

Firelight Newsflash! 9 June 2008 - World Day Against Child Labour 2008

World Day Against Child Labour 2008 - Education: The right response to child labour

JUNE 12 IS THE WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

This year the World Day against Child Labour will be marked around the world with activities to raise awareness that Education is the right response to child labour.

- Education for all children at least to the minimum age of employment.
- Education policies that address child labour by provision of properly resourced quality education and skills training.
- Education to promote awareness on the need to tackle child labour.

CHILD LABOR - A BARRIER TO EDUCATION

The ILO has estimated that some 165 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour. Many of these children work long hours, often in dangerous conditions.

Child labour is closely associated with poverty. Many poor families are unable to afford school fees or other school costs. The family may depend on the contribution that a working child makes to the household's income, and place more importance on that than on education. And 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.

More than ever today, children need a good quality education and training if they are to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in the labour market. However, in many countries the schools which are accessible to the poor families are under-resourced and inadequate. Poor facilities, over-sized classes, and lack of trained teachers lead to low standards of education.

In the Millennium Development Goals the United Nations and the broader international community set targets of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education and that there is gender parity in education.

These targets cannot be met unless the factors that generate child labour and prevent poor families from sending children to school are addressed. Among the most important steps required are:

- Provision of free and compulsory education;
- tackling barriers to girls education;
- ensuring that children have access to a school and a safe and quality learning environment;
- providing catch up education opportunities for children and youth who have so far missed out on formal schooling;
- tackling the worldwide shortage of teachers and ensuring a properly trained and professional teaching force;
- enforcing laws on child labour and education in line with international standards;
- tackling poverty, and creating decent work for adults;
- raising public awareness to tackle child labour.

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

The right to education occupies a central place in human rights and is essential for the exercise of other human rights and development. It provides a means through which economically and socially excluded children and youth can lift themselves out of poverty. When children who have had the benefits of education grow up, they are more likely to choose to send their own children to school.

Investing in education is also a sound economic decision. A recent ILO study found that the elimination of child labour and its replacement by universal education would yield major economic benefits in addition to the social benefits. Globally benefits exceed costs by a ratio of more than 6 to 1.

For more information on child labor, visit:
<http://www.crin.org/themes/ViewTheme.asp?id=3>

Join us on the World Day Against Child Labour

We look forward to a World Day that is widely supported by governments, employers and workers organizations, UN agencies, and all those concerned with tackling child labour and promoting education. We would like to invite you and your organization to be part of the World Day. Join us and add your voice to the worldwide movement against child labour. For more information contact ipec@ilo.org or view the website at:
<http://www.ilo.org/ipec/index.htm>

Guidelines & Training Manuals on Child Labour are available at:

<http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/lang--en/index.htm>

Titles include:

- Emerging good practices on action to combat child domestic labour in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia
- Training resource pack on the elimination of hazardous child labour in agriculture
- Training manual on child labour and HIV/AIDS
- Practical guide to child labour reporting
- Handbook on combating child labour among indigenous children
- Guidelines on the design of direct action strategies to combat child domestic labour
- Guidelines on the design of direct action strategies to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children

SCREAM: A special module on HIV, AIDS and child labour

This publication of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour is intended for use by educators and community workers to inform young people about HIV and AIDS and includes numerous activities to increase awareness and understanding of related health, gender, family and child labour issues.

WHAT IS CHILD LABOR?

A child is defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a boy or girl below the age of 18 years. However, that is not to say that all work carried out by boys and girls below the age of 18 is classified as child labour and therefore deemed illegal under international conventions and national laws. Many consider certain domestic tasks or light work performed by boys and girls to be beneficial to their development. So how do we distinguish between what is an acceptable task for a child and what is child labour?

“Child labour” refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to the development of the child. This includes work that interferes with a child’s schooling, forcing him or her to leave school early, combine school with a heavy workload or miss school altogether.

All the countries that have ratified ILO Convention 138 consider the

minimum age for child work to be 16 years or the age of finishing compulsory schooling, which could be younger. Boys and girls younger than 16 (or school-finishing age) but no younger than 12, are allowed to engage in “light work”, which is non-hazardous, no longer than 14 hours per week and not damaging to the child’s education. Children between the ages of 16 and 18 are permitted to work full time, but not in any hazardous conditions which in their nature might harm the child’s safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development. ¹

The ILO Convention 182, ratified by more than 150 countries, outlines the Worst Forms of Child Labour and obliges states to take immediate action to eliminate child labour in its worst forms as a matter of urgency. The worst forms include child trafficking, forced and bonded labour, the use of children in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, hazardous work and employment in other illicit activities (such as drug production/sale).

The efforts to eliminate child labour go hand in hand with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which entitle all boys and girls the right to an education, to protection from economic exploitation and to time for rest and leisure.

How does HIV relate to child labour and education?

The HIV pandemic affects the lives of millions of boys and girls worldwide in different ways. Many children live with HIV, while an even larger number have been orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS.

HIV AND EDUCATION

Children affected by HIV suffer some of the following challenges relating to education:

- Lack of sponsorship or funds to pursue their educational dreams.
- Lack of a home in case the caregiver was renting a house or the survivors have disinherited the child.
- Stigmatisation by fellow pupils, teachers or other members of society.
- Lack of in-school support in terms of psychosocial help, counselling, materials requirements and understanding.
- Lack of nutritional supplements for the children who are directly affected by HIV.

On the other hand, it could be the teacher(s) who falls ill due to HIV or AIDS related illnesses and has to leave the school. In communities where teachers are very scarce, this can be enough to push many children out of

school and into work.

HIV, AIDS AND CHILD LABOR

- * Of the estimated 39.5 million people living with HIV in 2006, around 2.3 million are thought to be children. (WHO/UNAIDS, 2006)
- * 4.3 million people are thought to have been newly infected with HIV in 2006, 530,000 of whom are estimated to be children. (WHO/UNAIDS, 2006)
- * However, there are an enormous number of girls, boys and adolescents who are orphaned by the deaths of their parents or guardians.
- * Over 15 million AIDS orphans (children between 0-17 who have lost one or both parents) are estimated to be living in the world today (UNAIDS, 2006), 12 million of whom reside in Sub-Saharan Africa.

CHILD LABOR STATISTICS

- * According to the Global Report on Child Labour 2006 (ILO-IPEC), there are an estimated 218 million child labourers below the age of 18 in the world. Of these about 166 million are aged 5-14, and approximately 52 million are aged between 15 -17 years.
- * 126 million of these are working in hazardous conditions.
- * There are no statistics that directly link HIV with child labour, but intuitively and qualitatively the relationship is clear.
- * In Sub-Saharan Africa, the country with the deepest and most extensive AIDS pandemic, there are almost 50 million child labourers aged 14 or under. This is 26.4% of the under 15 population.
- * There are also an estimated 122 million child labourers under 15 in the Asia and Pacific Region and 5.7 million in Latin America. There are a further 13.4 million in other regions.

What can be done to eliminate HIV related child labour?

The following list provides a sample of key areas for overcoming the HIV related child labour crisis. What do your group think are the ways in which YOU can make a difference?

CARE

- * Provide free ART drugs, medical and psychological support to all those who need it.
- * Provide free contraception, information and advice for all young people.
- * Target children affected by HIV directly with medication, nutritional supplements and counselling.
- * Promote the research into new and cheaper medication for prevention,

care and cure for people living with HIV.

- * Promote strong and innovative advocacy by all, at all levels, for the protection of children made vulnerable by HIV and to put a stop to the spread of the virus.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

- * Provide vulnerable children, affected and infected by HIV, with social protection when their parents fall ill, lose their jobs, or die in order to stop them falling into the trap of child labour.

- * Resuscitate community level social protection strategies so that children can be integrated rather than isolated as a result of HIV.

- * Provide subsidies to families for child care, food and education support, life-skills and vocational training to orphaned children so that they are guaranteed a childhood and grow up to be productive, educated members of society.

EDUCATION

- * Extend education for all to child labourers and people living with HIV with special funding and consideration to make the system adapt to their specific needs.

- * Combat the pressures to drop out of school by providing financial incentives such as free school meals, quality education and support to the families.

- * Strengthen the capacity of the schooling system to cope with the numbers of children whilst providing quality education and personal attention to their pupils in order to monitor potential child labour drop outs.

- * This implies a great investment in training teachers, providing materials and building schools.

MONITORING

- * Improve monitoring of children vulnerable to child labour as a result of HIV. Establish community child labour monitoring committees representing the schools, police, government, parents etc. who can direct the community approach to putting a stop to child labour.

AWARENESS RAISING

- * Escalate community level awareness about the problem of HIV and child labour.

- * Educate and empower young people to give them responsibility to take awareness raising into their own hands.

- * Fight stigma in schools, the workplace and society that is targeted at individuals infected and affected by HIV.

- * Promote a change in sexual behaviour. Encourage young people to talk about sex, its dangers and safe practices, to respect women's rights to

“say no to sex” and to protect their bodies and reproductive health.

- * Promote responsible sexual behaviour and faithful relationships.
- * Continuously identify and disseminate good practices on dealing with the twin challenges of HIV and child labour.
- * Participate fully with young people and children in finding solutions to the crisis.
- * Promote more awareness and responsibility in men for reproductive health issues; encourage men and women in a relationship to share decisions on family planning, contraception and sexual health in a relationship.
- * Sensitize the community about homosexuality and what it is so that gay men and women feel free to talk openly about their lives and seek information and advice on sexual health.

The full document can be downloaded at:

http://www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do;jsessionid=0a038009cefca59db68c5d24ec4a21fa36e88547f75.hkzFngTDp6WImQuUaNaLahD3IN4K-xalah8S-xyln3uKmAiN-AnwbQbxaNvzaAml-huKa30xgx95fjWta3elpkzFngTDp6WImQuxax0La34SbxeTa2b48OX3b4Dtgj15eMbyknvrkLOIQzNp65ln0__?productId=6884

ILO: Combating Child Labour Through Education [publication]

This booklet provides an overview of International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour's work on child labour and education and broader ILO concerns on training and skills. An excerpt from the booklet appears below.

To view a copy, go to the website:

http://www.crin.org/docs/Combating_CL_through_Education_EN%5B1%5D.pdf

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BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

The barriers to education that generate exclusion may be grouped under the following categories:

ACCESSIBILITY

- Physical remoteness and social barriers (e.g. girls' restricted freedom of movement), distance to school.
- Discrimination (e.g. based on region, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, caste, class, HIV/AIDS status).
- Burden of household chores on girls in the family home.
- Early marriage.
- Burden faced by children combining work and school.
- Lack of birth registration.
- Inflexible scheduling.
- Fear of violence at, and on the way to, school.

AFFORDABILITY

- Direct costs (e.g. school fees, other compulsory fees).
- Indirect costs (e.g. uniforms, textbooks, transportation, meals).
- Opportunity cost (i.e. income/wage lost to family from child leaving work to go to school).

QUALITY

- Lack of infrastructure, facilities (such as separate water and sanitation facilities for girls), materials and support systems for children.
- Inadequate conditions of work for teachers (short-term contracts, heavy workloads, low pay, etc.).
- Low status of teachers.
- Lack of adequate training, aids and materials for teachers.
- Lack of female teachers, especially at secondary level.
- Lack of sensitivity of education authorities and teachers to the

needs of children at risk of dropping out.

Relevance

- Curriculum detached from local language, needs, values and aspirations of children at risk of dropping out.
- Curriculum inadequate to prepare older children for the world of work through careers guidance, etc.