

The search for child domestic workers: How to find and empower children in domestic work



**Report from the roundtable discussion
18 June 2015, London**



Executive Summary

This roundtable discussion brought together 17 representatives of organisations (donors and NGOs) whose work relates, in some way, to child domestic workers. The discussion aimed to explore the barriers in identifying child domestic workers and the approaches that have worked in accessing this difficult-to-reach group of children.

The group discussed how child domestic workers fit within organisational frameworks and a number of themes emerged where child domestic workers were recognised as:

- a) part of a very large group of **'vulnerable children'** but that CDWs were not generally identified (by programme staff) as vulnerable;
- b) **out-of-school children:** one example of this was in Ethiopia where it was found that girls spent, on average, eight hours per day on domestic chores in their own homes, making it very difficult for them to attend school;
- c) **children on the move:** although many organisations will have come across child domestic workers as 'trafficked children', it is now widely recognised that this narrow view of children who are 'on the move' has had many adverse consequences. Consequently new approaches are being developed that see trafficked children as one of the groups of children who are 'on the move';
- d) **girls:** child domestic workers often fit under 'girl's rights' or 'violence prevention' initiatives, and are closely connected to sexual exploitation. Although it is commonly acknowledged that CDWs are mainly girls, there are significant numbers of boys. However, because of the stigma of domestic work being 'women's work' boys in domestic work are even harder to identify than girls
- e) **street-connected children:** child domestic workers pass through the street towards domestic work or go back onto the street after domestic work or use public space while they are CDWs. The streets are therefore a point of contact for CDWs either for the promotion of rights or for safety reasons;
- a) **workers or as slavery:** child domestic workers have traditionally fallen under the remit of child labour and have therefore predominantly been seen as 'workers'. Improving the working conditions of these child workers is an important consideration; however, it is a sector of child labour that can also fall under the slavery mandate. This is due to the volatility of child domestic workers' situations and the fact that children are hidden (in the private domain of the home) where the classic labour rights approach is insufficient in bringing a sustainable solution.

Discussion also centred on the challenge of categorisation. Child domestic workers can fit within a number of categories and approaches due to their fluid movement to different types of exploitation; categorisation of children therefore presents a tension. Furthermore, certain labels for child domestic workers are problematic because they imply a solution.

However, a child centred approach allows organisations to work with the connections that a child has made whether positive or negative and decide from these where the solutions are for that child. For child domestic workers the connections to the 'domestic sphere' (a private sphere) are important - although it is a sphere that is consequently out of reach of most public authorities and difficult to access for NGOs.

Although recognising that accessing child domestic workers is perhaps the biggest challenge for those working on-the-ground with child domestic workers, the group shared their experiences of creative ways to access this hard-to-reach group of children, concluding that one of the key questions for those trying to access CDWs is at what time do child domestic workers get out of the house? Also that as employers are the 'gate-keepers' of child domestic workers a key understanding amongst practitioners is not to alienate employers. Many practitioners, including WoteSawa, have found creative ways to engage employers, enabling them to access and work with child domestic workers.

1. What we know about child domestic workers

Jonathan Blagbrough

Child domestic workers are mainly girls who move to and are working in households other than their own, doing round-the-clock domestic chores, caring for other children and the elderly, going to market, fetching water etc. We also know that international definitions exclude the situation of children who are in similar situations in their own homes.

We know that the variety of child domestic worker's experience covers a broad spectrum, including positive experiences which may provide them with support and result in new life opportunities (for example, to access education); as well as negative experiences such as exposure to violence, arduous work and exploitation.

Domestic work is the largest single category of employment for girls. At a time when the numbers of other child workers are said by the ILO to be reducing, there is no evidence of a drop in the numbers of child domestic workers. We also know that domestic work is an important source of employment and, despite being undervalued, contributes significantly to local and national economies.

We know that child domestic workers are uniquely characterized by the ambiguous relationship they have to the employing family, blurred lines which are even more blurred when they are living with relatives. They are working, but are not considered to be workers; and they are living in a family setting, but are not treated fully like family members. This results in a legal and care 'vacuum' and disguises potentially abusive working conditions and violence.

We also know that, by themselves, regulatory and policy approaches to tackling child domestic work as a labour issue alone have largely been ineffective – whether this be blanket banning of the practice according to children's ages, considering all CDW as hazardous work, or by excluding the issue from regulation altogether. Indeed, these scenarios have generally contributed to making many adolescent domestic workers even more vulnerable and hamper their chances of supporting themselves or others. Liberal use of the 'trafficking' label has often been similarly unhelpful in seeking durable child-centred solutions.

What we also know is that child domestic workers are everywhere and yet are often difficult to uncover – not only because they are physically out of sight and culturally out of mind, but also because they are hidden within our own policy and programme silos. They are not an easy group to categorise: they are child workers, independent child migrants, trafficked children, children in slavery; they are 'out of school children', or are 'in school' and struggling; they are girls, but then some are boys too; they are street-connected, sexually exploited, escaping from child marriages and violence at home – the list goes on.

And when we as organisations respond we are similarly unsure of how to categorise them: should child domestic work be seen as a safer alternative to other types of situations children are in? Are they in a safe and protected environment, or trapped in a home where they are isolated, dependent and vulnerable? Is reintegrating them back to their families for the best, or should we accept their need to work and focus on making them more visible and help to reduce the dangers they face? What is clear is that they need multiple and coordinated responses to the many rights which they are often denied.

2. Meeting Overview

2.1 Purpose and objectives

This event was organised by Children Unite to bring together NGOs and funding agencies who have expressed an interest in the issue of child domestic workers to explore the barriers in identifying child domestic workers and the approaches that have worked in accessing this difficult-to-reach group of children.

Two questions were used with participants to facilitate discussion:

- Where do child domestic workers fit in your organisation's framework?
- For those who have worked with child domestic workers, how have you identified and started working with them.

2.2 Participants

In order to start discussing the first question, participants introduced themselves and explained how their organisation comes across child domestic workers.

Andy Ware, Programme Policy Manager at World Vision UK

World Vision takes a systems based and holistic approach to child protection with a particular focus on reaching the 'most vulnerable children' and CDWs fall within this group. Although World Vision tends not to have special projects focused on particular groups, there are one or two specialist projects which focus on working children, and one such project in Cambodia focusing on CDWs.

Mike Dottridge, Independent Consultant

Mike became interested in this issue in the 1990s when he was Director of Anti-Slavery International. Mike is interested in seeing systems improved for children who've left home as well as the issue of 'children on the move' which includes CDWs.

Lucy Brealey, Learning Officer at Plan UK

Lucy is scoping what, if any, work Plan have on CDWs. She believes that CDW is hidden within existing projects as the profile of the issue within Plan is currently quite low.

Jill Healey, Chief Executive of ChildHope UK

ChildHope works with partners in 11 countries, quite a significant number of ChildHope's partners come across CDWs, often through their work with street connected children. In implementing a project with their partner in Ethiopia (as part of the Girls Education Challenge Fund) they found that 96% children were doing more than two hours of domestic work per day, many in their own homes, and that girls spent, on average, eight hours per day doing domestic chores – many of which were heavy manual labour tasks that boys would traditionally have taken on

Jonathan Blagbrough: Co-founder of Children Unite and Independent Consultant

Jonathan previously worked at Anti-Slavery for 15 years and was responsible for the child labour programme which became the CDW programme. He is a co-founder of Children Unite and leads on Children Unite's consultancy work.

Silvia Cormaci: Women and Girls Programme Co-ordinator at Anti-Slavery International

Silvia's position at Anti-Slavery has changed from co-ordinating a 'Domestic Work Programme' and been widened to look at a 'Women and Girls Programme'. Anti-Slavery have programmes on domestic work (adults) and CDW and one particular project on CDWs in Peru.

Angel Benedicto: Co-founder and Director of WoteSawa

Angel is a former child domestic worker who co-founded WoteSawa in 2015 with four of her colleagues. Angel has been involved in lobbying for the rights of child domestic workers at the ILO's negotiations of the Domestic Workers Convention (No.189) in Geneva. Angel was in the UK in June to collect a Youth Leadership Award from HRH the Queen for her work with WoteSawa.

Audrey Guichon: Programs Officer at the Freedom Fund

The Freedom Fund is a relatively new private donor fund, founded to combat slavery around the world. The Freedom Fund's activities on CDWs focus on two Hotspots in Northern India as part of a more holistic programme on slavery, and a project in Ethiopia looking at the prevention of trafficking of women and girls into domestic service in the Middle East. The Freedom Fund is interested in identifying the best approaches to prevention of children on the move – which would include CDWs.

Sarah Thomas de Benitez: Chief Executive of the Consortium for Street Children

CSC is a network 80 organisations, many in UK but increasingly many based around the world; with members that include quite large organisations (Save, Plan etc.) who work on a range of interests some of which include CDW as well as members that are quite small who work almost exclusively with children who work or live on streets. Although child domestic work is at the margins at the secretariat the Consortium (and Children Unite as members of the Consortium) is raising the issue of CDWs' street connections to the network.

Veronica Yates: Chief Executive of Child Rights International Network

CRIN monitors children's rights violations around the world, working at the international level and linking with thousands of organisations around the world, seeing themselves as a bridge in advocacy in particular. CRIN run thematic campaigns which tend to focus on new or neglected areas that are often controversial or unpopular. They intend on developing a campaign on child domestic workers in the Middle East and North Africa region that may make use of strategic litigation.

Alessio Kolioulis, Programme Assistant for Africa and the Middle East and for Latin America and the Caribbean, Stars Foundation

Stars Foundation is a philanthropic organisation finds and awards what they believe are the best NGOs in Latin America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Asia/Pacific. During their last selection process the issue of child domestic work came up from organisations mainly in Morocco and Algeria and also Paraguay (where they are a 'novella' in the wider story of child trafficking across South America).

Maggie Crewes: Director of International Development at Retrak

Retrak has traditionally worked with street children (boys) but started working with girls where they have come across CDWs. Retrak is seeing an increasing number of girls on the street, who have either been trafficked into the city for domestic work and abandoned on the streets, have run away to the street to escape poor working conditions or abuse in domestic work or are 'on the move' and have a connection to commercial sex work.

Samantha Jacobs: Analyst, Children's Investment Fund Foundation

CIFF is a new organisation looking at slavery with a focus on health, education, nutrition and climate in South Asia and Africa. In the health team there is a new work stream on 'child slavery and exploitation' (working title) which is undertaking landscaping analysis on child slavery and exploitation looking at causes, drivers, evidence, interventions and partnering opportunities across a range of issues including child domestic work. The landscaping analysis will inform the strategic direction of CIFF regarding child slavery.

Tracey Martin, Consultant for EveryChild

EveryChild focuses on children without parental care and within this context works with six groups of children one of which is children who live with their employers and CDWs come under this group. The focus of EveryChild's work is in ensuring children are placed into adequate care, preferably family based care but not necessarily their own families. Although EveryChild have supported CDWs in various countries, their primary partner in this regard is in Nepal where they reintegrate CDWs from the Kathmandu Valley back to their homes.

Gillian Harrow, Organisational Development Manager, CRIN Gillian was representing both CRIN and Children Unite as she is becoming a trustee for Children Unite in the near future. Gillian acted as a scribe for the roundtable.

Jody Myrum, Director of Adolescent Girls Initiative, NoVo Foundation

Child domestic work fits under NoVos 'initiative to advance adolescent girls rights', within a broader context of migration. It also closely connects with NoVo's initiative to end violence against girls and women, which includes work on ending commercial sexual exploitation of girls and women and economic justice. Under this initiative we fund some domestic worker rights organizing in the U.S. NoVo has focused on adolescent girls for 7 years mainly through a large partnership with the Nike Foundation. Last year NoVo went through a strategic framing process to determine how to use their resources to target hard-to-reach populations that are often invisible and not focused on by others. One of the

issues that came out of the framing process was economic migration, including the common situation where girls end up as domestic workers. NoVo is currently funding a research project in Tanzania and Ethiopia on the links between domestic work and sexual exploitation and work in Kenya on domestic workers rights.

Helen Veitch, Co-Founder and Director of Children Unite

Children Unite is the only international organisation to focus exclusively on child domestic work. Children Unite works in partnership with organisations to protect child domestic workers from abuse and exploitation and promote their rights world-wide and works in two ways:

- Implementing **capacity building and advocacy projects** in partnership with organisations working directly with child domestic workers that build the capacity of staff to run effective interventions with child domestic workers and give opportunities for children to identify their needs and advocate for their rights. These activities aim to ensure that services, legislation and policy affecting child domestic workers incorporate their views and meet their real needs.
- Running a **consultancy service** offering flexible, tailor-made advice to organisations that run interventions with children to set-up or expand their services for child domestic workers. This advice service builds the capacity of organisations to develop specific programmes, advocacy projects and services for child domestic workers that are based on the needs expressed by children themselves.

3. Introducing WoteSawa's youth led approach

Angel Benedicto

Director and Co-Founder of WoteSawa, Angel Benedicto, explained WoteSawa's approach to accessing and empowering child domestic workers.



WoteSawa was set up by Kivulini, a women's rights organisation focusing on domestic violence and came out of a project co-ordinated by Anti-Slavery International. **WoteSawa started as a group of child domestic workers** who were being supported by Kivulini. The group elected 25 leaders (including Angel) from a wider group of children, this group became an Advisory Committee for Kivulini and met every Saturday to discuss the issues facing CDWs. This group were trained on leadership, entrepreneurship, finance management (saving schemes) and undertook activities such as identifying children, training children referring cases of abuse to Kivulini or the authorities. The group became 'WoteSawa' (meaning all are equal) in 2005 and the WoteSawa model was used to develop four more Advisory Committees to reach more children. Angel was elected as the Chair of the Advisory Group and subsequently became the Director of WoteSawa.

WoteSawa's **empowerment and community mobilisation approach works with 'street leaders' local government officials** (elected but not paid) who are responsible for a number of 'streets' (known as Mtaa) in their Ward (community)¹ which includes 80-100 families. There are 210 Mitaa and 21 Wards in Mwanza – WoteSawa is working in six Wards. There are two kinds of 'Street Leaders' a) local government leaders who are elected by the community who belong to political parties (5 year terms) and are responsible for one Mtaa (a certain number of streets); b) those employed by the government (Ward Executive Directors) who oversee the Street Leaders. WoteSawa gains the support of Ward Executive Directors which enables them to work with Street Leaders, inviting them to take part in training on children's rights that is delivered by WoteSawa (using the Child Act with states that child protection is the whole community's responsibility). Then **Street Leaders and a member of WoteSawa's team undertake door-to-door discussions** in their Mtaa to identify child domestic workers.

Once identified children and employers are engaged in WoteSawa's activities. **Employers are offered informal training** (on entrepreneurship skills and the Child Act), **children are engaged in an empowerment programme** and offered training on their rights (Child Act etc.) leadership skills, entrepreneurship skills and take part in income generation activities (IGA) to set up their own small businesses. **Through Street Leaders, the community is mobilised to identify cases of abuse of child domestic workers** and an informal referral system is utilised with local NGOs, social welfare, police or Street Leaders. The first place children go is

¹ Street Leaders are elected by the community but are not paid. New term for lowest level of government hierarchy is Mtaa (Street Leaders/Ward Executive Officers are responsible for 1 Mtaa) Ward Tribunal is a community mediation forum.

usually NGOs if the organisation is close (geographically) and NGOs communicate well together but sometimes the nearest person to the child is their local Street Leader. NGOs collaborate and deal with different types of abuse or different groups of children depending on their specialism – WoteSawa is contacted when child domestic workers are involved although it refers children to the police, CSO or other public/private institutions (NGO, CBOs) depending on the child's needs (counselling services, legal advice etc.) as WoteSawa do not provide many of these services themselves.



WoteSawa's Advisory Committee of Child Domestic Workers (from left Veronica, Meresiana, Agnes, Jenipher, Agnes, and Paskazia)

4. Content of the Roundtable

4.1 How child domestic workers fit within organisational frameworks

During discussion a number of themes emerged where child domestic workers had been identified by both funding agencies and those working directly with children.

Child domestic workers were commonly identified....

As Vulnerable Children

Some larger NGOs found that CDWs came up as **part of a very large group of 'vulnerable children' but that CDWs were not generally identified (by programme staff) as vulnerable.** For example, in a participatory study World Vision commissioned for their programmes in Cambodia, Eastern DRC and Tanzania looking at how to identify 'most vulnerable children', CDWs were not commonly recognised as vulnerable because of the 'hidden' nature of their work. However, as part of this study, when children undertook a 'transect walk' - where they walked through a specific community to identify risky places and the places where vulnerable children lived - they identified more CDWs as 'vulnerable children' than adults had done.

It was recognised that, within the group of child domestic workers, the 'most vulnerable children' are those who 'live-in' with their employers as they are most dependent on their employers and, coincidentally, most difficult to reach.

As Out-of-School Children

ChildHope shared an example of a project in Ethiopia which is part of the Girls Education Challenge Fund, where the numbers of CDWs were found to be unexpectedly high. The project focused on getting girls into education who are at risk across four domains: early marriage, street connectedness, migration and domestic labour. From a comprehensive baseline study with 2000 girls ChildHope were expecting the risks to have been fairly evenly spread across the four domains. However they found that **96% of the children surveyed were doing more than two hours of domestic work per day, many in their own homes.** The most shocking statistic for ChildHope was, however, that **girls spent, on average, eight hours per day on domestic chores** – many of which were heavy manual labour tasks that boys would traditionally have taken on.

As Children on the Move

It was recognised that **many organisations will come across child domestic work as a form of trafficking.** For example CDWs have been identified in Morocco and Algeria by Stars Foundation as well as Paraguay where they are a 'novella' in the wider story of child trafficking across South America.

Within the trafficking framework, however, there has been a view where **trafficking is 'in itself' seen as slavery**. It is now widely recognised that this view has had many adverse consequences for children and new theories and approaches are being developed to counter these consequences, one of these is to see **trafficked children as one of the groups of children who are 'on the move'**. The Freedom Fund and other funding agencies are interested in identifying the best approaches to prevention of children on the move, including children who move into domestic work.

As Girls

For many donors (such as the NoVo Foundation) **child domestic workers fit under 'girl's rights' or 'violence prevention' initiatives, and are closely connected to sexual exploitation**. This connection is also made by Oak Foundation who specifically identify child domestic workers as vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. NGOs whose focus is street connected children - mainly boys, started to work with child domestic workers when they started to work with street connected girls.

Although it is commonly acknowledged that child domestic workers are mainly girls, **there are significant numbers of boys - particularly prepubescent boys**. In Nepal local NGOs state that 50% of child domestic workers (in Kathmandu Valley) are prepubescent boys who do not want to be 'labelled' as CDWs. Although it was noted that the division of tasks for child domestic workers is often made according to gender, girls and women in Peru explained that boys are even more hidden than girls as they identify themselves as gardeners rather than domestic workers because of the shame of being associated with domestic work.

As Street Connected Children

Organisations working with street connected children come across CDWs regularly. Through the concept of 'street connectedness' an increasing overlap has been identified that surfaces CDWs. This overlap with street connections is on many levels where children either pass through the street towards domestic work or go back onto the street after domestic work or use public space while they are CDWs. **The streets are therefore a point of contact for CDWs either for the promotion of rights or for safety reasons.**

For example, Retrak have been working with children who were trafficked into cities for domestic work and abandoned at the bus station or on the streets, girls who have been in domestic work and run away to the street to escape poor working conditions or abuse in their workplace as well as girls who are in transit (on the move) or have left domestic work for commercial sex work

As Workers or Slaves

In Nepal **domestic work is linked to bondage**. There is an increase in adults who are getting out of bonded labour but entering into debt again and sending their children into domestic work either in India or Kathmandu to repay the debt - effectively bonding their children.

Child domestic workers have traditionally fallen under the remit of child labour and have therefore predominantly been seen as 'workers'. Currently, however, there are an increasing number of funders approaching child domestic work from the angle of slavery (for example, Freedom Fund and ClIFF) but the debate within these groups highlights a contradiction concerning the categorisation of child domestic work as slavery. There are a huge number of children (over 50 million) who are making a living in domestic work. **Improving the working conditions of these children is an important consideration; however, it is a sector of child labour that is also highly relevant to slavery.** The diversity of working situations that children find themselves in justifies child domestic work being categorised as 'slavery'; children can be involved in 'light work' (domestic chores) but can equally be involved in the most horrendous abuse that qualifies without any doubt as slavery.

Other questions that have been raised in the 'slavery' debate centre on the 'do no harm' principle – for example should the objective be to improve the working conditions of CDWs or parachuting in and rescuing children with the risk of 'doing harm' in the process.

The volatility of child domestic workers' situations adds to their vulnerability. A child could be in an acceptable employment one day and, in the space of ten minutes when an employer asks for sexual favours, their situation becomes slavery. It was suggested that this volatility alone justifies looking at child domestic worker from the slavery mandate.

The fact that children are hidden (in the private domain of the home) means that the classic labour rights approach is insufficient in bringing a sustainable solution. The lack of a distinction between being a 'worker' and being a 'child' – makes child domestic workers more removed from public monitoring than other 'workers'. In the most extreme cases children are owned by their employers and, as slavery is defined by ownership and the possibility to leave a situation, these cases clearly identify child domestic work as slavery.

The challenge of categorisation

'... a group that is relevant to all but missed by many.' Audrey Guichon

It was clear from participants at the roundtable **child domestic workers can fit within a number of categories and approaches and that categorisation of children presents a tension** between the need to target activities at particular populations (to meet their needs) and to work within broader 'frameworks' or 'platforms' that include a range of populations.

The **fluid movement of children to different types of exploitation** can be overwhelming to donors who need some way of counting CDWs. However, it was suggested that rather than counting children it may be useful to count incidents (of exploitation) or borrow from a method used for counting child marriages where adults are asked about their situation as children.

It was acknowledged that certain labels are problematic because they imply a solution. *'If I call a child a slave and I don't pull them out of slavery, I must be doing something wrong even though I know that most CDWs are not slaves'* (Mike Dottridge).

It was noted, however, that a 'category' approach does not appear to align with a rights based or child centred approach. For example, if the child is at the centre it is clear that they cross categories at different times of their life, their year or even their week - they are sometimes in domestic work, sometimes in the family, sometimes on the street. **A child centred approach allows organisations to work with the connections that the child has made whether positive or negative and decide from these where the solutions are for that child** rather than using a pre-determined set of solutions that might work for particular groups of children.

In this way looking at child domestic workers 'connections' (instead of the traditional view of child domestic work as 'child labour') would involve **looking at children's connections to the 'domestic sphere' which is a private sphere.** There are so many assumptions made about this private sphere; that it's safe and that it's where children 'should' be, and in many cases the children themselves pretend their employers are family because that's what they want to believe. The flip side of this idea of 'domestic/private' space is that public space (the street) is usually considered dangerous when in fact; in Angel's introduction she talked about the streets as a space where child domestic workers can find work, where they socialise with their peers, a space where they can be seen.

It is clear, however, that **this large group of child domestic workers who are based in the domestic sphere are out of reach of most public authorities.** Accessing this group of children was likened to trying to get passed a locked door – whether to identify children or for fact finding, child domestic workers are difficult to reach.

Although it was also acknowledged that many funders and NGOs are purposefully trying to support 'hard-to-reach' populations that are 'invisible' (and not focussed on by others)

4.2 Accessing and working with child domestic workers

For many organisations (particularly the larger NGOs) where the profile of child domestic work is low, the issue is hidden within a broader approach such as child protection. These programmes are often supporting child domestic workers but they are not 'targeting' this particular group. **This 'one size fits all' approach means that interventions with larger groups of children are not designed specifically for child domestic workers and, consequently, cannot meet their needs.** For example, World Vision found that although CDWs were clearly in existence in the communities in which their programmes worked, they were hidden and hard to identify and consequently their programmes were not reaching CDWs. This was also due to the timing of programme activities (child clubs in particular) which did not fit with the time CDWs had available to participate.

Participants in the roundtable that had experience of working with child domestic workers recognised that **accessing this 'hidden' population is, perhaps, the biggest challenge for those working on the ground.** A few examples were given of how NGOs have successfully accessed child domestic workers:

- In the Philippines most domestic workers are able to **congregate in parks on their day off** (Sunday) and have been used to approach younger domestic workers
- In Mumbai, child domestic workers meet **in school yards**;
- In rural contexts an approach has been used that works with **community leaders and local teachers** as they tend to know, in each village, which children in the locality are domestic workers, where they are working and their hours etc;
- in a number of countries the **door-to-door approach** has been used (knocking on every door in one community to identify whether a CDW is employed by the family). However, it was also noted that this door-to-door approach has a number of challenges – it has been found that as employers often work (outside the house) during the day it is best to make door-to-door visits at night. Secondly, many NGOs or governments raise awareness about national child labour legislation that bans children from working under the age of 14 (in most countries). Consequently employers are aware of this legislation and do not admit to employing a child when asked, no matter what their age;
- In Nepal, local organisations have found that due to an increase of CDWs who attend school (rising from 30% to 85% over the last 15 years)

they are able to access CDWs **through schools rather than 'outreach centres'** as they had done previously.

It was recognised that most child domestic workers will have an interface at some point and that **one of the key questions for those trying to access CDWs is at what time do child domestic workers get out of the house?**

The other issue is that **employers are the 'gate-keepers' of child domestic workers and a key understanding amongst practitioners is that you must not alienate employers.** One example of engaging with employers is to economically empower employers (who are often not that much better off than the children they're using as workers) while at the same time use them to access and offer support to the children in their care. There is also a good example in Tanzania of an Association of Responsible Employers who put pressure on their peers (employers) in their community to follow suit. Although **questions were raised about the issue of employers being relatives of the children they employ,** and how often children are being sent to a relative's house to work (and any trends relating to the socio economic status of employers).

In some countries (Cambodia was given as an example) **brokers are used who recruit CDWs and take them to the city but the brokers have some connection or relationship with the community the child comes from** as the parents often only want to use brokers they knew or feel they can trust (despite the fact that this trust was often broken).

In the area of disaster relief, organisations working in Nepal during the recent earth quake questioned whether CDWs are included when aid workers are counting how many people are in a family.

Many of these examples are included in resources produced by Anti-Slavery International that pulled together good practice on how to identify and reach CDWs are still valuable. See www.childrenunite.org/resources. However they also include an example of **working with employers' children (sons and daughters) through schools.**

5. Next Steps

To elicit the follow-up to this roundtable two questions were posed to participants: Is this forum useful to continue the conversation and to look at other topics? If so, what should we look at?

It was suggested that a further roundtable discussion is set up to **explore employers and how to work with them?**

It was suggested that the issue of **employers and accountability** is addressed. The most vulnerable children are those who are suffering the most horrific abuse. Unless there is accountability and redress which could mean punishment, employers will get away with it. In the child development world there is little talk of justice and redress for the victims, there is also little focus on state obligations to groups of victims or engagement of the ILO in the accountability process for child domestic workers.

It was noted that labelling people as 'employers' is problematic as **many people don't see themselves as employers**, they think of their child domestic worker as a 'helper', so the children don't have contract - particularly if their employer is a relative .

There is also a need to focus on **wider stakeholders than employers** . What are the local government mechanisms for holding the public (including employers) to account for child abuse? Child Protection Committees, social workers, police etc. are key stakeholders who need to work together to identify and protect particularly vulnerable children. In Cambodia, World Vision found that neighbours often came forward and reported abuse as they could see whether children were being physically or emotionally abused.

It would be useful to look at the **mechanisms that are already in place**, as in some countries there is legislation on domestic work or on child labour. Also, to look at the unexpected outcomes of taking a certain approach – or of using certain legislation; sometimes this has unexpected consequences for families and children. For example, the unexpected outcomes of using the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (182).

Finally, it was suggested that the discussion is held as a webinar so that more organisations working directly with child domestic workers (such as CWISH or WoteSawa) can participate.