

# Reducing Child Labor through Art based Approaches

Bhusaldanda Child Club, Tansen, Palpa

## 1. Introduction

According to Nepal's Child Act 2075 (2018), child labor means the employment in physical or mental work of children below 18 years of age. Child labor is not only a violation of human rights but also a social crime and a curse of civilisation. Child labor not only violates the fundamental rights of children; it also pushes their future into darkness. Child labor deprives children of the education they need to make their future better. Because of child labor, children lose the knowledge, training and skills they gain through education. Children working as child laborers are generally from uneducated, and poor families. Child labor is a common phenomenon in the country and is also considered a part of the socialisation process (CBS 2011a). It is deeply rooted in the society with little concerns about its deleterious effects on children's schooling and future productivity.

Whatever the cause, child labor compounds social inequality and discrimination, and robs youths of their childhood. Despite activities that help children develop, such as contributing to small housework, child labor limits access to education and harms a child's physical, mental and social growth. In December 2021, the members of the Bhusaldanda Child club discusses on "pressing social issues of young people". One of the child club member shared that he has to go to work at one of the construction sites in Palpa district everyday to earn living expense. The child club members decided to explore more on the issue, and they found that for some ethnic groups, children constitute an integral part of the family workforce in Palpa district. The child club members also found that due to lack of education and social awareness, Dalit and indigenous groups have a higher tendency to send their children for work instead of school.

The child club members of Bhusaldanda secondary school further analysed the child labor issue through 'conflict tree'. The designed and implemented a photo-collage small grant project as part of MAP Nepal Phase II Small Grant.

This policy brief summarises recommendations and issues identified by the child club members through art-based project to reduce child labor. The Bhusaldanda Child club expects local government, CSOs and NGOs of this area will take appropriate action after reading this policy brief.



Figure 1. A Photo Collage prepared by Bhusaldanda Child Club

## 2. Recommendations

Bhusaldada Child Club would like to recommend following points to local government and non-governmental organisations of Tansen Municipality.

- a. Action should be taken to raise public awareness against child exploitation. NGOs and the local community should play a role as a pressure group for the protection of children against child labor and for raising public awareness in favor of child rights.
- b. Art forms found more effective to address youth's issues and creating awareness among young people. Local NGOs and Local government should use arts based methods for awareness activities.
- c. Local Curriculum Development Committee should integrate contents in local curricula that increases awareness of child rights and contribute to reducing child labor.
- d. There should be successful and effective implementation of laws against child labor and in favor of child rights and fulfillment of positive social efforts and role. Local government's oversight mechanism should be pro-active.

## 3. Methodology

- To identify the issue, Bhusaldanda child club used a variety of artistic tools. Two child club meetings were organised to list the cause of the issues, where each participant shared their observations and experience.
- The child club members used 'conflict tree' method to analyse the root causes and impact of the child labor issue. Participants categorised the issues at different levels.
- Photo collage was organised to gather information. Participants were asked to present their feelings and ideas through photo and pictures.
- Most of the child club members and students of schools discussed and explored the issue. They consulted with teachers, parents, and local stakeholders before drawing the picture.
- The club members drew pictures and collected photos in form of photo-collage.
- Drawing on these inputs, the young researchers decided to create an awareness video and Lok Dohori song against child labor, using a member of the child club involved in child labor as the main character.
- The video and song were presented to parents and local government representatives to gather their feedback.



**Figure 2.** A photo created by child club member of Bhusal danda child club on 11 Feb 2022. The photo was created to identify the social issues and root cause of child labor.

## 4. Research findings

The research conducted by the child club members reveals a situation that is in dire need of attention.

- Poverty is major cause of child labor. Parents forced their children to go for work for financial benefit, rather than sending them to the school. This means that parents prioritise work and earning over children going to school. Parents do not have awareness on the child rights. There is gap in self-realisation among parents about the importance of education to their children.
- There is no means of communication between children and policy makers to understand youth's issues by policy makers. Local government communicates via radio and TV where someone give long speech. Most of the young people said they found the message boring, rather they enjoyed photo-collage and songs prepared by MAP Club.
- Many youths shared that they were never taught in school about child labor issues. They feel it would have been nice to get information on their rights and government's efforts through curricula.
- Most of the young people who were child labor said that there was no oversight mechanisms or no agency had consulted with them yet. This means that the oversight mechanism has to increase its monitoring works.



Figure 3. Lok dohori against child labor organised by Bhusal Danda Child Club, Tansen, Palpa.

## Impact

*"We have a friend who used to go to labor work and he was irregular to the school, he was about to drop out his education. We have created a video based on story of our own friend and he is main actor in the video, we have used his own location to film the video. After the video creation, he is regular to the school, which is change due to our video."*

(secondary school student, Tansen Palpa, 28 April 2022)

