International Labour Organisation

Addressing the impacts of child labour and the sustainability of eradicating it

Child labour constitutes the typically underpaid, abhorrent conditions in which school-aged children are forced to work, typically against their will, or as a means of affording necessities such as food, water, and/or healthcare. General work children participate in is **NOT** child labour. Examples of general work are chores, helping around the house, or youth jobs. These do not deprive children of their childhoods, potential,l or education. The existence of child labour isn't simply credited to those who employ them but rather to the economy and social standing of a country in which a child must resort to labour to support their family.

Other reasons for child labour are:

1. Lack of access to quality education
2. Educational deficits
3. Lack of judicial action
4. Social and cultural norms
5. Poverty
6. Inflation
7. Lack of adult living wages
8. Economic shock and crisis
9. Market demands for low- cost labour (agriculture, informal mining and garment manufacturing)

On no occasion do the grounds that farm child labour come alone; assume if your country has a prevalent cause, that there is a more complex reason behind it. The reasons listed above should aid in your understanding and are by no means comprehensive.

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As of 2024, 138 million children are in child labour worldwide, accounting for 8% of all children worldwide, with over a third in hazardous work. These children’s health and safety are compromised due to the conditions they were born into, and they are left completely passive regarding the reasons that got them there. As delegates, the responsibility falls to you.

Neither less talented nor less intelligent than children born in other countries, their future is permanently tainted, products of their environments. 33% of these children are completely out of school and have little chance of achieving literacy in the future. Should these children find a way to escape their conditions, finding employment in any other sector will be exceptionally difficult, another way in which this system debilitates them. Children in developing regions are 20-40% less likely to achieve functional literacy compared to normal non- working children of the same age and income level.

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Things to note:

- The ratio of child labour is unequal between girls and boys (9% compared to 7%)
- A majority of child labourers are situated in often hazardous agricultural work (70%)
- Adolescents - aged 15 to 17 - represent the highest proportion of child labourers in industries like mining, manufacturing, and domestic work.k
- UNICEF reports that nearly 30% of adolescents worldwide lack the necessary education and opportunities to transition into productive and fulfilling employment, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation
- International corporations largely support the presence of child labour due to the demand for cheap labour.
- Examples are Adidas, Amazon, American Eagle, ASDA, Carrefour, Columbia Sportswear, and Gap

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Questions to ask and answer:

“How can we ensure that education is widely accessible to children in underdeveloped countries?”

“How do we regulate and monitor a sector of work that is largely informal?”

“How can ILO collaborate with local communities to create sustainable solutions?"

“Should countries that have companies that are reliant on child labour be punished?” “How?”

“What actions can be taken to help older youth who have missed out on essential learning?”

“Should victims of child labour receive compensation?” “ How much?” “From whom?”

“How do we prevent child labour from becoming increasingly multi-generational?”

“Should countries have international treaties to ban trade with nations if they use children for labour?” “How can we keep them accountable?”

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