Combatting child labor in rural India

IMPAQ International is working with Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi to evaluate a large-scale child labor reduction program in northeastern India. This ILAB-funded evaluation will assess to what extent the program is able to reduce child labor and to increase school attendance.

Child labor is a widespread problem all across rural India: on average, children work 21 hours a week.[1] In mineral-rich states in particular, children are often involved in mica collection and mining. Many mica mines operate illegally and employ children to harvest mica from the earth, often for less than the equivalent of one dollar per day.[2] Children involved in mica collection and mining are particularly vulnerable to physical injuries.

Children and Parents Working in Mica Mining [3]

The US Department of Labor Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) selected IMPAQ to evaluate the Bal Mitra Gram (or "Child-Friendly Villages") child labor reduction program in India. This program is implemented by Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi's well-established NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA) – the largest grassroots movement for the protection of children in India. Implemented in Jharkhand state, an area with high incidences of child labor in mica mining, this two-year program is BBA's signature intervention to directly combat child labor. This evaluation is part of a cross-country series of ILAB evaluations that IMPAQ is conducting in Malawi, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Rwanda.

The Evaluation Method: At a Glance

► To detect the impact of the child labor reduction program, IMPAQ is using a randomized control trial (RCT), the gold standard of program evaluation.

► This method provides rigorous evidence as to whether the program reduces the incidence of child labor, as measured by the work status of children and number of hours worked.

► To detect the program effect, IMPAQ randomly assigned 20 villages into a treatment group (the one that receives the child labor reduction program) and 20 villages into a control group (without any intervention).

► The randomization ensures that the villages have the same average socio-economic characteristics at the beginning of the program.

► After the intervention, any detected differences in child labor incidents between treatment and control villages can then be solely attributed to the program.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Sonam Gupta
Senior Research Associate
IMPAQ International, LLC
sgupta@impaqint.com

[1] Education Research and Development Organisation. (2014). *Highlights of Child Labour in India.* Retrieved from http://www.erdoclasses.com/highlights-of-child-labour-in-india.php.
[2] Doherty, B. & Whyte, S. (2014, January 19). India's Mica Mines: The Shameful Truth behind Mineral Make-Up's Shimmer. *The Sydney Morning Herald.* Retrieved from http://www.smh.com.au/national/indias-mica-mines-the-shameful-truth-behind-mineral-makeups-shimmer-20140118-311wk.html.
[3] The Ugly Truth Behind Global Beauty Industry. (2014, Sept. 21). *Al Jazeera.* Retrieved from http://www.aljazeera.com/ indepth/features/2014/09/ugly-truth-india-global-beauty-industry-cosmetics-mica-201499101422805960.html.