Measuring the Role of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Tackling Child Labor in Latin America

Joe Cancelo

Center for Social Research, Brazil

Email: joe.cancelo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Tackling Child Labor in Latin America, especially Brazil. The research method used uses qualitative methods. The results found that Brazil is a country with a high number of child laborers in the world. Responding to issues concerning child labor which are quite alarming, the Brazilian government is seeking various solutions to reduce the number of child laborers. The solution proposed is not only the formation of regulations and regulations but also practical efforts such as *Bolsa Familia*. However, to realize these efforts so as to obtain significant results, the government is working with several other international actors.

Keywords: ILO, Child Labor, Government Efforts, Latin America.

A. Introduction

Based on research by the International Labor Organization (ILO), there are 218 million children who work as child laborers and half work in hazardous sectors even though many of them live in countries where children are prohibited from working (ILO, 2010). The background of the emergence of child labor is certainly very diverse, for example, because of the poverty suffered by families and the high cost of education that makes children forced to work rather than continuing their education. In reducing the high number of child labor in some countries, not only the government of the country itself is trying to overcome it but international organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) also help in reducing child labor.

After the end of the cold war, not only traditional security issues but non-traditional security issues such as the economy, environment, and human rights began to be raised to the international sphere. In addition, according to Harold.K Jacobson (Networks of Interdependence), the role of International Organizations in the global political system is increasing (Ilien, 2016). No one can deny the development of the organization and the range of its activities, this is caused by globalization. Moreover, all types of international organizations that transcend national boundaries have a great impact on government and cross-national actors that shape it (Baylis, 2014). The role of the ILO in reducing the high number of child labor can be evidence of the role of OI in the global political system.

Speaking of child labor, an appropriate definition is needed in order to clarify the focus of this paper. Child labor can be classified into several criteria including 1) Child labor under the legal age for work, 15 years is the minimum average age of a country to allow children to work while 14 years in developing countries. 2) Types of poor work, including slavery, forced labor, child trafficking and work with activities that endanger safety, health, and morals, for example, prostitution (Humananium.org). Problems arising from child labor are when the work of these children can endanger their lives in a variety of ways, taking up their time to realize the role of children in general, especially learning and playing and assigning too much responsibility (www.newsactivist.com). In addition, child labor brings other negative impacts including premature aging, malnutrition, depression, and dependence on drugs. Problems regarding child labor can be categorized as humanitarian problems because they encompass the welfare and security of one's life. In connection with the development of low politics issues in the global political system, issues regarding child labor need international attention because these problems arise in many countries in the world, especially developing countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, and India.

A 2013 study by a Non-Governmental Reporter in Brazil estimates that more than 258,000 children aged 10-17 work in domestic services at third-party homes (BILAUSDL, 2013). In addition, children in Brazil work in the agricultural sector which can endanger their health and safety. Their work sometimes takes up their time to fulfill their basic education. Therefore, the Brazilian government launched several efforts to reduce the number of child laborers and motivate children to pursue an education in schools. In realizing this, the Brazilian government does not carry out its programs alone, the Brazilian government is assisted by organizations that pay attention and hold a mandate to participate in helping the elimination of child labor in Brazil, for example, the ILO.

B. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Brazil and the Problem of Child Labor

In 2015, the government released the results of the 2014 National Household Survey which found around 3.3 million children aged 5 to 17 years working in Brazil (BILAUSDL, 2013). This figure has increased by around 4.5 percent since 2013. Moreover, the study found that 62 percent of child laborers from 5 to 13 years worked in the agricultural sector. Children in Brazil work the most in the agrarian sector, wherein that sector large responsibilities and good bodily endurance are needed because of the need for hazardous agricultural tools to maximize the results of the agriculture sector. In addition, the percentage in the public service sector is also quite high where children are employed in the construction and slaughter of animals.

Children in Brazil are employed in the worst forms of child labor, including tobacco production and commercial sexual exploitation. There are cases in the Amazon region where boys and girls are involved in cases of sexual exploitation which are then sent to European and American countries to meet the demands of pedophiles (Sinaga, 2015). In fact, work with high risk and the use of dangerous equipment in the field is prohibited before a person reaches 18 years of age (Reporter, 2013). Factors that trigger the growth of child labor include family factors. In Brazil, some families believe that their children need to work early so that they can have a good life later so that they cannot access basic education. In addition, some families argue that children can be used as a backup solution when adult family members do not generate appropriate income, so children are expected to work. There are examples of cases where children are used by their mothers to work in the fields because the workers in the fields are paid according to their work. Children are used to increasing work in the fields, by planting sugar, oranges, cocoa and so on.

Apart from family factors, culture also plays a role in creating child labor. Some northern regions in Brazil with a minimum average income have a culture that children from the age of 8 years work, this is evidenced by their parents who worked when they were children. The last factor is schools where some schools in Brazil are too far from residential areas, then secondary schools such as Junior High Schools (SMP) located in big cities cause parents to be unable to provide money to pay for transportation. In addition, some schools are not equipped with adequate facilities. Indeed, several cases have been found that the presence of children in schools remains good and does not experience problems, the statement is because part-timers in Brazil can still follow the process of learning and teaching at school.

The Brazilian government has responded to problems rooted in child labor in Brazil by establishing various rules and regulations relating to child labor in Brazil. These rules and regulations, among others, regulate the minimum age of a person to work, namely 16 years in Article 403 of the Labor Code. However, a violation was found regarding the regulation where many children under the age of 16 were already working. In addition, the regulation regarding minimum age for working roughly is 18 years also regulated in Article 2 of the Hazardous Work List. But the regulation is also not well-realized because there are many children in Brazil who have worked roughly before the age of 18, for example, those who lift weights beyond their own bodies.

In addition to regulations, several programs have been launched in response to problems related to child labor, including the Bolsa Familia program, which provides cash transfers to 820,000 children aged 7-14 years, which are expected to increase the arrival of children at school by 4 percent nationally. but 9 percent and 12 percent respectively in rural and northeast regions which incidentally is the poorest region in the country. Moreover, the Brazilian government also provides the Jornada Ampliada program which provides after-school activities so as to minimize the incidence of children working after school every day. The Bolsa Familia program was not only pursued by the Brazilian government alone, but was supported by several other actors including international organizations such as the ILO, UNICEF, and others.

2. The Role of the ILO in Reducing the High Level of Child Labor

Every year, the ILO holds an annual International Workers Conference with the participation of representatives of 2 governments, 1 business owner and 1 worker from each country. Each representative has the same right to express and vote independently.

The statement concluded how the ILO prioritized social justice and the welfare of workers throughout the world.

In addition, the ILO is well known for one of the programs to deal with issues related to child labor known as the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) which was formed in 1992 with a progressive goal of eliminating child labor to be achieved by strengthening a country's capacity to taking care of problems and promoting movements throughout the world to eliminate child labor. IPEC has so far operated in 88 countries including Brazil. IPEC is the largest operating program of the ILO.

IPEC is a program that emphasizes collaboration. The cooperation developed by the ILO in realizing maximum IPEC results is not only in countries that are experiencing problems, but also workers' organizations, private businesses, NGOs, media, universities, and others. One of IPEC's programs is to promote social dialogue and build awareness of child labor in agriculture with fellow federations of rural trade unions. The social dialogue program contains a broad spectrum of social and economic issues and is supported through extensive networks and technical cooperation. The program includes Jovem Saber as a capacity-building that focuses on rural development, land reform, and family agriculture and others. The next program includes Conscorio Social which contains non-formal education through the distance learning process. There is also a campaign to get mass attention and a system of mercury to monitor the arrival of children at school.

It should be noted that the IPEC program run by the ILO reflects on two key international conventions governing regulations on child labor, including the Minimum Age Convention 1973 and the Worst Form of Child Labor 1999. This statement shows how the ILO as an international organization has guidelines and evaluations of the program that will be made in the future. Therefore, the possibility of the effectiveness of the ILO program is quite high.

In addition, the previous chapter mentioned the Bolsa Familia program, also known as the family grants program. The program was formed by President Lula da Silva by providing funds to families who decided to send their children to work and drop out of school due to poverty suffered. In fact, there are cases where children in Brazil live with their grandparents so the government makes a policy that is to double the pensioners of workers. The program is not only carried out by the president and the government alone but is supported by other organizations such as the ILO. Funds given to these families can prevent a child from dropping out of school due to a lack of funds.

Dropping out of school causes children to not have guidelines and opportunities to find out their role in society, education can also elevate a person's degree of life so that it is easy to find decent work in the future. Therefore, several programs have been formed such as Bolsa Familia so that children can return to study at school instead of working in hazardous sectors.

If re-observed, the ILO in carrying out its duties always work together with the government of the country to solve the problems that arise. In this paper, it is mentioned how the ILO cooperates with the Brazilian government in several programs such as Bolsa Familia, besides that the ILO also includes non-state actors such as the media, NGOs, and others. The principle of cooperation carried by the ILO in carrying out its mandate is in accordance with the perspective of liberalism. Based on the perspective of liberalism, non-state international actors today can participate in helping the country in solving its domestic problems. Liberalism also believes that in a number of objectives, a country's freedom must be compromised by the need for collective action, hence the priority is attached to the coordinating role of international organizations. Therefore, the participation of the ILO with a variety of other international actors in stopping the pace of development of child labor in Brazil is a manifestation of liberalism.

All of these programs produced results according to ILO research, as many as 27,981 children were prevented from becoming child laborers through the Jovem Saber and Conscorcio Social programs, and 4,811 children could be monitored for their arrival to school. Then, the Bolsa Familia program was able to invite as many as 13,000,000 million families to participate. The statistics conclude that there is a high enough participation to eliminate child labor in Brazil. The success of the ILO in pioneering IPEC programs can be seen from the increased numbers of preventing children from working as well as high participation in schooling. Finally, the ILO as an organization with a mandate to ensure the welfare of workers throughout the world can be seen in its success in helping the Brazilian government to reduce the high rate of child labor.

C. CONCLUSION

Brazil is a country with a high number of child laborers in the world. The trigger factors include poverty factors that force children to come to work, family factors where adult family members do not get enough income so that they need children to work, cultural factors that are reflected in several areas in Brazil where the culture of child labor since the age of 8 years has taken root and continues to be done, then there is a

school factor where parents cannot send their children to school because of the need for expensive schools and the distance of schools far enough. In addition, the short learning time triggers children to be employed by their parents to fill free time. Responding to issues concerning child labor which are quite alarming, the Brazilian government is seeking various solutions to reduce the number of child laborers. The solution proposed is not only the formation of regulations and regulations but also practical efforts such as Bolsa Familia. However, to realize these efforts so that significant results are obtained, the government is working with several international actors such as the ILO.

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