

## Child Labour

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In recent years, global progress towards ending child labour has stalled. A staggering [160 million children](#) were estimated to be engaged in child labour at the start of 2020. The COVID crisis is expected to worsen this situation amid school closures and strained public and household finances. Leading Minds Online asks how we can get progress back on track and promote proven measures to reduce child labour.

### Social protection is critical - but is not a silver bullet

Reducing poverty through social protection has been shown to reduce child labour, but not all programmes are created equal. Three key criteria for successful social protection are: broad family coverage; benefits adequate to meet family needs; and regular, predictable payments. Diversifying household income and using technological innovations can also reduce child labour.

### Be wary of unintended effects

Some programmes to end child labour may instead incentivize it. For example, as social protection allows households to own a business or expand their farm, children may be brought into work, including into hazardous activities. Closely monitoring and adapting programmes can help avoid unintended impacts.

### Back to school - especially for those most vulnerable

School closures and inadequate access to online learning may be pushing students towards work. Returning and keeping children in school through adaptive teaching approaches is critical to addressing child labour.

[WATCH THE RECORDING: YOUTUBE.COM/UNICEFINNOCENTI](https://www.youtube.com/UNICEFINNOCENTI) 



Jo Becker



Muhammad  
Rafiq Khan



Virginia  
Messina



Eric  
Edmonds



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*Quotes from the panellists:*

"I'm concerned that many governments haven't taken the necessary steps to respond and prevent an increase in child labour."

**Jo Becker**

Advocacy Director, Children's Rights Division,  
Human Rights Watch

"Child labour is rising but this may not necessarily be due to poverty. In Ghana, diversifying farmers' income is a way to eliminate child labour."

**Muhammad Rafiq Khan**

Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF Ghana

"We have to join forces with other organisations to end this issue. Education and training as well as public and private collaboration is essential."

**Virginia Messina**

Senior Vice President, Advocacy and  
Communications, WTTCC

"Impact evaluations show the impact of social protection on child labour. As families are less concerned about making ends meet, children are less likely to be pulled into child labour."

**Eric Edmonds**

Professor of Economics, Dartmouth College

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