

CHILD ADVOCACY: AN APPROACH TO ADDRESS THE “WORST FORM” OF
STREET CHILD LABOUR AND IT’S ADVERSE AFFECTS
IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL



วิทยาลัยวิทยาศาสตร์สาธารณสุข
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH SCIENCES
CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis portfolio deals with the concept of advocacy in relation to the problems faced by street child workers Kathmandu, Nepal. The thesis portfolio consists out of: (1) an essay on the problems related to the “worst form” of street child work, (2) a proposal for a street child advocacy project, (3) a report on an exploratory inquiry of the target group under study, (4) a bibliography on street child labour and the concept of advocacy as a strategy, and (5) a portfolio presentation outline.

The literature reports that there are 30,000 street children working in the various urban areas of Nepal. In Kathmandu only there are more than 5,000 children working on the streets. Many problems are faced by street child workers such as lack of education, food, shelter, health, and frequent arrests by police. In Nepal it is illegal to employ children below the age of 14 for more than 6 hours a day. However children are compelled to work 9 to 14 hours a day. Therefore many children are facing the adverse affects of street work in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The exploratory inquiry was designed to answer questions on the characteristics of street child workers in Kathmandu, and the relative readiness of street child workers for advocacy approaches. The findings confirm the problems described in the literature related to street child labour. Most of the respondents expressed their eagerness to involve in advocacy activities aiming at awareness

raising within the community on the worst form of child labour and its adverse affects as well as improvement of their situation.

One advocate will initiate the advocacy project for a period of 24 months. The general objective of the proposal is to contribute in long term to the reduction of the “worst form” of street child labour. The specific objectives are: (1) improve access to health centres, shelter houses and vocational training centres for street child workers, (2) develop a mechanism for establishing representative groups of street child workers and immediate community which will function to make advocacy efforts eventual sustainable, (3) raise awareness on the rights of street child workers among the target groups including immediate community and employers, (4) document the problems associated with child abuse and prostitution. The street child advocacy programme is designed to enhance the capacity of children to come up for child rights and access existing social and health services. The project will be gradually handed over to the participating street child workers and community representatives and there are indications that the proposed program eventually will be sustainable.

The exploratory inquiry indicates that an advocacy approach is viable within the street child worker community in Kathmandu, Nepal. Working with the worst form of street child work could be an entry point in aiming at respect for child rights, their access to basic social and health services, and improvement on child labour conditions in Nepal.