

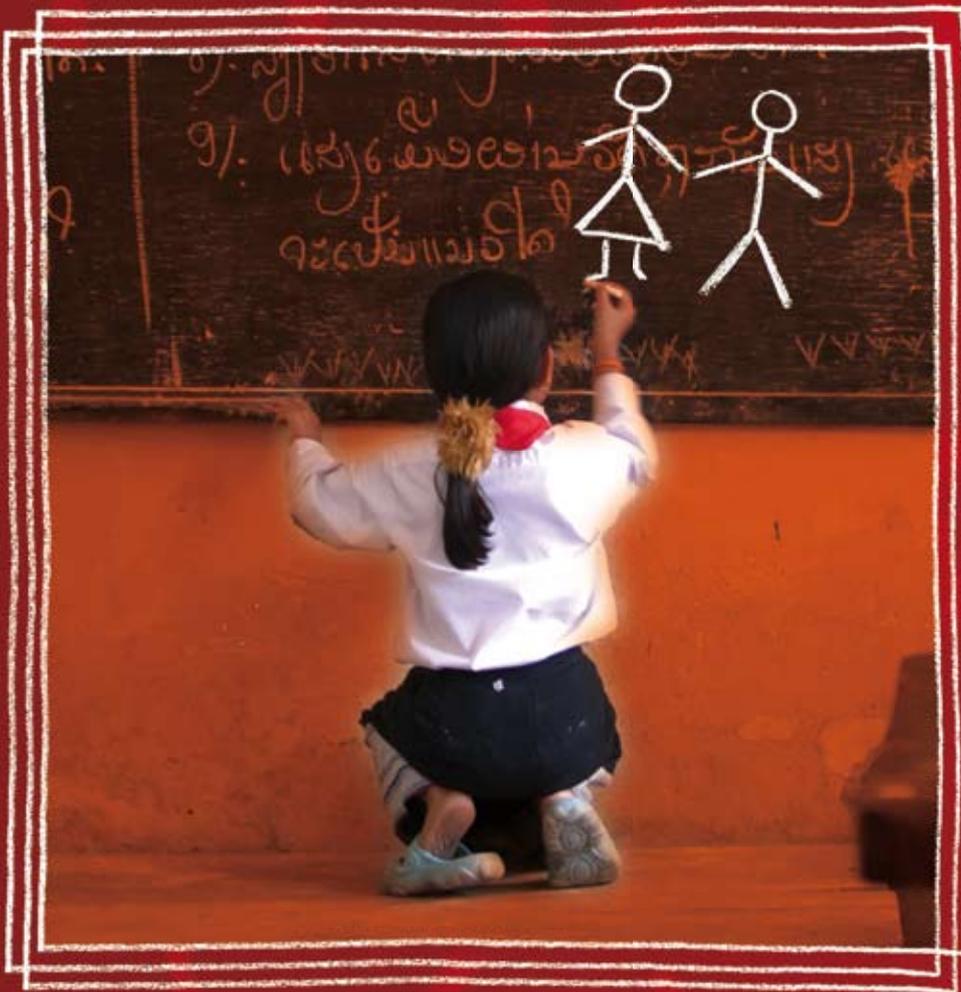


Education International
 Internationale de l'Éducation
 Internacional de la Educación
 Bildungsinternationale



International
 Labour
 Organization

quality education
 is the right response to
 child labour



WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

12 June 2008



DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.



Every year the World Day Against Child Labour focuses the attention of the world on the plight of millions of youngsters around the world who are child labourers. In 2008, the message of the World Day is that “Education is the right response to child labour.” On 12 June this simple but powerful message will be taken up across the world and promoted to governments, within employers’ and workers’ organizations, in the media, and to the public at large.

Teachers’ trade unions are uniquely placed to play a role in encouraging support for the World Day Against Child Labour, and to use it as an opportunity to call for all children to have access to a quality education.

In the following pages we look at the key messages for the World Day Against Child Labour and consider how education unions can contribute to the success of the day.

Child labour: A barrier to education

According to global estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 165 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are involved in child labour. Many of these children work long hours, in dangerous conditions. 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. 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.

Through the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations and the international community set targets of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls could complete a full course of primary education and that there should be gender parity in education. These targets cannot be met unless the factors that generate child labour and prevent poor families sending children to school are addressed. Among the most important steps that must be taken are:

- Provision of free, public and compulsory education
- Removing barriers to girls’ education
- Providing transitional education for children and youth who have so far missed out on formal schooling
- Ensuring that children have access to a school and a safe, quality learning environment
- 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
- Reducing poverty and creating decent work for adults
- Raising public awareness of the need to eliminate child labour



Education promotes 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 the means through which economically and socially marginalised children and youth can lift themselves out of poverty. And when children who have had the benefits of an education grow up, they are more likely to educate their own children.

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

Education International and child labour

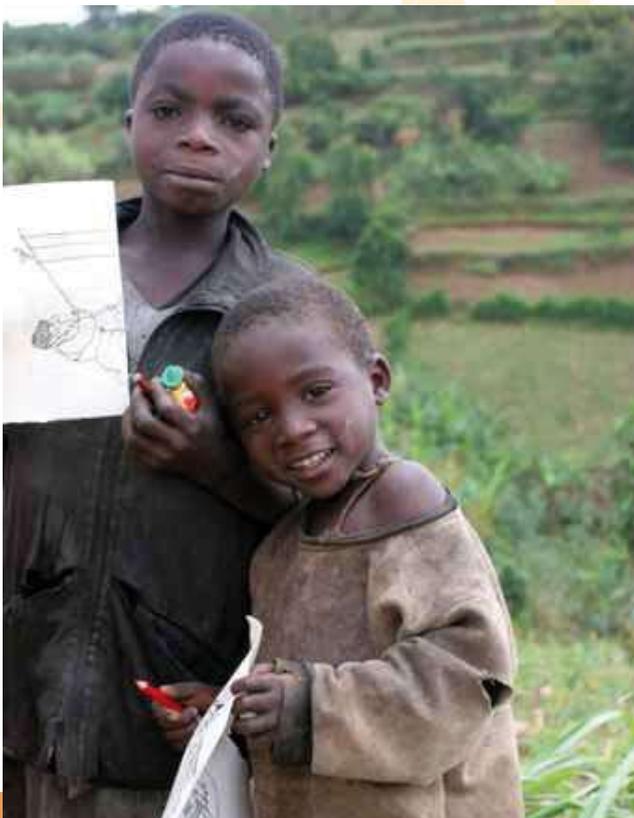
Education International (EI) represents 30 million teachers worldwide in more than 170 countries and territories, and includes over 390 member organizations. This provides a remarkable network of key actors who can potentially be mobilised in the fight against child labour.

Since its foundation in 1993, EI has placed the issue of child labour at the forefront of its work. EI and its members can contribute to the elimination of child labour in a number of ways:

- As a leading voice in the trade union movement, EI has the capacity to unite its members worldwide on the issue of child labour and to mobilise support within the broader trade union movement.
- EI is a member of a Global Task Force (GTF) on Child Labour and Education For All (EFA), alongside the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and the Global March against Child Labour. Thus EI can represent the views of teachers in broader discussions on child labour and education policy.
- Working through the EFA movement and other networks, EI and its members can help to raise awareness of the need to link efforts to tackle child labour with the broader EFA agenda.
- At national level, action taken by teachers' trade unions can have an impact on policies regarding access to and quality of education.

EI encourages its members to call on their governments to ratify ILO Convention No. 138 on a minimum working age and Convention No. 182 on ending the worst forms of child labour.

Adequate resources must be invested to allow for expansion of public education, including quality early childhood education and care, more schools, transitional and special education and vocational training to achieve the goal of EFA. EI also calls for quality teacher training and in-service development to enable teachers to meet the diverse and special needs of children, particularly the most disadvantaged, those at highest risk of becoming child labourers, and those who have been child labourers.



What your union can do now

The action that can be taken at country level will depend on the national situation and context. However, here are some ideas:

- Draw the attention of union members to the World Day Against Child Labour. Send them a copy of this leaflet, which can be accessed at www.ei-ie.org/childlabour/en.
- Discuss the World Day Against Child Labour within the union at national and local level. Identify what action the union might take on 12 June.
- If your union is affiliated to a national trade union confederation, work with the confederation to promote the day.
- Issue a press release before 12 June to draw attention to the day and any activities planned by your union.
- Discuss the day and any opportunities for cooperation with the ILO or IPEC office in your country (details of any IPEC programme in your country can be obtained from ipcc@ilo.org).
- If your country has a child labour problem, promote a workshop involving the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, UN agencies and others to discuss what steps are required to help child labourers in your country.
- Consider calling for a special EFA meeting to discuss the EFA process and tackling child labour.
- Review how your union is engaged with the EFA process in your country. The EFA process is designed to improve access to and quality of education, which can in turn contribute to tackling child labour. It is very important that teachers' unions have a voice in this process.
- If you are in a country where child labour is not seen as a major problem, promote a discussion on steps that can be taken in your country to support those tackling child labour elsewhere.
- Teachers are very well placed to know if child labour exists in the communities where they work and live. Teachers also often have a respected position in the community, their views are listened to, and they can help change attitudes and behaviour. Discuss how union members can help in providing information on child labour and the steps needed to tackle the problem.



Act Now!

- EI urges members to take action to support the World Day Against Child Labour. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure the suffering of child labourers is not forgotten.
- By adding our voice to the worldwide movement against child labour, teachers will bring important perspectives to the discussion of the policies and actions required to ensure that all children have access to quality education.
- Send EI information about the action your union proposes to take to contribute to the success of the World Day Against Child Labour.

KEY ILO STANDARDS ON CHILD LABOUR

The ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 183) states that the minimum age of employment should not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years. However, a Member country whose economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed may under certain conditions initially specify a minimum age of 14 years. National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons 13 to 15 years of age on limited light work which is not likely to be harmful to their health or development; or to prejudice their attendance at school (the ages of 12-14 can apply for light work in countries which have specified a minimum age of 14).

In 1999, the ILO adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, No. 182. This requires countries to implement immediate measures for dealing with the most dangerous forms of child labour and covers children up to the age of 18. Amongst other measures, the Convention states that Members shall, taking into account the importance of education in eliminating child labour, take effective and time bound measures to ensure access to free basic education, and wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training, for all children removed from the worst forms of child labour.

For links to the ILO Conventions, visit:
www.ilo.org/ipec/action/legal/conventions

Further information and resources

Education International (EI) is a Global Union federation representing over 30 million teachers and education workers. On the EI web site you can find:

- A copy of this leaflet
- The EI publication *Child Labour: Quality education is the right response*
- Other EI resources and information on child labour

Visit: www.ei-ie.org/childlabour/en/

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the United Nations specialised agency for the world of work. It seeks the promotion of social justice and internationally recognised human and labour rights and has established international Conventions on child labour. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) is the world's largest programme on child labour. The ILO is the lead agency for the World Day Against Child Labour. The World Day web site includes a range of information resources including:

- Key World Day Against Child Labour 2008 materials
- Various resources on child labour and education
- Activities linked to World Day 2008 and designed for teachers and educators to help students understand the world of the child labourer

Visit: www.ilo.org/ipec

Child Labour: An information kit for teachers, educators and their organizations

This information kit is designed to raise awareness of the nature and effects of child labour and to instil a sense of commitment and motivation, to inform others and promote action in the classroom and within teachers' organizations. The four modules in this kit are available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded from the IPEC Database at:

www.ilo.org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=2039

SCREAM - Stop Child Labour! Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media

This community-based education and social mobilisation project will provide teachers and educators with further activities to conduct with a wide range of age groups of children.

Visit: www.ilo.org/scream