

# CHILD FRIENDLY INFORMATION ON PLANS BY THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) TO STOP THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet shares key information from a document written by ASEAN in 2021, called a *“Roadmap on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2025”*.

Let's start by explaining a few words:

### Who is a child?

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A child includes every person under the age of 18 years.

### What are child rights?

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Children's rights are like special rules that make sure all children are treated fairly and have what they need to grow up happy, healthy, and safe. These rights are written down in an international document called the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This document was shared with governments around the world in 1989. All of the governments in Southeast Asia have agreed to follow this document. That means that your government has made promises to make sure that every child, girl and boy in the country has access to good services and support to live a healthy and secure life. The UNCRC document describes four main types of rights:

- **Rights to survival**, such as the health care, shelter, food, water
- **Rights to development**, such as education, play, leisure

- **Rights to protection**, such as protection from being beaten, teased, sexually harassed, tortured, asked to do heavy or harmful work, or treated unfairly
- **Rights to participation**, such as having a say in decisions that matter to you, having information on topics that interest you, being part of groups

### What is ASEAN?

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ASEAN stands for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. It is an association where the leaders of 10 governments in Southeast Asia unite together to work on common goals. The main purpose of ASEAN is to improve the economy, social and cultural situation in the region. ASEAN also supports efforts to respect and protect children's rights.

### What is a roadmap?

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A roadmap describes a plan to reach a destination or achieve a goal. The ASEAN (2021) roadmap is a plan to stop children from doing dangerous and harmful work by the year 2025.

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<sup>1</sup> TdH NL supported the simplification of the roadmap to help children understand it and gather their input for the upcoming version.

## What is ILO?

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The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency that works to make sure jobs are decent, fair and safe for people all over the world. The ILO helps to protect children from child labour, especially the worst forms of child labour and ways to stop them. It also supports decent work for young workers.

## What is decent work for young workers?

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Young workers usually refer to young people aged 15 to 24 years. This group includes adolescents (15-17 years old) who may still be in education or training, as well as young adults (18-24 years old) who are entering or already part of the workforce. Decent work for young workers is more than just providing employment—it encourages fair pay, safe workplaces, benefits (e.g. access to health care, paid holidays, unemployment insurance), skill training and opportunities to be part of trade unions to defend your labour rights.

## What is child labour?

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Child labour refers to any work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their education, or is harmful to their physical and mental development. It includes work, especially for children under the age of 15 years, that is too demanding for their age or prevents them from attending school regularly. Not all forms of children's work are child labour. When the work is light, when it does not stop children from studying or cause harm, and when they choose to do it, it may be ok. Indeed, some forms of work can be good for children, as children often want to help their families and learn skills.

## What are the worst forms child labour?

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The worst forms of child labour are the most extreme and hazardous types of child labour. The difference between child labour and the worst

forms of child labour relates to the severity and impact of the work on children's health and well-being. The worst forms of child labour damage child's health, safety, or morals, such as exposure to toxic substances or dangerous machinery. In the ASEAN roadmap the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) include:

- **Hazardous work** – work that harms children's health and/or safety because it is too heavy or because it is dangerous due to other working conditions. For example, handling chemicals such as pesticides while farming, using big knives to cut crops, handling heavy nets or fishing in deep-sea waters, using power tools or machines without proper training or safety equipment, or collecting trash without gloves.
- **Child trafficking** – where a child is taken away from their family or community without a choice. When children are taken away they may not be taken care of properly and are often asked to do things they don't want to do, like work too hard or do other things that they do not want to do.
- **Commercial sexual exploitation** - where children are asked to engage in sexual behaviours with people, especially people they don't know. Children may be asked to do things they don't want to do, like take pictures or videos of their bodies, or be around people they don't know who take advantage of them and hurt them.
- **Online exploitation** - Sometimes, there are people online who try to trick children into sharing things like pictures of their bodies (often naked) or information that they shouldn't share. They might pretend to be nice, but they're not. This is called online exploitation.

## What is labour in the informal sector?

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Labour in the informal sector includes types of work that may not be formally registered or recognised by the government. For example, the informal sector may include street vendors, waste collectors, or home-based work where people decide what work to do. Their work is not registered with the local government or national authorities. When people, including children, engage in informal work, they may or they may not have bosses.

## WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING SHARED?

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an organisation that works to protect children from child exploitation all over the world. Child exploitation is when somebody or groups of people use a child for his, her or their own benefit.

All children have rights to be protected from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation, including labour exploitation, sexual exploitation and online exploitation of children. Children also have rights to access information and to be heard in decisions that concern them.

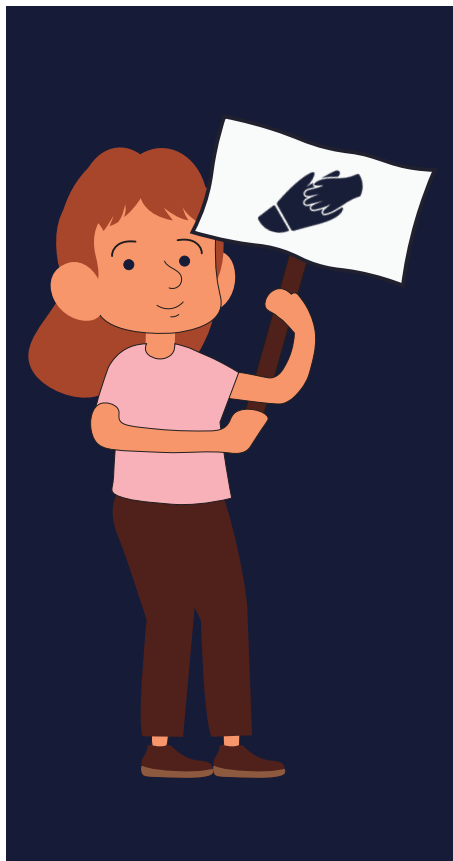
In 2025 ASEAN will develop a new roadmap to stop the worst forms of child labour. We want to make sure that children and young people, especially children engaged in child labour or those who risk exploitation, have a say in decisions about what should be included in the new ASEAN roadmap to stop the worst forms of child labour.

As the new roadmap is likely to take forward many of the ideas and activities from the ASEAN

2021 roadmap, this booklet helps share relevant information with you on the 2021 roadmap.

Once this information is shared, children and young people will have a chance to share your ideas about:

- What are the worst forms of child labour in your communities (including online exploitation)?
- What are any other child labour issues that concern you in your community?
- Which results and activities in the roadmap are most useful? Why?
- Which results and activities in the roadmap are least useful? Why?
- Are there any gaps? Why?
- Do you have suggestions about what else should be done to prevent and stop children doing the worst forms of child labour?



# THE PURPOSE AND KEY FOCUS AREAS OF THE ASEAN ROADMAP



## MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROADMAP

The main purpose of the roadmap is to guide ASEAN to support governments in Southeast Asia to take actions to stop the worst forms of child labour.

## Key Focus Areas of the Roadmap

The roadmap actions by ASEAN are in addition to actions that countries are already doing at a national level. For example, in each country in Southeast Asia, national governments have developed national plans of action and laws to protect children from child labour exploitation. Thus, ASEAN encourages government staff, police, social workers and other relevant people to share experiences and learn to make sure the existing laws and plans are properly implemented.

Key focus areas of the roadmap are to:

1

**Apply laws**  
to stop child  
exploitation  
practices.



2

**Prevent**  
child labour  
practices.



3

**Protect children**  
by supporting  
children and  
families.



## KEY RESULTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR EACH FOCUS AREA

### Focus Area: Apply Laws to Stop Child Labour Practices

**This focus area is to apply laws to stop child labour practices.** It is to make sure that children are not working under the legal age of employment, and also to make sure that children are not doing any work that is dangerous, harmful, or too difficult for them. It means looking out for and protecting children from jobs that can hurt them, and taking legal cases against people who harm children.



The **national laws** to protect children from child labour usually include details about:

- **The minimum age for employment.** The minimum age for employment varies across countries in Southeast Asia. It is:
  - 13 years in Singapore
  - 14 years in Laos and Myanmar
  - 15 years in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam
  - 16 years in BruneiHowever, no child under 18 years can be involved in hazardous work.
- **Types of hazardous work that need to be banned for children**, as they are dangerous to their health, safety and minds.
- **Education requirements** including the age until which children should stay in school, and ways to stop child labour that interferes with children's education.
- **Ways to protect children from exploitation**, where children are taken advantage of, underpaid, or asked to do things that harm them.
- **Ways to punish people who harm or exploit children.**
- **Way to support vulnerable families.**



## Key Results of the ASEAN Roadmap

### LABOUR INSPECTION

where people called labour inspectors visit workplaces to check that people are not working in bad conditions, and that children are not doing harmful work.



### IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

of police, labour inspectors and others to make sure child labour laws are applied.



### STRONG GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

to stop child labour.



### STRONG GOVERNMENT COORDINATION

with different actors.



## Key Activities of the ASEAN Roadmap

Make sure **government labour inspectors** visit different workplaces in different parts of the country to see if and how **children are working**, and to act to **protect children** from harm and exploitation.

**Train police, labour inspectors, lawyers, judges, officials** working at the borders to make sure they have knowledge and skills to apply laws to stop harmful child labour practices, child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, including online exploitation of children.

1. **Strengthen laws and rules** for registration and monitoring of businesses, including business in the informal sectors to prevent and protect children from child labour.
2. **Address corruption** to make sure that those who harm or exploit children are punished by the law.

1. Strengthen **national coordination** among different actors (e.g. police, lawyers, judges, social workers, teachers, health workers, employers etc.) to stop child labour and other types of exploitation.
2. Support **experience sharing and learning** among different actors to stop child labour.

## Focus Area: Prevent Child Labour Practices

**This focus area is to prevent child labour.** It involves taking steps to prevent child labour from happening in the first place. For example, by addressing root causes of child labour such as poverty, by investing in rural communities and supporting children's access to quality education and technical and vocational skill training. Technical and vocational training includes practical and technical skill training to be a mechanic, a carpenter, a hairdresser or other trades, as well skills on how to run and manage a business. This focus area also includes actions to promote decent work for young workers aged 15-24 years old, to make sure young workers have fair pay, safe workplaces, and other benefits.

### Key Results of the ASEAN Roadmap

**ADDRESS  
ROOT CAUSES**  
of child labour.



### Key Activities of the ASEAN Roadmap

1. Conduct **studies with employers, caregivers and children** to understand the types of child labour and the causes of child labour.
2. Conduct **studies with businesses** to understand good practices to prevent child labour in different parts of the business.
3. Provide **training courses on child labour** for interested government staff, trade union leaders, employers, teachers, civil society organisations, youth and others who want to help prevent child labour.

**ACCESS TO  
EDUCATION**  
especially in rural  
and remote areas.



1. Support **experience sharing on alternative education**, such as non-formal education and distance learning in rural and remote areas to better understand how to support education for children affected by migration, children living or working on the streets, children affected by emergencies, and other vulnerable groups.
2. Support experience sharing to better understand which types of **technical and vocational skill training** are most useful for children and young people from different backgrounds.



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION



1. Support studies to understand how child labour affects **rural employment and poverty reduction**.
2. Support **practical efforts** to respond to child labour as part of rural development and poverty reduction programmes.

## DECENT WORK FOR YOUNG WORKERS



1. Share experience and analysis on **effective technical and vocational skill training** for young people, especially in rural and remote areas.
2. Establish an **online resource library** for young people and employers, on how to protect young workers.
3. Undertake **social media campaigns** on the protection of young workers.

## PUBLIC AWARENESS RAISING

to know about new forms of child labour, including online exploitation.



1. Undertake studies on different types of **web-based (online) forms of the worst forms of child labour** in ASEAN.
2. Conduct **media** (like writing newspaper article or TV shows) and **social media** (like using facebook, instagram or tiktok) **campaigns and awareness programmes** on the protection of children against online exploitation.



## Focus Area: Protect Children by Supporting Children and Families

**This focus area is to protect children by supporting children and families.** It includes efforts to identify, and support children who have been exploited and/or are doing harmful jobs. This may include withdrawing children from harmful labour and helping them in their communities. It also makes sure that families affected by poverty, sickness or other vulnerabilities have access to grants, cash or other forms of support (known as “social protection”), so that they can meet their children’s basic needs.

### Key Results of the ASEAN Roadmap

#### **SOCIAL PROTECTION**

(where government provide cash, materials or other forms of support to individuals or families to reduce vulnerability).



### Key Activities of the ASEAN Roadmap

1. Conduct **studies** and **share findings** to better understand how government grants, cash (or other forms of support) provided to families help reduce child labour.
2. Create **online training** and **other training courses** for social workers to know about cash and grants that vulnerable families should have.

#### **IMPROVE CHILD-FRIENDLY WAYS**

to identify, withdraw and support girls/ boys/ children from child labour.



1. Conduct studies and share findings on good ways to **monitor and respond** to child protection and child labour cases.
2. Develop and share **guidelines for good child labour monitoring systems** to identify and make referrals for children in need protection from child labour and support, including counselling and other forms of support to recover from abuse or exploitation.
3. Set up **online platforms for social workers, counsellors, lawyers** or others to share their experiences and learning on the best ways to support child labourers.
4. Set up **online child labour reporting platforms** that allow children and adults to report child labour cases to social workers, police or other relevant actors.

# MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The ASEAN roadmap includes a **monitoring framework** to check and see if the activities in the focus areas are being implemented. For each activity there is an indicator.

Here are a few examples:

Key Results	Indicator Examples
<b>Labour inspection, especially in hard to reach places.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of labour inspectors trained by gender and by geographic location.</li> <li>2. Number of labour inspectors using child labour related indicators.</li> </ol>
<b>Access to education especially in rural and remote areas.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of children who complete a full compulsory education cycle by sex, age, nationality, and geographical location.</li> <li>2. Number of children/young people enrolled in technical and vocational skill training by sex, age, nationality, and geographical location.</li> </ol>
<b>Improve child-friendly ways to identify, withdraw and support girls/boys/children from child labour.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of children identified by age, sex, nationality, and geographical location.</li> <li>2. Number of children referred to services by age, sex, nationality and geographical location.</li> </ol>



We hope you found this information interesting and that you can share your views and ideas about what results and activities are needed in the next ASEAN roadmap!



## SHARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT ASEAN ROADMAP

**What do you think is most important to include in the roadmap to end the Worst Forms of Child Labour?**

*Write down your thoughts here and share with us during the consultation.*

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# CHILDREN ARE THE FUTURE



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