



PROJECT UPDATES

Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (My-PEC)



Adult women who are parents or guardians of child beneficiaries of My-PEC micro-pilot in Ye Township, Mon State prepare materials for soap-making made from local raw materials.

© ILO Photo / Selim Benaissa


Stakeholders identify hazardous work, impacts for children

After the first workshop on 09 October 2015 that introduced the members of the TWG-CL to the process of determination of hazardous work list, they re-convened on 15-16 December in Nay Pyi Taw to develop an initial list of hazardous work and identify the risks involved and the health impacts to children.

The workshop was facilitated by Selim Benaissa, Chief Technical Adviser of My-PEC, with support from Hnin Wuit Yee, Survey and Research Assistant and Saw Hsar Ka Baw, Outreach Officer. Forty-five (45) participants engaged in group works and plenary discussions.

Groups were assigned different sectors to focus on and through 'world café' method others were able to add inputs to each sectors.

The outputs of the workshop reflect the experiences and understanding of the local context among workers, employers, government and the civil society. The workers' organizations in particular were able to provide sample cases of hazardous work based on actual experiences.

The tripartite consultation process is required by ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182 in the process of developing the hazardous work list which is targeted for completion of the drafting process by March 2016. 

55 parents, youths avail livelihood trainings

Mon Cetana Development Foundation, an implementing partner of My-PEC in collaboration with the Mon National Education Committee conducted two livelihood trainings in Panan Bone Village, Ye Township on October 20 – December 5, 2015.

Fifty-five beneficiaries, mostly parents of child labourers and children-at-high-risk of becoming child labourers have benefited from these two trainings. Youths also participated.

The participants were trained on production of soap, shampoo, balm and ginger tea from fruits and vegetables produced by

the village. The same participants have attended awareness raising activities on child labour.

A micro-finance training will also be conducted to increase the understanding and practice of good financial management of family income and expenditures among beneficiaries, encouraging forming of micro-saving groups where beneficiaries can avail of loans with low interest when they are in need or for their own businesses.

This initiative is part of the four-month micro-pilot implementation in the village started in

>>> Continued on page 2

Exploited children of the border

Described by a famous travel website as "a hectic town like border towns all over Asia" there is a problem in Tachileik that is very common many people ignore – child labour.

The town faces Mae Sai across the Thai-Myanmar border, thus, tourism mostly courtesy of Thais, is thriving. As with other border areas, human trafficking is a big issue. This issue has caught the attention of different organizations that an

"Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Raising Workshop" was organized by World Vision, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Ministry of Home Affairs on 12 October 2015.

During the workshop, ILO-My-PEC, through its Outreach Officer Saw Hsar Ka Baw facilitated the session on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL). The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) was highlighted. The discussions revealed many young girls involved in child sex tourism brokered by

other community members. Hotels are also involved in brokering.

That was the first time for the participants to hear about child labour and the worst forms of child labour. There were 141 participants from World Vision, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of Home Affairs (Anti-Human Trafficking Police Task Force), Myanmar Women Affairs Federation, Mother and Child Welfare Association, General Admin-

>>> Continued on page 2



Key Findings from the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices Study on Child Labour in Mon State, Yangon and Ayeyarwady Regions

Child labour is seen by majority as an antidote to household poverty, and a 'necessary evil' for keeping children occupied and out of trouble in cases where they cannot attend school.

Knowledge about child labour is higher among parents of non-working children.

Parents of child labourers are aware that their children work in unsafe conditions. Parents and other adults both observe that child labourers work often in excess of 40 hours a week. These difficult working conditions and long hours do not deter poor parents from sending their children to work.

Government representatives, civil society actors, medical practitioners, teachers, religious leaders and journalists showed limited awareness of the extent to which child labour interferes with or impedes education and negatively impacts on child labourers' future.

Employers feel that they perform a humanitarian / welfare service to poor families by employing their children.

Either the child herself/himself or the mother decided for the child to work. This is an interesting finding that highlights the important role of mothers in influencing child labour in the household.

Fathers are perceived to be the breadwinners of the family and it appears that when they are unable to perform such role, the children are more likely to become labourers.



Mothers of child labourers were found to have the lowest education among all parents. Mothers of non-working children were more likely to have high school and university education.

Girls are considered strong and capable to perform the same work as boys although some jobs, such as in domestic service, were considered as the domain of girls, while jobs involving higher risks, e.g. carrying heavy loads, were seemingly for boys.

The study was conducted on March 2015. To download the full report, please visit http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_27675/lang--en/index.htm

...Continued from Page 1



Mae Sai, Thailand as seen from Tachileik.

© ILO Photo / Saw Hsar Ka Baw

Exploited children of the border

istration Department, Myanmar Red Cross, Ministry of Border Affairs, National Races Development, civil society organizations and hotel industry.

Poverty, low level of awareness about legislations, lack of Code of Conduct of the tourism industry, low cost of hiring children and ease of controlling them are the main reasons why children are hired to work in hotels or pulled into

CSEC, according to the participants. Children are exposed earlier to the use of narcotics, which is also rampant in this area.

The participants all agreed that more work need to be done by different stakeholders to prevent children from falling into child labour and WFCL. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, through its Permanent Secretary U Yee Mon fur-



...Continued from Page 1

55 parents, youths avail livelihood trainings

October 2015. It aims to prevent children from engaging in child labour through education interventions for the children, livelihood support for parents and youths, awareness raising for the community members and safe work for youth interventions.

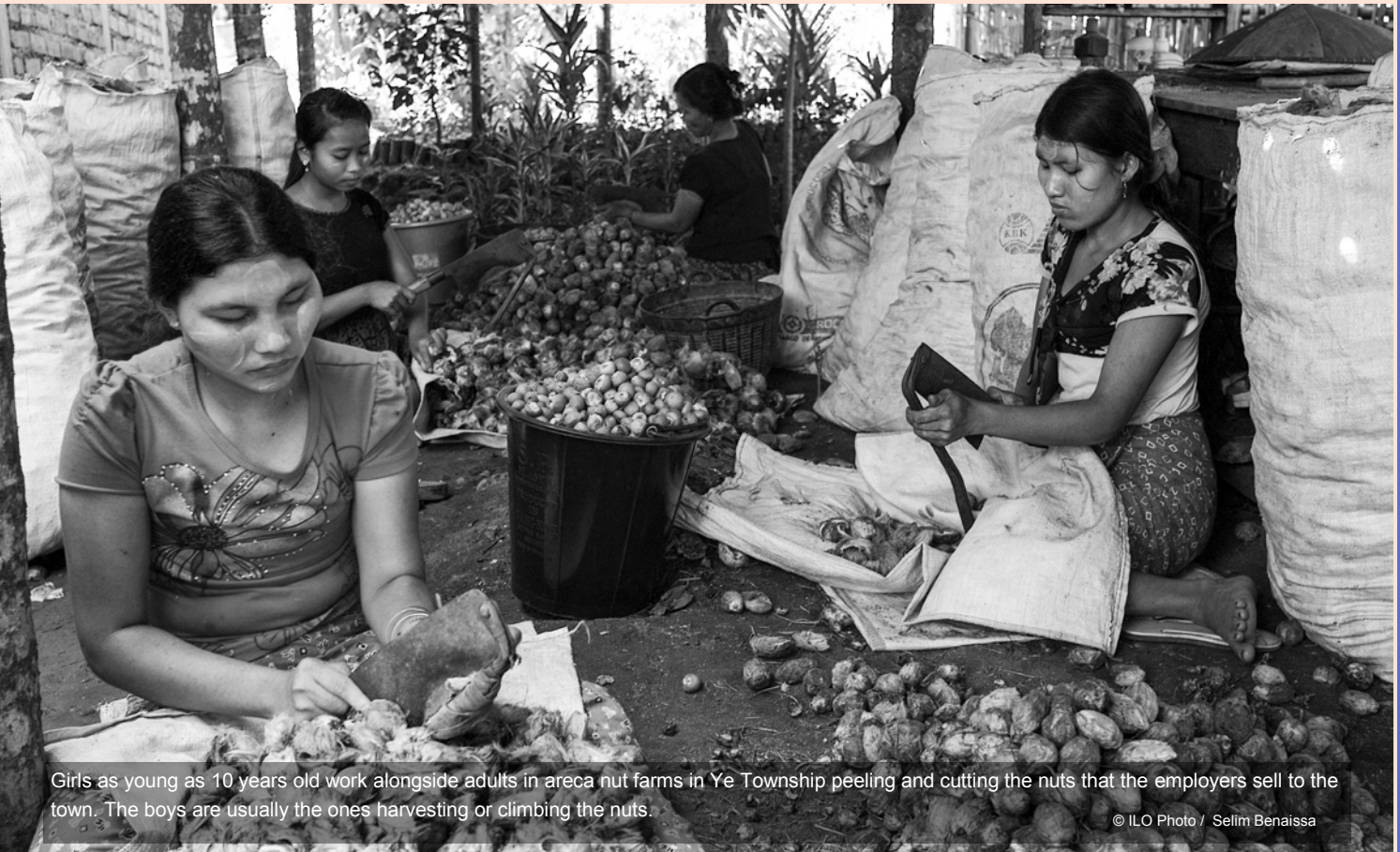
A total of 400 children – child labourers and at-risk children - directly benefits from the project.

The experiences and lessons learnt from the micro-pilot will be useful for the pilot intervention in three differ-





Chewing away their future: Betel nuts and child labour



Girls as young as 10 years old work alongside adults in areca nut farms in Ye Township peeling and cutting the nuts that the employers sell to the town. The boys are usually the ones harvesting or climbing the nuts.

© ILO Photo / Sellim Benaissa

“Chewing betel nut is a mark of a true gentleman,” said the local guide encouraging the tourists in the 19th Street, Yangon, to dare try it. He was referring to Myanmar’s age-old tradition of ‘kun yar’ or chewing areca nut wrapped in betel leaf, mixed with calc (limestone paste) and sometimes with an aromatic blend of spices and condiments. Indeed, as with other countries in Asia, this practice is very common wherever you go in Myanmar.

Areca nut is grown all over Myanmar, including the exterior part of Yangon. Some are produced for household’s personal consumption but majority find their way to the busy marketplaces in the towns and cities.

Panam Bone Village, Ye Township, is one of the producers of areca nut. Many of child beneficiaries of My-PEC in the village work for areca palm farm owners for peeling and cutting of the nuts using sharp cutters. While mostly girls are doing this kind of job, majority of the boys are earning as climbers or harvesters. The children begin this kind of work as early as 10 years old.

One of the girls who peel areca nuts for the living is 11-year old Ah Htaw (not her real name). Her pregnant mother asked her to leave school for several weeks during the areca season to work with her as peeler. Despite wanting to be with her classmates in Grade 6, she labours for 5-6 hours daily along with , other children, their siblings and mothers. The teachers oftentimes allow the children to go back to school after the season.

The other children interviewed were aged 13-17 years old but work for 8-10 hours between 6AM – 6PM. The payment is just like Ah Htaw’s, usually by lot of 10,000 areca nuts (for 6,000 MMK). Notably, all these other children have completely dropped out of school. Many of them only completed Grades 2 and 3.

One of the employers shared that she profits 25 Lakhs per year from her areca business in Panam Bone and other villages. Her buyers are established and are regularly purchasing from her. She herself was a child labourer who started working since 8 years old and never attended school. For her, she’s helping her community by asking the poorest families to work for her. She said she always helps her employees’ medical fees and even lend them money when needed.

Although she doesn’t see any danger in the work performed by the children for her business, she stated “I still prefer my employees to go to school or trainings. That’s why I am happy to learn of the ILO project that will help poor children and parents in this village. It is very important to educate the parents because they are the ones who influence their children not to go to school.”

Ye Township is in the border of Myanmar and Thailand. Many of the villagers in Panam Bone have already migrated, to Thailand and other regions or states in Myanmar because of the extreme poverty in their areas. That’s why it came as no surprise that the interviewed children also dream of migrating to Thailand or Shan someday.





SCREAM in Unison

Words about child labour has been getting around Panam Bone Village and its neighboring villages. Since the micro-pilot started with different kinds of interventions the community has been slowly building their awareness about the issue.

One of the barriers encountered in the beginning are people's lack of interest to discuss the issue because of the extreme poverty that they feel is a more urgent matter to discuss. Which is indeed, the case. Poverty and its link to child labour is one of the entry points used in trainings in the community through the methodology of Supporting Child Rights through Education, Arts and Media (SCREAM).

The SCREAM programme was developed by ILO to promote awareness among young people about children's rights, with a focus on child labour, so that they in turn can speak out and mobilise their communities to act.

Partners from Mon National Education Committee (MNEC), Mon Women Organization (MWO), Mon Cetana Development Foundation and Women Empowerment Programme were trained to become trainers on SCREAM 04-06 November. A multiplier training was conducted by Mi Thang Son Poine, Mi Dong Malay and Nai Seik Dana in Panam Bone on 10-12 November with 35 participants who are community leaders, mem-



Participants and trainers of the SCREAM Training of Trainers on 04-06 November show the different SCREAM modules.

bers of Parents-Teachers Associations, township members of MWO, teachers, and youths from different villages.

Having participants with different background and experiences livened up the sessions. Some participants shared their experiences as former child labourers themselves which enabled the discussions to be grounded on reality. At the end of the training, the participants were already looking for concrete steps such as putting up mechanisms for reporting and complaints of child labour at the communities.

"The participants were very eager to share back the knowledge of child labour to their respective communities," added Mi Htaw Chan, the Project Coordinator for MNEC.



UPCOMING RELEASES

School Needs Assessment

Geographic Scope: Dagon Myothit) Seikkan, Yangon; Labutta Township, Ayeyarwady; and Ye Township, Mon State

Tentative Availability: March 2016

This study will provide key information regarding the factors that either contribute to the low educational attainment, completion and enrolment level of children in the Project's selected geographic areas (access, infrastructure, materials, teacher capacity, etc.) or that present serious risk to the health or safety of the Project's direct beneficiaries.

Local Economic Development Assessment

Geographic Scope: Yangon, Labutta Ayeyarwady, and Mon State

Tentative Availability: August 2016

This study will assess the economic potentials and critical livelihood bottlenecks in the pilot areas to identify sectors/sub-sectors/value chains that offer economic potentials for household beneficiaries, and provide recommendations on appropriate LED projects, their modalities and approaches for implementation.

Baseline Surveys

Geographic Scope: Ward 87, Dagon Myothit) Seikkan, Yangon; Poe Laung Village Tract, Labutta Township, Ayeyarwady; and Ye Township, Mon State

Tentative Availability: July 2016

The surveys will be carried out to collect information on child labour characteristics in the selected areas such as demographic information, living conditions, educational status and working conditions; and other indicators relevant to selecting project beneficiaries who are child labourers in the worst forms of child labour and children at high risk of becoming child labourers.

The Myanmar Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (My-PEC) is an ILO four-year project that aims to develop a comprehensive, inclusive and efficient multi-stakeholder response to reduce child labour in Myanmar. The information contained in this newsletter reflect only some of the activities and outputs that the project has delivered since its official start. For more information please send an email to Selim Benaissa through yangon@ilo.org or call +95 1-2336538 .

Funding for this ILO project is provided by the United States Department of Labor (Project MMR/13/10/USA). This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does the mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.