



Students Michala Davey-Borresen and Aoife Jennings at the international day for the elimination of child labour – June 12th 2007. Photo: Steve Ryan Photography

The 'Stop Child Labour – School is the Best Place to Work' campaign

All children everywhere deserve the chance that only education can provide; a chance to escape poverty, a chance to enjoy better health and a longer life, a chance to have a decent standard of living, a chance to live free from exploitation and a chance to have fun.

Why a campaign on Child Labour?

Child Labour is not just a problem for Africa, India or China. Child Labour is a violation of human rights and therefore, it is a problem that affects us all.

Child Labour was a problem during the industrial revolution in Europe until governments made education compulsory for all children and today, Europe accounts for less than 1% of child labourers worldwide.

International agreements and conventions such as the Minimum Age for Employment and the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, along with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, have been agreed by nearly all governments around the world... yet nearly 218 million children still work as child labourers.

Child labour can no longer be considered a 'necessary evil' for millions of children merely because of where they were born. By raising awareness and taking action, **we can eliminate child labour.**

Our guiding principles

The Stop Child Labour campaign is guided by the following four principles:

1. **Child labour is the denial of a child's right to education**

The elimination of child labour and the provision of full time formal education are inextricably linked. The focus of attention must be to actively integrate all 'out of school' children into formal education systems, as well as supporting the removal of all barriers to local schools and ensuring the necessary financial and infrastructural support for the provision of quality education.

2. **All child labour is unacceptable**

The Convention on the rights of the Child along with a host of other international agreements unequivocally affirms the right of all children to live in freedom from exploitation. Approaches to the issue have tended to segregate different types of child labour into categories ranging from children working in mines, or hazardous industries to those working as full time domestic servants. The campaign believes that such distinctions, while helping to cast a spotlight on the worst abuses, tend to be too narrow in their focus and offer only partial solutions. Efforts to eliminate child labour should focus on all its forms.

3. **It is the duty of all Governments, International Organisations and Corporate Bodies to ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour**

All governments whether in the so called 'developed' or 'developing world' have a duty to ensure that they do not permit or allow child labour to exist within their state. Furthermore they have a duty to ensure that state agencies, corporate bodies, suppliers and trading partners with whom they do business are fully compliant with the CRC and other international agreements protecting the right of the child.

4. **Core labour standards must be respected and enforced**

The eradication of child labour is closely linked to the promotion of labour standards in the workplace; embracing the right to organise, collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, child labour and discrimination. Child Labour undermines the opportunities for adult employment and decent wages. Experience has shown that child labour is highly unlikely to exist when a free trade union is present. As a minimum, the International Labour Organisations standards on the minimum age of employment (15) and most hazardous forms of child labour (convention 182), must be enforced.

What is campaigning?

Campaigning is about changing the practices, policies and attitudes of governments, organisations, institutions and individuals. It is an acknowledgement that our actions (or inaction) can have an impact on the lives of others, that the choices we make have consequences far beyond ourselves and that we live in a global community, linked by our common humanity and that we have a responsibility to be agents for positive change – locally, nationally and around the world.

Campaigning can take many different forms and there are many ways to campaign. Campaigns can be local, national or international.

‘The future belongs to those with the vision to shape it.’ IPEC report 2006

Everyone has the potential to change our world!



FAQ 9. How can I take action against child labour?

You can take action against child labour by:

- Learning about the 'school is the best place to work' campaign
- Organising an awareness-raising event (kite flying for example)
- Getting your friends, school and community involved
- With your family, become an informed, ethical consumer

Why campaign?

People have power. As citizens and as consumers, people can demand positive change and hold governments, corporations and other individuals to account. This way, people can change the world.



Why campaign in Ireland?

- The Irish government and the EU are our voices in the international community. We need to let them know what we want them to say on our behalf. Otherwise, they are not accurately representing us.
- Policies at an Irish and EU level have a direct impact on countries and peoples of the developing world through Overseas Development Assistance, trade regimes and bilateral agreements. Indirectly, through international financial institutions and inter-governmental mechanisms, the Irish government and the EU play a role in determining the social, political and economic structures which impact on people all over the world. As Irish, European and Global citizens, we should be involved in these processes and our voices should be heard.
- The majority of the products we buy are imported from countries around the world. We should know where and by whom they were made.
- Our lifestyle and level of consumption has an impact on the environment which, in turn, has an impact all over the world.
- We are in the minority – we are wealthy and for the most part, have a very good quality of life. We have a responsibility to those who have not had access to the same opportunities.
- We live in an increasingly interdependent globalised world where the local and global are closely linked. We need to move beyond narrow definitions of benefit, gain, power and wealth toward a more holistic appreciation of our shared global humanity.

Where to start?

Knowledge is power. The first step is to know the issues you are talking about and also, the actual change you want to come about. One of the best ways to campaign is to inform and change the attitudes of people around you!

Taking action - Organising a campaign!

Planning

Research the issue

↓

Discuss, explore and debate

↓

Generate ideas about how to raise awareness

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Form a campaigning committee with roles and tasks

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Set clear objectives and draw up a campaign plan

What action?

Decide your **exact message** and what **action** you want taken

Raise awareness	Involve Media	Lobby for change
<p>Decide how to get your message across to a wide and diverse audience in your local community.</p> <p>Visit website for more information and ideas. </p> <p>Request information from international organisations dealing with your issue.</p> <p>Look for good examples from other countries and organisations.</p> <p>Design a programme of activities with clear objectives.</p>	<p>Research local media outlets – newspaper, radio and web. </p> <p>Research existing media coverage of your issue - is there an opportunity to build on this?</p> <p>Identify key contacts in media outlets.</p> <p>Follow-up all media communication with a phone call or email. </p>	<p>Identify local decision-makers – business, political, community leaders.</p> <p>Identify key national policy-makers – TDs, MEPs, political parties, large corporations, Unions and NGOs.</p> <p>Investigate consumer organisations and initiatives.</p> <p>Research government initiatives or strategies which address your issue. Generate a list of your key campaign goals.</p> <p>Make contact, request meetings.</p>
Examples		
<p>Organise a public discussion forum – promote via web, SMS and flyers.</p> <p>Arrange an event or activity involving a large group. Be creative – new ideas are great! </p> <p>Invite a speaker to your school, community or workplace.</p> <p>Design and print information flyers & posters.</p> <p>Circulate resources.</p>	<p>Invite media to attend and cover your activities and events.</p> <p>Write articles & letters and send to print media. Don't forget to include photos. </p> <p>Contact local radio to promote your events and/or interview your campaign group.</p> <p>Post messages on your own web pages, blogs, etc.</p> <p>Create a list of email addresses and send campaign updates and requests for support/action.</p>	<p>Write a letter introducing your group, outline your concerns, your activities to date and the action you would like them to take. Request relevant documentation.</p> <p>Request a meeting to discuss your issue in person and present your campaign objectives. Ask for a clear assurance of their commitment to the issue and details of the plans to address it.</p> <p>Use your consumer power – locally and nationally! Vote with your feet and wallet! </p>
Don't forget...		
Make people listen!	Be passionate and enthusiastic!	Don't give up!
Keep us informed: tell Concern about your achievements! stopchildlabour@concern.net		

What you can do!

General tips for campaigning

1. The 'taking action' diagram overleaf is a step-by-step guide to campaigning.
2. Know what you are taking about, research your issues thoroughly and have an informed opinion
3. Campaigning is about being persistent but not aggressive. Change takes time so it is important to stay with the issue and make your point in as many ways and to as many people as possible
4. **DON'T GIVE UP** – if your campaign is met with opposition or silence, don't be disheartened – it takes time to change people's minds and attitudes but **IT IS POSSIBLE**.
5. Communicate your successes! Send your photos, reports and letters to local media and to the stop child labour campaign team.

There are 3 things you need to do:

- 1 Be interested enough to learn about the issue, to raise the question with others and to discuss and debate the issue and to share your ideas and concerns with as many people around you as possible.
- 2 Work with a small group to find ways to raise public awareness of the issue of child labour and to challenge others to engage with the challenges, as well as the opportunities offered by the campaign.
- 3 Lobby government as well as international institutions about the issue and their responses to them. Also lobby non-governmental organisations to do more as well as other non-government structures e.g. women's groups, youth groups, schools, etc. Be an informed consumer and traveller, find out about where products or services come from and if child labour has been involved.

Indian organisations, including the MV Foundation as well as other, international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation have identified the key areas where worldwide action is needed:

- awareness raising (so that more and more people are faced with the realities and possibilities)
- law enforcement (so that the worst forms of abuse are tackled immediately)
- labour inspection (to protect those at risk today)
- educational support (so as to offer a productive alternative to work)
- support for children and their families (so as to make the alternative of compulsory schooling possible)
- co-operation with international initiatives (making sure we all work together for the same results)
- full implementation of ILO Convention 182 (which would legally protect children from the worst forms of exploitation).



STOP Child Labour

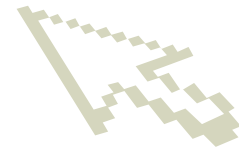
school is the best place to work

www.stopchildlabour.net



June 12th 2006 – campaigners present Stop Child Labour petition to An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Photo: Concern

WEB LINKS - FURTHER INFORMATION



Here are some links to help you find out more about Child Labour

1. For more information on the 'school is the best place to work' campaign visit **www.stopchildlabour.net** or visit the international site at **www.stopchildlabour.eu**
You can download copies of this resource and keep up to date on campaign activities.
2. For more information on Concern and its education programmes visit **www.concern.net** and **www.concern.net/education**
3. For more information on the Global campaign for Education visit **www.campaignforeducation.org** and for information on the Irish Coalition for the campaign visit **www.campaignforeducation.ie**
4. For more case studies on child labour visit **www.knowchildlabor.org**
5. For more information on child labour and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (in the International Labour Organisation) visit **www.ilo.org/ipecc**
6. UNESCO Global Monitoring Report: **www.unesco.org/education/**
This is an annual report that tracks global progress towards Education for All and the 6 Dakar education goals.
7. For more information on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) visit **www.un.org/millenniumgoals**
8. Visit **www.unglobalcompact.org** for more information on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the UN's Global Compact framework for business.
9. Visit the UN programme for children, UNICEF at **www.unicef.org** and for their fact sheet on child labour visit **www.unicef.org/protection/files/Child_Labour**
10. For more information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) visit **www.unicef.org/crc**
11. To learn more about the MV Foundation in India visit **www.mvfindia.in**
12. To view videos and news clips that explore and discuss the issue of child labour, enter 'child labour' on **www.youtube.com**
13. The world's largest network of children helping children **www.freethechildren.org**
14. Visit **www.childlaborphotoproject.org** for a photo exhibition and case studies on child labour.
15. Anti-Slavery.org has a comprehensive section in child labour.
Visit **www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/childlabour.htm**
16. To learn more about the right to education visit **www.right-to-education.org**
17. The Global March is an International coalition campaigning against child labour
www.globalmarch.org