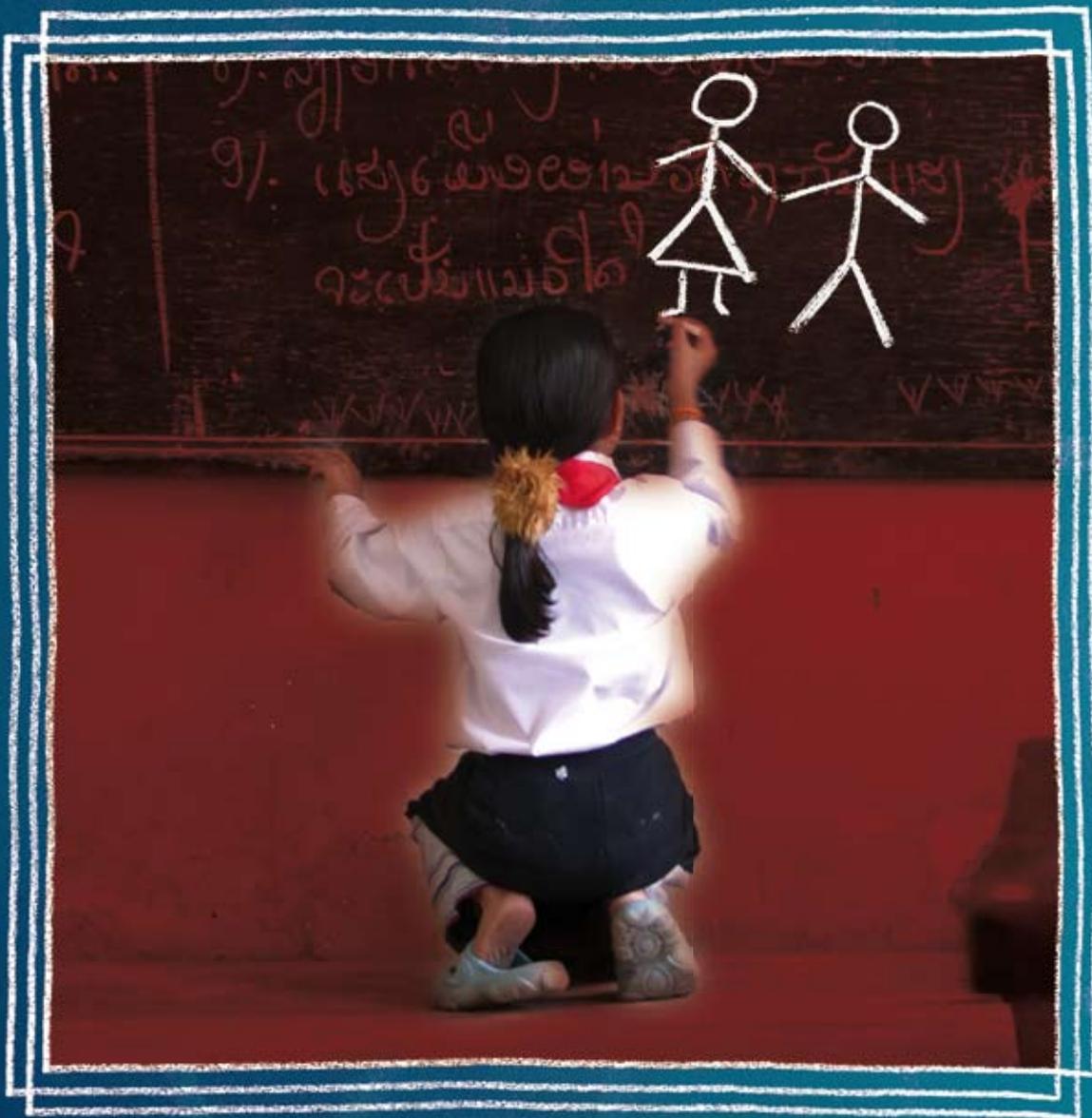


# quality education is the right response to child labour

a resource for teachers and educators



WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

12 June 2008 

DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.



# >> Quality education is the right response to child labour

**C**elebrated on 12 June each year, the **World Day Against Child Labour** calls the world's attention to the plight of millions of girls and boys around the world who are victims of child labour. It highlights the dangers and hazards faced by children who work at an early age, and the action necessary to tackle child labour. In 2008, the message of the World Day is that **"Education is the right response to child labour"**. On 12 June, this message will unite children, young people and adults around the world in solidarity with the millions of boys and girls who are forced to work and denied the right to quality education.

As a violation of children's fundamental rights, child labour concerns all of us. In today's globalized world, it is important that young people and adults alike be aware of the problems that exist in the world and how our actions influence the lives of others. Young people have an essential role to play in raising awareness on issues of social justice, in strengthening social progress and democracy.

In your role as teachers and educators - whether in formal or non-formal education settings - you can promote understanding about the importance of education for all children and how child labour represents an obstacle for children's own development as well as for the country at large. Teachers can also explain how necessary it is to enhance children's participation in issues that directly concern them, such as their schooling. Teachers and educators are in a crucial position to help children acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to increase their participation so that they can exert influence in their communities to bring about social change.

This brochure offers you and your students/group an opportunity to play your part in the worldwide movement to eliminate child labour. We hope that the information and ideas supplied here can form the basis of a short lesson/session in which you, the teacher or youth group leader, can introduce the issues involved and, through follow-up activities and discussion, initiate a process which will make a real difference in the lives of the millions of children trapped in child labour.

## What is child labour?

Children grow up in a world of heart-breaking extremes. Many of them go to proper schools, enjoy the safety of families, and are able to develop their full potential. But other children live in a world without schools or safety, with no play or dreams for a better future. They are forced to work from a very young age, sometimes in dangerous conditions, robbing them of their right to education and threatening their development.

## "AYEESHA" FROM INDIA

Ayeesha is eighteen years old and lives with her older sister. When Ayeesha was only 13, her father became sick and soon passed away. She was forced to drop out of school and to start working alongside her older sister rolling tobacco into thin cigarettes, called beedis. Sitting in the same position for hours, many children develop chronic back problems. Due to the environment, many start smoking and become addicted to tobacco. Breathing in fine organic dust, invisible to the naked eye, can trigger allergic reactions, such as asthma. After two years of backbreaking work, at the age of 15 Ayeesha was able to leave the beedi sweatshop and attend an educational and training programme supported by an ILO project, hosted by the Centre for Entrepreneurship Development and sponsored by the Madhya Pradesh government and Central financial institutions. Through this project, Ayeesha attended a tailoring course and she now works as a tailor. She has not only gained professional skills and financial independence but also confidence and a sense of empowerment, a feeling that she is the master of her destiny. Now, she dreams of setting up her own small business with her sister. (IPEC, 2008).

According to International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates, there are 218 million child labourers between the age of 5 and 17, of whom 126 million work in situations hazardous to their health or safety. There are 165 million child labourers between the age of 5 and 14. In its most extreme forms, child labour can involve children being enslaved, separated from their families, and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities. These children's safety and opportunity for normal development are compromised at every level. Their physical health may be endangered and their social and intellectual well-being may be jeopardized by inadequate nurturing and schooling.

## What do international human rights instruments say?

The right to a basic education and protection from economic exploitation is spelled out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Conventions on child labour. Conventions are international laws or treaties and once a country commits itself to a Convention, it is obliged to ensure that the law and practice in the country coincides with the requirements of the Convention.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)* defines a child as anyone below the age of 18 years and spells out the basic human



rights that children everywhere should have, including the right to protection from economic exploitation, the right to education and to play. It is the most endorsed human rights treaty in the world, ratified by all but two countries.

The *ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)* requires Governments to fix a general minimum age for work which should not be less than the age of finishing compulsory education, and normally not less than 15 years. However a country whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may specify a minimum age of 14 years. National laws may permit limited light work by persons 13 to 15 years old if it is not likely to be harmful to a child's health or development; or to prejudice attendance at school (the ages of 12 to 14 can apply in countries that specify a minimum age of 14). This Convention has been ratified by 150 of the 181 Member States of the ILO.

The *ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)* requires Governments to take urgent and immediate action to stop the worst forms of child labour and to ensure that these children have access to free basic education. This Convention has been ratified by 165 of the 181 Member States of the ILO.

For the text of ILO Conventions see:  
[www.ilo.org/ipec/action/legal/conventions](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/action/legal/conventions).

## What are the links between child labour and education?

Over 70 million primary school aged children, and a much larger number of secondary school aged children, are not enrolled in school. Many more children are enrolled in school but do not attend regularly. Most of these children are among the world's child labourers.

Widespread child labour is closely associated with poverty. The family may depend on the contribution a working child makes to the household income, and place more importance on that income than on education. A poor family may be unable to afford school fees, uniforms or other costs. Moreover, when a family has to make a choice between sending either a boy or girl to school, it is often the girl who loses out.

A child who is in school full time is more likely not to engage in child labour. Hence, expanding access to free and compulsory education is crucial to reducing child labour, as is the provision of quality education. Access to education is a necessary but not sufficient element as the challenge is to retain children in school. Only quality education can ensure that they stay in school. Quality education means that teachers

are recruited in adequate numbers to avoid high student teacher ratios in classrooms. Teachers and educators need to receive the training required to make them effective. Relevant curricula are also essential for an education of quality. Finally, no good education can be provided if classroom conditions are deplorable and students lack the necessary books, equipment and other educational materials. Children who receive an education of quality are more empowered to escape from poverty and, as adults, are more likely to send their children to school.

## International level action

The right to free and compulsory education, at least at the primary or basic level, is enshrined in international human rights law. Through the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations and the international community set a goal: ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), the ILO is leading efforts to end child labour, with projects in over 80 countries that both help governments to put in place policies to eliminate child labour and provide assistance to children. Education is central to the work of IPEC as it is instrumental in developing measures to prevent child labour, removing children from hazardous work, providing for their rehabilitation and offering alternatives for them, their families and communities as a whole. Together with eleven other UN agencies, the ILO promotes the World Programme on Human Rights Education, coordinated by the UN High Commission for Human Rights ([www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)). The ILO and its partners worldwide are also active in building awareness of the problem of child labour among communities and among governments, employers' and workers' organizations.

### "SALISSA" FROM BURKINA FASO

Salissa used to work with her mother at a gold mine in Ziniguima. They left very early each morning and came back late at night as they lived far from the site. Every day, they sorted through the stones looking for gold. All the workers were afraid of the employer, especially the children. At the end of the day, he never paid them their full wage. One day, Salissa saw a very thin man who could hardly walk and could not stop coughing. Her mother told her that he was suffering from the "gold disease", a respiratory disease caused by the dust at the site. This made Salissa even more afraid to work there. Fortunately for Salissa, a local community organization working to help children at the mine convinced her father to enrol Salissa in school. (IPEC, 2008).



Education International (EI) is the global union federation representing 30 million teachers worldwide in more than 170 countries and territories, and including over 390 member organizations. EI provides a remarkable network of key actors who can potentially be mobilized against child labour. Raising awareness of the need to link efforts to tackle child labour within the Education for All framework, uniting its members worldwide to combat child labour and mobilising support within the broader trade union movement are the main actions EI is undertaking at international level.

## What can students and young people do?

Students and young people are an important sector of society and their active involvement is central to efforts to eradicate child labour. By engaging your class or group in activities in this brochure, you will help them understand what child labour is, the global extent of the problem and how they can become involved in the worldwide movement against child labour.

When conducting the activities, we encourage you to use the stories and images of child labourers included in the brochure to inspire your group. If you have access to the internet, you will find a selection of photos on the ILO Photo Gallery by following the links on the ILO website: [www.ilo.org/dcomm](http://www.ilo.org/dcomm). You can also download additional stories from the IPEC website: [www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec). You can also encourage your group to visit the 12 to 12 Community Portal on child labour – [www.12to12.org](http://www.12to12.org) – to see what action other young people have taken and to share their experiences. The World Organization of the Scout Movement ([www.scout.org](http://www.scout.org)), in partnership with the ILO, is committed worldwide to combat child labour. We encourage Scout groups to establish contact with the ILO local offices for joint initiatives.

The activities proposed are in the spirit of the ILO's SCREAM - Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media – programme. This programme aims to involve young people in the fight against child labour through different forms of artistic media, such as drama, creative writing, music and the visual arts. The SCREAM Education Pack provides teachers and educators with further activities to conduct with a wide range of age groups of children. Further information is available from [www.ilo.org/scream](http://www.ilo.org/scream) or by email at [scream@ilo.org](mailto:scream@ilo.org).

**For more information on IPEC action against child labour visit:**  
[www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec).

**For more specific issues related to teachers, teachers unions and their activities to combat child labour visit the Education International's website:** [www.ei-ie.org/childlabour](http://www.ei-ie.org/childlabour).

## Activity 1

### My journey to school... my journey to work

*The aim of this activity is to heighten emotional awareness of what child labour is through reflective work. By the time the activity is completed your group will have also begun to realise and appreciate the value of going to school, and how millions of children are denied this right. This activity can be conducted in one double teaching session or two separate teaching sessions of approximately 40 minutes. In this activity you are first asking the students to capture, by writing and/or drawing, their journey to school as part of their daily ritual. Using their imagination the next part of the activity requires them to capture the experience of a young person their age going to work, exploring various aspects of how a child labourer lives.*

To begin with invite a member of the group to share their daily routine in preparing for school and to describe the sights, sounds and smells as they make the journey to their classroom. It may help to ask occasional questions "What do you enjoy eating for breakfast?" or "How do you get to school?" or "What do you like about your journey to school?" or "Who do you look forward to meeting at school?" You can also start by sharing your own journey to school, or simply as a different example to complement the story just shared. Depending on the time and resources available, explain to the group that they are to write and/or draw a map about their journey to school. Encourage them to be as detailed and descriptive as possible and to be open about their feelings. If members of your group are drawing a map ask them to clearly label key features of their journey.

After they have completed their stories/drawings explain to them that for the next part of the activity they will enter the world of a child labourer. Ask each group member to study the images and the stories of the child labourers, and to think about the lives of these children. Explain to them that they are to create a character of a child labourer, using the images and stories to inspire them, and then enter his/her world as the character makes his/her journey to work. Begin with asking the group to use their imagination to build a profile of the child. Ask them to close their eyes and then start asking, using the appropriate tone and allowing them time, the following questions for inspiration and add to them, "What is your character's name?", "How old is the child?", "Which country does the child come from?", "Does your character have any parents, brothers, sisters or any pets?" "Where does he or she sleep?", "Where does he or she work?", "Why is he or she working?", "Do they enjoy going to work?", "What would the child like to do instead of working?"



Once they have developed their individual characters ask them to imagine that they are the character they have developed. Tell them that they are to capture their character's daily ritual and routine by either writing and/or drawing a map. As in the earlier part of the activity inspire them with questions "What time did your character wake up in the morning?", "Did he or she have a good night sleep?", "Does he or she have anything to eat in the morning before going to work?", "What is the weather and temperature like outside?", "Is he or she wearing adequate and necessary clothing?" Encourage your group to describe this journey to work in the first person and to frequently use the word "I".

After your group have completed their characters' journey encourage them to exchange/swap their journeys with another person in the group. Depending on the time available, you could consider inviting one member of the group to share their journey to school with the whole group, and then another student to share their character's journey to work.

In many countries this activity led to the creation of a theatre performance which was shared with the entire community.

## Activity 2

### How long is child labour?

*The aim of this activity is to bring to the attention of the group the extent of the problem of child labour and the importance of education. The activity reveals information on key statistics on child labour and education. The statistics presented below are global statistics. Try, when possible, to combine the global statistics with national data which the group will be able to relate to well (see sources of information below). Two numerical scales, from 0 to 100, should be outlined on the floor parallel to each other. You will need markers to set out each point on the scale, 1, 10, 20, 30 ...100. You may consider placing a photo of child labour next to each point on the scale to add visual impact. If you have the option, it is a good idea to conduct this activity outside. This activity can be conducted in one teaching session.*

To begin the activity, divide the students into two groups, ask each group to stand at point 0 on the respective scales and explain the rules of the game. Explain that the aim of the activity is for them to become more familiar with the extent of the problem of child labour and the linkages with education. They will be asked questions, starting with some fun questions and then moving on to some more serious questions. For each question, ask them to discuss in their groups what they think the answer is and to nominate one person

from the group to move along to the point on the scale where they estimate the answer to be. Explain that after each question, there will be a short discussion to reveal more information behind the figure.

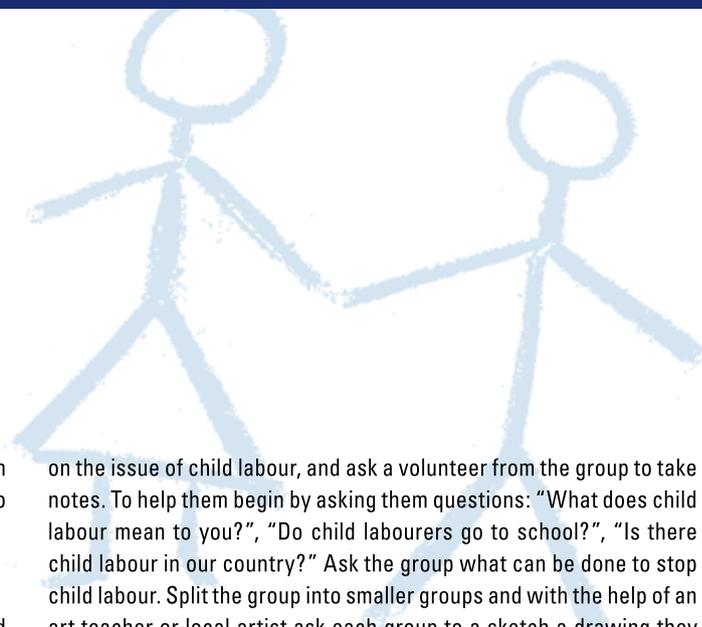
#### "Fun" questions:

- "Out of every 100 people, how many have never made or received a phone call?" (answer: more than 50.)
- "Out of every 100 people, how many have a computer?" (answer: 12.)

#### "Serious" questions:

Introduce this part of the activity by telling the group that child labour is a violation of children's basic rights, dignity and freedom. Approximately 1 in every 7 children is a child labourer (refer to the What is child labour? section of the brochure).

- "Out of every 100 child labourers in the world, how many are working in particularly dangerous conditions? (answer: 58. Approximately 6 out of every 10 child labourers are in occupations identified as hazardous to health and safety. A significant number of children are also involved in unconditional worst forms of child labour such as prostitution, bonded labour, child soldiers.)
- "Out of every 100 child labourers, how many are girls? (answer: 46. However many girls may also be involved with domestic chores for long hours.)
- "Out of every 100 children of primary school age, how many are not enrolled in school? (answer: 10 - or 1 in 10 children. Many of the children who are not in school are involved in some type of work.)
- "Out of every 100 out-of-school children, how many are living in developing countries? (answer: 95. It is clear that the vast majority of out-of-school children, are living in developing countries. The same is true for child labour. However, it is important to remember that it is not just a "developing country" issue. Child labour and lack of access to education also affects children in industrialised countries, albeit to a lesser extent.)
- "Out of every 100 children who do not go to school, how many of them live in rural areas? (answer: 82. As the vast majority of working children – 132 million, or more than 70% – are found in agriculture, we can clearly see the link between child labour and out-of-school children.)



At the end of the activity the groups should be encouraged to brainstorm on what they think should be done and what they personally can do to fight against child labour.

#### *Sources of information and statistics:*

The statistics above come from the following publications and websites:

ILO: *The end of child labour: Within reach. Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Geneva, 2006).*

[www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=2419](http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=2419)

UNESCO: *Education For All by 2015 Will we make it? EFA Global Monitoring Report, (Paris, 2008).*

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001547/154743e.pdf>

More information and country specific data can be found in the above-mentioned documents as well from the following web sites:

IPEC: [www.ilo.org/ipec](http://www.ilo.org/ipec)

Understanding Children's Work (UCW): [www.ucw-project.org/](http://www.ucw-project.org/)

## Activity 3

### SCREAM in Colour

*The aim of this activity is to raise awareness and understanding on child labour and to develop in young people the ability to express their views through visual messages. The learning process includes a series of steps, from discussing the issue, sketching a message/drawing, sharing their ideas, producing a final group sketch and then transferring the final sketch on a canvas or wall. By giving expression to the creativity of children, with the support of an art teacher, local artist and/or a university student from an art faculty of a local university, this activity develops their communication skills and encourages them to become agents of social change. This activity can be conducted in three double teaching sessions. For this activity you will need a public space donated or authorised by the mayor/local authorities to display the banner or mural. You will also need drawing paper of any size and colour, pencils/pens, felt pens, colouring pencils and the necessary amount of acrylic paints, brushes, solvent, etc. Sufficient room or space is also required to produce the canvas/mural, if necessary you can use the floor.*

#### Session 1

Using the facts and figures highlighted in this brochure, and the additional visual resources mentioned, begin by informing the group about child labour and the magnitude of the problem. Begin a discussion

on the issue of child labour, and ask a volunteer from the group to take notes. To help them begin by asking them questions: "What does child labour mean to you?", "Do child labourers go to school?", "Is there child labour in our country?" Ask the group what can be done to stop child labour. Split the group into smaller groups and with the help of an art teacher or local artist ask each group to sketch a drawing they would like to see on a banner opposing child labour that best captures their message. Encourage each individual to contribute.

#### Session 2

Once the groups' sketches are complete, invite each group to discuss their drawings. Stimulate the discussion by asking them to reflect and comment on each others' work, and for a volunteer to write down their observations. Make sure each group is given the opportunity to speak. Based on the discussion, ask your group to come up with and agree on a title, caption and group sketch for the final banner/canvas/mural. Again, ask one volunteer to write and draw these ideas down.

#### Session 3

After the final sketch is completed, using large marker pens transfer the final sketch on the canvas or wall. Make sure everyone participates in this process. After the groups have completed transferring the final sketch ask them to start painting.

Organise an exhibit of the final canvas/mural on or in the lead up to the World Day against Child Labour, inviting the media, the mayor/local authorities and other schools. This would be an ideal opportunity for your student to share their experience and send their message to their community to stop child labour.

### A SPECIAL REQUEST FROM ILO AND EI TO ALL TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

If you use this brochure in order to conduct an activity then we would like to hear from you. Please send details of your activities with any supporting material, including drawings, writings, photographs, to:

IPEC, 4 Route des Morillons, CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland.

E-mail: [scream@ilo.org](mailto:scream@ilo.org)

and/or

Education International, 5 Boulevard du Roi Albert II, B-1210 Brussels, Belgium.

E-mail: [headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org)

Please also let us know if you and your group would agree to us using such material in official documentation and promotional supports, such as our web sites.