

International Labour Organisation

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

Apprenticeships in the informal economy

Patrick Quinn, April 2007

The context for IPEC's work

IPEC is concerned to

- Prevent use of child labour in apprenticeships
- Promote good quality apprenticeships as part of a strategy to withdraw older children from hazardous work. 52 million aged between 15-17 are involved in hazardous work

Child labour

- ILO Convention 138- Minimum age of employment – 14 or 15
- “Light Work” which does not prejudice attendance at school, health or development allowed - from 12 or 13
- ILO Convention 182 –worst forms of child labour – includes hazardous jobs - each country determines hazardous work - 18

Development context

- Link with MDG 2 – Universal primary education by 2015 –latest MDG report cites child labour as barrier to UPE
- Education for All Framework – goals include UPE and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 – EFA report cites child labour as barrier
- Recently established Global Task Force on child Labour and Education for All – ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and UNDP

2003 Evaluation of apprenticeships

- Typically, highly informal training
- Trainees learn through periods of observation and direct hands-on experience in the artisan's workshop or shop.
- Generally no established curriculum or set of objectives.
- In Turkey those in informal apprenticeship arrangements had access to one day a week in a formal training centre
- Certification was not usually provided
- The business usually provided only meals and modest on-site accommodation if necessary, not wages.

Perceived strengths

- The learning takes place in a business setting and skills being learned are relevant to market needs.
- Trainees liked hands-on practice and less theory.
- Trainees can observe and learn other entrepreneurial skills in addition to the vocational skills, such as negotiating prices and selling to prospective clients.
- Trainees learn about and begin to establish a business network, including suppliers and clients.
- Most businesses are located near the community, so the children do not need to travel to town for the training.

Issues and concerns

- The children might be treated as cheap labour without really learning any skills, or be poorly treated.
- The children might be put to work in a hazardous environment. Some basic career guidance required, also addressing gender issues
- The number of children who train with each master craftsman or business owner should not be too large.
- Schemes rarely provide formal assessment of trainee progress. Makes it hard for recognition of competence
- The children may have other learning needs but difficult for business owners to organize other support services

Strengthening access and quality

- Avoid employment of children below the minimum age
- Promote local discussions with government and social partners on ways of extending and improving informal economy skills training
- Care in selecting the master craftspeople or skills providers.
- a written contract which indicates what the business owners will have to do and provide for the children

Strengthening access and quality

- Regular monitoring visits, meetings with the children and artisans
- Placing only a small number of children in each workshop
- Explore links with formal training or support services (eg literacy, numeracy support)
- Validation and certification of achievement