



# SCREAM

Stop Child Labour



International  
Labour  
Organization

Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media

## Children and journalists rise up against child labour (Kenya)

### BACKGROUND

The IPEC project saw unprecedented levels of children and journalists empowerment and engagement in the fight against child labour. One of the main reasons attributable to the high prevalence of child labour was a general lack of information on the effects and consequences of child labour. This was the case with most people in the target areas. The project invested heavily in awareness-raising as a way of laying a strong foundation for the eventual elimination of child labour, with children and journalists playing prominent roles.

### ACTION

Awareness-raising targeted virtually all stakeholders. The objective was to raise public awareness as a basis for preparing people towards progressive elimination of child labour and its worst forms. As the old adage goes, "information is power." Awareness-raising was meant to empower the people as knowledge leads to understanding which then leads to practice. The role of children and journalists in awareness-raising however stood out. Children actively shared key messages among themselves within children rights clubs. Besides mutual learning and sharing on child labour issues in club meetings, they also shared information on child labour to their peers and the community through poems, drama skits, songs and dances using the ILO-IPEC's Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media (SCREAM) programme, and inter-class and inter-school debates. These were performed during parents meetings, inter-school competitions, and during celebrations for the World Day Against Child Labour, and the Day of the African Child (DAC).

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*"People perish because of lack of knowledge."*

*(A teacher in Musokoto Deb Primary School)*

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Good practice



Awareness-raising activities against child labour, 2013.

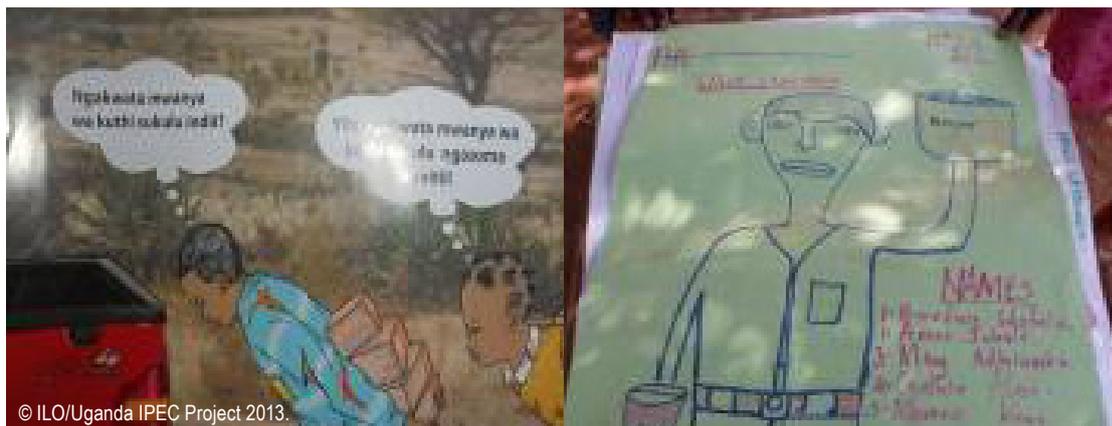
Using the SCREAM programme, teachers were trained on child labour and how best to respond to children needs in school. Furthermore, children were empowered and given opportunities to engage in creative activities in which they expressed themselves the best way they understood child labour. They developed information, education and communication (IEC) materials, poems, songs, drama skits, and talked to their friends on the dangers of child labour. In some areas within the project sites children were represented in Local Child Labour Committees and were guests of honour in all events they were involved in. The level of involvement of children, methods used and the space accorded to them to express themselves and create awareness on child labour in this project was unprecedented. The photos show a school girl performing a poem to her peers, and messages on child labour and other awareness-raising materials created by children through SCREAM programme.

The media too was actively involved in awareness-raising on child labour activities. In Busia, ICS partnered with a local FM station Western FM in airing 30 minute discussion sessions on child labour issues. Similarly in Kitui, "Syokimau", a local radio station broadcasting in the local language was used to educate and sensitize the public on child labour. Pwani FM and Kaya FM both broadcasting in the coastal areas (including Kilifi) hosted several talk show discussing child labour issues. Local radio stations aired discussions with school children, teachers, government officials and Implementing partners on different aspects of child labour. To better equip the media with knowledge and understanding of child labour dynamics, and consequently improve on their reporting on child labour issues the project partnered with the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) which trained journalists on effective media use and child labour and other child rights issues. Implementing partners were also part of the training where they were sensitized on effective ways to communicate with journalists. This led to more airtime allocation, more accurate and objective reporting on child labour, which ultimately improved the general awareness.

## WHY IT IS A GOOD PRACTICE

This activity was documented as a good practice because of its impact in awareness-raising. Two main factors greatly add value to the practice. The first one was children’s empowerment and involvement in awareness-raising activities using SCREAM programme; and the second was the training of journalists on issues of child labour. Awareness-raising activities was and remains the most effective and relevant ingredient in the fight against child labour and child abuse in general. The approaches used in this practice were child friendly, relevant and responsive to the needs of children. They were also effective in delivering the message to journalists and onwards to the general population through better reporting by the trained journalists, and by community facilitators and volunteers. Materials developed were easy to read and understand while audio messages were delivered in local languages. This was also effective as it empowered people whose profession is to report. The knowledge they gained will assist them in reporting on child labour wherever they were.

Awareness-raising activities were an investment in the knowledge economy. This means that the information and knowledge gained will not fade from people’s mind. The local communities gained insights, lessons and better understanding about child labour and child rights. Some changed their attitudes towards the vice, especially parents whose children were supported, government officers, and children themselves. There was a clear understanding of what child labour is and that this can still take place in the home context. This was repeated by most of the stakeholders met in the course of this documentation.



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Awareness-raising activities against child labour, 2013.

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*“Children now know their rights; they now know they are not supposed to be in child labour, that they have rights to education, good health and so on.”*

*(A Project Officer in Kitui)*

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## ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Children in rights clubs were steadfast to monitor and act on child labour. One child in Busia was for example reported to have severally used the mothers phone to report child labour incidences to an Implementing partner in Busia. Further, children were able to create awareness materials such as posters and key messages, drama skits and poems, which were not only relevant to their areas but which had a deeper impact on other children and stakeholders across the three counties. For example, the poster on child labour in sand harvesting developed in Kitui, was also relevant to other two counties where sand harvesting featured child labour. In relation to involvement of journalists, the joint training of journalists and Implementing partners on effective media use on child labour and children rights was effective and responsive to their needs. Journalists generally lacked good understanding of child labour dynamics, while child labour actors (partners) are unable to effectively communicate with journalists. This led to misreporting and under-reporting of child labour issues. Following the training, journalists and partners were better skilled, which led to more reporting on child labour.

Together with other conventional methods of awareness-raising that were used, empowerment of children and journalists specifically led to more effectively delivery of the child labour message. People, including leaders ordinarily have a soft spot for children. They listen to them and this also happened when children performed poems and shared other messages on child labour in public meetings. Journalists on the other hand have a wide hearing and consequently, they are able to reach the larger population. Discussion on child labour aired live from radio stations, in local languages, effectively placed child labour on the county map. People gained deeper understanding on child labour. This understanding was best summarized by an officer from the Busia County government who noted that they did not have any excuse for not addressing children issues given that ILO had laid bare the situation of children in the county.

## REFERENCES

- Extracted from ILO-IPEC: *Kenya: emerging good practices in laying foundations for child labour-free zones - A case of Busia, Kilifi and Kitui Districts*. ILO, Nairobi, 2013.  
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