

Red card to child labour.

'It is up to the youth of today to help stop the trafficking of children!'

Workshop at the United Nations House, Tokyo. 12 June 2003.

The event was held by the International Labour Office (ILO) in cooperation with the following six NGOs:

Action against Child Exploitation (ACE).

ECPAT Stop Child Prostitution and Pornography.

Global March against child labour.

International Centre for Children's Rights.

Free The Children Japan.

World Vision Japan.

The workshop was open to anyone of around 25 years of age or less. Among the participants, university and high school students took the central role along with some elementary and junior high school children also taking part. There were some children who stopped to attend on the way home from school and there were even some children who came to participate from Kyushu.

In total more than 150 people attended.

The short drama performance at the workshop.

A short play was performed at the event by professional actors. Through the theatrical performance, the actors aimed to illustrate and convey the problem of child labour to the attending crowd.

Outline of the play's script.

--- Hello everyone. I am a merchant trader who is here to tell you a story about a country in South East Asia.

There, there lives a girl named Tary who stays at home doing the housework everyday and does not go to school. She has an older brother who does go to school, which seems unfair, but in this society this is the norm and the family does not even think it strange.

--- I guess everyone here feels sorry for Tary, but surprisingly, Tary doesn't mind. In fact, she is proud of the work that she does for her family. As

usual, she must do the washing by hand today too as her family can't afford to buy a washing machine.

One day, all of a sudden, a television set was delivered to the house, which made everyone very happy, but the unfamiliar man who delivered the T.V. did not leave straight away and at this point, Tary's mum said to her, "Tary, from today you are to go and work at this gentleman's place".

"It is in the city where there is everything you could wish for", added the man and with great courage Tary said that she would try her best and with that left home.

In truth, Tary was sold to pay for the television for the family.

--- So does anyone here think there is something wrong in this story so far?
(Answer from participants) Children shouldn't be sold to pay for televisions!

--- Yes, but these people don't think that it is a bad thing. There are some countries that think nothing of this! Where do you think Tary was taken to?

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--- Let us take a look. Imagine the scene, there is a young woman who is obviously working as a prostitute and next to her stands a scary looking guy that looks big enough to be a bodyguard. This is where Tary is made to work as a prostitute.

"I can't stand this anymore!", shouts Tary.

"When will you just shut up?!" replies the young woman and with that, Tary starts to fight with her.

It is likely that the young woman also felt like Tary does at one stage.

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After that, Tary received protection and rehabilitation in order for her to get back into society and she later became a member of an NGO.

Societies in which children are sold and have no hope for the future are not the norm. Children must be protected so please help to change things!

Group Discussion.

The performance was used as the basis for a group discussion. Participants discussed the causes of child labour and then considered policies to help eradicate such causes and finished by forming an action plan

stating the things that they personally will try to do to help. During the discussion, if participants found difficulty in expressing their opinions due to a lack of knowledge or information, three ILO and NGO staff were on hand to give assistance.

Those participating in the workshop were split into 14 groups consisting of 6~8 people and self-introduction games were used to relieve nerves and help the participants to remember each others names.

At first, there was some difficulty in hearing what many of the participants were saying, but when one person gave an opinion, it soon triggered off others to do so too.

Below are just some of the things that came out of the talk:

- It was understood that in Japan children take part time jobs to get some extra pocket money, but in some countries children have to work in order just to survive.
- It was realised that the preconception that children went out to find work themselves was wrong.
- Parents are often lied to and tricked when their children are taken away. If the parents knew they were being lied to, would they still sell their children then? The parent's lack of knowledge is being taken advantage of and thus, it is important to give more information to parents about this.
- People in advanced countries have seen an increase in the amount of spare time that they have and so they go out to buy prostitutes.
- Although within the play there was no reference made to those that buy prostitutes, this was a theme that came up in the discussion forum.
- There were also some key words that came out of the discussion:
 - ☞ **Ignorance.**
 - ☞ **Poverty.**
 - ☞ **Demand for prostitution.**
 - ☞ **Awareness of human rights.**
 - ☞ **Education.**

Summary of the presentation of the causes, policies and personal action plans discussed in the groups.

As already mentioned, each group was to discuss what they believed to be the causes of child labour and what policies and personal action plans can be taken to tackle the problem. The contents of each group discussion have been brought together and summarised below.

● **Causes of child labour.**

- i) Discrimination against girls and women.
- ii) Lack of educational environment for children.
- iii) Poverty.
- iv) The fact that people come and pay for prostitution services from the developed world.
- v) Women's status in society.
- vi) Parents believing that children are just objects that they possess.
- vii) Tradition of parents selling their children.
- viii) A difference in values.
- ix) The fact that there is demand for prostitutes.
- x) A feeling of indifference by the advanced countries despite them being a part of the problem too.

● **Policies to tackle the causes.**

- i) To inform the world of the problem.
- ii) Education for adults and the establishment of schools.
- iii) To promote fair trade.
- iv) Education for children.
- v) Campaign to prohibit the hiring of prostitutes by the advanced countries.
- vi) Change in government.
- vii) Education in both developing and developed countries.
- viii) Creation of work and vocational training.
- ix) To understand in detail about the conditions that prevail in the places that have problems.
- x) UNICEF and the ILO should strive to work harder.
- xi) Use of the media.

● **Action plans of the participants.**

- i) To inform more than one person a day about the problem of child labour.
- ii) To hold an Anti-Child Labour Festival, in which children's wishes are heard by the adults.
- iii) Have Kimura Takuya (famous Japanese celebrity) endorse a campaign to eradicate prostitution.
- iv) Structural reform.
- v) To send chain letters to people.
- vi) To implement projects formulated in cooperation with groups such as NGOs.
- vii) To air a documentary on TBS television channel.

- viii) To provide scholarships.
- ix) To use the media.
- x) To present the problem at high school open days.
- xi) To gather many children and their parents and make an open air classroom.
- xii) Make a play with the local people from the countries that experience the problem.
- xiii) To hold an event where children, responsible for the future of this world, ride bicycles holding flags on the street.
- xiv) First, to fully comprehend for ourselves, the nature of the problem and then to inform people of it through television and at school.
- xv) To tell people of the tragedy of trafficking and to also think ourselves about what we believe happiness to be.

Interviews.

Interviews were held with some of the people that helped to organise the event along with a teacher who was there to observe how the event went.

With the facilitators.

Interviewer: It seems like you have a difficult job.

Facilitator 1: Well, since everyone here comes with a certain level of conscience and knowledge and as the children here are used to these kinds of places, it is not really that much of a difficult job.

Facilitator 2: When no one has anything to say, I often feel like saying something but we have to restrain ourselves from doing so.

With the NGO staff.

Interviewer: How was it today?

NGO staff: We had very little time this time round to do everything and in reality we should have taken more time for the event. On the previous occasion, we went away together for a few days and did the event there.

With the high school teacher.

Interviewer: There are people who say that by teaching children their rights, they become more self-centred.

Teacher: Yes there are people that say that but, in fact when you teach children their rights, you realise that children start to think about the rights of other children as well.

Interviewer: Children nowadays seem to be inundated with all sorts of problems. What do you think?

Teacher: Well, when we were children we only thought about ourselves and the things around us and so compared to that, I think that children's concerns are gradually becoming wider nowadays.

Interviewer: I spoke to a teacher of a junior high school who said to me that he has his hands full with giving guidance to his students in their daily lives and so he is not at the stage of being able to teach and discuss children's rights. What do you think?

Teacher: Yes I can understand his feelings. At our school also at first, there were only a few students who felt concerned but they have gradually increased in number. I don't think that one can say that just giving up without trying is what education is.

Survey of the participants.

Finally, a survey was undertaken in order to discover the participants' views of the event. In total 54 attendees participated in the survey. The results of the survey are highlighted below.

The survey consisted of four questions:

Question 1.What do you think of today's event?

Result:

Evaluation.	Number of people.
Very good.	34
Good.	17
Not bad.	1
Not very good.	0
Bad.	0
Not answer.	2

Further views highlighting what the participants thought was good or bad about the event:

In regards to the performance.

- Despite the play being done by Japanese actors, it felt very real.
- It made us realise that others must be informed of this problem too.
- The play helped one to understand the views and values of the people like Tary and her family.

In regards to the discussion.

- It was easy to talk to everybody.
- A lot of different problems were focused on.
- It was an important experience to be able to talk with other people who hold similar views.
- Separating the participants in to groups was a good thing.
- It was stimulating and good to hear other peoples opinions.
- It made me realise that we are the ones that should change the world today. It gave us a sense of responsibility.
- It was good to make personal action plans. That can be put into effect.
- The knowledge concerning the subject was deep.
- Everyone was very friendly making it very enjoyable.
- Being split up in to small groups made it easier to voice your opinion.
- Everything was made easy to understand.
- The discussion was so that it allowed people of all ages participate.

In general.

- It was good to see how a workshop should be run.
- Being able to learn new things had a great meaning.
- The short time limit made it difficult to include a lot of things.

Question 2. What do you think of this workshop being for youngsters only?

Result:

It made it easy to speak to other people of the same generation.	34
It made the contents and events easy to understand.	24
It made a special, young environment which was good.	30
It was good that many of the staff were young too.	17
It would have been better to allow adults to participate too.	6
There could have been more technical discussion in regards to the problem.	4
Other	5

Other views:

- It would have been interesting to know what the older generations think as well.

- It was a good experience as it is very rare to be able to speak to other young people about such topics.
- It may have been good to have some even younger children participate too.

Question 3. What was the best aspect of the event?

Result:

The performance	28
The discussion	42
Presentation of the group discussions	15
Others	1

Question 4. How would like to see the workshop improved?

Results:

- It would be better if more of the current situations around the world were taught to the participants.
- More time would be better.
- If desks and chairs had been provided it would have been easier to write.
- More time for the presentation was needed.
- The discussion leader and facilitator in my group could have been a bit more motivated and taught us more about child labour.
- It would have been better to divide the groups according to people's ages and equally between the sexes.
- It would have been better to do the event on a weekend (holiday).
- It would have been more rewarding if we were able to do something with more of an impact.
- Being able to hear from the people in the countries themselves would have been good.
- It would have been useful if we were told how we could initiate in helping the cause. (e.g., introduction to NGOs).
- It would have been better to do the event on a bigger scale so that as many people as possible can join in and understand the problem.
- We should aim to hold this event every year.

The summary of the event above was compiled by one of the core members of event's organising groups.