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# LABSTAT

## Updates

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## WORKING CHILDREN IN OUR MIDST

(Second of a Three-Part Series)

A **child** is an individual below 18 years of age. This definition is contained in the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999). It is also stated in the 1992 Republic Act 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act) that was amended in 2003 by R.A. 9231 (An Act Providing for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Affording Stronger Protection for the Working Child). On the other hand, the 1997 UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education states that the customary or legal age of entrance to primary schooling is not younger than five years. Taking into consideration these international perspectives and local laws, statistical inquiries on working children focus on those aged 5-17 years old.

There has been two nationwide surveys of children (1995 and 2001) conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO). In both instances, these undertakings were provided assistance by the International Labour Organization-International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour. Starting with the October 2003 round of the Labor Force Survey (LFS), the NSO collected data on the economic characteristics of children 5 to 9 years old in addition to those 10 years old and over.

However, with the revisions in the LFS questionnaire beginning April 2005 survey round, only the inquiries on the industries and occupations of the working children 5-14 years old years were retained. (The country's labor force consists of persons at least 15 years old). However, a query on the schooling status of those 5-24 years old was added which was not asked in previous rounds of the LFS.

The data on working children are not part of the regular releases of the NSO and have to be sourced from the LFS public use files, the latest of which is for January 2005. These statistics are not **comparable** with those from the 1995 and 2001 Surveys of Children which used past 12 months as reference since the LFS uses a shorter reference period of past week.

Around 1.6 million children aged 5-17 years old worked as laborers and unskilled workers in January 2005. They were mostly found in agriculture and forestry.

### Working children mostly laborers and unskilled workers in agriculture and forestry

Working<sup>1</sup> children 5-17 years old were engaged in various occupations and industries according to the January 2005 Labor Force Survey. Three out of four of these children (1.598 million out of 2.128 million) worked as laborers and unskilled workers. The rest of the working children

were engaged as service workers and shop and market sales workers (248,000 or 11.7%), farmers, forestry workers and fishermen (142,000 or 6.7%). Others were trades and related workers (79,000) and plant and machine operators and assemblers (26,000). (Table 1)

<sup>1</sup> Work is defined in terms of economic activity which encompasses paid and unpaid work of children including illegal work, whether in the formal or informal sectors. It is distinct from child labor which needs to be eliminated as it deters the child from natural development and exposes him/her to hazardous work. Presently, there is no data series on child labor.

In terms of economic activities, more than half (56.8% or 1.209 million) were in agriculture and forestry. Almost all of them (1.123 million) were engaged as laborers and unskilled workers.

Some 300,000 of the working children were in wholesale and retail trade either as service workers and shop and

market sales workers (185,000) or laborers and unskilled workers (109,000).

About 190,000 were employed in private households, 134,000 in fishing and 110,000 in manufacturing. The least number of working children were in mining and quarrying (9,000) and construction (25,000).

### **Six out of 10 children in unpaid family work**

About 57 percent (1.220 million) of the 2.128 million working children performed unpaid work for their families. The survey also reported that 751,000 (35.3%) were paid employees mostly in private establishments (563,000 or

26.5%) and private households (177,000 or 8.3%). Around 150,000 were self-employed (7.3%) with 94,000 of them as farmers, forestry workers and fishermen. (Tables 2 and 3)

### **Almost half of the working children in permanent employment**

There were 1.059 million children reported in permanent employment, i.e., expected to last for one year or longer. Less than a million (962,000 or 45.2%) had short-term work and a little over 100,000 (5.0%) worked for different employers. (Table 3)

Children with permanent employment or short-term work were mostly in unpaid family work (56.1% and 64.9%, respectively). On the other hand, those who worked for different employers

were largely in private establishments (93.9%).

Male children comprised 66 percent (805,000) of those in unpaid family work and 72.6 percent (409,000) of those hired in private establishments. They also had the larger share of self-employed workers at 83.2 percent (129,000). Female working children prevailed in private households as they comprised 88.7 percent (157,000) of total.

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**TABLE 1 - Working Children 5-17 Years Old by Industry Group and by Occupation Group,  
Philippines: January 2005**  
(in thousands)

Industry Group	All Occupations	Laborers and Unskilled Workers	Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	Trades and Related Workers	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	Other Occupations
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>2,128</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>
Agriculture and Forestry	1,209	1,123	-	85	-	a	1
Fishing	134	79	-	55	-	-	a
Mining and Quarrying	9	6	-	-	3	-	-
Manufacturing	110	33	1	2	66	6	2
Construction	25	21	-	-	4	-	-
Wholesale and Retail Trade	319	109	185	-	5	2	18
Hotels and Restaurants	46	6	38	-	-	-	2
Transportation, Storage and Communications	53	25	7	-	a	18	2
Private Households with Employed Persons	194	180	12	-	-	-	1
Other Industries	29	17	4	-	-	-	9

Note: Details may not add up to total due to rounding.

a Less than 500.

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

**TABLE 2 - Working Children 5-17 Years Old by Class of Worker and by Occupation Group,  
Philippines: January 2005**  
(in thousands)

Class of Worker	All Occupations	Laborers and Unskilled Workers	Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers	Farmers, Forestry Workers and Fishermen	Trades and Related Workers	Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	Other Occupations
<b>Philippines</b>	<b>2,128</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>
Wage and Salary Workers	751	574	97	16	33	14	17
Private Households	177	165	12	-	-	-	1
Private Establishments	563	403	84	16	32	14	14
Gov't/Gov't Corporations	3	a	a	-	-	-	2
Family-owned Business	8	5	1	-	1	a	-
Self-Employed	155	31	5	94	7	9	8
Employers	3	1	-	2	-	-	a
Unpaid Family Workers	1,220	992	146	30	39	3	9

Note: Details may not add up to total due to rounding.

a Less than 500.

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.

**TABLE 3 - Working Children 5-17 Years Old by Class of Worker and by Nature of Employment,  
Philippines: January 2005**  
(in thousands except percent)

Class of Worker	Number				Percent			
	Total	Permanent Job	Short-Term	Different Employers	Total	Permanent Job	Short-Term	Different Employers
<b>Both Sexes</b>	<b>2,128</b>	<b>1,059</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Wage and Salary Workers	751	371	276	104	35.3	35.0	28.6	97.3
Private Households	177	122	52	3	8.3	11.5	5.4	3.2
Private Establishments	563	243	219	100	26.5	23.0	22.8	93.9
Gov't/Gov't Corporations	3	1	2	-	0.1	0.1	0.2	-
Family-owned Business	8	5	2	a	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2
Self-Employed	155	92	61	2	7.3	8.7	6.3	1.9
Employers	3	2	1	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
Unpaid Family Workers	1,220	594	624	1	57.3	56.1	64.9	0.8
<b>Male</b>	<b>1,376</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Wage and Salary Workers	440	192	164	84	32.0	28.0	27.2	96.7
Private Households	20	11	9	a	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.5
Private Establishments	409	176	150	83	29.8	25.6	25.0	95.9
Gov't/Gov't Corporations	3	1	2	-	0.2	0.1	0.3	-
Family-owned Business	8	5	2	a	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.3
Self-Employed	129	78	49	2	9.3	11.3	8.1	2.3
Employers	2	1	1	-	0.1	0.2	0.1	-
Unpaid Family Workers	805	416	388	1	58.5	60.5	64.6	1.0
<b>Female</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Wage and Salary Workers	311	179	112	20	41.3	48.1	31.0	100.0
Private Households	157	111	43	3	20.8	29.9	11.8	14.8
Private Establishments	154	68	69	17	20.5	18.2	19.2	85.2
Gov't/Gov't Corporations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Family-owned Business	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Employed	26	14	12	-	3.5	3.8	3.4	-
Employers	1	a	a	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-
Unpaid Family Workers	414	178	236	-	55.1	48.0	65.5	-

Note: Details may not add up to total due to rounding.

a Less than 500.

Source of data: National Statistics Office, Labor Force Survey.