

In Their Own Words: Consequences of Child Labor in Urban Nigeria

'Dimeji Togunde* and Arielle Carter

Department of Anthropology/Sociology, Albion College, Albion, Michigan 49224, USA

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ABSTRACT This paper utilizes a 2002 datasets gathered through interviews with 1,535 children (aged 8-14 years) and their parents in urban Nigeria to examine the dangers and hazards reported by children who work in the urban economy. Findings indicate that slightly over half of interviewed child laborers are female; they begin work as early as age 7; and work for an average of 4 hours a day in order to contribute financially to the sustenance of the family; and to acquire training needed in future occupations. The children come mostly from large households of about 6 persons, where many of their parents have low levels of education, income, and occupational statuses. Furthermore, because the sample is urban based, children come mostly from nuclear and monogamous households. A significant percentage of working children are involved in motor accidents, face attempted kidnapping, rape, and sexual molestation. Many are also invited by gangsters to participate in robbery and anti-social activities. Others suffer from physical exhaustion and pains due to frequent long walks. These health problems have detrimental effects on children's school attendance, punctuality, school performance, and leisure time. This study has policy implications for regulating child labor in Nigeria.