

Trade Unions **&** **Child Labour**

Booklet 2

Union Policies and Action Plans to Combat Child Labour

Developing National and International Trade Union Strategies to Combat Child Labour
Project INT/96/M06/NOR

Bureau for Workers' Activities
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

This booklet is one of seven booklets in the series “*Trade Unions and Child Labour*”. The booklets were produced in the year 2000 as part of the ILO/ACTRAV project, Developing National and International Trade Union Strategies to Combat Child Labour (INT/96/M06/NOR), sponsored by the Government of Norway.

The series of booklets comprises:

- 1 Guide to the Booklets**
- 2 Union Policies and Action Plans to Combat Child Labour**
- 3 Fact Finding and Information about Child Labour**
- 4 Campaigning Against Child Labour**
- 5 Collective Bargaining to Combat Child Labour**
- 6 Using ILO Standards to Combat Child Labour**
- 7 The Tripartite Structure to Combat Child Labour**

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Preface

The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has been involved in issues concerning environmentally sustainable development and child labour for many years - through supporting trade unionists to develop and to implement their own policies and action plans.

Child labour is a vast and complex area, and many different groups are engaged in the elimination of child labour, therefore a large number of publications have been produced on this subject.

So, why do we need more?

Just as with the question of environmentally sustainable development, trade unions have asked for materials dealing with the issue of child labour from the specific point of view of workers and their organizations.

This series of booklets is designed as an introductory "one stop" guide for trade union activists who have decided that they want to get involved in child labour and want information to get them on the track.

You, the reader, may be involved in trade union work at many levels: at a national centre; in a national trade union; in the regional or local structure of a national centre or national union; or as an activist in an enterprise or a public service such as a school or hospital.

It does not matter which level you work at, or what position you hold, whether you are a full-time paid staff member of a trade union or a voluntary activist such as a shop steward or a branch secretary. At any level, in any trade union position, you can make a contribution to the fight against child labour. The struggle is worthwhile. It is a struggle for basic human rights - the rights of the child to education and childhood. It is a trade union issue because it is a question of adult employment.

You can use the materials as working papers. Often, you will think of things that you need to do. Record these points and then take the appropriate action.

Above all, the materials are tools to be used.

There are checklists, action points, quotations, case studies, and different references throughout the booklets.

The booklets were produced through a collective process by trade unionists themselves. Draft booklets were prepared and were then sent out for comments to many trade union organizations and tested in several workshops in Africa and Asia. They were then revised in the light of feedback from previous activities, at a workshop in Geneva. Further revision and editing took place before it was finally printed for publishing.

Geneva, 2000



Else-Marie Osmundsen
Chief Technical Adviser
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Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project

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The Problem of Child Labour Today

1



Photo ILO/Lissac

Child labour has been high on the agenda of international organizations and conferences during the last decade, even though it is not something new. In the nineteenth century, often as the result of trade union campaigns, governments passed legislation to protect children from the increasing dangers that industrialization and urbanization brought to working relationships. These developments, coupled with legislation for compulsory schooling, gave rise to the idea that the place for children was at school and not in the workplace.

When the ILO was founded in 1919, one of the organization's core issues was child labour. Convention No. 5, adopted in 1919, addressed the problem of the minimum age for industrial employment. Since then there have been a number of conventions on the minimum age for employment for different industries. However, the two principal ILO conventions dealing with the child labour issue are:

- ◆ **ILO Convention No. 138, Minimum Age for Employment, 1973, and**
- ◆ **ILO Convention No. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999.**

It is important to note that these conventions are not the first to recognize the link between child labour and education. Convention No.10, adopted in 1921, already recognized this link.

The ILO promotes its objectives through standard setting, advocacy and technical cooperation. In 1992, the ILO established a programme dedicated to the fight against child labour. This programme is called the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, IPEC. IPEC works with governments, employers and trade unions to develop national policies and programmes to eliminate child labour. IPEC facilitates dialogue between these three partners in order to achieve national objectives. Today IPEC is an InFocus Programme of the ILO, covering all three methods – standard setting, advocacy and technical cooperation.

The social partners are also involved in the fight against child labour directly. ACTRAV, the Bureau for Workers' Activities, has given high priority to child labour. Two ACTRAV projects, "*Developing National and International Trade Union Strategies to Combat Child Labour*" (INT/96/M06/NOR), and "*Action against Child Labour through Education and Training*", (INT/98/M10/NOR) are working in collaboration with a wide range of trade union organizations.

The Bureau for Employers' Activities, ACT/EMP, has also worked to promote employers' awareness and action on child labour.

Despite the long history of campaigns and legislation, working children can still be found in industrialized countries. An increase in child labour is being observed in Central and Eastern European countries as they move from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Even in the United States, more children are working because of the rapid increase in part-time jobs and the demand for a more flexible workforce. Nevertheless, child labour is most prevalent in the non-industrialized countries. Although it is impossible to give exact figures, the ILO estimates that in developing countries alone:

- ◆ **250 million** children between five and fourteen are working.
- ◆ Approximately **190 million** working children are in the 10 to 14 year age group.
- ◆ Approximately **120 million** children are working full time.
- ◆ In Latin America, there are thought to be approximately **17.5 million** working children. This represents about **20%** of the children in the region.
- ◆ In Africa, **40%** of the continent's children are child labourers. This means some **80 million** children are working in the region.
- ◆ Asia has **60%** of the world's child labourers, nearly **153 million**.
- ◆ The number of working children between the ages of 14 and 18 years is not known.

These statistics serve to illustrate that child labour is a vast problem, but they alone do not describe the nature of the problem.



Photo A. Ramella

What child labour is

So, what do we mean by child labour? Child labour is not children doing small tasks around the house, nor is it children participating in work appropriate to their level of development and which allows them to acquire practical skills and learn responsibility. Child labour does include all work which, by its nature or the conditions under which it is carried out, harms, abuses and exploits the child, or deprives

the child of an education. This means that child labour manifests itself in many forms and a critical examination of the situation of working children is necessary to determine what constitutes child labour and its worst forms. The framework for this examination is clearly stated in the two principal ILO conventions on the issue. (Please refer to Booklet 6, Using ILO Standards to Combat Child Labour.)



Photo ILO/Lissac

Forms of child labour

Child labour exists in many forms, and new forms develop as the formal sector of the economy shrinks and the informal sector grows. Sometimes child labour can be easily observed, sometimes it is hidden from view. This list of different forms of child labour includes some of the most widespread forms as well as some of the worst forms. Some of these forms of child labour are more amenable to trade union action than others, because workplace action, which can be of crucial importance in the fight against child labour, is an area where trade unions are strong. However, this is by no means a complete list of all existing forms.

Agricultural work Very many working children are found in agriculture and some in fishing. These children start working at an earlier age and work longer hours than children in cities and towns. Children are often found working on the family farm or small holding, but the family may be hired as a unit, working as contract labour. Child labour is still common in commercial agriculture. Trade unions have particular problems organizing in the agricultural sector, as some countries do not permit agricultural workers to enjoy the same rights of freedom of association as other groups of workers.



Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project

Children are believed to comprise a quarter of all agricultural workers in Kenya. And a 1993 study in Malawi found that the majority of children living on tobacco estates were working full or part-time (78% of 10-14 year olds and 55% of 7 to 9 year olds). The situation is by no means confined to the developing world. Entire families of migrant labourers (as in the case of Mexican migrant workers in the USA) help plant and harvest the rich world's fruit and vegetables...

Children ... face the greatest risks from hazardous and exploitative agricultural labour... Children pick crops still dripping with pesticides or spray the chemicals themselves. According to data from Sri Lanka, death from pesticides poisoning on farms and plantations is greater than from other childhood disease such as malaria and tetanus.

Alec Fyfe, *Bitter Harvest, Child Labour in Agriculture*, ILO/ACTRAV, 1997

Domestic service

This form of work is very common and many people see it as acceptable. It may be paid or unpaid work. It can take place in the family home - cleaning, cooking, and looking after younger brothers and sisters. It is important because it means adults are now free to take paid jobs. Many more girls than boys do this work. When domestic work is not for the family, but outside the home, there are particular problems. The children - almost always girls - work very long hours, they have no chance to go to school, they are isolated from family and friends. They often face the risk of sexual and physical abuse from their employers.



Photo ILO/Lissac

In 1995, a survey of domestic child workers sampled girls from 10-16 years and found “that 17% had had no formal education and 50% had attended school only up to Standard 8. Of the girls sampled with no formal education, 67% of them were orphans. Of the remaining girls, 88% had surviving mothers, and 72% had surviving fathers. However, all the mothers were unemployed and all the fathers were in casual self-employment such as labourers, petty vegetable and clothes traders... Only 39% had any familial affiliation with their employer and, if so, it was generally a second or third auntie.”

Child Labour in Domestic Service: Trade Union Manual, ILO/ACTRAV, 2000

Work in mines and quarries

Child labour is used in small-scale mines in many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The children work long hours without adequate protective equipment, clothing and training and are exposed to high levels of humidity and extreme temperatures. Child miners suffer from physical strain, fatigue and disorders of the muscles and skeleton, as well as risk serious injury from falling objects.

Children as young as 6 or 7 can be seen in many countries breaking rocks with hammers, washing ore, sieving it and transporting it. Children as young as 9 have been observed working underground, setting explosives and fetching and carrying for adult workers. At age 12 or so their presence underground is more widespread in a number of countries and they start to do work that is the same as adults — filling sacks with ore, transporting them on their backs or loading them into carts.

Social and labour issues in small-scale mines, ILO Report for discussion at the Tripartite Meeting, Geneva, 17-21 May 1999

Photo Gianotti



Photo ILO/Lissac



Work in manufacturing processes

This work can be regular, casual, legal or illegal, as part of a family or by the child on her or his own, for an employer. This type of work includes carpet weaving in a small workshop or factory, polishing gemstones, making a wide range of products such as garments, chemicals, brassware, glassware, fireworks, and matches. These processes expose the children to hazardous chemicals, poor ventilation, radiant heat, fire and explosion, which can lead to poisoning, respiratory diseases, cuts, burns and even death.

Here are the actual words of the head of a US company that makes clothing accessories in China:

“We have a factory in China where we have 250 people. We own them; it’s our factory. We pay them \$40 a month, and they work 28 days a month. They work from 7am to 11pm with two breaks for lunch and dinner. They all live together, 16 people to a room, stacked on four bunks to a corner. Generally, they’re young girls that come from the hills”

Irwin Gordon, President Ava-Line, quoted in Business News, 21/8/1996

Slavery and forced labour

This is also known as bonded labour. Despite the existence of United Nations and ILO conventions aimed at stopping these practices, they persist. The practice is most commonly found in rural areas, where it can be more easily hidden from enforcement authorities and publicity. It is also frequently linked to the oppression of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. One recent estimate, which is deliberately conservative, estimates that there are 27 million bonded labourers in the world today, and a high percentage of these are children. Human Rights Watch believes that there are 15 million children in bonded labour in India alone.¹

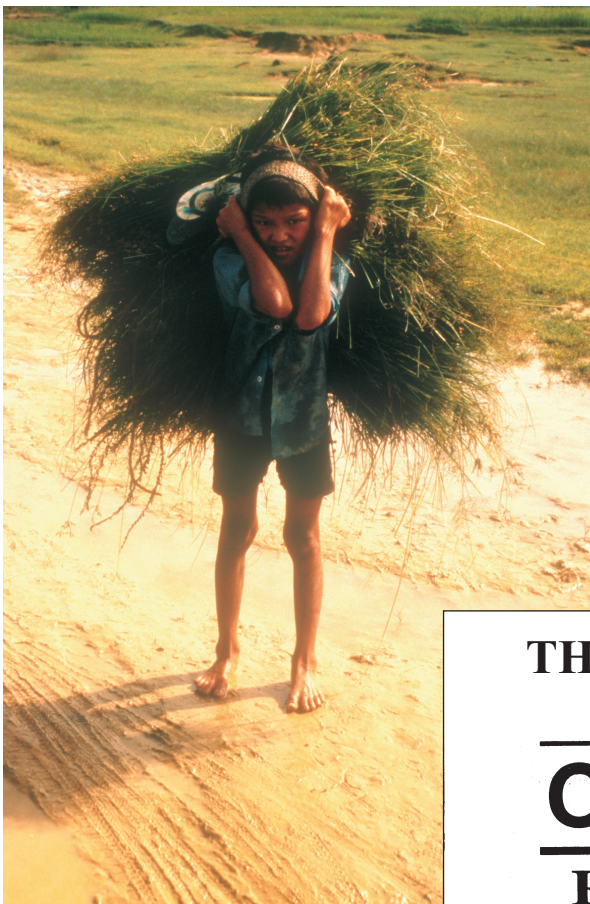


Photo Tor Monsen/ILO info Norway

A trade union led campaign has been successful in pressurising the Government to abolish the Kamaiya system (a form of bonded labour) in Nepal. This may be too late for Malla, an eleven year old Kamaiya bonded labourer in western Nepal.

While the other family members are working on the estate, Malla is forced to carry heavy loads for hours each day, even when he is too tired to continue.

CTA Mission, Nepal, September 2000

THE KATHMANDU POST

Monday, September 4, 2000

OPINION

Rehabilitate Kamaiyas

Last month, the government introduced a legislation to end the age-old practice of Kamaiya or bonded labour with the help of some social organisations in the country. In doing so, the government no doubt took a revolutionary new step to reform the existing socio-economic system. However, it has failed to take the next step, that is, to rise up to the challenges of rehabilitating the freed Kamaiyas. Thus the government has not even

there have been no specific measures to rehabilitate them even a month after their liberation.

After the government outlawed bonded labour, more than 85 thousand Kamaiyas in the country's five mid-western and western districts have been without jobs and shelters. Obviously, the government liberated them without making adequate preparations for their resettlement. Neither were temporary shelters

¹ Kevin Bales, *Disposable People*, University of California Press 1999; Human Rights Watch, *The Small Hands of Slavery*, 1996

Prostitution and trafficking in children

This particularly repugnant form of child labour is thought by many experts to be on the increase, as the sale of children across national boundaries is becoming more common. The United Nations estimates that one million children in Asia are involved in the sex trade. In addition, children working in other industries, for example tourism, are also subject to being used sexually. The harm that these children face ranges from moral corruption to sexually transmitted diseases to death.

In the worst cases, the children are physically trapped in the brothels. In Ranong, Thailand, where there are large number of child prostitutes, some brothels are surrounded by electrified barbed fences and armed guards.

Voices of Thai Women, quoted in ICFTU, No Time to Play, Child Workers in the Global Economy, 1996

Work in the informal/unorganized sector

This includes a whole range of activities. Some are very easily observed while others are hidden from public view. These activities often take place on the streets and generally involve little equipment, for example the bearing of loads on construction sites and at brick kilns. This work would also include the activities of domestic servants and home workers. This type of work may be considered “self-employment” in the informal sector, for example shoe cleaning, begging, pulling rickshaws, collecting fares on small buses, selling newspapers, collecting rubbish, and scavenging on rubbish dumps.

Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project



Photo Tor Monsen/ILO info, Norway



In Bhaktapur, Nepal, children work in the informal sector, in the brick kiln industry.

SANTOS (12) works in a quarry some miles from the capital Kathmandu. He works from six in the morning until six in the evening. He is an orphan. His father died recently, and Santos was left alone with a handicapped grandfather. He attended school until he was left alone - up till third class - but then he had to take care of and financially support his grandfather alone. On a good day, he earns about 0.33 US\$. But this is exceptional.

A kilo of cheap rice costs 0.33 US\$, and a coke 0.22 US\$.

An NGO runs a project which provides school facilities. Many of the child labourers have started attending school and been replaced by adult workers. The NGO cooperates closely with the trade unions by inviting them to visit and organize the workers in order to improve their working conditions. This enables the trade union organizations to “get into” the informal sector.

CTA Mission, Nepal, September 2000

What causes child labour

The reasons for child labour are many and the causes of specific incidences of child labour will vary from country to country and from industry to industry. However, there are common causes:

Poverty

Poverty is frequently given as the main reason for child labour. Poor families may send their children to work to increase the family income. Large numbers of children work as unpaid workers in family farms and stores that depend on family labour to survive economically.

Failure of the education system

Many areas simply do not have schools - particularly in rural areas. In some cases, fees are charged and parents cannot afford them. Where free schools are available, the quality may be poor and parents consider the child will survive better if he/she works and learns a skill.

Informal economy

Child labour is much less common in large workplaces. In small, unregistered enterprises, often called the informal sector, child labour is more frequent. Inspectors rarely visit such workplaces, and there are no trade unions. Child labour can flourish in such conditions.

Low cost of child labour

Against the background of a growing sector of small informal enterprises, child workers become increasingly attractive because they can be hired for less than adults. In addition, child workers are not organized and are more easily disciplined.

Absence of workers' organizations

The incidence of child labour is greatest where trade unions are weak or do not exist. Trade unions are generally not found in the informal sector where it can be difficult to organize.

Lack of social protection

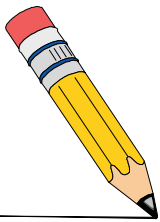
Large numbers of children are swelling the ranks of child labourers because society is not able to provide them with appropriate protection. These include children who are abandoned or have been orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic or by natural disasters, and those recruited as soldiers into private militias and armies in conflict zones.

Social customs and attitudes

In some countries, powerful elites, or majority ethnic groups consider that working is the proper and natural occupation for the children of the poor or children of ethnic minorities. They have no commitment to ending child labour, and indeed want to continue exploiting these children for the cheap labour they represent. In other cases, when parents have little money to spend on education, they choose to educate the boy child so girls are often not given any schooling.



- 1** Based on your experience and the information provided above, draw up a list of the forms of child labour existing in your country or your industry.
- 2** Discuss and decide by consensus which are the worst forms that need immediate elimination.
- 3** List the forms of work or tasks which are acceptable for children to do. Give reasons why you consider these acceptable.



Role of Trade Unions in Combating Child Labour

Many have argued that the problem of child labour is a problem for governments to solve. Child labour has so many facets, and the reasons for its existence are so complex that governments alone cannot be expected to resolve the problem. The solution will only come about from the efforts of a large number of partners, including trade unions.

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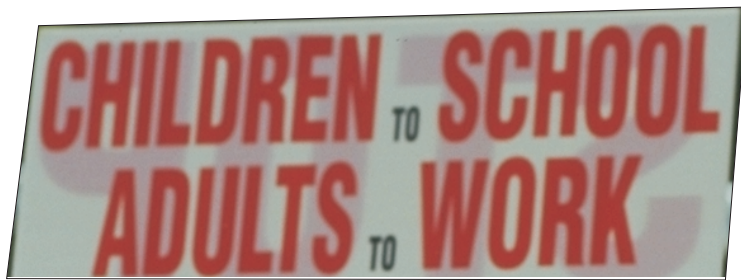


Photo Gianotti

Which side are you on?

“We don’t consider it as hazardous... Children working in the carpet industry are in good health, they work in a good atmosphere...it is important that they are allowed to do this work....their nimble fingers make them well suited for it, and it is good for them to learn as child apprentices.”

This statement was made by a man whose job was to protect children and uphold the law - the Labour Commissioner for the state of Rajasthan, in western India. With these views, is it any wonder child labour persists?

This illustrates the importance of trade union action on child labour. We cannot leave it to governments to enforce the law.

Human Rights Watch, *The Small Hands of Slavery*, 1996

Workers' organizations are logical leaders in discovering and denouncing child labour at the local, national and international level. And they can become credible advocates for the protection of children against exploitation and abuse in the workplace by documenting concrete cases of child labour and their effects on the children. Trade unions can and must assert the right of workers to adequate remuneration, thereby reducing poor families' dependency on child labour.

Workers' organizations have access to large numbers of adult workers and their families. They can communicate the importance of promoting their children's education, protecting children from work hazards and from starting to work too early. As a potentially strong pressure group, trade unions have a role to play in collective bargaining and in social mobilization efforts at the national and international levels.

Child labour as a trade union issue

Let us look more closely at some of the reasons why child labour is an issue for trade unions:

Child labour is a way into the unorganized sector

The world over, and especially in the developing countries, the "unorganized" or "informal" sector is growing. For trade unions, this sector is extremely difficult to organize. It is where most child labour takes place. So, if we take up the issue of child labour, if we engage with the problem, we can learn more about the informal sector, and we can find routes into it. Ultimately, trade unions must organize the informal sector if it is to keep its numerical strength.

Child labour undermines the bargaining power of trade unions

Working children represent a plentiful source of cheap labour. This contributes to the depression of wages and leads to the weakening of trade unions' ability to negotiate improvements in workers' wages and conditions of service.

Child labour contributes to unemployment of adults

A child may be doing work an adult can do - but at a much lower wage. If children are removed and rehabilitated, the job may be filled by an adult worker. There are many instances where the parent is unemployed, and the child is

working. This is bad for both adult and child. It is the opposite of what should happen.

That is why trade unionists say:

***Children out of work and into school;
adults into work!***



Photo Tor Monsen/ILO info, Norway

2

The economic argument - poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere

Poverty is undoubtedly a contributory cause of child labour. But child labour itself is a cause of poverty. If children can do the work of adults at lower wages, then that is a threat to adult workers' wages and conditions. Trade unions are well placed to protect working children, advocate their right to education while demanding recognition of the rights of adult workers better wages.

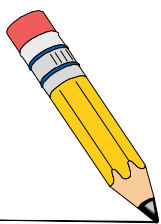
Solidarity and social justice

The very foundations of trade unionism are the principles of solidarity and social justice. Trade unions were formed to give workers the collective strength to fight injustice, to resist exploitation and to demand fair conditions of employment. So firstly, there must be a broad consensus among workers of what is fair and just. Secondly, there must be the same consensus in the society at large if gains are to be secure and not just temporary. Hence, it is in the interest of trade unions to help create the social climate which will contribute to the elimination of child labour.



- 1** Are there other reasons why trade unions should get involved in the fight against child labour?
- 2** Look again at the list of the different forms of child labour and discuss how should trade unions decide on which forms shall be given priority attention.
- 3** How can child labourers be assisted by trade unions?
- 4** Based on the information provided in this section decide whether the following argument would be acceptable or unacceptable to trade unionists and give reasons why:

“In some countries, children are legally able to work at the age of 13 or 14, but are not legally allowed to join or form trade unions. If governments will not actually abolish child labour, they should at least allow the children to organize against their own exploitation.”



Trade Union Action to Eliminate Child Labour

The right to a childhood, to an education, the chance to play in the sun and normal physical development are basic human rights denied to millions of children. It is intolerable that this situation exists at the dawn of the 21st century. No government now actually defends child labour; no employer will boast that they employ child labour. It is now universally recognized and agreed that child labour must stop. But child labour will never be eliminated without the involvement of trade unions.



Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project

Many trade union organizations are already convinced that child labour is a natural area of activity for them and have drawn up policies and are taking action against child labour. The International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF) at its Congress, passed a resolution which said that the IUF...

3

Declares that child labour is a key area for trade union activity and that a strong labour movement nationally and internationally is essential to tackle this issue.

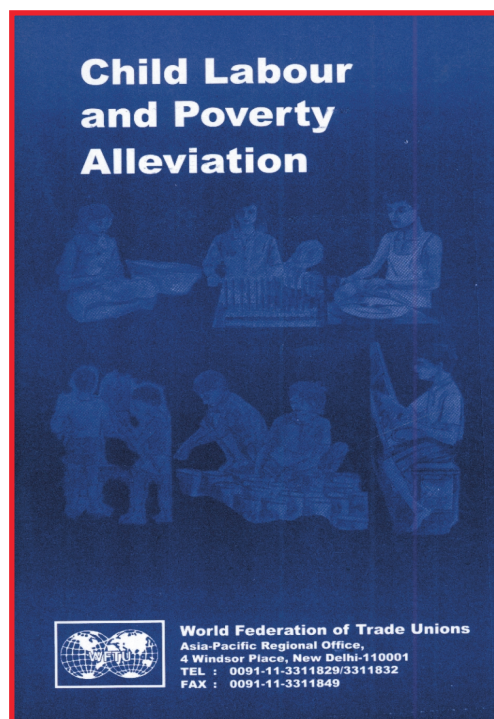
Declares that the elimination of all forms of child labour is the IUF's goal.

IUF 23rd World Congress, April 1997, Geneva

Trade unions are human rights organizations because workers' rights are human rights. They have fought for the rights of workers since their foundation. Trade unions, where they organize in the workplace and exercise political influence, have brought about human rights in the workplace and in the society. Where there is a trade union in the workplace:

- ◆ workers have rights and cannot be dismissed at the whim of the employer;
- ◆ that workplace is safer;
- ◆ there is more chance of equal pay between women and men workers;
- ◆ there is less child labour.

There are a number of forms of action against child labour which only trade unions can undertake because of their specific and unique role. Trade unions should not begin work on child labour in an ad hoc manner, but develop first a policy, and build a plan based on the policy. This can include action unions can take on their own, action where they might co-operate with the other social partners (governments and employers), or action where they will work with other partners. The importance of developing policies and plans is that the trade union's work against child labour will be organized and systematic as this work must be sustained over the long term to bring results.



8 มีนาคม : วันสตรีสากล
STOP CHILD LABOUR

เชิญร่วม
เดินรณรงค์นานาชาติ
เพื่อการขจัด
การใช้แรงงานเด็ก
(ไทย, อินเดีย,
บังกลาเทศ,
ฟิลิปปินส์,
ปากีสถาน)

เริ่มเวลา 08.30 น.
จากอนุสาวรีย์ประชาธิปไตย
ไปยังทำเนียบรัฐบาล

จัดโดย : **ฟิว** **ITGLWF** สหพันธ์แรงงานอุตสาหกรรมสิ่งทอฯ (ส.ท.ท./TWFT.)
สหพันธ์แรงงานสิ่งทอฯ ระหว่างประเทศ (ITGLWF.)
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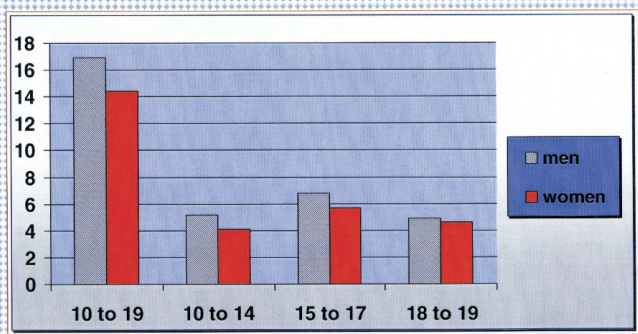
Areas of trade union action

Fact-finding, investigation and information

Finding out the facts about child labour, putting names and faces to the child labour problem, are necessary tools to build a mobilization programme, decide on priorities, develop strategies and find solutions to specific cases of child labour. Trade unions must undertake investigation and ensure documentation of the concrete cases of child labour so as to be able to take effective action against the problem.

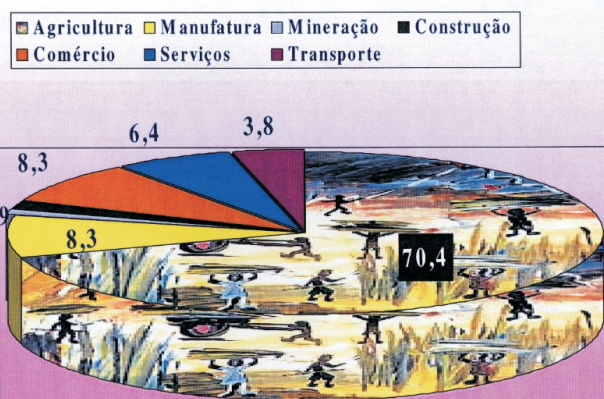
(Please refer to Booklet 3, Fact-Finding and Information About Child Labour.)

Brazil - working population division by gender and age



Source: Child Labour Presentation
by CUT Brazil

Children works activities



Awareness-raising, mobilization and campaigning

Awareness-raising and mobilization are important tools for the prevention and elimination of child labour. Much of the ILO's work in the last decade has been raising awareness of the issue. Many trade unions when getting involved with child labour issues for the first time, have started by making their own members more aware of the problem. Child labour must become unacceptable to public opinion at all levels in society. Publicity and other material are available from the ILO, and may also be available from your national centre, or international organization (ITS).

(Please refer to Booklet 4, Campaigning Against Child Labour.)

Collective bargaining

Trade unions can negotiate with employers at several levels for the elimination of child labour, for support for rehabilitation, or other measures. They can therefore sign agreements with employers on steps to be taken on the process of elimination of child labour. Such agreements should be binding and implemented from both sides.

(Please refer to Booklet 5, Collective Bargaining to Combat Child Labour.)

Using international labour standards

The new ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour is a weapon for unions in the fight against child labour. It is also a campaign objective that national governments should ratify the convention at once. If your country has not yet ratified ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age of Entry into Employment, which is the basic instrument for the abolition of child labour, then you should also work for it to be ratified.

Trade unions should promote and use existing tripartite committees to consult on and advocate that governments should ratify both the Conventions No. 138 and No. 182.

(Please refer to Booklet 6, Using ILO Standards to Combat Child Labour.)

Using the tripartite structure for improvement of legislation and enforcement

In most countries there is legislation dealing with child labour, but it is often not properly enforced. Law enforcement needs to be reinforced through the training of law enforcement personnel, including labour inspectors. Where legislation does not exist, trade unions can pressure governments to pass new laws. If the law is outdated, trade unions can agitate for revision of the law. In either case, trade unions will need to develop a clear policy on the content of child labour laws, and a plan for how to achieve action by the national legislature. Legislation should, of course, follow the standards laid down in ILO conventions.

Trade unions can also campaign for governments to devote adequate budgetary resources to labour inspectorates in line with ILO Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection. Trade unions should also press for tripartite supervision of labour inspectorates.

(Please refer to Booklet 7, The Tripartite Structure to Combat Child Labour.)

Action against child labour through education

The provision of education is an effective way to stop most forms of child labour. In addition to making schools available, primary education must be compulsory and an effective system to monitor and enforce school attendance must be put in place. Trade unions can work with teachers' organiza-

tions to promote quality, free basic education as a means of preventing child labour. When trade unions have included education in some form in their programmes of action, it has not been to take over government responsibilities, but to demonstrate that it is possible to provide education and to use the education issue to mobilize the community.

(Please refer to Booklet 1, Guide to the Booklets.)



Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project

Rehabilitation through the provision of support services

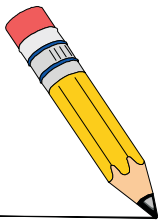
To simply remove children from the workplace is not enough. Without alternatives, children may find even more hazardous work to participate in. Leaving work must be accompanied by rehabilitation. Some children may be able to be integrated into the school system, others may need special centres to cater to their needs which can include shelter, health services and nutrition, vocational training, recreational activities and intensive counselling. Some trade unions have become directly involved in the provision of these services themselves. This is a short term solution, as such services should be the role of the State, or large voluntary agencies with adequate experience and resources. Trade unions should campaign for adequate resources to be devoted to this type of activity by governments.

Promotion of income-generating opportunities for families

Many children are forced to work in order to supplement the family income. In many instances, therefore, removing children from either full-time or part-time work must be combined with alternative income-earning opportunities for their families. Trade unions can work with other civic groups to develop such income-generating schemes for the benefit of those families who have lost income because the child is no longer working. Encouraging and supporting this type of activity is one way in which trade unions can give direct support to working children.



- 1** If your trade union has not yet developed a policy on child labour, what issues would you suggest for inclusion in such a policy?
- 2** How could you implement your policy through an action plan?
- 3** Discuss and draw up a realistic timetable for the plan taking into account the other priorities and commitments of your trade union.



Trade Union Policy and Action Plans

Why should workers' organizations develop policies on child labour? A policy provides the trade union with a public statement of what it is committed to work towards. It provides the framework for setting objectives and priorities and it is the yardstick which determines what kind of activities and actions are undertaken to achieve these objectives. Policy and action are very closely linked because a policy must be implemented through a set of actions for it to be effective. In other words, a policy should guide day-to-day practice and action if it is not to be just another piece of paper. For this reason policy and action plans should be treated together.

Policy development

What can a policy statement help you to do? It justifies action taken on the issue. If child labour is placed on the agenda of a meeting or becomes the topic of workshop, it can be defended by your policy statement. A policy, therefore, is the first step to action. Trade unions need to establish policies on the issue of child labour before they can implement a coherent set of actions. Before unions can develop a policy, they must think about:

- ◆ how important the child labour issue is compared to other union activities;
- ◆ the major headings which should be included in the policy;
- ◆ the kind of campaign the union would launch against child labour;
- ◆ the areas of union activities which would include child labour activities.

Frequently, policy is developed at the national level of the organization, and it stays there. In order to get a commitment from and to mobilise the membership, the policy has to be communicated to the wider membership in a process of information sharing. Once the policy is developed, it is important that it is immediately communicated to the membership.

Development of action plans

With a policy in hand, you now need to outline a plan of action designed to implement the policy and achieve its objectives.

Why do we need a plan of action? Child labour is a deeply entrenched problem and many employers benefit from it, and many governments have not made the political commitment to combat child labour. So the struggle will take many more years. Therefore, a long-term plan rather than a series of ad hoc events is required to combat child labour.

Child labour plans: checklist



In developing plans, this checklist may be useful:

- ✓ What actions will be required to implement the plan?
- ✓ Who will benefit from the plan?
- ✓ What resources are needed to implement the plan?
What materials and finances will be required?
- ✓ Who within your union will have responsibility for implementing the plan?
- ✓ Who will actually carry out the plan? This can be a person different from the one with responsibility.
- ✓ Is there a clear time frame for implementation of the plan?
- ✓ Does your plan fit in with other union activities?
- ✓ Is the plan, or action, at the right level to be successful and to make an impact? For example, a plan which involves action at a local level might be successful, but will it have an impact outside the area?

Photo ILO/ACTRAV/Child Labour Project



- ✓ What other action is required before the action or activity can be carried out? (e.g. gather information, form an alliance or a committee, appoint a focal point for child labour, etc.)

If you can answer all these questions for every action/activity that the union intends to undertake, then you should be able to structure an action plan which is realistic and sustainable over the long term.

Implementation

The plan ensures that the union has a document which states quite clearly what the union intends to do, and when the union intends to carry out these activities. In addition, this plan has to be reviewed and strategies have to be adjusted according to the experience gained during implementation. Hence there should be a timetable built into the plan for reviewing the plan and monitoring its implementation.

Trade unions need to develop their own policies, plans and strategies. It may be that unions will need to find external assistance to help them implement their plans, and IPEC may be one source of such support. The development of policies and plans will foster a clear understanding and vision of what unions want to achieve before they seek such assistance.

Examples of Union Policy and Action

Trade union policy

We reproduce below examples of trade union policies on child labour. In a number of cases, these are extracts from larger policy statements or resolutions. The two cases from ICATU and SATUCC are examples of the development of policy: how workshops on child labour were used by two groups to start to debate what their unions' policy might be.

International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU)

At a workshop held in Damascus in May 2000, delegates from different Arab countries agreed that trade union priorities included:

- ◆ Combating child labour in mining, construction, and chemical industries.
- ◆ Launching a continuous campaign to raise awareness on the effect of using children in prostitution and drug trafficking on the children.
- ◆ Establishing a unit within ICATU and the national trade unions responsible for child labour with the objective of collecting data, and drafting plans of action.
- ◆ Encouraging governments to ratify conventions relating to children and human rights, launching media and awareness raising campaigns in the workplaces, amongst trade unions, in schools and media.

The Southern African Trade Union Coordination Council (SATUCC)

In order to take a proactive action against child labour, SATUCC organised a two-day child labour workshop prior to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Annual Tripartite Employment and Labour Sector Conference, in Swaziland in April 1999. The workshop was attended by twenty participants drawn from the SATUCC Executive Council members who are also policy makers in their respective National Centres.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- ◆ to inform about what is child labour;
- ◆ to help participants understand the provisions of Convention 138, Minimum Age for admission to employment and other related instruments;
- ◆ to familiarize participants with the provision of the proposed new convention on the prohibition and immediate elimination of worst form of child labour;
- ◆ develop a regional trade union position on the elimination of child labour in Southern Africa and submit proposals to the Tripartite SADC Employment Conference for further discussions.

The workshop adopted several recommendations that were presented to the SADC meeting. Based on these recommendations, the SADC meeting the Ministers and Social Partners urged member states to make legal provisions on child labour in the following areas:

- ◆ Linking of school leaving age to the minimum age for admission to employment.
- ◆ Prohibition of most hazardous forms of Child Labour.
- ◆ Prohibition of dangerous work for young persons.
- ◆ Strengthening enforcement of legislation on child labour.
- ◆ Harmonisation of legislation on child labour.
- ◆ Development of a Code of Conduct on Child Labour.

The meeting further directed the Employment and Labour Sector (ELS) Secretariat to convene a Regional Seminar on Child Labour, using the Recommendations as background documents to further elaborate policy on the eradication of Child Labour.

Report from SATUCC Workshop and SADC meetings in Swaziland, April 1999

ICFTU policy on child labour

Campaigning for an End to Child Labour

In the new millennium, the international trade union movement must renew and intensify its campaign work against child labour, based on the experiences of the campaign to date and taking account of the mounting challenges of the era of globalisation. The Charter Against Child Labour, launched by the 112th meeting of the ICFTU Executive Board (Elsinore, December 1998), sets out five main areas on which this campaign work should be based:

- ◆ Education for all Children
- ◆ No More Exploitation
- ◆ Economic Security
- ◆ Rights for Children and Rights for Adults
- ◆ Unions at the Centre of a Global Alliance

The ICFTU maintains that...

Most children work because their families are poor. Creating decent jobs for all adults and providing comprehensive social security are essential steps in ending child labour. Action against child labour must therefore be closely linked to action for debt relief and equitable development. Too often, however, governments claim that the only real cause of child labour is poverty, and that until poverty is eliminated, they will not be able to provide school places for all the children in their country. Many of these same governments nevertheless allocate massive amounts to military expenditure. Poverty is an important factor in child labour, but it should not be used as an excuse for inaction. Child labour in itself is a major cause of poverty and underdevelopment, and reliance on child labour can only worsen the economic plight of the countries concerned.

Selections from the ICFTU's policy, decided at its Congress at Durban, South Africa, 2000

Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU)

CALLS upon African governments to ratify and implement ILO and UN Standards on child Labour, in particular ILO Convention No 138 and the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child as well as update their laws and regulations ...

CALLS UPON OATUU affiliates to intensify their support for OATUU's activities in their respective countries against Child Labour and to collaborate with the other social partners...to play a more active role towards the elimination of child labour.

20TH session of the General Council of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity,
held in Tunis, September 1997

Education International

Principle:

**CHILD LABOUR IS INTOLERABLE,
CHILD LABOUR CAN AND SHOULD BE ERADICATED.**

- ◆ Teachers have a special responsibility in this task.
- ◆ Education is the first instrument for preventing and fighting against child labour.

EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Strives to:

- ◆ Prevent more children from falling into child labour and seeks their collaboration in eradicating it.
- ◆ Help children workers to go back to school.
- ◆ Make access to quality public education easy for everyone.
- ◆ Assist, as a transition measure, children workers in staying in school.

Promotes the development of the following strategies:

- ◆ Changes in education and labour legislation in order to integrate the child labour issue and make these effective.
- ◆ Opposition to economic and social policies which generate child labour.
- ◆ Inclusion in national educational policies of the problems generated by child labour.
- ◆ Quality national public educational policies for everyone, democratic and integrating and which request from the State the necessary resources for their application.
- ◆ Better training, status and working conditions for teachers.
- ◆ Supports employment requests from parents in order to better their family income against the risk of having working children.

From resolution on child labour, EI 2nd World Congress, 1998

IFBWW action programme on child labour

The IFBWW will..

- ✓ carry out sustained advocacy work to ensure that child labour is an issue in the public consciousness, both in countries where it occurs and in countries which benefit from cheap goods produced by child labourers;
- ✓ work with its affiliates to put pressure on national legislators, local government and law enforcement agencies to ensure compliance with national and international legislation providing protection for children;
- ✓ work with its affiliates to organize workplaces where child labour occurs and to negotiate basic improvements to working conditions, particularly for women members;
- ✓ coordinate boycotts of companies which systematically use child labour to secure market advantages;
- ✓ secure the necessary resources to appoint child labour coordinators regionally and internationally.

Adopted at the 20th Congress, Harare, September 1997



Child Labour

Trade union strategies for the global
elimination of child labour

**PILOT SEMINAR FOR TRADE
UNIONS IN GHANA**

ACCRA, 15 TO 19 MARCH 1999

International Federation of Building and Woodworkers
(IFBWW)
International Labour Office, Bureau for Workers' Activities
(ILO/ACTRAV)

Public Services International

Deploring the abuse of child workers by their employers, the hazardous and unjust conditions in which they work, and the robbing of their opportunity for education at such a critical time in their lives

Concerned by recent reports by labour organisations citing the continued practices of child bondage, child prostitution

Affirming that childhood is the time for education and not for employment, and that adult workers need to be fully employed and receive just wages to provide adequately for their families

Urges PSI affiliates to extend and intensify efforts to abolish child labour such as:

- ◆ including clauses in collective bargaining, trade and loan agreements;
- ◆ taking actions against goods produced in such conditions;
- ◆ and promoting national legislation and its enforcement

PSI 26th World Congress, 1997

How can public service workers respond to the problem of child labour?

Public service workers can take a number of steps in the fight against child labour, any or all of which are important components of a comprehensive trade union strategy:

Organising and collective bargaining is one of the best bulwarks against the economic exploitation of children, as is a strong and effective labour movement, built with the traditional tools of trade union organisation.

Awareness raising is a key to creating the necessary political and social climate for change, and to ensuring a commitment from all those in society to eliminate child labour.

Promoting government action to ratify ILO conventions, enact (and enforce) workers' rights laws and bans on child labour, design national policies to fight child labour, and provide a system of accessible, relevant, high-quality and compulsory basic education that is free for all. A good way for trade unions to maximise the impact of any child labour initiative is to collaborate directly with government to anchor it in a national action plan.

Working with employers, using child labour, or benefiting from the sale of products made with child labour, who have a special responsibility for taking action.

Codes of conduct can be used to promote action by government and corporate employers to respect workers' rights and to support responsible efforts to eliminate child labour in local enterprises and workshops.

Shareholder activism can be an important part of a strategy by public service workers to promote employer action.

Monitoring and implementation is of critical importance, whether in relation to child labour laws or to codes of conduct, clauses in collective bargaining contracts, social labelling and trademark schemes.

Acting through alliances and partnerships with other trade unionists and with governments, employers, NGOs and consumers.

New ILO Convention on the worst forms of child labour

In June 1999, at the 87th ILO Conference, a new ILO Convention and Recommendation were adopted aimed at promoting immediate action by governments to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. In practice this means slavery or similar practices, prostitution, illicit activities and any work, which by nature or circumstances, is likely to be harmful.

For this Convention to have a real impact, every effort must be made by trade unions to get their governments to ratify it **now**.

JOIN THE
CAMPAIGN
AGAINST
CHILD LABOUR

PSI handbook on child labour for public service workers

As part of its campaign, PSI has published *Children at Work!*, a handbook on child labour for public service workers. *Children at Work!* is intended to serve as a practical guide for action by trade unions and professional associations, as well as a resource for their education programmes. The handbook has been translated into six languages. Copies can be obtained by contacting PSI at the address below. It is also available in English on the PSI Web site.



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Web: www.world-psi.org

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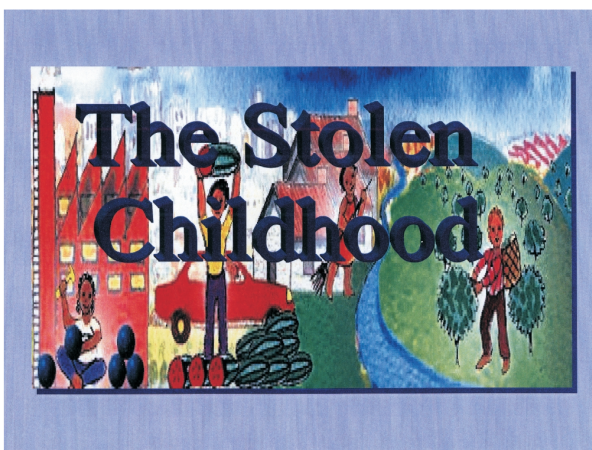
A Leaflet on Child Labour for Public Service Workers

Trade union action

Trade unions have taken different types of action to fight child labour. We highlight only a few examples of these below.

The Central Única de Trabajadores (CUT)

The CUT, a national centre in Brazil, created a National Commission on the Rights of the Child and Adolescent within its Social Policies Secretariat. This commission had the aim of coordinating integrated action to protect the rights of the child, including the right to be protected from economic exploitation. The commission has campaigned for the ratification of Convention No. 138; tried to enforce national law on children; and conducted case studies in eleven regions.



Report on child labor in Brazil

CUT

Source: Child Labour Presentation
by CUT Brazil

The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)

The AITUC held a workshop to sensitize trade union members in Andhra Pradesh, in southern India. During the workshop, they visited a slate mine, where child labour was rife. They took photographs, and interviewed the children. The AITUC held a press conference and achieved good coverage. The mines were closed, the local administration provided loans to the parents of the children, who were admitted into local schools.

Education International (EI)

The EI has launched a campaign for good quality, free primary education. It has invited internationally known NGOs to join the campaign, which gave it more publicity. Many of Education International's affiliates are actively engaged in this campaign.

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

The Canadian Labour Congress produced a booklet, *Challenging Child Labour*, to increase members' awareness of the issue. It lobbies the Canadian government to support social clauses in trade agreements (see later in this manual for a discussion of social clauses). It supports partner organizations such as the South Asian Coalition against Child Servitude.

The General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU)

The GAWU in Ghana adopted a multimedia approach, producing a video, printing T-shirts, writing songs under the theme "Stop Child Labour".

The International Trade Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

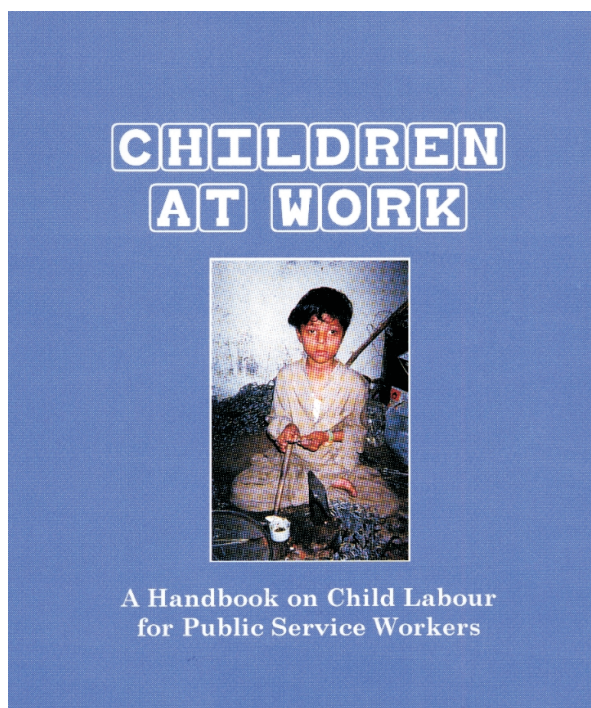
The IUF developed a manual on Child Labour in Domestic Service, focussing on the problem in East Africa, with its affiliates in Kenya and Tanzania. It also developed a Model Collective Agreement Concerning Prostitution in Tourism.

The IUF also paid particular attention to child labour in agriculture. A study was made of international instruments and national laws in agriculture; a video on tobacco was produced in Malawi, which led to an agreement between the IUF and the International Tobacco Growers' Association on child labour.

Public Service International (PSI)

The PSI developed a model code of conduct for enterprise which included guidelines on child labour, and produced leaflets and a book on child labour. PSI has not simply fo-

cussed on child labour in public services, but taken up the cause of working children more generally. It also developed guidelines on how the public sector, in its purchase of goods and services, can specify that its suppliers do not use child labour.



The Universal Alliance of Diamond Workers (UADW)

The UADW undertook a study of child labour in the Diamond and Gemstone Industry in India. The comprehensive report revealed the scale of the problem and received wide publicity. The report enabled UADW, with its Indian affiliates, to develop recommendations and policy for the future. The UADW also made a film on child labour in the gem processing industry.

The General Federation of Workers Trade Unions in Yemen (GFWTU)

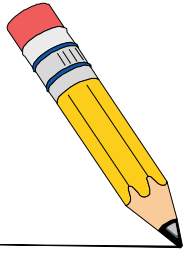
The GFWTU collaborated with ACTRAV in a survey of the scale of child labour in their country. GFWTU staff and activists undertook interviews for the research.

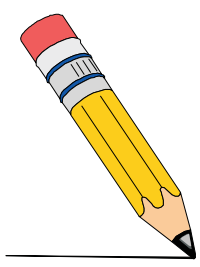
Some, but not all, of these initiatives have been carried out in cooperation with the ACTRAV Workers' Education project Developing National and International Trade Union Strategies to Combat Child Labour (INT/96/M06/NOR).

**More examples of trade union action can be
found at the project website:**



There have been two issues of ACTRAV's journal, **Labour Education**, dealing with child labour: numbers 102 and 108, which contain more examples.

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