

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

CHILD LABOR PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION PROGRAM

2014 Accomplishment Report

In 2014, the DOLE continued to intensify its efforts for the prevention and elimination of child labor in the country. The following are the highlights of accomplishments of the DOLE.

HELP ME Convergence Program to Address Child Labor

The HELP ME Convergence Program is in response to President Benigno S. Aquino III's instruction to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Social Welfare (DSWD) to address the child labor problem. The President's concern was based on the results of the 2011 Survey on Children which showed that 2.99 million children between 5 to 17 years of age were engaged in hazardous work.

The Human Development and Poverty Reduction (HDPR) Cabinet Cluster has approved the HELP ME Convergence Program during its joint meeting with the NEDA Board – Social Development Committee on 8 November 2012. The HELP ME Convergence Program engages several government agencies to deliver services to the child laborers and their families to combat child labor. These government agencies include the Departments of Labor and Employment, Social Welfare and Development, Education, Health, Interior and Local Government, Agriculture and Justice; and the Technical Education Skills Development Authority, National Economic and Development Authority, Council for the Welfare of Children, and Philippine Information Agency.

The HELP ME Convergence Program aims to implement a sustainable and responsive convergence program to address child labor in the Philippines by providing focused, converged, and synchronized strategies to effectively address the child labor problem. It adopts the community-based approach to answer the child laborers' call 'HELP ME'. It also hopes to contribute to the vision of a 'Child Labor-Free Philippines' by promoting 'Child Labor-Free Barangays'. 'HELP ME' stands for the following: H – for health services and medical assistance; E – for education and training; L – for livelihood opportunities to families of child laborers; P – for prevention, protection and prosecution; M – for monitoring; and E – for evaluation.

To roll out the implementation of the HELP ME Convergence Program, the DOLE developed in 2013 profiling forms for vulnerable workers and conducted a Trainers' Training on the Profiling of Vulnerable Workers on 27-29 November 2013 for 123 DOLE regional and field office focal persons.

In 2014, a nation-wide profiling of child laborers was undertaken by the DOLE to locate where these children are and identify the appropriate interventions and services to be provided to them and their families by the implementing agencies of the HELP ME Convergence Program. A total of 75,724 child laborers were profiled from 406,887 households. Most of the child laborers profiled were engaged in farming, fishing, scavenging, vending, small-scale mining and domestic work, among others. As of December 2014, data on 23,086 (30.5%) profiled child laborers have been encoded.

The DOLE conducted series of consultation meetings in 2014 with the HELP ME Convergence Program partner government agencies for the formulation of a draft Joint Memorandum Circular which shall serve as the basis of engagement in the convergence of programs and services. The JMC will contain the roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies involved in the implementation of the HELP ME Convergence Program. The draft JMC is currently undergoing review by partner agencies.

Child Labor-Free Barangay

The campaign for child labor-free barangay, launched in May 2012 to contribute to the vision of a “Child Labor-Free Philippines”, aims to influence change and obtain commitment and support from various stakeholders to make barangays free from child labor.

DOLE Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz issued on 15 December 2014 Administrative Order No. 657 on the *Guidelines on the Certification of Child Labor-Free Barangay*. The Guidelines contain the criteria for the selection of child labor-free barangay, documentary requirements, certification process, incentives and benefits, and grounds for decertification, among others.

A barangay, to be certified as child labor-free, must meet the following criteria: profile of children in the barangay, including child laborers, regularly maintained and updated; commitments of parents of child laborers not to engage their children in child labor, of school heads to monitor school attendance, of barangay officials to support campaign against child labor, enact and implement ordinance or resolution against child labor and immediately act upon reported child labor incidents; child laborers have access to health and education services and their parents to livelihood opportunities; presence of functional Barangay Council for the Protection of Children and inclusion of child labor and/or child protection agenda in the Barangay Development Plan with corresponding budget; partnership with government and civil society organizations; and participation of barangay officials in capacity building activities.

As of December 2014, a total of 53 barangays were certified as child labor-free; 219 barangays were upgraded from “continuing” to “low-hanging fruits”; and 365 “new-frontier” barangays were upgraded to “continuing” barangays. In “new frontier” barangays, no interventions on the prevention and elimination of child labor have been undertaken yet, while in “continuing” barangays, there are initiatives, interventions or services already provided but need enhancements to achieve the goal. “Low-hanging fruits” barangays have services and programs already provided and various stakeholders were already mobilized but these need to be sustained and continuously monitored.

There were seven (7) resolutions and 14 ordinances passed at the local levels in support of the campaign for child labor-free barangays. In addition, three (3) Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Elimination of Child Labor in the Sugar Industry have been signed by key stakeholder in the sugar cane growing provinces of Batangas, Negros Occidental and Bukidnon.

Child Labor-Free Establishment

One of the recognition awards under the DOLE Incentivizing Compliance Program is the *Child Labor-Free Establishment* which aims to promote compliant and socially responsible business practices as establishment-based component of the campaign for a Child Labor-Free Philippines.

The *Child Labor-Free Establishment Certificate* is conferred to a company or establishment that is not employing child labor and not using products or materials produced through the use of child labor. An establishment applying or nominated for the *Child Labor-Free Establishment Certificate* must meet the following criteria: (a) be a holder of a bestowed Tripartite Certificate of Compliance on Labor Standards; (b) maintains a company policy expressly prohibiting child labor which is displayed publicly; (c) contracts or terms of engagement with its suppliers and contractors contain stipulations prohibiting child labor; (d) has no pending case with the DOLE on the use of child labor; and (e) suppliers and contractors have no pending case with the DOLE or any verified report on the use of child labor.

In 2014, the DOLE Regional Offices awarded *Child Labor-Free Establishment Certificate* to 97 establishments, bringing to a total of 104 the establishments already recognized by the DOLE as *Child Labor-Free Establishment* since 2013. Region XI had the highest number of Child Labor-Free Establishments at 29, followed by Region IV-A at 23 and the Cordillera Administrative Region at 18.

Project Angel Tree

Project Angel Tree aims to provide an array of social services made available by sponsors or benefactors or “angels” to child laborers and their families. In 2014, a total of 5,793 children were provided with school supplies, clothing, toiletries and grocery items under Project Angel Tree. The figure includes 200 child laborers in Manila who were beneficiaries during the 81st DOLE anniversary celebration in December 2014. DOLE officials and employees acted as “angels” or sponsors to these children.

Kabuhayan para sa Magulang ng Batang Manggagawa

Livelihood assistance was provided to 10,681 parents of child laborers under the DOLE Integrated Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program. The livelihood assistance were in the form of food processing, sari-sari stores, automotive machine sets, crop production equipments, pedicabs, barber shop and beauty salon/spa equipment, carpentry tools, farm implements and motorized fishing boats and fishing supplies, among others.

Sagip Batang Manggagawa

In 2014, the SBM Quick Action Teams conducted 15 rescue operations (10 in NCR, 1 in CAR, 1 in Region V, 2 in Region VII and 1 in Region VIII) wherein 89 child laborers engaged in worst forms of child labor were removed. This brings to a total of 3,392 child laborers already rescued by the SBM QATs since the inception of the SBM in 1993.

Out of the 15 establishments raided in 2014, five (5) criminal cases against the perpetrators have been filed. Two (2) of which are pending with the Office of the Prosecutors in Baguio City and Manila, while three (3) are with the Regional Trial Courts of Pasig and Manila.

The DOLE issued in 2014 permanent closure orders to eight (8) establishments found engaging 25 minors in prostitution. This brings to a total of 41 establishments permanently closed by DOLE since Republic Act No. 9231 was enacted in 2003.

World Day Against Child Labor Celebration

The National Child Labor Committee, chaired by the DOLE, spearheaded the 2014 World Day Against Child Labor national celebration on 18 October 2014 at the Occupational Safety and Health Center with the theme “*Batang Malaya Proteksyunan, Child Labor Labanan!*” The celebration, led by the DOLE Secretary, was participated by 190 former child laborers and 135 partners from the government, workers’ groups, academe, media, and civil society organizations. Zumba, games, art contest, infomercial-making contest were held. Likewise, various activities were also conducted by the DOLE Regional Offices in celebration of the 2014 World Day Against Child Labor.

Working Child Permit

In 2014, a total of 4,175 working child permits were issued by seven (7) DOLE Regional Offices for children below 15 years of age who were engaged for public entertainment or information. Of this number, 99 % or 4,144 were issued by DOLE-NCR.

The Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns developed draft guidelines to address the issues and concerns encountered by the DOLE Regional Offices in the issuance of working child permit. A consultation meeting with DOLE-NCR was conducted to solicit their comments and inputs on the draft guidelines.

Amendment to DOLE Department Order No.4, Series of 1999 (Hazardous Work and Activities to Persons Below 18 Years of Age)

The DOLE has formulated proposed amendments to DOLE Order No. 4, Series of 1999 through series of consultations with stakeholders and DOLE field implementers. The proposed amendments was presented to the Tripartite Executive Committee of the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council during its 16 October 2014 meeting. The comments of the said Committee will be incorporated in the revision of the proposed amendments.

The United States Department of Labor, in its 2013 report on *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor* published on 7 October 2014, has cited the Philippines as having achieved **significant advancement** in its efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, the second year in a row. The Philippines is among the 143 countries profiled in this report, and the only country in the Asia

and the Pacific out of 13 countries to receive an assessment of significant advancement, the highest ranking,

The US Trade and Development Act of 2000 requires that countries must implement their commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor to be eligible for certain US trade preference programs and requires the US Secretary of Labor to report on this to Congress annually. The report focuses on the efforts of certain US trade beneficiary countries to implement these commitments through their legislation, enforcement efforts, policies, and social programs.