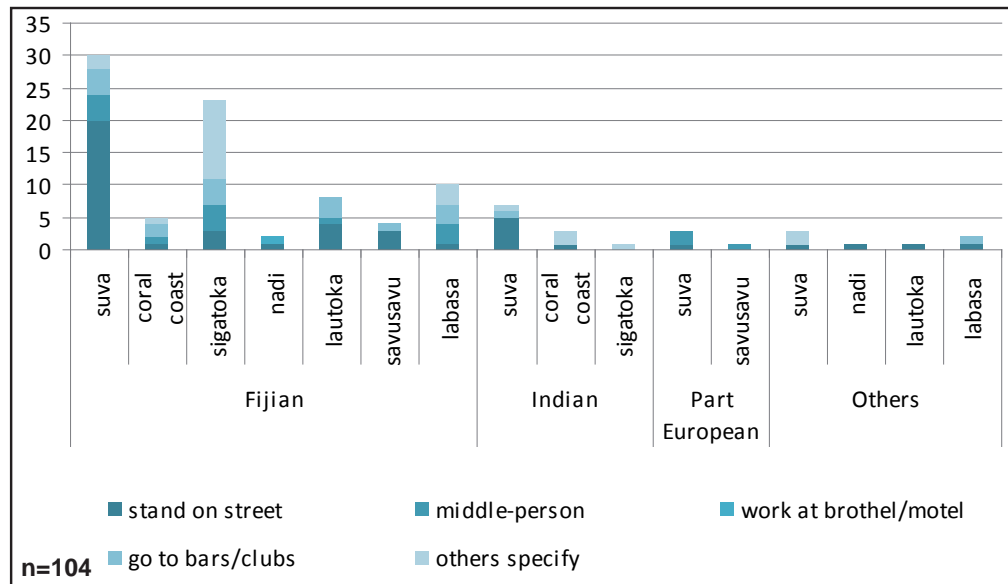


Figure 3.7: How clients are identified

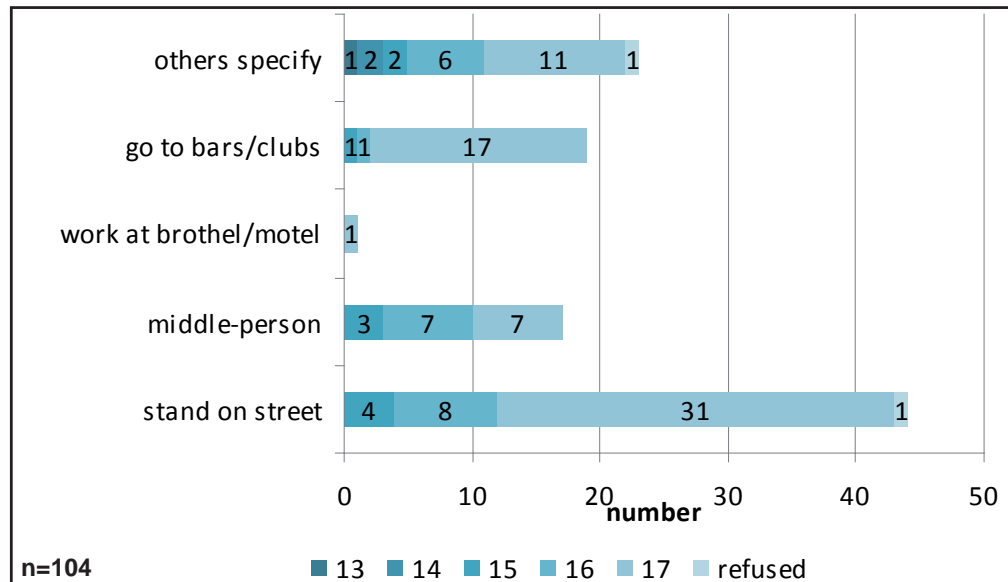
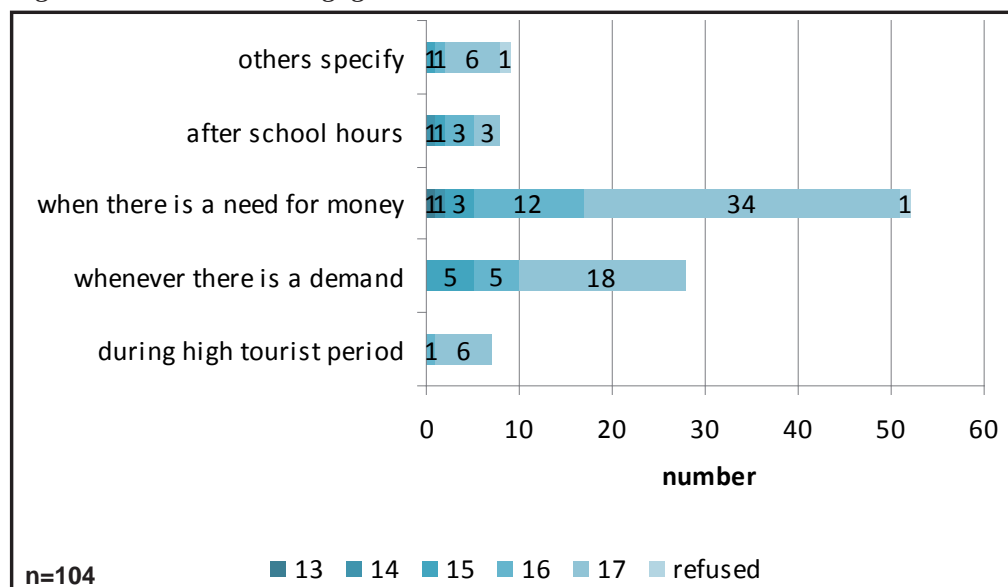


Figure 3.8: Time when engage in Commerical Sex Work



The '*Time when engage in CSEC*' graph shows that most of the children are involved in CSE when there is a need for money, followed by when there is a demand, that is, when clients are available. The survey also shows that some children are engaged in CSE during high tourist period and some of the children are engaged in CSE after school hours.

EDUCATION

The study highlights the critical link between education and child labour. 65% of the child respondents do not attend school, compared to 35% of the child respondents who are still in school. The majority of the children out of school are between 15 and 17 years old. Most common reasons given by the children interviewed for leaving school was family problems (parental neglect, no family support), and financial difficulties (unable to pay school fees, had to leave to get a job). Other reasons given were peer pressure, poor academic performance, problems at school, pregnancy, and being told by family members to leave school.

According to FGDs, homes and schools had no safety nets and there were no short term measures including resources and information to help support and absorb vulnerable children, particularly those dropping out of school, who easily fall prey to many forms of abuse and discrimination in the labour force. Adult sex worker data revealed that 20.7% had reached primary school level, 66.7% had reached secondary school level and 10.3% had reached tertiary school level. 2.3% had not had any formal schooling. Financial difficulties and family problems were the main reasons given for dropping out of school.

SOCIO- ECONOMIC STATUS

Children participating in the survey ranked their family's socio-economic status from very poor, poor, OK and well-off. Although there was no defined parameters given for each term, based on the participants perception, the majority of children ranked their family's socio-economic status as OK (54%), followed by poor (26%), well-off (8.6%) and very poor (7%). 5 children refused to answer. Adult sex workers also identified their family's socio-economic status as OK (51.8%), poor (25.3%), well off (9.6%) and very poor (9.6%).

The types of work that the children are involved in daily, apart from being sex workers, include domestic work (mostly girls), hair dressing (only boys) and working in restaurants and hotels. 17% of children identified themselves as full time sex workers, and a significant number of female child sex workers identified their working status as school students. The majority of adult sex workers were identified as being unemployed (20.6%), and in either full-time (16%), or part-time (19.5%) sex work. Other types of work included domestic work, part-time hotel work, self employment, and as work as hairdressers (mostly males).

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

The majority of children in CSE live with their families (56.7%) or friends (23%). A small percentage of children in CSE live alone (6.7%) and some children live with others (13.7%) including aunt, aunt and uncle, grandmother, grandparents and partner. The most common reasons given by children for 'relocating' or leaving their initial family were related to family problems and included ill-treatment/ physical abuse by step-parents (and parents), parental neglect, separated and remarried parents, inability of parents to look after them, and pregnancy. "*I have no attention from my parents*". Peer pressure was the second most common reason for relocating.

The majority of adult respondents live with their family (42.5%) and friends (32.2%). A number of adults also live alone (14.9%), and with others (10.3%), including adopted father, niece, partner, and older sister.

Table 3.7: Child Working Status by Gender

Working Status	Female (%)	Male(%)	Total (n)
Do Not Know/ Refused To Answer	19.7	30.5	23
Beggar	1.2	-	1
Dancer	-	4.4	1
Domestic Duties	13.6	4.4	12
Full-Time Sex Worker/ Sex Worker	18.5	13.0	18
Hair Dresser	-	13.0	3
Hotel Worker	-	4.3	1
Part-Time Sex Worker	8.6	17.4	11
Restaurant Worker	2.5	-	2
School Student	22.2	-	18
Unemployed	11.1	13.0	12
Volunteer Worker	2.5	-	2
Total (N)	81	23	104

Table 3.8 Adult Working Status by Gender

Working status	Female (%)	Male(%)	Total (n)
Refused To Answer	12.3	6.7	9
Bartender	1.8	-	1
Domestic Duties	15.8	3.3	10
Food Vendor	1.8	3.3	2
Full-Time Sex Worker	17.5	13.3	14
Hair Dresser	1.8	20.0	7
Part-Time Hotel Worker	5.3	-	3
Part-Time Sex Worker	17.5	23.3	17
Self-Employed	3.5	3.3	3
Pre-School Helper	1.8	-	1
Unemployed	17.5	26.7	18
Volunteer Worker	1.8	-	1
Waitress	1.8	-	1
Total (N)	57	30	87

REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN CSE: PUSH FACTORS

Underlying factors ‘pushing’ children into commercial sex work, as indicated by the children, are the need for money, peer pressure, family problems and parental neglect. Most of the children have indicated that their need for money is the main factor that led them into CSE, closely followed by peer pressure and family problems/ parental neglect. The fact that children involved in CSE drop-out from school at an early age seldom have sufficient qualification to obtain a decent job and earn enough, they are more inclined to experience poverty. Where there is high unemployment and few opportunities to earn cash, the risk of children entering into commercial sexual exploitation is greater.

Children who remain at home while parents are working or are busy with community and family commitments they often lack adequate supervision and protection during the day and at night as well. Unsupervised children may be drawn into “wrong company” (peer pressure, has been the second most influential push factor), engaging in high risk activities or be attracted to high risk locations such as bars and nightclubs. Family problems and parental neglect are so closely intertwined that the discussion of one will overlap into the other. Family problems become complex and daunting when coupled by dysfunctional families, absent fathers, lack of financial resources and the capacity to address pertinent family issues. These types of situation expose vulnerable children to abuse and commercial sexual exploitation.

Box 10: Parental Neglect a Concern

“We are seriously concerned about the large number of very young students leaving school and just staying at home doing nothing. These young girls get into trouble because their parents are always busy doing other things, like drinking kava, going to church functions, attending unnecessary meetings and neglecting their children. Parents rarely share quality time with their children; they are never there when their children need them. Majority of these young girls fall pregnant and there is a large number of very young single mothers with at least two children. What will become of our kinsmen in the next 10 years if this trend continues?”

From CSEC Survey Report, SCF; 2009

CHILDREN LIVING AWAY FROM HOME AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Children are often sent from rural areas to urban centers’ to attend high school. These children usually live with members of their extended family while attending school. However, living away from parents often increases the vulnerability of children to sexual abuse and commercial exploitation.

In this study, 10 children or 9.6% confirmed that they were sexually abused between the ages of 6 to 10 years old. 34 children or 32.7% were sexually abused between 11 to 14 years old, and 45 children or 43.3% were sexually abused between the ages of 15 years to 17 years old. Previous experience and studies in this field show clearly that child sexual abuse is a push factor for children entering into CSE. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse identified in this study were generally males, and included cousins, father, stepfather, relative’s husband and others (neighbour, school student, teacher, and stranger).

Box 11: Sex work pays school expenses

“I live with my aunty and uncle in Suva, sometimes my parents are late in sending money for my schooling. I learnt from my friends that I can easily make a lot of money if I sell myself. I am now able to pay my busfare and buy other school things.”

16-year old girl, Suva
From CSEC Survey Report, SCF; 2009

Table 3.9: Factors Forcing Children into CSE

Factors	%	total (n)
no answer	1	1
abused	1	1
alcohol	1.9	2
family problems	9.6	10
financial problems	5.8	6
identity crisis	1	1
need money	37.5	39
not sure	1	1
parental neglect	7.7	8
peer pressure	29.8	31
physical or verbal abuse	1	1
sexual abuse	1.9	2
other	1	1
Total (n)		104

REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN CSE: PULL FACTORS

Almost three quarter (71%) of the children stated that what attracted them most was ‘easy money’. Money made weekly ranged from \$10 to \$900, which was mostly spent on themselves or on school items. Expensive gifts (3G mobile phones, jewelry, clothes, perfumes) were also listed as ‘attractions’ for children in CSW. According to a child respondent, *“I do not need any qualifications for the good and easy money I make. Whenever I need money, I just stand at my street corner and wait for clients.”*

The second most common reason is that they want to be with their friends or follow their peers. This indicated that some children are lured rather than pressured (1%) into the activity by their friends. A further 10% stated that they are involved for pleasure.

The most common form of payment received by the children in commercial sex work, is money. 93% of the children stated that they received money in exchange for sexual activity. Other things received by the child sex worker includes having the rent paid, food, groceries, drinks and cigarette, clothing and accessories, and help with the school work.

The children were asked if they take and use all the money and gifts received or if others benefited as well. The survey showed that about two thirds of the children always take all the money. Others who also take the money include the landlord, their mother, aunty, some other family member and the madam/middlemen who also take a portion of the money. Although the survey was unable to examine and identify if children in CSW were forced into the activity, that fact that there are others who benefit from this illegal activity financially, indicates possible ‘forced sexual exploitation’.

Figure 3.9: Main Attractions

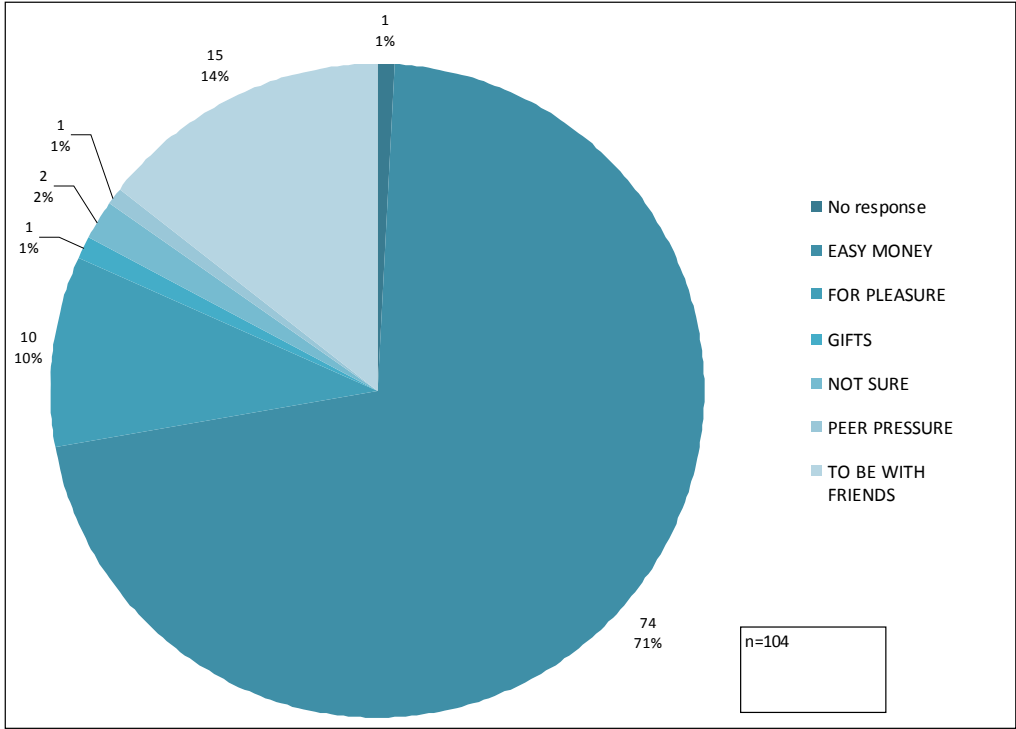


Figure 4.0: What they receive in exchange

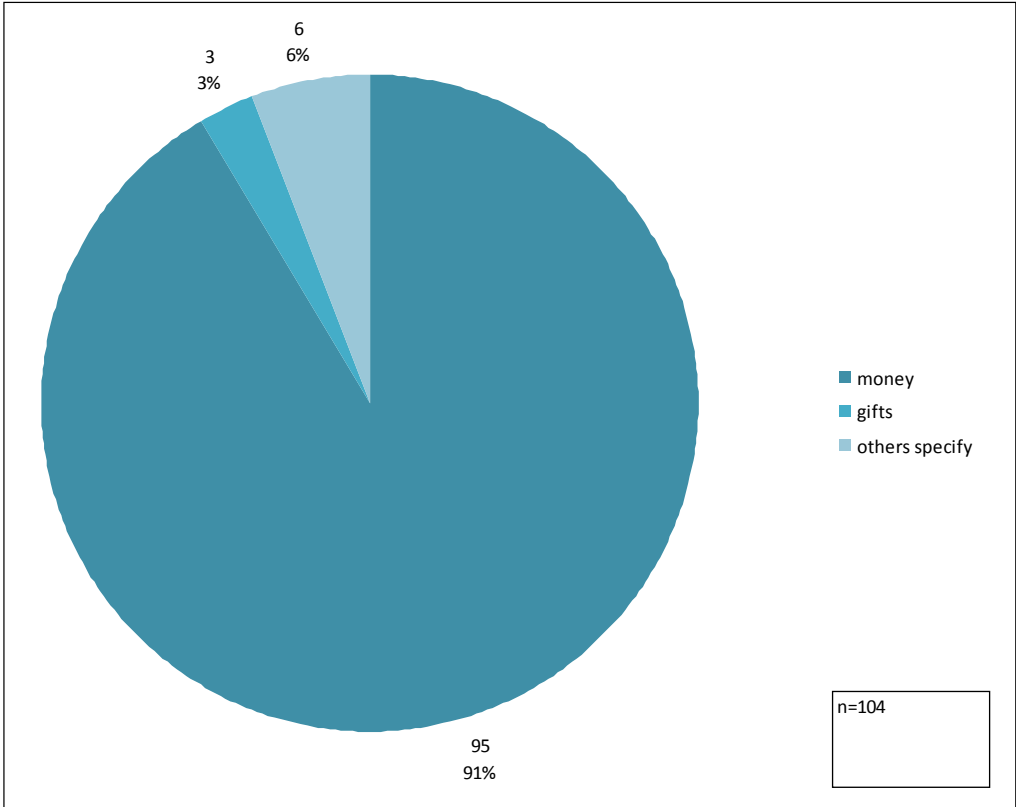


Figure 4.1: Do you always take the money?

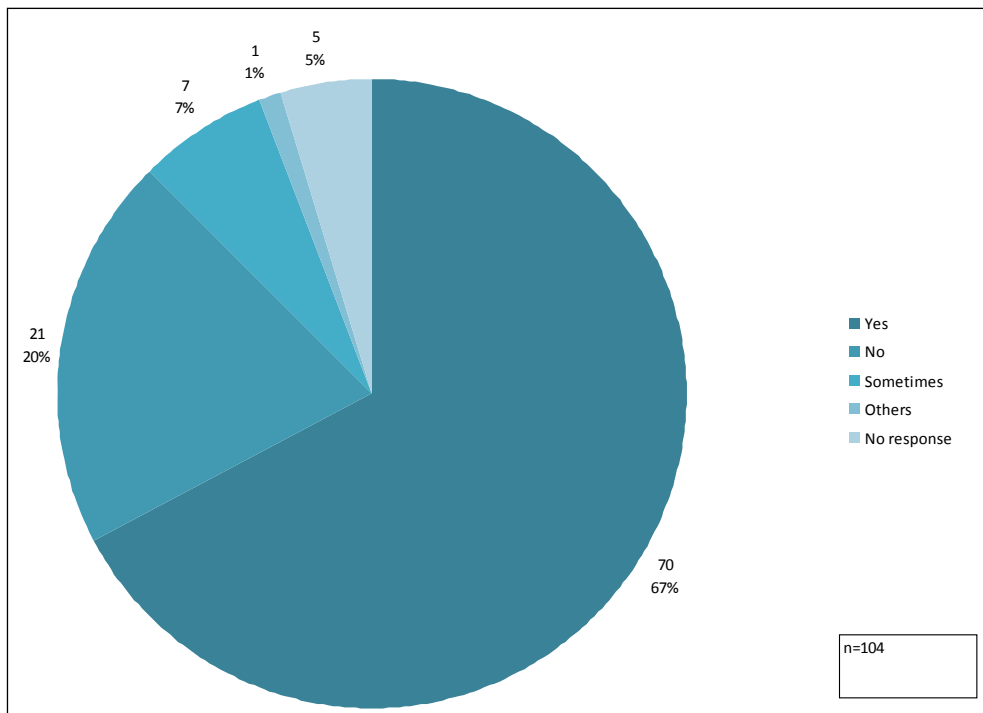
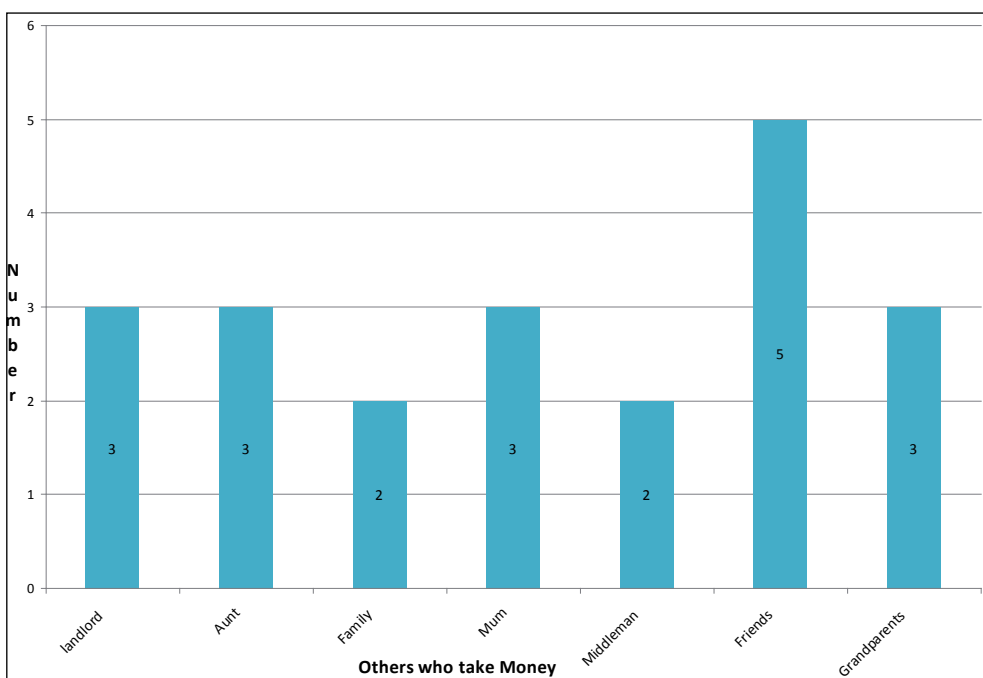


Figure 4.2: Others who take the money



Box 12: Payment In Cash Or In Kind

Annie and Molly (not their real names) are two cousins who are currently involved in commercial sex. They live in the same house with Annie's parents. Annie's parents do not know of what the two cousins are up to. Annie is 20 years old and her cousin Molly is 17. Annie has been in the CSE industry since she was 17 years old and has established clients. Molly is learning fast and frequents bars and clubs for her clients. The two were both enthusiastic to show what they received as gifts in exchange for sexual favors, Annie proudly showed off her washing machine and Molly a diamond ring. When asked if her mother asked where the washing machine came from, she simply shrugged shoulders and said, "No, why would she?"

From CSEC Survey, SCF; 2009

The survey also revealed that some parents were aware of their children's involvement in CSW (15.4%). A number of children stated that they contribute money for the family's needs and help pay for their bus fare and school needs. Some children give money to their parents or family members, who have 'turned a blind eye' to the issue. According to a child respondent, "My mum is ok with it, as long as I give her money."

OTHER FACTORS

Key informant interviews revealed that child sex workers are mobile and children move from one urban area to another depending on the demand. 65% of the children stated that they do travel to other urban centres for 'work'. Some stated that they travel from Suva to Nadi, to the Coral Coast and Sigatoka areas when the tourist demand is high. During the Hibiscus Festival or during a national sports competition, children from other divisions travel to Suva to meet the demand for child sex work.

Figure 4.3: Travel To Other Location For Commercial Sex Work

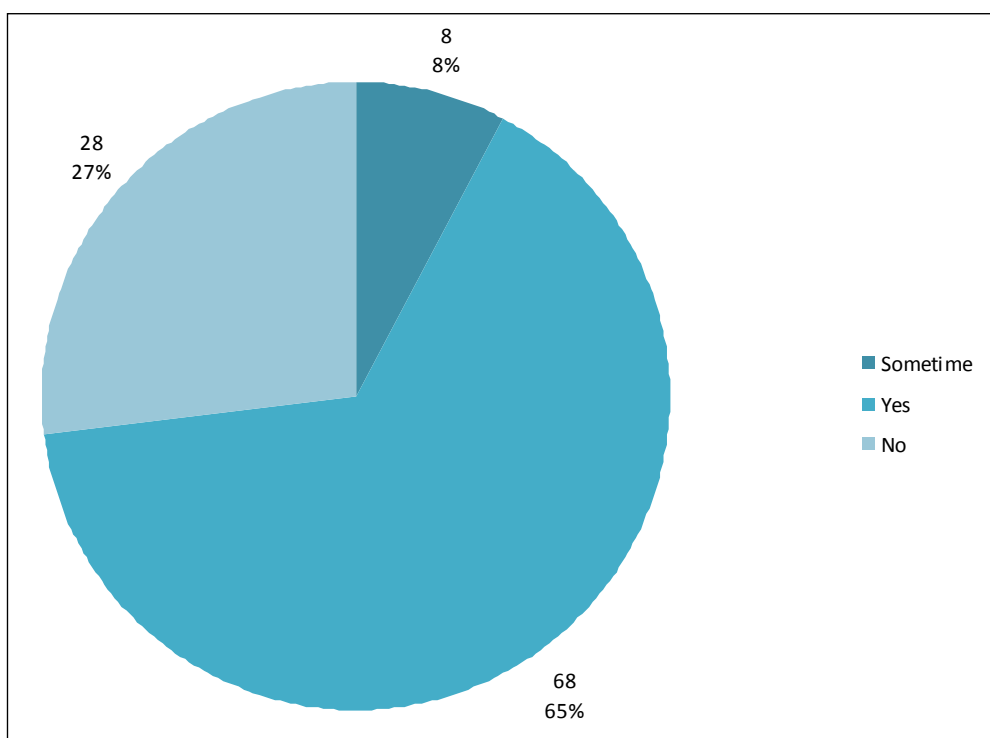
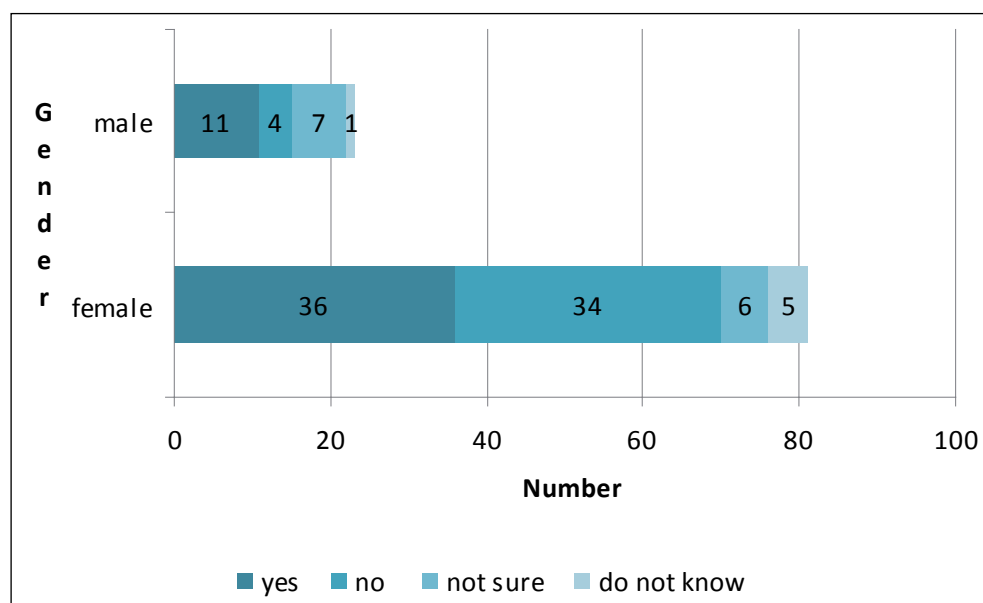


Figure 4.4: Is the Community Aware of Children in Commercial Sex Work



FEARS AND DREAMS

Many members of the community are aware that CSEC exists. Reactions to children in commercial sex work include physical and psychological aggression. Children in commercial sex work endure insults and humiliation from the public. A significant number stated that they were scorned by some of their friends and felt isolated. A few leave in fear of the male members of their immediate and extended families finding out about their work.

The dangers encountered by children in relation to their commercial sex work, were identified as physical abuse (49%), contracting HIV/AIDs or STDs (18%), fear of the unknown (16%), fear that relatives and friends will find out (6%), danger to personal safety (6%), falling pregnant (6%) and having a fatal accident (1%).

The children were asked to state their inspiration for the future. None of the children interviewed gave negative responses. All of the children had dreams for their future. The following lists some of their wishes:

- To have a brighter future (not doing sex work)
- To have a good life
- To be safe
- To go back to school and get a good job
- To get married to someone rich and start a good family
- To become rich and have a lot of money
- To have a good and secured job and earn a lot of money earlier in life
- To have someone to love and live a good life
- To stay away from her parents
- To be a boy (wish from a girl)
- To look after her child well
- To travel overseas
- For everyone to understand them
- To lead a good life
- To get married to a foreigner

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research clearly indicates that a greater number of girls than boys suffer sexual exploitation. The vulnerability of girls is closely related to gender inequalities existing within their families and communities. The high demand by male perpetrators for sex with children and the high public tolerance on this issue, are among the negative attitudes that allow CSEC to breed.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children including commercial sex work, is a fundamental violation of children's rights. It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children, and can result in serious, lifelong and life threatening consequences for the physical, psychological, spiritual, moral and social development of children.

The research indicates that children are at risk of pregnancy, physical and sexual injury and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Children's right to enjoy childhood and to lead a productive, rewarding and dignified life is seriously compromised.

A wide range of individuals and groups at all levels of society contribute to the exploitative practice. This includes intermediaries, family members, service providers, customers, community members and others, who contribute to the exploitation of children through indifference, ignorance of the harmful consequences suffered by children, or the perpetuation of attitudes, behavior, and values that view children as economic commodities.

Poverty cannot be used as a justification for CSEC, even though it contributes to an environment which may lead to such exploitation. A range of other complex contributing factors include economic disparities, inequitable socio-economic structures, dysfunctional families, lack of education, growing consumerism, urban-rural migration, gender discrimination, and irresponsible male sexual behaviour. All these factors exacerbate the vulnerability of girls and boys to those who would seek to procure them for commercial sexual exploitation.

A holistic approach should be taken to preventing and withdrawing children from CSE. Education and rehabilitation programmes for children withdrawn from CSE have to be developed, which may include vocational training, skills upgrading and work experience programmes. Capacity building on micro-finance and other skills activities can be provided to families of children in CSE, and to children at risk to older children in CSE.

The adoption of Child Protection Policies should be made compulsory for all workers in all sectors in Fiji so that everyone in Fiji has a common responsibility to protect children from any form of exploitation. There is a need to advocate and mobilise support for child rights, and ensure that adequate resources are available to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation. Communities can be involved and trained as "sidewalk" counselors by trained community counselors and get involved in anti-CSEC campaigns.

The primary task of combating CSEC rests with the State and families. Civil society also has a vital role to play in preventing and protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation. It is therefore imperative to build a strong partnership between Governments, international organisations and all sectors of society to counter such exploitation. Fostering close interaction and cooperation between the government and non-government sectors to plan, implement and evaluate measures against CSEC, and to mobilise families and communities to protect children with adequate allocation of resources, is critical.





Research Study 2:

STREET CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

RESEARCH STUDY 2: STREET CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

INTRODUCTION

This report provides an overview of the situation of street children in Child Labour drawn from research in Fiji's main urban centres. The context of the research sees the issue of street children who are involved in work that either denies them education or the chance to fully develop their potential as adults, as a serious challenge directly to those concerned, and more broadly to the sustainable and equitable development of Fiji's towns and cities.

Anecdotal reports and newspaper articles of working street children, children exploited in commercial sexual activities, children working as domestic servants, in the markets, in hotels, in subsistence agriculture and reports of children exploited through prostitution bear witness to this growing concern. The United States Department of Labour report 2008, 'Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Fiji', added sex tourism and trafficking to the list of Child Labour forms found in the country. The anecdotal evidence also suggests a growing awareness and concern, at least by media organisations, of the issue of street children. Providing a baseline and understanding the extent to which children work and exist on the streets is critical to the development of interventions for withdrawal and or removal.

Box 13: Media Reports on Street Kids

On February 19, 2007, a newspaper article in the Fiji Times stated that Suva's street kids have been on the streets operating as shoeshine boys, wheelbarrow operators and some simply asking for money. On March 14, 2007, a Fiji Times article highlighted the efforts of Police and the Lautoka City Council 'to ensure that street kids are rehabilitated and kept out of trouble'. According to the report, the council was looking at agencies which could train shoeshine boys and sword sellers for jobs, and in addition had removed, with police help, 15 street kids who had been living at Churchill Park for several months. Further newspaper articles in May of the same year (FT May 24, May 28, 2007), claimed the Ministry of Social Welfare had identified 40 street kids on the streets of Suva and liaised with the police, the military and the navy to provide jobs to 25 of these street kids. An additional article on a feeding programme on the streets of Suva, found that of the 30 children and adults benefiting from the programme, the youngest was four years old. Jobs for the street children interviewed were listed as shining shoes or selling coconut baskets for money. The article further stated that "the children are mostly from broken families and poor backgrounds."

**"At night we would sleep under a culvert or a house as long as we found somewhere to lie down."
From Street Children Survey , FSPI, 2009**

Street Children work and live on the streets of Fiji's towns and cities and are a growing feature of the urbanization process. They must not, however, be considered as an exclusively urban issue as many street children are from families who have migrated from rural areas or are themselves direct migrants to town. A desk review was carried out by Research teams and based on a quick count survey conducted in Suva with the Market Police Post, it was found that 18 children out of 107 registered street dwellers are below the age of 18 years. This includes 8 wheel barrow boys, 1 shoe shine boy and 9 street kids. The Sergeant in charge conceded however that this number may not be accurate because the target population, i.e. street children, is highly mobile.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the findings from the Street Children in Child labour survey conducted by The Foundation of the South Pacific International (FSPI). The survey was conducted with children (between 5-17 years of age) working in the street, including children who are living on the streets and those living at home, those who are on the street every day, and those who only come and work a few days in a week. This report identifies these children, outlines the different types of work that these children do and the reasons why these children are working. Comments and observation from stakeholders in the community is also discussed in the report.

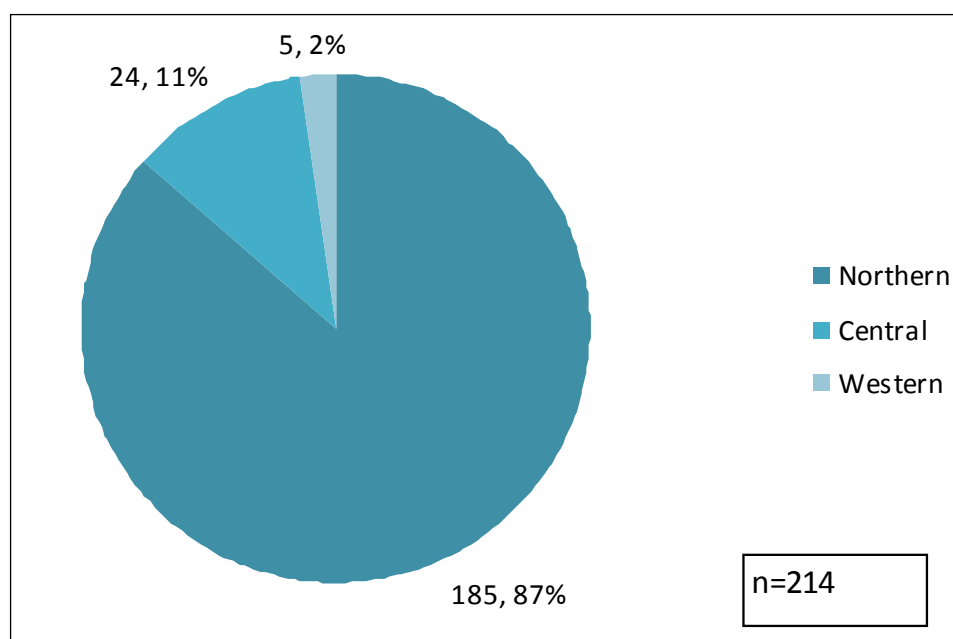
AGE, GENDER AND ETHNICITY OF STREET CHILDREN

The vast majority of Fiji's street children are males. Of the 214 children surveyed, 171 were males and 43 females. Just under half of the identified street children reside in the Central Division (46.7%). It should be noted that the field research concentrated in Suva and that some of these children were very mobile, moving from one urban area to the next when doing business or working in the streets. There were no street children recorded in Sigatoka despite two periods of research. According to the Station Officer in Sigatoka, children who come to work on the streets in Sigatoka are mostly market vendors who help their parents to sell their produce every Saturday.

Table 4.0: Divisional Distribution of Street Children by Gender

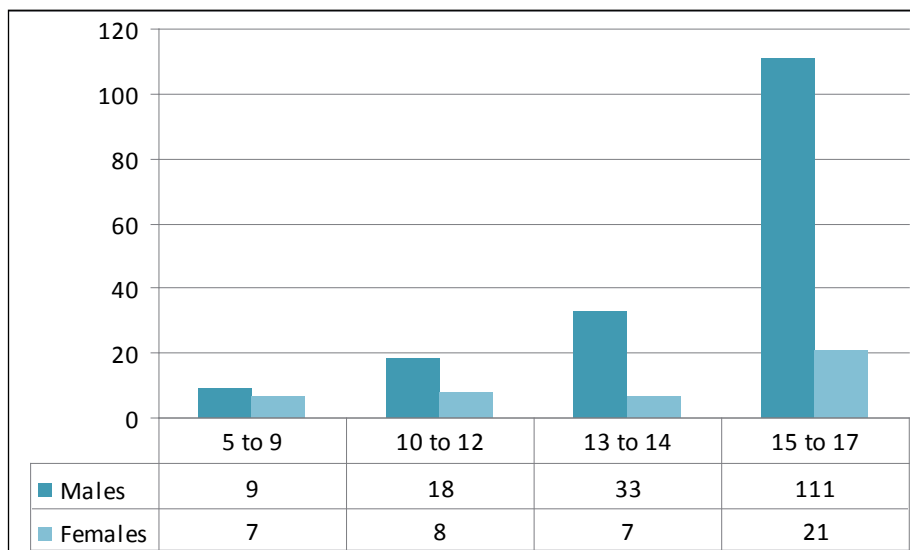
Towns/ Cities	Gender		Total (n)
	Female	Male	
Suva	39	139	178
Nausori	2	5	7
Nadi	-	10	10
Lautoka	1	12	13
Ba	-	1	1
Savusavu	-	3	3
Labasa	1	1	2
Total	43	171	214

Figure 4.5: Distribution of Street Children by Division



When looked at by Province of Origin, street children from the maritime provinces were very highly represented, with 31% of the street children coming from Lau, Kadavu, Lomaiviti and Rotuma. Of the children surveyed, the majority were between 15-17 years (61.7%), followed by 13-14 years (18.7%). A number of children between 5-9 years (7.5%) were also identified as street children.

Figure 4.6: Age Distribution of Street Children by Gender



STREET CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

The scale of street children in child labour in Fiji is significant. 79.4% or 170 children, were identified as street children in child labour, of whom 20.6% were under the age of 12 years, 18.2% were under the age of 15 years, and 61.2% were between 15-17 years. The majority of children in child labour were engaged in hazardous work (81%), followed by children below 15 years in non-hazardous work (13%) and children engaged in the ‘unconditional’ worst forms of child labour (6%), namely commercial sexual exploitation and begging.

Most of the street children in child labour were Fijian males, followed by Indian males. 94% of the females engaged in child labour were also of Fijian ethnicity.

Figure 4.7: Gender of Street Children in Child Labour

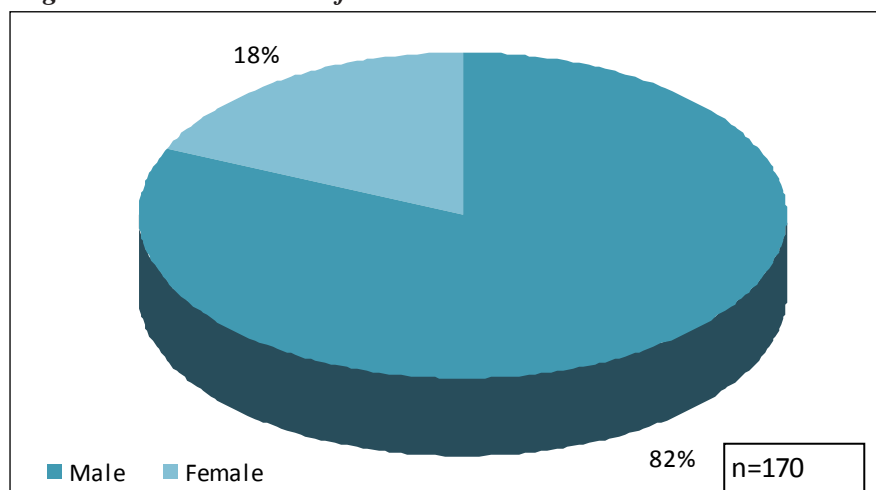


Figure 4.8: Age of Street Child Labourers by Gender

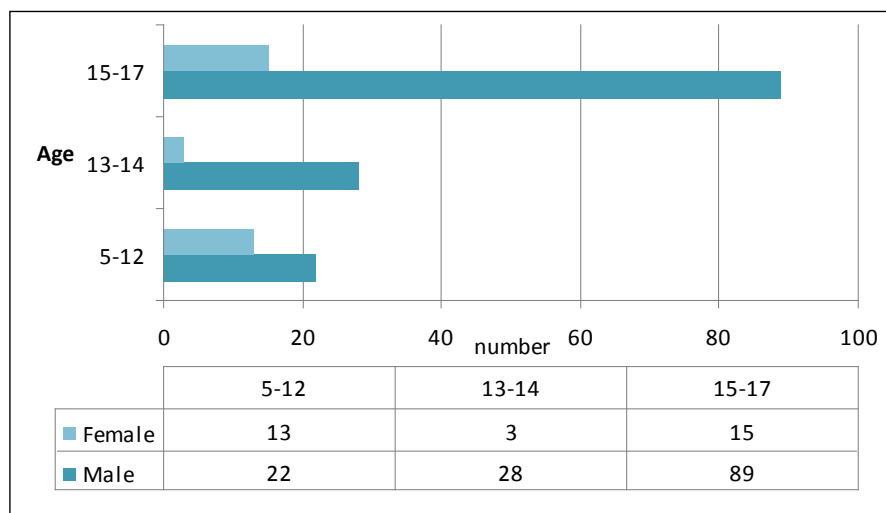


Figure 4.9: Distribution of Street Child Labourers by Division

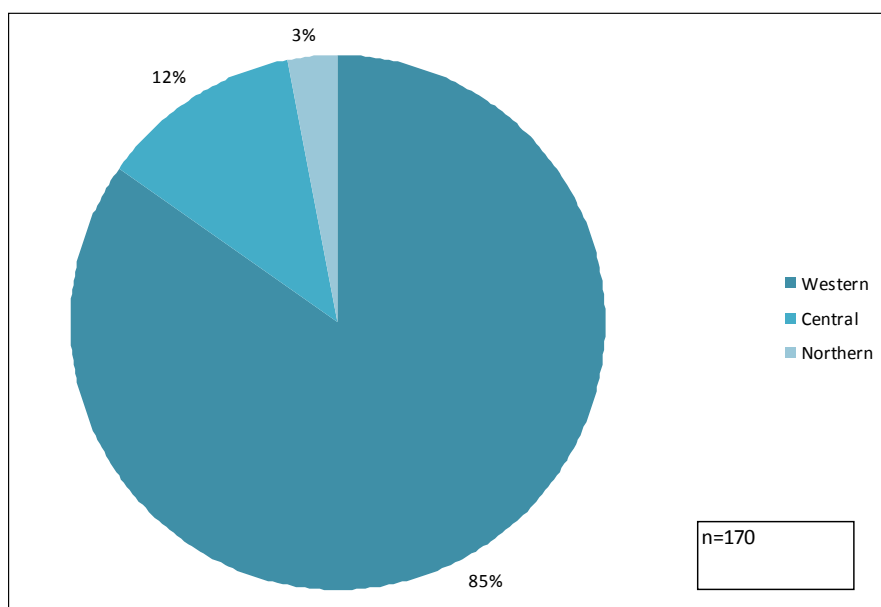
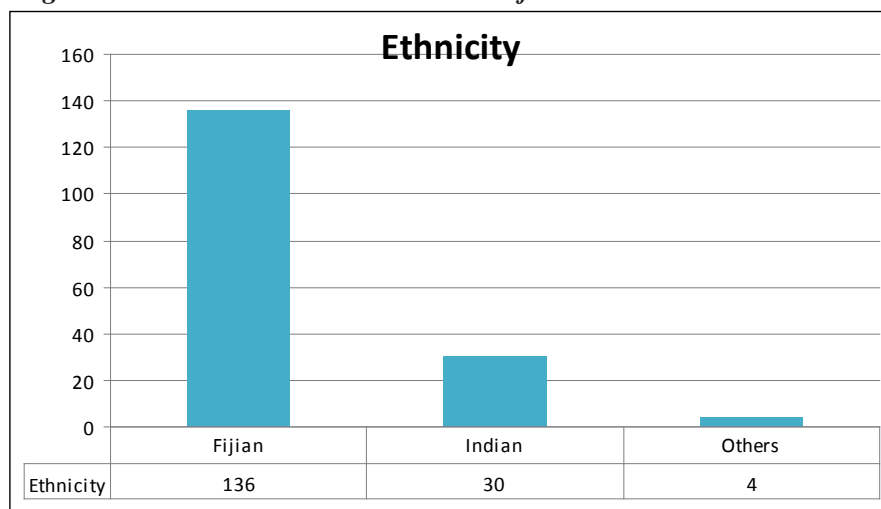


Figure 5.0: Ethnic Distribution of Street Child Labourers



Categorizing street children in child labour was based on various conditions including the child's age, hours of work and working conditions, the nature of the work, whether the child was going to school or not, guidelines provided by C138 and C182 and national legislations, and the **child's perception and responses regarding their work**. The classifications including hazardous work are reported here according to the assessments and conditions set out by the research team, as Fiji does not have a list of hazardous work for children available.

Each case was reviewed to assess whether the work was harmful to the physical, emotional and moral health and well-being of the child. Data of street children in child labour was sorted into hazardous work, the unconditional worst forms of child labour, and child labourers in general, including children not engaged in light work, and children in non-hazardous work.

It is worth mentioning at this stage that the research team, in consultation with the ILO- IPEC's Fiji Tackling Child Labour through Education programme (TACKLE), and with reference to the labour legislation in Fiji and the relevant ILO conventions, excluded 44 street children from the child labour category. The research team felt, though, on speaking with the respondents in this cohort, that this group should definitely be treated as street children at risk of falling into child labour and its worst forms, as in reality they were prone to the same sets of risk factors as those street children deemed to be in child labour.

Table 4.1: Distribution Of Street Children In Child Labour, Not In Child Labour By Age And Work

Classification	Categories of Work	Age Category			Total (n)
		< 12	< 15	<18	
Street Children in Child Labour	unconditional worst forms of child labour	4	-	6	10
	hazardous work	14	26	98	138
	non-hazardous work	17	5	-	22
Total number of Street Children in Child Labour		35	31	104	170
Street children not in child labour	household chores	7	1	8	16
	non-hazardous work	-	-	20	20
	light work	-	8	-	8
Total Number of Street Children not in Child Labour		7	9	28	44

CURRENT WORK, WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF STREET CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

Street children in child labour were found to be engaged in a wide variety of activities. The most common types of work are pushing wheel barrows in and around the Suva market, street vending and scrap metal collection. Other types of work that they are currently engaged in are collecting scrap metal, selling sweets and vegetables on the streets, shining shoes, packing, loading minivans and unloading trucks, market vending, and begging.

Younger children (less than 15 years) tend to be vendors on either the street or in the Suva Market while scrap metal collection, wheelbarrow pushing and sex work predominate for the older cohorts of street children in child labour. As expected, the Suva-Nausori corridor where most of the business opportunities are present, has the widest variety of job types. The Street children in the Western and Northern divisions are employed within a smaller range of employment types with the predominance of car washing and street/market vending.

Whilst there are limitations to drawing conclusions on ethnic grounds, what does emerge from the data on ethnicity is that by and large Indo-Fijian street children in child labour work as vendors or in begging, whereas Fijian street children work as wheelbarrow boys or scrap metal collectors.

Younger street children in child labour from both ethnic groups are more commonly found in street or market vending, but older Fijian street children in child labour move out of vending towards heavier, manual hazardous work. The high number of Fijian children employed in hazardous work underscores this division, with the majority engaged as wheel barrow boys.

HOURS OF WORK

Of the total number of street children in child labour, 33 children (19.4%) stated that they worked over 12 hours per day and 87 children (51.2%) worked 8 to 12 hours per day. The most common form of work for children under 12 years and between 12 to 14 years old was as market vendors and scrap metal scavengers.

Street children in child labour between 15 to 17 years were most commonly involved in hazardous work. The 10 children involved in the 'unconditional' worst forms of child labour were from the under 12 and 15-17 year cohorts, and were engaged in sex work and begging.

Table 4.2: Street Children in Child Labour under 12 years old by category, type of work and hours of work

Categories of work	Types of work	Schooling	Daily working hours				Total (n)
			< 5 hours	5-8 hours	8-12 hours	> 12 hours	
UWFCL	Begging	Yes	-	1	-	-	1
		No	1	1	1	-	3
Hazardous work	Car wash	Yes	1	1	-	-	2
		No	-	-	1	-	1
	Construction worker	Yes	-	-	1	-	1
	Market vendor	Yes	-	-	1	-	1
	Scrap metal scavenger	Yes	6	1	-	-	7
	Street vendors	Yes	-	-	2	-	2
Non-hazardous child labour	Domestic work	Yes	-	1	-	-	1
	Market vendor	Yes	3	1	-	-	4
	Street vendors	Yes	9	-	2	-	11
		No	-	-	1	-	1
Total (n)			20	6	9	-	35

Table 4.3: Street Children in Child Labour 12-14 years old (< 15) by category, type of work and hours of work

Categories of work	Types of work	Schooling	Daily working hours				Total (n)
			< 5 hours	5-8 hours	8-12 hours	> 12 hours	
Hazardous work	Car wash	Yes	1	-	-	-	1
		No	-	-	1	1	2
	Garage worker	No	-	-	1	-	1
	Market vendor	Yes	-	1	4	4	9
	Scrap metal scavenger	Yes	1	3	1	-	5
		No	-	3	-	-	3
	Street vendors	Yes	-	-	1	-	1
	Shoe shine	No	-	1	-	-	1
	Wheel barrow boys	Yes	-	-	1	-	1
		No	-	-	2	-	2
Non-hazardous child labour	Market vendor	No	-	-	2	-	2
	Street vendors/sweet sellers	No	-	-	3	-	3
Total (n)			2	8	16	5	31

Table 4.4: Street Children In Child Labour 15-17 years old (<18) by category, type of work and hours of work

Categories of work	Types of work	Schooling	Daily working hours				Total (n)	
			< 5 hours	5-8 hours	8-12 hours	> 12 hours		
UWFCL	Sex worker	No	1	3	-	1	5	
	Begging	No	-	-	1	-	1	
Hazardous work	Car wash	Yes	-	-	1	-	1	
		No	-	-	5	-	5	
	Construction worker	Yes	-	-	1	-	1	
	Garbage truck boy	No	-	-	1	-	1	
	Loading/ unloading	Yes	-	-	1	-	1	
		No	1	-	1	-	2	
	Market vendors	No	-	-	1	-	1	
	Scrap metal scavenger	Yes	1	-	1	-	2	
		No	-	4	5	-	9	
	Security	No	-	1	-	-	1	
	Shoe shine	No	-	1	3	3	7	
	Street cleaner	No	-	-	1	-	1	
	Wheel barrow	Yes	-	2	-	3	5	
		No	-	-	5	14	19	
	Barber	No	-	-	1	-	1	
	Caddy boy	Yes	-	-	1	-	1	
	Farming	No	-	-	1	-	1	
	Gardener	No	-	-	4	-	4	
	Domestic work	No	-	-	1	1	2	
	Market vendors	Yes	-	-	8	-	8	
		No	-	-	8	2	10	
	Row boy	No	-	-	-	1	1	
	Salesperson	No	-	-	3	1	4	
	Street vendors	Yes	-	-	4	-	4	
		No	-	-	4	2	6	
	Total (n)			3	11	62	28	104

EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOUR

More than half (59%), or 100 of the street children in child labour are not schooling. This includes 5 children under 12 years, 14 children between 12-14 years, and 81 children between 15-17 years. Although above the minimum age of employment, the majority of this group (15 to 17 years) have been categorized as ‘hazardous child labourers’ base on their working conditions and their own perceptions of the harm and risks that they face as a consequence of their work. Children in car washing stated that their working conditions, for example, standing for very long hours and often standing in the rain without any shelter and being verbally abused by customers, was hazardous. Children unloading and loading in supermarkets stated that they carried loads as heavy as 50kg. The data shows that most street children in hazardous work are involved in pushing loaded wheelbarrows.

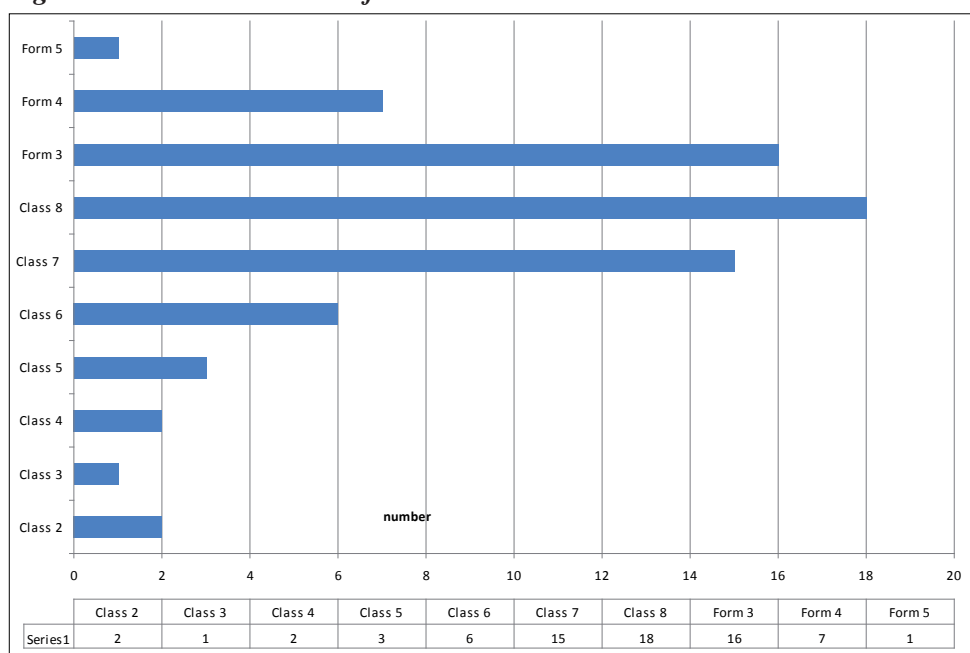
Street Children in child labour start work at early age. Just over half of those children who answered the question started work when they were less than 12 years old. In all cases the vast majority of street children began working in child labour when they were 14 years or younger. Most of the children only went through primary school before they left school, with the majority of them dropping out of school at Class 8 level, followed by children who dropped out of school in Class 7 and Form 3. A very small number of street children in child labour had reached higher secondary school level.

The most common reason given by children for dropping out of school was no school fees (44%). Other reasons given for dropping out of school was lack of interest in school, peer pressure, failed exams, mistreated by teachers, expelled from school, to support the family, parents did not send to school, and because of work pressures.

Table 4.5: Street children in child labour by education status

Age	Education Status		Total
	In School	Not in School	
under 12 years	30	5	35
12-14 years	17	14	31
15-17 years	23	81	104
Total	70	100	170

Figure 5.1 Education status of street children in child labour who are school dropouts



LIVING CONDITIONS

The majority of street children in child labour were found to live at home with their parents (over 50%) and other relatives (28%). A few also lived with friends and other street children. Only 12 children interviewed actually lived on the street. In terms of the types of accommodation that street children live in, most children stated that they lived in informal or squatter settlements, indicating links between street children in child labour and these urban-based informal or squatter communities. Any interventions that follow the research should consider these links in more detail. Some of the children also stated that they sometimes live on the street, particularly during peak periods, but their usual place of residence is home.

REASONS FOR WORKING: PUSH AND PULL FACTORS

The street children in child labour working in the street have various reasons for working. Most of the children (90%) stated that they enjoy the work they were doing. Respondents stated that work, like scrap metal scavenging is ‘easy’ money and suffices their needs.

Most of the street children in child labour are paid for their work with almost all of them being paid in cash. With regard to the wages received by street children in child labour, the data is revealing. Sex work, although the sample is small, pays higher wages with 4 of the 5 children in sex work reporting weekly wages of more than \$200 and the fifth earning more than \$100. Scrap metal collectors, wheel barrow boys and some vendors also reported earning wages in excess of \$100 per week. Notwithstanding the possibility of respondents exaggerating their income, this evidence will mean that interventions to withdraw children from street labour will need to take into account the wages that working on the street affords.

The challenges of convincing ‘poor’ street children that education is an option that would add value to their lives are demonstrated by the data on whether children enjoy their work and why. Over 80% of street children in child labour stated that they enjoyed their work regardless of the type of work. The majority of those street children who answered the question of why they enjoyed work explained that this was because of the money that they earned doing it. About 35% of them enjoyed work on the streets because it was “easy money”, and a further group stated that they enjoyed work because it allowed them to support their families and allowed them to support themselves. Only a small percentage of street children in child labour stated that they enjoyed work because it allowed them to pay their school fees (2%).

Reasons given by street children in child labour for enjoying the work they are doing include:

- Do not need any qualification
- Easy Cash
- I am my own boss
- I can keep away from committing crime
- I can pay for my school materials
- I can support my education
- I can support my family
- I get to earn money to support myself
- It is the only job I can get
- It's fun
- No other available jobs
- I get to serve others

Key informants agreed that there are more children on the streets now (compared to 5-10 years ago), either working or simply roaming the streets. Children on the street and working on the street are seen as a product of social and economic causes. It is these causes that must be identified and investigated to best address children working on the street.

Children find themselves on the streets primarily due to poverty and a non supportive family environment. These are reflected in responses such as: *'I was chased by my family because they don't agree with my lifestyle....of selling drugs'*.

Factors contributing to children engaging in child labour include:

- pressures from within the family unit
- problems at home
- the inability of the family to cope with its financial instability
- neglect at home and extending to pressures outside the child's family unit
- having a criminal record thus preventing opportunities in securing a full time job
- peer pressure
- expelled from school
- poor academic performance
- the basic reality that life is hard without money,
- all contribute to the child engaging in life on the street.

A child from a family with a low socio-economic status, where there is no source of income for the family, is depended on to work to provide income. Attending school is seen as a financial burden for the family and children are encouraged to work and earn to provide for the family. Coupled with lack of importance placed on attending school and the lack of conducive learning environment at school, children 'drop out' of school, disillusioned to remain in school. Neglect from the family and the lack of proper parenting and support from the family lead children to find this love, company, support and enjoyment on the street.

It was found that a high number of street children in child labour have criminal records either being charged or 'on the run' or have had some form of contact with the law.

The types of other activities identified by street children in child labour that they also get involved in are selling drugs, 'choking', robbing, and some pick pocketing. Respondents stated that some of the work they engage in is risky (they are chased and harassed by the police) and feel that they are stigmatized and discriminated against for the work they do. Street children in child labour stated that they know that there are better opportunities available to them but that they need training and qualifications in order to access these opportunities. These opportunities were identified as a better job, a 'normal' job and a 'safer' job that pays better.

'Work nowadays is through who you know....it's good to have someone you already know inside so they can fix you with a job' (response from respondent engaged in scrap metal collection)

They expressed a desire to go back to school, either into the formal education system (for those who are of age to do so) or to attend vocational training with the aim at improving their life and ability to provide for their family. For most, because their parents are not working, they are not able to afford to send children to school. These children are left wondering where their next meal is coming from.

CHALLENGES FACED WORKING WITH STREET CHILDREN AND STREET CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOR

Challenges are faced both internally (working with the children, their families) and externally (the community, at the national level). These include:

- There are low funds and limited resources to determine the scale of street children in child labour implement targeted action, and monitoring street children cases.
- Capacity issues are faced in terms of qualified persons working with children and their families. It was expressed that there is a need for counseling skills to be taught to better enable them to deal with cases more effectively. There are emotional issues that are involved with dealing with children and when reuniting children with their families. Resource persons must have the capacity to deal with these issues effectively.
- Lack of programmes to look after street children in child labour and still provide the family with the income that the child is earning from working. There is no money to pay for vocational training or skills education for these children who are taken out from child labour.
- Lack of formal mechanism and services to take street children in child labour off the streets and out of work, and to provide rehabilitation and education support.
- There is a lack of family support and a supportive attitude towards children. Some families encourage child labour. They want their children to work as this is 'easy' money for them. Working with existing mindsets, attitudes and cultures that tolerate or even encourage child labour is challenging.
- Employers who do not comply with the labour laws deny the child labour issue and see it as a means or way they intervene to help the child.
- Children themselves do not want to stop working as they enjoy earning money and working/living on the streets. Street children in child labour are aware of the 'power' of money and want to continue to earn that money.
- Younger street children are often strongly influenced by adults or older street children to stay on the streets thus creating fear within the child to leave the streets and the work he or she is engaged in.
- There is a lack of political will to prioritize the Street Children issue, the Child Labour issue and child exploitation and abuse. This is reflected by the limited resources that are allocated by government to combat these issues.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS STREET CHILDREN AND CHILD LABOR

Stakeholders, both Government and civil society saw themselves as playing important roles in addressing the issue of Street Children and Street Children in Child Labour. These roles include working with families to strengthen the family unit; enhancing the lives of individuals by sitting and listening to their stories; working with the community through the church on improving parenting skills and the importance of looking after the needs of the child; providing court support and advice to those children who are especially at risk, and referring children and families to relevant support services and empowerment programmes.

Government has a role to play in allocating resources to address the issue and create an enabling environment for taking children off the street and out of child labour. According to survey respondents, providing assistance, financially, socially, and resource-wise is the role of Government. These include:

- Setting up vocational or educational programmes to enable street child labourers to attain certified qualifications
- Assisting street children above the minimum age and in child labour to apply for better job opportunities, such as for the British Army
- Providing housing facilities for street children and improve their current housing facilities. This includes supplying the urban ‘informal’ community with electricity so students can study at night.
- Assisting poor families to get their children back into school, and assisting families who cannot look after their children with support programmes, possibly conditional cash transfers.
- Providing free education for those children who can and want to go back to school.
- Creating employment that is not hazardous and with ‘decent’ working conditions for street children and helping them with creating small businesses.
- Assisting street children with their youth initiatives such as sports development programmes, community outreach, peer education and life skills.
- Raising awareness in communities and schools on the issue of child labour and working with other stakeholders to coordinate initiatives to address the issue.

It was also emphasized that the general community has an important role to play in helping street children, and that the public should not discriminate against street children, but provide them with support and guidance. Stakeholders suggested that communities can assist in providing resources and developing programmes to address the ‘root causes of street child labour’.

This can be done by mobilizing opportunities to provide street children with ‘safe’ jobs within the community, and preventing more children from joining the growing numbers of street children in child labour.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey was able to identify some of the different types of work the children do along the streets in urban towns and cities. Some children engage in hazardous work and some children below the legal working age . It was also noted that most of the children working on the streets are living at home. The few who are homeless find shelter at the homes available for them, including at the Ark of Hope and Rescue Mission, two NGOs that assist ‘street kids’.

Some of the children miss school to come and work. Fridays and Saturdays are the peak days for wheelbarrow boys who get a lot of returns (cash). A group of scrap metal collectors working during a school day indicated that they often missed school to collect scrap metal.

There was a general agreement by NGOs and state actors such as the Police and the Ministry of Social Welfare that it is a growing concern to see the increasing numbers of children on the street and working. All stakeholders interviewed stated that all street children are involved in some form of child labour.

The concept of child labour is reasonably well understood at a general level by stakeholders, although there were stakeholders who defined child labour as: children below 18 working; children under the age of 12 working for a business and not paid for the work they do; children who are supposed to be in school but working; and parents forcing their child to go and work. It is obvious that more awareness, training and capacity building to understand the child labour issue is needed.

The disparity lies in how street children are viewed, and therefore determining how they are approached and assisted. There are views that these children must be taken off the streets and withdrawn completely from child labour. They are viewed as the problem, as a nuisance and hindrance to the communities and the country as a whole.

However, there seems to be more understanding and consensus, especially from those working directly with them, that the underlying factors and issues that brought them to the streets in the first place are the problem, and that these need to be addressed. Half of the respondents interviewed had heard of the term ‘child labour’ and stated that it is illegal in nature. Their feelings were that children should be in school and not working especially young children.

‘People tell me what’s your business with these children.....I tell them, they are all our children and gifts from God to be cared for and looked after’





Research Study 3:

CHILDREN'S WORK IN RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

RESEARCH STUDY 3: CHILDREN’S WORK IN RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Past surveys (Child labour in Tobacco Farms in Fiji: British American Tobacco) clearly highlight how children are mostly engaged in work in rural and agricultural communities in Fiji. Informal discussions with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education revealed that children were involved in selling agricultural products in the market from family farms. Children also provided seasonal labour on farms, particularly sugar cane farms and either leave school completely or during the cane cutting season to harvest. It was also revealed that children in rural areas and villages drop out of school at an early age to farm because they are able to earn an income and that less priority is placed on completing education as opposed to earning an income. Of growing concern was the ‘suspicion’ that a number of children were engaged in marijuana cultivation.

In Fiji, the agricultural sector constitutes of two main sub sectors crops and livestock. The crops sub-sector includes sugar and non-sugar - traditional root crops (dalo, cassava and yaqona), tropical fruits (pineapple, papaw and mango), vegetables, rice, spices, cocoa, coconut products. The livestock sub sector includes beef, dairy, pork, poultry, sheep, goat, and bee stocks. The agricultural activities chosen for this survey were the major ‘legal’ economically viable agricultural activities in Fiji.

The survey was conducted in communities which were pre-selected in consultation with the research committee members including representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, and Fiji Employers Federation. The communities selected were located in areas where Fiji’s major economically viable agriculture activities are prominent.

- Sugarcane – Seaqaqa (Macuata) and Rakiraki (Ra)
- Copra - Vuna, (Taveuni)
- Taro - Delaivuna (Taveuni)
- Kava (Piper methysticum) - Qila (Taveuni)
- Vegetables and Fruits - Nabaka (Nadroga)
- Tobacco – Dubalevu (Nadroga)
- Fisheries – Malake (Ra)
- Poultry, Piggery & Dairy – Naduruloulou (Naitasiri) and Waimaro (Tailevu)
- Rice Dreketi (Macuata)

The Rural and Agriculture survey interviewed 343 children. These children were identified from the household survey, where by 287 households were surveyed. From the 287 households, children between the age of 5 and 17 years of age who stated that they had worked for more than one hour in the reference week, were selected and interviewed. It should be noted that not all the children interviewed were child labours. The children interviewed lived on the farms or in the targeted farming areas. The survey interviewed the children in order to determine child labour situations.

15 Key informant interviews were conducted with school leaders, principals, teachers, state officials, and religious or community leaders. 7 Focus Group/Conferencing Method discussions were facilitated with schools and communities in the Fisheries, Tobacco, Fruit and Vegetable agricultural sectors. A total of 77 females and 83 males participated.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The summary of findings provided below helps to explain the characteristics of children who are perceived to be child labourers in agricultural communities. This is followed by a brief explanation on the types of jobs these children are involved in and the type of households they come from. The summary also has a section on the parents and teacher's perceptions in relation to the working children.

AGE, GENDER AND ETHNIC DISTRIBUTION

The survey had most of the data collected in the Northern division where 61% of the children were from. This concentration is mainly due to the selection of agricultural produce, as this was the criteria used for identifying the target areas.

The reason behind having a small proportion of children interviewed in the central division was because cattle and piggery farms were to be targeted in the central and during the survey period these farms were quarantined because of an infection outbreak. It was therefore impossible to visit the farming area.

More than half (65%) of the children interviewed were between 5 to 12 years. 19% were above 15 which is the legal working age in Fiji. There were more males (55.7%) interviewed compared to females (44.3%)

More males were interviewed as compared to females. The majority of children interviewed were still in school (87%). A slightly higher proportion of females (88%) were schooling compared to males (85.7%). The age group from 15 to 17 years had a greater proportion of school dropouts, compared to the younger age groups.

Figure 5.2: Age Distribution of Children

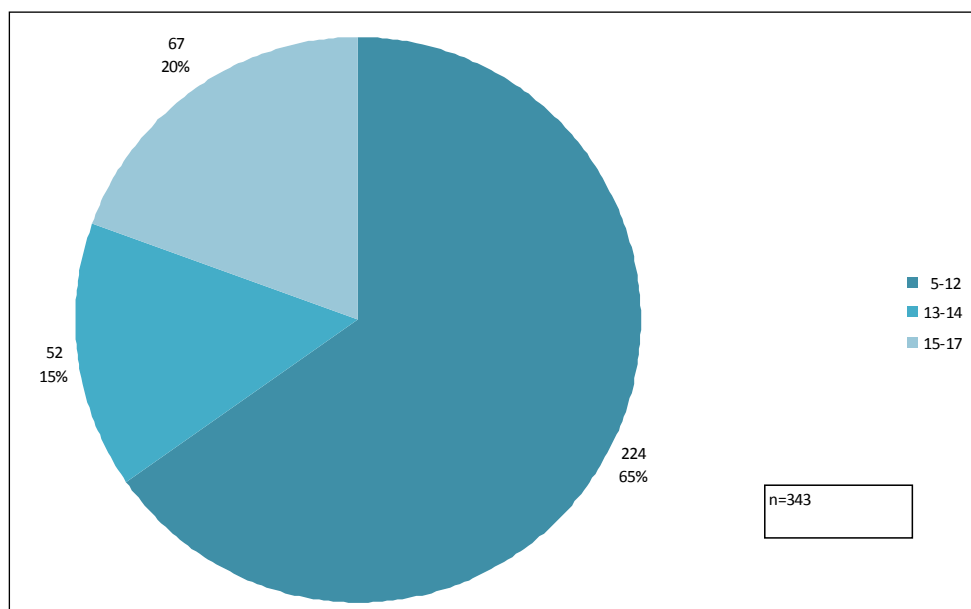


Figure 5.3: Distribution of Children by Division

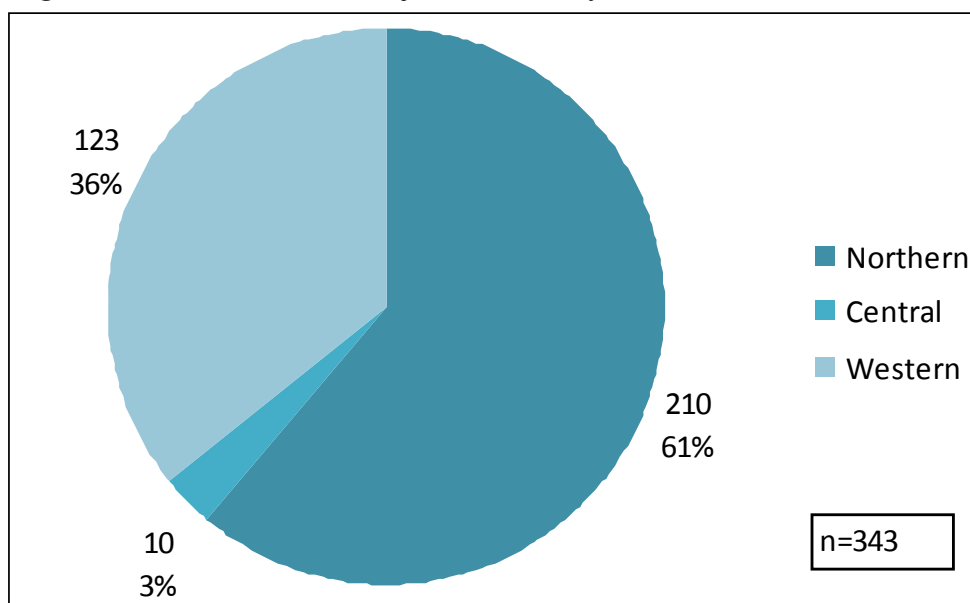


Figure 5.4: Distribution of Children by Gender

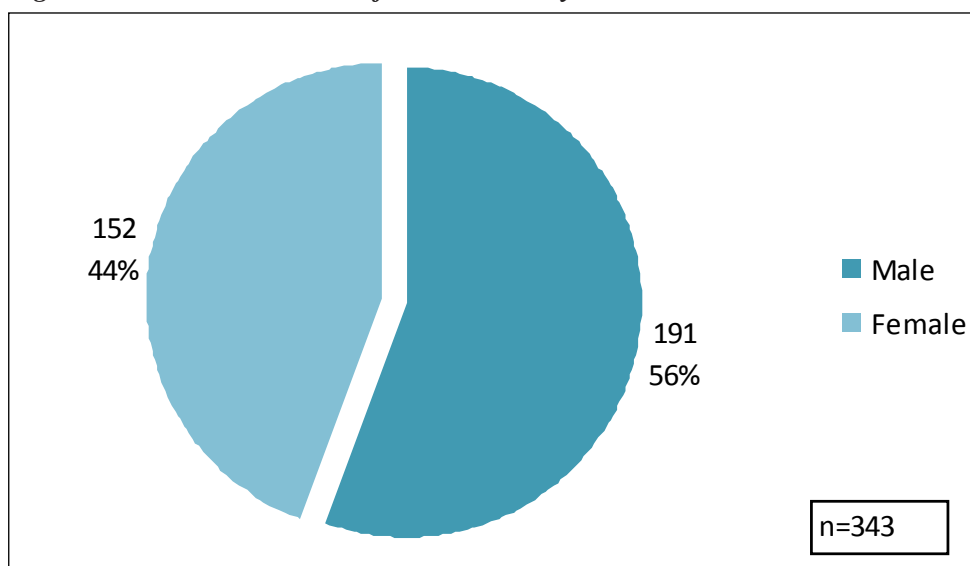
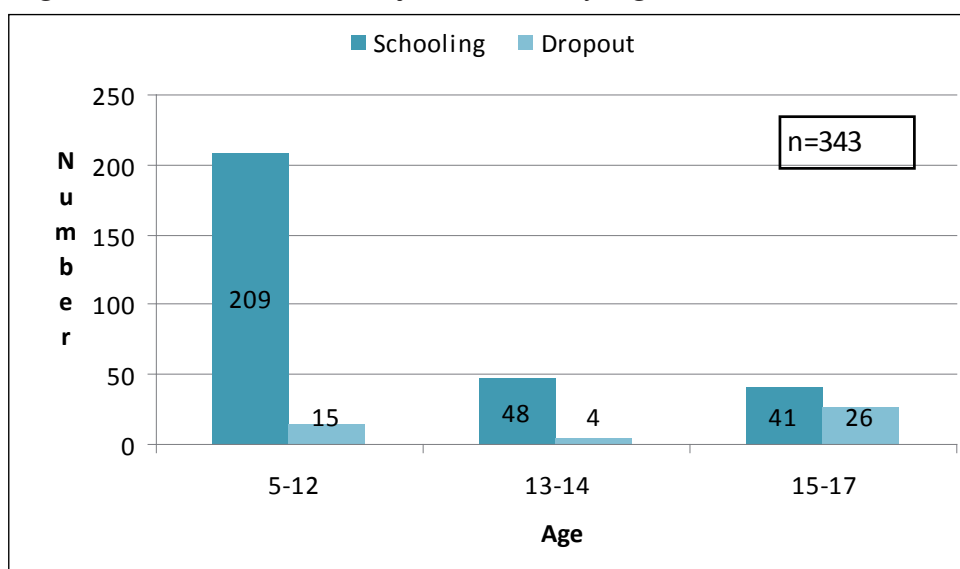


Figure 5.5: Distribution of Children by Age / Education Status



THE WORKING CHILDREN IN RURAL AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Of the 343 children interviewed, 303 stated that they worked for more than one hour in the reference week. The children who worked for more than an hour were asked to identify their status in relation to the type of work they did. Most of the children, 281, stated that they were unpaid family workers, 8 children stated that they were employees and 3 stated they were self employed.

Figure 5.6: Distribution of Children by type of work

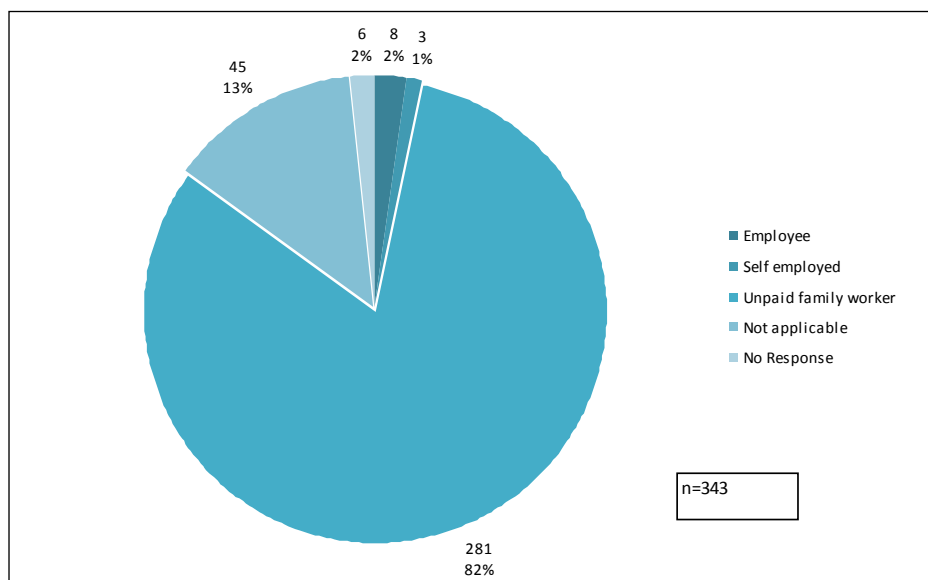
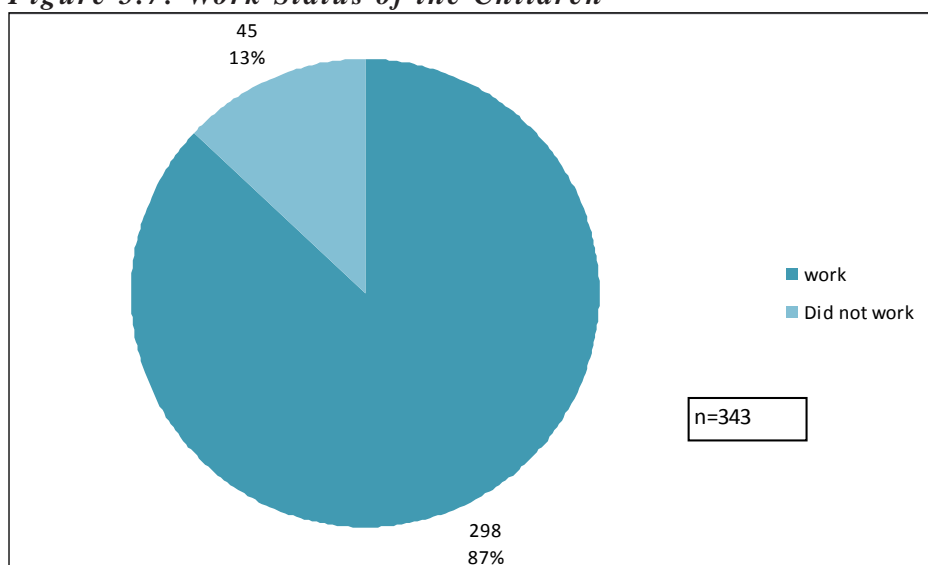


Figure 5.7: Work Status of the Children



The survey showed that children in agricultural communities are involved in farm work entwined with household chores including cleaning the house, washing clothes and dishes, collecting firewood, cleaning the compound, and cooking. 29.5% of the children identified working in the agricultural sector as their main work activity. These included livestock farming activities, other farming activities such as vegetable farming and planting dalo and cassava, and fishing.

CHILD LABOUR AND HAZARDOUS WORK

Of the 343 children, 61% (209) were categorized as involved in child labour activities, based on the age of the child, whether the child was going to school, and the child's responses to questions in relation to hazardous working conditions. The majority of children engaged in child labour were males. Most of the children live with their families and contribute to almost all aspects of the family's well being.

Figure 5.8: Gender Distribution of Child Labourers

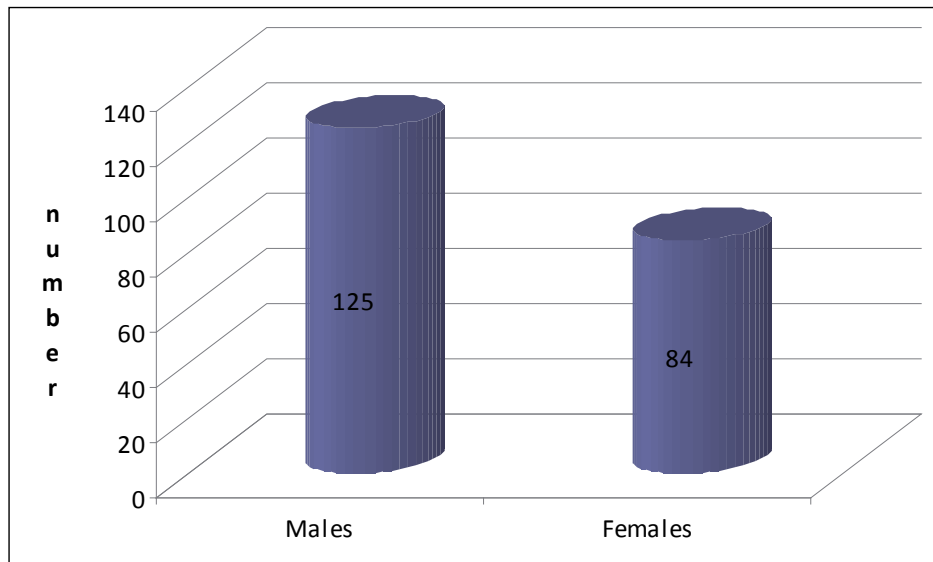


Figure 5.9: Ethnic Distribution of Child Labourers

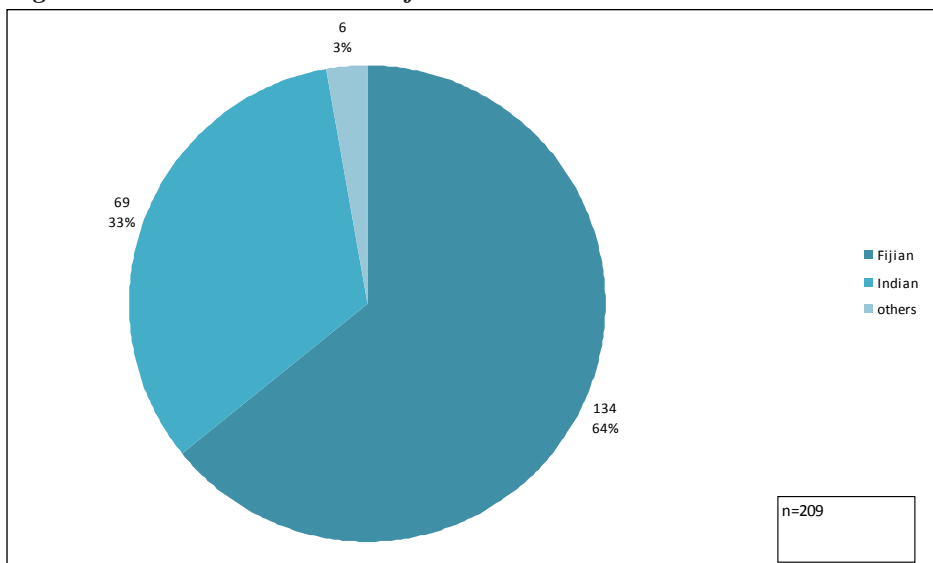


Table 4.6: Age Distribution of Child Labourers

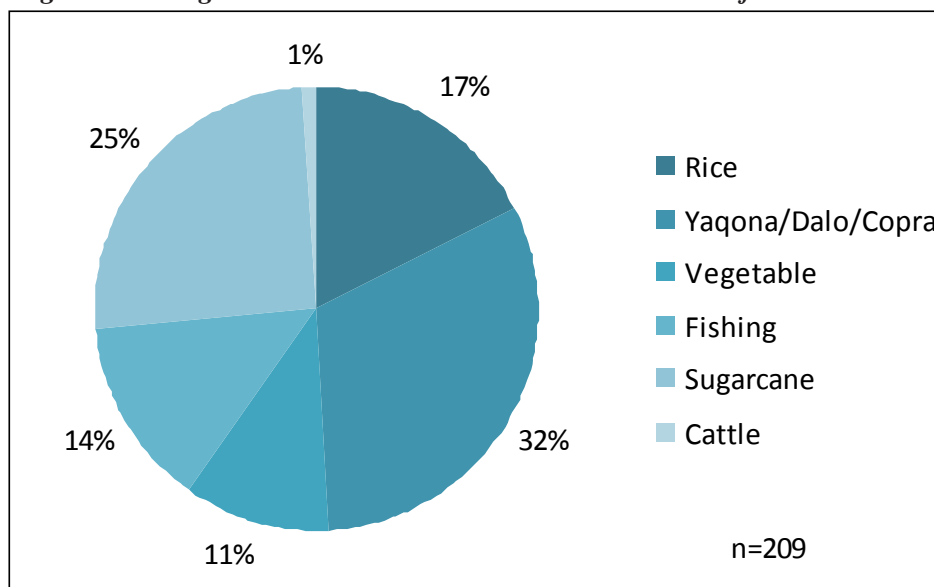
Age (yrs)	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Total
Number	9	12	15	16	20	21	15	17	22	13	21	16	12	209
Percent (%)	4.3	5.7	7.2	7.7	9.6	10.1	7.2	8.1	10.4	6.2	10.1	7.5	5.7	100

The majority of the 209 children in child labour were identified as children involved in hazardous work or below the minimum age of employment who were working and not going to school (school ‘push outs’). The types of work that these children combine are identified in the Table below. Most of the children also combine household activities with their farm duties. One common activity for children and adolescents in rural cattle and goat farming areas is herding. Herding involves several activities including guiding the cattle to the grazing grounds in the morning and back home again at the end of the day; keeping the cattle together; and making sure cattle have enough to graze on. In some cases the children are expected to collect freshly cut grass for cattle feed.

Table 4.7: Agricultural Activities the children were engaged in during the reference week

Agricultural activities	Children’s activities
Live stock rearing	Cattle farming; Pig farming – feeding pigs, (cleaning pens); Goat farming – feeding goat, return goat to shed
Dairy farming	Cattle Farming – feed cattle; Dairy farming – milk the cows, fill water trough
Poultry farming	Chicken – feed chickens; Ducks – feed ducks
Fish Farming	Fishing
Drying copra	Collect coconuts; Removing coconut flesh for drying
Root Crop farming	Taro farming; Cassava farming; Weeding/cleaning plantation; Harvesting mature root crops
Rice farming	Planting rice; Harvesting rice
*Yaqona farming	Planting Yaqona; Weeding/cleaning Yaqona plantation; Harvesting Yaqona
Tobacco farming	Weeding/cleaning plantation; Harvesting tobacco
Sugar Cane	Plant sugar cane; Harvest cane sugar
Vegetable and fruit farming	Prepare garden; Weed/clean garden; Harvest vegetables and fruits
Selling of agricultural produce	Preparation of the sale of vegetables and fruits; Carrying produce to site for sale of produce; Manning the vegetable/fruit stall

Figure 6.0: Agricultural areas these children are from



NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The main response from all the children interviewed in relation to non-agricultural work activities is involvement in domestic work or household chores. Domestic work ranges from sweeping the house, washing the clothes, scrubbing pots to cooking. The young children and majority of the adolescent girls do domestic work. Taking care of younger siblings is also included.

It is also important to note that two other major activities that the children do is collecting firewood and collecting water. This is indicative of the lack of piped water in some of these areas. Most of the children have a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities that they do in a week which they are allocated according to the pressing need of the family.

Children stated that work becomes more demanding during the harvesting and planting seasons. All children are expected to do their bit and the day starts as early as 5am in the mornings. Most of the children are expected to help out until the season finishes.

Box 14: Multi-tasking

A 15 year old male revealed that he worked as a “blacksmith” and also repairs tyre as part of his normal employment, apart from normal farming chores.

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

HAZARDOUS WORK ACTIVITIES

The proportion of children identified in hazardous activity was 55% (190). Those who are not in hazardous activity but working and out of school made up 6% (19). It must be clearly stated at the outset that the data did not capture much of the necessary details to allow for further indulgence into the specifics and parameters of each mentioned hazards pertaining to each individual child. It should be understood that the responses from the children to the questions on hazards are the measures used in this analysis.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Age group in Hazardous activity

Age groups	Hazards		Total
	Yes	No	
5-7	33	36	69
8-10	55	49	104
11-12	32	19	51
13-14	33	19	52
15-17	37	30	67

Table 4.8: Hazards children are exposed to in the work they do

Types of activity	Number	Dominant age-group*
Operate machine/heavy equipment	47	15-17
Carry heavy loads	128	8-10
Exposed to dust and fumes	11	15-17
Exposed to open fire	8	8-10
Experience extreme heat and cold	42	13-14
Work in water e.g. sea, river, lake, pond	9	8-10
Workplace too dark/confined	6	8-10
Handle agro-chemicals	23	15-17
Explosives	10	15-17
Verbal abuse	102	8-10
Repeated insults	30	8-10
Beaten/physically hurt	73	8-10
Sexually harassed	4	15-17

** The most common age cohort that indicated they were exposed to hazard listed. Some of the children noted down that they experience more than one of the hazards identified.*

Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to hazardous working conditions, which have deep rooted consequences on their human rights, health and future. Most of the children stated that they carry heavy loads while working, the second most common hazard is verbal abuse, followed by beatings and physical abuse during work. It is also important to note that children working with chemicals and machinery do not wear the correct protective outfit and are inadequately trained. The following excerpts describes some of the hazards that children experience in the various agricultural sectors, taken from qualitative data:

FISHING

Children are often expected to put together whatever is needed for fishing trips under the guidance of an adult. In preparation to go fishing or diving, the outboard motor fuel tank is filled to capacity and extra fuel is also at hand for any urgent need. The children are directly involved in steering outboard motors and fishing and deep sea diving. Deep sea diving is usually done without proper training in diving, and without using fuel appropriate outfit and diving gear.

Box 15: I don't need to go to school

A child was staying with his grand mother admitted that he ran away from his parents because he did not want to go back to school. He had lost interest in school but his mother insists he should go whenever he missed school. He said "Village life is good for me. I don't have to go to school; I prefer to go out to sea. I don't dive although my friends do; however, I help in taking the boat around at night. I get paid for that."

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

SUGARCANE

During harvesting season the children interviewed stated that they wake up early as early as 5am and work late into the afternoon until 6pm, cutting cane, loading and stacking cane onto trucks. In addition to these long working hours, children are also exposed to harsh weather conditions and use cane knives (machetes) to work. During non harvesting seasons, the children are normally involved in weeding and spraying using chemicals, carrying fertilizers, and fertilizing the young growing canes without wearing any protective gear.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

The study also found that children plough the land in preparation for planting, the use of bullocks and hoe, and spray fertilizers where it's needed. Children harvest or pick mature vegetables and fruits for long periods of time whilst carrying a load at the same time.

Box 16: Working for Education

Three children aged 5, 12 (both female) and 13 (male) are currently attending school. They come from a poor family so they work in another farmer's vegetable and fruit farms during the weekend earning \$5.00 each daily. This money is for their bus fare to school.

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

Farmers who own tractors and other machineries (trucks and cars etc) that are used in the farm often have make-shift workshops where children are involved in welding and tyre repair. Children involved in this informal employment weld and do repair works with no training and in many cases without proper safety equipment.

TOBACCO

Children in Tobacco farming were involved in ploughing land using bullocks and the hoe, spraying fertilizers (using chemicals), planting and picking of tobacco.

DALO (TARO) AND YAQONA (PIPER METHYSTICUM)

Children were involved in planting, harvesting, selling, weeding plantation, spraying fertilizers, and carrying up to 50kg sack loads of fertilizers as well as products.

COPRA

Children collect coconuts and carrying these to the designated area, then split open the coconuts and remove all the flesh using very sharp knives. They also gather firewood for use in the dryer and some prepare the dryers.

RICE, POULTRY AND PIGGERY, AND DAIRY FARM

Children harvest rice using a sharp sickle. They are also engaged in carrying heavy loads such as rice and the feed for cattle, chicken and pigs. Poultry, piggery and dairy farming are more small-scale, home-based activity.

Box 17: Early start to the day

A 13 year old male said that he woke up at 5.00am to start cutting copra for the family earnings. A normal household target per week in an estate is 200kg.

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FAMILIES

Through informal interviews, the majority of the families of these children stated that they encounter financial difficulties. The economic status of these families largely determined by the viability of their agricultural activity has a bearing on the existence of child labour within their community. During the interviews the children stated they are aware of the financial constraints that their families struggle through and they accept having to work on the farm instead of going to school. Cattle are classified as part of the family capital/asset for those who own them. Most families keep one or a few because it can be put to good use.

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

A striking feature of the families of the children that were interviewed was that they came from large households. In some instances, children were living with their extended family- this was a common family feature in the rural agricultural communities, as a traditional way of living where they live together as one family, eat and do things communally.

Children from large nuclear families was another common feature in the communities studied. Some families lived off the farm or whatever agricultural activity they are involved in, and also practiced subsistence farming. With their limited and seasonal source of income, these families encourage their children to work to help earn for the family.

A third living arrangement involved children living with relatives. They were either living with their grandparents' or with uncles or aunties. A number of children in these types of living arrangement stated that they worked to earn their keep. These children were either from single parent families, or broken families.

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS FOR CHILD LABOURERS IN RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

This information is integrated with the key informants' views and observations by researchers' together with conferencing notes. The issue of child labour is a cause and consequence of poverty, displacements, illiteracy, and unemployment. With reference to the reasons that the children stated when interviewed about their reasons for working, the study showed that financial constraints, loss of interest in school, family problems and geographical isolation are the main push factors. On the other hand earnings and peer pressure are the main factors.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Quite a number of the children when interviewed stated that they left school due to financial constraints in the family. Daily bus-fare and school materials were too expensive and they felt that their family was better off spending money on things that would benefit the whole family. The scarcity of their family finances pushes these children to opt for work so that they can contribute financially to their family. Despite how meager their child's pay is and discriminatory and hazardous work conditions in some cases, they are still convinced that that is their best option.

Many families need the manual labour of their children because they are unable to pay wage labourers to work the land. As previously mentioned, a good number of children claim that they work as unpaid workers on their family farm.

SCHOOL PUSH-OUT FACTORS AND PEER PRESSURE

Children drop out of school is due to a combination of several factors including a loss of interest in school. Several of the families of the child labourers lived a far distance from the school, and coupled with all the chores that have to attend to early in the mornings this does not foster a conducive environment to emphasise the importance of schooling. The study found that the remoteness of communities and settlements from schools (including vocational centers) which are normally located in villages can be a real challenge in getting access to these services. Road access to agricultural sectors are at times problematic especially from farm feeder roads that are inaccessible by public transport. It is also very expensive to hire transport. Some children have to cross a river on foot or by boat to get to school while others have to walk at least 5km to get to school.

Box 18: Challenges faced in getting to school

“Some of the challenges I face such as having to cross the river early in the morning to get to school and in the afternoon to get home. I also have lots of farm work.” (13 year old male)

A 16 year old girl said she dropped out of school at the age of 14yrs because her cost of transportation to and from school was \$10.00 daily. At the time of the interview, she was about to get married.

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

In some cases administrative procedures in schools poses a barrier to the education of children.

Box 19: Administrative Procedures a Barrier to Education

A family just moved in to live in an estate (copra) and work to enable them to buy some more materials for their home. In this family, there are two children aged 12 and 13 years respectively who usually join the parents as early as 5am in the morning to cut copra until 11.00am almost everyday. According to the parents;

“We were in Suva four years ago and then we decided to come back to the village because it was expensive renting and sending children to school. I believe that we can get a lot of money from farming. My children left school in classes 4 and 5 in a primary school along the Suva Nausori corridor. I tried to enroll them at one of the Primary School back in the village on one of the outer islands but the Head Teacher did not allow us because we did not have the clearance form and school reports from their previous school. I am discouraged by all this so I have decided not to send them to school but I teach them farming. I want my children to learn farming skills and live independently. If they are good farmers, they will get more money”

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

Children who have already out of school are relied upon to contribute to the family's welfare and take on the responsibility of parents. This new role makes them determined to persevere to cope and it permits them to mingle with adults. The 'elevation of their new status' seems to appeal to those children contemplating dropping out of school. Stories of fun, exciting episodes and money earned from those already engaged in sugar cane harvesting gangs and dalo as well as yaqona farming, such as camping out in the isolated farm area and harvesting cane or plant dalo and yaqona appeals to many adolescents.

FAMILY PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES

A small handful of the children have parents who have never been to school and have always farmed their land. In cases like this where priority is given to the land and survival of the family, children of these families are obliged to share the burden of farming to meet the needs of the family. There are also instances where young children between the ages of 5-14, who live with either aged parents or grandparents do everything from domestic work to farming. Some children work to earn quick cash to help them and the family in their current financial situation. Despite the informal arrangement, poor work conditions and meager child's pay, these do not deter children from going out of their way to get a "job".

Box 20: Working but wanting to go to school

"I left school last month (May). I am staying with my mother; my father went away and never returned. My father used to support me to school. Now I help my uncle in the farm. Today, I walked all the way with my uncle to collect taro tops. I like farming and I also like to go to school." (11 year old male)

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN'S STORIES TAKEN FROM QUALITATIVE DATA

- Two children left school when they were 7 & 6 years old. They faced financial problems and these two children now help the parents in the farm.
- Three brothers and sisters age 5, 12 and 13 go to school and also work in other people's farms for one whole day to support their bus fare to school. They earn \$5 on Saturdays.
- A 9 year old girl misses school for two days to look after her grandmother or work in the farm planting vegetables.
- Two brothers, aged 13 and 15, left school because of financial problems. They are now full time farmers in their rice field. They use machetes (cane knives) and chemicals at certain times.
- A 13 year old boy and his 12 year old sister could not go into school because the parents do not have clearance and reports from their previous school. They work to pay for their house materials. According to their mother, "I want to teach my children skills to help them in the future. They can earn more money than many civil servants today."
- A 13 year old boy had missed school for one week saying that he was sick but later mentioned during the interview that he was working throughout the week in the copra field with his father.
- Four children, aged between nine and thirteen (9-13) have not received any formal education. The parents were not educated too. These children can only converse in Hindi or Fijian and very little English. They work in the copra plantation and do other housework and fishing for family consumption.

- Two children age 15 and 16 left school to stay home to do household chores and help parents look after the big family. The younger one left school when he was in class 4, to go fishing and farming with his father. He was not allowed to be interviewed. The older one was doing household chores.
- A young boy aged 15 who was beaten in school by his teacher left school and is now farming. He said he was not going back as he was also not good academically.
- A 14 year old boy left school because of corporal punishment. He also said that he was not good academically.
- A fifteen year old was not good in school. Now he has no interest in school and intends to be a good farmer in the future.
- Two young children who were interviewed highlighted that they need financial assistance to support and keep them in school.
- A seventeen year old girl left school because she failed her she failed form 4. "Also transport was a problem for me. Sometimes we have to walk distance alone from the main road down to our home." Now she does domestic work and works in the family vegetable gardens.
- A 15 year old boy left school at the age of ten, because 'he was weak and a slow learner'. He was found working at a shop sorting yaqona and was interviewed with the help of his friend as he could not converse in English.
- Two brothers aged 10 and 8 were interviewed at home during the survey- they stay with their aunty and fish and collect firewood after school daily.
- A 17 year old girl left school to help her grandmother. She weaves and sometimes gets negative comments from people for being part Fijian.
- Two girls aged 13 and 10yrs are staying with their aunty. They both have 1 uniform each. They mostly engage in household chores and are often verbally abused.
- Two brothers aged 11 and 8 years live with their grandmother and they do a lot of work in the farm, and household chores. Their grandmother is sickly and no one else stays with them.
- Three children aged 10, 8, and 6years stated that their father was sick for the last 8 weeks and could not afford to pay for the children's school fees and stationeries. The three children had not been to school since their father got sick. The living condition was not healthy when the research team visited the family.

Box 21: Case study interviews with children in Rural Agricultural Communities

Below are some cases observed and recorded in the course of the research which demonstrates some of situations faced by children in rural agricultural communities.

The names used in these cases are fictitious.

Tulla, now 16 years of age, left school at class six because she was sick, had an operation and was away from school for too long. She was living with her mother and stepfather when she dropped out of school. She stated that her stepfather did not support her education and as a result she was unable to get her school books and other school stationery so she dropped out. She was often beaten by the stepfather so she now stays with her aunt. Tulla does most of the work in the house and is continuously scolded by her aunt.

Shirley aged 12 and John 13 live with their parents in the village. Their 17 year old brother lives in another settlement and he makes a living through fishing (diving). The two children left school at class 4 and 5 respectively. The family lived in Suva before the parents decided to move to the village and settle because the rent and cost of living in Suva was too high. Upon arriving in the village the children were not allowed to be enrolled in school because they did not have their clearance and school report from the previous school. The two children now accompany their parents, as early as 5am, to cut copra until 10-11am almost every day (Monday to Friday). Their mother stated that she now wants her children to the skills of farming and live independently because if they are good farmers they will get a lot of money. Shirley however stated that she wants to go back to school and be in class four again although she has not been schooling for a few years. Shirley shared how she once got injured at work while trying to get coconut flesh out of the shell.

Stan is 13 years old he dropped out of school to become a farmer. He is currently a labourer on his 21 year old brother's farm. His brother is married to a 16 year old girl- they got married when she was 15. She had no choice but to get married because her mother had married and moved to another place. Marriage would provide her with a stable family.

Ryan is 12 years old and left school when he was in class 4. He left school because he had repeated class 3 twice and twice again in class 4. He is now a full- time farmer and sometimes works as a labourer for other farmers. When the research team visited him he was sorting grog at a shop- this was another of his many jobs.

From Rural Agriculture Survey Report, LLEE, 2009

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

From interviews with key stakeholders it was observed that although most of them agree that children who have dropped out of school was an issue, they also believed that young children working on the farm is a normal way of life. It is not unusual to see children working in farms, at home or in their family vegetable garden during a normal school day in some of the selected study areas. Key informants and the children themselves stated that if there is an urgent task that has to be done in the family farm or community, there is no question about it and everyone in the family is expected to pitch in. There is a general agreement that children should work on the farm because:

- “It is the traditional (normal) way of living.”
- “So that they learn to work”
- “Because they stay in the village, they have to learn farming – planting root crops and fishing is the normal way of life”

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey findings show that some children in rural and agriculture communities are involved in child labour. Some do hazardous work, and some miss schooling to work on the farm or help out doing household chores and caring for the young or the old in the family.

Some parents are comfortable with their children working and/or dropping out of school to work. This is because for most cases their children are assisting the family financially. To some parents it is a norm and an expectation that if their children must help in the family farm, they can miss schooling. This can have a negative effect on the children’s education.

To address child labour in rural agricultural communities, there is a need to:

- Create awareness on labour laws regarding children’s work. To ensure that these are understood at the grass-root level, it would be beneficial to have the relevant documents and information translated in vernacular. Community involvement and capacity building through training for community leaders on Labour policies and regulation with respect to Child labour would serve as an effective means of ensuring that this information is passed at this level.
- Develop roads and better transportation services out in the areas of rural and agricultural communities. Children face difficulties in traveling to school, either due to the remoteness of their homes from school centers, poorly accessible road conditions and lack of affordable and “safe” modes of transportation.
- Enhance poverty reduction programs. This can involve capacity building on micro-finance activities for victims and families of victims. Encouraging the wise use of natural resources to ensure that these resources are used in a way that promotes sustainability. Just as it is important that such programmes be geared to alleviating poverty and improving the financial status of families and victims, it is also crucial that such programmes does not contribute to child labour.

- Improve the education system through the development of a school curriculum that encompasses life skills, and developing the child holistically. Include civil rights education into the school curriculum and promote the development of in-school careers and family life programmes
- There is a need for more structured, professional counseling systems in schools in rural and agricultural districts. Policies and monitoring systems should be implemented for the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools, and ensure that the education system and school curriculum allows for the intake of former school drop-outs.
- Improved school infrastructure and provision of more and better boarding facilities to schools in rural districts will be beneficial, particularly to children who are disadvantaged due to the remoteness of their homes from school centers.
- To reduce the cost and burden on families that are financially challenged. Education centers or programmes should be set up with children's fees subsidized or "free" education enforced. More information and scholarship awards should be made available to children in rural districts.
- Develop skills training programs for the out of school children followed by certification. It is equally important that when these programs or strategies are implemented, there is caution taken to protect (and not impede) the child's development and progress.





Research Study 4:
**CHILDREN'S WORK IN
INFORMAL AND SQUATTER
SETTLEMENTS**

RESEARCH STUDY 4: CHILDREN'S WORK IN INFORMAL AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Several studies have been conducted over the years on poverty-related issues within Fiji which have helped to identify new problems encountered by the poorest in society as well as highlighting linkages within Fiji society which deserve more attention. One such area which deserves more scrutiny in terms of understanding the dynamics of urban poverty related issues is that of squatter or informal settlements within Fiji's main urban locations.

Approximately, 15% of Fiji's population (and up to 20% of Suva's population) live in over 200 squatter or informal settlements around the nation. While not all those living in squatter settlements live below the poverty line, 70% - 80% of them do. This implies that, without assistance, many parents find it difficult to send their children to school. Moreover many of those living in squatter settlements are unemployed or only partly employed and some of them seek the assistance of their children in earning money to help the family survive. Children in squatter settlements would therefore seem to be a vulnerable group in terms of the incidence of child labour.

It is generally perceived that poverty is a major contributing factor to child labour. With the assumptions therefore that informal and squatter settlements shelter the most poor within Fiji and thus have a hypothetically significant incidence of child workers, this project focused on targeted urban settlements Fiji-wide.

While poverty alone may not explain the need for pulling together all available resources in terms of supporting livelihoods, there is a need to obtain information on why certain households allow children to work, while others do not and similarly to obtain the perception of child worker employers and other key informants on the issue of the types of work young children conduct.

The study focused on determining the scale of child labour in informal and squatter settlement in Fiji from interviews with the particular children involved in this category. However information was obtained from the wider group of 'child workers' in the settlements. The survey also elicited responses from other groups within the 'child worker's universe' - that is household respondents, parents or guardians of children interviewed, employers of children below 18 years of age and other key informants of the settlement communities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to Barr (2007)¹² and Bryant (1989)¹³ stated that there tends to be a degree of ambiguity in Fiji on differentiating between the terms 'squatter settlement' and 'informal settlement'. Very often both tend to refer to one and the same thing.

In Fiji, the term 'squatter' has generically come to denote a person who occupies sub-standard urban housing. However, for purposes of this study differentiation is made between the terms 'squatter settlements and informal settlements' even though both are often also referred to as informal settlements due to the extra-legal nature of their land-tenure classification.

¹² Barr K (2007), "Squatters in Fiji: The need for an attitudinal change", CCF Housing and Social Exclusion Policy Dialogue Paper no1, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

¹³ Bryant, J.J. (1989), "Self-help in Fiji: Squatter Housing and Informal Employment as Responses to Poverty", Suva, Geography Department, University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

This survey defines ‘**squatter settlement**’ as “*a settlement of dwellings occupying State, Freehold or Native land illegally or without any form of security of tenure or without any consent from the landowners*”. ‘**Informal settlement**’ is defined as “*a settlement of dwellings occupying Fijian customary (Native) land with some type of informal consensual arrangement with Fijian landowners but without any legal form of security of tenure*”.

The Fijian term for the latter bilateral arrangement between the informal settlement and village leaders or landowners is *Vakavanua*. A Vakavanua arrangement often implies an obligatory commitment by the tenant to shoulder, in part, the traditional responsibilities of the landowners. This obligation that can place enormous burden on the tenants because it is neither quantified nor qualified in a contractual sense but is described commonly as a “traditional obligation”.

According to Walsh (2006) ¹⁴ there are certain features regarding squatter settlements or informal settlements that merit some consideration. Firstly, Walsh maintains that in the Fiji situation residents of informal settlements are not alone in paying some type of rent levy to native landowners. Most squatters pay some sort of rent as part of extra-legal tenure arrangements even on freehold land.

Secondly, and linked to the notion that all native Fijians have access and rights to native land, is the misconception that the majority of squatters are mostly Indo-Fijian: This, in fact, is not the case. Nearly two-thirds (62.7%) of urban squatters were Fijian in 1996; slightly over one-quarter Indo-Fijian, and nearly 5% others.” (Walsh, 2006) Walsh claims that contrary to popular belief the main reasons for the increase in squatter and informal settlements in Fiji’s urban areas is not due to rapid urbanisation or a shortage of houses although these are contributing factors. The real cause is poverty and the high cost of public housing.

The poverty situation in Fiji is very serious and has definite repercussions on the ordinary people of the country. This means that the poorest households have to search for every means of income they can find to meet their basic needs. Children are often enlisted to do their part in boosting household income. As bottle boys, shoeshine boys, wheelbarrow boys, prostitutes, house-help or baby sitters, young boys and girls are recruited to earn income for the household so that the family can eat, younger siblings can be sent to school or rent be paid for Public Rental Housing or to the landowners for vakavanua informal housing arrangements. Sometimes young children can also be used to help with fishing or gardening activities. They may also be involved as domestic workers.

The following list of issues helps us to understand why children are enlisted to help contribute to the family income:

- 35% - 40% of Fiji’s population live below the poverty line;
- Another 30% live just above the poverty line and so are vulnerable to poverty;
- 55% of those in full time employment earn wages below the poverty line;
- 15% of Fiji’s population live in over 200 squatter settlements – mostly around urban areas;
- In 2002 the poorest 30 % of the population earned 10.19% of all incomes while the top 30% earned 60.2% of all incomes;
- 66% of those who drop out of school do so for reasons connected with poverty;
- About 24,000 families receive Family Assistance payments of \$60 - \$120 a month from the Social Welfare Department.

¹⁴ Walsh C (2006), “*Fiji: An Encyclopaedic Atlas: University of the South Pacific*”, Suva, Fiji.

These issues are particularly rife in squatter settlements where many of the poorest people in the country live and a relatively high proportion of children have dropped out of school. When parents are unemployed, partly employed or in low-paid employment, they often look to their children to assist with the basic needs of the household.

This survey used a number of research tools to collect the data. A household survey was initially done to enable the research team to identify the children in the household who are at risk of being involved in child labour and those who are involved in child labour. One hundred and ninety two (192) households were surveyed, followed by a survey of 362 children. In-depth interviews were also conducted with stakeholders, including employers.

As part of the survey, a total of 20 settlements were visited in three of Fiji's key Divisional areas (Central, Western, Northern division), of which 12 were squatter settlements and 8 informal settlements. The settlements chosen were principally derived from the Informal Settlement list provided by the Department of Housing and Squatter Re-settlement.

The following settlements were visited:

- **Western Division:** Kerebula and Navokai; Vunato, Field 40 and Navutu; Varavu and Tauvegavega;
- **Northern Division:** Namara and Vatia; Nakama, Tavutikau and Buca;
- **Central Division:** Corbett Avenue and Navosai; Veidogo, Nanuku, Cunningham and Namadai; Nadonumai and Lami Tiri.

The particular choice of settlements was based on several factors:

- Balance of squatter and informal types;
- Sampling of either predominantly indigenous Fijian, Indo-Fijian communities or balance of both;
- Total settlement population (the 2002 list provided an estimate only);
- Ease of access to settlement (both physical access to sites as well as traditional/formal access to interviewing community households);
- Recommendation of certain settlements by key informants who work closely with settlement communities, such as ECREA and the Peoples Community Network (PCN).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A total of 198 household were interviewed- 37.4% were in the Central division, and 29.8% were from the Northern division.

Figure 6.1: Households by Division

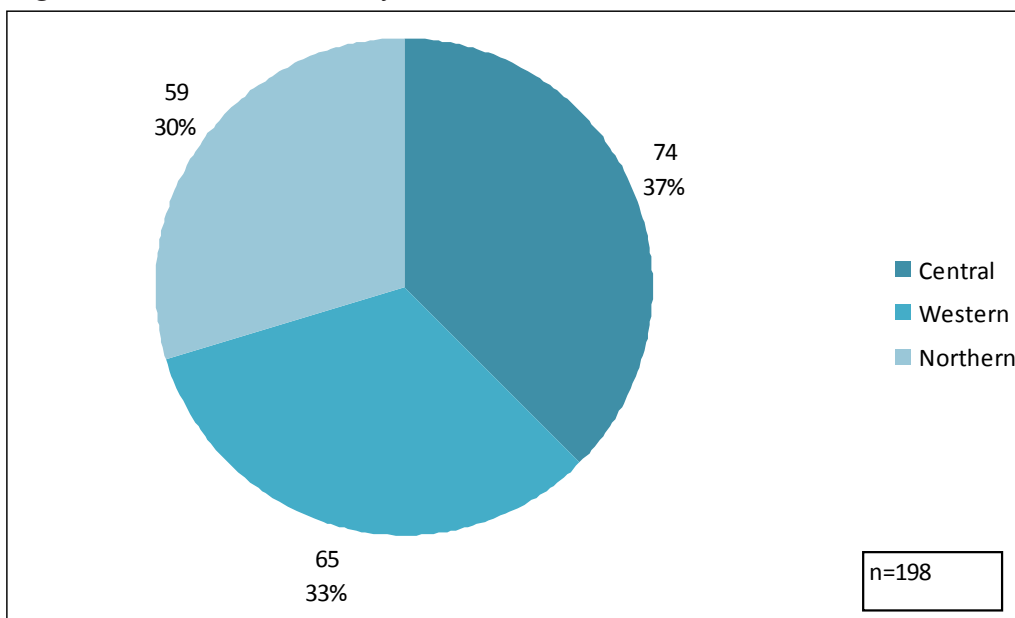
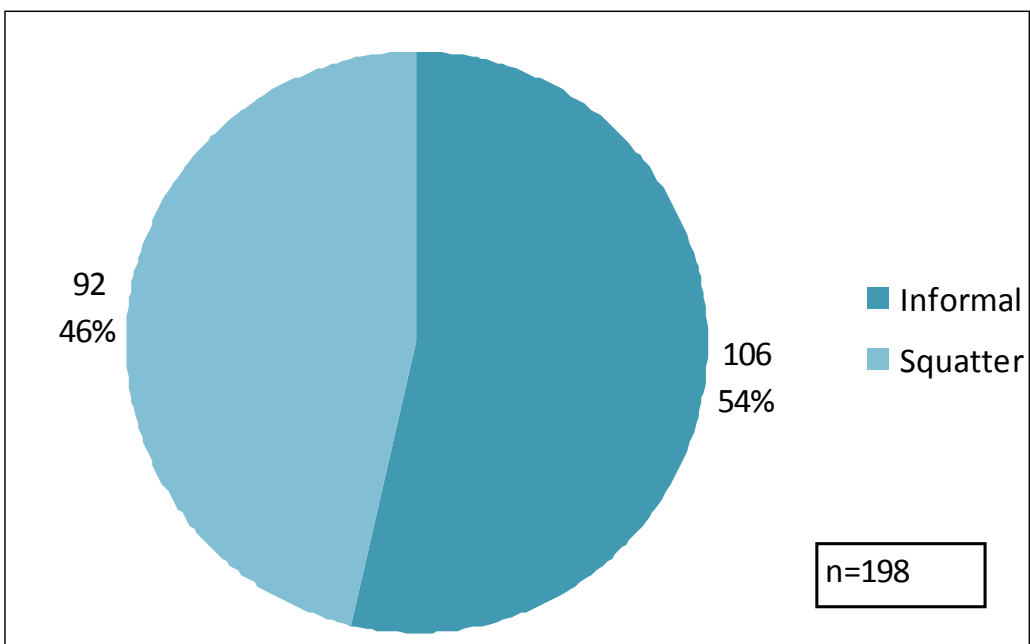


Figure 6.2: Type of Settlement



DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDREN INTERVIEWED

The analysis below shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the children who responded to the survey. These children were identified from the household that were selected for the interview. The household was a screening process where the children who were working or assumed by the household to be involved in child labour were identified.

Figure 6.3: Distribution by Division

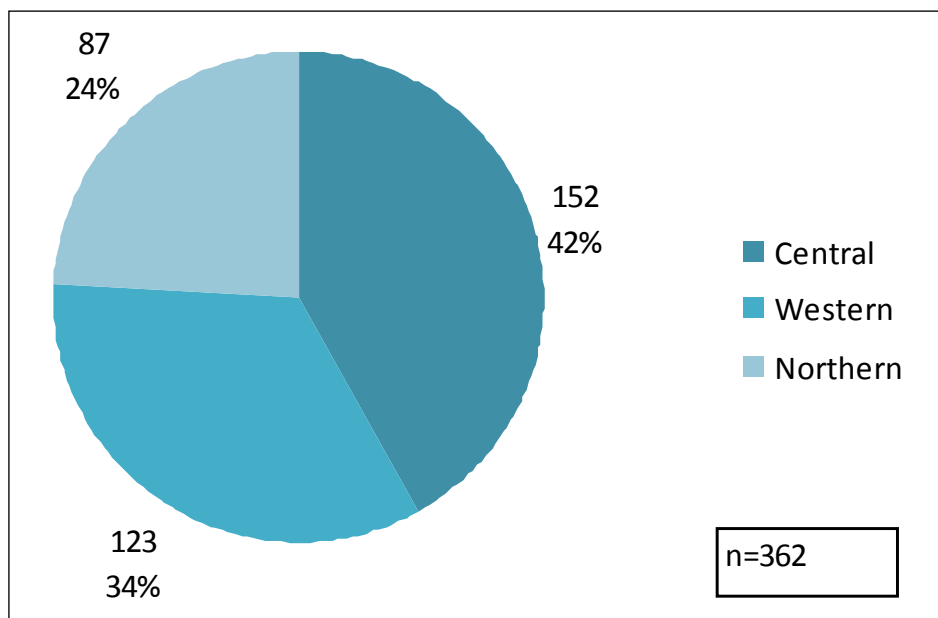
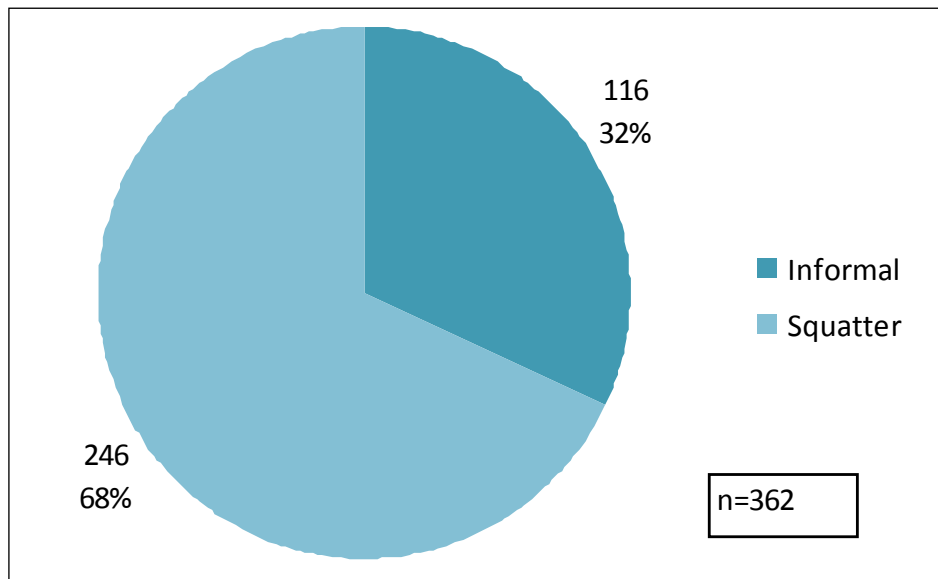


Figure 6.4: Distribution of Children by Settlement



A total of 362 children were interviewed. Forty-two percent of the children were from the Central division, 34% from the West and 24% from the Northern division. About two-third (68%) of the children live in squatter settlements, and 32% residing in informal settlements. It must however be noted, that there is very little difference between informal and squatter settlements.

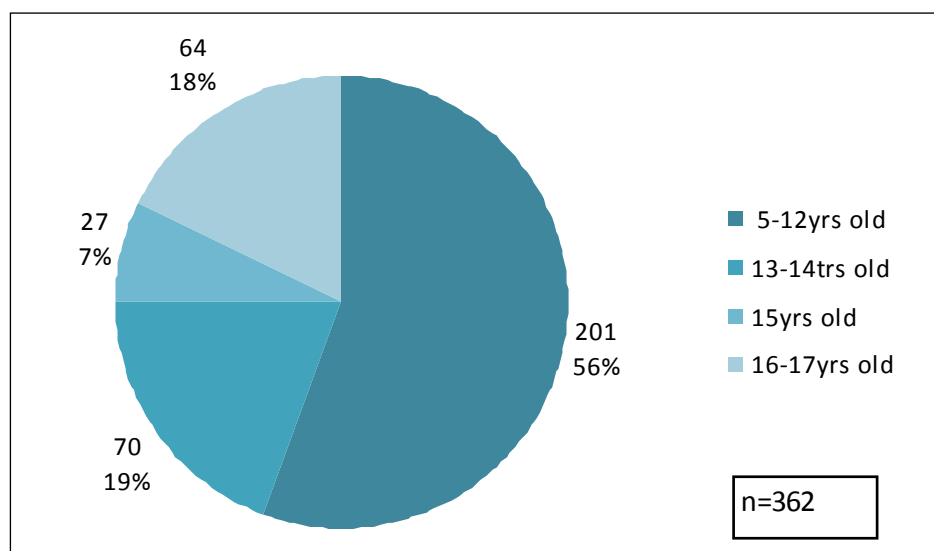
More than half of the children (55.4%) were between the ages of 5-12 yrs of age, 37% of the children interviewed were above the legal working age (15 years). There were more female respondents compared to males.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Education Level by Age and by Gender

AGE	Gender				TOTAL
	Male		Female		
	Schooling	Not Schooling	Schooling	Not Schooling	
5-12yrs old	86	4	106	5	201
13-14 yrs old	34	3	30	3	70
15 yrs old	9	3	12	3	27
16-17 yrs old	16	15	22	11	64
TOTAL	145	25	170	21	361

The above table shows that most of the children interviewed were still in school. Only 46 children aged between 5 and 17 years were not schooling. Most of the children were between the ages of 16 and 17. Most of the children not in school were males (25), while a slightly lower proportion were females (21).

Figure 6.5: Age Distribution of Children



Education plays an important role in ensuring that child labour is addressed in society. Children who spend most of their time doing school related activities are less at risk of being involved in child labour. Most of the children interviewed were in school. The majority of school dropouts had reached primary school level, followed by secondary school level, and a small number reaching vocational education (3%).

Figure 6.6: Gender Distribution of Children

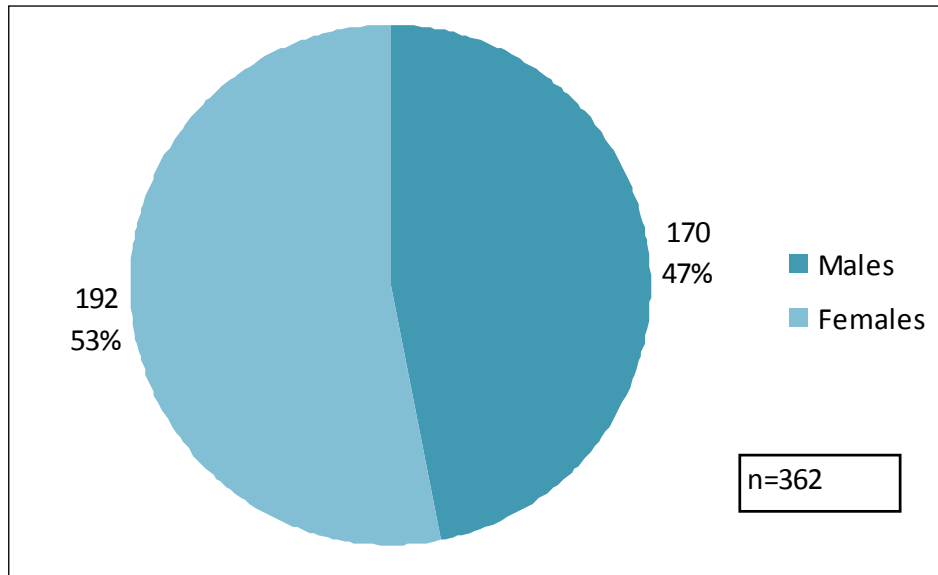


Figure 6.7: Education Level Children in School

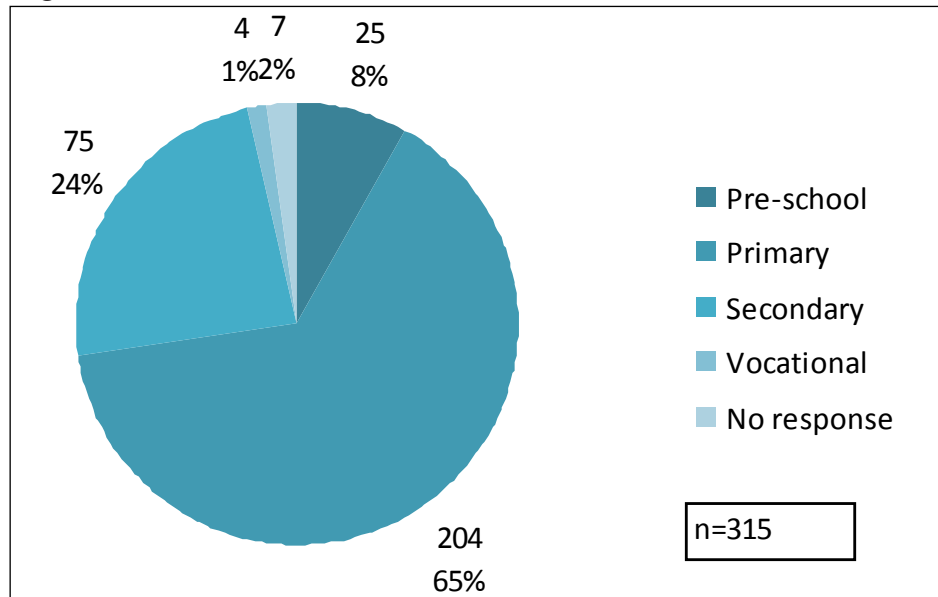
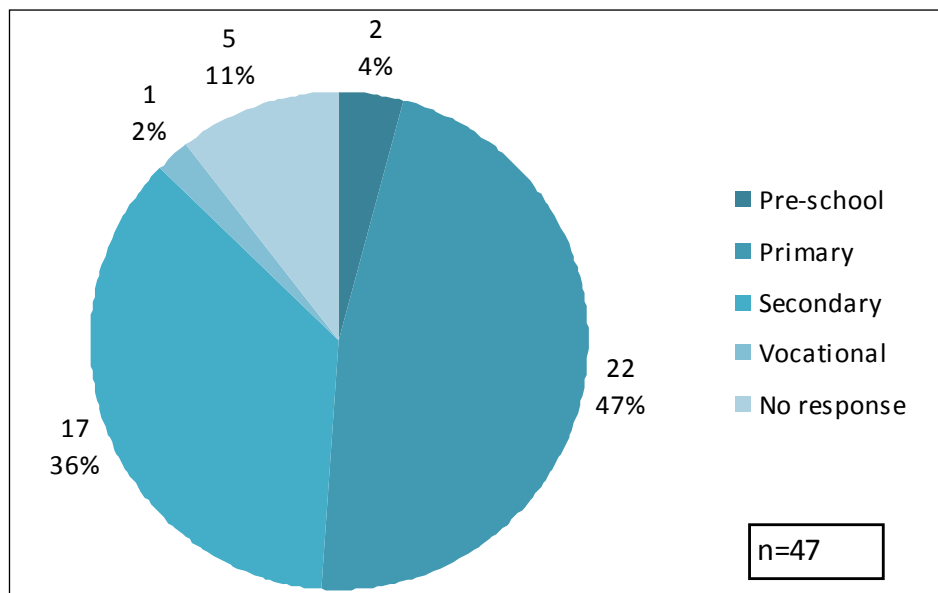


Figure 6.8: Education level of Children not in School



THE WORKING CHILDREN IN INFORMAL AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

In identifying the children who are working the children were asked a question if they were working in the last week prior to the survey or if they were temporarily absent from a job or business. One hundred and eighty (180) children identify with the above category. The analysis of working children is therefore based on the characteristics of the 49.7% or 180 children who were working on the week before the interview or who were temporarily absent from a job or business during the reference week.

Most of the working children interviewed were still in school, and most of these working children live in squatter settlements. The largest percentage was identified in the Western Division, in the areas of Nadi, Lautoka and Ba. Those who stated that they worked in the reference week were from a total of 102 households out of the 198 interviewed.

Figure 6.9: Gender Distribution of Working Children

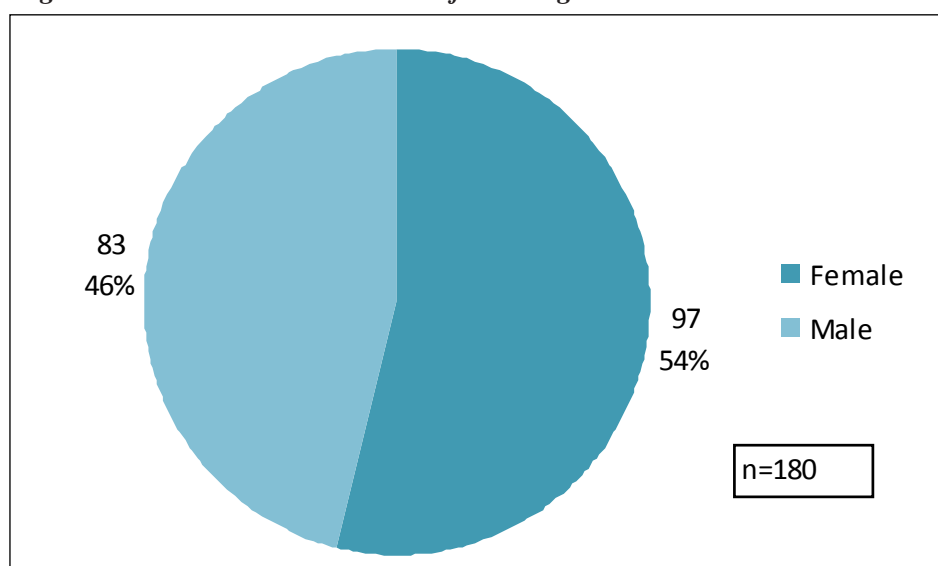


Figure 7.0: Age Distribution of the Children

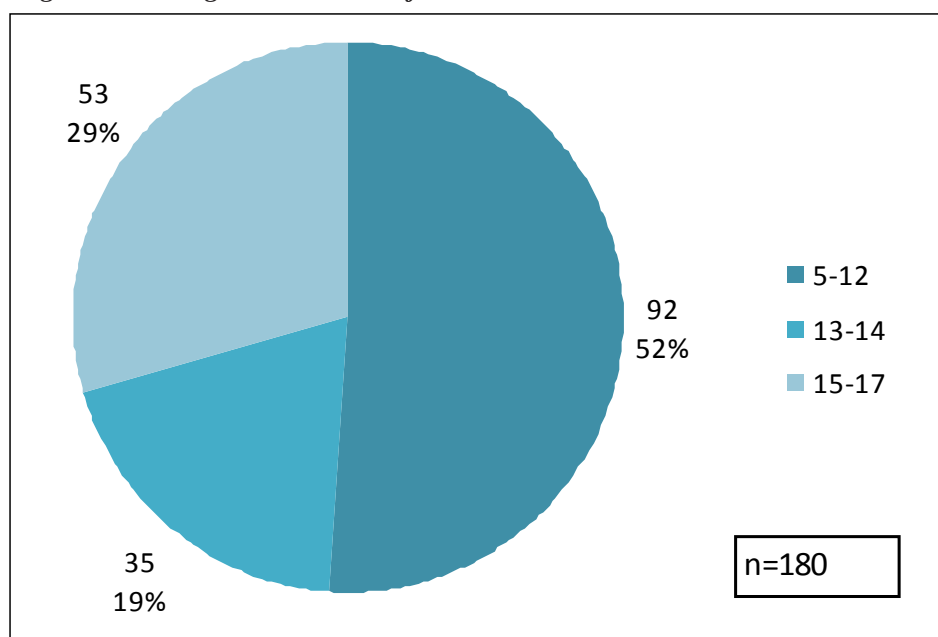


Table 5.0: Number of working children from Central, Western and Northern Divisions

Working children per Division	Type of Settlement		Total (n)
	Informal	Squatter	
Central Division	26	42	68
Western Division	29	44	73
Northern Division	7	32	39
Total (n)	62	118	180

Figure 7.1: Distribution of Working Children by Division

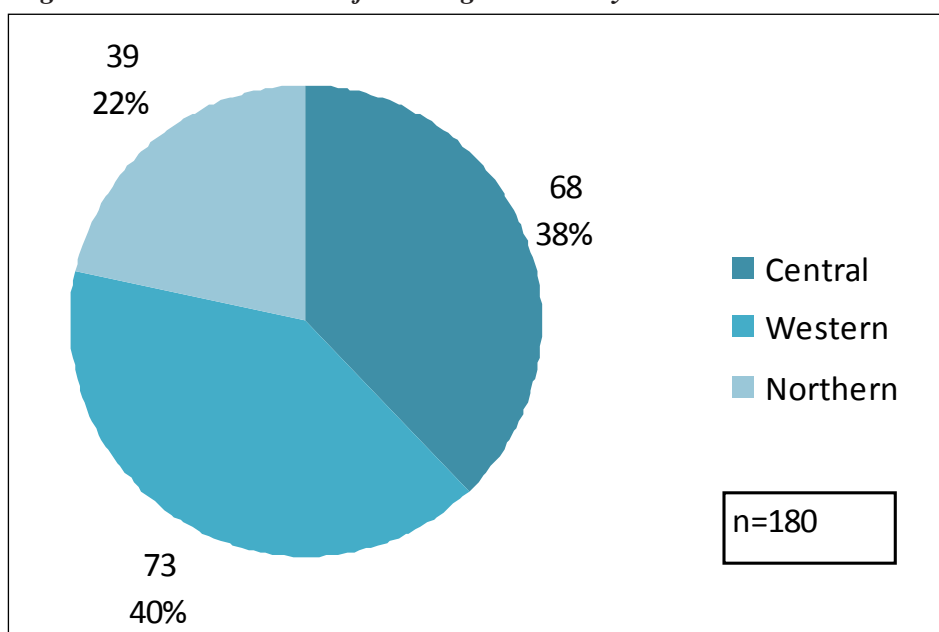
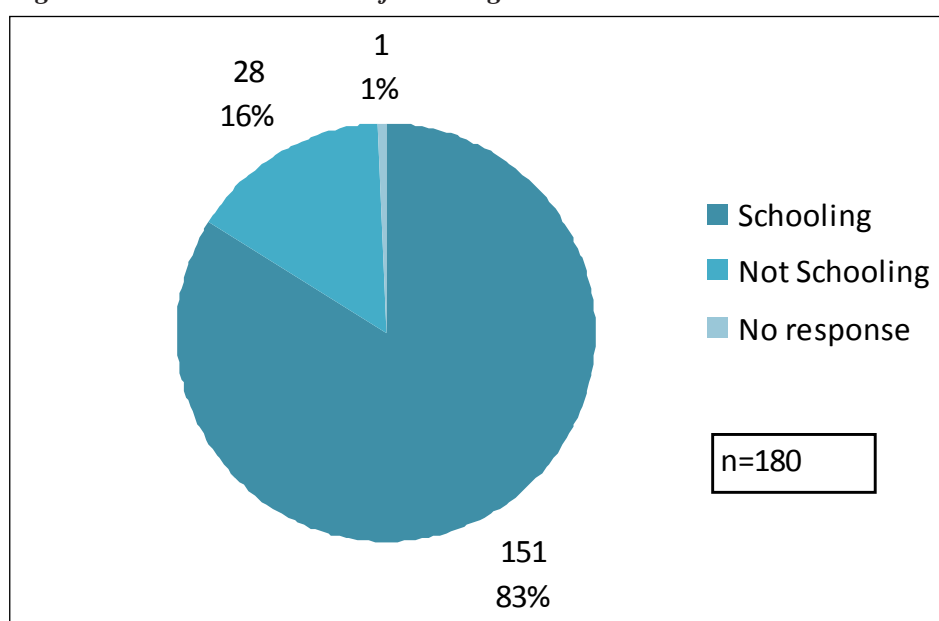


Figure 7.2: Education Status of Working Children



TYPE OF WORK DONE BY WORKING CHILDREN

Many of the children identified as ‘working children’, stated that the work they conducted mainly involved household chores and the preparation of food and drinks and a variety of domestic duties. 36.7% of the children were doing jobs where food and drinks are prepared, followed by, 31.7% who were washing, ironing, cleaning, for someone else or for payment in cash or kind.

The majority (93%) whether at school or not, across all age groups from the 5 to 17 year range, also performed household chores. For some children the tasks comprised “light household duties”, i.e. sweeping, dusting and washing up. In other instances the responsibilities were clearly large and questionable for some so young, for example, 5 to 6 year olds stated that they ironed, cooked and looked after younger siblings. What was more difficult (and highly sensitive) to identify was whether the children conducted other jobs in addition to helping at home and decided against reporting this during the course of the interview.

Other work activities identified by these children include farming activities (such as cutting cane and harvesting crops), street and market vendor work (including selling fresh fruits, selling fish in the market, selling peanuts), and assisting in small businesses such as car washing, and assisting in repair shops. Some children were assisting their parents by selling the farm produce others work in back yard garages or assist relatives and family friends and get some rewards in cash or in kind.

Most of the children who were collecting scrap metals were not from the area where they were interviewed. These children are very mobile moving from one area to the next looking for scrap metal. A community leader in one of the targeted community stated that most of the young children in the settlement were involved in the scrap metal business, particularly collecting copper and aluminum, and to get quick money to help them and their families.

The responses from Key Informants indicate a broad range of activities conducted by children ranging from around 8 to 17 years of age. These largely ‘non-skilled’ activities include the selling of beans and fresh seasonal fruit, brush cutting, car washing, packing at supermarkets and the age-old ‘profession’ of begging on the streets.

While activities conducted across the urban areas are often similar in nature, there are some activities conducted by very young children which are ‘location-specific’ such as the cutting of cane in Ba, farming activities in Nadi and Lautoka and working at supermarkets and retail shops in the larger urban centres. The selling of scrap metal is reportedly common in the Western and Central Divisions in particular.

Reference to activities associated with the ‘unconditional’ worst forms of child labour such as child prostitution and drug trafficking was not evident from respondents of the survey. Only one respondent from the settlements stated that such activities existed. These more sensitive issues were highlighted by respondents from local government bodies and NGOs who often deal directly with persons linked to these types of activities.

Box 22: Children working in Informal Settlements

“If you walk around Lautoka you see kids selling beans during school days. Some of them are our clients. They will travel to Nadi and return. Some we even see in Suva. Some children are used by parents to beg. We see sex workers in the evening” (NGO respondent, Lautoka 7 July 2009).

“Most of the young children in this settlement that are involved in work are involved in the business of scrap metal – particularly copper and aluminium and others where they can get very quick money within the day. That helps them and their families.” (Community respondent, Suva, 22 July 2009)

“I have seen them in marketing areas- selling bean and peanuts. A few others may be in shops – not sure of numbers” (Local government respondent, Savusavu, 15 July 2009)

From Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey, USP; 2009

Table 5.1: Activity taken during the reference week

Activity	Number	%
Tender crops or catch fish/seafood	31	17.2
Prepare food, or drinks	66	36.7
Sell articles, newspaper, drinks, food, or agricultural product	8	4.4
Wash, iron, clean, for someone else or for payment in cash or in kind	57	31.7
Repair tools, or equipment for someone else or for payment in cash or in kind	3	1.7
Others	15	8.3
TOTAL	180	100

Table 5.2: Other work identified by children

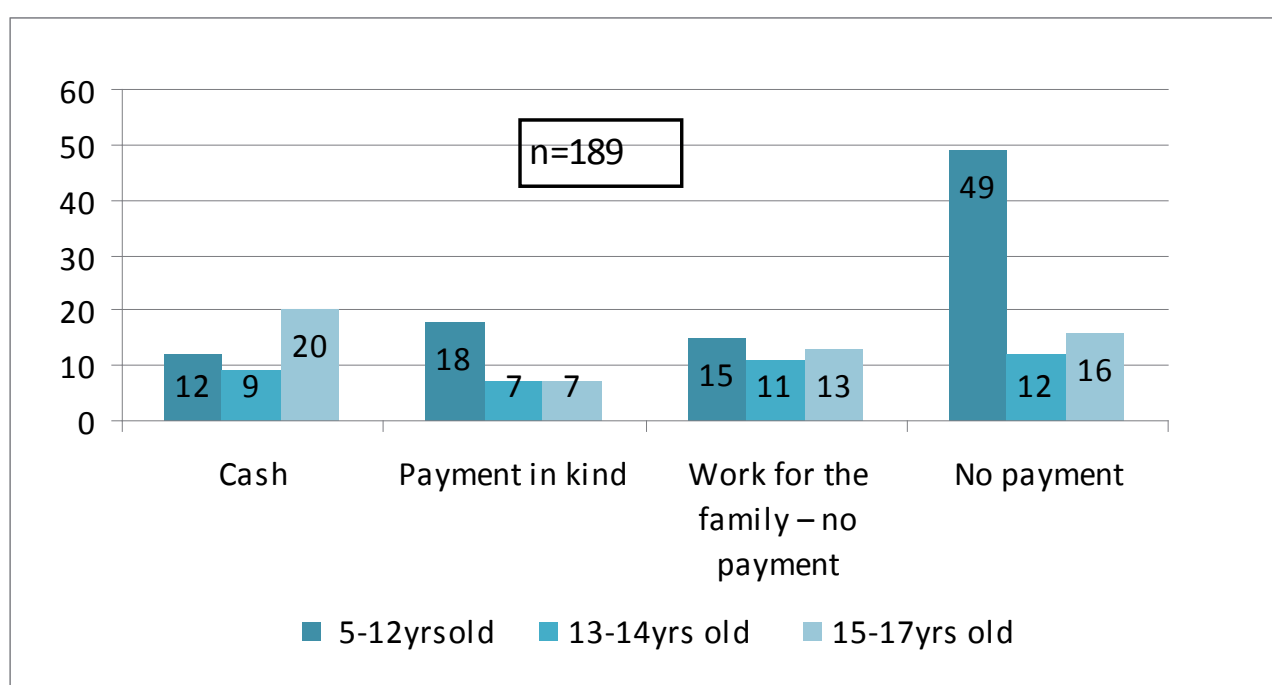
Other types of work children engage in identified through interviews with children
Selling peanut beans
Selling fresh seasonal fruit (bananas, pineapple, pawpaw)
Washing cars
Begging
Selling fish at the market
Cutting cane
Picking up rubbish
Assisting at electrical shop
Auto repair shop assistant
Collecting scrap metal
Grass cutting using brush cutters
Assisting building/painting work
Packing food items at supermarket
Sex worker

WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN AND IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES

In general, most children claimed that their working conditions were satisfactory despite the fact that the majority received no payment for the work they did. Child respondents claimed being paid rates ranging from 50 cents to \$120 for the last pay received. A largest percentage (ages 9-16 years in the Western Division) claimed receiving \$5 in the past week. Some casual activities such as cutting cane (\$15 a week) or selling fish at the market (\$5 for weekend work) were reported.

Employers of child workers quoted wages ranging from \$40 per week to \$144 (9 to 14 yr category) for activities such as car washing, auto repair assistants and sales assistants in food outlets. Payment is usually received on a weekly basis for most of the jobs children conduct for cash payment. In terms of payment in-kind, the incidences reported were few and comprised mainly of offers of food, clothes or transport.

Figure 7.3: Distribution of types of payment for working Children by Age



(NB: some children received two types of payment)

Box 23: Loss of Innocence

“...the kids who finish high school prematurely are preoccupied in the work they are involved in to bring in money for their families” (Community respondent, Lautoka, 22 July 2009).

“...work involves work as farm hands, on the job trainees in small backyard garages, warehouse labourers and packers in supermarkets, house girls and prostitutes...the effects on the child and the households are negative. Although the income helps to sustain the household the effects on the child are often traumatic. Children quickly lose their innocence...” (Community respondent, Nadi, 6 July 2009).

From Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey, USP; 2009

Responses obtained from **Key Informant Interviews** highlight the respondent's perception on i) how the type of work children are involved in affects their lives, ii) whether the children from the settlements have been affected by their work in terms of their normal development including access to education.

Key Informant perceptions are listed below:

A. EARLY EXPOSURE TO WORK EXPERIENCE AND LOSS OF INNOCENCE

Some key respondents felt that while they recognized that dropping out of school or being forced to work early to help feed the family compromised the child's education, it also taught children to cope with certain responsibilities in life through earning money and contributing to the family well-being. This was particularly so for cases of families with very low incomes where the children's contribution made a great difference to the household well-being.

However, there was also the sentiment that exposure to work at a very young age had a significant social and psychological impact on minors such as with activities like begging and the direct selling of goods and services such as prostitution, the selling of beans, shoe shining and the selling of seasonal fruits and scrap metal to dealers.

B. PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH PROBLEMS

There were many references made by key informants in relation to the negative physical and health impacts of certain types of work conducted by young children from informal and squatter settlements. Within the communities themselves activities such as the cutting and carrying of firewood and the cutting of cane is deemed dangerous and physically heavy duty.

Some young children are exposed to heavy work such as those who work at the Lautoka sugar factory who are obliged to lift heavy sacks of sugar. There was reference to the exposure of young children who deal in the sale of scrap metal to dealers and their exposure to dangerous heavy metals and the associated risk of respiratory complications as a result.

Key informants noted that in the informal employment sector as well as un-regulated formal sector work, there were less provisions for safety measure for employees, and there was a need for the Ministry of Labour to ensure that safety at the workplace is respected by both employers and their workers.

C. EXPOSURE TO WRONG CHOICES AND PERPETUATING THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF POVERTY

For several Community respondents, the issue of access to education for settlement children was not as insurmountable a problem as that of solving the poverty issue in general. Communities indicated that there was a need to empower the children's primary carers firstly (parents and guardians), in terms of appreciating and understanding the importance of children's access to education in the medium and long term, before tackling assistance to children directly.

While many Community respondents clearly understood and appreciated the importance of education for their children, it was also a matter of priorities in terms of general welfare:

“Food on the table first and then we sort out the education issue”

(Community respondent, Suva, 21 July 2009).

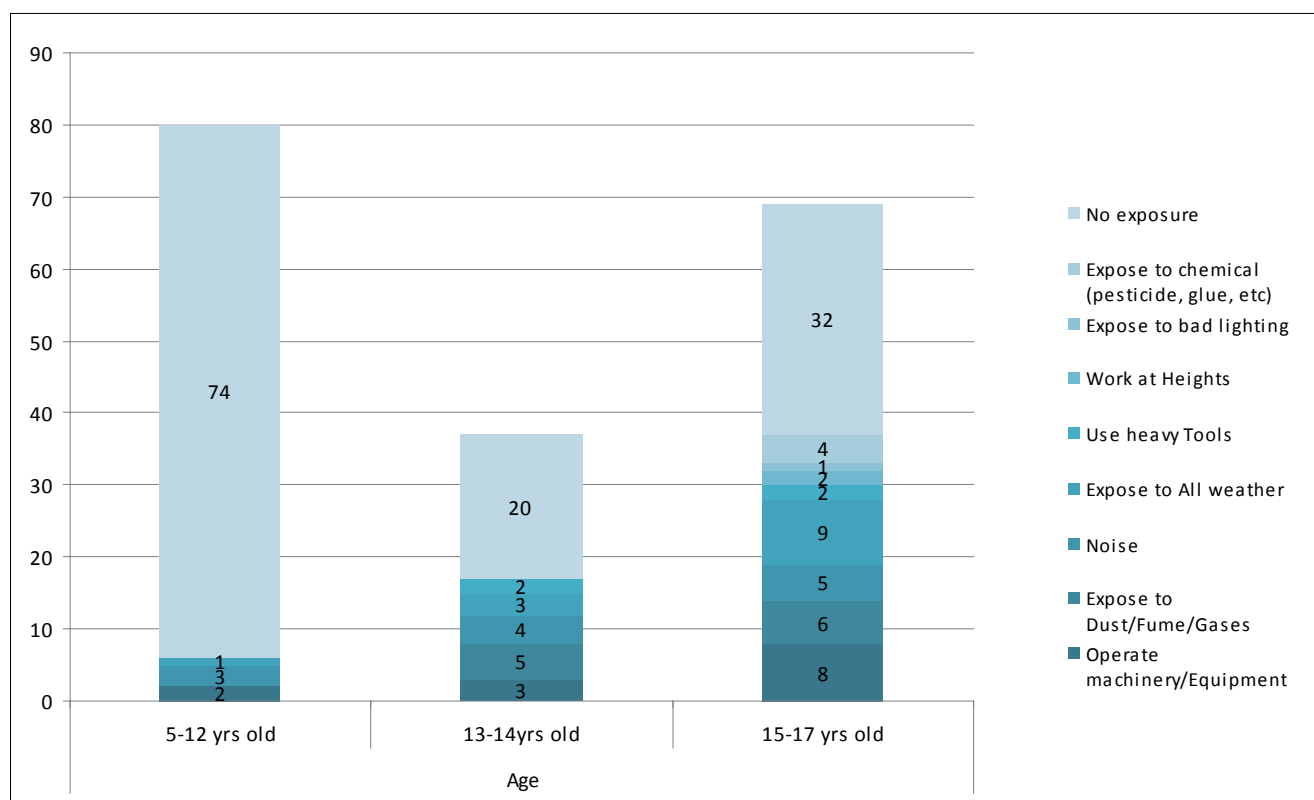
RISKS AND HAZARDS INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES CHILDREN UNDERTAKE

Over 50% of the total number of working children interviewed from settlements for each of the three Divisions in Fiji responded that the risks and hazards in activities they conducted are non-existent to minimal. However, the comments from those few children who are involved in activities that involve risks and hazards associated with the work they do should be noted.

Table 5.3: Possible Hazardous Work the Children are Involved in:

Description of Work	Number	Percent
Carry heavy load in daily activity (work, school)	32	17.8
Operate machinery/equipment	13	8.3
Exposure to Dust, Fume, Gas, etc	11	6.1
Exposure to Noise	12	6.7
Exposure to all weather Conditions	13	7.2
Use heavy tools	4	2.2
Work at heights	2	1.1
Exposure and work under bad lighting	1	0.6
Expose to chemical (eg pesticides, glue, etc)	4	2.2
Not applicable	126	80.3

Figure 7.4: Types of Hazards Children are exposed to by Age



Most of those who stated that they were exposed to hazards were between the ages of 15 to 17 years. Operating machinery and heavy equipment is common amongst all the three age groups. The type of machinery and equipment they used however was not captured in the questionnaire.

From observation and through interviews it was assessed that work such as cane cutting, assisting and auto repairs, and collecting scrap metals is hazardous. The long hours of work in the cane field using cane knives and the exposure to all weather conditions is hazardous. Work that is not directly related to home activities, such as car washing, cane cutting and collecting of scrap metal involve obvious risks such as exposure to all weather conditions, the handling of potentially dangerous implements (cane-knife) and exposure to heavy metal through continuous handling of metals such as copper and aluminium. In the case of young children involved in gathering scrap metal, the metals are often stolen, adding another dimension to the issue of risk, i.e. working outside the law. The employment of young hands (mostly male) at car wash outlets in all Divisions is relatively common.

The employers who were interviewed did not feel that they were breaking the law by employing children under 15 years of age. They claimed they employ that the young children are often school drop-outs from low income families and come to them seeking work to help support their families. The employers thus feel that they are assisting the economy in some way through the provision of work to this portion of Fiji's workforce, i.e. young and unskilled school drop-outs.

A key informant from Nadi, who manages an electrical outlet was keen to be interviewed about the hiring of some of his staff who were well below 18 years. He strongly believed that what he was contributing to the employment situation in Fiji. Whilst he understood that there is a minimum age for the employment of youth, he also stated that when youngsters were trained and received pay they learnt skills while contributing to their household's livelihoods. According to him many of the youths that worked in his shop often go onto formal electrical training and return to work for the shop once they are qualified.

In the Western Division, particularly in the Ba area, the hiring of young children to help cut cane is relatively common during the harvesting season. A key informant mentioned that the hiring of pani wallahs or water bearers during the cane season was also common and these were usually young children tasked to carry water to the sugar cane workers in the field.

PERCEPTIONS TOWARD WORK ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATION

From the working children interviewed some assumptions can be made from the general nature of the responses obtained via the questionnaire-led interviews. Firstly there are a significant number of children under the age of 18 years in informal and squatter settlements across the country who state that they work whether they currently attend school or not. In most instances it appears that the conditions of work, whether they be at home or working for someone else, are not abusive or hazardous.

Although the survey did not directly capture information on children's "satisfaction" levels with regard to the work they do, most children are aware that, aside from activities where specific skills are learnt, they conduct particular work activities to generally assist the livelihoods of their households. From the children's case studies, there is a feeling amongst those that have dropped out of school that it is better to find a job and help earn money for their family rather than remain idle.

Many parents and guardians do not consider household chores that their children undertake as “work”. This was apparent during interviews where questions to be addressed to parents of ‘working children’ were deemed non-valid. However most admit that their children participate in household duties and sometimes are involved in other economic activities. In the Western Division around 35% of parents and guardians interviewed felt the work their children undertook was acceptable, including the working conditions and their children’s employer.

In terms of perceptions toward education, it should be noted that the high level of school attendance by the children respondents indicates a strong level of participation in Fiji’s educational system by the random sample examined. Of the 362 children interviewed, 315 stated that they attend school. Of the 180 children working, 151 (84%) stated that they attend school, of which 66% are at primary school level.

Table 5.3: Reasons for not attending school

Response from Children		Response from Household	
Reasons for not attending School	Total (n)	Reasons for not going to school	Total (n)
Too young	2	Too young	26
School too far	3	Disabled/Illness	6
Parents cannot afford school related expenses	20	Cannot afford schooling	34
Poor in studies/not interested in school	16	Poor in studies/not interested in schooling	36
Need to work to for pay/help family business	7	Help at home with household chores	17
Need to help at home with chores	5	School not considered valuable	6
Family does not allow schooling	1	To work for pay or family business/farm	8
School not considered valuable by family	3	Did not give a reason	36
TOTAL	57		169

Most of the out-of-school children stated that they are not in school because their parents cannot afford the school related expenses. This is followed by those stating that they were poor in studying or were not interested in schooling.

The most common reason provided by the household for children dropping out of school was that the children were not performing well, poor in studying or not interested in school. 17% of the households stated that the children have to help with household chores so they do not go to school.

From the key informant interviews, all stakeholders felt that education was very important for children in their settlements. However, there was recognition that many families struggle to make ends meet and that priorities had to be met in terms of providing the basic essentials such as food, shelter and clothes.

Education for many was a “secondary priority”. Community stakeholders such as leaders and elders recognised that education for their children was a priority but felt that tackling the root causes of social problems in the community e.g. dysfunctional family issues, substance abuse and the vicious cycle of poverty had to be overcome before families could start prioritising sending their children to school. Empowerment programmes offered to primary carers of children in communities would be a pre-requisite toward moving in the direction of encouraging families to ensure that their children received a proper education.

Although the sample of children interviewed in the survey indicates a high level of school attendance, it is apparent through the various key informant interviews that in fact there are many families who cannot afford school fees, bus fares or the cost of uniforms for their children. In some cases the issues are more complicated whereby the child is subjected to a dysfunctional family environment and ends up skipping school, and is at risk of making the wrong choices in terms of work activities.

Box 24: Parents and Child Labour

“But when we go and assess their home situation we find that in many cases the parents are not old. They are often relaxing, doped up with grog...so the parents practically threaten their children to go out and look for work....their parents wake up late, there is no fare – there is lack of support...the child’s development is affected.” (Child Guidance Counsellor, Nadi, 6 July 2009)

From Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey, USP; 2009

Local government officers who work closely with low income families (Social Welfare), as well as various members of non-government organisations who work as support groups to various factions of marginalised groups in society (street workers which include children below 18 years) recognise the benefit children from settlements reap from attending school and generally feel that education is very important. However it is widely recognised that unless the social problems affecting settlement communities are addressed, assisting access to education alone will not be effective.

Box 25: Tackling the family first

“The underlying issue is tackling the family first. Education is probably secondary to that because we have tried it once and it didn’t work. The root cause is actually back at home. Until and unless we sort it out from home then only then can we hope to tackle why they (the children) are working and how they should be going back to school....how are you going to educate a family who has had 3 generations of begging or 2 generations of shoe-shining or 3 generations of bottle-collecting? You have to look at these situations in a holistic way.” (Government stakeholder, Lautoka, 7 July 2009)

From Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey, USP; 2009

There are many factors that can contribute to the reasons why children are working. The survey showed that some children work because of the payment they get in return and others had to work because it is a social expectation. Most of the children were working for no payments, these are done for household benefits or working to help relatives. About 40% of the children stated that they work for payment in cash and in kind. Most of the children receiving cash for work were from the older age group.

Figure 7.5: Remuneration for work by age

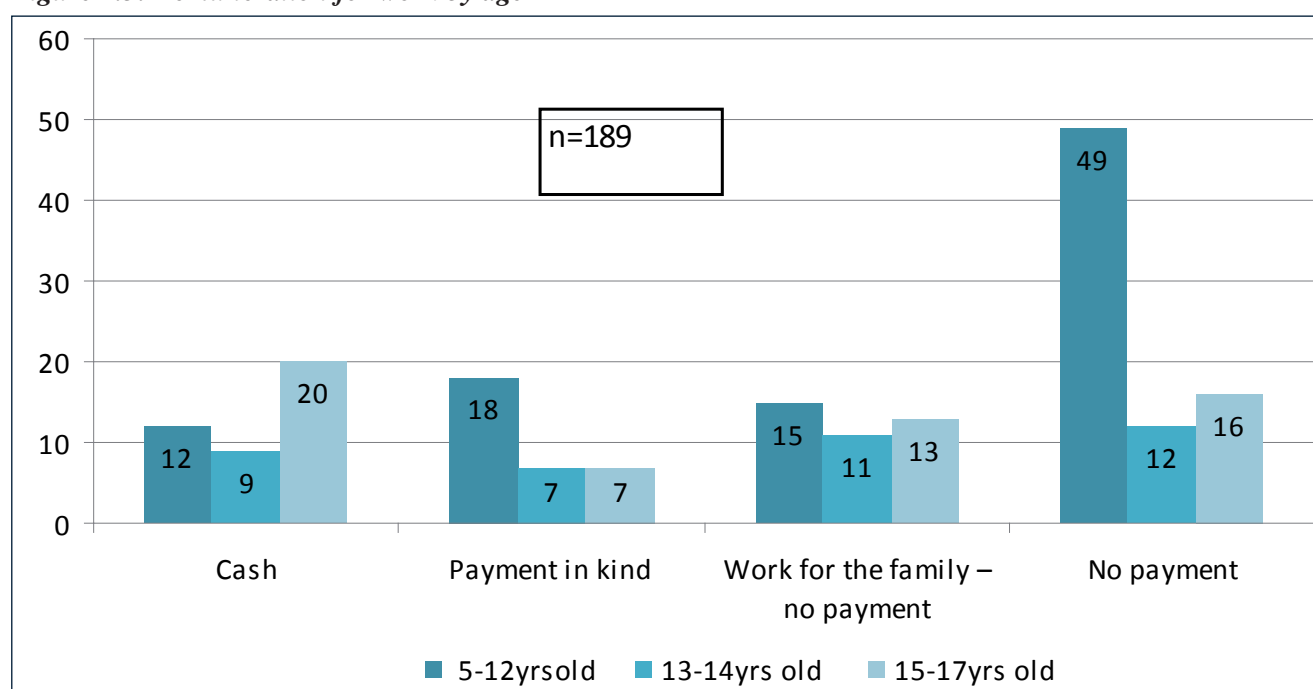


Table 5.4: Remuneration for Work Children do

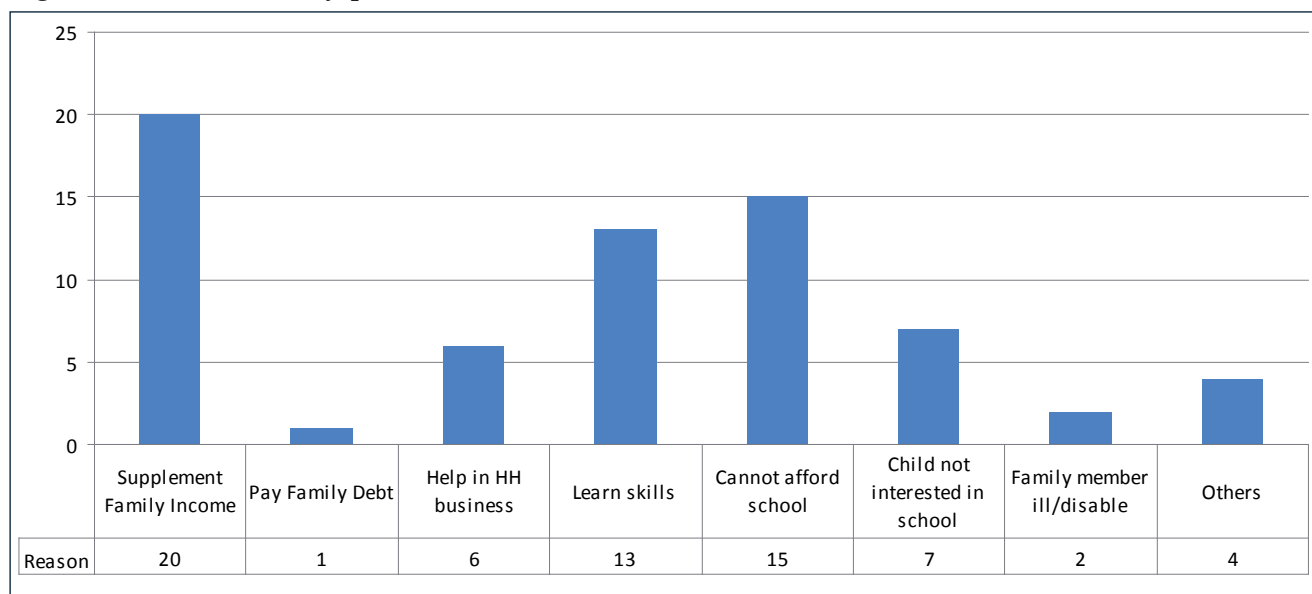
Description of Activity and its return	Number
Undertake activity for and received payment in cash	41
Undertake activity for and received payment in kind	32
Undertake activity for own account	1
Undertake activity for own business	2
Undertake activity for family member without pay	39
Undertake activity for no payment	77

Table 5.5: Reasons for working identified by those temporarily not at work

Main reason for working as identified by those temporarily absent from the job or business they do	Number
Supplement family income	23
Pay outstanding family debt	2
Help in household enterprises	8
Learn new skills	7
Cannot afford school fees	5
Not interested in School	3

Some of the children were regular workers but were temporarily not working at the time of the survey. These children were also asked to give reasons for working. Most of them stated that they worked to supplement the family income. The most common reason given by parents for allowing their children to work was to supplement the family income. Parents also felt that by working children are able to learn new skills.

Figure 7.6: Reasons why parents allow their children to work



From interviews and discussions with the children it was noted that some children were secretive about the work they do and they did not want the family to know. One such case captured during the survey involved a 15 year old sex worker who stated that she was attracted to the activity through her friends and peers who were also involved in the activity, and did not want her family to know.

Box 26: Worst Form of Child Labour

“I have seen a case in town where “a mother and her two children aged 1 and 4 are beggars. They beg on the street and at times the mother would breast feed the child while begging”.

“From this settlement there are children who sell copper wires to scrap metal dealers. Some are employed as packing boys in supermarkets or shop. Some of them are prostitutes, while others beg more covertly, that is house to house rather than sit in the streets”.

(Key Informants in Suva)

From Informal and Squatter Settlement Survey, USP; 2009

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of the survey, the following can be concluded:

- The incidence of working children in squatter and informal settlements is significant;
- Many working children attend school;
- Most working and non-working children in settlements conduct household chores;
- Cases of children conducting “light work” activities exist in squatter and informal settlements;
- Working children below the age of 18 years in the settlements may be at risk of falling within the “child labour” category;
- Cases of children under 18 years working under hazardous conditions exist in settlements;
- Cases of children who fall within the Worst Forms of Child Labour potentially exist in settlements.

From the quantitative component of the survey (questionnaire led interviews), it appears that cases of ‘Child Labour’ are comparatively small as a percentage of the total number of children interviewed who are working. However, qualitative data and interviews with various key informants indicated that incidences of children in settlements who may be deemed as “child labourers” are more than just “a few cases”. Such cases or activities reportedly exist in many low-income households and include those that fall within the Worst Forms of Child Labour, in particular children involved in hazardous work activities. Taking into account the various comments from different survey respondents the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- **Identification of key social issues/problems existing in squatter and informal settlements-** Identification of the root causes of social problems in the settlements was quoted by many stakeholders as the key to tackling the Child Labour issue in the long term. The problems are more rife in certain communities than others. Those that work closely with families (e.g. ECREA, PCN and Social Welfare) are very aware of the nature and extent of social problems of many low-income households. The vicious cycle of poverty is often a challenge to address and attempt to break. Strengthening the ‘household/family base’ seems to be a pre-requisite to improving the chances of children not falling into child labour practices.
- **Identification of possible approaches to address the issues -** Programmes led by religious groups and non-government organisations have been implemented in some settlements to address different aspects of community livelihoods. An ongoing and key task is addressing some of the key “tools” that community families need to acquire such as ‘increasing levels of empowerment’ and ‘skills training’. Suggestions have also been made on the necessity of having a moral/spiritual building side to empowerment-building which also addresses strengthening the moral fibre of family units within the community.
- **Working with relevant partners-** It is important to identify relevant partners who already work with settlement communities as partners for any future action in terms of programme assistance design and/or intervention. Apart from this external knowledge base it is also important to continue to work with key figures in the communities themselves.
- **Utilizing role models/alternative modes of teaching and awareness-** It may be beneficial to enlist the assistance of positive role models in training and awareness programmes. This may be current or former settlement residents who have experience in working with young people in various organisations and projects and have achieved positive results in various aspects of public life.. Utilising different modes of expression such as drama or song to effectively convey messages to community youth, may also be an effective means of communication, and assist in addressing child labour issues in settlements.





Research Study 5:
SCHOOL BASED (EDUCATION)
SURVEY TO UNDERSTAND
CHILDREN'S WORK

RESEARCH STUDY 5: SCHOOL BASED SURVEY TO UNDERSTAND CHILDREN'S WORK

INTRODUCTION

A report in 2004 stated that 845,000 people were living in Fiji in 2003, and 270,400 or 32 per cent comprised of children population¹⁵. Early school dropouts are usually associated with, among other factors, child labour. Depriving children of good education in substitution for child labour has long-term social and economic negative effects on the concerned individuals, their families, communities and nation as a whole. In the long-term it will reduce the productive economic labour force in Fiji as well as depriving the affected individuals of better job opportunities.

According to the Minister of Education, Filipe Bole, the survival rate of students shows that about 15 per cent of Fiji's children do not survive the full eight years of their primary education while an average of about 74.9 per cent of those who start secondary education in Fiji get to Form Six and an even lesser percentage make it to Form Seven¹⁶.

The eradication of school dropouts has been a recent concern of the Ministry of Education in Fiji. This has resulted in the development of a 'No Dropout Policy' by the Education Ministry. The policy objectives will ensure children have 12 years of education before diversifying into other alternative pathways¹⁷. Literature has proven that school dropout is caused by socio-economic, cultural and behavioural factors and not examination alone¹⁸.

It is therefore important to identify where the non-surviving percentage of children at school has gone. As no in-depth studies have been conducted in Fiji to be able to provide knowledge and information on any relationship between school dropouts and child labour as well as children in school and child labour, conducting a school-based survey in various schools across Fiji's main urban centres and school, will add to information on the scale and nature of child Labour within Fiji.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The School-based (Education) Survey was conducted in three of the four divisions in the country. A total of 588 children, 147 teacher and 241 parents were interviewed using questionnaires. Other research tools were used to triangulate the findings.

The objectives of this research was to identify the characteristic of children who are at risk of dropping out of school and entering into child labour and those who have already dropped out of school and are workers. The survey also aimed to examine the factors that contribute to these children dropping out of school and for those at risk to identify why they are involved in child labour. Children participating in the survey identified some of the weakness in the schooling and education system and made recommendations to improve education in Fiji.

15 Population Reference Bureau, 2004, www.prp.org

16 Dropouts rise: 15 pc of our kids don't survive primary school, 2008, www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=87209

17 No School Dropouts Policy Developed, 2009, www.radiofiji.com/fiji1/fullstory.php?id=21008

18 School dropout-the Fiji challenges, 2009. www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/page_14590.shtml

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results discussed below include the findings from the school-based questionnaires, from the interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, and from observations. The discussion is divided into two parts: children in school and those that have dropped out of school. The discussion also includes community perceptions and responses from parents, teachers, key informants, analysed through the information collected.

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDREN INTERVIEWED

Two groups of children were interviewed aspects of this survey. The children who were still in school and are working or assessed to be at risk of dropping out of school, and the second group were the school dropouts. A total of 588 children aged between 5 and 17 years were interviewed, of which most were males (65%). Most of the children were from the central division, and from the rural areas. Children still in school and working, children at risk and possible child labourers were identified by the teachers.

Of the total children interviewed, 150 children were identified as school dropouts and 438 children were still in school. 63% of those schooling are males. The majority of school drop outs were also male. Less than 1% stated that they were studying and thinking of dropping out of school.

Figure 7.7: School status of the children by gender

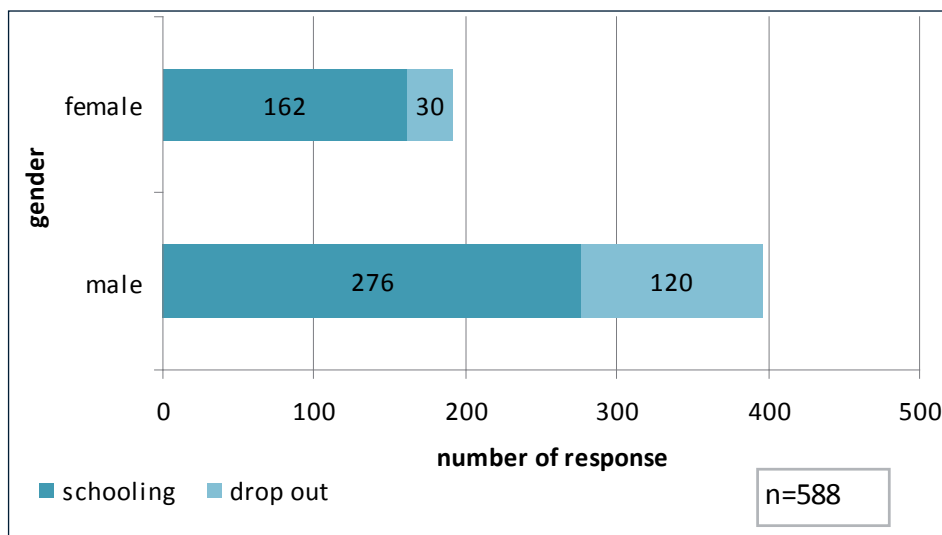
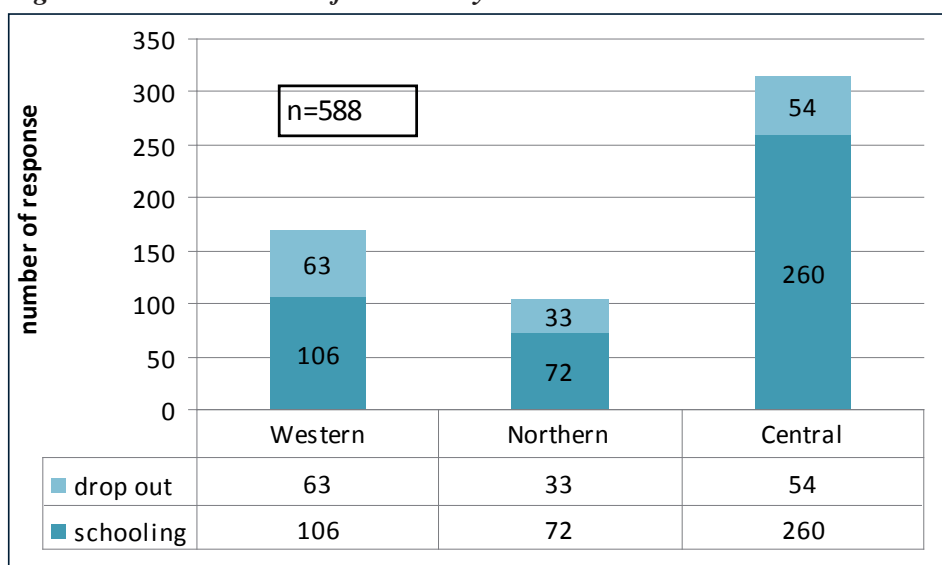


Figure 7.8: School status of children by division



Most of the children interviewed were from the central division, and were from rural areas. The majority of children interviewed were between 15 to 17 years old.

Figure 7.9: School status of the children by location

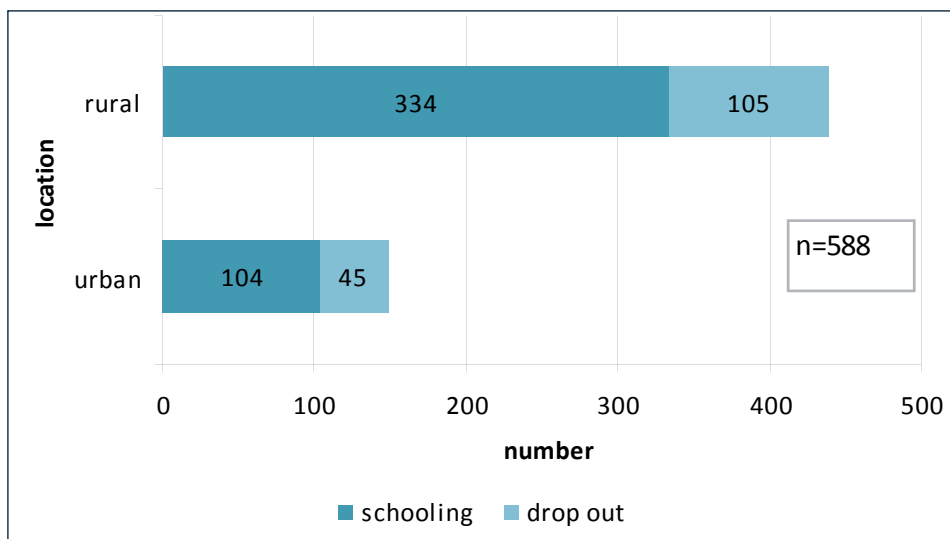


Figure 8.0: School status of the children by age

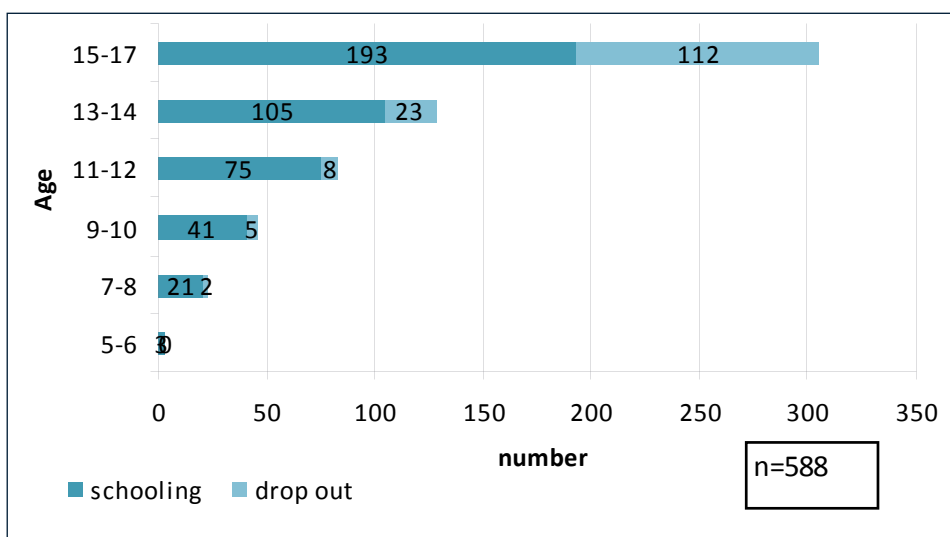
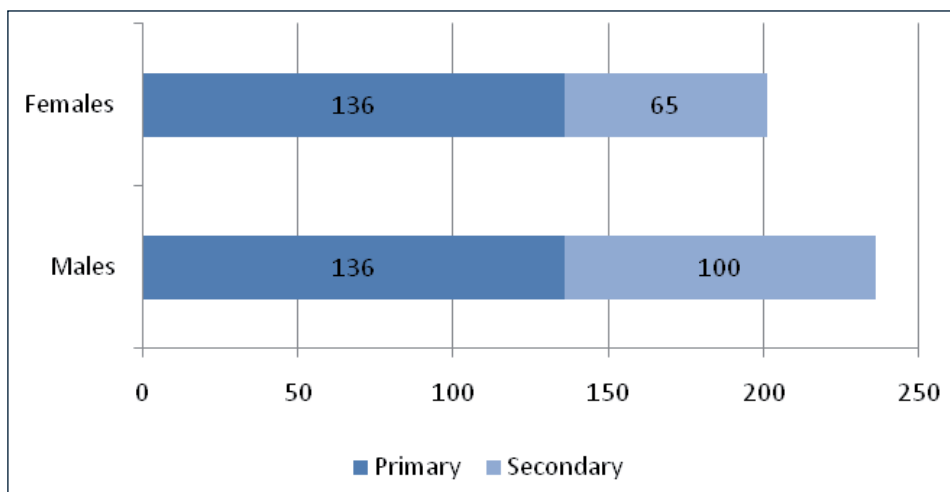


Figure 8.1: In-School children by School Level



TYPES OF WORK AND WORKING CONDITIONS

Table 5.6 shows the different types of work these children are currently involved in. These are the work identified by the children. There is a clear indication that agricultural activities are some of the common task that children are involved in.

There is also a clear indication that these agricultural activities are common amongst rural children while other income generating work such as collecting scrape metals, delivery boys, carting with wheelbarrows are tasks performed by those living in urban areas because they are available in these areas. All activities listed in the table are paid activities that the children do.

Other activities of children in the rural areas include housekeeping, babysitting, weaving, cutting firewood, tending farm animals, cutting copra, making brooms and oil, selling fish and crabs, selling cooked food, looking after the old and the sick, and working in the pearl and sea weed farms.

Other activities in the urban areas include collecting and selling bottles, collecting and selling scrap metal, delivery boys, wheelbarrow boys, sales boys, selling peanuts and beans, working in ice plants for fish, working in saw mills and timber yards, cleaning in shops, and washing boats.

Stakeholders and community members stated that in the villages the young school leavers that join the village life are expected to join in the village cleaning up and contribute to all the levies expected of a villager. When these children work so hard to cope they are treated like adults and worry about not being able to live up to such expectations.

Activities that were identified as child labour were activities done by children out of school and working below 15 years, activities not considered as 'light work', activities considered as hazardous work, and activities which requires long hours of work by children, which had a negative impact on their education. The survey found that most of the children start working below the minimum working age of 15 years.

Table 5.6: Work the Children are currently engaged in

WORK/ ACTIVITIES	Central	West	North	Total
Agricultural				
Work in the family plantation	7	2	10	19
Preparing crops for the market	7	2	3	12
Work in other farms, planting/ harvesting crops	5	9	3	17
Tending farm animals	1	2	1	4
Cutting copra	-	-	5	5
Cutting cane	1	12	10	23
Planting rice	1	1	5	7
Selling/Retail				
Selling in the market	11	6	7	24
Selling peanuts, beans, sweets	3	2	4	9
Selling food	1	3	2	6
Housekeeping				
Household chores	1	6	4	11
Babysitting/ House keeping	3	4	4	11
Housekeeping	2	3	5	10
Collecting firewood	1	2	2	5
Others - general				
Delivery Boys	1	2	2	5
Making brooms and oil for sale	-	-	2	2
Fishing	1	3	2	6
Working in Car Wash	1	3	3	7
Collecting bottles, scrap metals	2	6	3	11
Working in garages, tyre repairs	-	7	3	10
Work in flour mill /factory	2	-	-	2
Work in the supermarket	5	9	8	22
Village work	3	-	3	6
Carting with wheelbarrow	2	1	2	5

HOW CHILDREN FIND EMPLOYMENT

Through interviews it was gathered that school drop outs in the sugar cane belts find jobs easily during cane cutting season. Those in the farming areas find work in the planting and harvesting season. In the urban areas the supermarkets are always taking in children to do packing of groceries. Other small business owners welcome children to collect bottles, collect copper and scrap metal and sell items in the street.

Some children also find work through their friends and peers. Some are lured to work because their peers are already working. Other as in the case of one community children work because they have to save for financing their tertiary education. As a result they have over the years saved the returns they get from work.

CONDITIONS WHICH GIVE RISE TO CHILD LABOUR

Child labour is promoted by the financial difficulties faced by families and the open opportunities provided by farmers of sugar cane and cash crops, and the supermarkets who employ children. In the villages it is the plantation work and cash cropping that gives rise to the use of children as workers. The seasonal opportunities are taken by those children in need to cash or those who are dropouts in need for some cash returns. The survey through interviews also reveals that the employers need more hands at peak times and they also pay children lower wages.

SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Some of the children who work have poor socio-economic background. Some of the children working are leaving with relatives including grandparents or other relatives because parents have either passed on or separated and gone, or aunties and uncles. Most of the households are facing financial constraints because they are living under the poverty level and trying to make ends meet with education expenses and daily survival.

The survey through community interviews also revealed that some working children were working because they want to satisfy their wants and needs. Some of these children are from above average household and to them poverty is not a reason for working. It is their desire to get things that their parents do not buy them and that their friends have.

RISKS AND HAZARDS

Children that leave school to join the work force and earn money, experience some power of independence and with it is the perception that school is not so important. Such children adopt adult manners and socialise with adults. Smoking and drinking kava are done at a young age and their health is at risk. Cutting cane is done in the hot sun and the use of the cane knives by 15 – 17 year old children causes fatigue and strain. If the knife is too small then the child has to put in more energy to cut the cane. Similarly the work done in the farms include planting and harvesting, lifting and carting heavy sacks or bags into the vehicles.

During packing in the supermarkets children are expected to carry 50 kg bags of flour, onions, or potatoes. Children's growth is at risk especially as their bones are still developing. When they are not able to do the job, they get a telling off from the supervisors.

REASONS WHY CHILDREN ARE WORKING

From interviews with stakeholders and focus group discussions it was observed that the main reason given by informants for children dropping out of school is lack of money in the household. Other reasons include children losing interest in schooling and parents' lack of support towards children's education, teachers' lack of understanding of children's home situation, children's poor performance in school and being ridiculed by teachers. 9% of the children identified "being ridiculed by teachers" as a reason for dropping-out of school.

The children that chose to drop out of school to work said they had to work to get school fees and stationeries for their younger siblings, and to help their family's daily living, and helping parents cope with their financial difficulties. The most common reason given by teachers and parents for children working was also to assist the family financially.

Figure 8.2: Children's Reasons for working

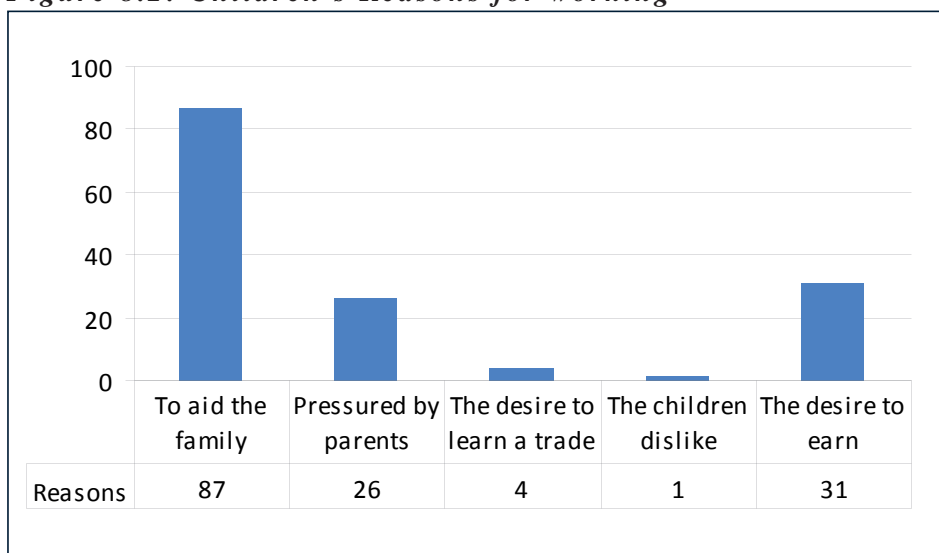
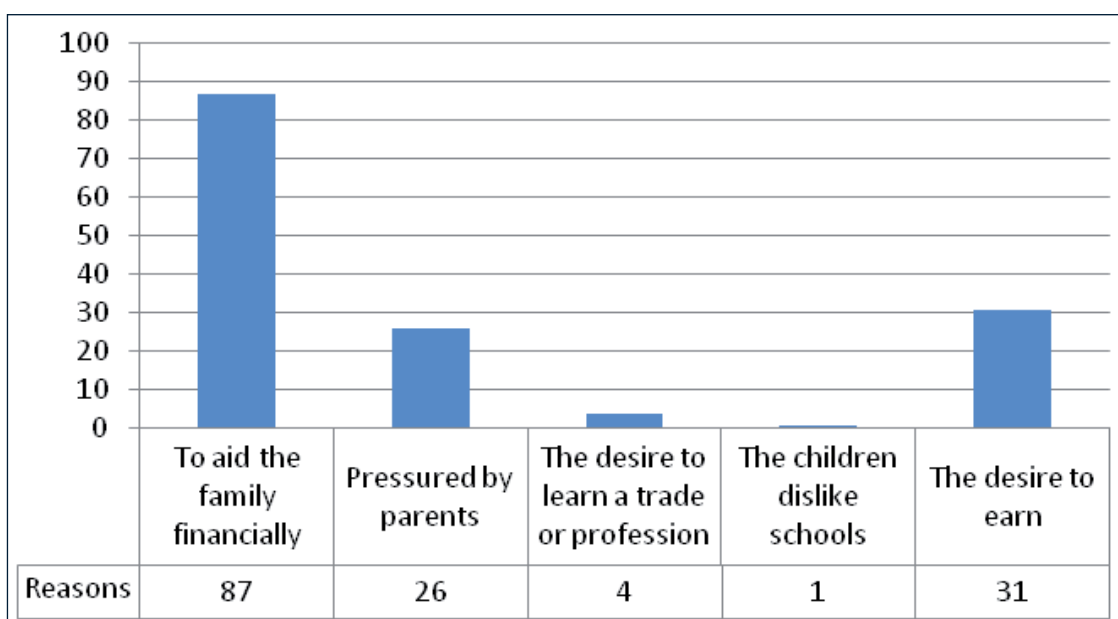


Figure 8.3: Teacher's perception of why children work



Teachers stated that the main reason why children work is because they are to assist their parents and the family financially. About one quarter of the teachers agreed that children work because they want to learn the skills. Other reasons for working listed by teachers include financing children's education such as school fess and bus fares and to fund the children own needs and wants.

Working children are viewed to be beneficial to the family as family income earners. The graphs below outline some of the parent's perception regarding children's work.

Table 5.7: Reason given by teachers why students work

Reasons	Percentage
To aid the family financially	82.9
Pressured by parents	24.8
The desire to learn a trade or profession	3.8
The children dislike schools	1.0
The desire to earn	29.5
Total (n)	147

Figure 8.4: Parents Satisfied their children work by location

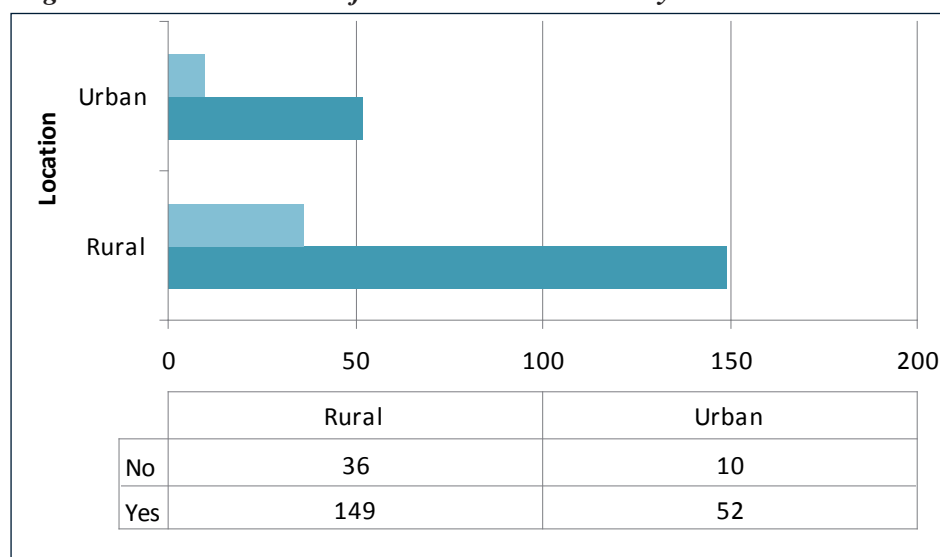
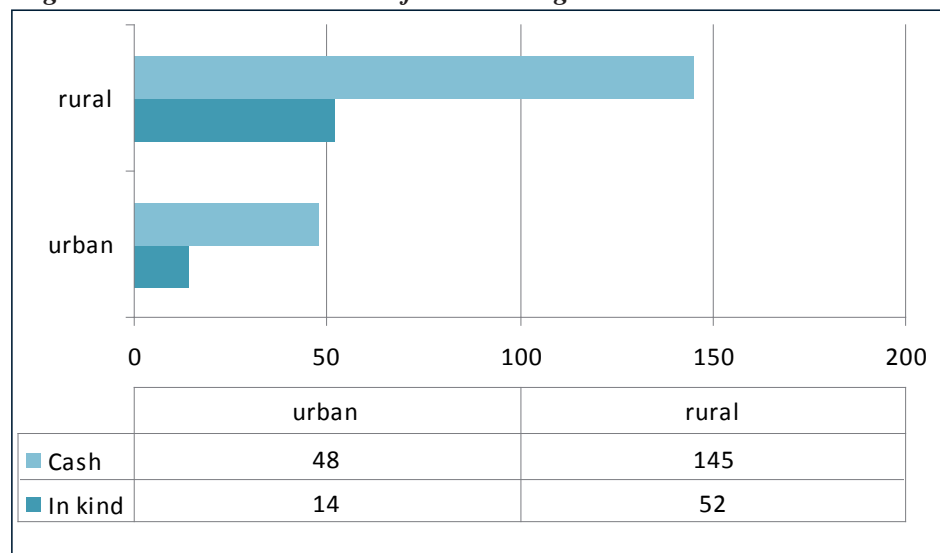


Figure 8.5: Returns received from working children



There is a clear indication that most rural and urban parents are satisfied with their children working. One main reason for this is that the children are bringing in additional cash to the family and are contributing to the survival of the family. The most common type of return for work children do is cash. A small proportion of the working children are paid for work they do in kind.

Although two thirds of the parents stated that were satisfied that their children were working, almost three quarter of them (72.4%) also stated that would prefer that their child does not work, but study only. This indicates that although parents may want their children to be in school, they have little choice but to get them to work, largely because of financial difficulties.

Figure 8.6: Do parents prefer to send child to school and not work?

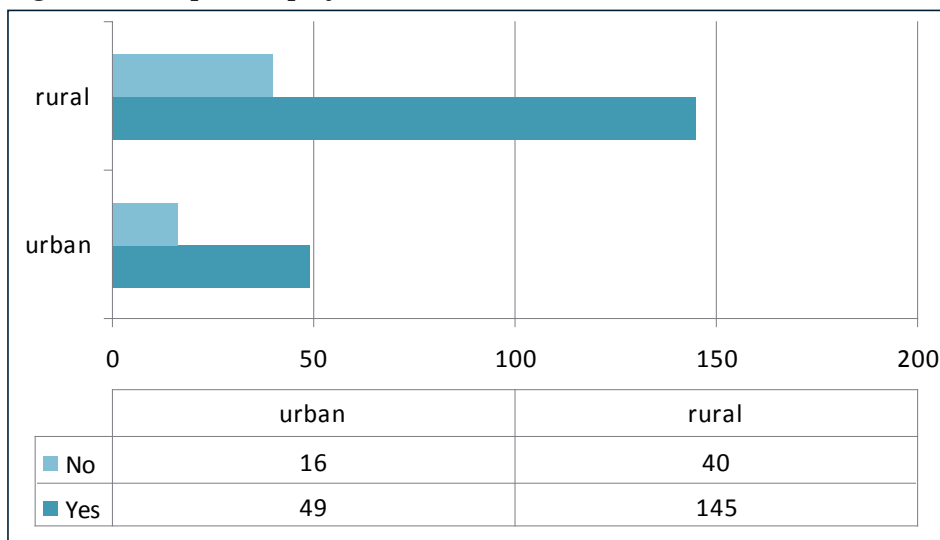
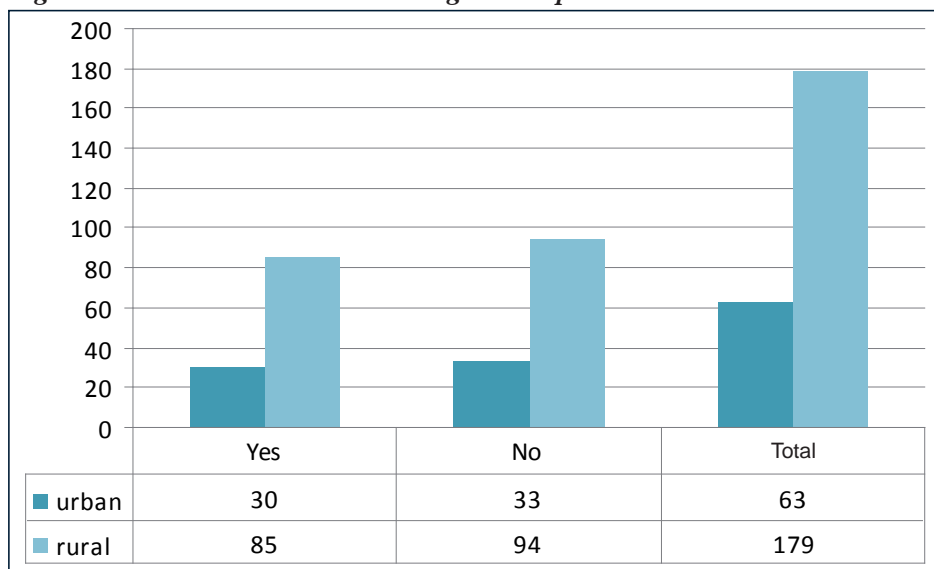


Figure 8.7: Does the work have a negative impact on child's education?



SCHOOL DROP-OUTS

A slightly higher proportion of school dropouts were from the western division followed by the central division. The proportion of school dropouts in the rural areas was slightly higher than those from the urban area, 30 % of the urban children are school dropouts as compared to 23 % in the rural areas. Most of the school dropouts interviewed were males (80 %). The older the children were the more likely it was for them to dropout of school. Most of these children are now working for payment in cash or in kind.

Discussion with stakeholders and with the community members revealed that the children that drop out of school continue with the jobs that are available to school children. First they hang around with older people and gain confidence to join the community. They also face many challenges from their parents and relatives.

The school leavers develop team relationship with other school leavers to secure opportunities for earning cash. In the villages they follow the routine of village life and have a plantation of crops to be sold; they also become the work force during village gatherings and ceremonies. The children that drop out of school to look after the family take on the responsibilities of parents. In the towns they look out for any odd jobs that come their way. When there is no job they just hang around with their peers and join various social groups such as youth group, dance clubs, sports teams, and church groups.

Most school dropouts are engaged in agricultural activities, followed by skill based activities such as mechanical work, construction and industrial work compared to those in schools. Some children stated that the reason they are working is because they want to gain some skills and have some work experience. It was also noted from case studies that some children work to be able to pay for their school fees and other requirements from schools.

Table 5.8: Distribution of School dropouts by Age and Gender

Age	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
5-12	11	4	15
13-15	32	9	41
16-17	77	17	94
Total (n)	120	30	150

Table 5.9: Type of work done by school drop-outs/ students

Type of work	School dropouts	Students
Mechanical work	4	5
Tailoring and upholstery	-	2
Carpentry	62	1
Agricultural work	62	159
Construction work	2	-
Industrial work	3	4
Trade	3	1
Others	52	147
No response	24	119
Total (n)	150	438

REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Anecdotal evidence shows that children drop-out of school because school fees are not paid or because they academically weak. Different groups of people have different perceptions of why children are dropping out of school. Reasons children gave for not going to school (missing school) and for dropping out of school are given above in the table below.

Reasons given by students slightly differ from the school dropouts. The three main reasons for not going to school given by students are, firstly not doing their homework, secondly they do not like the subject, and finally the school day is too long.

The school dropouts on the other hand stated that they dropped out because they want to be with friends, they would like to learn vocational courses and thirdly the school had no counselor to counsel them.

Table 6.0: Reasons why Children are not/did not go to school – Children's Response

Students	Number	School Dropouts	Number
Don't get along with peers	15	My parents don't want me to stay in school	3
Prefer to work	11	My peers treat me badly	3
Teaching methods are not attractive	10	My parents do not have enough money	4
No one helps in solving my problem	5	I feel education is pointless	3
I don't like the subjects	25	I want to help my family financially	1
The classes are overcrowded	3	The school environment is uncomfortable	1
The school day is too long	20	I would like to learn a vocational trade	34
No money for books and stationery	7	There is no counseling in school	32
School is uncomfortable	15	Low academic achievement	5
I don't do my homework	52	I want to be with friends	38
I don't do well in school	9	My teacher treats me badly	12

The following were suggestions from students on how to attract, retain, and increase the educational performance of working children in schools:

- Have good facilities available in school.
 - *Computers,*
 - *Recreational and sports facilities*
 - *Better toilet facilities*
 - *Indoor sports*
 - *Textbooks to be available to children*
- Educate children to manage their time wisely
- Vocational studies to be available in schools
- Reduce bullying and criticism in schools
- Families should help children to have the time to study
- Improve time management
- Classes to be exciting
- Compulsory daily attendance

- Do not overwork children
- Have compulsory daily attend
- Government to assist families through:
 - *Bus fare*
 - *School fees*
- Have good teachers who:
 - *Teach well*
 - *Are good to students*
 - *Do not punish children (No corporal punishment)*
 - *Keep children happy*
 - *Help children in homework eg. after school*
 - *Provide extra classes*
 - *Avoid abusing children*
- Parents to be more supportive and:
 - *Encourage children to get to school*
 - *Assist in homework*
- Schools to provide lunch and educate children on social ills, which may help keep children in schools

The above list shows that there are many issues that children perceive to contribute to school dropouts.

Children also stated that all stakeholders must work together to address the issue. This includes the government, the parents, the teachers, peers, the school management, Ministry of Education, and others in the community. The child also has a role and a contribution to make.

The following were **suggestions from school dropouts** on how to attract, retain, and increase the educational performance of working children in schools:

- Government should provide free education- meaning nothing should be paid at all
- Teachers should take interest in educating children mentally and spiritually and not just academically
- More government support to poor families
- Schools should have enough teachers
- Improve hostel food
- Teachers should help and counsel students
- Parents to have time with children
- School facilities should be improved
- Help prepare students for employment and provide jobs for school leavers
- Scholarship provided to needy students
- Parents to be educated and encourage children to go to school
- Government to pay for school fees and bus fares for disadvantaged children

CONCLUDING COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research was able to identify 588 children who are working and schooling, at risk of dropping out and school drop-outs. 74.5 % of the children are still in school and 25.5% are school drop-outs. About one quarter (25%) of the school children who are known to be working are at risk of dropping out of school because they want to leaving school for various reasons.

There are clearly differentiated jobs done by children in rural compared to those in urban areas. Children in rural areas are more likely to be engaged in agricultural activities. Children in urban areas work for a living through the different sources of employment available to them in the urban areas. The child workers in urban areas are more likely to be working for others. Child workers in rural areas are more likely to be assisting in family activities and task.

The research identified that child labour is common amongst males. The most common groups working are those aged between 15 and 17 years. The youngest working child is 6 years old. Children started working from the age of six. Children wanting to drop out of school are mostly in secondary schools. Child labourers are remunerated in different ways. Most of them receive payment for work they do outside the family. When working for the family they do not always get remunerated.

The survey also observed that at community level the community must be educated on the positive and negative effects of child labour. It was noted that the concept of child labour is not very clear to those at the community level. The lack of understanding includes the positive and negative impacts of child labour and the short term and long term effects of it.

Most of the children, teachers and parents interviewed stated that most child workers work outside the family to earn money and assist the family. Parents and teachers also know of children working but do very little to prevent them from doing so. More than 50 % of the parents know that their children are working and most of these parents stated that this does not affect their children's education. The teacher's on the other hand disagree with the parents as most say that child labour affects children's concentration in school and also affects their school work because they sometimes do not complete their homework.

The following recommendations are made as a result of the survey findings:

- Parents and the community in general must be educated to better understand the concept of child labour
- Community awareness on the negative and positive impacts of child labour must be conducted at all levels of society
- Schools dropouts can be engaged in vocational and skill based education to ensure that they get some form of education that they have missed out on. This can enable children to be lifted out of child labour
- Identify the risk cases in schools and on an individual level address the issues that contribute to the risk to ensure that they do not drop out of schools. The issues can be at individual level, household level, or from the school. This must be identified and it is noted that this differs for every individual.

Finally a collaborative approach, involving the Ministry of Education, Schools, Teachers, Teachers Unions, parents, and the wider community is needed to ensure that children are given the opportunity to receive good quality education and remain in school until they finish their formal secondary education.

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