



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour  
**IPEC**



# **Part I: An introduction to Child Labour**

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# International and Regional Context

## WORLDWIDE:

- 11% drop in child labour from 2000-2004
- 218 million child labourers
- 126 million involved in Worst Forms

## ASIA-PACIFIC:

- the largest number of child workers aged 5-14: 122.3 million



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# What is Child Labour?

ILO Conventions No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment

1. Work that deprives children of:
  - - childhood; potential; dignity
2. Work that is harmful to physical and mental development: mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children
3. Work that interferes with their schooling by:
  - depriving them of the opportunity to attend school
  - obliging them to leave school prematurely
  - requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work



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# Defining the Worst Form of Child Labour

ILO Convention No.182 (1999):

- Slavery or similar practices: *trafficking* of children, debt bondage, *forced labour* (including the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict)
- Using or offering a child for prostitution/ pornography
- Using or offering a child for illicit activities (production and trafficking of drugs)
- Work which by its nature or because of the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of the child, i.e. “hazardous work”.



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# Causes



- Family/culture acceptable practices
- Poverty
- Internal/external factors
- Economic shock (crisis)
- Supply /DEMAND side factors



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# What can I do?

## SOCIAL MOBILIZATION:

- Individual level:

1. critical consumer behaviour
2. discussing/lobbying
3. collective action

- Agents of social mobilization

1. Workers/Employers Orgs.
2. Universities
3. Media (SCREAM)
4. Public interest organizations (NGOs, etc)



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## Possible initiatives for collective action

- Campaign (Changes to business models: Soccer ball production in Sialkot, Pakistan)
- Boycotts: products of a company or a country
- Student activism : time and idealism
- Corporate Social Responsibility



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## **Part II: Engaging Business in the Worldwide Movement Against Child Labour**

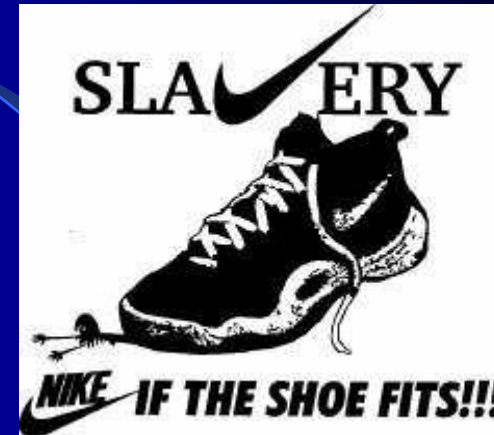
**Martijn Hofman**

**Intern: Child Labour and Disability  
ILO-Bangkok, 30 September 2009**



# What does Child Labour has to do with Business?

- Child Labour is a global issue, it plays a role in the developed as well as the developing countries.
- For many international companies it was found that child labour was used e.g.
  - Nike and the soccer ball industry in India (1990's)
  - IKEA carpet manufacturing in South Asia (1995)
  - GAP fashion company in India (2007)
- But also in Thailand:
  - Shrimp-industry (2008)
  - Agriculture



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# But companies can play an important role in the fight against Child Labour

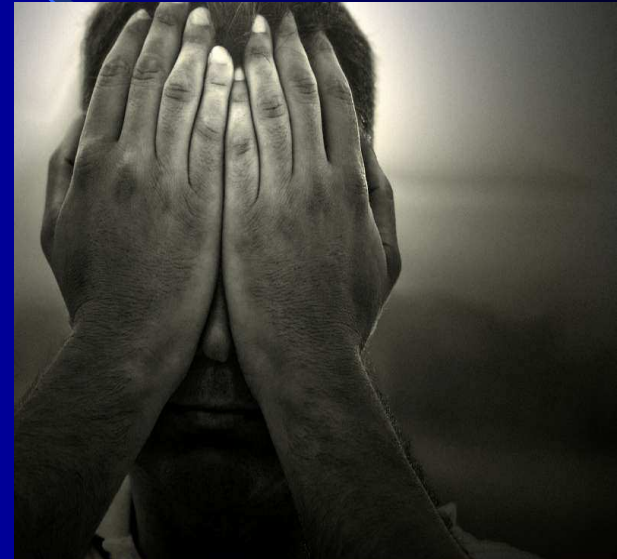
- A major force for progress by
  - Providing opportunities for decent work, propelling economic growth
  - Adhering to national law
- However significant risks persist
  - Informal economy, agriculture
  - Household production
  - Long global supply chains (e.g. global brands)



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# Possible responses on a broad scale

- International Labour Standards: mainly a government issue
  - Multi-Stake Holder Initiatives: collaboration between different partners (governments, IO's, businesses and NGO's)
  - Public-Private Partnerships: governments and businesses partner
  - Supported by auditing, certification, monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- > Focus on the reputation of sensitive, export-oriented companies (sporting goods industry, tobacco, tea, cocoa)



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# What can a company do?

- **Corporate Social Responsibility:**

Wide range of economic, social and initiatives, like Code of Conduct, international framework agreements, auditing... For this issue, CSR relates to all the initiatives that directly addresses the issue of child labour

Examples:

- Socially responsible investments
- Fair Trade and Social Labelling (“child labour free” products)

- **Conducting Due Diligence:**

Make sure that social standards are met throughout the whole supply chain

- Tracking Performance/Social Auditing: To measure the non-financial impact of a company’s business
- Does the company live up to shared values?
- Is a fair balance between buyers and suppliers achieved?



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# What else could a company do?

Some suggestions:

- Advocate - that they are promoting the Conventions
- Co-operate with others on this issue (other firms, governments, trade unions, the academic world)
- Hold seminars or trainings for staff members
- Participate in the 'UN- Global Compact' ten principles (a United Nations initiative to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies and to report on their implementation)



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# Value of a Long Term Vision

- **Complex problem resistant to quick fixes**
- **Trend toward capacity building**
- **Changes to business models**
- **Benefits for the society as a whole: Give children education instead of child-labour**

(Important ILO study: “ Investing in Every Child”)



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## Good Business-arguments

- Respect for labour standards yields in the long term healthier, better-performing workforce and higher productivity
- Showing company's commitment to an issue like child labour can be good marketing.
  - Example: Body Shop-special campaign in collaboration with ECPAT to stop exploitation of children

*'Soft Hands,  
Kind heart'*



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# Students activism



Have a look at:

- The *12-to-12 Community Portal* of the ILO-Child Labour programme: [www.12to12.org](http://www.12to12.org)

And think how you could contribute!

- For more information on the *UN Global Compact*: [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)



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## Questions and Discussion

As a future business-leader what innovative ways could you think of to combat child labour!?



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# Invitation for: 'Young Hearts, Youth Arts & Media Festival'

- Organized by PLAN (Promoting Child Rights to End Child Poverty)
- A regional arts and media festival against school violence by young creative talents from 6 Asian countries -many arts and media-activities: exhibitions, song and dance, workshops
- Opening speech by Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva
- **3-4 October, 2009, 10:30am to 7pm**  
**Discovery Plaza and Siam Center**  
**Bangkok, Thailand**
- <http://www.vectormonster.com/plan-international.org/younghearts/>



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*I want to cry out to the world the rage of chained children.  
I want to cry out to the world the pain of abused girls.  
I want to cry out to the world the unutterable sadness of  
abandoned babies.  
I want to cry out to the world the fear of maltreated kids.  
I want to cry out all this to the world.  
But who will cry out with me?"*

*WILL YOU?...*

*Thank you!!*



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