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The puzzle of "idle" children: neither in school nor performing economic activity. Evidence from six countries

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As part of broader efforts toward durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Through a variety of data collection, research, and assessment activities, the UCW project is broadly directed toward improving understanding of child labor, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and effective policies for addressing it. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a set of descriptive statistics on the observed group of children that neither attends school nor performs economic activity. Drawing on datasets from six countries, evidence is provided suggesting that children can be absent from both school and economic activity because they are needed to perform household chores, because of their health, or because they are unable to find work after having left school. But a large proportion of children not in school or economic activity does not fall into any of these categories. A simple theoretical model of household decisions concerning children’s time allocations is presented in an attempt to account for this “unexplained” portion of the group of children absent from school and economic activity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Datasets from developing countries providing information on children's activities consistently show a significant group of children left out of school and not participating in economic activity. Indeed, in several of the countries where data are available, the proportion of children outside of school and economic activity outstrips that of economically-active children, often by a substantial margin (Figure 1). In India, for example, host to the world's second largest child population, 26 percent of children are idle while just five percent are involved in economic activities.[2]

2. While considerable recent research attention has been accorded to child labourers, the group of children absent from both school and economic activity has been subject of very little research. These children also constitute an important policy concern – they not only do not go to school but are also the category of children most at-risk of entering work when households are exposed to individual or collective shocks.[3]

3. What are the characteristics of this observed group of non-working and non-studying children? To what extent are they idle (i.e., involved only in leisure activities) as opposed to performing household chores? How many are "unemployed", or unable to work or attend school for reasons related to health? Is their absence from school and economic activity a permanent or transitory state? Why might households choose to leave their children idle rather than attending school or involve them in economic activity?

4. This paper tries to address some of these questions, by analyzing in detail a number of datasets. The puzzle of "idle" children may have many possible answers, but as we shall see information currently available might not be sufficient to fully solve the problem.

5. The first step we take is to consider in some detail the characteristics of these supposed idle children. To see their age and geographical distribution, and their relationship with other correlates like income.

6. We then address the question of whether we observe idle children because we do not fully take into account the range of activities children perform. In fact, economic activity is often included as the only possible alternative to schooling in the use of time. Surveys typically give information on the schooling status of the child and ask questions on economic activities performed. An increasing number of datasets allows, however, to consider also the time spent in performing household chores and more detailed aspects of the status of the child. The phenomenon of "idle" children might hence be only apparent: once household chores are explicitly included in the range of activities performed by children it will disappear. Also, children might be actually inactive but not out of their will (or following the will of their parents): they might be (chronically) ill or looking for a job.

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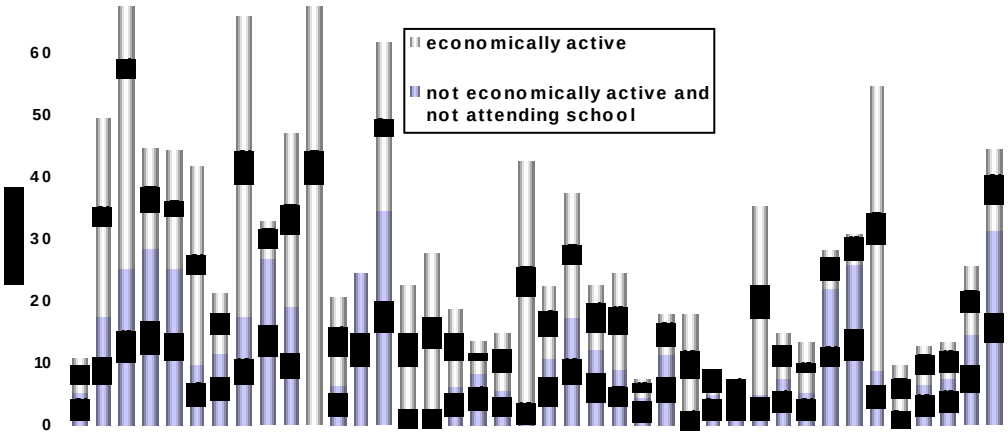
[2] UCW calculations based on the *Human Development of India survey*, 1994.

[3] See, for example, UCW Project, *Understanding Children's Work in Guatemala*, Guatemala, April 2003.

Figure 1. **Economically active children and children absent from both school and economic activity, selected***



Notes: *Age reference groups and data collection methodologies are not standardised across surveys. Inter-country comparisons should therefore be considered as indicative only.

Sources: See Country Statistics at UCW project website (www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/Main.sql?come=Ucw_Tables.sql)

7. We will try to assess how many of the children that can be classified as neither attending school nor performing an economic activity do belong to the above mentioned categories.

8. As we shall see, once a more extensive definition of children's activities is utilized the number of apparently "idle" children is reduced, but still a substantial number of children neither working nor going to school remain.

9. It is then important to assess whether absence to school and from work is a permanent or transitory phenomena. Again information is scarce, but some conclusions can be reached.

10. Finally, we identify theoretical reasons that may make rational for a household to keep their children out of school, while not performing any substantial work.

11. Further research gaps are identified, that need to be filled in order to get a better understanding of the phenomena of idle children.

12. This paper draws on data from six countries – Brazil, Cameroon, Guatemala, Nepal, Turkey and Yemen – in an attempt to address these questions in a variety of national contexts. Data availability, in addition to the desire for representation from different regions, guided the selection of these countries. In particular, the analysis we intend to carry out requires data on time spent on household chores, health status of the child and information about his or her labour market position. Only few data sets have all the required information. Within this restricted set, we selected countries to be representative of different regions, cultural characteristics and stage of economic development. While the sample of countries is, strictly speaking, not "representative", it should nonetheless give an accurate view of the difference in the phenomenon of idle children.

13. The data were collected through a range of survey types, namely Living Standards Monitoring Surveys (LSMS) (Guatemala and Brazil), Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Nepal), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (Cameroon), SIMPOC survey (Turkey), and Poverty Survey (Yemen). The fact that a significant group of "idle" children is observed across all of these survey types suggests that the "idle"

children phenomenon is not merely a function of questionnaire design or sampling technique.

14. The paper is intended as an initial contribution to a broader discussion concerning the characteristics and policy implications of this group of children absent from both school and economic activity. It might raises more questions than it answer, but we hope that the knowledge gap identified in this paper help to carry out more focused research.

15. The paper has the following structure. Section 2 looks at the size of this observed group of non-working and non-studying children, broken down by key background characteristics. Section 3 then looks at the relative importance of household chores, "unemployment status" and child health as explanations for absence from school and economic activity. Section 4 examines whether absence from school and economic activity is a transitory or permanent state, and, in the case of the former, the prior activity status of children currently absent from both school and economic activity. Section 5 provides theoretical framework to explain exclusion from school and economic activity as an outcome of parental decisions regarding children's time allocations. Section 6 concludes.

2. EXTENT OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

16. The proportion of children left out of both school and economic activity varies significantly among the six countries selected for in-depth analysis for this report (Brazil, Cameroon, Guatemala, Nepal, Turkey and Yemen). Exclusion from school and economic activity is most common in Yemen and Cameroon, accounting for one-third and one-fourth, respectively, of total 7-14 year-olds. It is least common in Brazil and Turkey, where only around one in twenty children are neither in school nor economically active. But even in these latter two countries, the number of children in this group is no means insignificant when looked at in absolute terms: 0.6 million 7-14 year-olds in Turkey, and 1.1 million in Brazil, neither attend school nor perform economic activities.

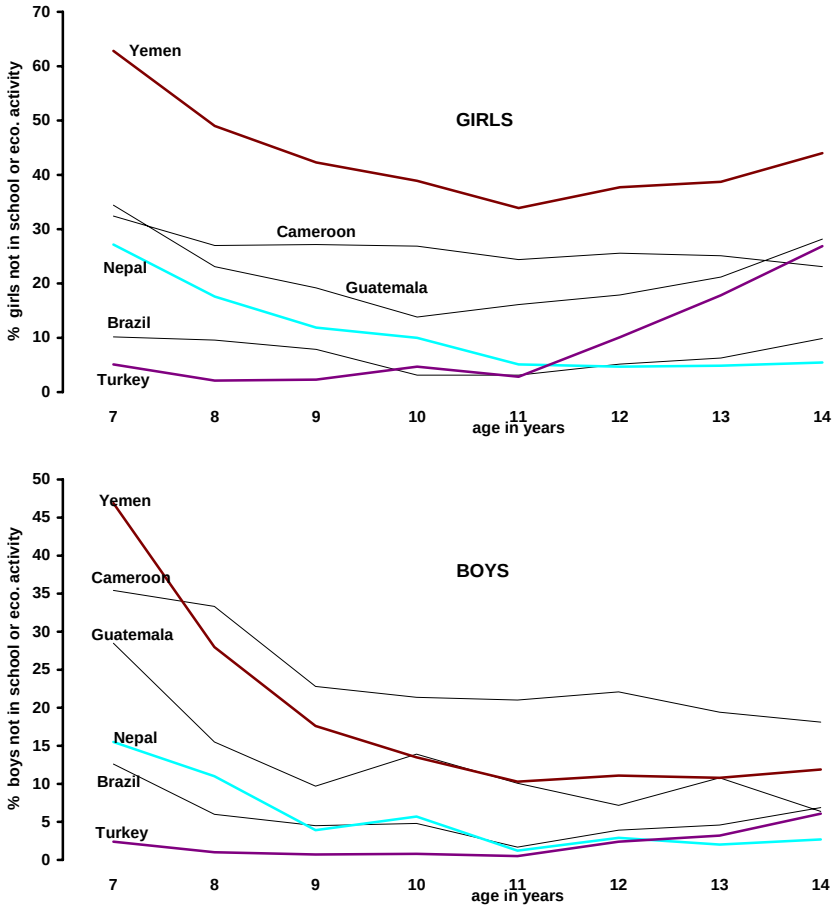
Table 1. Percentage of children absent from both school and economic activity, by country, sex, residence, age and income level

Country	Sex	Residence		Age								HH income level(1)		Total
		urban	rural	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	poor	non-poor	
Brazil	male	4.5	8.5	12.6	6.0	4.5	4.8	1.7	3.9	4.6	6.9	8.7	2.6	5.5
	female	5.1	12.0	10.2	9.6	7.9	3.1	3.1	5.2	6.3	9.9	11.0	2.9	6.9
	total	4.8	10.2	11.5	7.6	6.2	4.0	2.3	4.5	5.5	8.5	9.9	2.7	6.2
Cameroon	male	33.3	19.3	35.4	33.3	22.8	21.4	21	22.1	19.4	18.1	--	--	24.2
	female	36	20.5	32.4	27	27.2	26.9	24.4	25.6	25.1	23.1	--	--	26.5
	total	34.6	19.8	33.9	30.4	24.9	23.9	22.5	23.8	22.1	20.6	--	--	25.3
Guatemala	male	11.8	14.1	28.5	15.5	9.7	13.9	10.1	7.2	10.8	6.4	16.4	8.2	13.3
	female	13.8	26.5	34.4	23.1	19.2	13.8	16.1	17.9	21.2	28.2	28.8	10.3	22.0
	total	12.8	20.1	31.3	19.5	14.3	13.8	12.9	12.1	16.2	17.2	22.5	9.2	17.5
Nepal	male	3.5	6.3	15.5	11.0	3.9	5.7	1.2	2.9	2.0	2.7	--	--	6.0
	female	7.3	11.9	27.2	17.6	11.9	10.0	5.1	4.7	4.9	5.5	--	--	11.4
	total	5.3	9.1	21.4	14.2	8.0	7.8	3.2	3.7	3.4	4.1	--	--	8.6
Turkey	male	2.0	2.2	2.4	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.5	2.4	3.2	6.1	3.3	1.2	2.1
	female	8.2	8.9	5.1	2.1	2.3	4.7	2.8	10.1	17.8	26.9	12.4	5.2	8.5
	total	5.1	5.5	3.6	1.6	1.5	2.7	1.7	6.5	9.8	16.2	7.9	3.1	5.2
Yemen	male	11.0	21.9	46.9	28.0	17.6	13.5	10.3	11.1	10.8	11.9	--	--	19.3
	female	18.4	52.3	62.8	49.0	42.3	38.9	33.9	37.7	38.7	44.0	--	--	44.0
	total	14.6	36.5	54.7	38.4	29.8	25.8	21.3	23.6	24.1	27.5	--	--	31.2

(1) Note: Poor households are defined on the basis of the official Poverty Line in the case of Guatemala and on the basis of the households falling in the first and second household income quintile in the case of Brazil and Turkey.

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey* ,1998.

Figure 2. Percentage of children excluded from both school and economic activity, by age, sex and country



Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey* ,1998.

17. The extent of absence from school and economic activity also varies significantly within the countries (Table 1). It is much more common among rural compared to urban children four of the six countries (Brazil, Guatemala, Nepal and Yemen), while in only one of the countries (Cameron) does the opposite pattern hold.[4] Children from poor households appear much more prone to be reported as being excluded from school and not involved in economic activity than children from non-poor households, although data on household income are not available for all six countries. In Guatemala, indigenous children are disproportionately represented among children absent from school and work.

18. Exclusion from school and economic activity appears closely related to sex and age in the six countries. Girls are more likely than boys to be reported as being neither attending school nor performing economic activity in all six countries, although in one (Cameroon) the gender gap is relatively small. Absence from school and economic activity is higher among children at the lower compared to the upper end of the 7-14 age spectrum in all countries except Turkey (although some younger

[4] While the case of Cameroon deserves further investigation, most of the countries for which data are available (see the UCW website www.ucw-project.org for details) show that apparently idle children are more common in the countryside than in urban areas.

children may simply be late school entrants).[5] But the age pattern differs somewhat by sex. Among girls, exclusion from school and economic activity falls until the age of 10 or 11 years and then begins to rise again (Cameroon excepted), while among boys, it falls consistently across the 7-14 age spectrum (Turkey excepted) (Figure 2). This likely reflects the different paths taken by boys and girls as they approach adulthood. Girls tend to leave school and/or economic activity as they become older to assume responsibility for domestic chores (non-economic activities by the SNA definition). Boys, including those out of school, on the other hand, are more likely to become involved in economic activities as they come of age.

3. REASONS FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

19. What might explain this large observed group of children left out of both school and economic activity? A number of possibilities exist. First and most obviously, these children might not go to school or work in economic activities because they are needed at home to perform chores. Another possibility is that they are simply unemployed, i.e., wanting to work in economic activity but unable to find a job. A third possibility is that they are chronically ill or disabled, resulting in their exclusion from school and economic activity. Lastly, they may be absent from school and economic activity because this outcome is optimal in terms of household welfare.[6] The first three possibilities are explored in turn below. The fourth possibility is looked at in Section 5 by means of a simple model of household decisions concerning children's time allocations.

3.1 Household chores

20. To what extent is this observed group of out-of-school and non-economically active children involved in household chores, such as water collection or caring for younger siblings, which are technically *non*-economic activities?[7]

21. Household chores constitute a major time burden for only small proportion of total children absent from both school and economic activity (Table 2). Indeed, only in Cameroon do nearly half of idle children put in at least 28 hours per week on household chores.[8]

22. In the other countries far less than 20 per cent of idle children are involved in household chores for more than 28 hours a week. The gender difference is, however, very large. In most countries considered the number of idle boys involved in household chores is often negligible and in any case far smaller with respect to the

[5] To reduce the size of the late school entrants group, data on six year-olds have not been included in this paper. This makes a large difference in overall levels of absence from both school and work in countries where late school entry is common. In Yemen, for example, 81 percent of 6 year-olds are absent from school and work, while at age seven this proportion falls to 55 percent. Nonetheless, it is likely that at least some idle children in the lower part of the 7-14 age range have simply been delayed in entering school, particularly in Guatemala where primary school begins at seven years.

[6] Apparent idleness does not appear to be strongly correlated with relationship to household head, as shown in Annex 3. Only in Brazil are apparently idle children likely to have a substantially different relationship to the household head than non-idle children.

[7] According the UN System of National Accounts (1993 Rev. 3).

[8] Four hours per day is seen by UNICEF as the level of involvement beyond which household chores begin to substantially affect children's participation in, and ability to benefit from, schooling. The distribution of hours spent on household chores also of course is important in determining the extent to which household chores affect schooling. But information on the distribution on time spent on household chores is unfortunately not available.

number of girls (again with the exception of Cameroon). Moreover, (data not reported here) as age increase there is a higher if not exclusive female involvement in household chores signaling a marked "feminisation" of household chores and the intra-family specialization of tasks.

Table 2. Percentage of children involved in household chores , by child activity status, weekly hours spent on household chores, sex and country

Country	Sex	% children EA and not attending school who are performing HH chores for:			% children attending school and not EA who are performing HH chores for:			% children EA and attending school who are performing HH chores for:			% children not EA not attending school who are performing HH chores for:		
		≥7 hrs./wk	≥20 hrs./wk	≥28 hrs./wk	≥7 hrs./wk	≥20 hrs./wk	≥28 hrs./wk	≥7 hrs./wk	≥20 hrs./wk	≥28 hrs./wk	≥7 hrs./wk	≥20 hrs./wk	≥28 hrs./wk
Brazil	Male	23.1	4.7	4.7	20.8	2.8	1.7	46.9	4.0	2.5	24.4	5.0	2.3
	Female	81.1	34.8	24.1	54.2	19.7	11.5	77.7	29.7	23.8	67.4	43.5	26.6
	Total	42.1	14.6	11.1	37.6	11.3	6.6	56.5	12.0	9.2	47.7	25.8	15.5
Cameroon	Male	70.7	33.6	27.0	69.4	33.9	28.1	67.1	22.9	9.6	75.2	49.9	44.7
	Female	74.3	32.5	22.9	65.4	28.9	22	67.1	21.8	9.2	82.8	50.7	44.4
	Total	72.3	33.1	25.2	67.4	31.3	25	67.1	22.4	9.4	79.0	50.3	44.6
Guatemala	Male	25.9	7.7	3.1	27.5	8.5	5.0	31.7	9.3	5.5	33.8	13.2	9.7
	Female	58.8	31.9	25.7	50.4	23.5	15.9	64.4	29.6	16.8	59.6	33.9	26.0
	Total	38.0	16.6	11.4	38.9	16.0	10.4	42.1	15.8	9.1	49.6	25.8	19.7
Nepal	Male	13.8	2.7	0.8	6	1.3	0.6	14	0.9	0.2	14.5	5.7	3.7
	Female	56.1	17.2	7.7	25	6.2	3.0	46.7	8	3.4	41.2	18.2	12.6
	Total	43.2	12.8	5.6	13.9	3.3	1.6	28.4	4.1	1.6	31.7	13.8	9.5
Turkey	Male	17.5	13.1	9.2	5.8	0.4	0.2	11.4	0.1	0.1	7.1	0.8	0.5
	Female	66.7	17.9	7.3	22.6	1.7	0.7	42.0	1.0	0.0	65.9	31.1	24.9
	Total	40.2	15.3	8.3	13.7	1.0	0.4	25.3	0.5	0.1	53.8	24.9	19.9

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey* ,1998.

23. Although the household chores are more common in children not attending school and not performing economic activity they are also present for the other children status. Working children and students appear to have similar although lower levels of involvement in household chores, suggesting that responsibility for household chores may not play a central role in exclusion from school and in the non involvement in economic activity. For example, in Guatemala 10 percent of the children working and/or studying also perform household chores for more than 4 hours a day. The percentage rises to 20 per cent for idle children. Similar patterns can be observed for the other countries. The difference in involvement is large, but not so large to bring us to the conclusion that idle children are overwhelmingly involved in household chores. On the contrary, it appears that household chores are more or less evenly spread across all children, partly independently of the activity they perform, but dependently on the gender of the child.

24. Obviously the results obtained in terms of participation of idle (and other groups) of children to household chores depend on the cutoff used for the definition i.e. on the limit number of hours per week. In Table 2 some examples are also presented for different cut offs, namely 7 and 20 hours per week. Over three-quarters of idle children in Cameroon, and around one-half in Brazil, Guatemala and Turkey, spend at least seven hours a day on household chores (Table 2).[9] A significant increase in the number of the idle children that can be classified as involved in household chores is obtained reducing the hours per week from 28 to 21. This result is not surprising

[9] Data on household chores is not available for Yemen.

(similar increases can be observed also for the other categories of children), but illustrates that further research is needed to define more rigorously the cut off for hours of involvement in household chores. In the rest of the paper, we will continue, however, to use the cutoff of 28 hours a week put forward by UNICEF.

3.2 Looking for a job

25. Let us know turn to consider whether the children classified as neither in school nor performing economic activity are in fact "unemployed", or looking for a job, having dropped out of school or lost their previous job.

26. All of the data sets contain information on unemployment status and on whether the individual is looking for a job. The results are presented in Table 3.

27. In Turkey, the only middle-income country included in the study, over one-quarter of all idle children, and almost half of idle male children, is actively seeking work. In Yemen, almost one-third of idle male children is looking for a job. In Brazil, Nepal and Guatemala, however, the inability to find a place in the labour market appears to play a smaller role. Job seekers in these countries account for less than one in ten children not in school or economic activity.

Table 3. Percentage of idle children who are actively seeking work, by country, sex, and age

Country	Sex	Age								Total
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Brazil	Male	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	5.4
	female	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2.5
	total	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3.8
Guatemala	male	7.1	9.0	11.7	12.7	18.2	23.0	11.3	25.8	12.0
	female	2.1	5.1	6.3	8.5	12.3	9.6	8.2	12.2	7.3
	total	4.5	6.6	8.1	10.7	14.7	13.9	9.2	14.8	9.1
Nepal	male	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	8.0	14.7	24.9	2.4
	female	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.9	0.0	6.8	4.5	0.6
	total	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.1	3.3	9.2	11.3	1.2
Turkey	male	11.7	20.1	0.0	62.8	58.4	44.1	40.6	63.1	42.7
	female	14.3	14.7	16.3	22.3	45.0	25.7	24.0	18.8	21.9
	total	13.4	16.5	12.1	28.3	47.1	28.8	27.0	27.5	26.2
Yemen	male	_	_	_	27.9	27.0	27.6	34.4	35.4	30.2
	female	_	_	_	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.0
	total	_	_	_	10.4	9.9	10.1	11.1	11.1	10.5

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida (*ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey* ,1998.

28. In all five countries where data are available, "unemployment" accounts for a much larger proportion of male children than female children that are not in school or economic activity (Table 3). As age increases, male children are increasingly looking for job, confirming the gender specialization that takes place as children approach adulthood.

29. Summing up, a number of apparently idle children is in fact waiting to (re)enter the labour market. These are mainly male and in some countries they represent a substantial share of the idle children. The differences across countries are difficult to fully explain: cultural reasons, structure of employment, functioning of the labor market are all likely to be important reasons. However, also differences in the structure of the surveys, in the way the questionnaire is shaped are likely to be of importance.

3.3 Health condition

30. The third possibility is that children's non-involvement in economic activity or school may be dictated by their health. Chronic illness or disability could leave children physically unable to perform economic activity, and could leave them excluded from education systems that are unaccommodating to children with special needs. This possibility is also at least partially supported by the data. About one in 10 idle children in Brazil, Turkey and Yemen, and a slightly higher proportion in Nepal, suffers from chronic illness or disability. Among economically active children and children attending school, by comparison, levels of chronic illness and disability are much lower in all countries (Table 4) (except Yemen).

Table 4. Percentage of children suffering chronic illness or disability,* by activity status, sex and country

Country	Sex	EA and not attending school	Attending school and not EA	EA and attending school	Not EA not attending school
	Male	1.5	7.4	7.9	12.9
Brazil	Female	0	6.0	1.3	5.9
	Total	1.0	6.7	5.9	9.1
	Male	2.1	14.6	11.3	9.4
Guatemala	Female	1.7	14.4	12.1	5.0
	Total	2.0	14.5	11.5	6.7
	Male	2.7	0.3	0.2	13.7
Nepal	Female	2.3	0.3	0.2	9.8
	Total	2.4	0.3	0.2	11.2
	Male	1.00	0.0	0.0	24.3
Turkey	Female	1.03	0.0	0.0	5.3
	Total	1.01	0.0	0.0	9.2
	Male	8.7	8.7	11.5	10.1
Yemen	Female	10.8	8.8	11.4	9.1
	Total	10.1	8.7	11.5	9.4

Note: *Definitions of chronic illness and disability are not standardized across countries (see footnote 7). Data should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey*,1998.

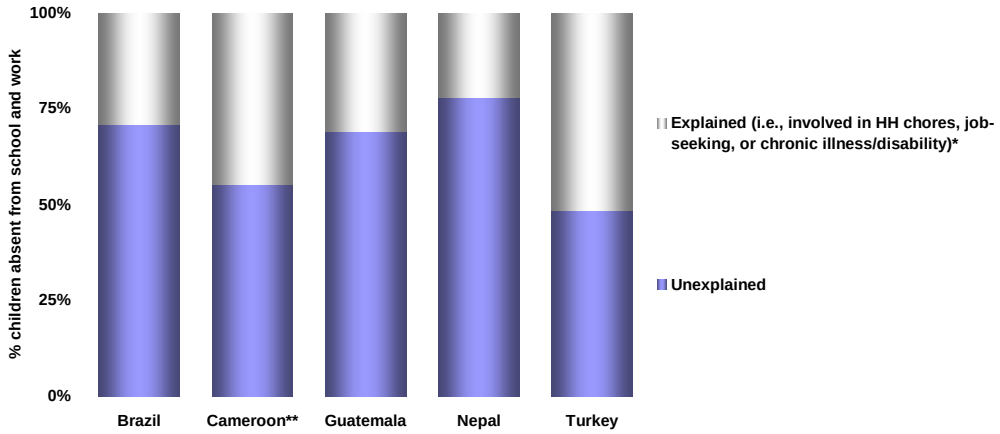
31. But questions relating to child health are not standardised across surveys, meaning that the data on reported chronic illness and disability must be interpreted with caution.[10]

32. Household chores, unemployment and chronic illness/disability together account for some but by no means the entire observed group of children not in school or economic activity (Table 5 and Figure 3). Indeed, only in Turkey do these three

[10] The figures presented in Table 4 represent different measures of chronic illness and disability: (1) proportion of idle children with chronic health problems requiring constant monitoring (Brazil); (2) proportion of idle children that did not register in school or look for work in the last week for reason of illness or handicap (Guatemala); (3) proportion of idle children not working or attending school in the last 12 months because of chronic illness (Nepal); (4) proportion of idle children who dropped out of school for reasons of health (Turkey); and (5) proportion of idle children who are ill or injured and unable to engage in his or her usual activities (Yemen).

possibilities account for at least half of the out-of-school and non-economically active group of children. In Nepal, by contrast, they account for only about one-fifth of children not in school or economic activity.

Figure 3. **Explained and unexplained absence from school and economic activity**



Notes: *Eliminating overlapping categories; **HH chores only.

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*.1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC), 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey*

33. Table 6 presents the same information in a different format. It shows the percentage of children that can still classified as idle once the data have been "adjusted" to take into account those involved in household chores (for at least 28 hours a week), those looking for a job and the children unable to attend school and work[11].

Table 5. Percentage of children not in school or economic activity that are performing household chores, actively seeking work, chronically ill/disabled, or a combination of all three, by sex and country[2]

Country	Sex	Proportion of children in neither school nor economic activity that are: [3]			
		Performing HH chores at least 28 hours per week	Actively seeking work	Chronically ill or disabled	Total[1]
Brazil	Male	2.3	5.4	12.9	20.7
	Female	26.6	2.5	5.9	34.8
	Total	15.5	3.8	9.1	28.3
Cameroon	Male	44.7	--	--	44.7 [2]
	Female	44.4	--	--	44.4 [2]
	Total	44.6	--	--	44.6[2]
Guatemala	Male	9.7	12.0	9.4	27.3
	Female	26.0	7.3	5.0	33.2
	Total	19.7	9.1	6.7	30.9
Nepal	Male	3.7	2.4	13.7	19.8
	Female	12.6	0.6	9.8	22.7
	Total	9.5	1.2	11.2	21.7
Turkey	Male	0.5	42.7	24.3	66.8
	Female	24.9	21.9	5.3	47.5
	Total	19.9	26.2	9.2	51.4
Yemen	Male	--	30.2[4]	10.1	36.2 [3]
	Female	--	4.0[4]	9.1	12.4 [3]
	Total	--	10.5[4]	9.4	18.3 [3]

Note: (1) Performing HH chores or seeking work or chronically ill/disabled, eliminating overlapping categories; (2) Includes only household chores; (3) Excludes household chores children aged 10-14 only .

[11] Data are shown only for those countries for which the whole set of information are available.

Table 6. Total and "adjusted" rates of exclusion from school and economic activity

Country	Sex	Total rate of exclusion from school and economic activity			Adjusted rate(1) of exclusion from school and economic activity		
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Brazil	Male	4.5	8.5	5.5	3.6	6.6	4.4
	Female	5.1	12.0	6.9	3.9	6.1	4.5
	Total	4.8	10.2	6.2	3.8	6.4	4.4
Cameroon	Male	33.3	19.3	24.2	--	--	--
	Female	36	20.5	26.5	--	--	--
	Total	34.6	19.8	25.3	--	--	--
Guatemala	Male	11.8	14.1	13.3	8.9	10.1	9.7
	Female	13.8	26.5	22.0	10.0	17.3	14.7
	Total	12.8	20.1	17.5	9.5	13.5	12.1
Nepal	Male	3.5	6.3	6.0	2.9	5.2	4.9
	Female	7.3	11.9	11.4	5.5	10.0	9.5
	Total	5.3	9.1	8.6	4.1	7.5	7.1
Turkey	Male	2.0	2.2	2.1	0.8	0.8	0.8
	Female	8.2	8.9	8.5	5.4	4.3	4.9
	Total	5.1	5.5	5.2	3.0	2.5	2.8
Yemen	Male	11.0	21.9	19.3	--	--	--
	Female	18.4	52.3	44.0	--	--	--
	Total	14.6	36.5	31.2	--	--	--

Note: (1) Adjusted for full-time involvement in HH chores, job-seeking and chronic illness/disability

Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil, *Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios* (PNAD), 1998; Cameroon, *Enquête Camerounaise auprès des ménages* (ECAM), 1996; Guatemala, *Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida* (ENCOVI), 2000; Nepal, *Labour Force Survey*,1998-1999; Turkey, *Child Labour Survey* (SIMPOC) , 1999; and Yemen, *Household Budget Survey* ,1998.

34. The number of children neither working nor attending school is reduced once we take into account a set of activities and/or conditions that escape a simple classification based on school attendance and performance of economic activity. However, a substantial number of them still remain "idle".

35. What then are these remaining children doing? One possibility is that they are really idle, i.e., engaged only in leisure activities. Why such an outcome might be optimal for households is examined in Section 5 of this paper.

36. A second possibility is that these children are actually economically active or in school but that the household surveys failed to capture them due to reporting error or omission. Such errors or omissions could arise for several reasons. Parents may falsely report their children as being idle instead of as working, for example, because (at best) work by children is forbidden or (at worst) because their children are engaged in illegal or dangerous activities. Alternatively, parents may misinterpret the survey question, and report a child as idle because he or she was not working at the time of the interview, although he or she may work during other periods. Parents may report their children as being out of school when in fact they are in some form of non-formal or informal schooling.

37. The degree to which this unexplained portion of the group of non-working non-studying children reflects involvement only in leisure, only the one hand, or unreported economic activity or schooling, on the other, requires further investigation.

4. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: A TRANSITORY OR PERMANENT STATE?

38. Is absence from schooling and economic activity a transitory or permanent state? And, if only transitory, what was the prior activity status of non-working and non-

studying children? These questions are looked at in this section using data from Guatemala.

39. Half of 7-14 year-old children in Guatemala that are excluded from school and economic activity have never attended school or been economically active, while about one-quarter have been out of school and economic activity for more than a year and another quarter for less than a year. But these figures may be misleading, in that they mask the obvious role of child age in the duration of absence from school and economic activity.[12]

Table 7. Guatemala, percentage distribution of children absent from school and economic activity, by duration of absence, age and sex

Sex	Prior status	Age			Total
		7-9	10-11	12-14	
Male	Always idle	62.2	43.3	8.2	49.8
	Idle for more than one year	14.4	25.6	46.8	21.7
	Idle for one year or less	23.4	31.2	44.1	28.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	Always idle	74.5	40.5	16.6	48.8
	Idle for more than one year	11.8	33.4	60.2	32.1
	Idle for one year or less	13.7	26.1	23.2	19.1
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Always idle	69.8	41.1	14.3	49.2
	Idle for more than one year	12.7	30.2	57.0	28.1
	Idle for one year or less	17.5	28.8	28.6	22.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: UCW calculations based on Guatemala, Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida-ENCOVI, 2000.

40. For this reason, it is perhaps more instructive to look at the upper end of the 7-14 age spectrum, i.e., non-working and non-studying 12-14 year-olds, who can be thought of as reflecting the accumulated experience of younger children. A much smaller, but by no means insignificant, proportion of children from this group, about 14 percent, have never attended school or been economically active, with the proportion substantially higher among girls (17 percent) compared to boys (eight percent) (Table 7). These children constitute a particularly at-risk group. Never having had the opportunity to enter school or the job market, their future prospects are undoubtedly much more limited that those of their more experienced counterparts.

41. Among the remaining children from this group that have attended school or been economically active in the past, two-thirds have been absent from these activities for more than a year, again with likely negative implications for their human capital accumulation and future prospects. Girls are much more likely to experience long-term absence from school and economic activity than boys.

[12] Children at the lower end of the 7-14 age spectrum account for by far the largest proportion of the non-working and non-studying group, simply because their younger age means that they have had fewer opportunities to enter school and/or economic activity.

Table 8. Guatemala, percentage distribution of children absent from school or economic activity for less than one year, by previous activity, sex and age

Sex	Status immediately prior to becoming idle	Age								Total
		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Male	Worker	8.9	29.5	20.5	20.6	21.9	14.7	33.3	45.9	22.7
	Student	89.0	65.1	69.9	76.1	59.9	65.7	66.7	54.1	71.4
	Student worker	2.1	5.5	9.6	3.3	18.2	19.6	0.0	0.0	5.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Female	Worker	25.6	11.9	5.8	16.3	32.3	59.1	46.6	49.6	32.8
	Student	74.4	88.1	94.2	83.7	67.7	40.9	41.9	47.1	64.4
	Student worker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.5	3.3	2.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	Worker	14.3	17.7	15.3	18.9	27.9	36.4	41.5	48.2	27.9
	Student	84.3	80.5	78.5	79.1	64.4	53.6	51.4	49.7	67.8
	Student worker	1.4	1.8	6.2	2.0	7.7	10.0	7.1	2.1	4.3
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: UCW calculations based on Guatemala, Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida-ENCOVI, 2000.

42. What was the prior activity status of non-studying and non-working children? Looking at 7-14 year-olds in Guatemala who have been out of school and economic activity for less than a year, most (68 percent) are school drop-outs. But again, this overall figure disguises important differences by age. School drop-outs account for the overwhelming majority of young children who are out of school and economic activity, but moving across the 7-14 age spectrum, school drop-outs diminish in importance and labour market drop-outs increase in importance, such that by the age of 14, children absent from school and economic activity are split evenly between ex-students and ex-workers. This suggests that school-related factors are particularly important in driving the idleness phenomenon among young children, but that among older children, factors relating to the labour market are also important.

43. On one side school attendance requests a continuum presence at school to benefit from education. On the other slack markets do not offer continuity in labor even to adults.

5. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOLING AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY: A THEORETICAL EXPLANATION

44. The preceding discussion has shown that a larger number of children neither working nor attending school is still present even when we adjust the figures to take into account children performing household chores, unemployed and chronically ill. Is this the outcome of a gap in the way in which survey information is collected, or do a number of children really lay substantially idle, without any productive (for current or future welfare) use being made of their time? In order to shed some light on the matter let us see what economic theory has to say and see if such an allocation of children' time can be justified on rational ground.

45. Why should a child spend its time neither in school nor working (either in an economic activity or in the household production)? This situation can arise as the result of a combination of circumstances where the costs to education are high and returns to work are low. Let us consider, for example, a situation in which the costs to access education are relatively high (or the returns to it relatively low). In such a case a household might decide not send its child to school. Why would it not send her to

work (or employ her in the household production)? If there are (fixed) costs associated with sending a child to work and the returns from work are low enough, then would be more efficient to keep the child lying idle. This might be the case of a household without land and not involved in a small family business residing in an area where the labour market is very slack. The travel costs (both direct and indirect) that the child should bear to reach a place where he can be employed, might as well overcome the income the child can obtain from work. Fixed costs of accessing education and work needs not to be the only reason for inducing a household to leave its child "idle". If household value children's leisure (even not very highly), then in presence of low returns to education and to work children's might be left out of both.

46. To fix the ideas better let us consider a simple model, where the household decides the allocation of children's time.

47. We assume the parents care about their own current consumption, the current and future consumption of their offspring. Parents earn an exogenously fixed anoint Y. For simplicity of exposition we collapse parents and children current consumption in one single measure of aggregate household consumption C. This simplification has no implication, as we are not interested to discuss intrahousehold allocation of resources. We also assume that the number of children is exogenously given and normalized at 1.

48. The household maximizes the following utility function:

$$U = f(C, H)$$

49. where the H indicate the child stock of human capital that will determine the future earnings and consumption of the child. We assume that children's time (normalized to 1) can be allocated either to work, l, or to the accumulation of human capital. Human capital can be accumulated by attending school according to the following function:

$$H = h_0 + g(1-l)$$

$$g' > 0$$

where h_0 indicate the innate stock of human capital and g' is the (marginal) return to education.

50. We also assume that in order to send a child to school a fixed cost of S must be borne by the household. E.g. for school fees, uniforms, books, etc. Analogously, in order to send a child to work parents have to face a fixed cost of Z. This can be thought, for example, as a transportation cost. Also other indirect costs, like health hazards etc. might be imagined as constituting such a fixed cost.

51. Moreover, such fixed costs can also depend on the characteristics of the child considered. This is especially relevant for children with disability as the nature of the disability, the accessibility of the school and/or of the work place, can influence the cost of attending school and/or working.

52. Because of the presence of these fixed costs the budget set is not convex and in order to determine the optimal choice of the household we have to consider four different regimes.

53. If the child is sent to work and not to school, she will work full time (remember we assumed no value for leisure), and the maximum level of utility that the household can obtain is:

$$U_W^* = U(Y + w - Z, h_0) \Rightarrow l = 1$$

54. If work is performed and school attended at the same time, the indirect utility function will be:

$$U_{WS}^* = U(Y + wl^* - Z - S, h_0 + g(1 - l^*)) \Rightarrow 0 < l < 1$$

where l* indicates the optimal amount of time devoted to work. In the case where school is attended and no work is performed, we have:

$$U_S^* = U(Y - S, h_0 + g(1)) \Rightarrow l = 0$$

Finally the maximum utility a household can achieve by keeping a child idle is:

$$U_I^* = U(Y, h_0) \Rightarrow l = 0$$

55. The decision of the household among the four possible states will depend on its preferences of children's future consumption with respect to the current household (including children) consumption and on the structure of the relative prices that includes the returns to work, w, to education, g', the fixed cost of working, Z, and of attending school, S. Observe that a child not sent to school will also not work if the fixed cost of work Z is higher than the return to work w. To observe idle children we need, therefore, not only low returns (high costs) of education, but also low returns (high costs) to work.

56. Observe that the returns to work are influenced by the age and by the sex of the child. As age increases the returns to (manual) work increase as well, and in general the returns of male children tend to be higher than for female. The returns and the fixed costs to work are influenced also by the labor market and by the institutional framework. The age of the child also affects the fixed costs for schooling since as the child moves beyond primary education, attending school becomes more expensive. The returns to education and the fixed costs to attending school are influenced by the quality of the school and its relevance in the development of the local economic system.

57. How these conclusions extend to the case of household chores? We have not distinguished here between economic activity and household chores as forms of work, but obviously fixed costs to participate to household chores are not likely to be high. The type of activities parents are involved is relevant with respect to fixed costs of working and together with household size also to the returns to household chores. If the child by performing household chores is able to free parents' time, the mother can direct her energies towards activities with higher return thereby increasing total household income. However, on the other side, returns to household chores might also be very low if, for example, the mother is not working outside the household; there is relatively large number of school aged children and/or a small number of very young children to be looked after, etc.. In all this circumstances the benefits deriving for additional supply of time to household chores might be negligible. Children out of school might end up performing some chores, but (as also the data show) for an amount of time that would not impede to them to go to school and work. We need also to consider that there might be psychological costs linked to traditions and cultural attitudes, especially concerning gender specialization in household chores.

58. What can be learned from the simple model developed here in terms effects of the exogenous variables on household's decisions concerning children activities? Given the nature of the problem it is not possible to formally derive comparative statics results without imposing some structure. However, for any given shape (within the usual regularity conditions) of the household preferences and any initial ranking of the four states, the following conclusions can be reached.

59. An increase in the return to work (or a reduction in the fixed costs to work) will make more likely that a child work and less likely that he attend school or lays idle. Analogously an increase in the return to education (or a reduction in the costs of accessing schools) makes it less likely that a child neither works nor attends school.

60. The combination of high cost to access education and work on the one hand, and low return to work and education on the other makes it more likely that a child will be idle. We expect to find idle children in areas where school are difficult to access and expensive (with respect to parents' income), where the labour market is slack and work possibilities are available at some distance from the residence. Within these areas, in household that do not own land or run a small business, or that have large number of children.

61. Finally, disabled children are likely to face relatively higher fixed costs of attending school or working and hence to be found "idle", unless structures and policies are in place that compensate such additional costs.

6. CONCLUSION

62. The analysis of the data on children's activities shows that a significant group of children is neither economically active nor attending school. We have tried to address this apparent puzzle, by considering in more detail the characteristics of this group. The main conclusions reached through this analysis are the following:

- Taking account of the fact that children absent from school and work might perform full time household chores, be unable to work or looking for job does explain part of the phenomenon.
- This has implications in terms of both of reporting and data analysis and in terms of questionnaire structure for surveys aimed (also) to captures children's activities. In particular, reporting on children's activities should take in to account clearly the three categories discussed, where possible. Questionnaire should be designed so to obtain information on household chores, long term health status (chronical idleness, disabilities) of the child and of the children position with respect to the labour market.
- The number of non-studying and non-working children falling in the above mentioned conditions varies by countries, both in absolute and in relative terms. The largest number of them (especially girls) is involved in household chores. However, a non negligible number is represented by children looking for a job.
- The exclusion from education is not a single 'one-off' event since it marks the entire life span and future generations. Policy measures could be directed to diminish the child exclusion and the drop out from school by reducing the fixed costs of attending school and by increasing the returns to school improving the quality of the schools and making them more suitable for the local economic system.

- "Unemployed" children raise an important issue: should they be classified as part of the labour force? To what extent they should be object of policy action? Under what form?
- Once children performing household chores, unemployed or unable to work (and to attend school) are excluded, we are still left with a substantial, albeit reduced, number of non-studying and non-working children.
- This leaves us with two alternatives: misreporting; and "idleness" as a possible outcome of rational household behavior.
- Misreporting can occur for example because activities carried out by children's are not recognized as work by themselves or by the parents, because helping on the farm can be seen not as an economic activity etc.
- We have developed a simple theoretical model that illustrates under what conditions it would be rational for parents to keep their children out of school and of work.
- From our analysis we do not have enough evidence to really support any or both of these two hypotheses. Further research is needed in both directions. In particular, it would be important to assess how the structure of the questionnaire or the amount of "probing" does influence the estimate of the number of idle children. On the other hand an econometric analysis of the determinants of children's activities will help to clarify whether the data or consistent with the hypothesis that children are really idle.

ANNEX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONS USED TO BUILD INDICATORS

a) Survey questions used to determine work status of children

BRAZIL 1996/97 LSMS	GUATEMALA LSMS (2000)	TURKEY SIMPOC (1999)	NEPAL NLFS (1998/99)	YEMEN NPS (1999)	CAMEROON MICS (2000)
Have you worked during the last 7days? Yes…..1 No…..2	1. Last week did you work: - for a salary or wages? - for yourself? - or providing paid work to other persons? Yes…..1 (pass. Sec. B) , No…..2 2. Last week you did not work: - Not even one hour? - Not even helping in a family business, in construction or on a farm? - Not even selling lottery tickets, food, magazines or other products? - Not even washing, ironing or sewing clothing for other persons? - Not even cleaning cars, shining shoes or another similar activity? Yes…..1 (pass. Sec. B) , No…..2 3. Although you did not work last week, did you have any job or business from which you were absent for leave, illness, vacation, maternity leave or other motive? Yes…..1 (pass. Sec. B) , No…..2	1. Did you work to earn cash or income in kind in the last week? (as regular employee, casual employee, employer, self employed or unpaid family workers) Yes…..1 , No…..2 2. In the last week, for one hour, did you work as paid or unpaid worker? (even if you are a HOUSEWIFE, STUDENT or RETIRED PERSON) Yes…..1 , No…..2 3. Did you have a job or business firm which you were temporarily absent last week? Yes…..1 , No…..2 4. During the last week, did your child work in any economic activity, (even if he/she is a student) as paid employee or self employed, even for one hour, to earn income in cash or kind, or as unpaid family worker in household enterprise or had any job attachment? (Paid employment jobs such as car repairing, self employment jobs such as pedlar or unpaid jobs such as sowing seed, watering etc. in household's agricultural activity) Yes…..1 , No…..2	During the last 7 days, did [Name] do any of the following Work activities ? A. Working for wage or salary, or payment in kind (e.g. food, cloth) B. Retail shop, street or market trader, other trading activity, transporting produce to market for sale, operating taxi service, etc. other business activity C. Weeding, planting, harvesting, keeping birds/pests away from crops, carrying crops to/from storage, herding, looking after animals, poultry etc. D. Milling rice, any other processing of food (except cooking for home use only) E. Tailoring, dress making, weaving, making handicrafts etc. F. Construction and major repair of houses, farm buildings, fences, boats, construction works done through volunteer labour like (road, bridge, building etc.) G. Fetching water, H. Collecting firewood I. Any other home-based activity (Please specify) Yes…..1 , No…..2	1. Does (name) work for an employer or in an establishment for cash or in kind wages or salary? 2. Does (name) work in his own farm or business without employing others? 3. Does (name) own a project, business or part of it which he manages and employs others? 4. Has (name) worked during the last week for the household or others without receiving cash or in kind pay? -- Question used to define working status for children aged 5-9 -- 5. Does (name) work for pay or without pay? Yes…..1 , No…..2	DURING THE PAST WEEK, DID (name) DO ANY KIND OF WORK FOR SOMEONE WHO IS NOT A MEMBER OF THIS HOUSEHOLD? If yes: FOR PAY? 1 YES, FOR PAY (CASH OR KIND) 2 YES, UNPAID 3 NO cl8 DURING THE PAST WEEK, DID (name) DO ANY OTHER FAMILY WORK (ON THE FARM OR IN A BUSINESS)? YES……1 NO …….2

b) Survey questions used to determine education status of children

BRAZIL 1996/97 LSMS	GUATEMALA LSMS (2000)	TURKEY SIMPOC (1999)	NEPAL NLFS (1998/99)	YEMEN NPS (1999)	CAMEROON MICS (2000)
Do you currently attend school? Yes….1, No…..2	Was enrolled for school year 2000 in adult education, primary, secondary, university or post graduate even if he\she had withdrawn previously? Yes…..1 No……2 Did (name) drop out or is he\she currently attending school? Is attending……1 Dropped out……2	Are you a student in an educational institution? Yes…..1 , No…..2	Is [Name] currently attending school or college? Yes…..1 , No…..2	What is the enrolment status of (name), was he/she enrolled in 1998/99? Yes…..1 , No…..2	IS (name) CURRENTLY ATTENDING SCHOOL? YES….1 , NO……2

c) Survey questions used to define household chores

BRAZIL 1996/97 LSMS	GUATEMALA LSMS (2000)	TURKEY SIMPOC (1999)	NEPAL NLFS (1998/99)	YEMEN NPS (1999)	CAMEROON MICS (2000)
During the last seven days, have you done household chores? Yes….1, No…..2 If yes, how many hours a day?	Questions referred to the day prior the interview Did you clean the house Did you cock or prepare breakfast, lunch or dinner? Did you wash dishes Did you wash or iron cloths Did you throw out the trash? Did you fetch water? Did you collect firewood Did you look after children? Did you go to the market? If Yes, record hours spent doing these activities	a) During the last week have you worked in any houseworks? (Washing clothes, looking after younger brother/sister, cooking, washing dishes,cleaning inside or outside the house etc.) If Yes: b) How many hours did you work on household chores during the last week?	During the last 7 days, did (name) do any of the following activities without pay for your household? Cooking\serving food for household Cleaning utensils\house Minor hhld. Repairs Shopping for household Caring for the old\sick\infirm Childminding Other volunteer\community services If Yes, record hours actually spent doing the activity during the last 7 days - Tot hours	Not Available	During the past week, did (name) help with housekeeping chores such as cooking, shopping, cleaning, washing clothes, fetching water, or caring for children? Yes…….1 No…..2 If yes: Since last (day of the week), about how many hours did he/she spend doing these chores?

d) Survey questions used to define health status

BRAZIL 1996/97 LSMS	GUATEMALA LSMS (2000)	TURKEY SIMPOC (1999)	NEPAL NLFS (1998/99)	YEMEN NPS (1999)	CAMEROON MICS (2000)
Do you have any chronic health problems that require constant monitoring? Heart problem……..1 High blood pressure……2 Diabetes……3 Respiratory problems……..4 Digestive problems…….. 5 Gynecological problems……...6 Prostate problems……7 Allergy……..8 Cancer ……..9 Bone\muscle\joint problems……10 Neuro-psychiatric problems…….11 High cholesterol……..12 Other……13	1) For which reason was (name) not enrolled at school in the year 2000? Illness\handicap……1 ……. 2) What is the main reason that (name) dropped out or stopped attending school this year? Illness…….1 ……. 3) What was the main reason you did not look for job last week? …….. illness……..7 ……..	The variable describing disabilities is only for children dropped out from school What is the main reason for not going to school or for dropping out the school? (Select at most 3 choices) 1. Lack of a suitable school 2. Not interested in schooling economic activities 3. Can't afford schooling expenses 4. Can't get along with teachers 5. Disabled/illness 6. Necessity of taking care of permission to work younger brother/sister 7. Necessity of helping household in houseworks 8. Necessity of helping household's 9. Necessity of working for wages 10. To learn a job and gain a profession 11. His/her family doesn't give 12. Preparing for the university exam 13. Other (Explain)	1. What was [Name] mainly doing in the last 7 days ? Attending school..1 Household duties.2 Old, sick.....3 Disabled.....4 Others(specify). ..5 2. What was the reason that [Name] was not available for work most of the year ? (If more than one reason, code the main one.) Attended school.....1 Household duties .....2 Disabled.....3 Income recipient.....4 Too old/sick.....5 Retired.....6 Pregnant/Delivery.....7 Others(specify).....8	Has (name) had an accident or fell sick during the last month? If yes: Malaria Diarrhea diseases Accident\Injury skin condition Eye condition Ear, nose or throat condition Romatesm condition Diabitics, blood pressure Others (specify) If (name) had been ill or injured Was he/she unable to engage in his/her usual activities? Yes…..1 , No…..2	Not Available

ANNEX 2. DATASET DESCRIPTIONS

63. The information used to develop the descriptive analysis was collected in the six countries through a range of survey types, namely Living Standards Monitoring Surveys (LSMS) (Guatemala and Brazil), Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Nepal), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (Cameroon), SIMPOC survey (Turkey), and Poverty Survey (Yemen). The surveys were designed to investigate different themes (child labour, poverty, living conditions, etc.), but each contains the core information required (labor market status, education, time spent performing household chores, health status) to carry out the analysis in this paper. The fact that a significant group of "idle" children is observed across a variety of survey types demonstrates that the "idle" children phenomenon is not merely a function of questionnaire design or sampling technique.

e) Brazil

64. The information was drawn from the 1996-97 Brazil Living Standards Survey (Pesquisa sobre Padrões de Vida) (PPV, 1996-97). The survey provides individual-level and household-level socio-economic data from 4,940 households in two regions of the country - the Northeast and Southeast. The PPV sample was selected following a two-stage probabilistic sample design, with the first stage built on the basis of census sector and the households in the second stage. The 554 sectors selected for sampling were distributed through 10 regions defined as geographic strata, composed by six metropolitan regions (Recife, Salvador, Fortaleza, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and São Paulo) and the urban and rural south east and the urban and rural north east. All stages of the survey were performed by the Brazilian Institute of Geographics and Statistics with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank.

f) Cameroon

65. The information was drawn from the Cameroon 2000 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS, 2000). The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is a household survey developed by UNICEF to fill data gaps in areas critical to the survival and rights of children. The methodology was developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNESCO, the United Nations Statistics Division, MEASURE (USAID), the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The MICS2 model questionnaire includes 19 core modules and 2 optional modules to obtain information for households, household members, women 15 to 49 years of age, and children under five years of age. The sample size is 4,500 households, representative at the national level previous application of appropriate weights.

g) Guatemala

66. The information was drawn from the Guatemala 2000 Living Standards Measurement Survey (ENCOVI, 2000). The survey followed a probabilistic survey design, covering 7,276 households (3,852 rural and 3,424 urban). The survey is representative at the national and regional level as well as in urban and rural areas.

ENCOVI included questions to elicit a unique level of detail (for a representative sample) on different themes related to education, working activity and time use. This level of detail allowed us to investigate with more accuracy on idle children.

h) Nepal

67. The information was drawn from the Nepal 1998-99 Labour Force Survey (NLFS, 1998-99). The sample design followed a two-stage sample selection with wards forming the first stage of selection. The wards were selected with probability proportional to the size, where the number of households recorded in the 1991 census represented the reference size. The sample picked up the seasonal variations during the year of interest. For this reason, the sample needed to be spread evenly across the year, using an equal size of sample in each season. Given the different distribution of the population between urban and rural areas, and the importance of this breakdown, the sample was split in equally between the two areas. The NLFS 1998-99 sample constituted 14,400 households equally distributed in urban and rural areas and spread over the three seasons.

i) Turkey

68. The information was drawn from the Turkey 1999 Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC, 1999). The sampling frame was created on the basis of the 1995 Listing Form Study and the 1997 Population Survey. In urban areas, the first stage sampling unit consists of clusters containing around 100 households. In rural areas, especially in localities with a small population, clusters of 100 household could not be created, therefore the sampling unit is the village itself. Villages with a population of less than 100 are excluded. The survey follows a two-stage stratified clustered with eight sub-samples, collecting information based on a final sample of 23000 households.

j) Yemen

69. The information was drawn from the Yemen 1999 Poverty Monitoring Survey (YPMS 1999), a national household survey involving a stratified sample of 54,000 households. The very large sample was designed primarily to provide information on access to services and other aspects of non-income living standards at the district level. The survey report detailed information on children's activity.

ANNEX 3. RELATIONSHIP OF IDLE CHILDREN TO THE HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

Relationship of Idle children with the head of the household			
Rel. to HH. Head	Non Idle	Idle children	Total
Head of the household	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spouse\wife	0.2	0.2	0.2
Son\daughter	84.6	83.8	84.3
Daughter\Son in law	0.1	0.2	0.1
Grand son\daughter	8.1	9.1	8.5
Father\mother	0.0	0.1	0.0
Brother\sister	3.4	3.2	3.3
Other relative	3.5	3.3	3.4
No relation	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	100	100	100

Source: Yemen National Poverty Survey, 1999

Relationship of Idle children with the head of the household			
Rel. to HH. Head	Non Idle	Idle children	Total
Household head	0.0	0.0	0.0
Spouse	0.0	0.0	0.0
Children	93.4	91.1	93.3
Daughter/son in law	0.1	0.4	0.1
Grandchildren	5.9	5.8	5.9
Parents	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other relatives	0.5	2.8	0.7
Non relatives	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100	100	100

Source: Turkey, Child Labour Survey (SIMPOC), 1999

Relationship of Idle children with the head of the household			
Rel. to HH. Head	Non Idle	Idle children	Total
Head	0.1	0.1	0.1
Wife or Husband	0.0	0.0	0.0
Son\Daughter	85.1	84.5	85.0
Grandchild	10.8	11.2	10.8
Father or Mother	2.0	1.7	2.0
Sister or Brother	0.0	0.1	0.0
Father/Mother in law	0.0	0.1	0.0
Brother-Sister in law	0.2	0.7	0.2
Son-Daughter in law	1.1	1.2	1.1
Niece or Nephew	0.0	0.0	0.0
Bonded servant	0.2	0.0	0.2
Other Servant	0.5	0.4	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Nepal Labour Force Survey, 1998-99

Relationship of Idle children with the head of the household			
Rel. to HH. Head	Non Idle	Idle children	Total
Spouse	0.0	0.7	0.1
Son\Daughter	88.9	75.0	88.0
Other relatives	10.7	23.0	11.4
Attaché	0.3	1.3	0.3
Household employee	0.1	0.0	0.1
Relatives of Hh employee	0.1	0.0	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Brazil, Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilios (PNAD), 1998

Relationship of Idle children with the head of the household			
Rel. to HH. Head	Non Idle	Idle children	Total
Spouse	0.0	0.6	0.1
Son\Daughter	87.8	86.2	87.5
Son\daughter in law	0.1	0.3	0.1
Grinchild	9.0	8.9	9.0
Father\Mother	0.0	0.0	0.0
Brother\Sister	0.6	0.7	0.6
Brother\Sister in law	0.2	0.1	0.2
Other relative	1.5	2.9	1.8
Domestic Employee	0.4	0.0	0.3
Boarder	0.0	0.1	0.0
Other non relative	0.3	0.4	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Guatemala, Encuesta National Sobre Condiciones De Vida (ENCOVI), 2000