

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

**FOR THE CHILD LABOUR IN THE
TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR HELD AT**

KAYEGI HOTEL - MBALE

FROM

20th – 21st August 2009

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TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR HELD AT KAYEGI HOTEL MBALE
FROM THURSDAY 20TH TO FRIDAY 21ST AUGUST 2009**

NO.	NAME	ORGANIZATION	TITLE
1.	Oludik Vicky	Police	W/PC
2.	Neumbe Angella	CDO – MMC	Community Dev. Officer
3.	Makai Nangoye S.W.	AL Office Mbale	DLO
4.	Jabbi Ronald	Occupation Safety	Caretaker
5.	Cephas Wabbai	CRO-Child Outreach	Social Worker
6.	Namakola Twaha	Atlas/Rotary Int.	BDO
7.	Watenga Abednego	Mbale Local Govt.	Coord. CBS
8.	Ibrahim Makubuya	Warid Uganda	Supervisor
9.	Mabonga N.M.	SDPWO/MBL LG	SDPWO
10.	Nalyanya Henry	RDC's Office	D/RDC – Mbale
11.	Lunyolo Annet	MGLSD	Secretary
12.	Serwaludde Ed.	MTN	Supervisor
13.	Jingo Kasujja	Orange Uganda	Manager
14.	Babita Annet	Mg. Ltd.	Secretary
15.	Sidire Ibrahim	Islamic University Mbale	Lecturer
16.	Mirembe Rose	News Reporter	News Reporters
17.	Mafaabi Ronald	Zain Uganda	Supervisor
18.	Atim Juliet	News Journalist	News Journalist
19.	Natukunda Ritah	UTL	Supervisor
20.	Nattabi Mary	UTL	Manager
21.	Ochwo Emmy	DSO Office	Officer
22.	Mugisha Charles	Informal Sector	Director
23.	Dan Lwanga	Broad Band Company	Supervisor
24.	Okoth David	Mbale Local Government	Social Worker
25.	Alamagombe Shamira	Mbale Islamic University	Lecturer
26.	Mrs. Wandera Rita	Uganda clays Kampala	Supervisor
27.	Oasca Joh Bosco	Atlas Freight Mbale	Field Officer
28.	Godfrey Kiberu	MGLSD	P.L.O/E
29.	Matovu Michael	FUE	Child Labour
30.	Nakamya Irene	CDO	CDO

Opening the Workshop.

The workshop was opened by Mr. Kiberu Godfrey (Assistant Commissioner for Employment) in the Ministry of Labour Gender and Social Development. He observed that the workshop was a follow up on the study on Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector which was conducted in the Districts of Kampala, Mukono and Mbale. He observed that the problem of Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector was quite big and required a concerted effort from all stakeholders. He requested the participants to listen attentively to the presentations and come up with recommendations and solutions that would ensure the elimination of Child Labour from the sector. He wished participants good and fruitful deliberations.



Participants at the opening of the workshop

Participants Expectations

The Participants indicated the following expectations at the beginning of the workshop:

- Learning about Child Labour and its causes in Mbale District
- Getting knowledge how Child Labour could be included in the District Action Plans
- Learning the nature of Child Labour in the telecommunication Sector

- Coming up with strategies to assist children involved in Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector
- Sharing information on the study on Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector.

Presentation by Ms. Jackie Banya

Ms. Jackie Banya, Senior Programme Officer ILO/IPEC Kampala gave a presentation on the National Child Labour Policy and the Role of the International Labour Organisation Programme towards the elimination of Child Labour.

She briefed the participants that Child Labour generally referred to work that was mentally, physically, socially and morally dangerous and harmful to children. Child Labour also implied work and activities that interfered with the children's school attendance. She informed the participants that Child Labour also involved work that was hazardous in its nature and circumstances under which it was performed and that it affected the health, safety and moral development of children.

Participants were informed that Child Labour equally involved the use of dangerous tools, working for long hours, carrying or lifting heavy loads, heavy tasks, exposure to chemicals and dangerous substances, cruelty by employers and was at times accompanied with sexual abuse of children and exploitation. She emphasized the point that all the above required to be eliminated.

Participants were briefed that Uganda had ratified ILO Convention No.182 of 1999 which looked at the worst forms of Child Labour as:

- Child slavery or practice similar to slavery such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom
- Use of children in armed conflict.
- Use, procurement and offering children for prostitution and pornography
- Use of children in illicit activities such as drug trafficking
- Work that was likely to harm the health, safety and morals of children.

In her presentation Ms. Banya further elaborated on the children's rights. She observed that these were included in the :

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Children's Act

- The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda under Article 34(4)

While elaborating on the causes of Child Labour, Ms. Banya briefed the participants that Child Labour in Uganda was mainly caused by :

- Poverty as 38% of the population was living below the poverty line
- HIV/AIDS as parents die and leave behind orphans who leave school
- Gender, as girls have limited opportunities of acquiring knowledge and skills for productive work.
- Irresponsible parenthood, as parents neglect the children and do not take them to school.
- Ignorance due to lack of knowledge between Child Labour and Child Work.

Ms. Banya explained to the participants that some of the interventions already in Uganda to combat Child Labour included:

- The universal primary Education UPE 1997
- Universal Secondary Education (USE)
- Orphans and vulnerable Children Policy 2004
- Draft Policy on HIV/AIDS 2006

Ms. Jackie Banya also informed the participants that Uganda had put in place the National Child Labour Policy whose vision was “to create a society free of exploitative child labour, in which all working children enjoyed the right to childhood, education, dignity and the full development of their potential”. She further elaborated that the mission of this same policy was to provide an enabling environment for the prevention, protection and elimination of child labour. The guiding principles in the same policy were:

- The recognition that all human beings, adults and children have rights.
- Having a multisectoral approach to create opportunities for information gathering, sharing knowledge and coordination of activities.
- Collection of accurate and reliable statistical information to prevent and eliminate child labour.
- Mobilising popular support to denounce Child Labour.

- Realizing the impact on education and the increasing number of HIV/AIDS orphans who contribute to Child Labour.

Ms. Banya further informed the participants that in the wake of the challenge on Child Labour the International Programme on Elimination of Child Labour had initiated a new project in Uganda to cover the Districts of Rakai, Mbale and Wakiso. The purpose of the project was to create Child Labour Free Zones in the area and she requested the participants to support the programme.

Discussion on the presentation

Participants discussed her presentation. During the exchange of ideas it was observed that not much awareness had been created in Mbale, and that the Government required to set up a rehabilitation Centre in the District to combat Child Labour. The issue of culture was discussed and participants noted the need for the parents to be sensitized so as to produce the number of children they can afford to support. Vocational Training and children lack of skills that pushed them into Child Labour was also noted.

Presentation by Mr. Michael Matovu

In his presentation Mr. Matovu Michael informed the participants that in Uganda there was a very fast developing telecommunication sector and that a number of companies and investments were increasing. He informed the participants that equally the number of telephone subscribers had improved. He observed that the prominent companies were mainly MTN, Warid Telecom, Zain, Uganda Telecom, and Orange. He further observed that even there was an expansion of other telecommunication sector activities mainly on the side of the increase on the number of Telephone Companies and the Frequency Modulated Radio Channels.

Mr. Matovu Michael observed that MTN alone had at least 1,800,000 mobile telephone subscribers, Zain 1,100,000 Subscribers and that the number was even expanding among other service providers. Mr. Matovu Observed that during the Survey that was conducted within the Telecommunication Sector in the Districts of Mukono, Kampala and Mbale (with financial support from the International Labour Organisation) it was revealed that children were involved in the Telecommunication Sector in the mainly in the following activities:

- Sale of telephone Cards
- Manning of telephone Booths

Mr. Matovu explained to the participants that most of the children who were involved in the above activity were found to be orphans and many had lost at least one or both parents (mainly due to HIV/AIDS) related illnesses. Most of the children were also found to be coming from polygamous families and a significant number were school drop outs who could not meet their Education and School requirements.

Mr. Matovu Michael informed the participants that the survey in the sector revealed that:

- At least 41% of the children were not related to the owners of the business
- 81% worked full time
- They worked for extremely long hours
- 50% worked more than 14 hours a day, that is mainly beginning at 6:00am to 11:00pm in the night
- The average hours were 12 a day
- Mr. Matovu Michael informed the participants that the survey results revealed that:
 - Most of the children had worked for at least 3 months
 - Some children were not paid for the work
 - Some were paid on daily or weekly basis and others on monthly basis
 - 89% of the children indicated, they were willing to go back to school
 - Those who had stayed long in Child Labour were willing to go back to school

In His presentation Mr. Matovu observed that the Survey emphasized the point that Child Labour was actually in existence within the sector and that children were working under very hazardous circumstances and that the challenge of HIV/AIDS was still enormous. The study equally exposed the point how the Girl Children were very vulnerable.. Matovu observed that the Rapid Assessment Report equally observed the need for:

- Advocating for elimination of child labour in the sector as a priority.
- Networking with other stakeholders was necessary
- Supporting a the National Child Labour Policy
- Initiating programmes for children working in the sector say by providing vocational skills especially to the school dropouts
- Having direct support to children who would like to return to school in the sector
- Promoting apprenticeship programmes for the children in the sector

- Working together to come up with solutions on child labour in the sector
- Sensitizing all stakeholders concerned on the problems of child labour
- Supporting on the improvement of working conditions through labour inspections enforcing minimum hours of work for minors and ensuring minimum health and safety conditions
- Follow up, counsel and place identified children
- Ensuring that supply chain of phone dealers, agents and companies are all made aware of the problem.

Mr. Matovu Michael further noted that during the Rapid Assessment Study it was recommended that the Telephone Companies needed:

- To place child labour issues in their company corporate Social responsibility agenda and to improve their individual company image
- Have child labour messages on airtime cards
- Identify and help such children by developing dialogue with other stakeholders

During the presentation participants were exposed to other regulations and laws that prohibited Child Labour in Uganda and these included the Republic of Uganda Constitution Article 34(1) which prohibits the social and economic exploitation of children from work that was likely to be harmful to health, physical, mental spiritual, moral and social development of children. The Children Act which protects children from employment or activity that is harmful to education, health, mental, physical or moral development. Participants were also exposed to the Employment Act 2006 which prohibits employment of children in dangerous and hazardous jobs, and the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2006 which prohibits the employment of children.

Participants were briefed about the ILO Convention No. 182 which defined Worst Forms of Child Labour as “ Work which by its nature or circumstances under which it is carried out is likely to the health, safety and morals of children”. Mr. Matovu observed that the Convention urges to put in place programmes to eliminate the worst forms of Child Labour. Participants were also briefed that the ILO Recommendation 99 calls for states to identify and eliminate the worst forms of Child Labour and Section 3(e) of this recommendation included Children working in difficult conditions such as those working for long hours, or during night, work where a children are confined to the premises of an employer. The same recommendation calls for action from employers and workers organisations to sensitising parents on working conditions of such children. It calls for mobilising resources for both national and international programmes, and

requests for monitoring and giving publicity on the best practices towards eliminating child labour.

Participants were further informed that the ILO Recommendation 99 emphasises sensitising and mobilizing the general public including national local leaders, and parliamentarians and judiciary about Child Labour practices, in addition to registering the perpetrators of Child Labour. Participants were also exposed to the ILO convention No. 138 of 1973 which was ratified by Uganda and forbid the employment of children below 18 years, and the United Nations Convention No. 32 on the rights of children (1989) which protects children from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitations.

Mr. Matovu Michael briefed the participants that eliminating Child Labour was a responsibility by all members of society and that each individual in society was under obligation to ensure that the practice was gradually avoided. He observed that preparing a code of conduct on eliminating the problem could be one of the interventions at all levels, including establishment of close contacts with the Ministry of Labour to ensure observation of positive work standards.

During the presentation Mr. Matovu Michael noted the need to provide support or scholarships for children who are most vulnerable, disseminating to the public about the cost of Child Labour, and ensuring all actors such as Parents, Teachers, Religious Leaders, Political leaders, Local Leaders, Government and each equally plays his or her role towards the elimination of the practice both in the telecommunication sector and in the country.

Discussion on the presentation

During the discussion on the presentation the participants noted the concern that the report had taken so long before its results (that were useful) could be disseminated. A representative from one of the telecommunication companies expressed the point that in their organization it was policy only to employ adults. The participants also noted the laxity in the local government and in the Mbale Town Council not to pass by laws that would limit Child Labour Activities.

Workshop recommendations and way forward

After brainstorming and discussing all the presentations, the participants came up with the following recommendations as a way forward:

- Raising more awareness through the mass media about the problem of Child Labour within the sector in Uganda.
- Availing guidelines to employers including recruitment agencies when recruiting and employing new workers to limit the employment of children..

- Enforcement of the policies and the laws that address Child Labour in Mbale District required to be strengthened.
- Sports and Drama was noted as one of the ways through which awareness could be raised on Child Labour in the Telecommunication Sector including other Sectors.
- Government was requested to establish rehabilitation centres for the children withdrawn from Child Labour or those affected by Child Labour as Mbale District lacked facilities to help such children.
- Telecommunication companies required to start a scholarship fund so as to meet the school requirements of children involved in Child Labour, and this could be done through the company corporate social responsibility programme.
- More research and dissemination of reports was required into the problem of Child Labour in Mbale District.
- The Mbale District authorities were requested to include Child Labour issues into the District Budgets and plans so as to enable the raising of resources for eliminating Child Labour.
- The telecommunication companies were requested to closely monitor and see how best they could contribute to the gradual elimination of Child Labour.
- Involving the children in the Child Labour Programmes was recommended.
- Vocational Skills training was requested as most children left schools with no skills and that tended to force such children into Child Labour.
- Reaching other districts in the country so as to share the report findings was recommended.

Closing the Workshop,

The Workshop was closed by the District Resident Representative Mr. Nalyanya Henry who thanked the participants for attending the workshop. He requested all of them to share the information both in the District and within their individual communities so as to bring an end to the problem. He informed them that the problem of Child Labour was big not only in the Telecommunication Sector but even in other Sectors and required the concerted effort from all stakeholders. He thanked the International Labour Organisation for supporting the organization of the workshop and he promised that all issues raised by the participants were to be forwarded to the relevant authorities. He declared the Workshop Closed.