

**RAPID APPRAISAL OF CHILD LABOR  
IN THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY:  
CASE STUDIES IN TWO ILOCOS PROVINCES**

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

"Children are a bit like chickens - they need to be kept safe, guided, fed and loved."

Grandmother of four young children,  
cited in UNICEF 2001

The aphorism quoted above captures the essential feeling of millions of parents worldwide. Children are the objects of care and protection, and parents generally feel responsible for them as they move from infancy to childhood and adolescence. The notion that parents exercise care and control over their children defines childhood as a period of dependency. It views children's actions as being under the discipline of their elders, and the scope of their independent behavior is framed within this social expectation.

Filipino families are no different. Ethnographic studies point to the solicitous actions of parents over their children. Every child is valued as a gift from God, deserving of care, nurturance and protection. At the same time, parents are disciplinarians and aim to mold their children into the socially accepted norms of society. Part of this norm, especially in rural areas, is for children to participate early in life in household activities. Hence, it is not unusual to find pre-school children being asked to look after infants and younger siblings. Neither is it exceptional for young children to help in household chores: carrying water, gathering fuel, sweeping, washing dishes and going on simple errands. In families engaged in agricultural production, children are also socialized to become involved in the family's productive activities (Nurge 1965; Nydegger & Nydegger 1966; Mendez & Jocano 1974; Domingo 1977; Boquiren 1987; del Rosario & Veneracion 1987; Remedio 1991; Gonzaga 1991; Orense 1992; Sumagaysay 1992; Torres 1996; Torres 2002).

Children's involvement in productive work becomes problematic when it interferes with their physical, emotional and intellectual development. It is in recognition of these risks that the issue of child labor emerges. In 1973, the International Labor Organization adopted Convention No. 138 and Recommendation No. 146 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment. This Convention provides a minimum age for admission to employment of not less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling, but in any case, not less than 15 years of age. In 1989, all except two member- countries of the United Nations adopted the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Among others, this covenant provides for "the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

Child labor has been extensively studied in the Philippines since the mid-eighties. However, there have been no researches focusing on child workers in the tobacco industry. For this reason, Philip Morris International and the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) commissioned PARTNERS, International to undertake a baseline study of child labor in selected tobacco growing areas of the Ilocos Region.

## Research Objectives

The general objective of the research is to produce a bird's eye view of child labor in tobacco production within the provinces of Ilocos Sur and La Union. In more specific terms, the study aims to:

- a) estimate the *incidence* of child workers in Ilocos Sur and La Union,
- b) describe the *situation* of child workers in selected areas,
- c) document *existing programs* addressing child labor among governmental and non-governmental agencies in the two provinces, and
- d) identify possible areas for *program intervention*.

## Methodology

The research was conducted from mid-November 2001 to February 2002, approximately covering a period of 2½ months. The study sites were selected after consultation with PBSP, the Plans and Projects Office, and other technical staff of the central and branch offices of the National Tobacco Administration (NTA). The criteria for selecting barangays in Ilocos Sur and La Union for the research were the following:

- a) tobacco-producing as the main industry of the barangays;
- b) having the biggest number of tobacco farmers and farm size among barangays of the provinces;
- c) presence of child workers, 7 to 14 years old; and
- d) accessibility of the barangays

### *Study Sites*

The baseline study was conducted in two barangays each from the municipalities of Candon, Ilocos Sur and Balaoan, La Union (see attached maps, Appendix A). In Candon, Barangays Parioc II and Balingaoan were chosen for the case study. In Parioc II, there are 148 farmers cultivating a total 133.85 hectares of tobacco farms. In Balingaoan, there are 111 tobacco farmers working on 94.20 hectares. In Balaoan, the two contiguous barangays, Calliat and Baracbac Este were selected. These barangays registered a total number of 142 and 178 tobacco farmers, respectively, based on the 2001 barangay profiles. Thirty hectares are devoted to agricultural purposes in Calliat and 50 hectares in Baracbac Este. These barangays will be described in greater detail in Chapter Three.

### *Methods of Data Collection*

A combination of methods was used for a Rapid Appraisal of Child Labor in tobacco-growing areas of Ilocos Sur and La Union. These methods included a review of documents on child labor, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, drawings and stories by selected child workers from two barangays, and case studies of seven selected households across barangays. The list of research cooperators using the different methods of gathering data is included as Appendix B.

*Key informant interviews* were done with officials, technical staff and extension workers of the NTA. The interviews aimed to elicit the following information: to identify the role of the NTA in the tobacco industry, its strategic programs, projects and services to the tobacco farmers and their families, impacts of these programs on the socio-economic conditions of the farmers and the households, and their knowledge about child labor. Four selected line agencies of the government in Region I, through their respective heads and key staff, were interviewed to determine what programs, projects and activities were being implemented, and to identify future plans to address the issue of child labor in agriculture, particularly in tobacco farming. These informants belong to the following regional offices: the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, and the Department of Health.

*Ocular visits* around the barangays and farm sites were undertaken to get social and resource maps, and to plot the accessibility to roads and transport of the residences, school and production areas. Since the period of the visits by the Research Team coincided with the planting season of tobacco, they were able to observe some child workers helping their mothers and fathers in watering newly replanted tobacco seedlings.

*Focus group discussion (FGD)* were done in Bgys. Calliat, La Union and Parioc II, Candon, during which time the selected children were asked by the Researcher-Facilitator to draw on papers their participation in the whole process of tobacco production. Work participation refers to the specific work the children do and/or how they help their parents in tobacco farming. After the drawing activity, each child worker was asked to share with the group the story behind his/her drawing. A Documentor from the Research Team recorded the children's stories and took photos of the drawings. A total of 21 children participated in the FGDs.

*Case documentation* of 7 child workers was conducted to explore the incidence of child labor in the tobacco-growing barangays. Using a data portfolio on child labor

devised for the research, the following information were determined; a) physical features of the barangay, b) tobacco production profile, including other crops, c) relations of production, d) production processes for tobacco growing, and e) occupational risks and hazards. These data sets were gathered from interviews with the Barangay Secretaries, Barangay Health Workers, barangay school teachers and barangay extension workers. Child workers and their parents also provided information for the case studies. For the in-depth interview with the child workers and parents, personal information about and the work profile of each of the child workers was obtained. The parents and their children were separately interviewed to validate responses to each question.

### **Identifying the Child Worker**

For the purposes of this study, a *child worker* is defined as *a person below 15 years of age, engaged in any of the phases of tobacco farming, whether on full-time or part-time basis, and receiving remuneration in cash or in kind. The child may be working for his/her parent or relative or for others in the community.*

## CHAPTER TWO Child Labor in the Philippines

### What is Child Labor?

The Convention on the Minimum Age for Admission for Employment (ILO Convention No. 138 and Recommendation No. 146) provides a uniform minimum age for admission to all kinds of work or undertakings, without distinction. It stipulates that the age of admission to paid work should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory education, but in any case, not less than 15 years. Exemptions to this rule include the following situations:

- work done by young persons in schools for general, vocational or technical training
- work done by persons at least 14 year of age in undertakings that are an integral part of a course of education or training for which a school or training institution is primarily responsible, or a program of training approved by competent authority
- artistic performances given appropriate permits by competent authority.

The Convention, however, allows member-states with an insufficiently developed economy and educational facilities to initially specify a minimum age of 14. Moreover, work for children from 12-14 years is allowed provided these activities are not harmful to their health or development, and will not be prejudicial to their schooling or vocational training (ILS-DOLE 1994).

In the context of the Philippine experience, child labor pertains to "the participation of children in a wide variety of work situations, on a more or less regular basis, to earn a livelihood for themselves or for others. Children's work may be paid or unpaid, and remuneration for their efforts may be made to adults rather than to themselves, or assessed in non-material ways (such as food, education, shelter or clothing). Very rarely are children able to determine the prices of their own labor" (ILS -DOLE 1994). Researches have also shown that children's work in the Philippines may be full-time or part-time, regular or seasonal, depending on specific circumstances faced by children (Del Rosario & Bonga 2000).

The Labor Code of the Philippines provides that children below 15 years may be allowed to work in non-hazardous activities, provided that such children work under the sole responsibility of a parent or guardian and the activity does not interfere with the children's schooling (Article 139). This is supported by the Child and Youth Welfare Code (R.A. 7610), which allows children to work below the age of 15 under the direct supervision of the parent. However, R.A. 7658 provides that this situation is permissible only if the child's employment neither endangers his/her life,



safety, health and morals, nor impairs normal development. It also requires parents to ensure the enjoyment by the child of either primary or secondary education.

R. A. 7610 declares as a state policy the provision of special protection of children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. It provides sanctions against such acts and allows the state to intervene in behalf of the child when the parent or guardian fails to protect the child.

Del Rosario and Bonga (2000) question the assumption that children's work in the home should be allowed because these are likely to be unexploitative. They particularly point to the situation of child labor in industrial homework for export production where -

“Child workers received pittance for the beautiful handiwork from which the foreign importers in developed countries earned much profit. They also worked long hours and were risk in terms of their health. Individually and collectively, these child home workers were being exploited right in their own homes, not necessarily by their parents, but under parental supervision. The home was, therefore, hardly a place free of exploitation, particularly in the context of subcontracting for export production.” (Del Rosario & Bonga 2000:37)

Not all types of children's work are considered child labor. Generally, the participation of children in domestic activities, or in efforts that do not produce goods or services, does not constitute child labor. Hence, undertaking household chores is not part of child labor but work in family-owned businesses is. Mendicancy is not child labor because it does not produce a social commodity. But debt-peonage, where children are made to work to pay off their parents' debts, is child labor even if children receive no direct payments for their work. So are children's self-employment activities (ILS-DOLE 1994).

## **Profile of Child Labor**

The National Statistics Office undertook a Survey of Children 5-17 Years Old in 1995. They estimated that 16% of Filipino children were engaged in economic activities during the study period. Boys were more likely to work than girls, and the incidence of children at work increased with age, especially in the 10-14 year age group (NSO 1998:17). About 11% of all rural children work, predominantly in agriculture. A majority of working children attended school in 1995, across all age groups. However, more girls than boys were in secondary school. Consistent with empirical studies, the NSO survey described few children to be engaged in work alone. More likely, these children were working and studying at the same time. Given this situation, the problems most often cited by the children in relation to their

schooling include the high cost of schooling, the distance of their schools from their residences and difficulties in catching up with school work. These observations are consistent with findings of case studies and other researches on child labor (Boquiren 1987; del Rosario & Veneracion 1987; Remedio 1991; Gonzaga 1991; Orense 1992; Sumagaysay 1992; Torres 1996)

Statistics on working children in Region I may be summarized as follows:

- 7.1% of all children in the region are engaged in economic activities, with an almost equal number of girls and boys at work.
- A majority of the children are unpaid family workers in household operated farms (80.5%) and only 15.5% work in private establishments.
- Only 14.1% of children are permanent workers. Close to 39% work as short-term casual workers, while 55% are engaged seasonally and during the summer vacation

Boquiren (1987) observed that the child's decision to work is conditioned by a host of factors, including personal characteristics of the child, the household situation, influences of peers and community circumstances. In communities characterized by family-size production units, children are likely to engage in work in the company of one or both parents. In fact, in agricultural communities, most families view their children's work participation as part of the family's routine activities, and find nothing wrong with it. Most parents of working children have their own histories of working early in life, within the same communities where their families are presently situated (Boquiren 1987; Del Rosario and Bonga 2000; Orense 1992; Sumagaysay 1992; Gonzaga 1991).

Study results generally show that a majority of working children continue to go to school. However, this pattern is differentiated in relation to the type of work of the children, the production cycle, parents' occupational status, the affordability of intermediate and secondary schools, gender of children and their employment status (whether working full-time or part-time). The proximity of secondary and intermediate schools is one important factor that discourages children from completely dropping-out of school because of their work activities (reviewed by Del Rosario & Bonga 2000).

The health status of working children is affected by their activities. Child workers tend to be underweight and undernourished (IIR 1986; Veneracion 1989; Gonzaga 1991; Sumagaysay 1992). Children engaged in agricultural work suffer from respiratory ailments, gastro-intestinal complaints, and skin diseases (IIR 1985; Veneracion 1992). They are also exposed to a variety of chemical, biological and physical hazards (NSO 1998). The paramount chemical risk in farm activities comes from exposure to toxic fumes from insecticides, followed by dust and noxious liquids. In Region I, amoebiasis constitutes the foremost biological hazard, followed by viral, fungal and bacterial infections. Prolonged exposure to the sun, heat, and

noise are among the physical hazards in the Region. In the face of these risks to health and physical safety, only about one in five working children use safety gadgets of any kind (NSO 1998). The most common safety gadgets used in farming are safety helmets, face shields, and safety boots.

Child workers aspire for a better life for themselves. A majority wants to finish a college education and become professionals. To achieve this, they perceive their work engagement as instrumental. Hence, work is seen as necessary to be able to move out of their present family situations (Torres 1996; Del Rosario and Bonga 2000).

### **Government Intervention in Addressing the Child Labor Problem**

Despite the efforts of the governments to prohibit child labor since the 1920s through the enactment of laws and policy guidelines, the problem continues to persist. Since child labor is considered as a major economic and societal problem and child labor jeopardizes the children's potential to become productive adults, the government is required to respond more vigorously.

As the perennial problem of child labor is rooted in the economic structure of the country, the objective of the abolition of child labor can be achieved through sustained increases in standards of living. The ILO, in recognition of this fact, adopted a "two-pronged approach" to the child labor problem. The goal is the eventual elimination of child labor by improving the conditions under which children work.

There have been government actions to address the child labor problem such as special projects designed to respond to specific needs. One of these projects, a project of the University of the Philippines in collaboration with UNICEF, was the launching of "Breaking Ground for Community Action on Child Labor" in 1988. It identified and assisted communities in regions with high concentration of child labor through the provision of basic health and education services to children, entrepreneurial skills to children's parents, and advocacy work to convince parents and employers to remove children from heavy or dangerous work. The government formulated the Philippine Plan of Action for Children. It sets specific goals for children in especially difficult circumstances, among which is the banning of children from hazardous occupations/situations by 80% by the year 2000.

In 1991, the National Child Labor Program Committee was created to expand the project "Breaking Ground for Community Action on Child Labor." It involved government, non-governmental agencies, and local government units, working together to combat child labor. In 1994, the Philippine government became a participating country in the ILO-International Programme on the Elimination of Child

Labor (ILO-IPEC), after which an agenda of action for attacking child labor in the Philippines was formulated by representatives of various government agencies, NGOs, employers' and workers organizations, local government officials and academics from different regions of the country.

The current focus of actions in the country is on the elimination of risk to children than on ending their participation in all form of work. The ILO-IPEC believes that this approach is needed to accommodate the poverty element in child labor and to allow families flexibility in maintaining their essential survival mechanisms while protecting the children involved. The government is focusing on rescue efforts for the most exploited forms of child labor and for high-risk children such as the very young (below age 12 or 13). For the rest of working children, however, until alternatives for survival are set in place, heightened efforts are recommended be exerted, to assure that they are in jobs that are not harmful to their health and physical and mental development.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Child Labor in Selected Barangays of La Union and Ilocos Sur**

The present set of findings on child workers was derived from a Rapid Appraisal of Child Labor in four tobacco-growing communities of the Ilocos Region. In this chapter, the principal results of the research will be presented. Brief profiles of the barangays where child workers were identified will be presented first, to enable the reader to place the situation of child labor in the context of community characteristics. Information from informant interviews, ocular surveys, focus-group discussion, and case studies will be combined in the presentation.

#### **The Tobacco-Producing Municipalities and Barangays**

##### *Balaoan, la Union*

The municipality of Balaoan in La Union is made up of 36 Barangays with a total land area of 6,450 hectares. The barangays of Calliat and Baracbac Este in Balaoan comprise 90 and 80.45 hectares, respectively. The topography of Balaoan is generally 60% flat plains suitable for rice, corn and tobacco production, and 40% rolling terrain. The southeast portion going towards the western portion of the municipality is predominantly hilly. Balaoan had a total population of 32,280 for the year 1998. Forty-nine percent or 3,219 hectares of Balaoan is cropland, with 3,556 total numbers of farmers tilling different farm types and following several cropping patterns where rice is the basic main crop except in upland areas.

Barangay Calliat is located at the southern part of Balaoan beside Barangay Baracbac Este. It is approximately 6 kilometers from the town proper of Balaoan with a road network that stretches from the national highway to its neighboring barangays. It is accessible by passenger jeepneys and tricycles. Social services such as school and health center are visible in the area. Calliat Elementary school is just beside the barangay hall, multi-purpose cooperative and day care center. These resources are also accessible to the residents of Barangay Baracbac Este due to the nearness of the place and its geographical boundaries.

It had a total population of 1030 in 2001, and most individuals are engaged in agriculture. Farming and livestock raising are the most dominant and reliable sources of income of the residents. Ninety percent of the workers in the area are farmers and their main crops are palay and tobacco. Some of them plant corn and watermelon as alternative cash crops. The remaining 10% of its population are professionals and entrepreneurs. Almost all families are engaged in backyard gardening and livestock

raising. Produce is mainly for home consumption although some are sold in the market. The tobacco farmland and facilities for production are just a few kilometers away from farmer's residential area. Most of them who engage in tobacco growing have their own curing barns needed in curing the harvested tobacco leaves.

Barangay Baracbac Este is located on the northeastern part of Balaoan, sandwiched by Brgy. Calliat on the east, on the north by Brgy. Tallipugo, and on the south by the Maluyo River. It is approximately 5 kilometers away from the Balaoan Municipal Hall, with concrete farm to market roads and provincial roads connecting to national highway. The place is accessible through passenger jeepneys and tricycles anytime. Two-thirds of the total land area of the barangay is used for agriculture. Its population numbered 1,284 in 2000.

Baracbac Este doesn't have an elementary school in the area. Children normally enroll at Calliat Elementary School, a walking distance from their houses. Most of the residents have electricity supplied by La Union Electric Cooperative while deep wells are the main source of fresh water.

Majority of the residents in Baracbac Este depend on farming as their primary source of income. Rice, corn and sugar are their main products while tobacco is planted during dry season. Farmers who engage in tobacco farming own curing barns that are located near to or beside their houses. Some of them till land in the adjacent areas, particularly in Barangay Calliat. Aside from farming, most of the residents also undertake livestock raising such as swine raising, poultry, cattle, goat and carabao raising.

#### *Candon, Ilocos Sur*

The city of Candon has 42 barangays with a total land area of 10,328.21 hectares. Based on the 2000 census, a total population of 48,456 is projected, with an annual growth of 0.20%. 25,127 of the total population are female and 22,363 are male. Seventy-four percent of the total land area of Candon is considered as agricultural land. Majority of the land is used for the production of rice, tobacco, cotton, corn, and vegetables. A small area is devoted to fishing. Commercial establishments located in the city proper make up only 0.03% of its total land area that is used for industrial investments.

Barangay Parioc II is 348 north of Metro Manila, and 7.2 kms. from the city proper. It is almost 5 kms. away from the hi-way going north to Vigan, Ilocos Sur, and passing through the road between Brgy. Calaoa-an and Brgy. Ayudante. The area is a valley situated between two mountains. Parioc II can be reached by tricycle, the most popular means of transportation going to the highway and vice versa. Twenty

percent of the southwestern part of Brgy. Parioc II is considered as a forest reserve. Its hilly terrain is planted with small trees that are the residents' source of firewood. About 0.1 % of the land is used as fishpond.

Parioc II has a population of 1,512, consisting of 831 males and 681 females, occupying 341 residential households scattered in groups across the Barangay. Around 95% of all households have electricity.

Barangay Parioc II is traversed by 18 kms of concrete roads, with trails in its interior areas commonly used for animal drawn carts. Along the stretch of the road going inside the barangay proper is a bridge, and almost halfway is the Brgy. Day Care Center (also Multi-Purpose Center) ran by a Barangay Health Worker. The same structure is use by 59 students, who are supervised by a teacher. Since there is no elementary school in the barangay, elementary grade students walk to Brgy. Parioc I, which has the nearest public school in the area. Approximately 95 % of the household have electricity. A small number of farmers get their water supply from the river, while the major source of water comes from deep wells, run by diesel motors.

Majority of the residents are engaged in farming. Approximately 262.5 hectares of land, which is rain dependent, is planted to rice during the rainy season. After harvest time, other crops that need less water such as corn, tobacco, and vegetables replace the rice in the fields.

Barangay Balingaoan is situated 348 kms north of Metro Manila, 4 kms. from the town proper of Candon City. Its total population is 1,393, including 688 males and 705 females, spread across 255 households.

There is a 12 km. long barangay road linking the main highway to the interior part of Balangaoan by means of tricycles and other public utility vehicles going to the town proper. It is composed of 6 sitios, linked by 83 % of concrete road, some rough roads (10 %), and trails in the interior. The biggest sitio is Bariquir where 1/3 of the total number of residential houses is concentrated, spreading along both side of the barangay. road. The smallest sitio is Kamanggaan where the Barangay Day Care Center is located. The Barangay Hall, church, and the Barangay Elementary School are located alongside the barangay main road in Sitio Nagbalsaan. Eighty-five percent of households have electricity and about 35 families have telephones.

The source of income of residents in Balangaoan comes from agricultural production in a land area of more or less 287 hectares. The areas are planted with seasonal alternate intercropping of corn, vegetable, and tobacco, but its main product is rice. Balangaoan doesn't have an irrigation system to supply the water needs of the

farmers. Their sources of water come from deep wells constructed beside rice paddies run by conventional diesel motors.

### Child Labor on Tobacco Farms

Ten child workers from Calliat, Balaoan and 11 from Parioc II, Candon were separately asked to take part in focus group discussions about their work. In order to stimulate the interest of the children, they were first asked to depict their work in tobacco production through colored drawings. Approximately half of the children who participated in the FGDs were boys and the rest were girls. The boys from Balaoan had ages ranging from 11 to 14 years, while those from Parioc II were younger: from 9 to 14 years. The female research cooperators were younger than the boys, with one from Parioc II being only 7 year of age. Table I summarizes the data.

Table I. Number of Child Workers in the FGDs and their Ages

Barangay	Sex of Children		Range of Ages	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Calliat, Balaoan, La Union	6	4	11-14	8-13
Parioc II, Candon, Ilocos Sur	5	6	9-14	7-13

According to community informants and extension workers alike, the participation of children in tobacco production is a common feature in the life of the four barangays in the study. At young ages, sons and daughters are taught to accomplish simple tasks from planting to *agtudok* ('sticking' tobacco). The drawings shared by the child workers in the FGDs illustrate their involvement in a variety of tasks from seedbed preparation to post-harvest activities. The case studies describe similar work experiences with family members and other persons in the communities.

#### *Types of Work of Child Workers*

The types of work engaged in by children, derived from both FGDs and case studies, include (see also Table 1, Appendix C):

- In seedbed preparation -
- Cultivation of tobacco plants for water percolation (*ruc-at*)
- Weeding
- Cultivation or plowing (*gulis*)
- Assisting adults in chemical spraying



In planting and transplanting operations –

- Planting
- Transplanting
- Watering
- Fertilizer application

In harvest and post-curing operations –

- Harvesting (*pitás*)
- Sticking tobacco leaves on bamboo sticks (*agtudok*)
- Uprooting the plants
- Preparing the fire for the flue (*gatong*)
- Sun drying

*Work Patterns of Child Workers*

There are similarities and slight difference in the patterns of work of children across the two municipalities we studied. To obtain a better picture of the nature of their work in tobacco production, the summary results of the FGDs are reproduced here.

1. Calliat, Balaoan, La Union

The children shared their work in the tobacco farms through drawings, which were shared with the big group. The drawings showed that the children of Calliat were actively involved in six (6) activities of tobacco farming.

*Panag-sibug* (watering) the plants takes place when sowing seeds and becomes a regular activity once transplanting has taken place and until harvest time. Watering is done usually with an older sibling or with a parent. The children hold the watering hose (2-3 inches in diameter) to avoid trampling on the tobacco plant. *Panagturnok* (uprooting of tobacco seedlings) for replanting is also participated in by the children. After uprooting the tobacco plant from the sowing plot, the children assist in transplanting (*panagmula*) to the main plot. Transplanting is a family activity, which is done late in the afternoon, usually from 3-5 p.m. One maintenance work for the tobacco plant is *panag-paggot ti ruot* (weeding) by the family members. An activity identified as a male role is *panag-gulis* or plowing along the tobacco plots to loosen the soil for better water percolation during watering. The last activity in tobacco production where the children are involved is *panag-tudok* (sticking). It is considered as a favorite among the children not only because it is the easiest but also it is paid.

Majority of the children of Calliat do not get paid for their work in their tobacco farm, which they perform before their classes in the morning, and after their classes in the afternoon and usually during weekends. What drives them to work is the desire to help the family. The two that get paid for their work earn from ₱ 20.00 – ₱ 25.00 per hundred sticks.

In the above-mentioned activities, the children used their bare hands, which leads to their getting injured or their fingers being pierced during sticking. They however do not consider this as a serious problem.

2. Parioc II, Candon, Ilocos Sur

The child workers in Barangay Parioc II are involved in the tobacco production process from planting to the post-curing stage. At the onset of the sowing of tobacco seeds, the plots now have to be watered (*panag-sibog*) regularly, which is every other day. This is done very early in the morning before the children attend their classes or late in the afternoon, before sundown. Watering is done using rubber hoses of several meters long and about 2-3 inches in diameter. An elder sibling or the father is usually the person whom the child helps by holding the hose, making sure that it does not trample on any tobacco plant. After a month the seedlings are ready for transplanting (*panag-mula*) to the main plot. Transplanting is done early in the morning starting at 7 AM – 9 or 10 p.m. then again from 2 p.m - 4 p.m. Since transplanting coincides with the Christmas vacation, the children join their family in this activity.

One week after the tobacco plants are transplanted, fertilizer (*panag-abono*) can then be applied. The Ammonium Sulfate (2100) or complete fertilizer is placed in a *sitaw* or small pail and the children using their bare hands apply the granules to the tobacco plant. Spraying or insecticide application is performed by older children, who are 14 years old and above. The adults harvest mature tobacco leaves. Sticking (*panag-tudok*) is a favorite among the children because it is paid for 30 centavos to 50 centavos per *sad-ay* which consists of three sticks per *sad-ay*. On weekdays, the children do sticking from 5-8 p.m., others work from 8 p.m. -11 p.m.; while on weekends, they work from 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. Children who are 9 years old and above help in the fueling of the curing barn (*agsungrod*) and carrying tobacco in *sad-ay* (*agyawat*) to the curing barn. Once the tobacco leaves are cured and removed from the curing barn (*panag-yakas*), The leaves are removed from the stick (*panag-manos*). A complete *panag-yakas*’ is paid ₱ 20.00 with merienda. After removing the leaves from the sticks, the sticks are then bundled and the *sad-ay* arranged for future use. The children also perform these last two activities. Majority of the children keep all the money they earn for themselves. They save this to buy new clothes (*bado*) or school supplies. One shares half of her earnings with her mother. The OSY whose farm work is regular earns ₱ 50.00 pesos for a half-day work. Aside from working in their own farms, the children work on the farms of relatives.

During weeding and planting time, the children used *kumpay* (sickle), don sweaters, and wear wide brimmed hats. Two of the participants also sometimes use gloves when sticking tobacco leaves. Aside from this apparel, the children use no other protective clothing so that most experience punctures during their sticking activities.

From among the child workers in the FGDs, it was reported that girls as young as 7 years old help in weeding, watering, sticking and uprooting tobacco. The boys, who were older, were occupied with a wider variety of jobs: *ruc-at*, chemical spraying, weeding *gulis*, fertilizer application, transplanting, planting and sticking tobacco (Table 2, Appendix C)

Adult tobacco growers usually accompany the children in the accomplishment of their tasks. Hence, the children report working alongside either parent, with aunts, uncles, cousins, grandmothers, friends, and neighbors. Ocular observation confirms the children's account that these different individuals may work together as pairs or small groups, depending on the phase of tobacco production they are working on.

For most of the children, work is part-time and seasonal. They go to the fields before leaving for school, once school is over in the afternoons, on week-ends and school breaks. At the time of the study, in December and early January, tobacco growers had just begun to plant. By the time the validation meeting took place in February, some farms had been harvested and most of the children were involved in sticking tobacco, helping fuel the flues, and drying the harvested leaves.

#### *Monetary and Non-Cash Earnings*

Remuneration for working in tobacco farms varies according to the phase of tobacco production, and is sometimes different across the two municipalities. On the average, for part-time work that may last from 2 to 3 hours on schooldays and 10 hours on week-ends, child workers receive ₱ 20 to ₱ 25 daily. The cheapest payment for work is in Calliat, for *panag-tudok*, or sticking the harvested leaves on bamboo sticks in preparation for curing. Some tasks are unpaid, especially because the children work on small family-owned farms.

Some girls reportedly received no payments for doing the same tasks that boys were paid for. These activities include weeding, transplanting tobacco, fertilizing and weeding. In Parioc II, one child stated that she received money from her parents only after the cured tobacco had been sold to a dealer (Table 3, Appendix C).

Money earned from tobacco production are often used by the children to buy clothes for themselves and other that the need for school. Some buy food for themselves and their siblings or give a portion of the earnings to their mothers. This was shared both by the children in the FGDs and in the case studies.

In addition to money, the children perceive certain benefits they receive to be related to their work. These non-cash benefits include *merienda* (snacks) during the activity, getting uniforms, food and other pieces of clothing from their parents, and their school allowances.

#### *Tools and Equipments used by Child Workers*

For certain aspects of tobacco production, some tools and equipment may be required. For fertilizer application, for instance, children use pails (called *sitaw*), the fertilizer itself (ammonia or complete fertilizer), bottle caps and spoons for measuring the chemical. For *panag-tudok*, which occupies the children for a great deal of time, bamboo sticks (*sad-ay*) are fashioned on which the children string the tobacco leaves. Sometimes, gloves are worn to protect them. In many cases, however, the children use their bare hands in undertaking either fertilization or *panag-tudok*.

It may be worth noting at this point, however, that even older persons at work on the farms do not wear protective clothing while applying pesticides or fertilizers. Many of them also go about with bare feet on the fields and use their bare hands for fertilizer application, chemical spraying and *panag-tudok*.

### Profile of the Child Workers: Case Studies

A more extensive profile of children drawn into child labor was obtained from the case studies. The demographic characteristics of these children are displayed in Table II. Their names have been changed to protect their identities. A Summary Matrix derived from the case studies is part of Appendix D.

Table II. Demographic Characteristics of Child Workers

	Barangay	Sex	Age	Educational Level
Billy	Parioc II	Male	14	Grade 6 (OSY during the study) <sup>1</sup>
Monica	Parioc II	Female	8	Grade 2
Ricardo	Balingaoan	Male	10	Grade 4
Marichu	Balingaoan	Female	12	Grade 4
Marlon	Calliat	Male	11	Grade 6
Rebecca	Calliat	Female	12	Grade 6
Ruben	Baracbac Este	Male	14	First year H.S.

Most of the children included in the case studies are in-school children, with the exception of Billy, who stopped going to school only this year. Except for Marichu, who is at a lower grade level than her age-cohorts because she had failing grades in the past, the rest have attended school regularly. Work in the fields has not affected the school performance of many of the children. Ricardo is Second Honor in his class while Becky is Seventh Honor. Neither have they been absent on account of work. Rather, illness is the more common explanation of school absences.

Visual observation and their own accounts point out that many of the children are underweight and small for their ages. This is especially true among the children from Balaoan. Despite this poor nutritional profile, the children have not been ill in

<sup>1</sup> OSY means out-of-school youth

recent months, suffering only from common respiratory ailments such as coughs or colds. However, Becky states that she gets asthma attack when she is tired.

### *Socialization into Tobacco Production*

Billy started to work when he was only 4 years of age. Marlon and Marichu learned *panag-tudok* before they started elementary school, when they were 6 and 7 years old, respectively. Ricardo is the most recent child worker, having been taught only when he was already 10 years old. Hence, the age at which children begin work in tobacco production varies widely. Most probably, the entry of children into tobacco production is linked to the number of adults in a family: the fewer the adults, the more likely a child is involved in work. But *panag-tudok* is taught even to young children. All the children report that they learned the needed tasks from relatives, including their own parents, aunts, grandparents, uncles and cousins. These findings are indicative of the fact that tobacco-growing in the two towns are largely family enterprises, and the children are drawn into work as part of their roles as obedient sons and daughters.

The 7 children do the same types of simple tasks that the child workers in the FGDs report doing: from planting to post-curing phases of production. Monica and Richard narrate that they work as assistants of older siblings or relatives, from whom they learned the trade. Others reportedly observed older siblings or relatives to learn the tasks. Billy reports that, at the age of 13, he was also taught how to do chemical application. Marichu said she also helps in rice production, as the other children probably also do.

Five of the children work close to their residences, and their family farms can be reached by walking for 5 to 10 minutes only. Billy and Becky, however, need to ride the tricycles or walk for about half-an-hour to their places of work.

Certain tasks, according to the children, are done by both younger and older children, while others are for older ones only. Fertilizer application is taught to young children, regardless of sex, who engage in the work along with older children and adults. Weeding, watering and *panag-tudok* are other activities that young girls and boys can do along with older persons. From these accounts, it can be concluded that most of the work assigned to young children are relatively easy, which they can learn through imitation or after rudimentary instruction from older companions

Chemical spraying (or pesticide application), firing the flue, and *akas* (collecting cured leaves from the flue) are tasks reserved for older children and adults. These activities apparently require bigger children (for carrying the sprayers, for instance, or reaching into the flue) and a more developed sense of judgment.

However, both boys and girls can do these tasks. *Pagpitas*, or harvesting mature tobacco leaves is another activity often done by older children. In this case, they have to be tall enough to reach the tobacco leaves (*basta't puwede nang maabot ang dahon ng tabako*, they said (so long as the child can reach the tobacco leaves). Plowing the fields, however, is a task assigned only to older male children. In Parrioc II and Balaoagan, older children help in tobacco curing activities: fueling the curing barn, carrying the *sad-ay* (tobacco strung on a long pole) to the barn, removing the cured leaves from the sticks afterwards, and arranging the sticks for future use.

The intensity of involvement in tobacco production varies across the children and according to tasks. The youngest, Monica, spends only about a quarter-of-an-hour on week-ends for watering the plants or *panag-tudok*. Five of the other children work no longer than 2 hours at certain tasks. Billy, however, is a fulltime worker, and works an average of 6 hours a day. The most laborious chore is *panag-tudok*, which can take up to 10 hours, according to Becky, or until midnight, according to Ruben. Some activities have to be done daily (like fertilization, weeding and *panag-tudok*) but the rest can be done only for certain days of the week (like watering the plants). The nature of activities is also differentiated by the stage of production, such that fertilization and watering are accomplished from December to January, at the start of the production cycle, and *panag-tudok* from February to March, after the leaves have been harvested.

#### *Physical Risks and Hazards*

The children were asked to describe the conditions under which they work. Almost all agree that tobacco cultivation is undertaken under harsh physical conditions. From the months of December to March, the weather can be either hot or cold, although it is generally hot in the open fields. Marichu complains that she gets tired and sleeps late because of her work. Marlon also says his hands get tired from work and his body feels heavy (*nangangawit*).

The children like the simpler tasks like watering and harvesting leaves best because they are easy. They have different opinions about *panag-tudok*, which is easy for some but risky for the others, who fear having their fingers pricked. Ricardo does not like fertilizer application, either, because he says it is risky (*delikado*).

The presented complaints and direct observation of their activities in tobacco production lead us to infer that health hazards for children include the following:

- Sleeplessness and fatigue brought on by long work hours, working under hot weather and use of heavy equipment
- Wounds and injuries, especially from *panag-tudok*
- Dermatitis resulting from over-exposure to the sun and fertilizer application

- Exposure to toxic chemicals resulting from spraying and fertilizer application without protective gear
- Bites and stings from wasps, bees, mites ants and other insects
- Asthma and rhinitis resulting from contact with tobacco leaf and dust

Researches on the health risks associated with tobacco production lists the following possible health effects of work in tobacco farming (Kanerva & Piirila 1996; Meridian Research 1994; Raffle 1994; Sullivan 1994):

Table 3. Exposures and Health Effects of Work in Tobacco Farms

Activity	Exposure	Health Effects
Watering	Sunlight, ultraviolet radiation	Sun-induced dermatitis, melanoma, heat-induced dermatitis
Weeding, planting	Bites and stings from wasps, bees, mites, ants, spiders, snakes etc.  Sunlight, ultraviolet radiation	Anthropod induced dermatitis, envenomation  Sun & heat-induced dermatitis, melanoma
Sticking	Wet tobacco leaf contact, tobacco dust	Nicotine poisoning (green tobacco sickness), asthma and rhinitis, acute pulmonary responses
Fertilizer application	Ammonia & vegetable fertilizers; acid or caustic chemicals; dry fertilizer (hygroscopic fertilizer; liquefied anhydrous ammonia)	Burns
Spraying if insecticides	Methanyl; carbon monoxide	Acute pulmonary responses
Feeding the curing barn	Moist and hot environment	Heat-induced asphyxia

Tobacco croppers and harvesters have been known to experience green tobacco sickness when working with damp tobacco. It is manifested by complaints of headaches, pallor, vomiting and nausea, following contact by the worker with wet tobacco. The skin can also be burned in several ways. Burns can result from dry fertilizer that is hygroscopic and attracts moisture. On the skin, it draws out moisture and causes skin burns. Liquid anhydrous ammonia is used for fertilizing the soil, where it can expand into a gas and combine with moisture. If the liquid or gas gets into contact with the body, especially the eyes, skin and respiratory tract, cell destruction can occur and permanent damage results in the absence of immediate treatment. The child workers of La Union and Ilocos Sur have reportedly been sick

of some of the symptoms described above. They have had coughs, asthma, and strained eyes. A number experienced dizziness, stomachaches, headaches, and vomiting. Others have had skin rashes.

#### *Children's Aspirations*

Education is a value close to the hearts of the children. Billy, who had to stop schooling to enable an older sister to go to college, asserts that he needs to work now to be able to resume schooling. Similarly, Ricardo, Marlon, Becky and Ruben want to continue their work on the farms since it provides money needed to pay off loans, or to purchase household goods. Marichu says she considers the work as part of her routine (*nakasanayan na*). Thus, none of the children find anything objectionable in their present situation as child workers. They look at work as merely being instrumental for the achievement of a better quality of life. In fact, someday, they would like to see themselves as professionals: as an engineer, a teacher, a nurse or a police officer.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Government Programs in the Ilocos

This chapter describes the programs of key government line agencies in the Ilocos. Originally, we intended to document only programs of agencies dealing with the issue of child labor. However, a description of the work of the National Tobacco Administration is included, inasmuch as it is the most visible agency in the municipalities and barangays we visited

### The National Tobacco Administration

#### *Significance of the Tobacco Industry*

The national average annual revenue to the government, as contribution by the tobacco industry during the period 1997-99, was ₱ 21.193 billion. The national average annual volume of tobacco production was 71.635 kilograms, and the average annual value of production reached a ₱ 2.633 B mark. About 1.93 million Filipinos are dependent on the industry (NTA Brochure, 2001).

By geographic coverage of the NTA, Virginia tobacco type covered 23,347 hectares (or 58% of the country's total coverage of 40,297 hectares) in the provinces of Abra, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur (66 %), and La Union. The native variety ranked second in terms of coverage, where 9,752 hectares (24%) were planted in most provinces, followed by burley tobacco grown in Pangasinan (51%), Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, and Occidental Mindoro.

As to demographic coverage of the NTA, the Virginia tobacco is the predominant type cultivated by 32,352 farmers in the provinces of Abra, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur (60%), and La Union. The native variety ranked second (18,729 farmers) while burley was the least variety grown by 11,336 farmers. Tobacco is a dry season crop that is grown during the dry season that is from October or November to April. As a traditional crop, the tobacco farmers are said to have mastered its technology and, in the Ilocos region, tobacco farming is considered as a typical and traditional household activity which members of the family have inherited from their great grandparents. Hence, all members of a family may be engaged in tobacco production.

The production of Virginia tobacco has been on the decline in recent years. The US Department of Agriculture (July 2000) describes the problem in the Philippine tobacco industry thus:

“...after a substantial expansion in 1998, the Philippine tobacco in 1999 contracted again as more than 20% of the entire crop was damaged by heavy rains. After gaining some momentum in 1998 to rebuild inventories, this will again lead to substantial declines, primarily as a result of damage to Virginia flue-cured tobacco.”

This scenario led to speculation that during the latter half of 1999, due to low prices of the low-grade tobacco leaf resulting from the La Niña phenomenon in 1999-2000, farmers would be discouraged to plant more tobacco. NTA feared that farmers would shift to other crops such as vegetables for 2000 and 2001. This, in fact, is what happened in Ilocos provinces. The decline in the profitability of tobacco production has led to further crop diversification in the barangays we visited. More areas are now planted to corn, peanuts and vegetables. The NTA has had to extend technical assistance and credit to tobacco farmers, in an effort to help them recoup their losses.

### ***Responsibilities and Functions of the NTA***

The National Tobacco Administration (NTA) is the only government agency attending to the development of the local tobacco industry and its major sectors, the tobacco farmers, in particular, and the tobacco buyers and manufacturers, in general. It is mandated by law to (NTA Charter, Executive Order No. 245):

- Administer and regulate the production and trading of tobacco and the manufacture, sale and distribution of tobacco products;
- Improve the living conditions and raise the quality of life of the tobacco farmers, including those who depend upon the industry for their livelihood; and
- Promote the balanced and integrated growth of development of the tobacco industry to help make agriculture a solid basis for industrialization.

Based on the above mandate, the NTA has outlined four (4) strategic programs for the tobacco industry. These are 1) total market development through responsive research, quality production, fair and equitable trading and efficient delivery of services; 2) total farming, total farmer, total technician development; 3) farmers' organization development; and 4) identification and development of other industrial uses of tobacco.

Among its component services, the NTA is engaged in research such as the production of certified tobacco seeds and technology research/information services. Its extension services are in the form of free distribution of certified tobacco seeds. It extends technical assistance from seed bedding to marketing; provides agricultural inputs and credit assistance for production and/or facility development. It works in collaboration with tobacco companies, congressional leaders, local government units, lending institutions, and other sources. In the area of marketing services, the NTA provides the following: a) certification of production based on acceptances as required under R. A. Nos. 7171 and 8240; b)

trade regulation enforcement; c) establishment of marketing tie-ups; and d) market research and information services.

R.A. No. 7171, An Act To Promote The Development of the Farmers in the Virginia Tobacco-Producing Provinces, which was approved on January 9, 1992 serve as the source of financial support to tobacco producers from the national government for beneficiary provinces. The law stipulates that the funds shall be constituted and collected from the proceeds of fifteen percent (15%) of the excise taxes on locally manufactured Virginia-type of cigarettes. The funds allotted shall be divided among the beneficiary provinces *pro rata* according to the volume of Virginia tobacco production.

During the Tripartite Conference constituted by the NTA, representatives of farmer-leaders and traders on December 12, 2001, it was reported in their position paper, "Forging New Directions for the Philippine Tobacco Industry", that the 15% of excise taxes component, amounting to ₱ 1.62 billion, has been given back to the tobacco planters. Part of this money has found its way into Balaoan and Candon. Both the NTA extension workers and farmers report that credit facilities given to farmers have come from excise taxes. In the current year, many farmers have availed of loans from NTA to assist them in a renewed effort at increasing the value of tobacco crops.

From accounts of the tobacco farmers, NTA workers assisted them with interest-free loans after the failure of their crops in 1999. Its extension officers regularly visit their farms to render technical assistance and inspect their curing barns. It has also made available to farmers an innovative design of a curing barn for their possible adoption, with a view to replacing the existing curing barns that have been passed down from generations of tobacco farmers. It helped to establish a cooperative farm among the farmers, which it assists from seedbed preparation to marketing. Residents of the communities visited by the research team generally have positive appraisals of the NTA extension officers. They are considered to have been a big help to the farmers (*malaking tulong*), especially because they extend new technologies for tobacco production. They welcome the credit program of the NTA, and farmers wish to avail of bigger loans.

The NTA is not mandated to examine social relations and employment patterns in tobacco production. As such, its programs are not directed to child protection. However, its looming presence in the barangays makes it a significant partner in monitoring and abating problems spawned by child labor.

## The National Program Against Child Labor

In Region 1, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are the lead and cooperating agencies in implementing the National Program Against Child Labor. This Plan is part of the implementation of the National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (2000-2025) or *Child 2*. The National Strategic Framework aims to ensure that every Filipino child will exercise his or her right to survival, protection, development and participation throughout the life cycle. Related to this, among the strategies that are strategic for child labor are the following (CWC 2000):

- Strengthening of the capability of families to nurture children and provide them with full support for their welfare and development
- Advocacy towards a paradigm shift to put children first in the use of resources of the family, community and State
- Transformation of values and practices in the labor market that would protect children from abuse and exploitation

The goals of the National Program Against Child Labor in Region 1 are the following:

- a) establishment of reliable mechanism for identifying and monitoring child laborers, their families and communities through a data base of working children,
- b) inspection of tourism establishment for accreditation,
- c) visitation of business establishments,
- d) compliance with international conventions affecting child laborers through the conduct of symposia,
- e) education campaign, linkages and networking with agencies and NGOs,
- f) promotion of integrated advocacy and action for child laborers,
- g) increased capacity of families employment, livelihood and entrepreneurship, and
- h) strengthen the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children and *Sagip Batang Manggagawa* (Rescue Child Workers) Action Teams.

There is no project that addresses the issue of child labor in agriculture, particularly in the tobacco growing areas. The DOLE Regional Office, for one, believes that children in the Region's tourist establishments are at greater risk of exploitation. Representatives of four agencies interviewed for this project (from DSWD, DOLE, DECS, and DOH) were unanimous in saying that there is no child labor in the tobacco industry in the Region. They perceive children's work in tobacco farms as part of training the children for adult responsibilities. They also state that there is no reported victim of child labor in the Region.

## CHAPTER FIVE Conclusions and Recommendations

### Child Labor in Selected Barangays of the Ilocos

The utilization of the labor of young children below the age of 15 is a common experience in the tobacco farms of La Union and Ilocos Sur. Tobacco production is inherently a family enterprise among tenant farmers and leaseholders in the barangays we visited, where the average size of the areas under production is half-a-hectare. Thus, it is not unusual to find all hands in a household at work on tobacco farming, including older and younger adults and children of all ages. Both women and men spend time on farming, and this extends to boy and girl children. The norm of working together on tobacco farming is so ingrained that parents may scold or spank children who are recalcitrant, or would rather do some thing else when there is farm work to be done. The parents' attitudes keep the children in line and they obediently do whatever the have been assigned to perform.

Children are taught at young ages (from 4 years of age) simple tasks related to tobacco production, like watering the plants, weeding and *panag-tudok*. Eventually, the children help their parents, older siblings and other relatives in all phases of tobacco cultivation - from seedbed preparation to post-curing - engaging in more difficult activities as they grow older. Observations made during data gathering, findings from the case studies and the FGDs, show that children undertake many of the tasks with older members of the family. For instance, a child may hold the hose for his father or grandfather while the latter waters the plants. An older boy helps carry the chemical sprayer to the fields for his father. Mother and daughter together water the young plants. Cousins go off to the farms together to weed the tobacco. *Panag-tudok* is essentially the work of women and children sitting around in groups. In many cases, therefore, children's work happens under the supervision of parents and other relatives.

The work assigned to children is not always time-consuming and they are able to finish their tasks before they go to school and upon their return in the afternoons. Given the fact that tobacco growing commences in October or November and extends to March or April, school vacations provide time for children to be more intensively engaged in tobacco production. The average amount of time that children use for working on tobacco farms is 2 - 4 hours. However, on week-ends, they may work for as long as 10 hours, especially

when the activity involved is *panag-tudok*, sticking tobacco on the *sad-ay* (bamboo poles).

The remuneration derived from children's work is low, given the fact that they are usually given only ₱ 20 for part-time work. This is far below the average nominal wages of adult workers, which was determined to be ₱ 141.00 per day in Region I in March 2001 (BLES-DOLE 2001). Some tasks are unpaid, like watering, weeding and cultivation (*gulis*). Arrangements for payment and the cost of children's labor vary across family enterprises and barangays. For instance, while a girl child was paid only ₱ 20.00 a day in Balaoan for *panag-tudok*, a boy child in Candon reportedly received ₱ 50.00 daily for the same task. Whatever the arrangements, however, children's work serves to keep down the cost of tobacco production.

### **Government Concern for Child-Farmers in Tobacco Production**

The research determined that, to date, there is no program of government that directly addresses the issue of child labor in the tobacco industry within Region I. Programs and efforts of agencies implementing the National Plan for Child Labor focus on children in tourism and entertainment rather than on the plight of agricultural child workers. The National Tobacco Administration concerns itself with providing financial and technical assistance to tobacco growers, ignoring completely the risks to children emanating from their labor participation. Consciousness about the need to extend child protection to children at work in tobacco production is not evident among the regional line agencies. Neither do barangay officials nor other community workers perceive child labor as an issue. Instead, these community gatekeepers look at children's work participation as part of their childhood responsibilities, which they need to fulfill as obedient children and productive members of their families and communities. Parents are wont to share this view of children at work.

A significant area of concern that emerges from the study has to do with the physical and health hazards associated with tobacco production. Children have been observed to work on farms under conditions that can be deleterious to their health. They toil in positions straining their limbs under the scorching heat of the sun. They often wear no protective clothing against sharp or hot objects or chemicals. Children use their bare hands in *panag-tudok* and fertilizer application. In the barangays of Candon, older children continue to be involved in tobacco curing activities, which involves other risks to health. Yet, parents and the children themselves are apparently unaware that there are protective measures that are important to safeguard the health of children.

## **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this Rapid Appraisal of child labor in selected barangays of La Union and Ilocos Sur, the following recommendations are made:

### **Information Campaign on Child Labor**

It is evident from this study that there is very little awareness on the configuration of child labor in tobacco production. Government officials have not studied the phenomenon, much less designed programs to address the need for child protection in tobacco growing. Community influences, parents and children are also unaware that there are risks to the children's wellbeing that may occur as a result of their work in tobacco farms.

The notion that children's work is part of their socialization is a dominant theme. Yet, the findings of this study describe certain areas that may require attention. For instance, communities have to be made more aware of the rights of children to safety, education and good health. They need to be informed of their responsibility to protect and safeguard their children against the potentially hazardous effects of child labor in tobacco production. In instances where the children are full-time workers, their rights as young workers have to be safeguarded. Work conditions need to be examined, including the conditions and terms of payment.

An information campaign should target various groups: regional offices of government and local government units, tobacco producers, parents and their children.

### **Comprehensive Research on Child Labor in Region I**

The rapid appraisal we conducted has merely revealed the 'tip of the iceberg.' Much more needs to be studied concerning the plight of child workers in the tobacco industry. The themes of a comprehensive study may include the following:

- regional description of the incidence of child labor in tobacco growing barangays, across provinces, as a way of identifying areas where the children are more disadvantaged
- work patterns and work conditions in family enterprises engaged in tobacco production, to identify the range of risks and issues that require child protection measures
- analysis of the impacts of children's participation in tobacco production on their health, nutrition, education, values and world views, as a means of identifying

useful entry points for program interventions by government agencies, NGOs and the private sector.

## **Child Protection Measures**

Several strategies and directions can be immediately undertaken to alleviate the situation of child workers and to guarantee respect of their rights. Among these are:

- formulation of municipal ordinances specifically for the protection of working children against exploitation and hazardous forms of employment
- formation of a regional or provincial inter-agency committee to address the situation of child workers in the tobacco industry
- activation and strengthening of the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children, with special efforts to educate and capacitate them to address child labor
- for NTA, to include a monitoring system in its extension efforts in order to assess the extent of child labor in the tobacco industry and to provide child-focused services among its programs in the communities
- for local governments, to monitor children's work participation in tobacco-growing barangays, as a factor that may negatively affect their health condition.

## **Community Development**

It has been observed that child labor is more likely in families that are economically strapped. The tobacco industry has experienced major setbacks in the past several years and has yet to recover. These conditions will make child labor utilization a more likely phenomenon. Assistance to poor farmers, their families and communities become important in this respect. Given the living conditions of the tobacco farmers, their children and barangays, the following measures are recommended:

- To expand the provision of economic assistance and livelihood projects to tobacco-growing families, especially as a way of preventing their victimization from loan sharks and unscrupulous traders
- To encourage farmers to apply the integrated farming system approach, which enjoins them to plant a diverse variety of crops at different times in the year, in order to offset the dire effects of losses from mono-cropping
- To establish elementary schools within the barangays of Parioc II and Baracbac Este, so that the inaccessibility of schools does not become a reason for dropping-out of school among its young population.

The experience of child labor has been proven to exist in the Ilocos provinces. While their work conditions are not alarming, measures still have to be put into place in order to enhance the rights and welfare of children. To paraphrase the UNICEF (2001), it is the right of the child to have the "best possible start in life."



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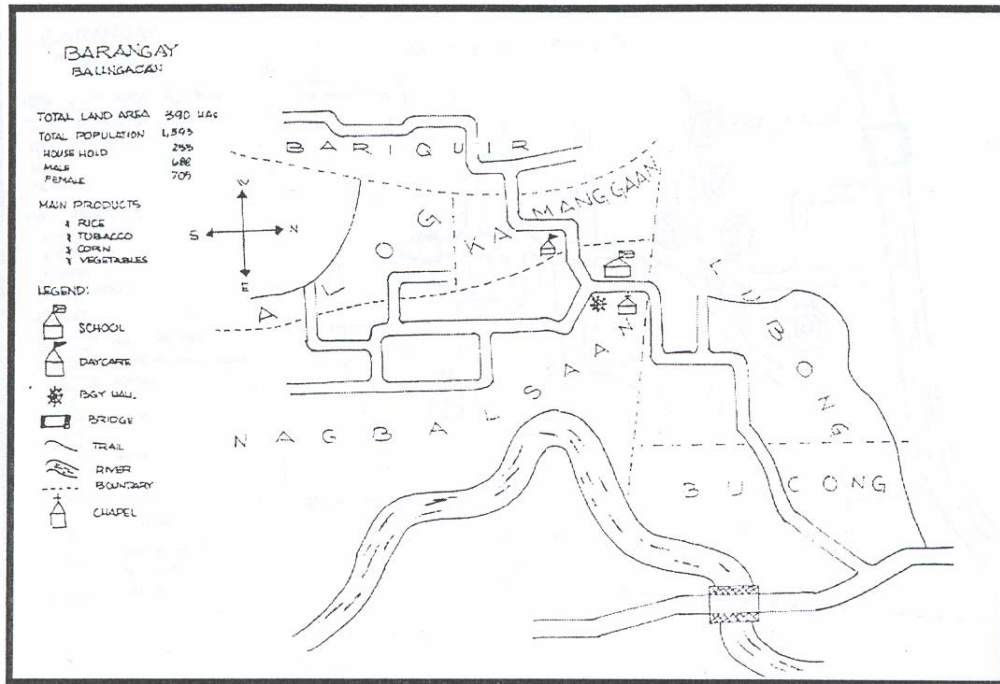
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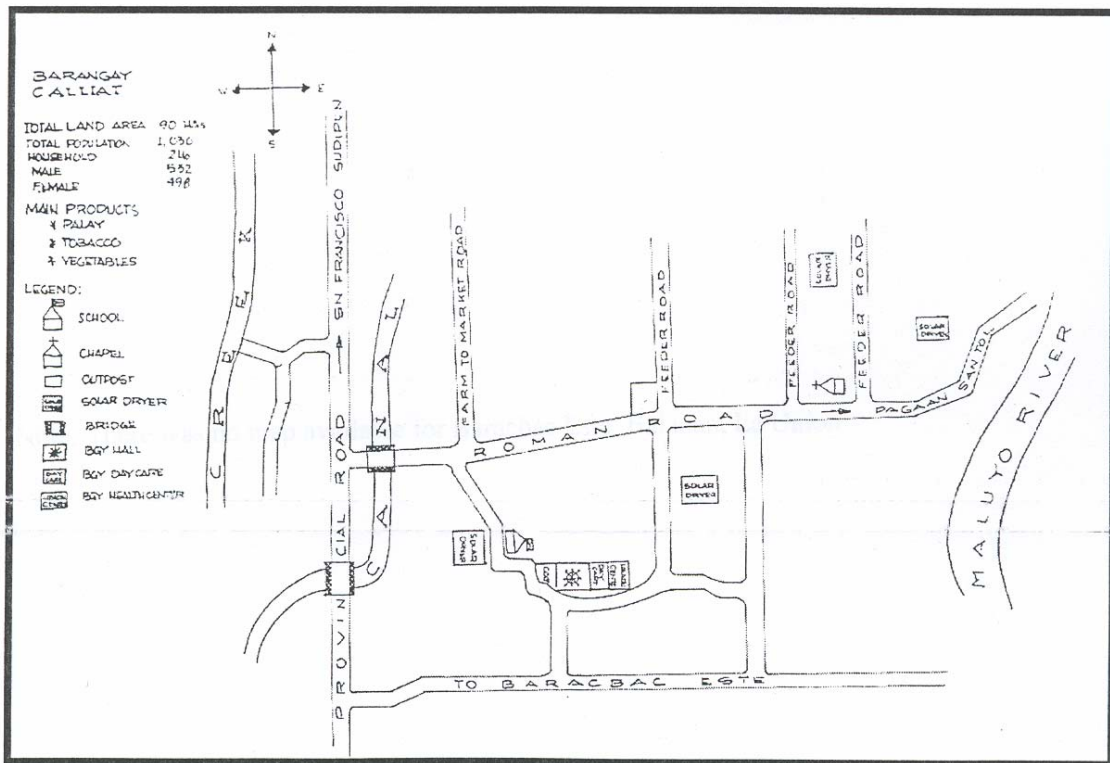
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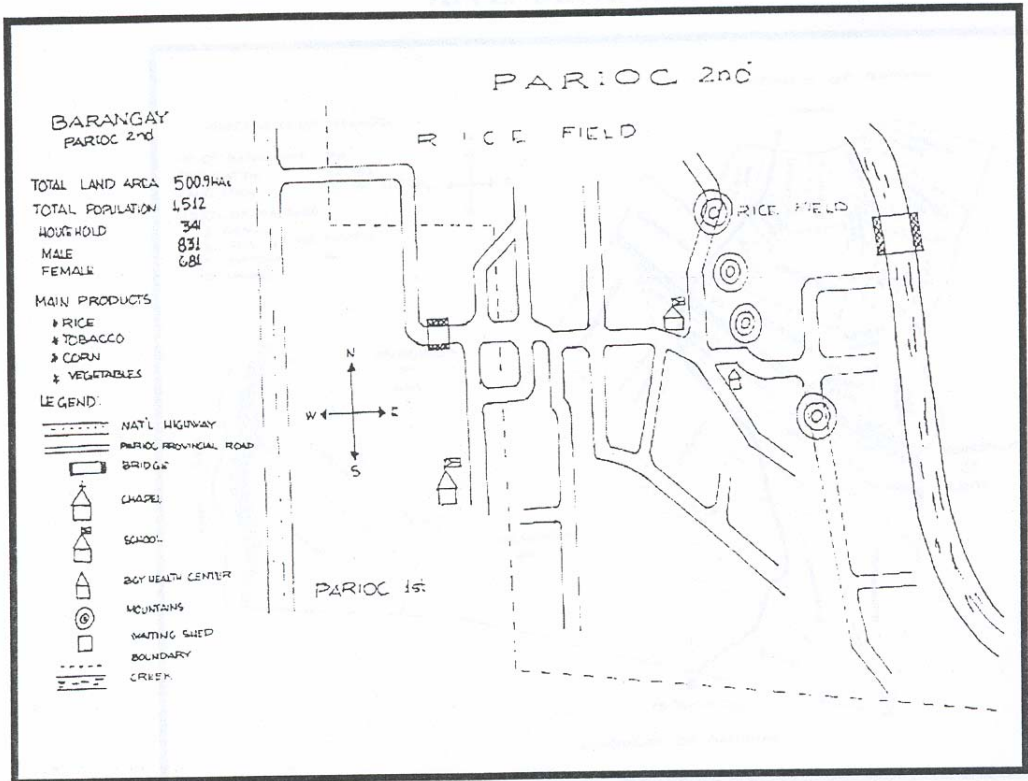




Balingaoan, Candon City, Ilocos Sur



Calliat, Balaoan, La Union



Parioc II, Candon City, La Union

## APPENDIX B

### *Methods of Data Collection*

A combination of methods was used for a Rapid Appraisal of Child Labor in tobacco-growing areas of Ilocos Sur and La Union. These methods included a review of documents on child labor, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, drawings and stories by selected child workers from the two barangays, and case studies of 7 selected households. Below is the list of informants using the different methods of gathering data:

Collection Method	Informants or Participants
Documents review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library research</li> <li>• Office research, with assistance from NTA, regional offices, and others</li> <li>• Internet research</li> </ul>
Key Informant Interviews	<p>National Tobacco Administration Technical Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans &amp; Projects Officer</li> <li>• 2 Supervising /Senior Agriculturists</li> <li>• 3 Extension Workers</li> </ul> <p>Selected officials &amp; staff of regional line agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief, Workers Amelioration &amp; Welfare Division, DOLE</li> <li>• Chief, Operations Division, DSWD</li> <li>• Officer-in-Charge, Technical Services division, DOH</li> <li>• Education Supervisor II, elementary Level, DECS</li> </ul> <p>Barangay officials and staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barangay Health Worker</li> <li>• Barangay Secretaries</li> <li>• 2 Elementary School teachers</li> </ul>
Group Interview	Farmers and NTA workers with the Research Team
Focus Group Discussions	4 girls & 6 boys from Calliat; 6 girls, 5 boys from Parioc II
Case Studies	7 child workers and their families from the 4 barangays

APPENDIX C

TABLES

TABLE 2. CHILD LABOR IN DIFFERENT WORK PHASES

Sex	Balaoan, La Union	Candon, Ilocos Sur
<b>Child Workers In Seedbed Preparation</b>		
Male	Ruc-at	Spray
	Weeding	
	Gulis (Cultivation/Plowing)	
Female	Weeding	Weeding
<b>Child Workers in Planting and Transplanting Operations</b>		
Male	Planting	Planting
	Transplanting	Transplanting
	Watering	Watering
		Applying fertilizer
Female	Planting	Planting
	Transplanting	Transplanting
	Watering	Watering
	Applying fertilizer	Applying fertilizer
<b>Child Workers in Harvest and Post Harvest Operations</b>		
Male	Sticking	Harvesting (pitas)
		Sticking
		Gatong
Female	Sticking	Harvesting (pitas)
	Uprooting	Sticking
		Sundrying

TABLE 3. TYPES OF WORK BY SEX AND AGE

Types of Work	Balaoan, La Union		Candon, Ilocos Sur	
	Male (age)	Female (Age)	Male (Age)	Female (Age)
Ruc-at	11	-	-	-
Spray	-	-	14	-
Transplanting	14	13	-	-
Planting	11-14	-	10-14	7
Watering	11-14	8-13	9-14	7-13
Applying fertilizer	-	12	9-14	10-13
Sticking	11-14	8-13	9-14	7-12
Uprooting	-	13	10-14	7
Sundrying	-	-	-	12
Pastol ng Kalabaw	14	-	-	-



TABLE 4. EARNINGS BY TYPES OF WORK AND SEX OF CHILD WORKERS

<i>Types of Work</i>	Balaoan, La Union		Candon, Ilocos Sur	
	Male Remuneration	Female Remuneration	Male Remuneration	Female Remuneration
Ruc-at	₱ 20/day	-	-	-
Spray	-	-	₱ 50/half-day	-
Weeding	₱ 25/day	None	-	None
Gulis	None	-	-	-
Watering	₱ 25/day	None	None	None
Applying Fertilizer	-	-	₱ 50/half-day	None
Transplanting	₱ 25/half-day	None	-	-
Planting	None	-	-	-
Sticking	₱ 0.15 per 100 sticks of tobacco leaves	₱ 20-50/day	₱ 20/day (.30/Sad-ay) regardless of the number of outputs/sticks	₱ 0.50/sad-ay =3 sticks
	₱ 0.10/100 sticks of tobacco leaves		₱ 50 sad-ay (1 sad-ay=3 sticks)	₱ 20/day (0.30 sad-ay)
			₱ 50/day	Through Curing: ₱ 100/curing/week (₱ 100 x 2 curing/week)
Uprooting	-	None	-	-
Sundrying	-	-	-	₱ 5.00/kilo of sundried leaves (10 kilos a day)
Pastol ng kalabaw	None	-	-	-