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# 「Child labour: Quality education is the right response」



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# Education International aims to eliminate child labour



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## Child labour: Quality education is the right response

More than 200 million children around the world today are deprived of a childhood. Forced to work in fields, mines and factories, many children's plight is highly visible. But many more children suffer in the hidden dimensions of child labour, such as domestic work, sexual exploitation, human trafficking and slavery.

Meanwhile, more than 80 million children are not attending school. These two realities are inextricably linked, and as teachers and trade unionists we will never forget that.

The elimination of child labour is one of the fundamental goals of Education International (EI). In the context of its pursuit of human and trade union rights, EI conducts advocacy activities with the trade union movement.

Since its foundation in 1993, EI has placed the issue of child labour at the forefront of its work. At its First World Congress in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1995, EI passed a resolution which established the



fight against child labour as a top priority for the organisation and provided a set of guidelines for member organisations.

At present EI represents over 30 million teachers worldwide in 169 countries and territories, involving more than 384 member organizations. This provides a remarkable network of key actors in the fight against child labour.

EI can contribute to the fight against child labour in two major ways: Through the international trade union movement and through the Education for All Campaign. As a leading voice in the trade union movement, EI has enormous capacity to unite its members worldwide as a unique force on a specific issue, such as child labour. Collective action by teachers and other allies has the capacity to positively impact national policies. EI is an organization focused on achieving the right to quality education for all through publicly-funded and publicly-regulated systems of education, a critical tool in the battle against child labour.



Education International's  
main strategy on child  
labour: Prevention and  
monitoring



## Child labour: Quality education is the right response


For Education International, prevention is one of the main tools against child labour. Keeping children in school is the best way to keep them away from work.

Of course every child has the right to an education, but keeping children in the educational system will have other benefits in the long term as well. A generation of educated adults will be far more capable of equipping their countries with the needed skills and human resources, thus enhancing their countries' social and economic development.

Strengthening national policies on child labour through the promotion of compulsory education, universal access, free and quality Education For All has always been and still is the major goal of teacher unions worldwide. Reducing the number of children who drop out of school and go to work, attracting and retaining current and former working children and those at risk, are areas where teachers and teacher unions are best equipped to intervene.



Teachers' involvement in child labour monitoring can also make a difference. Teachers and their organizations are in key positions to monitor child labour because they interact daily with child workers, ex-workers and children at risk. They normally have wide access to children and their parents in the communities. This allows them to more easily identify working children who are not attending school regularly or at all, which is the first step of a child labour monitoring programme. Recognizing the sectors or forms of child labour in the communities, creating child labour committees in schools and informing parents, local and national authorities about the issues are the next steps in a monitoring system to which teachers can contribute significantly.



*“Encourage school systems to become child labour monitors by helping to survey the extent of non-attendance at school and its relationship to the spread of child labour; and to use that information to work with parents and local communities so that they understand the value of education and the costs of child labour and are encouraged to participate with the local early childhood services and schools in decisions about the education of their children.”*

EI Child Labour Resolution, 1999



# 「Child labour and the Education For All (EFA) initiative」

Education For All initiative



## Child labour: Quality education is the right response

Millions of children who do start school, leave before they have acquired basic knowledge and skills. In fact, the number of children leaving the education system prematurely is greater than the number of children who never attended school. This is a great challenge for, if not a burden on, authorities and educators in their efforts to achieve universal education.

EI tackles child labour in the context of the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All. EFA is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. Governments, United Nations bodies, development agencies, civil society groups, non-government organizations and the media are all partners in this groundbreaking initiative.

In 2006, Education International was invited to join the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education For All as a core member. The Global Task Force (GTF) includes the ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and the

Global March against Child Labour as well as a number of country representatives that serve on a rotating basis. The main GTF objective is to contribute to the achievement of the EFA goals through the elimination of child labour. Education International gladly accepted the invitation to participate in this initiative, which is a very positive step towards eliminating child labour.

Global Action Week - Philippines 2006  
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# 「Child Labour, EFA and HIV/AIDS」

Child Labour, EFA & AIDS



AIDS orphan attending Class - Zhou Jie (China)  
© Sharron Lovell/polaris/Photo News 2006



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By the end of 2005, more than 15 million children had been orphaned worldwide due to AIDS. In many cases, these children are compelled to leave school as they have to find ways to survive. From the education system perspective, this means that millions of children are out of school and thus deprived of a free, quality and public education. In this context, the pursuit of the EFA goals means that efforts need to be made to retain children into the school system, prevent drop out and get working children back into schools.

The AIDS pandemic is also affecting the educational system from the teachers' perspective, as significant numbers of teachers are among its victims, especially in Africa.

EI wants to tackle the child labour problem in the context of the AIDS phenomenon.

The EFAIDS programme was launched in January 2006 and is an EI-WHO-EDC joint initiative that combines the efforts of teachers' unions in advocating for EFA at national level, with their commitment to HIV/AIDS prevention in schools. The programme is essentially a fusion of two previously separate initiatives, namely the HIV/AIDS Education programme and the EFA programme and it is operational in 35 countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America.

*Programme goals are: Prevent new HIV infections among teachers and learners; Mitigate the negative effect of AIDS on achieving EFA goals; Increase the number of learners completing basic education.*


*Within the Programme, there is a direct link between education and the prevention and elimination of child labour, with two main lines of actions: support for HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children, and the fight against AIDS-related stigma and discrimination among learners and teachers.*

*Child labour elements could also be included in the main working areas of the programme, such as policy development, research, advocacy, training and publications.*

# Awareness Raising and Campaigns



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Another important area of work for Education International is awareness raising activities and campaigns. The mobilization of key actors such as Ministries of Education, teachers and their unions, school principals, head teachers, parents and community leaders is extremely significant in raising the consciousness of the relevance of education in combating child labour. Promoting the participation of children themselves in the fight against child labour is another way teachers can play a key role.

At the political level, teachers and their organizations are among the best advocates for free and quality Education For All. They can bring together people at community and national level, and lobby governments worldwide to fight against child labour. This also includes promoting the application of international rules, such as the Rights of the Child Convention and ILO Conventions No. 138 and No.182.

# 「A gender approach and special attention to vulnerable populations」



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Special attention needs to be paid to working girls. Girls, more often than boys, are left out of the educational system and thus are more vulnerable to recruitment into the work force. Therefore, specific attention ought to be granted to the needs of girls in child labour prevention, retention and monitoring activities. The UN Commission on the Status of Women focuses on the girl child in 2007, providing a good opportunity to emphasize the gender dimensions of this complex issue.

Ethnic and minority groups are usually among the most vulnerable in society. They are more likely to suffer discrimination and marginalization, which implies that their rights, and in particular their right to education, are not protected. The incidence of child labour among these groups is high. Education International believes that special efforts should be mustered to ensure that ethnic and minority groups are not forgotten.

# 「EI affiliates take action against child labour:」



Scavenging for scrap metal - Fieri - Albania



## Morocco

The National Education Union (SNE-FDT) carried out child labour activities in five schools in the city of Fez, targeting 3,000 direct beneficiaries and 6,000 indirect beneficiaries. Activities focused on the prevention of child labour in schools with four working areas: schools themselves, families, capacity building and lobbying the authorities, mainly the Ministry of Education. Main actors involved were the Ministry of Education, municipalities and local NGOs. The results of the actions developed led to a 90% decrease in the drop out rate in those schools. Due to these excellent results, there is a plan to continue and to expand these activities.

## Albania

The Albanian teacher unions Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania (FSASH- TUFESA) and Independent Trade Union of Education of Albania (SPASH- ITUEA) have been very active in the fight against child labour. These unions jointly implement projects on child labour aimed at reducing the dropout rate in schools. The activities are mainly focused on capacity

## Child labour: Quality education is the right response

building, including training and seminars with trade unionists; child labour prevention, (working with teachers, working children and the whole community); lobbying and advocacy including the negotiation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the government where child labour prevention is a key element; awareness raising activities, such as the elaboration and dissemination of material and publications with information on child labour.

More recently, the two teacher unions organized a regional seminar on Child Labour and Trade Unions where more than ten unions from various countries in the region participated.

Match factory - India • © ILO



ET affiliated to take action

## India

The All India Federation of Teachers Organizations (AIFTO), the All India Primary Teachers Federation (AIPTF), and the All India Association for Christian Higher Education (AIACHE) have all participated in activities to bring an end to child labour. Their actions were mainly aimed at preventing child labour in different areas of the country.

Activists organized seminars on child labour for trade union affiliates, mobilized their affiliates to raise awareness on the importance of education in the fight against child labour, and created promotional material related to child labour.

More recently, the Akhila Karnataka Prathamika Shikshakara Sangha (AKPSS), an organisation of primary school teachers in Karnataka who are affiliated to the AIPTF, produced a booklet entitled *Golden Dawn: Drop Out Children*. It focuses on the situation in Karnataka state, where too many children still lack education because they have dropped out of school to go work. This publication clearly illustrates how child labour can hinder the achievement of the EFA goals in India, and the importance of achieving the right to education.





## Child labour: Quality education is the right response

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the ILO is the world's biggest programme of technical cooperation aimed at preventing and eliminating child labour. The programme seeks to achieve the progressive elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities and by building a worldwide movement to combat child labour. ILO-IPEC places a strong emphasis on promoting free and compulsory education within the context of its broader support of the Education for All agenda.

EI has been working together with IPEC on a range of programme initiatives designed to raise awareness of child labour problems and to provide support for at-risk children. These initiatives include:

- 1. Efforts to build public awareness of the dangers of child labour and the importance of education**

- 2• **Work in the classroom to raise the understanding of children about the dangers of child labour**
- 3• **Initiatives to identify children at risk of dropping out and to provide special support to try to keep such children in school**
- 4• **Assisting with programmes to bring back to school children who have dropped out and entered the labour force**

These initiatives are building up a knowledge base on strategies which teacher unions can utilise to contribute to efforts to tackle child labour. EI and ILO-IPEC plan to continue cooperation in these and other areas, now and in the future.





*Through Education International,  
teachers everywhere are  
determined to build a world  
in which every child's right to  
an education is respected, and  
all youngsters have access to  
quality, free public schooling.*



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