

# COUNTING PENNIES

## A review of OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

Impact: Philippines



“MY DREAM IS TO FINISH MY STUDIES. That is how I can really help my family.”- Oscar, 12 years old.

### ENDING CHILD LABOUR

National laws in the Philippines clearly prohibit the employment of children younger than 15 years of age. Despite this, it is estimated that approximately 5.5 million children are working, nearly 3 million of them in hazardous labour. Roughly 65 per cent of them are engaged in agriculture, including in sugarcane farms and processing plants, where they may work in dangerous and hazardous conditions.

A project financed by the US Department of Labor and Employment started to reduce child labour in sugarcane areas with two main strategies: improving opportunities for vulnerable children and their families through education and livelihoods, and improving government and institutional systems for sustained reduction of.

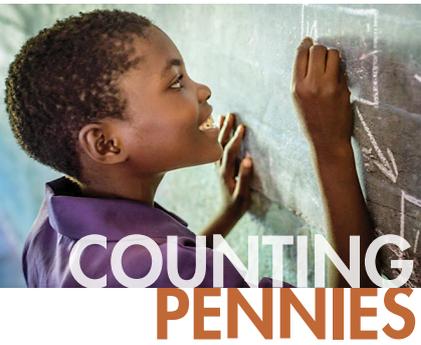
The project has covered over 90 per cent of the geographic area where sugarcane is farmed and processed. Many parents who had previously struggled are now able to cover the costs of their children’s school attendance, are more committed to withdrawing their children from work, and are more able to differentiate between acceptable children’s work and exploitative child labour.

Local implementation of national law through child labour ordinances had been adopted in 95 barangays. Important partnerships within the sugar industry resulted in the adoption of voluntary codes of conduct for sugarcane producers.

### MEET OSCAR, A CHILD ADVOCATE

Three years ago, planting sugarcane would have been Oscar’s destiny. He lives in an area of the Philippines where child labour in the sugarcane industry has been an accepted practice. His older brothers did





it, he sometimes helped, and he believed he would take it up full-time when he was old enough.

Instead, aged 12, Oscar is at school and doing well enough to volunteer as a 'little teacher' – a tutor for younger children who have missed school or fallen behind. He also regularly joins the child labour community education team, part of the USDOLE project to combat child labour in the sugarcane industry. The team visits sugarcane communities to build awareness and action on what types of work are acceptable for children. Oscar takes part because he wants to ensure that other children never have to do the type of hazardous work that he and his brothers were forced to do only a few years ago. 'My dream is to finish my studies,' he says. 'That is how I can really help my family.'

Investments in this area build on the successes of previous projects and have reduced child labour in the sugarcane industry by 86 per cent after five years of project implementation.

*Official development assistance (ODA) investment helps children across the world by preventing and addressing violence against children. But this is not enough to end the problem. Imagine what can be done if we increase investments.*

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Investments have reduced child labour in the sugarcane industry by 64 per cent in the first three years of implementation.

