

# Child Labour

‘Child labour exists because we allow it to exist’

Ms. Shanta Sinha, Chair of Children’s Rights Commission, India.

By Development Education Unit, Concern Worldwide

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Written by Joanna Rea.



Cover pic:

BANGLADESH Narayanganj, Nr. Dhaka.

A child labourer carrying bundles of garments in a textiles factory.

Most of the workers in this factory are children.

Photo: G.M.B. Akash/Panos Pictures

Inside cover pic:

YEMEN Hays

Nagat, aged 9, works in the fields in Al Fash village.

Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Panos Pictures

Child labour is any work done by a child that may be harmful to their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



# Foreword

Despite the world's promises to care for every child, the scourge of child labour still leaves countless children deprived of their most basic rights. In order to guarantee that these rights are secure, the international community must make the protection of children the first priority in countries where child labour is present. Businesses must redouble their efforts to ensure that no child labour is used in the production of any good, and above all people, wherever they may live, must make it clear that the abuse of children as child labourers has no place in this world.

This book is written for anyone interested in learning about child labour and how to take action against it.

## 'Stop Child Labour – School is the Best Place to Work'



An international campaign which seeks to eliminate child labour through the provision of full-time education.

The campaign has two core objectives:

1. To challenge and bring an end to, all forms of child labour and to challenge those who would argue for its retention
2. To support the global campaign for education which seeks to provide Education For All (EFA)

# The Reality

There are

**218 million**

child labourers in the world

**14%** of all children between 5 and 17 years are child labourers

**1 in 7** children around the world is a child labourer

**63%** of children in Mali aged 5-14 years are child labourers.

**38%** of children in Cambodia and **47%** in Burkina Faso are working

**22%** of child labourers work in the service industry – retail, restaurants & hotels, transport, finance, business, community and social services

**9%** of child labourers work in industry – mining, quarrying, manufacturing, construction and public utilities

Latin America and the Caribbean are making the greatest progress in tackling child labour while the highest incidence of child labour can be found in sub-Saharan Africa

Every year **22,000** children die in work related accidents

**69%** of child labourers work in agriculture – hunting, forestry, fishing and agriculture

The proportion of girls working is not decreasing and girls are more likely to be child labourers than boys

**Progress has been made:**  
the number of child labourers fell globally by 11% from 2002 to 2006 and the number of children in hazardous work decreased by 26% - '*child work is declining, and the more harmful the work and the more vulnerable the children involved, the faster the decline'* (ILO 2006)

# Section One

## A history of child labour

### Introduction

It is time to end child labour...

1 in 7 children around the world is a child labourer. That is 218 million children who are working instead of going to school. They work in factories and in fields, they sew footballs and t-shirts, they pick cotton and cocoa, they mine, they dig, they serve in homes, they fight in wars. They are trapped in poverty with little hope of escape. They have been denied their rights to a childhood and full-time, quality education.

Children, as one of the most vulnerable groups in society, should be afforded our highest standards of duty and care. They need protection from exploitation and should have the opportunity to grow, develop and fulfil their potential. Child labour makes this impossible for children.

By depriving 218 million children of their right to education and all the potential that it holds, we are all denied a brighter and more just world. Eliminating child labour is a moral imperative that we can no longer ignore.

Child labour is a fact of life for children in many countries and it is an issue that affects us all. It is the responsibility of everyone to contribute to the elimination of child labour – governments, trade unions, businesses, international organisations, communities, employers, teachers, parents, children and **you**.

Through the provision of full-time, quality education and the reduction in global demand for cheaply produced products, the elimination of child labour is achievable.

**...children belong in school, not work.**

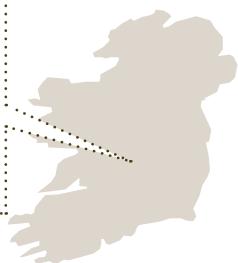
The '**school is the best place to work**' campaign believes that child labour is any work which is harmful to a child's development including the withholding of access to full-time quality education.

### The keys to eliminating child labour: political mobilisation and practical action

There are **864,449** children between 0-14 years in Ireland, **457,889** are in primary school.

If every seventh child was taken out of school and put to work, there would be **67,984** child labourers in Ireland

Source: CSO 2006



'Child labour is one aspect of poverty – it is a result of poverty and it is also a way of perpetuating it.'

International Labour Organisation

### History of child labour

Child labour is not a new problem or phenomenon. It has existed in every part of the world since ancient times. In more recent history, it emerged as an issue during the industrial revolution when children were forced to work in dangerous conditions for up to 12 hours a day. In 1860, 50% of children in England between the age of 5 and 15 years were working.

In 1919, the world began to address the issue of child labour and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted standards to eliminate it. Throughout the 20th Century, a number of legally binding agreements and international conventions were adopted but in spite of these, child labour continues to this day. The highest number of child labourers is in the Asia-Pacific region but the largest percentage of children working, as proportion of the child population, is found in sub-Saharan Africa.

**1 in 7** children in the world is a child labourer



# Centuries of child labour

Italian state of Venice prohibits the use of child labour under the age of 13.	City of London is requested to send over "one hundred friendless boys and girls" to work in spinning factories in the colony of Virginia in America.	Parliamentary petition reports that child slaves from Ireland, Scotland and England were locked below deck for two weeks before the ship departed. On the voyage they were "locked up under decks amongst horses" destined for the colony of South Carolina.	In the early nineteenth century child workers comprise one third of all workers in US factories. By the end of the century one fifth of all children between the age of 10 and 16 are in full employment.	Ineffective English parliamentary acts to standardise children's work hours in cotton mills to 12 hours per day. This is followed by similar acts in 1819, 1844 and 1878.	English Act permits children aged 11-18 to work 12 hours maximum, children aged 9-11 to work 8 hour days and makes it illegal for children under 9 to work. This act applies only to the textile industry.	Massachusetts becomes the first American state to adopt child labour reform laws. These laws prohibit the employment of any child under 15 who has received less than 3 months schooling in the previous year.
1396	1630	1659	1800	1802	1833	1839
Dreadnought Society is founded to facilitate migration of boys from England to New South Wales. <i>"Large numbers (of boys) can now be obtained in England and their economic value is greater than that of adults because they have a longer life expectation"</i> – Arthur Goldie, General Secretary of the Millions Club to Prime Minister Andrew Fisher.	US President Wilson passes the Keating-Owen Act banning articles produced by child labour from interstate commerce. A Supreme Court ruling subsequently declares this act unconstitutional.	American Labour Foundation demands that the peace treaty include provisions that no commodity be delivered in international commerce in the production of which children under 16 have been employed.	The Foundation of the International Labour Organisation. The ILO Constitution is written by the Labour Commission representing Belgium, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.	In Ireland, The School Attendance Act obliges children aged 6 to 15 to attend a national or other suitable school.	Childrens and Young Persons Act (UK) – Children under 13 may not be employed. Children may not hold jobs requiring physical labour. Working children must be registered with local education authority and must receive a permit.	Article 24 of the Indian constitution states "no child below the age of 14 shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or in any hazardous employment".
1911	1916	1918	1919	1926	1933	1937

Pennsylvania becomes the first state to limit the age of workers to twelve years of age in the silk, cotton and woollen mills, however no provisions are made for enforcement or proof of the child's age.	In England, 50% of all children aged between 5 and 15 are in work. Many of them work 80 hour weeks as domestic servants for a half pence an hour.	International Workers Congress calls for international campaign against child labour.	US census finds 750,000 workers aged 15 and under. The youngest are found to be scavengers gathering trash, cinders, rope and metal to sell to junk dealers. Other occupations are shoe shining for boys and street sweeping for girls.	Lancashire, Mr. Sorabjee Bengali's and Lord Shaftsbury's campaign to end child labour in India begins.	At the turn of the twentieth century an estimated 12% of all textile workers in Mexico are children.	National Child Labour Committee is launched by social workers to eliminate child labour in the US.
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1848      1860      1866      1870      1878      1900      1904

**2008:** **218 million children** are working instead of going to school. They work in factories and in fields, they sew footballs and t-shirts, they pick cotton and cocoa, they mine, they dig, they serve in homes, they fight in wars.



1938      1973      1989      1992      1999      2003      2004      2015

Fair Labour Standards requires employers to pay child labourers the minimum wage. It limits the age of child labourers to 16 and over 18, if the work is hazardous. Children of 14 and 15 are permitted to work in certain occupations after school.

ILO's Convention 138 recommends the Minimum Age for Admission to employment as 15, and 18 for work that jeopardises safety and morals. The Convention is ratified by 132 countries.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international agreement on the rights of children which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, is agreed and ratified by all countries but two (Somalia and the United States of America).

The Formation of the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) within the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Convention 182, ratified by 147 countries, calls for prohibition, and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

**School is the best place to work**  
campaign starts  


The ILO publishes a new report showing a fall in the number of child labourers from 246 million to 218 million.

Child labour is eliminated through the provision of full time formal education for all children...?

# They abolished slavery didn't they?

2007 marked the 200th anniversary of the Slave Trade Abolition Act in Britain. From the first meeting of the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade to the passage of the 1807 Slave Trade Abolition Act it took just 20 years.

In that time the campaign challenged assumptions that had been embedded over hundreds of years and convinced many thousands of people that not only was slavery wrong but that they had an obligation to end it.

## Slavery was big business

Slavery was big business, it created and then relied on a large support network of shipping services, ports, finance and insurance companies. It also had support at the highest and most powerful levels of society.

The royal connection with the slave trade began with Queen Elizabeth 1st. In 1672, Charles II granted the Royal African Company a monopoly on the slave trade and in 1713, Britain won the right to be the sole supplier of slaves to the Spanish colonies in South America for 30 years. This led to the establishment of the South Sea Company which shipped over 64,000 slaves in 15 years. Queen Anne and George I held a 22.5% share in South Sea Company.

- Thomas Guy, the founder of the world famous Guy's Hospital in London, sold his shares in the company just before the prices crashed.
- In 1729, Philip York, the Solicitor General, declared that "individuals brought to England from places where they had been enslaved, remained in the state of slavery"
- William Beckford, the wealthiest man in England (the Bill Gates/Richard Branson of his day) owned 22,000 acres of sugar plantations in Jamaica. He realised that political influence would further his business affairs and so he became Lord Mayor of London. He then became an MP and led a group of pro-slavery parliamentarians and influenced government policy on trade, defence, shipping and finance.

The slave trade contributed significantly to the commercial and industrial revolutions. Cities such as Liverpool and Amsterdam grew wealthy as a result of the trade in humans.

## Attitudes that held slavery in place

"Slavery is good for slaves...they really are happier in a system where their lives are run by others (ask any prisoner)"

"Living in slavery is better than starving to death..."

"Abolishing slavery would be economically disastrous..."

"Social norms that accept slavery....if ethics is a matter of public opinion then slavery was ethical." (Cultural Ethical Relativism)

"People should be able to become slaves if they want to!"

## Ending slavery

It is unthinkable today that such a practice as the slave trade could exist, yet just over 200 years ago it was alive and well in Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Ending slavery meant changing the hearts, minds and habits of people who occupied the most powerful positions in society, it meant challenging attitudes that saw people being denied their humanity based on the colour of their skin. It meant challenging businesses that made huge profits from the suffering of others. The legacy of slavery still lives today. However, so too does an important lesson...if slavery can be ended then why not child labour?

**It is time to consign child labour to the history books and to allow all children to realise their rights.**

## Section Two

# Child labour today

## Defining child labour

Child labour is commonly defined as work done by children under the age of 18 which is considered to be damaging to their physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual development.

Child labour encompasses every non-school going child – irrespective of whether the child is engaged in wage or non-wage work; whether he or she is working for their family or for others; whether employed in hazardous or non-hazardous occupations; whether employed on a daily or on a contract basis or as a bonded labourer.

**Definition of Child Labour:** Child Labour is work performed by a child that is likely to interfere with his or her education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32.1)

The main source of information on child labour comes from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). They conduct research and publish reports on the issue and have a special department dedicated to the elimination of child labour – the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).



### FAQ 1. Why does child labour exist?

‘Child labour exists because we allow it to exist.’

Ms. Shanta Sinha, Chair of Children’s Rights Commission, India.

- It exists because people accept it and make excuses for it. There are no excuses for child labour. All forms of child labour are unacceptable.
- It exists because the international community allows it to exist. Child labour could be eliminated with political will and action.
- It exists because the right of children to full-time education is not respected.
- It exists because the formal education systems in some countries are allowed to discriminate against the poor and vulnerable by making schools inaccessible and unaffordable.
- It exists because global demand for cheaply produced goods means that suppliers have to find the cheapest labour force possible and often times, this means children are forced to work. Child labour is cheap and in many cases, free.
- It exists because consumers do not care enough about who makes the products they buy as long as they are cheap.
- It exists because often times it is ‘invisible’.
- It exists because farmers are not paid a fair price for their crops (cotton, coffee, cocoa) so they are unable to afford school fees for all of their children.
- It exists because international legislation and conventions seeking to end child labour have not been taken seriously or enforced.
- It exists because we haven’t done enough to end it.

‘It exists where laws are not enforced and where there is a cultural acceptance of children not in school. All of these issues must be addressed in any serious attempt to eliminate the scourge of child labour.’ MV Foundation, India

# Types of child labour

Child labour has been categorised into different forms. However, regardless of where and how children work, all forms of child labour are unacceptable.

## Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour

– Examples of the worst forms of child labour include prostitution, pornography and drugs-related work.

**Child Trafficking** – meaning '*any act or transaction whereby a child is transferred by any person or group of persons to another for remuneration or any other consideration*'. This category is different from the others in that it refers to the process that commercially exploits children.

**Child Prostitution and Pornography** – meaning '*the use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration*' - this category includes using images of children involved in real or simulated sex.

**Children used for Crime** – '*the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs...*' It is important to note that this category is different than the broader category of juvenile crime which includes cases of children committing criminal acts on their own but it does include most cases of children selling drugs, as they are usually being used as the distribution end of a larger business chain.

**Children used in Armed Conflict** – means the involvement of children as combatants or support workers in armed conflict, whether by government forces or rebel forces.

**Domestic Child Servants** – children working in household duties for extended hours at the home of an employer – many of these children are working in slavery or slave-like conditions, many have been trafficked and many risk their health, safety and moral well-being. This category does not include part-time domestic work done on a commercial basis by children old enough not to be harmed by such work, or normal household chores done as a member of their family.

**Hazardous Child Labour** – "*work that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.*" Such work is defined to include physical, psychological or sexual abuse, work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces, work with dangerous machinery, work with hazardous materials, work with long hours including night work.

## FAQ 2. Why is child labour a problem?

- Because it denies children their most basic rights – protection and freedom from exploitation.
- Because it means children are at work instead of going to school. Children are denied their right to full-time quality education which is the key to escaping poverty. By working instead of learning, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated.
- Because young children around the world are involved in dangerous and physically damaging work.
- Because it makes it difficult for adults to find employment when employing children is cheaper. Child labour excludes adults from the work force and this creates poverty.

## FAQ 3. Is all child labour harmful?

No! But, let's be clear: child labour is any labour that prevents a child from receiving a full time formal education. Helping around the house or farm, or working in a local shop on weekends or for a few hours after school during the week is not child labour. In fact, this kind of work can be good for a young person - it helps them learn valuable life skills. However, if this work prevents a child from receiving a full time formal education and when it contravenes existing laws on the minimum age and conditions for employment, it becomes child labour.

## FAQ 4. How does child labour harm young people?

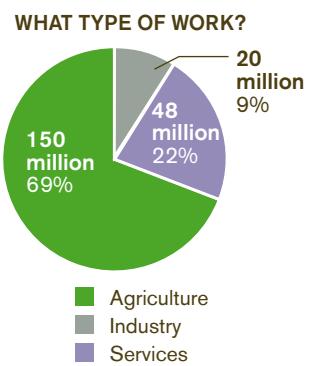
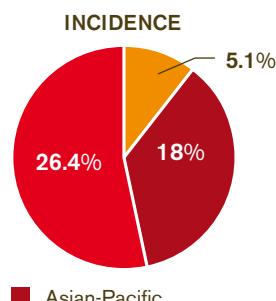
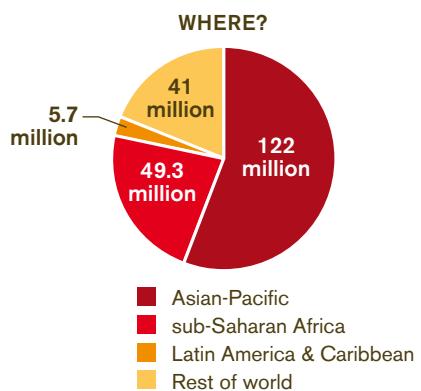
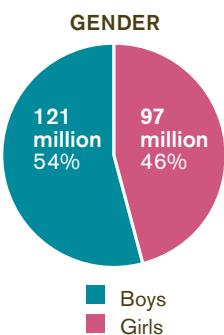
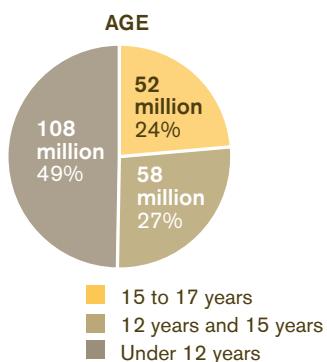
- Causes serious damage to children's health as a result of violence, injury or disease
- Impinges on the social, emotional and moral development of children
- Exploitation of children through force, low wages, poor working conditions and sexual/psychological abuse
- Continuing poverty for individuals, families and whole communities
- Denial of the basic rights of millions of children
- Denial of the rights to education, health, leisure time and human development for many of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children

# Where and how do children work?

While the figure of 218 million child labourers is used in official calculations, the actual number of children working is probably much higher. This is due to the invisible and informal nature of child labour and the fact that many children have not been registered because they have no birth certificate and they do not appear on any school or employment records.

## GLOBAL ESTIMATES ON CHILD LABOUR

218 million – total number of children working Source: ILO 2006



Note: while the Asia-Pacific region has the highest number of child labourers, the incidence is highest in sub-Saharan Africa.

NIGER Aguié (Sahel Region)  
Children weed a freshly sown millet field.  
Photo: David Rose/Panos Pictures



# Child labour and International law

Child labour is prohibited by international law and is a breach of many international agreements and conventions. We do not need any new laws, goals or conventions on the issue of child labour. What is needed now is ACTION!

'The world wants no new promises.' Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the UN (MDG Report 2007)

## FAQ 6. Isn't child labour illegal?

Throughout the world, legislation exists that makes the exploitation of children illegal. However, all too often, the monitoring component of these legal frameworks is weak or non-existent and the finances and political will to improve them have not materialised. Some governments and businesses see child labour as a way to compete internationally as it keeps their costs, and therefore the price for their goods, low.

## International Declarations and Conventions relating to child labour

### Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Agreed on December 10 1949 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. This declaration lists the fundamental rights and freedoms that every individual, without reservation, is born with. They include the right to education and the right to be free from exploitation and slavery.

### The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

2nd September 1990

All countries ratified, except 2 (Somalia & USA)

28 September 1992 – Irish ratification

This convention is the most widely ratified convention and every country in the world, with the exception of two, have signed and agreed to abide by it. The Convention recognises that children, as a special and vulnerable group in society, should have a set of basic rights and protections that ensure their access to health care and education as well as legal, civil and social services that protect them from harm, exploitation and abuse.

- **Article 19:** Children will be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.

- **Article 27:** Recognises the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.
- **Article 28 & 29:** The right to education
- **Article 31:** The right to play
- **Article 32:** The right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

*"States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of this article.*

*States Parties shall provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment, provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment, provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article."*

## Optional Protocols

Following the ratification of the Convention, two optional additional 'protocols' were added.

### 1. Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

12th February 2002

112 countries have ratified

18 November 2002 – Irish ratification with minimum age for recruitment into the Irish armed forces as 17.

### 2. Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography

18th January 2002

115 countries have ratified

Has been signed but not been ratified by Ireland.

## The International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Since its establishment in 1919, the ILO has been responsible for proposing a minimum age for entering employment and in 1992, the ILO set up the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). There are two ILO Conventions relating to child labour:

### ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and Work

19th June 1976

150 countries have ratified

22nd June 1978 – Irish ratification with minimum age specified as 16 years.

One of the most effective methods of ensuring that children do not start working too young is to set the age at which children can legally be employed. Each country that ratifies this convention agrees the minimum age of employment.

## ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

19th November 2000 – came into force

165 countries have ratified

20th December 1999 – Irish ratification

Following comprehensive research into the issue ILO concluded that it was necessary to strengthen existing conventions on child labour. This convention helped to focus the international spotlight on the need for urgent action to eliminate the worst form of child labour as a priority, without losing the long-term goal of the effective elimination of all child labour.

## African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

November 1999

### Article 11 Education:

Every child shall have the right to an education.

The education of the child shall be directed to:

- The promotion and development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- Fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- The preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures;
- The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all peoples ethnic, tribal and religious groups;
- The preservation of national independent and territorial integration;
- The development of respect for the environment and natural resources;
- The promotion of the child's understanding of primary health care.

### Article 15: Child Labour

"Every child shall be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. This article covers both the formal and informal sectors of employment..."

- Provide through legislation, minimum wages for admission to every employment.
- Provide for appropriate regulation of hours and conditions of employment.
- Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure effective enforcement
- Promote the dissemination of information on the hazards of child labour to all sectors of the community.



## Child labour myths

**Myth:** Poverty causes child labour and prevents a child from going to school

**Fact:** Child labour causes poverty by keeping children in low paid work, keeping adults out of the workforce and denying children the right to education which would allow them to break the cycle of poverty.

**Myth:** Parents of child labourers have little regard for the value of education

**Fact:** Parents do recognise the power and value of formal education.

**Myth:** Children prefer working to going to school

**Fact:** In the overwhelming majority of cases children prefer school to work.

**Myth:** Child labour is only a problem in the developing world

**Fact:** 1% of child labourers work in the developed world and a high proportion work in agriculture.

**Myth:** Most child labourers work in 'sweatshops'

**Fact:** Only 5% of child labourers work in export industries such as textile manufacturing. The highest proportion, 69%, work in agriculture.



# Child labour and poverty

The link between child labour and poverty is not inevitable. Child labour is not a product of poverty alone and poverty does not automatically create child labour.

Some groups, organisations and individuals argue that child labour is a 'necessary evil' and that child labour will only be eliminated if and when poverty is eliminated.

The 'Stop Child Labour Campaign' does not think this is the case. While we accept that poverty can force children into work, it also believes that if child labour is not eliminated, poverty will always exist.

In many cases, instead of poverty causing child labour it is, in fact, the other way around – child labour causes and perpetuates poverty – by keeping adults out of the workforce.

Rather than merely blaming poverty as the cause of child labour, we must recognise the role governments, social systems, culture and tradition play in allowing children to work.

Statistics show that huge numbers of children from impoverished and disadvantaged backgrounds go to school and in many cases, parents make huge sacrifices to enrol their children in full-time education.

Often times, it is the school system itself that keeps vulnerable and marginalised children from attending school by burdening parents with unaffordable fees.

Would we accept 67,984 child labourers in Ireland?

**'Child labour and poverty are inevitably bound together and if you continue to use the labour of children as the treatment for the social disease of poverty, you will have both poverty and child labour to the end of time'** Grace Abbott (Childrens' rights advocate)

As IPEC notes 'it is the policy choices made by governments rather than poverty levels alone that explain why certain countries have managed to reach a critical threshold in achieving universal primary education and with it child labour elimination' (IPEC 2006)

## FAQ 5. Isn't child labour necessary for poor families to survive?

Child labour cannot be tackled as a family issue only; it is a societal issue, a cultural issue, and a human rights issue. Put simply, child labour should not exist and no excuses should be made for it. Child labour is not a 'necessary evil'. Child labour is not just an issue for poor families; it is something that affects us all. Parents, employers, government officials, teachers, police and other community representatives should all be involved in providing the necessary conditions to ensure that children do not have to work. Families that depend on the income generated by their children should be supported and provision for the education of these children should be made. There is little point in removing a child from work for them to be replaced by another child.

When children are no longer available for work, employers have no choice but to hire those who are available to them...adults.

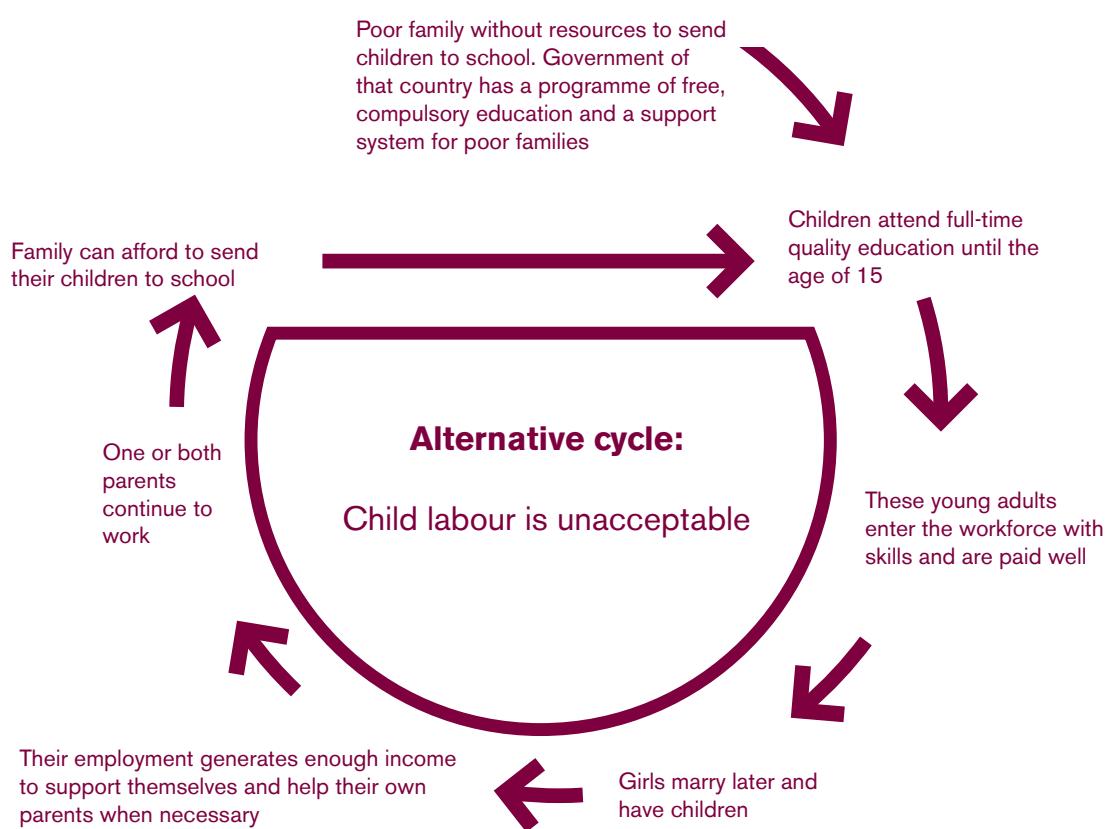
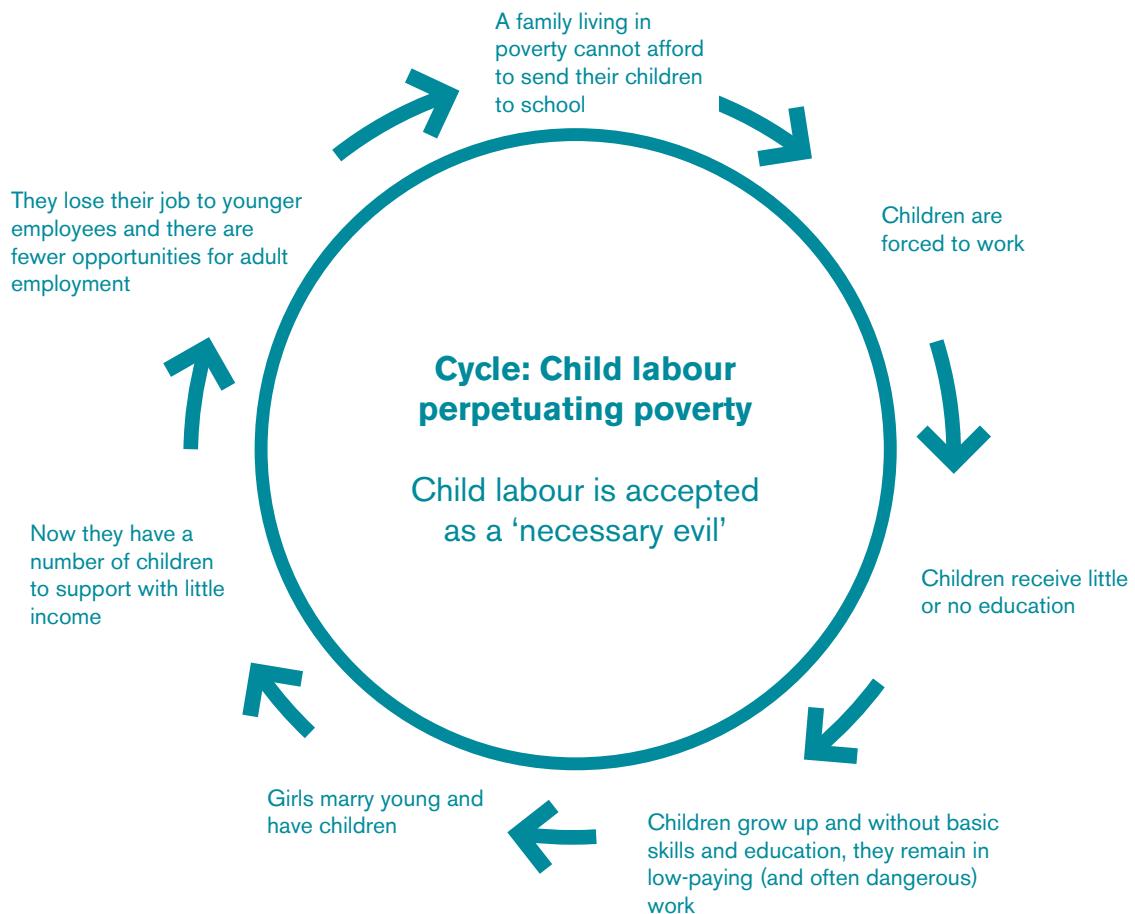
'Only 5% of families that have working children depend on their wages, so we are working to get the other 95% of families to send their children to school.' MV Foundation, India

The argument that child labour is a 'necessary evil' or an 'unavoidable by-product' of poverty is unfair and does a great disservice to the 218 million children around the world who are denied their rights. We should not accept the exploitation of children under any circumstances and they should not be condemned to a life of poverty and lost opportunity. Instead of accepting child labour, governments must redouble their efforts to eliminate it and ensure that all children, in every country attend full-time formal education.

'Why do we have to pay the price of poverty?  
We didn't create poverty, adults did.'

Sultana, a twelve-year garment factory worker from Bangladesh, Thailand, 14 February, 1998

'People believe there are many reasons why children are better off working, but nobody asks the parents of a middle class child why they are sending their children to school. It's a double standard – every child, rich or poor must be allowed their right to full-time formal education.' MV Foundation, India



PAKISTAN Dir

Community based school set up by NGO Khwendo Kor, an organisation working to empower women and children in Pakistan's deeply conservative North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

Photo: Jenny Matthews/Panos Pictures



## Section Three

# Child labour and education

## Introduction

According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “*Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...*” and Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises “*the right of children to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity*”. Basic education is a human right and yet, there are millions of out-of-school children around the world today. Many are children from vulnerable and marginalised communities, the majority of whom are girls. Child labour denies children their right to a full-time, formal, quality education.

As Irish Aid note in their White Paper on Aid (2006) “*Education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalised adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty*”. Children who are forced to work instead of learn are consigned to a life of poverty and vulnerability. Our international ambitions to eliminate poverty will never be met if these children do not return to school, stay in school and receive the education that is rightfully theirs.

‘Education is a torch that can help to guide and illuminate the lives of those children currently excluded from access to education. Education is the acknowledged responsibility of all governments to ensure that everyone is given the chance to benefit from it in these ways. It is also in the fundamental interests of society to see that this happens, progress with economic and social development depends on it.’ UNESCO Education for All monitoring report 2003/4

Free, quality, basic education would cost around \$10 billion a year which is the same as 4 days global military expenditure.

At the World Education Forum in Dakar April 2000, 185 governments endorsed the Dakar Framework for Action to achieve 6 education goals.



### Education for All goals (EFA)

#### The six goals are:

1	by 2015 all children of primary school age will have access to free schooling of acceptable quality
2	gender disparities in education will be eliminated by 2005
3	levels of adult illiteracy will be halved
4	early childhood care and education will be expanded
5	learning opportunities for young people and adults will be greatly increased
6	all aspects of education quality will be improved

Despite efforts from national and international groups, it is clear that the world is not on target to reach the education goals by 2015.

- 58 countries, representing 30% of the world’s population, are moving away from achieving the EFA goals.
- Girls still account for 60% of out of school children and gender parity targets will be missed by 90 countries in 2015.
- Poor education quality is still a major concern. Less than 63% of pupils reached the last grade of primary school in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Education programmes are not reaching poor, disadvantaged and marginalised children.
- The world will need 18 million new primary teachers by 2015 to achieve EFA.

“Watoto Shuleni wala sio Kazini”

(Swahili: “child out of work into school”)



# Child labour and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

At a meeting of the UN in 2000, all of the world's governments committed to realising 8 promises. These 8 promises – or goals – set targets for the international community on progress towards a more equal, just and sustainable world. The target date for the achievement of these goals – including the education goals – is 2015.

'The MDGs are achievable if we act now.'  
Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the UN (MDG Report 2007)

The 8 goals are:		
	Goal 1:	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
	Goal 2:	Achieve universal primary education
	Goal 3:	Promote gender equality and empower women
	Goal 4:	Reduce child mortality
	Goal 5:	Improve maternal health
	Goal 6:	Combat HIV & AIDS other diseases
	Goal 7:	Ensure environmental sustainability
	Goal 8:	Develop a global partnership for development

'In the Millennium Declaration of 2000, world leaders set forth a new vision for humanity...they committed themselves "to spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from abject and dehumanising conditions and extreme poverty" We must recognise the nature of the global trust at stake and the danger that many developing countries' hopes could be irredeemably pierced if even the greatest anti-poverty movement in history is insufficient to break from 'business as usual'. Are we on course to look back, in 2015, and say that no effort was spared?'

Meeting the Challenges of a Changing World UN, 2006

## Focus on Goal number 2 – Education for All

Target 1: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

According to the UN, there has been some progress towards the attainment of this goal but there is still a long way to go. (UN MDG Report 2007)

For example:

- Net enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa rose from 57% in 1990 to 70% in 2005 and in developing regions as a whole, from 80% to 88% during the same period.
- In Southern Asia, net enrolment currently stands at 90% while in Eastern Asia it is 95%.
- The highest net enrolment rate is seen in Latin America and the Caribbean where the figure stands at 97%.

While these figures look promising, it is important to note that they do not give us any indication of how long children stay in school after they enrol or the quality of education that they receive when they are there. In some cases, children are enrolled but never actually attend school. Although the enrolment numbers are increasing, in many cases, there has not been a corresponding increase of investment in infrastructure and many schools are struggling to provide adequate resources and facilities such as teachers, classrooms, books, teaching material and toilets. The lack of these basics often discourages children, especially girls, from attending school. It is also important to note that these figures do not incorporate data from countries in conflict or post-conflict situations. If these figures were included, the global estimates would be less optimistic.

The UN also notes that girls and children from poor rural families are least likely to attend school:

- 31% of children of school going age in rural areas are out of school (compared to 18% for urban areas)
- 37% of children in the poorest 20% of the population are out of school (compared to 12% for the richest 20%)
- Overall, this means that poor girls from rural areas are least likely, of all groups, to attend school. Even when enrolled, these are also the most likely group to drop out of school.

Looking at sub-Saharan Africa in more detail, the figures indicate that **30% of children of primary school going age are not in school at all**. In many cases, these children will come from some of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised groups in these countries – those that are in most need of the education that will give them access to opportunities to break free from the cycle of poverty.

Furthermore, according to the ILO, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest incidence of child labour so the **link between child labour and education** becomes strikingly apparent. Free, compulsory, quality education to the age of 15 is crucial in the elimination of child labour.

While the second millennium development goal relates directly to Education, Child Labour has an impact on progress towards achieving all 8 of the goals.

'Child labour is an issue of grave importance. It must become a top priority for all governments of the world. How can the world move into the twenty-first century with children still being exploited for their labour and denied their basic right to an education?' Craig Kielburger (Childrens' rights campaigner)

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Child Labour....</b>
	1. Poverty Causes and perpetuates poverty.
	2. Education Denies children their right to education.
	3. Gender Equality Both girls and boys are involved in child labour but young girls are disproportionately affected.
	4. Reduce Child Mortality Children are involved in dangerous and hazardous work.
	5. Reduce maternal Mortality Physical effects of working when young. With education less women marry early or become pregnant at a young age.
	6. HIV & AIDS Children are forced to drop out of school to tend to sick parents or to look after siblings. Many work to provide for their families.
	7. Environment Dangerous work. Unsustainable industrial and agricultural practices involving children.
	8. Global Partnership Government, business, consumers and citizens – their inaction and apathy sustain child labour around the world. Demand for cheaply produced products and unfair trade rules create demand for cheap labour which often involves children.

RWANDA Butamwa

Children in a classroom at the Public Primary School of Butamwa. This school has 985 students, but only 17 teachers. The parents have to pay school fees for their children, up to \$3 per trimester, but many struggle to pay this.

Photo: Dieter Telemans/Panos Pictures





# From work to school – bridging the gap



## The MV Foundation

'Making education a reality for every child'

The Mammipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF) is a Concern partner based in the state of Andhra Pradesh in southern India. The Foundation has developed an innovative and successful approach to dealing with the issue of child labour which is based on a firm conviction that all children must be in school. It recognises the inextricable link between universal education and the abolition of all forms of child labour. With community participation and action, the MV Foundation seeks to remove all barriers to ensure that every child goes to school and stays in school.

### Child labour in India

India has the largest number of children working in the world. It is now estimated that one third, (between 70 and 80 million), of the world's working children are in India.

This reality continues despite the Indian Constitution's prohibition on the employment of children under 14 years (Articles 24, 39 and 45) and guarantees that all children will have access to free and compulsory education.



MV Foundation community participation initiative.  
Photo: Lizzy Noone/Concern (2004)

### The Foundation's principles

'Child labour exists because we allow it to exist'

The MV Foundation provides an alternative to many current views on the link between child labour and education. While many groups argue that poverty is the main determinant of child labour, the MVF argues that it is social norms that allow it to continue and that these norms must be challenged if child labour is to be eliminated.

The organisation's approach is captured in its Charter of Basic Principles (or 'non-negotiables'). These principles guide the Foundation's work and clearly outline its approach.

1. All children must attend full-time formal day schools.
2. Any child out of school is a child labourer.
3. All labour is hazardous and harms the overall growth and development of the child.
4. There must be total abolition of child labour.
5. Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned.
6. All arguments in support of child labour are anti-child and are contrary to the values of real human development.



The MV 'non-negotiables' painted on the wall of a school.  
Photo: Lizzy Noone/Concern (2004)

The MVF also challenges the myth that children should not return to school until the quality of education improves. It argues that improvements in the quality of education will only come after children return to school because the community will campaign more effectively for better schooling when their own children are there.

## The Foundation's approach

'No child is free until all children are free'

The MV Foundation's activities focus on the twin tasks of the abolition of child labour and the strengthening of schools. The MVF believes that every child has a right to a childhood and an opportunity to develop to his/her full potential and that every form of work done by a child interferes with this right. According to the Foundation, the essence of any program to eliminate child labour is, first of all, to create a norm within communities that no child should work and that all children should be in formal schools.

### Bridging schools and camps

When child labourers are withdrawn from work, they are enrolled in 'bridge schools'. The purpose of these schools is to allow children to catch-up on the education they have missed and after this, they can enrol in the formal education system in the class that is most appropriate for their age.

The Foundation also organises monthly 3-day camps to encourage children to slowly withdraw from work. This also allows MV volunteers to demonstrate to parents and employers that if they can do without children's help for three days, they could do for longer. This time also facilitates discussions on the value of education. These short camps prepare children for longer 3 month camps which in turn, prepares them to enrol in the formal education system. These step-by-step approaches ensure that parents, employers and communities can see the value of allowing children to go to school instead of work.

### Community activities

The MV Foundation enlists the support of every sector of society and it relies on the involvement and support of the local community in every village where it operates. Public awareness is raised through rallies, public meetings and poster campaigns. In their role as education activists, youth volunteers work directly with families of girls and bonded labourers and with child labourers themselves. The Foundation also acknowledges that the co-operation of parents is vital and recognises that parents, even poor parents, are motivated strongly to provide a better future for their children through education. The Foundation has established a number of Child Rights Protection Forums (CRPF) where supporters can come together and advocate for change in their own communities. By June 2006, there were 25,000 CRPF members throughout Andhra Pradesh.

## MV Foundation in numbers

Founded in 1991, after successfully removing 50 children from bonded labour and enabling them to attend school, the MV Foundation has continued to expand:

- The MV Foundation is currently working in 2,500 villages.
- Due to the Foundation's activities, over 400,000 former child labourers are now in school.
- The programme is being implemented in more than 6,000 villages, covering 137 villages in 11 districts of Andhra Pradesh.
- 1,000 villages in the Ranga Reddy district have become 'child labour free villages'.
- 45,000 child labourers have gone to Bridge Course Camps.
- 3,000 education activists have been mobilised to liberate children.
- The Foundation relies on strong community involvement and the support of 8,000 youth volunteers, 500 women's group and 1,500 teachers.
- 3,000 school education and local government committees supporting the Foundation's work.

Resulting in:

- The withdrawal of children from the labour market.
- The bargaining power of rural labourers has been increased.
- There has been an increase in wages for women,
- Conditions and wages for contract labourers have improved.
- There has been an increase in demand for adult labour and.
- There has been a positive change in employer's attitudes to child labour.

The experience of the MV Foundation clearly demonstrates that given the opportunity and support they need, poor and vulnerable parents are willing to withdraw their children from work and enrol them in school. Even though parents were not given any incentives or subsidies, they still want their children to realise their right to education.

For more information on the MV Foundation, its approach and work, please visit [www.mvfindia.in](http://www.mvfindia.in)

## Shashikala's story

Shashikala was 1 when her father died. Her older sister was forced by her extended family to skip school and earn money so that she, instead of them, would look after the family. While others her age were starting school, Shashikala began to work in a biscuit factory in the Kattedan Industrial Area outside Hyderabad. She earned 15-20 rupees per day depending on how fast she worked. Now, she cannot bear the smell of biscuits.

Thanks to the intervention of the MV Foundation, Shashikala left the factory and is now preparing for her Standard VII exams at a residential school for girls. Other former child labourers attend the school too – Lalitha, who had previously looked after buffaloes and Mamta, an orphaned 12-year old factory worker. They are all eager to learn and all of them are definite about never wanting to work in a factory again.

The MV Foundation logo painted on the wall of a school. Children attending a MF Foundation programme.  
Photos: Lizzy Noone/Concern (2004)



## Keshavallu's story

Seven-year-old Keshavallu – one of many children in the residential camps run by the MV Foundation – had been herding cattle as a bonded labourer from the age of five. His working day used to last from sunrise to sunset and his duties included sweeping the yard, cleaning the cattle-shed and taking the cattle out to graze.

His parents – who migrated to the city – had bonded him to a landlord in exchange for a loan. His employer provided him with one warm meal at night – in the morning he had to make do with rice left over from the night before. Even after six months in the residential camp Keshavallu's small body shows the ravages of malnutrition and hard labour. But he is happy in the camp, where he is being prepared to enrol in school as a full-time student. He says he will never go back to work. He recently encouraged his eleven-year-old brother – bonded to another landowner – to join him in the camp. The simple enticement of 'three meals a day and time to play' was enough to make his brother run away from his employer.

Every child in the MV Foundation camps has a similar story to tell. Saritha, a twelve-year-old, was bonded to a biscuit factory owner to pay off her father's debt. She often had to work all night in the factory, to complete rush orders. Twelve-year-old Malesh spent six years of his life making plastic slippers in a small factory – he now owns his first pair. Eight-year-old Sakuna had been plucking flowers from dawn to dusk for the last two years.

This is the story of countless children across India who start work at an early age, work long hours for little pay, and often in hazardous and exploitative conditions. The only difference is that Keshavallu, Saritha, Malesh, Sakuna, and many others like them in the Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh, have been lucky enough to get a chance to reclaim their childhood and their right to education. Through the efforts of the MV Foundation, these children have opted out of work and have chosen instead to join the formal school system. They have done this voluntarily and without the promise of cash or other incentives to their families.

(Source: Getting Children out of Work and into School - MV Foundation, UNDP India, 2003)

# Concern and Child Labour

It has been said that Ireland's Celtic Tiger began not with the joining of the EEC (now EU) in the 1970's or with direct foreign investment into the country in the 1980's but with the passing of the compulsory secondary school act in the 1960's.

Just as education here has helped provide a qualified and highly skilled workforce here, so too, Concern believes, should children in the developing world be afforded their right to education in order that they too may bear the fruits of personal and economic development.

'Education is not just a way of escaping poverty it is a way of fighting it.' Julius Nyere

Education is a right, not a privilege, and should be available to everyone, regardless of gender, class, ethnicity or location.

Education has a powerful impact in addressing social and economic barriers in society and is central in building human capacity and empowering people.

Education is positively linked to other economic and welfare benefits. It is a necessary precondition to tackling poverty and is essential for sustainable development.

Concern believes that the problem of child labour must be addressed through the provision of full time formal education for all children. To do this we have to focus on two key tasks:

1) Get children who are now '**out of school'** enrolled in fulltime, formal education

2) Ensure that those who are in school, stay in school (by receiving a quality education)

Our education programmes, currently running in 15 countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Caribbean specifically target children of primary school going age (6-14 years) from marginalised and vulnerable communities who are excluded from the formal education system. They are children who come from the poorest families and include the landless, child labourers, children of minority groups, children of pastoralist (nomad) or migrant families, orphans, and children who are either infected or affected by HIV and AIDS. In particular Concern's education programmes reach out to girls, as nearly 60% of them are excluded from education and many more drop out (or are pulled out) before attaining four years of primary education. Girls with disabilities are up to ten times more likely to be excluded from school than for the population as a whole and it is estimated that fewer than 5 percent of children with physical, cognitive, or sensory impairment in developing countries are reaching the goal of primary school completion.

## Out-of-school children

In many rural areas, primary school enrolment rates are half those of urban areas. Attendance figures further suggest that as many as 72 million children worldwide do not attend school regularly; two thirds of these are girls. It is also estimated that there are over 218 million child labourers in our world. At first glance these two figures seem to be at complete odds with each other, however some international agencies attempt to make sense of them by explaining that many child labourers receive 'one or two' hours of education each day either at work or in the evening after their day of toil is complete. For Concern, this type of education is completely unacceptable.

**The four A's:** To ensure that the right of every child to full time formal education is being met four key elements must be in place, these are;

**Availability:** is there school buildings, teachers, books, space?

**Accessibility:** how far will a student have to travel to get to school, what language will the student be taught in, are there school fees?

**Acceptability:** does the education that students receive meet quality standards?

**Adaptability:** is the school year flexible enough to accommodate student and family needs?

## Keeping children out of work and in school...

### Catch Up Classes in Burundi

Burundi is one of the poorest (it is ranked 167 out of 177 in the Human Development Index of 2007) and most densely populated countries in the world. During the last 30 years Burundi has suffered from instability and conflict.

The current state of the education system has been described by the Minister of Education as "catastrophic". Before the beginning of the civil war 70% of children in Burundi were enrolled in primary schools. During the conflict that figure fell to 30%. Nowadays the figure has risen to just over 60%. Problems faced by the education system prior to the conflict have worsened. There is a lack of funds and an unequal geographical spread of services.

The quantity of teachers has decreased as well as the quality of teaching. Thousands of pupils have been displaced, and 25% of school buildings have been destroyed. The right to education is not fully respected and gender inequality in relation to access to education needs to be addressed.

Meeting the basic right to education not only requires repairs to educational infrastructure but also a major expansion of capacity and a change in people's behaviours.

To address these issues Concern established 'catch up' classes aimed at encouraging 'out of school children' to enrol in an accelerated learning programme which would enable them to return to the formal school system at the grade most appropriate to their age.

By 2007, 1,197 pupils completed the catch up classes and another 867 children were supported to return to school through outreach work without attending the catch-up classes.

## Working to get children into school in Bangladesh

Most households with out-of-school children are extremely poor. In a sample of 30 households, over half had incomes of less than 2,000 taka (23 Euros) per month during the months they found work at all. Where there were 3 or more income-earners, household wages sometimes exceeded this.

None of the parents from these households had received any formal education at all.

Most, but not all, of these children were enrolled in school after the age of six and attended school for one or two years before leaving. The decision to leave school was sometimes the child's decision due to humiliation, beating, or inability to understand the schoolwork.

In other cases, it was the parents' decision. They see their children as valuable potential income-earners and were not convinced that going to school would help their children to secure a better job. In other cases, parents could simply not afford school fees.

The well-being of the poorest households varies according to the season due to the availability of work and the presence of other factors such as flooding or illness in the family. When a family member is in need of medicine, it is necessary for these households to sell their duck or chicken (if they have one) in exchange for medicine, or to borrow money (normally at exorbitant interest rates), if they can. In times of extreme stress, they depend upon their own family – brothers or parents. They have nowhere else to turn.

**Once a child is enrolled in school, Concern works with teachers to help them provide as high a quality an education as possible.** This not only benefits the teacher but also helps to lessen the chance that the child will drop out of school before mastering essential learning and basic skills.

The School Management committees are supported to identify youth and mothers in the community to assist in working with the poorest and underperforming students.

These volunteers are trained and guided in effective teaching techniques to assist the classroom teaching as well as support sessions with the poorest children and mothers before and after school. The volunteers become trainers themselves after 3 years.

Keeping a child in school... reasons given for dropping out of school:	
<b>Infrastructure and equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough schools: Schools too far away</li> <li>• Not enough classrooms in established schools</li> <li>• Inferior quality and shortage of school materials and resources</li> <li>• Lack of basic furniture such as desk, chairs, blackboards</li> <li>• Poor water and sanitation facilities (or none at all)</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers not motivated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn up late</li> <li>• Classes too large so they can't help children/ only help brightest</li> <li>• Low salaries so they need a second job to support themselves</li> </ul>
<b>Poverty: School costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fees too high</li> <li>• Uniforms</li> <li>• Books, pens, etc.</li> <li>• Protracted illness/malaria</li> <li>• Illness of parents</li> <li>• Many children are orphans/ unaccompanied who have no support, no encouragement, no income</li> </ul>
<b>Hunger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malnutrition</li> <li>• No food at lunch time</li> <li>• Lack of food means children can't concentrate, so drop-out</li> </ul>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delinquency of students</li> <li>• Parents do not value education or see school as important/ relevant</li> <li>• Children refuse to go and parents can't force them</li> <li>• Lack of role-models, especially for girls</li> </ul>
<b>War</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displaced populations</li> <li>• Security</li> <li>• Buildings destroyed</li> <li>• Teachers won't work in some areas</li> </ul>

'There are so many myths about the causes of child labour....people say that it is caused by poverty. We believe it is the other way around. It is child labour that causes poverty in that it depresses wages, it arrests development and creates poor quality of life for communities and society as a whole.'

Shanta Sinha, former secretary of MV Foundation

# Child labour on the lake shore of Malawi

Malawi is ranked as one of the 10 poorest countries in the world where the majority of people rely on small scale farming or fishing to provide food and income for their families. Many children work in the fields or in the fishing industry.

Concern has been working with a Community Based Organisation called Khwapu, based along Malawi's central lake shore, to eliminate one of the most serious problems facing the community there – child labour in the fishing industry. With assistance from Concern and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Khwapu conducted training with community and spiritual leaders, teachers and parents on the rights of the child as set out in the Malawian constitution. Open air debates and discussions were held on the meaning of child labour, child protection and the importance of education. Drama groups held plays, workshops and developed songs and poems which brought to life many of these issues which had not been recognised previously by the community.

The community as a whole responded so well to this project that there are now 310 more children attending the local school. While many children still take part in fishing activities, they do so only out of school hours and parents are now ensuring that school is the biggest priority for their children. This project has not only been successful in terms of getting children into formal education, it has also encouraged the community to lobby their local government departments to provide the necessary resources needed to house these extra students. More teachers are needed as are extra classrooms, and this is the next challenge that Khwapu is undertaking, guaranteeing that the lessons learnt regarding human rights and child labour are put to good use.



The additional children back in school now being taught under a tree as there are not enough classrooms, Khwapu school. 2008.  
Photo: Rodwell Kanyimbo



Children and fishermen hauling in fishing nets, Nkhotakota district Malawi. 2008. Photo: Louise Finan

## Thika Declaration on Child Labour, January 2007

At the East African Conference on Child Labour in January 2007, organised by the Stop Child Labour Campaign, NGOs from Kenya, Uganda and Somalia adopted the “East Africa Regional Declaration on Abolition of all forms of Child Labour and upholding Children’s right to Education”.

This declaration acknowledged the fundamental rights of children and called for the abolition of all forms of child labour. It also acknowledged children’s right to education.

Importantly, the declaration also noted that “child labour perpetuates poverty, depresses adult wages and undermines labour standards and productivity; liberation of children from labour paves way for socio-economic development that includes the poor and marginalised”

The declaration also acknowledges the role that everyone must play in the elimination of child labour  
“Every individual and every organ of society....will strive to promote respect for child rights and freedom from child labour”

## Section Four

# Big business and child labour

## Introduction

‘Responsible business is our best hope for delivering broad-based development and creating sustainable markets.’ Georg Klan, Director of UN Global Compact, 2006

Given today's concerns about the impact of globalisation on the developing world, more and more companies have recognised that they must operate responsibly and work to uphold international agreements on human rights and the environment.

Despite some recent high profile examples of companies using children in the manufacture of their products there is a growing awareness that ‘corporate citizenship’ is good for business. Companies have a significant role to play in ensuring that all labour standards are respected and in particular, that no child labour is used in any part of their supply chain.

## Corporate Social Responsibility

‘A company that makes profit and little else is not much of a company.’ Henry Ford

Business, trade and investment are essential pillars for commerce and peace. However, in recent times some businesses have been linked to exploitative labour practices and environmental degradation. Of course, not all business behave in an irresponsible manner but debates about the role of large corporations in relation to issues such as human rights, environmental stewardship and corporate citizenship are widespread and are a crucial component in any discussion on child labour and the development of strategies to eliminate it.

‘We must ensure that while eliminating child labour in the export industry, we are also eliminating their labour from the informal sector, which is more invisible to public scrutiny and thus leaves the children more open to abuse and exploitation’ Carol Bellamy (Former Executive Director of UNICEF)

‘Some companies now have their own codes of conduct against the use of child labour. The problem is monitoring their implementation.’ Carol Bellamy (Former Executive Director of UNICEF)

### What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)?

A widely quoted definition by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development states that “Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.”

Businesses should not seek to gain a competitive advantage by exploiting people or the planet. Corporate social responsibility, if it is to be taken seriously, must move beyond charitable donations and tokenism. **In essence, it is about how businesses make their money, not how they spend it.**

‘CSR is good for business and good for society.’

The term CSR came in to common use in the early 1970s although it was seldom abbreviated. The term stakeholder, meaning those impacted by an organization’s activities whether in the immediate environment or on a global scale, was used from the late 1980s to highlight the impact of a corporation beyond its shareholders.

While there are many legal requirements that regulate the ways in which corporations operate, CSR measures are voluntary actions that are taken over and above these proscribed by law.

## FAQ 7. What can be done about child labour?

Eliminating child labour is within our reach and it can happen. We all have a role to play – governments, international organisations, businesses, NGOs, community and faith-based organisations, trade unions, employers, teachers, parents, communities and you.

'What this is all about is political will. If our own country [Canada] and other countries made it clear that child labour is both illegal and unacceptable, then this problem wouldn't exist.'

Craig Kielburger

Put simply: if children are in full-time education, they are not working. Therefore, the provision of education to all children is the key to eliminating child labour.

**Governments and Donors** (such as the European Union and the Irish Government) must continue to increase funding for basic education in developing countries and support initiatives that aim to get out-of-school children back to the classroom – and keep them there. They must also develop policies that actively target the elimination of child labour as part of their Official Development Assistance.

**The International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has identified 6 areas in which additional work is needed;

- Awareness raising around the issue
- Law enforcement to back up existing legislation
- Labour inspection to monitor work-places and whole industries
- Support to education in developing countries
- Direct support to children and their families
- Co-operation with international initiatives

**Consumers around the world** can also take action. They can learn about the issue of child labour and then make informed decisions about where they shop. They can create demand for child-labour free goods and continue to ask retailers for a guarantee that the products they sell are not made by children. Consumers can demand total transparency in the supply chains of everything they buy and curtail the global supply of cheaply produced products.

In brief:

- All government and international organisations must ensure that they are not engaged in or perpetuating child labour.
- All industries, business and multinational corporations must enforce core labour standards.
- Consumers everywhere should 'look behind the label' of all the products they buy.

## Stop Child Labour Campaign and CSR recommendations

The Stop Child Labour campaign have developed 15 recommendations to businesses to assist them in their attempt to eliminate child labour:

1. Make explicit in your company's formal policy or code of conduct that all forms of child labour are unacceptable.
2. Ensure that company policy is based on international conventions and complies with national and local legislation.
3. Make it explicit in contracts with your supplier(s) that child labour will not be tolerated at any point along the supply chain.
4. Ensure that any children currently employed at any stage in the supply chain are transferred to full-time education.
5. Make sure that children aged 14 or 15 to 18 are allowed to work according to international or national agreements on hazardous dangerous work.
6. Involve your own staff and your suppliers: inform them of your company's action plan against child labour.
7. Collaborate with other sectors of society – trade unions, communities, teacher unions, parents and local and/or national governments, to ensure that former child labourers return to school and stay in school.
8. Make a special effort to address the specific challenges faced by children from discriminated and marginalised groups so that they can make the transition from work to school.
9. Verify the authenticity of age certificates and advocate for the establishment of reliable birth registration systems.
10. Efforts to eliminate child labour must comply with the ILO's recommendations on fundamental labour standards and other agreed workers' rights.
11. Pay a price to suppliers that enable them to avoid child labour and hire adults instead. If necessary, adjust other elements of your company's sourcing policy with a view to implementing your company's 'no child labour' policy.
12. Whenever possible, transfer the jobs done by children to their parents or other close relatives, or offer them alternative suitable employment.
13. Where feasible, establish facilities such as crèches and day-care centres for employees, to help them keep their young children out of work.
14. Plan and implement pro-active investigations into the incidence and type of child labour in your supply-chain, a robust monitoring system, transparent policy and practice, third-party monitoring and verification, and involve those directly concerned and/or affected.
15. Participate in efforts to combat child labour in industries where child labour is common through multi-stakeholder initiatives and where appropriate, join an 'International Framework Agreement' with one of the sectoral global unions.

# The Global Compact

The Global Compact was launched by the United Nations on 26 July 2000, when several dozen business leaders came together at UN Headquarters to join an international initiative that would bring companies together with UN agencies, labour and civil society to advance universal social and environmental principles.

The global compact, the world's largest corporate citizenship initiative, is the UN framework for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies in the area of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. Over 4,000 organisations from 116 countries around the world have subscribed to the Global Compact and its 10 principles. Through the power of collective action, the Compact seeks to advance responsible corporate citizenship so businesses can be part of the solution to the challenges of globalisation. In this way, the private sector – in partnership with other social actors – can realise the UN's vision of a more sustainable and inclusive global economy.

## What is the global compact?

1. It is a framework for businesses that are committed to aligning their operations and strategies with ten universally accepted principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption.
2. It is a purely voluntary initiative with two objectives:
  - a. Mainstream the ten principles in business activities around the world
  - b. Facilitate cooperation among business partners in support of the UN Global Compact goals.
3. It does not "police", enforce or measure the behavior or actions of companies. Rather, the Global Compact relies on public accountability, transparency and the enlightened self-interest of companies, labour and civil society to initiate and share substantive action in pursuing the principles upon which the Global Compact is based.
4. Its principles are based on UN declarations that have been agreed by government heads from around the world and as such the principles are not new, but they are specifically addressed to business leaders in order that they may fulfil their duty as good "corporate citizens".

## The Ten Global Compact Principles

### Human Rights

**Principle 1:** Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

**Principle 2:** Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### Labour Standards

**Principle 3:** Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

**Principle 4:** The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour

**Principle 5:** The effective abolition of child labour

**Principle 6:** The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### Environment

**Principle 7:** Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

**Principle 8:** Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

**Principle 9:** Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### Anti-Corruption

**Principle 10:** Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

### Global Compact on child labour

In elaborating on Principle 5 (quoted above) the Global Compact advises: *"Although children enjoy the same human rights as adults, their lack of knowledge, experience and power means that they also have distinct rights by virtue of their age. These rights include protection from economic exploitation and work that may be dangerous to their health or morals and that may hinder their development..."*

*"Employers should not use child labour in ways that are socially unacceptable and that lead to a child losing his or her educational opportunities."*

## Criticism of the Global Compact

Perhaps the single biggest criticism of the Global Compact is that, because it is a voluntary action taken by companies, the UN has no power in enforcing compliance with the principles. Critics state that it is vital for governments to impose stricter regulations that will force business leaders to comply with the principles.

The U.N.'s Global Compact with international big business "at the moment is so voluntary that it really is a happy-go-lucky club"

Ramesh Singh, chief executive of ActionAid

For more information on The Global Compact, visit [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

## Other global initiatives

While the UN Global Compact represents a serious attempt to engage business and government leaders at the highest levels, it is not the only attempt to apply agreed principles to business practice.

- **Fair Labour Association (FLA)** – agreed a code of conduct defining working standards for the apparel industry including a standard on child labour; "No person shall be employed at an age younger than the age of completing compulsory education."
- **Social Accountability 8000 (SA 8000)** – seeks to create an "auditable" code of conduct that can be applied in the sourcing of all materials across all consumer products. The SA8000 standard requires that companies "provide support and actions to ensure the safety, health and education and development of children who have been subjected to child labour...and are dismissed."
- **Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)** – based on the International Labour Organisation's conventions on labour standards. On child labour the ETI simply states; CHILD LABOUR SHALL NOT BE USED. Where child labour has been used, companies shall develop, or participate in and contribute to policies and programmes which provide for the transition of any child to attend and remain in quality education until the age of 18.

## The Geneva Declaration

In July 2007 at the second United Nations Global Compact Leaders Summit, top executives of corporations such as Coca-Cola, Nestle, Levi-Strauss, Fuji, Xerox, and L M Ericsson adopted the 21-point Geneva Declaration, which spells out concrete actions for business, governments and United Nations Global Compact participants.

The Geneva Declaration expresses the belief that "globalisation, if rooted in universal principles, has the power to improve our world fundamentally – delivering economic and social benefits to people, communities and markets everywhere".

"The need for action is urgent," the document says. "Poverty, income inequality, protectionism and the absence of decent work opportunities pose serious threats to world peace and markets".

"Business, as a key agent of globalisation, can be an enormous force for good", the Declaration says, adding that companies, by committing themselves to corporate citizenship, can create and deliver value in the widest possible terms. Globalisation can thus act as an accelerator for spreading universal principles, creating a values-oriented competition for a "race to the top".

Read the Geneva Declaration at [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)



## CASE STUDY

### Marks and Spencer – Plan A

M&S operates 600 stores in the UK and an additional 240 stores worldwide, including Ireland. In 2007, Marks and Spencer launched its 'Plan A' ("because there is no Plan B"). This is an ambitious five year, 100-point plan which seeks to "tackle some of the biggest challenges facing our business and our world. It will see M&S working with its customers and suppliers to combat climate change, reduce waste, safeguard natural resources, trade ethically and build a healthier nation". The plan details 5 areas (or 'pillars') in which M&S have committed to improve their business operations. Each pillar has a corresponding target goal, to be achieved by 2012:

Pillar	Target by 2012
Climate Change	Become carbon neutral
Waste	Send no waste to landfill
Raw Materials	Extend sustainable sourcing
Health	Help customers and employees live a healthier life-style
Fair Partnership	Help improve the lives of people in our supply chain

#### Plan A and Child Labour

Under its pillar on 'fair partnership', M&S has committed to a number of ethical trade and labour standard commitments.

By the end of 2007, the company:

- extended its use of Fairtrade certified products and purchased approximately a third of the world's Fairtrade cotton.
- increased Fairtrade food sales by 20% and sold 3.2 million Fairtrade cotton garments
- Updated their commitments on labour standards to ensure they work even more closely to support their suppliers.
- Assisted its suppliers to develop six ethical model factories to identify and share best practice.

M&S continues to work in partnership with suppliers to improve labour standards and this will have a direct impact on efforts to eliminate child labour.

For more information, please visit [www.plana.marksandspencer.com](http://www.plana.marksandspencer.com)

## CASE STUDY

### Nike in the news

Nike has become one of those global companies targeted by a broad range of campaigning NGOs and journalists as a symbolic representation of business in society. In Nike's case, the issues are those of human rights and conditions for workers in factories in developing countries. The use of child labour within the Nike 'supply chain' seems to have been eliminated. However, in the face of constant accusations, Nike has developed a considered response, supported by detailed reports on its corporate website. Nevertheless, the criticism of the company continues unabated.

### Nike the company

Nike Inc. produces footwear, clothing, equipment and accessory products for the sports and athletic market. It is the largest seller of such garments in the world. It sells to approximately 19,000 retail accounts in the US, and in approximately 140 countries around the world. Just about all of its products are manufactured by independent contractors with footwear products in particular being manufactured in developing countries. The company manufactures in China, Taiwan, Korea, Mexico as well as in the US and in Italy.

### Who works in these factories?

The Global Alliance report on the Nike factories in Indonesia gave the following workforce profile: 58% of them are young adults between 20 and 24 years old, and 83% are women. Nearly half of these workers have completed senior high school. Few have work-related skills when they arrive at the factory. 95% of the workers in the nine participating factories have received pay or wage increases in the last year, consistent with government minimum wage increases, and with small exceptions the base wages in these factories are above the region's minimum wage – although critics would observe that this does not add up to a great deal.

### What are the issues?

Nike has around 700 contract factories, within which around 20% of the workers are creating Nike products. Conditions for these workers have been a source of heated debate, with campaigners making allegations of poor conditions, commonplace harassment and abuse. Nike has sought to respond to these allegations by putting into place a code of conduct for all of its suppliers, and working with the Global Alliance to review around 21 of these factories, and to pick up and respond to issues.

In Indonesia, the following was reported: 30.2% of the workers had personally experienced, and 56.8% had observed, verbal abuse. An average of 7.8% of workers reported receiving unwelcome sexual comments, and 3.3% reported being physically abused. In addition, sexual trade practices in recruitment and promotion were reported by at least two workers in each of two different factories, although a subsequent investigation was unable to confirm this. 73.4% of workers are satisfied with their relationship with direct line supervisors, 67.8% are satisfied with management.

Far and away, the main concerns expressed by workers relate to their physical working environment. A further report has been produced relating to a site in Mexico, which has experienced serious problems leading to labour disputes. In both cases, Nike responded to the audit reports with a detailed remediation plan.

### What do the critics say?

Naomi Klein, in her widely read book "No Logo" deals quite extensively with Nike, accusing them of abandoning countries as they developed better pay and employment rights in favour of countries like China, where these are less of a cost. She points to a photo published in 1996 showing children in Pakistan stitching Nike footballs as an example of the use of child labour. Other critics have suggested that Nike should publicise all of its factories, and allow independent inspection to verify conditions there. Any auditing carried out by Nike should be made public. A lot of focus is given to wage rates paid by the company's suppliers. By and large, audits have found that wage rates are above the national legal minimum, but critics contend that this does not actually constitute a fair living wage.

### What does Nike say?

Nike accuses Naomi Klein of peddling inaccurate and old information. They point out that they have not abandoned countries as she claims, and remain in Taiwan and Korea despite the higher wages and labour rights. They admit that the 1996 photo documented what they describe as a "large mistake" when they began to order soccer balls for the first time from a supplier in Pakistan. They now operate stitching centres where the non-use of child labour can be verified.

Nike provides a list of the factories it uses and their locations to a number of independent 3rd parties who can then monitor, investigate and audit these factories. However, Nike argues that NGOs used this information in a negative way, making further attacks instead of using the information to facilitate a dialogue to assist the company to resolve challenges. As for wage rates, Nike feels that establishing what constitutes a "fair" wage is by no means as easy as its critics would have the public believe – and disparages the constant quoting of wage rates in US dollar equivalents, when these are meaningless given the different cost of living in the countries concerned.

Nike are also visibly dismayed at how they have attained the status of the worst offender in this area. They request that people look towards their competitors and see how many of them have taken the kind of measures that Nike has over the last few years.

### Does anyone else support Nike?

The Global Alliance was quite complimentary. It said "Upon due consideration, members of the Operating Council unanimously expressed their judgement that upon learning of the alleged violations that surfaced through the Global Alliance assessment process, that Nike had acted in good faith, and developed a serious and reasonable remediation plan."

[www.theglobalalliance.org](http://www.theglobalalliance.org)



Is your shopping  
child labour free?  
The clothes you wear?  
The food you buy?  
All the products  
you use?

## Section Five

# The consumer and child labour

## Introduction

'Before you finish eating your breakfast this morning you've depended on half the world.'

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 - 1968).

As consumers, we have power. We can make decisions about what we buy and who we buy from and in doing this we send a strong signal about the world we want to live in. A signal that retailers, manufacturers and businesses can not ignore. With information, it is possible to make ethical consumer decisions. Ethical consumption can be about a range of issues including fair trade, respect for labour standards, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, community development and healthy eating. Consumers can demand that everything in our shopping baskets, on shelves and on clothes hangers has been produced **without exploiting the planet and without exploiting people.**

'Ethical shopping - and ethical consumerism in general - is about taking responsibility for your day-to-day impact on the world. It doesn't mean deluding yourself that shopping can solve all the world's problems, or that the check-out is the new ballot box. And it doesn't mean following a prescriptive list of evil companies and countries that need to be boycotted. It means taking the time to learn a little about how your lifestyle affects people, the planet and animals, and making your own decisions about what constitutes an ethical or unethical purchase.'

Clark D., 2004, The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping: vii

**Ethical consuming is about buying things that are made ethically by companies that act ethically.** Consumers everywhere can also 'look behind the label' of everything they buy to ensure that no child labour was used. This way, consumers make it clear to retailers that they must ensure that no child labour is used anywhere in the manufacture of the products they are selling.

### FAQ 8. Should we boycott?

Boycotts are not helpful given that they often hurt the people that they are trying to help. They could even make matters worse. For example, children could be forced from unsafe factories to even more unsafe streets. Furthermore, child labour is so widespread and supply chains are so difficult to follow, it is hard to promote one company's record over another. Instead of refusing to buy certain products, consumers should use their power to support those organisations and initiatives that are creating the conditions for a child labour-free world.

Brand manufacturers are very sensitive to consumer pressure so we can put pressure on them to guarantee that no child labour was used in the making of their products. Such pressure can range from asking questions, writing letters directly to the company, retailers, business groups, chambers of commerce and politicians. We can also create demand for transparency and accountability in all supply chains.

Child labour will only be eliminated when systems are put in place to prevent one group of child labourers being replaced by another. We believe that child labour is not just an issue for a single industry or company alone, but an issue for all of us. We should all work together towards the elimination of child labour.

No one action will eliminate child labour. Instead, political mobilisation and public action is needed and to be successful, all stakeholders must be involved.

'Boycotts are something that may make the person who's boycotting feel better, but it doesn't necessarily make conditions any better for the child.' Carol Bellamy (Former Executive Director of UNICEF)

### Purchasing power along the supply chain

Consumers demand no child labour from retailers

Retailers demand no child labour from manufacturers

Manufacturers demand no child labour from cotton traders

Suppliers demand no child labour from producers

Producers demand no child labour from farmers

# Focus on: Chocolate



In Ireland, we have the third highest per capita consumption of chocolate in the world. Each of us consumes approximately 10kg of chocolate per annum and spends over €100 per year. But we sometimes forget that a chocolate bar bought in our local newsagents is the final product in a long chain of events from cocoa tree to chocolate bar.

## History of Chocolate

Throughout history, Chocolate has meant many things to many people. For the Aztecs, it was used as money. Spanish Monks drank it to promote good health. For the French, it was a sign of wealth and good taste. Chocolate is also the national dish in Switzerland.

We do not know where and when chocolate was first invented. However, we do know that Cacao beans (used to make chocolate) grew wild on the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, and the Indians there used cacao to make a spicy drink flavoured with chilli and pepper. They called the drink "chocolatl," which means "warm drink." The Aztecs valued cacao so much that they used the beans as currency and the Mayan people who lived in the area that is now Mexico, worshipped cocoa as a food of the Gods.

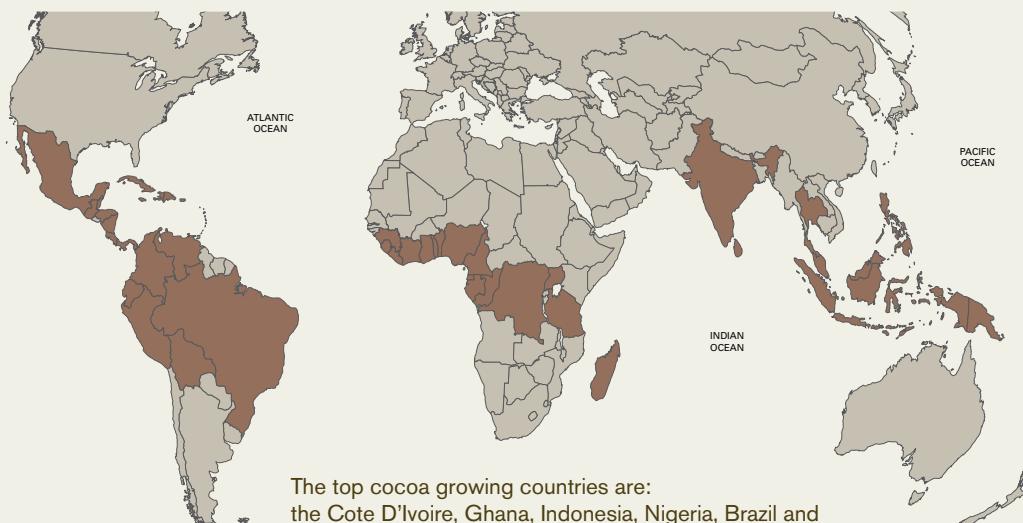
Following the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the new world, the Spanish made their own improvements on the New World drink—they replaced the chilli with sugar and vanilla. In 1615, Princess Anna of Austria served the drink at her royal wedding. Soon after, chocolate became all the rage among the fashion-conscious French.

By the mid-1700's, chocolate houses that served the "excellent West India Drink" in pots were common in Paris, London, and Venice. By this time, bakers were also experimenting with cocoa in cakes and rolls.

The chocolate we know is hard, slightly crumbly, and melts in your mouth. This is all a result of special processes that were developed in the 1870's. This process was developed by Henri Nestle who wanted to make his chocolate extra rich by adding milk to it - hence the creamy milk chocolate that we eat today!

## Where is the chocolate?

Chocolate is best grown in countries on the equator. Like coffee, it requires high temperatures and humidity to grow well.



## How chocolate is made

Chocolate is made from the seeds of the cacao (kah KOW) tree. Chocolate-making companies buy these seeds and then crush, mix, roll, and mould them in machines to make chocolate bars and sweets.

**GHANA** A cocoa farmer lays out beans on giant tables made of rush matting to dry in the intense Ghanaian sun. After six days they will have developed a full flavour. The villagers of Domebra sell part of their crop under a fair trade initiative, which not only pays the farmers a fixed rate for their cocoa beans, regardless of fluctuating market prices, but a 'social premium' of \$150 a tonne which helps fund community projects.

Photo: Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures



## Chocolate and Child Labour

There are almost half a million children between the ages of 5-17 working on cocoa farms in the world today. In many cocoa producing countries children have never tasted the chocolate that their labour produces. Examples of the jobs children do on plantations include pesticide spraying, fertilizing, harvesting, pod collection, pod breaking, fermenting, transport and drying.

### Alice's Story

Alice is from the Cote D'Ivoire, she is now 16. From the age of 7 she has worked picking up garbage on the streets of the capital after her father could not make ends meet because he wasn't being paid enough for his cocoa beans. With assistance from a local NGO, she has recently started school and is learning how to write but can not yet read. She is very shy and self conscious as a result.

Lizzy Noone of Concern and the Stop Child Labour campaign met Alice at the Children's World Congress on Child Labour, where Alice got the chance to ask the World Cocoa Federation to work towards their goal of eliminating child labour on the Cote D'Ivoire, and asking them to pay a fair price to cocoa farmers like her father. The World Cocoa Federation are urging multinational chocolate producers to ensure that 'the worst forms of child labour' are abolished on cocoa farms.

<http://www.dubble.co.uk/>    <http://www.papapaa.org/>

# Focus on: Cotton



Cotton is one of the most traded agricultural raw materials in the world today and child labour is widespread in the cotton-producing industry. According to the Environmental Justice Foundation, 6 of the world's 7 cotton producers have reportedly used children in their fields.

Children are involved in harvesting, producing hybrid-seeds, applying pesticides and pest control. They are exposed to hazardous and dangerous conditions and hard, difficult labour – all at the expense of their education. A global demand for cheap cotton is forcing children into the cotton field and out of the classroom.

‘The link between children in fields and consumers in the west cannot be avoided.’

The Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF)

## Some cotton facts

- There are four main types of cotton: genetically modified, conventional, fair-trade and organic.
- European and North American consumers account for 75% of world clothing imports. Therefore, these consumers can influence how the cotton industry operates.
- 99% of cotton farmers live and work in the developing world where 70% of the world's cotton supply is produced. Two thirds of these farmers live in India and China.
- Cotton uses more insecticide than any other crop.
- Child labour subsidises the cotton industry through free and cheap labour and the bargaining power of adults is greatly reduced.
- One third of textiles coming into the EU come from China followed by Turkey and India. The UK and Germany are the biggest EU cotton importers.
- 60% of the world's cotton is used for clothing, 35% is used in home furnishings and 5% is used in industrial products.
- Subsidies to farmers in rich countries drive the price of cotton downwards. For example, the US cotton industry was subsidised by \$4.2 billion in 2004/5. sub-Saharan Africa lost \$350 million as a result of reduced artificial world prices.
- It is estimated that the removal of cotton subsidies would see an increase in household income by 2.3-5.7%. This would significantly increase family income, allowing farmers to, among other things, send their children to school.

## Cotton and Education

Cases of children missing out on their right to education can be found all over the world. For example, in Uzbekistan, state-imposed quotas force children out of the classroom and into the cotton fields. In central Asia, students are removed from school during harvest season and children are sent to work in cotton fields under the guise of ‘summer camps’. In China, schools in the cotton-producing region are forced to undertake “work-study” programmes, are under-funded and teachers are not paid. Poor quality education sees a high drop out rate and an increase in the number of children working to supply the cotton industry. Children also migrate across borders during harvest season, missing out on their education for most of the school year.

## Take action

‘Consumers are fuelling a false economy that deprives children of their childhood and developing countries of an educated future generation.’ (EJF)

It is entirely possible and feasible to establish the source of all cotton. However, the cotton producing industry will only take responsibility when it is pressurised to do so through political will and consumer action. Consumers must create demand for ethically and sustainably produced cotton.

Without labelling and completely transparent supply chains, the cotton industry is denying consumers the option to make informed choices about their purchases. Labels must indicate both the country of origin plus the country of manufacture. Consumers must demand to know who is handling cotton at every stage of its production.

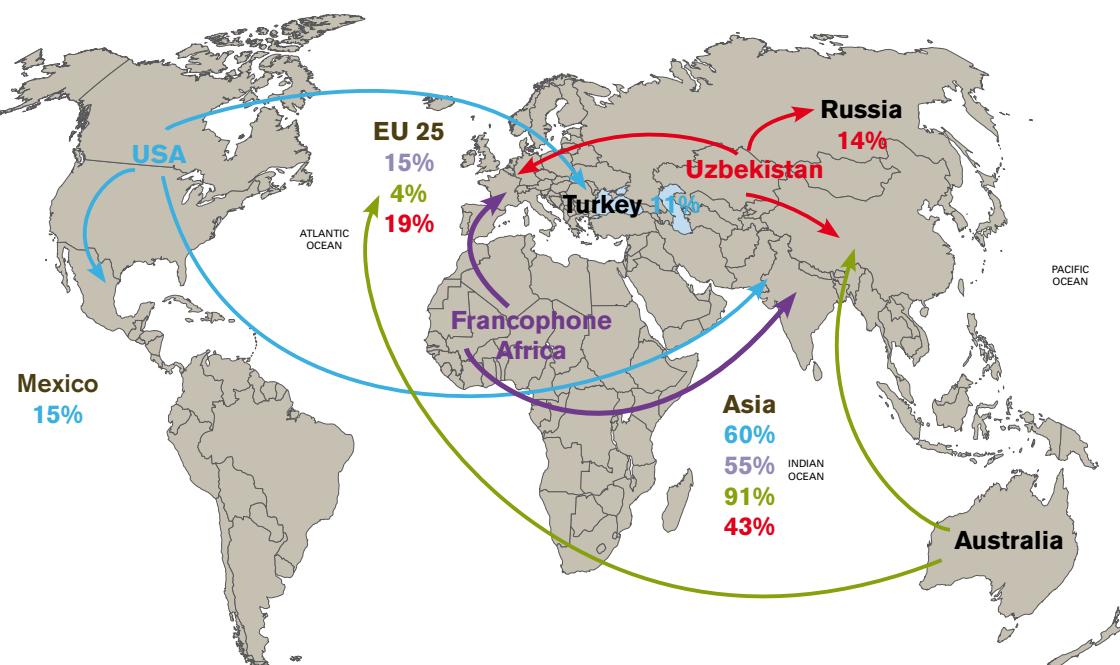
For more information visit: [www.continentalclothing.com](http://www.continentalclothing.com) [www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org)

TURKEY Harran Plain, Anatolia Region, Kurdistan  
Young workers picking cotton in a cotton field.  
Photo: Dieter Telemans/Panos Pictures



### Cotton exports in 2005

Asia is a major recipient of Uzbek and African cotton exports, while 19% of Uzbekistan's cotton exports end up in the EU. Source: Infocomm, UNCTAD, [www.unctad.org/infocomm](http://www.unctad.org/infocomm)





Students Michala Davey-Borresen and Aoife Jennings  
at the international day for the elimination of child labour  
– June 12th 2007. Photo: Steve Ryan Photography

## Section Six

# Take action against child labour

## The ‘Stop Child Labour – School is the Best Place to Work’ campaign

All children everywhere deserve the chance that only education can provide; a chance to escape poverty, a chance to enjoy better health and a longer life, a chance to have a decent standard of living, a chance to live free from exploitation and a chance to have fun.

### Why a campaign on Child Labour?

Child Labour is not just a problem for Africa, India or China. Child Labour is a violation of human rights and therefore, it is a problem that affects us all.

Child Labour was a problem during the industrial revolution in Europe until governments made education compulsory for all children and today, Europe accounts for less than 1% of child labourers worldwide.

International agreements and conventions such as the Minimum Age for Employment and the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, along with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, have been agreed by nearly all governments around the world... yet nearly 218 million children still work as child labourers.

Child labour can no longer be considered a ‘necessary evil’ for millions of children merely because of where they were born. By raising awareness and taking action, **we can eliminate child labour.**

### Our guiding principles

The Stop Child Labour campaign is guided by the following four principles:

#### 1. Child labour is the denial of a child's right to education

The elimination of child labour and the provision of full time formal education are inextricably linked. The focus of attention must be to actively integrate all ‘out of school’ children into formal education systems, as well as supporting the removal of all barriers to local schools and ensuring the necessary financial and infrastructural support for the provision of quality education.

#### 2. All child labour is unacceptable

The Convention on the rights of the Child along with a host of other international agreements unequivocally affirms the right of all children to live in freedom from exploitation. Approaches to the issue have tended to segregate different types of child labour into categories ranging from children working in mines, or hazardous industries to those working as full time domestic servants. The campaign believes that such distinctions, while helping to cast a spotlight on the worst abuses, tend to be too narrow in their focus and offer only partial solutions. Efforts to eliminate child labour should focus on all its forms.

#### 3. It is the duty of all Governments, International Organisations and Corporate Bodies to ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour

All governments whether in the so called ‘developed’ or ‘developing world’ have a duty to ensure that they do not permit or allow child labour to exist within their state. Furthermore they have a duty to ensure that state agencies, corporate bodies, suppliers and trading partners with whom they do business are fully compliant with the CRC and other international agreements protecting the right of the child.

#### 4. Core labour standards must be respected and enforced

The eradication of child labour is closely linked to the promotion of labour standards in the workplace; embracing the right to organise, collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, child labour and discrimination. Child Labour undermines the opportunities for adult employment and decent wages. Experience has shown that child labour is highly unlikely to exist when a free trade union is present. As a minimum, the International Labour Organisations standards on the minimum age of employment (15) and most hazardous forms of child labour (convention 182), must be enforced.

# What is campaigning?

Campaigning is about changing the practices, policies and attitudes of governments, organisations, institutions and individuals. It is an acknowledgement that our actions (or inaction) can have an impact on the lives of others, that the choices we make have consequences far beyond ourselves and that we live in a global community, linked by our common humanity and that we have a responsibility to be agents for positive change – locally, nationally and around the world.

Campaigning can take many different forms and there are many ways to campaign. Campaigns can be local, national or international.

'The future belongs to those with the vision to shape it.' IPEC report 2006

Everyone has the potential to change our world!



## FAQ 9. How can I take action against child labour?

You can take action against child labour by:

- Learning about the 'school is the best place to work' campaign
- Organising an awareness-raising event (kite flying for example)
- Getting your friends, school and community involved
- With your family, become an informed, ethical consumer

## Why campaign?

People have power. As citizens and as consumers, people can demand positive change and hold governments, corporations and other individuals to account. This way, people can change the world.



## Why campaign in Ireland?

- The Irish government and the EU are our voices in the international community. We need to let them know what we want them to say on our behalf. Otherwise, they are not accurately representing us.
- Policies at an Irish and EU level have a direct impact on countries and peoples of the developing world through Overseas Development Assistance, trade regimes and bilateral agreements. Indirectly, through international financial institutions and inter-governmental mechanisms, the Irish government and the EU play a role in determining the social, political and economic structures which impact on people all over the world. As Irish, European and Global citizens, we should be involved in these processes and our voices should be heard.
- The majority of the products we buy are imported from countries around the world. We should know where and by whom they were made.
- Our lifestyle and level of consumption has an impact on the environment which, in turn, has an impact all over the world.
- We are in the minority – we are wealthy and for the most part, have a very good quality of life. We have a responsibility to those who have not had access to the same opportunities.
- We live in an increasingly interdependent globalised world where the local and global are closely linked. We need to move beyond narrow definitions of benefit, gain, power and wealth toward a more holistic appreciation of our shared global humanity.

## Where to start?

Knowledge is power. The first step is to know the issues you are talking about and also, the actual change you want to come about. One of the best ways to campaign is to inform and change the attitudes of people around you!

# Taking action - Organising a campaign!

Planning		
 <p>Research the issue ↓ Discuss, explore and debate ↓ Generate ideas about how to raise awareness ↓ Form a campaigning committee with roles and tasks ↓ Set clear objectives and draw up a campaign plan ↓</p> 		
What action?		
Decide your <b>exact message</b> and what <b>action</b> you want taken		
Raise awareness	Involve Media	Lobby for change
<p>Decide how to get your message across to a wide and diverse audience in your local community.</p> <p>Visit website for more information and ideas. </p> <p>Request information from international organisations dealing with your issue.</p> <p>Look for good examples from other countries and organisations.</p> <p>Design a programme of activities with clear objectives.</p>	<p>Research local media outlets – newspaper, radio and web. </p> <p>Research existing media coverage of your issue - is there an opportunity to build on this?</p> <p>Identify key contacts in media outlets.</p> <p>Follow-up all media communication with a phone call or email.</p>	<p>Identify local decision-makers – business, political, community leaders.</p> <p>Identify key national policy-makers – TDs, MEPs, political parties, large corporations, Unions and NGOs.</p> <p>Investigate consumer organisations and initiatives.</p> <p>Research government initiatives or strategies which address your issue. Generate a list of your key campaign goals.</p> <p>Make contact, request meetings.</p>
Examples		
<p>Organise a public discussion forum – promote via web, SMS and flyers.</p> <p>Arrange an event or activity involving a large group. Be creative – new ideas are great! </p> <p>Invite a speaker to your school, community or workplace.</p> <p>Design and print information flyers &amp; posters.</p> <p>Circulate resources.</p>	<p>Invite media to attend and cover your activities and events. </p> <p>Write articles &amp; letters and send to print media. Don't forget to include photos.</p> <p>Contact local radio to promote your events and/or interview your campaign group.</p> <p>Post messages on your own web pages, blogs, etc.</p> <p>Create a list of email addresses and send campaign updates and requests for support/action.</p>	<p>Write a letter introducing your group, outline your concerns, your activities to date and the action you would like them to take. Request relevant documentation.</p> <p>Request a meeting to discuss your issue in person and present your campaign objectives. Ask for a clear assurance of their commitment to the issue and details of the plans to address it.</p> <p>Use your consumer power – locally and nationally! Vote with your feet and wallet! </p>
Don't forget...		
Make people listen!	Be passionate and enthusiastic!	Don't give up!
<b>Keep us informed:</b> tell Concern about your achievements! <a href="mailto:stopchildlabour@concern.net">stopchildlabour@concern.net</a>		

# what you can do!

## General tips for campaigning

1. The 'taking action' diagram overleaf is a step-by-step guide to campaigning.
2. Know what you are taking about, research your issues thoroughly and have an informed opinion
3. Campaigning is about being persistent but not aggressive. Change takes time so it is important to stay with the issue and make your point in as many ways and to as many people as possible
4. DON'T GIVE UP – if your campaign is met with opposition or silence, don't be disheartened – it takes time to change people's minds and attitudes but IT IS POSSIBLE.
5. Communicate your successes! Send your photos, reports and letters to local media and to the stop child labour campaign team.

### **There are 3 things you need to do:**

- 1 Be interested enough to learn about the issue, to raise the question with others and to discuss and debate the issue and to share your ideas and concerns with as many people around you as possible.
- 2 Work with a small group to find ways to raise public awareness of the issue of child labour and to challenge others to engage with the challenges, as well as the opportunities offered by the campaign.
- 3 Lobby government as well as international institutions about the issue and their responses to them. Also lobby non-governmental organisations to do more as well as other non-government structures e.g. women's groups, youth groups, schools, etc. Be an informed consumer and traveller, find out about where products or services come from and if child labour has been involved.

Indian organisations, including the MV Foundation as well as other, international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation have identified the key areas where worldwide action is needed:

- awareness raising (so that more and more people are faced with the realities and possibilities)
- law enforcement (so that the worst forms of abuse are tackled immediately)
- labour inspection (to protect those at risk today)
- educational support (so as to offer a productive alternative to work)
- support for children and their families (so as to make the alternative of compulsory schooling possible)
- co-operation with international initiatives (making sure we all work together for the same results)
- full implementation of ILO Convention 182 (which would legally protect children from the worst forms of exploitation).



# STOP Child Labour

school is the best place to work

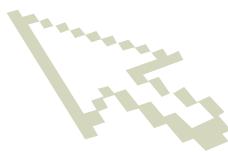
CONCERN

[www.stopchildlabour.net](http://www.stopchildlabour.net)



June 12th 2006 – campaigners present Stop Child Labour petition to An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Photo: Concern

## WEB LINKS - FURTHER INFORMATION



Here are some links to help you find out more about Child Labour

1. For more information on the 'school is the best place to work' campaign visit **[www.stopchildlabour.net](http://www.stopchildlabour.net)** or visit the international site at **[www.stopchildlabour.eu](http://www.stopchildlabour.eu)**  
You can download copies of this resource and keep up to date on campaign activities.
2. For more information on Concern and its education programmes visit **[www.concern.net](http://www.concern.net)** and **[www.concern.net/education](http://www.concern.net/education)**
3. For more information on the Global campaign for Education visit **[www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)** and for information on the Irish Coalition for the campaign visit **[www.campaignforeducation.ie](http://www.campaignforeducation.ie)**
4. For more case studies on child labour visit **[www.knowchildlabor.org](http://www.knowchildlabor.org)**
5. For more information on child labour and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (in the International Labour Organisation) visit **[www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec)**
6. UNESCO Global Monitoring Report: **[www.unesco.org/education/](http://www.unesco.org/education/)**  
This is an annual report that tracks global progress towards Education for All and the 6 Dakar education goals.
7. For more information on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) visit **[www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)**
8. Visit **[www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)** for more information on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the UN's Global Compact framework for business.
9. Visit the UN programme for children, UNICEF at **[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)** and for their fact sheet on child labour visit **[www.unicef.org/protection/files/Child\\_Labour](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Child_Labour)**
10. For more information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) visit **[www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)**
11. To learn more about the MV Foundation in India visit **[www.mvfindia.in](http://www.mvfindia.in)**
12. To view videos and news clips that explore and discuss the issue of child labour, enter 'child labour' on **[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)**
13. The world's largest network of children helping children **[www.freethechildren.org](http://www.freethechildren.org)**
14. Visit **[www.childlaborphotoproject.org](http://www.childlaborphotoproject.org)** for a photo exhibition and case studies on child labour.
15. Anti-Slavery.org has a comprehensive section in child labour.  
Visit **[www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/childlabour.htm](http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/childlabour.htm)**
16. To learn more about the right to education visit **[www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org)**
17. The Global March is an International coalition campaigning against child labour  
**[www.globalmarch.org](http://www.globalmarch.org)**



**Contact details:**

Concern  
Camden Street  
Dublin 2

**t:** +353 417 7740  
**e:** stopchildlabour@concern.net

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