



SUMMARY OF POLICY DIALOGUE

ON THE

‘PROTECT THE CHILD DOMESTIC WORKERS FROM MALTREATMENT’ PROJECT

HELD ON

MARCH 26, 2024 AND OCTOBER 8, 2024

IN LAGOS STATE

Supported By:



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Executive Summary

This report outlines the outcomes of the first and second policy dialogues held during the pilot phase of the project on Child Domestic Work (CDW). The Protect Child Domestic Workers Project, supported by the Freedom Fund and the U.S. Department of State, is dedicated to combating the exploitation of child domestic workers in Lagos State. These policy dialogues serve as a crucial platform for engaging relevant stakeholders in reviewing the implementation and monitoring of existing legal frameworks related to CDW issues. Additionally, these dialogues aim to strengthen these frameworks to better protect child domestic workers from maltreatment. This report outlines the objectives, discussions on stakeholder commitments, and key findings from these policy dialogues, development of an action plan, response to mapping report, panel discussions, lessons learned, challenges faced and suggestions and actionable recommendations

Introduction

The exploitation of Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) remains a critical issue that requires urgent attention. Exploitative child domestic work is a violation of children's rights and is widely condemned. Child domestic workers often face barriers to accessing education, healthcare, and basic rights, despite existing legal frameworks designed to protect them.

In response to these challenges, two policy dialogues were organized as part of a broader initiative to address gaps identified by Devatop Centre for Africa Development on the legal framework and financing of child domestic work in Lagos State.

Prior to the dialogues, a comprehensive mapping exercise was conducted on 'The legal framework and financing related to child domestic work in Lagos State'. A mapping brief was produced and distributed to stakeholders forming the basis of discussions during the dialogues. This report highlights how the mapping report was reviewed and adopted.

During the policy dialogues, participants engaged in various sessions designed to advance the project's objectives. These activities included panel discussions, policy games, deliberations on gaps and interactive sessions designed to explore practical steps for moving from policy discussions to tangible actions.

The conversations revolved around strengthening existing systems, developing innovative strategies to combat child domestic work and ensuring effective implementation of protective policies. Additionally, the dialogues fostered partnerships among government agencies—including the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Information and Strategy, Ministry of Education, and Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency—NGOs, such as the Human Development Initiative Foundation, Women’s Rights and Health Project, and Youth Empowerment Foundation, and the private sector, leading to actionable insights and recommendations. Through interactive discussions and workshops, participants evaluated existing challenges, proposed innovative solutions, and committed to developing an action plan to improve protections for CDWs and enhance the implementation of legal frameworks identified during the mapping exercise.

Objective

The objective of the policy dialogues was to engage relevant stakeholders in addressing the challenges and gaps in the protection of Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) in Lagos State by discussing the legal frameworks, identifying enforcement obstacles, and formulating actionable recommendations to strengthen protections, raise awareness, and foster better community involvement in safeguarding the rights and welfare of CDWs.

The aim of the second policy dialogue was to deliberate on key pending gaps as a continuation of the first policy dialogue. Areas focused on were: Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation to assess implementation of the legal provisions to protect Child domestic workers from exploitation, Implementation and enforcement of existing laws on Child protection, Grass root awareness to households on the legal protection of children and Poverty and limited education opportunities as a factor which drives parents to send their children into domestic work.

Stakeholders Engagement

The first policy dialogue, held on March 26, 2024 and the second on October 8, 2024, provided a platform for key stakeholders which include government agencies, civil society organizations, networks and community leaders to review existing child protection laws and discuss solutions to improve the welfare of child domestic workers in Lagos State.

In the first dialogue, 12 stakeholders were represented and 16 new stakeholders attended the second dialogue. Stakeholders include: Ministry of Labour and Employment, Nigeria Association of Social Workers, Child Protection Network, National Agency for the Prohibition of trafficking In Person, National Human Rights Commission, Legal Aid Council, Network Against Trafficking, Abuse and Labour (NACTAL), Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Ministry of Information & Strategy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, National Orientation Agency, Office of the Special Advisers to the Governor on SDGs, NASFAT, Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, SOS Foundation, Association of Orphans and Vulnerable, Juvenile Welfare Centre, Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Radio Lagos FM (Eko F.M), Women's Rights and Health Project (WRAHP), Human Development Int. Foundation, Youth Empowerment Foundation, International Federation of Female Lawyers (FIDA) – Lagos and Ministry of Local Government Community Affairs and Road (MLGCA & RD) etc. Community representatives were also present in the dialogue.

Gaps from the mapping report

The gaps identified from the mapping report were thoroughly examined during the policy dialogue. Gaps are listed below:

1. Inadequate financing mechanisms to effectively implement the legal provisions on child domestic work in Lagos state.
2. Lack of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to assess implementation of the legal provisions against child domestic work.
3. Ineffective implementation of the legal provisions by the stakeholders in Lagos state.
4. Age ambiguity/inconsistency: The definition of "hazardous work" for children in domestic work varies, creating loopholes for exploitation.
5. Enforcement challenges: Implementation and enforcement of existing laws are often weak, leaving children vulnerable.
6. Lack of awareness: Many households and employers remain unaware of legal protections for children.
7. Economic factors: Poverty and limited education opportunities drive parents to send their children into domestic work.

Stakeholders response to mapping report

Key areas of concern were addressed, including enforcement challenges, monitoring and the need for improved coordination and resource allocation.

S/N	Gaps	Questions	Responses
1	The constitution provisions are in general terms and not specific to Child Domestic Work and related issues.	Are there laws protecting child domestic workers?	There are no laws protecting child domestic workers, but there are different organizations set up to respond to cases of child abuse or exploitation.
2	There is the absence of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework to measure compliance to legal provisions	Asked the stakeholders to speak on that.	There is no good coordination of monitoring and evaluation framework instead of Absence.
3	There is no enforcement mechanism provided as there are out of school children in Lagos State as a result of child domestic work	Are there enforcement mechanisms put in place in Lagos to ensure children are in school?	There are mechanisms already put in place in Lagos but, these mechanisms need strengthening, Lagos state also ensures school children are in school during school hours.
4	Findings have shown ineffective implementation of these provisions to safeguard the child from child domestic work.	How Effective is the system of foster parenting in Nigeria?	There are different options for alternative care, fostering, kinship and guardianship, but there is a lack of facilities, manpower and funds for catering for streets children. to really achieve a strong fostering system, states must work together.

Questions asked by stakeholders from the Mapping Report

The following questions were asked by Stakeholders during the review of the mapping exercise.

S/N	Questions	Response
1	In getting data for the mapping exercise, how many groups did you consult?	Consultants were engaged to carry out the mapping exercise. Desk review of existing data, focus group interview.
2	Which government stakeholders were consulted during the mapping exercise?	Ministry of Justice, the Police and CBOs who work with children were consulted due to time constraints.
3	Why were the CDWs themselves not interviewed during the mapping exercise?	The CDWs were not interviewed due to issues with consent, however we have identified CDWS and will work with them.
4	How do you get to identify children's organizations in getting data?	Desk and Internet research can bring up this information.

Panel Discussion

Panel sessions during the policy dialogue were insightful, engaging and thought-provoking. The panelists shared insights on the identified gaps, causal factors to these gaps, actionable recommendations and strategies to bridging these gaps and implementation of policies relating to child domestic work.

During the first policy dialogue the discussion was held with representatives of National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking In Person (NAPTIP), Child Protection Network (CPN), Human Rights Commission and a representative of the Ministry of Education. The panel discussion highlighted several key insights.

Representatives from the Ministry of Labour mentioned that they are in the process of developing a structured approach to implement laws related to CDWs. There was a consensus on the importance of political will, with the Ministry of Labour acknowledging bureaucratic challenges. NAPTIP emphasized that true political will emerges when grassroots communities fully understand their rights under the law. Additionally, representatives from the education sector stressed the need for laws to be implemented and domesticated at the community level to strengthen the political process.

When discussing immediate actions and the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), various suggestions were made. The education sector proposed using media and education as channels for advocacy, while CPN emphasized the importance of the National Orientation Agency in making the message accessible to grassroots communities in different languages. NAPTIP highlighted the importance of engaging communities directly in the project, as visual materials tend to have a greater impact. The Human Rights Commission suggested simplifying laws so that children can understand them and ensuring that educational materials are widely distributed.

The second policy dialogue on Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) focused on moving from policy to action, highlighting key barriers to effective implementation of laws protecting CDWs in Lagos State. The panel included stakeholders from the Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Youth and Social Development, Child Protection Network, Ministry of Justice and SOS Village. Key gaps discussed were the lack of a comprehensive monitoring framework, weak enforcement of laws, low public awareness, and economic factors driving children into domestic work. The discussion emphasized the need to address these challenges to ensure better protection for CDWs.

Panelists agreed that while protective laws exist, enforcement remains weak, leaving children vulnerable. Key takeaways included addressing the root causes of exploitation, such as fear, lack of awareness, and economic pressures. Strategies discussed included improving community engagement, raising awareness, and fundraising efforts to support these initiatives. Going forward, the panel emphasized the importance of closing these gaps and ensuring practical steps are taken to better protect CDWs.

Action Plans

In both policy dialogues, stakeholders demonstrated a strong commitment to taking actions aimed at protecting Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) from maltreatment. During the first policy dialogue, 11 specific action commitments were made, in the second policy dialogue, 18 commitments were made. Commitments included community engagement and grassroots advocacy, policy regulation and enforcement, capacity building and empowerment, child protection and support services, advocacy through media etc.

These collective commitments signal a growing momentum in stakeholders' engagement and quest to safeguard and protect the rights of child domestic workers and ensure the and well-being of child domestic workers in Lagos State.

Stakeholders category who took action is reported below:

Action plan in first policy dialogue

S/N	Category	Number of pledge to action
1	Government	6
2	Network	2
3	CSO	3
	Total	11

Action plan in first policy dialogue

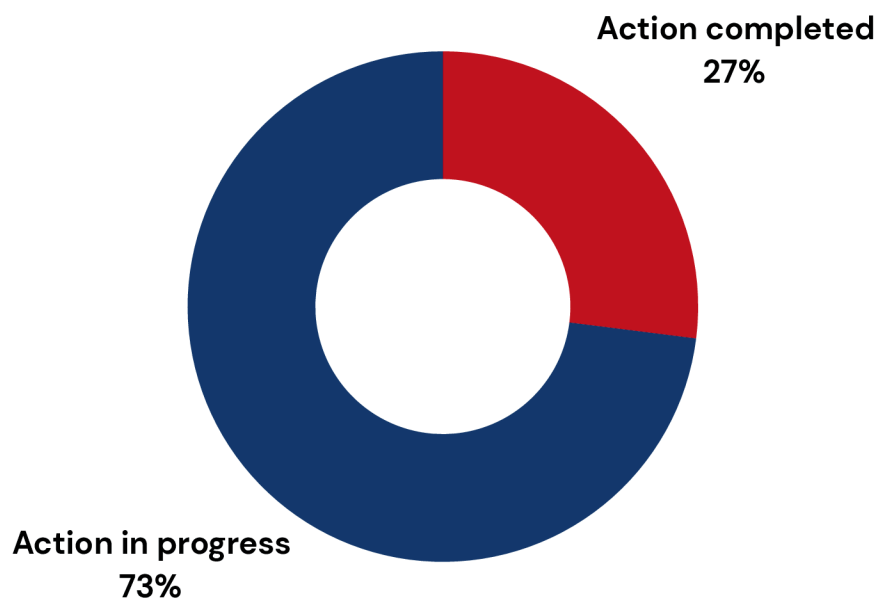
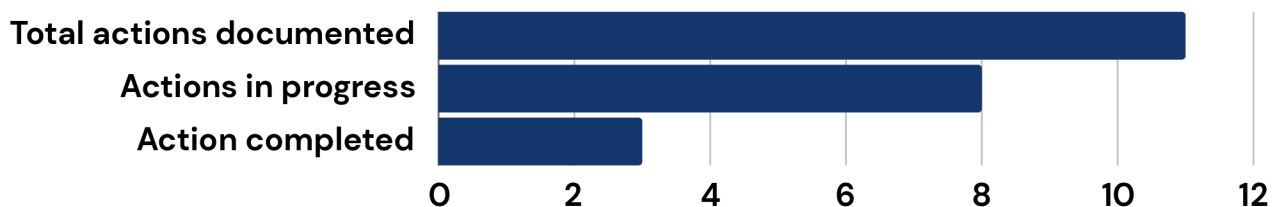
S/N	Category	Number of pledge to action
1	Government	12
2	Network	2
3	CSO	2
4	Media	1
5	Religious body	1
	Total	18

Take action implementation: While stakeholders made strong pledges to protect child domestic workers, follow-up revealed gaps in execution with many commitments not fully implemented. National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Person (NAPTIP), Child Protection Network (CPN) and African movement for Working Children and Youth (MAEJT-NIGERIA) carried out their action. The table below illustrates the gap between pledge and implementation.

Action Pledge Chart

S/N	Take action components	Number of Pledges	Percentage Achievement
1	Total actions documented	11	-
2	Action completed	3	27.3%
3	Action in progress	8	72.7%

A graphical representation of take-action



Policy Dialogue 1 (Held on March 26, 2024)



Policy Dialogue 2 (Held on October 8, 2024)



The above chart shows that only 3 stakeholders out of 11 fully carried out their commitments, meaning just 27.3% of the intended actions were taken. This shows a gap between pledge and action. Strengthening accountability is needed to ensure tangible action.

Stakeholders commented that there are actions they have carried out to protect child domestic workers, but the report is not shared because of internal organizational policies especially when it has to do with confidentiality.

Contributions

During the first policy dialogue on Child Domestic Workers (CDWs), stakeholders highlighted several gaps in the protection and enforcement mechanisms for CDWs. It was acknowledged that while there are no specific laws protecting child domestic workers, various organizations respond to cases of child abuse. Additionally, the lack of a comprehensive monitoring framework to track legal compliance was noted, with a need for better coordination in this area.

Stakeholders also discussed the challenges in enforcement, particularly regarding ensuring that children remain in school. While Lagos has mechanisms in place, this need further strengthening. On the issue of foster care, it was emphasized that alternative care options exist, but there is a shortage of resources, manpower, and funding to support these systems effectively. Cooperation among states is necessary to improve foster care for vulnerable children.

In the second policy dialogue on Child Domestic Workers (CDWs), stakeholders discussed critical gaps hindering the protection of these children. Stakeholders suggested gathering accurate data through baseline and endline surveys, conducting grassroots mapping, and establishing reporting channels. They also pointed out the need to review laws that are obsolete and domesticate them to local contexts, emphasizing the lack of political will and funding as major barriers.

Enforcement challenges were highlighted, with weak implementation of laws leaving children vulnerable. Additionally, there is a significant lack of awareness of the laws guiding CDW engagement among households.

Community engagement, religious institutions, and social media were suggested as ways to increase awareness. Economic factors, such as poverty and limited education, were identified as major drivers of child domestic work, with some families resorting to sending children into domestic work due to financial hardship.

Key Findings

- Stakeholders acknowledge that there are no laws enacted specifically to protect child domestic workers
- Stakeholders expressed differing views on acknowledging the existence of child domestic workers (CDWs). Legal bodies opined that CDW should not be recognized as a form of work and thus should not be discussed, while other stakeholders acknowledged both its existence and the exploitation associated with it.
- Victims face significant hurdles in reintegrating into society after exploitation, often lacking the necessary support systems.
- Legal terms are technical and makes it uneasy for community dwellers to understand
- The role of media, such as radio and community sensitization programs, was identified as critical in educating the public on CDW issues and child protection rights.

Lessons Learnt

- 1.Cultural orientation on CDWs: Most abuse and exploitation are sometimes seen as training.
- 2.Collaborative Efforts: Engagements with various ministries and agencies highlighted the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach to protecting Child Domestic Workers (CDWs), with significant potential for impactful collective action.
- 3.Community Involvement: Empowering local communities and involving them in the dialogue has proven effective in spreading awareness and enhancing the support system for vulnerable children.
- 4.Community leaders and religious organizations hardly get involved in CDW issues in their communities. It is most times seen as a family unit affairs.
- 5.Community dwellers have not seen it has their responsibility to protect children who are being exploited.

Challenges

Stakeholders present during the dialogues highlighted challenges faced during the implementation of the project to protect Child Domestic Workers (CDWs). These challenges underscore the complex and multifaceted nature of protecting CDWs, necessitating a collaborative and compassionate approach from all stakeholders involved.

1. Confidentiality and Reporting: Organizational policies, especially related to confidentiality, hinder the sharing of reports on efforts made to protect CDWs, affecting transparency and progress tracking.
2. Cultural Acceptance: Deeply ingrained cultural beliefs see Child Domestic Work as a way of life and this hinders effective intervention and create barriers to understanding the exploitation involved.
3. Family/community centred case resolution: Victims are often encouraged to resolve cases through family or community centers, leading to the withdrawal of charges and leaving offenders unpunished, which perpetuates a cycle of abuse. Cultural beliefs often lead parents to plead on behalf of perpetrators, obstructing effort to ensure justice is served.
4. Funding Limitations: Insufficient funds hinder the collection of evidence and limit the scope of awareness campaigns necessary for effective intervention. Funding is also a necessity for case management.

Recommendations

During the policy dialogues there were quite a number of actionable recommendations made during the interactive sessions. These recommendations have been grouped into 11 actionable steps that can be taken for the protection of CDWs.

- Media Engagement: The National Orientation Agency (NOA) should ensure frequent appearances on conventional media to raise awareness about the challenges surrounding CDWs and provide clear guidance on where to seek help.
- Community Education: Collaborate with religious and community organizations to educate the public on domestic abuse and the rights of CDWs, focusing on areas where people are unaware of existing support services.
- Children as Advocates: Involve children in advocacy efforts, with NAPTIP empowering them as vanguards to promote the protection of CDWs and educate their peers and communities.
- NGO Collaboration: Facilitate joint actions between NGOs to increase the effectiveness of awareness campaigns and advocacy for stronger laws protecting CDWs, especially in rural areas.
- Community-Based Reporting Centres: Establish local reporting centres within communities for easy and fast access to services, including the reporting of employers who exploit CDWs.
- Training and Protocol Development: Provide training for stakeholders and CDW ambassadors on how to handle cases, and develop a standardized response protocol for dealing with CDW issues, as proposed by Devatop.
- Quarterly Data Review and Case Dashboard: Implement quarterly meetings with government agencies to review data on CDW cases and create a case dashboard to track and monitor progress.

- **Legislation and Enforcement:** Work with policymakers to clearly define what constitutes child domestic work, enforce existing laws more rigorously, and ensure that violations are promptly reported and acted upon.
- **Awareness Campaigns and Outreach:** Intensify awareness programs through community rallies, school education, and partnerships with police and community leaders to discourage harmful practices and promote the protection of CDWs.
- **Develop a committee with Government and CSOs to review laws for CDWs (targeting CDWs protections).**

Conclusion

In conclusion, the policy dialogues on Child Domestic Workers (CDWs) highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive action to protect vulnerable children from exploitation and abuse. Stakeholders recognized significant gaps in legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and community awareness. However, there is a collective commitment to address these challenges through targeted advocacy, enhanced collaboration among NGOs, and increased engagement with local communities. By prioritizing education, media outreach, and legislative amendments, stakeholders aim to create a supportive environment that empowers children and raises awareness about their rights. The actionable recommendations set forth during these dialogues provide a roadmap for future initiatives, emphasizing the importance of coordinated efforts and sustained advocacy to ensure the safety and well-being of Child Domestic Workers across the region.



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