



International
Labour
Organization



Tackle child labour through education:
moving children from work to school in 11 countries

Getting an education is an important human right and a pathway out of poverty for individuals and nations.

Furthermore, educational opportunities and experiences influence not only the present, but also the future of children, youth and the very countries they live in.

In many countries, however, child labour creates a major barrier to getting an education. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that some 218 million children below the age of 18 are involved in child labour. Many of these children are currently out of school, and those that try to combine work with school are highly vulnerable to early drop out.

In the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community committed themselves to ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling. There is a particular need for a clear focus on the children who remain outside the education system, including those engaged in child labour. Much remains to be done if this goal is to be achieved.

WORK TO SCHOOL
FROM





ABOUT THE TACKLE PROJECT

The ILO, with financial support from the European Community (EC) and in agreement with the Committee of Ambassadors of the ACP Group of States, has launched a major new project aimed at tackling child labour through education in 11 countries across Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). The project has been developed in the context of a strategic partnership signed in 2004 between the ILO and the EC aimed at reinforcing their joint efforts to reduce poverty and improve labour conditions in developing countries. The overall goal of the partnership is to accelerate the fight against poverty and work towards the achievement of the MDGs.

KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- to help reduce poverty by providing access to basic education and skills training for disadvantaged children and youth ; and
- to strengthen the capacity of national and local authorities in the formulation, implementation and enforcement of policies to tackle child labour in coordination with social partners and civil society.

COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

AFRICA

Angola, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zambia

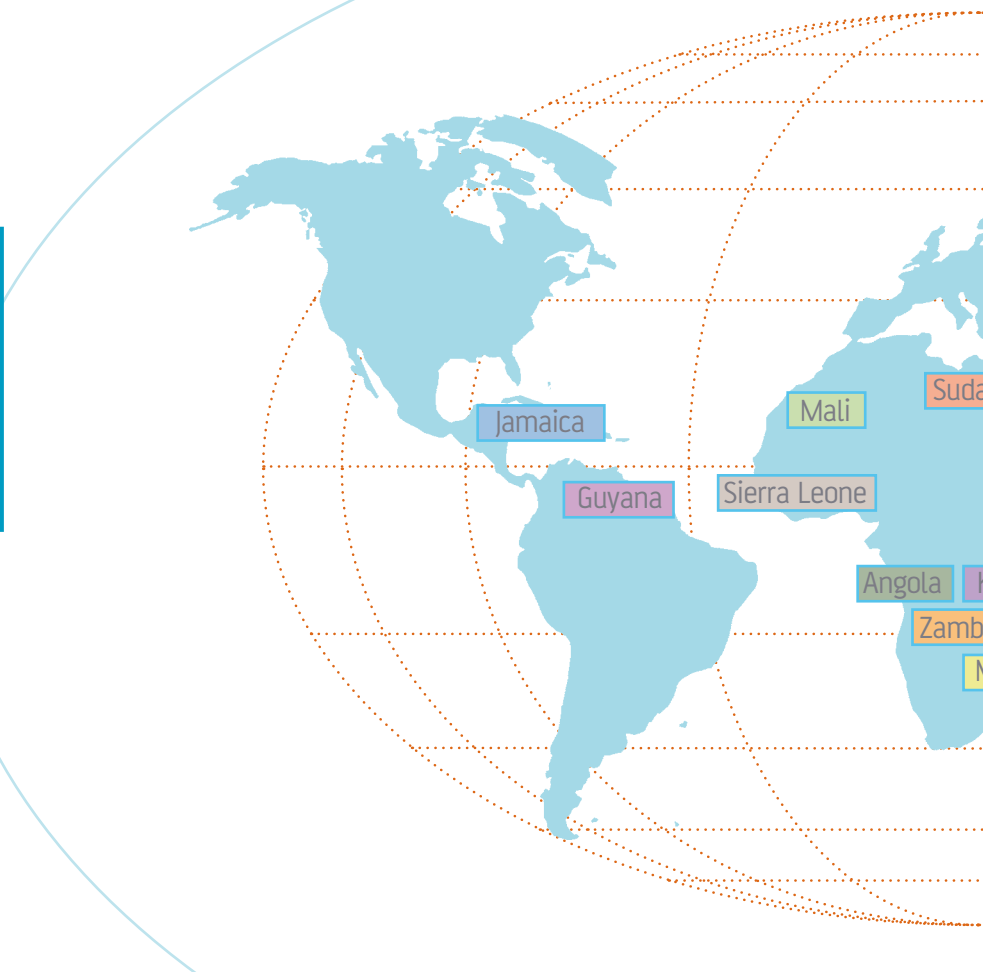
CARIBBEAN

Guyana and Jamaica

PACIFIC

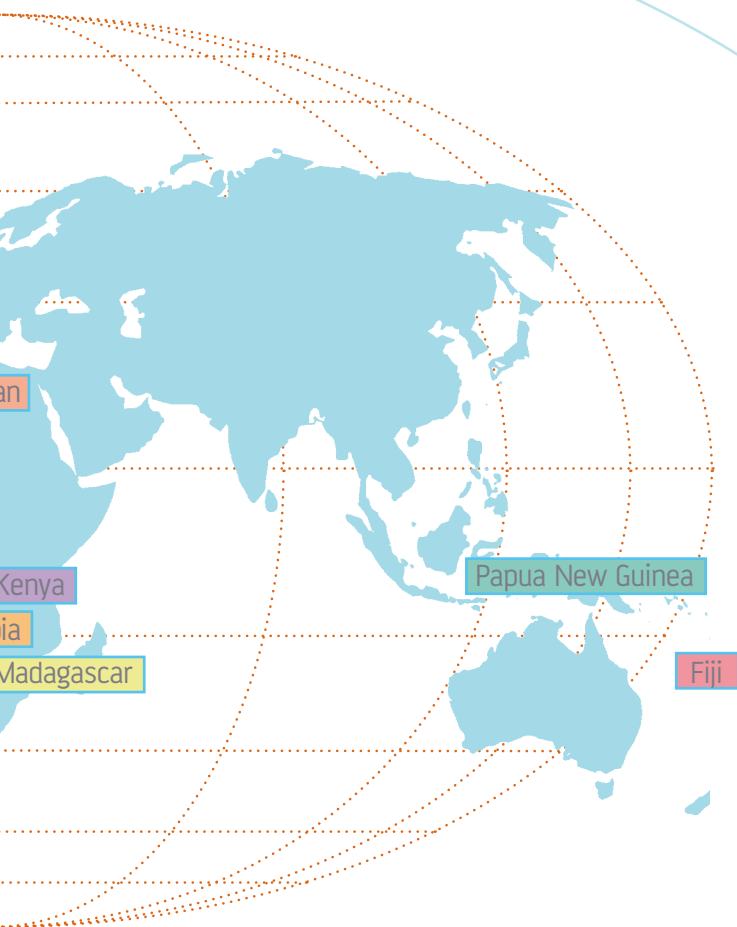
Fiji and Papua New Guinea

PROJECT S



Strengthen legal frameworks on child labour and education	Strengthen institutional capacity to formulate and implement child labour strategies	Targeted actions to combat child labour
<p>The 11 countries involved in TACKLE are at different stages in the development of legal frameworks on child labour and education. The project supports the review and/or assessment of existing legal frameworks and consistency between child labour and education legislations. Putting the legal framework in place is only the first step. The next challenge is how to effectively enforce legislation. Even countries that have sound laws on child labour often find it difficult to apply them in practice. The project combines work aimed at assessing and improving the legislative environment with activities to help ensure effective implementation systems and measures.</p>	<p>TACKLE works with Ministries of Labour and Ministries of Education. Ministries of Labour are usually responsible for fostering and implementing legislation on child labour, labour inspection and monitoring services. Ministries of Education oversee the implementation of policies and programmes catering to the needs of children who do not attend school, and TACKLE works with them in the provision of quality non-formal education and other programmes aimed at mainstreaming children back to formal education. The project also builds and strengthens the capacity of employers' and workers' organizations to address child labour through policy dialogue and practice within their own organizations, and in implementing strategies to eliminate child labour.</p>	<p>TACKLE supports education and training interventions aimed at withdrawing children from child labour and preventing vulnerable children from entering child labour. These interventions include the development of models of good practice that can be replicated by governments and other relevant bodies</p>

T R A T E G I E S



Potential areas of emphasis in target countries:

Kenya Support children in extremely vulnerable situations by providing access to formal and non-formal education.

Sudan Establish a solid national framework to combat child labour.

Zambia Integrate the efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour into the national strategies to achieve Education for All.

Madagascar Develop synergies between Government, ILO and other donors' efforts for the elimination of worst forms of child labour.

Angola Work with partners to develop and implement pilot activities to fight child labour.

Sierra Leone Support the ratification of ILO Conventions No.138 and No.182 and strengthen national capacity.

Mali Strengthen models of intervention to fight against child labour through education and vocational training.

Papua New Guinea Integrate child labour concerns into the Decent Work Country Programme.

Fiji Establish broad-based action against child labour and promote the adoption of a National Plan against child labour.

Guyana Support ongoing efforts to eliminate child labour and promote youth employment.

Jamaica Support the integration of child labour concerns into broader educational and poverty reduction programmes.

Gender and youth

in ongoing programmes. For withdrawal, the basic objective is to remove children from work while providing them with alternatives. Programmes focussed on prevention also include strategies aimed at keeping children in school and out of child labour.

Gender is often an important factor in the decision to send children to work or school. Because of low expectations for girls securing decent paid work as adults, returns on their education may be perceived as lower than those of boys. This is reflected in lower school enrolment rates for girls than for boys in many countries. The project therefore pays particular attention to the situation of girls.

The worst forms of child labour can extend to older children and youth above the legal minimum age of employment but working under conditions which threaten their health, safety and/or morals. Strategies are tailored to the special needs of these older children and include vocational and skills training, career guidance, job placement services, and support for the creation or strengthening of small enterprises.

Improve advocacy and dissemination of good practices to enhance the knowledge base and reinforce networks on child labour and education

Empirical evidence on child labour and analysis of its links to other aspects of development is crucial in informing discussions and broadening support for the integration of child labour concerns into policy formulation. The project supports efforts to develop the knowledge base and strengthen networks on child labour-education related issues. It also strengthens mechanisms for knowledge sharing, more particularly sharing of the knowledge generated through the project.

THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

■ The **Cotonou agreement** between the European Union (EU) and African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) countries reaffirms commitment to the internationally recognised core labour standards, as defined by the relevant ILO Conventions, including the elimination of the worst forms of child labour (Article 50). It refers to enhancement of cooperation in this area, exchange of information, formulation of national labour legislation, strengthening of existing legislation, and educational and awareness-raising programmes. The TACKLE project is funded from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), 2000-2007, which followed the signing of the Cotonou Agreement.

■ The **Cotonou agreement EU development policy** has explicitly recognised the need to tackle the issue of child labour, and particularly the worst forms of child labour. Most recently the European Consensus on Development (A joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the member states meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, December 2005, paragraph 97) has referred to the need to address the issue of the worst forms of child labour in the context of poverty eradication efforts.

■ The ACP/EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly adopted on 15 October 2003 a **“Resolution on children’s rights and child soldiers in particular”** (ACP-EU 3587/03/def.). The ACP/EU resolution emphasises that the fight against child slave labour, trafficking of children, sex trade in children and the use of child soldiers must be a political priority for the European Union and the ACP countries, to be implemented in particular through the regional funding programmes of the EDF budget. Education is identified as an essential element, in the form of rehabilitation programmes, non-formal education and basic education for the most vulnerable children.

■ The **European Parliament** (EP), in a report of June 2005, highlights the urgent need for Community action in the fight against the exploitation of children, and notably the worst forms of child labour, in developing countries. The EP calls on the Commission to address this problem from the perspective of education and using the strategic partnership between the EC and the ILO (European Parliament 15.6.2005 : Report on the exploitation of children in developing countries, with a special focus on child labour, A6-0185/2005 final).

■ The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** spells out the basic human rights of all children and seeks to protect these rights by setting standards. It requires State Parties to make primary education compulsory, available and free to all, and encourages the development of secondary education, including general and vocational education, available and accessible to every child. The Convention recognizes the rights of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, interfere with the child’s education, or be harmful to the child’s development. It requires states to provide a minimum age or ages for admission to employment.

■ The **ILO Minimum Age Convention, N° 138 (1973)** 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 initially specify a minimum age of 14 years. National laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons from 13 to 15 years of age on limited light work that 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).

■ The **ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, N° 182 (1999)**. This requires countries to implement time bound measures for eliminating the most dangerous forms of child labour. The worst forms of child labour consist of:

- a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

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