



The International Labour Organization



Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

**REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP BY THE
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR & SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT ON CHILD LABOUR IN THE
TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR**

HELD AT

MUKONO RESORT HOTEL

FROM 25TH – 26TH SEPTEMBER 2008

**Prepared by:
MICHAEL MATOVU**

**THE REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON CHILD LABOUR IN THE TELECOMMUNICATION
SECTOR HELD AT RESORT HOTEL – MUKONO FROM 25th TO 26th SEPTEMBER 2008**

1.0. List of Participants

	Name	Organization	Designation	Contact
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3	Muligi Ntambi	FUE/NUCAFE	Mpigi/Mukono	0772 446640
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5.	Katende Milly	Director of Educ.	Ag. Inspector.	0772552162
6.	Kibuuka Emmanuel	YRA/NYC	Director	0752 626847
7.	Kaula Henry	REEV Cons/Makekere	Consultant	0782 760888
8.	Jackie A. Banya	MGLSD	Ag. PLO	0772503618
9.	Mwasa Kityo Z.	MGLS D	Ass. Admi	0772 423003
10.	Ntege James	Mukono Aid	SPSWO	0772 99803
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12.	Aseru Florence	Police Mukono	CFPU	0772 428925
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15.	Haji Kibiriiti A.K	Mukono Dist. Comm	CHAIRMAN	0782 976505
16.	Osinde Owor	MGLSD	C/CDDL	0772 438172
17.	Nabwire Rebecca	MDC	Labour Offices	0772 518791
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20.	Bulenga Milly	Mukono Dist.	DCDO	0772 388019
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26.	I G. Munabi	Uganda Tea	Ex. Secretary	0772 481575
27.	Nsimbi James	Mukonon T. Council	S.L.E.O	0712 861504
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2.0. Remarks before Opening of Workshop

Mr. Godfrey Kiberu (organizer of the workshop) welcomed the participants and briefed them about the workshop. He informed them that a Rapid Assessment had been conducted in the Districts of Mukono, Kampala and Mbale about Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector and that this particular Workshop was a follow up on the same activity. He informed them that a similar workshop had already been conducted in Kampala at Regency Hotel and that this particular workshop was targeting Employers, Workers and other Members of the Community in Mukono District. He wished participants fruitful deliberations and he requested the Guest of honour to open the Workshop.

3.0 Official opening g of the workshop

The Guest of honour -Mr. Osinde Owor- thanked the organizers of the workshop and all who had turned up at the workshop. He observed that in Uganda about 2.7 million young girls and boys were being employed prematurely and that this was mainly due to poverty and HIV/AIDS.

He noted that poverty was the main cause of Child Labour as parents failed to pay the children school fees and also in meeting their scholastic needs. This he observed equally contributed to the school dropouts. He observed that HIV/AIDS caused Child Labour as the scourge left many children orphans.

Mr. Osinde further observed that in the telecommunication sector, children were increasingly getting employed to sell air time and distribute telecommunication products as well as used in attending to telephone booths. He emphasized that the Government in addressing the problem of Child Labour had come up with a number of policies such as:

- The National Child Labour Policy
- Universal primary Education (UPE)
- Universal Secondary Education (USE),
- Orphans and Vulnerable Children Policy and others.

He requested all the participants to support the policies and ensure that Child Labour was eliminated. He declared the Workshop open.



Participants at the opening of the Workshop

3.0. Presentation by Ms. Jackie Banya.

Ms. Jackie Banya made a presentation concerning the National Child Labour Policy.

She informed participants that the policy was adopted in November, 2006 and that it was developed through consultative process which involved a number of stakeholders.

She noted that stakeholders included among others Federation of Uganda Employer (FUE), Communities working with children, labour unions and Government Ministries. She observed that this policy was response by Government to eliminate child labour in Uganda and that its main goal was to eliminate the child labor starting with its worst forms.

She explained that the vision and mission of the National Child Labour Policy were to create a society free of exploitative child labour, and in which all working children enjoyed their rights to childhood, education, dignity and the full development. The policy was intended to establish guiding principles. She highlighted that the policy had guiding principles which included:

- Rights based approach:
- Multi-sectoral approach at different levels.
- Mainstreaming child labour into economic, agricultural, education, health and other relevant programmes.

- Monitoring and Data collection on reliable statistical information in all efforts to eliminate child labour.
- Gender Principle concerned with the need to cater for specific gender needs and situations of the working boys and girls.
- HIV/AIDS in which it is recognized the impact of HIV/AIDS on education and the increasing number of orphans who end into child labour.
- Children's participation whereby children participate in the development and monitoring of programs designed to eliminate child labour.
- Focusing on the worst forms of child labour and the policy addresses practices such as child slavery, child trafficking, use of children in armed conflict, use procurement and offering children for prostitution and pornography, use of children in illicit activities like drug trafficking and other works that are likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children.

Ms. Banya observed that the following legislative framework were recognized by Uganda and these included:

- The ILO Conventions No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour (1999).
- The ILO Conventions No.138 on the Minimum age for admission to employment (1973).
- The UN Convention on the rights of the child, 1989.
- The UN protocol to combat the use of children in armed conflict.
- The optional protocol on selling and exploitation of children and
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child, 1991.

At local level Ms. Banya observed the following legislation:

- The employment Act 2006,
- Occupational safety and Health Act .

Ms. Banya observed that other policies on the elimination of Child Labour included:

- The Universal Primary Education (UPE), 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE). These aim at promoting literacy and help to keep children in school.
- The Health Policy and Strategic Plan of Action, 2002.
- The Revised Poverty Eradication Action Plan, 2004
- The Draft National Employment Policy, 2006.
- The Revised National Strategic Framework on HIV/AIDS in Uganda 2003/04 to 2005/06.

- The Revised National Gender Policy, 2006

In order to eliminate Child Labour Ms. Banya emphasized the following:

- Advocacy and awareness raising which involves increasing public awareness and sensitization to ensure that families and communities participate in the identification of the problem and solutions to generate the necessary driving force, community ownership and commitment to take action against child labour.
- Mobilize the public to act and intensify awareness raising activities at all levels in order to create understanding of the risk and consequences of child labour with special emphasis on activities with a linkage on HIV/AIDS.
- Identifying avenues for poverty alleviation, strengthen links with poverty eradication and HIV/AIDS as well as promoting strategies aimed at integrating HIV/AIDS issue into child labour control and prevention.

Responding to her presentation and during the discussions, the participants noted the following:

- The need to distribute the policy to all stakeholders.
- The need to combat poverty if Child Labour was to become eliminated.
- The need to translate the policy into local languages which can easily be understood by all.

4.0. Presentation by Mr. Isaac Munaabi

Mr. Munaabi Isaac gave a presentation on the definition of Child Labour and issues concerning Child Work. He informed the participants that Child Labour was in brief “any work which prevents a child of school going age from going to school and which inhibits proper growth and development of the child; physically, mentally, and psychologically’.

He informed participants that child labour was different from child work. Mr. Munaabi informed the participants that Child Work was work which prepares a child for future participation in the development of society. He further explained that Child Work had a clement of sharing, training for future responsibility, was beneficial to the child, and it was a process of growth and was not exploitative..

Mr. Munaabi further observed that Child Labour was:

- Work which was hazardous
- Work which exploits.

- Exchange of labour for pay
- Fixed task type of work.
- Work with an element of authority.
- Bonded labour (slavery)
- Work which hindered s child growth and development.
- Work that prevented a child from benefiting fully from childhood activities

5.0. Presentation by Mr. Matovu Michael.

In his presentation Mr. Matovu Michael noted that the telecommunication sector was growing very first in Uganda and that they are about 4 million telecommunication sector subscribers. He observed that there were over six television stations and over 50 F.M stations in Uganda. He observed that in Uganda the telecommunication sector companies included Zain, MTN, Warid, Uganda Telecommunication and other new companies were being registered.

Mr. Matovu outlined the findings of the Rapid Assessment carried out about child labour in the telecommunication sector in the districts of Kampala, Mukono and Mbale.

Mr. Matovu informed the participants that the Rapid Assessment revealed that there was child labour in the telecommunication sector. He noted that during the Rapid Assessment Study, children were found to be employed in the sell of airtime cards, manning telephone booths and distributing other telecommunication products.

He emphasized that most of the children involved in child labour during the above Rapid Assessment had lost at least one of their parents. He further noted that 25% of the children had lost at least a parent due to HIV/AIDS and that most of them had come to Kampala, Mukono, Mbale and other urban areas to look for work. He observed that most of the children involved in Child Labour (it was revealed during the Rapid Assessment) were coming from polygamous families and that most of them had dropped out of school.

Mr. Matovu observed that the Rapid Assessment revealed that:

- At least 45% of the children were not working for relatives
- 81% were working full time
- 50% worked for more than 14 hours (beginning from 6.00 a.m to 11.00 p.m.).

He noted that most of the above children were willing to go back to school. Mr. Matovu observed that the study established that the children were often abused in the process especially the female who were most vulnerable to sexual harassment. According to the study he observed that it was recommended that:

- The telecommunication sector collaborates and works together with other stakeholders to eliminate the increasing problem of child labour.

- The sector works together with NGOs, Government, Civil Society Organizations, and other players towards the elimination of Child Labour.
- Supporting directly the children especially those who were willing to go back to school.
- Initiation of programs to help child labour victims for example through vocational training as a way through which they can acquire skills.
- Creating awareness about the problem of child labour such as sensitization of all stakeholders like telecommunication companies, communities, labour unions, children, parents, employers etc.
- Supporting the improvement of working conditions through labour inspections. This was upon recognition that labour officers were either not present in some districts and the few that were working were not facilitated to do their work.
- Follow-up and counseling of the children involved in child labour. This could be done through providing psycho-social support to the child laborers.
- Ensuring that the supply chain is made aware of the problem of child labour in telecommunication. This was due to the fact that telecommunication vendors were increasingly employing children.
- Where possible putting child labour messages on air time cards say; *“not to be sold by some one below the age of 18”*.

Mr. Matovu noted that Child Labour violated:

- Article 34 (1) of the Uganda Constitution
- The Children’s Act
- Employment Act and the ILO Convention No. 182 of 1999.

He observed that all the above call for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. He concluded his presentation by highlighting the point that every one had a role to play to eliminate Child Labour.

During the discussions that followed Mr. Matovu’s the presentation, the following points were noted:

- Representatives of telecommunication companies noted that they were not directly to be blamed for child labour as their products were sold by “third parties”
- Participants agreed that child labour in the sector was on the increase and the earlier it was tackled the better.

- One participant noted that child labour was not only in the telecommunication sector but even in agriculture. He gave an example of Mukono district where children were employed in agriculture in the planting Vanilla. He observed that children were employed to pollinate Vanilla plants.
- A participant observed that in Doho Rice Scheme (Eastern Uganda), children were employed to scare birds from eating the rice and these children hardly attended school.
- Another participant also narrated that child labour was also high in the domestic sector. She noted that employers recruiting agencies usually had large numbers of girls and boys recruited for work.

6.0. Presentation by Mr. Alex Menya

Mr. Alex Menya gave a presentation about the nature and scale of child labour in the informal sector. In his presentation Mr. Menya observed that child labour was most common in the informal sector in Uganda than any other sector. He observed that relatives of children were going to the villages and picked children whom they brought to urban areas like Kampala for work and such children were always exploited.

Giving an overview of Child Labour he observed that in the world there were over 246 million children involved in child labour and that 73 million were less than 10 years and most of them were orphans. He further explained that the Sub-Saharan Africa had the largest proportion of child labour totaling to 48 million and that Governments had done little in eliminating the problem. He observed that the causes of Child Labour were mainly:

- Poverty
- HIV/AIDS.
- Political Conflicts
- Failure to attain education and school drop outs
- Lack of social protection as children head families and support themselves to meet basic needs.
- Exploitative behavior by employers.

Mr. Menya observed that the every organization including the informal sector could play a significant role towards the elimination of Child Labour through:-

- Advocacy and ensuring that the elimination of child labour is on the Agenda of most organizations.
- Communicating regularly to employers in the Informal Sector against employing children.

- Social mobilization so that people know the evils and danger of child labour, to know/identify and remove the invisible forms of child labour which was beyond the formal sector.
- Collaborating with Government and other stakeholders to address the root causes of child labour.
- Gathering more information and statistics on Child Labour.
- Collaborating with stakeholders to identify children engaged in hazardous work.

Concluding his presentation Mr. Alex Menya requested the telephone companies to support efforts against child labour.

While reacting to his presentation, the participants observed the following:

- That the sector was having a big proportion of children involved in Child Labour.
- That Labour Inspections by Government required to be strengthened so as to eliminate Child Labour in the sector.

7.0. Group Discussions:

Participants were divided into two groups to discuss two group questions and the following was the response from each group:

7.1. Group one Question:

Who are the stakeholders in the supply Chain of Child labour in the telecommunication sector? What strategies should other actors including the telecommunication companies play in eliminating Child Labour?

The key stakeholders and their role in the supply chain were identified by the group as the following:

- *Parents/guardians:* The group noted that these could play a big role especially in the informal sector where parents had pay phones and employed their children. The group noted that these parents or guardians often exploited children and children worked for long hours with risks of child abuse like sexual abuse.
- *Telecommunication Companies:* These brought the business into existence. They sold Air time cards, Phone booths, Phone Cards etc to vendors who then sold and employed children. It was explained that before telecommunication companies were established, children could not undertake such businesses.
- *Sale Agents:* Group members noted that these distributed franchise to children and they acted as 'bridge' between children and companies. The group reported that it would be too hard for children to go directly to telecom companies for products themselves.

- *Vendors:* These directly employed children to ‘man telephone booths, sell airtime, phone -cards etc. These often exploited children and they sometimes did not pay the children.
- *Community:* Group observed that the community was equally responsible for the problem. They noted that community was not caring about the problem of Child Labour.
- *Employment Agencies:* These received children from villages to come and work etc. These played a central role in supplying child labour to people.
- *Children:* Some children brought friends and relatives who were children to work with them.
- *Landlords:* It was noted that children operated phones and other businesses on their premises/vendors. So landlords facilitated child labour indirectly.
- *Phone users:* The phone users were not caring from whom they bought the telecommunication products from.

Regarding the strategies to combat Child Labour the group one recommended the following:

- *Parents/Guardians:* These should ensure that they children go to school and make sure that they continue with education.

Telecommunication Companies: These could do the following:

- Sensitization about child labour by putting information against child labour on Air Time cards ‘not to be sold by some one below the age of ‘18’ on airtime cards.
- Print posters/ Messages against child labour.
- Send messages to people against child labour.
- Participate in the rehabilitation of such children and even send them to school or provide scholarships etc.
- *Community:* Should report child labour cases to authority and form anti-child labour groups to sensitize those who employ children.
- *Employment Agencies:* Should adhere to the rules and regulations against child labour.
- *Teachers:* Sensitize, educate and guide parents about retaining children in schools, provide guidance and counseling to children to reduce on school drop-outs.
- *NGOs:* Could sensitize, withdraw children from child labour and reach out to needy children and families especially the child headed families.

7.2 Group 2 Question was:

How different stakeholders can participate in the fight against child labour and the following was presented:

Children:

- Through music, dance and drama messages against child labour to sensitize communities and their fellow children in schools.
- Children can be involved in child labour awareness campaigns and Essay writing/competition about child labour
- Debates in schools by children against child labour and report cases of child labour against them and other children.

Telecommunication Companies by:

- Restricting children from selling airtime cards
- Being involved in child labour campaigns
- Supporting rehabilitation of such children

Employers by:

- Stopping recruitment of children
- Networking with other stakeholders to fight child labour
- Creating awareness against child labour
- Promoting improved working conditions for those children who must work.

Workers by:

- Advocacy
- Monitoring and enforcement of Labour legislation
- Starting activities through Trade Unions
- Monitor and report cases of child labour to authority
- Net working

Government through:

- Enforcement of legislation
- Strengthening the Labour Inspectorate.
- Every district having a Labour Officer
- Creating awareness to the public through adverts, workshops and other information, education and communication programs.
- Translating of the child labour policy into local languages for easy understanding.
- Government setting up new rehabilitation centres for children.
- Government should strengthening Universal Primary and Secondary Education.



A participant from Warid Telecommunication Company emphasizing a point during the discussions/ presentation.

Parents through:

- Collective social responsibility and report cases of child labour
- Educating children instead of leaving them to drop out of school
- Providing the required psycho-social support to the children to nurture them into responsible citizens who focus on their future.

8.0. RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

After the group discussions, participants came up with the following recommendations as a way forward:

- Participants observed the need for all the key players including the Telecommunication companies to come up with programmes and initiatives that would effectively contribute towards the elimination of Child Labour within the sector.
- Parents were to be encouraged to take the children to school other than involving them in Child Labour.
- The families of the children and their homes were to ensure that domestic violence which had become common was reduced, as Domestic Violence tended to force children into Child Labour (as children fled the homes and others ended on streets).
- Schools were to ensure that the school environment was conducive for education so as to attract the children to stay at school and this could be strengthened through dialogue between Government, parents/guardians and school administration.
- Family planning required was to be encouraged so that families were with children they could afford to support and manage.
- Bye Laws required to be passed by local authorities so as to curb on Child Labour practices.
- Dialogue required was to be maintained with telecommunication companies so as to search for a solution on Child Labour in the sector.
- Support to the children in schools and provision of Vocational Training for skills in schools was required to become encouraged so that children acquired skills other than being pushed into Child Labour in the event of leaving school.
- Children required were to be involved in the fight against Child Labour.
- Other districts in the country required to sensitized on Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector
- More awareness raising workshops and campaigns about the problem of Child Labour in the Sector required to be undertaken as ignorance about the problem was still rampant in other areas of Uganda.



Mr. Isaac Munaabi one of the facilitators emphasizing a point before the closing of the Workshop

9.0. Closing of Workshop

The workshop was closed by the Assistant District Administrator Mukono Mrs. Namatovu Ssemakula Betty who observed that in the District Child Labour was a big challenge that required to be carefully handled. She requested the participants to sensitize other members of the public about the problem of Child Labour and its consequences. She observed that families had a number of problems which forced children into Child Labour and even made children drop out of school. She noted that there were various family problems which made children to drop out of school and forced children into Child Labour and she requested the participants to work together with the authorities so that solutions became found.

She thanked the organizers of the workshop and the International Labour Organisation for the message on Child Labour which would in turn assist the children of Uganda. She observed that each and every individual had a role to play towards the elimination of Child Labour and that she was to bring to the attention of Government and the concerned authorities what had transpired during the workshop for a follow up. She then declared the workshop closed.