



Give girls a chance

TUC report for the World Day Against Child Labour, 12 June 2009
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On the World Day Against Child Labour, the TUC draws attention to the plight of girl child labourers by joining trade unions around the world in the global campaign Decent Work, Decent Life for Women.

By publishing this report, the TUC reflects the conditions of child labourers in developing countries, underlining the importance of the Decent Work Agenda and highlighting the link between the elimination of child labour and realisation of decent work for all.

The report emphasizes the multiple disadvantages girls face, which result in the worst forms of child labour. 2009 is especially important since the world economy is going through a series of crises. The TUC calls for the necessary steps to be taken to prevent erosion of gains in the elimination of child labour and gender equality.

Introduction

In 2002, International Labour Organisation research and experience in productive work, workers' conditions and changing relations of production culminated in 'Decent Work', the framework to eradicate poverty. Yet still, hundreds of millions of people work in ways that deny them the ability to fully utilize their creativity or maximize their productive potential.¹

There are long-lasting, deep-rooted imbalances in the structures of the global economy.² These imbalances are politically unsustainable and ethically unacceptable. They are the biggest obstacles to social justice. The worst forms of child labour are among the unacceptable consequences of these imbalances. Millions of children need to or are forced to work at an age when we expect them to be at school rather than at work. Some of these children face arduous working conditions that damage their physical and mental health irreversibly. According to the decent work agenda, elimination of child labour is a sine qua non for reducing poverty and creating a fairer global economy.

2009 is the seventh World Day Against Child Labour. This year's focus is on girls' child labour since various studies reveal that girls face multiple disadvantages that result in the worst forms of child labour.

This year is particularly important as the world is going through serious crises that have significantly injured the economies of developing countries. Although it is still too early to know the full effect of the recent crises with regards to child labour, experience of previous crises show that during economic hardships the number of child labourers increases along with the relaxation of the labour standards. Thus, this report aims to give a brief outlook of the current situation, and tries to provide some insights to better highlight the link between 'giving girls a chance', gender equality and a better life for all.

Decent work

"Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the work place and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decision that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men." ILO defines decent work as

1 ILO.2003. Report of the Director-General. International Labour Conference 91st Session: Working out of poverty. <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/kd00116.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2009). p, 6.

2 ILO. 2004. A Fairer globalization: Creating opportunities for all. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/wcsdg/docs/report.pdf> (accessed August 20, 2008). p, 3.

an inseparable and intrinsic component of poverty reduction, and a means to achieve equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.³

Thus, decent work initiatives should encompass four policy areas:

- the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work (which includes freedom of association and collective bargaining, elimination of forced labour, abolition of child labour and elimination of discrimination);
- the creation of employment and income opportunities;
- the provision of social protection; and
- the strengthening of social dialogue.

Role of Trade Unions⁴

Trade unions play an important and, in some respects, a unique role in the worldwide movement. It was the labour movement in the mid-nineteenth century that first made child labour an issue.

The trade union movement was influential in helping to push the issue of child labour towards the top of the international policy agenda in the 1990s. The emphasis on human and trade union rights within the labour movement, allied with deep concerns to promote equality and social justice, means that trade unions were receptive to a shift towards a rights-based approach to child labour, with a particular focus on the right to education.

As vertically integrated organizations they provide a unique link between the global and the national level on issues related to social protection and children's rights. Trade unions are well placed to act as watchdogs and to take direct action to prevent child labour and remove children from the workplace and help provide the alternatives of quality education and preparation for the adult world of work.

Teachers' organizations at the national and international level have a key role in promoting Education for All (EFA). Global Union Federations (GUFs) such as Education International (EI) have been active as part of the worldwide movement. Finally, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has continued to play a central role in promoting child labour elimination as part of wider human rights and development debates by forming sectoral alliances to create child labour-free zones.

Recently, trade unions became highly instrumental in spotting use of child labour in informal sector and gathering data on it. They also play a facilitating role in developing sector-based solutions to the problem of child labour in the informal economy.

³ <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/addisababa/pdf/dwfaq.pdf>.

⁴ Extracts from ILO. 2006. 'The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.' ILO, Geneva.

International action

Child labour became an international issue in the 1990s when a decade-long crisis in developing countries made it apparent that children are particularly vulnerable to poverty and economic crisis. In 1989, the UN adopted the Convention on the Rights of Children and this united several different actors working on the issue. Nonetheless, a grand strategy that specifically addresses the question of child labour has never been developed.

Being the most contemporary global framework to eradicate poverty, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aim to improve children's life by achieving universal primary education for all and eliminating the gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Unfortunately, confining issues of child poverty and development into education creates short-sighted solutions. Children are often active economic agents in varying degrees. Issues of child poverty and lack of education cannot be addressed without understanding and tackling the phenomenon of child labour. Acknowledging the presence of many children at work rather than at school immediately alters the reality where responses to child poverty and children's access to education are developed.

Since none of the MDGs addresses child labour directly, the ILO has intensified its work in the direction of mainstreaming child labour into the agendas of development actors. As a result of these efforts, various actors merged their efforts into eliminating child labour. Prime international development actors such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund began to cooperate with the ILO to prepare children sensitive policies. Governments of developing and developed countries, NGOs, trade unions, business associations and corporations have been involved and are participating in various projects.

In this atmosphere of intensifying collaboration, two key ILO Conventions - the Convention on Minimum Age of Employment (No. 138) and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (No. 182) - play essential roles.

The aim of the international movement against child labour is to create a future without child labour. However, there are some forms of child labour that need addressing more urgently. These priority areas are forced and bonded child labour, use of children in armed conflict, child prostitution, trafficking in children for labour and sexual purposes, and the use of children in illicit activities such as the drugs trade.

Growing international commitment to the elimination of child labour and acceptance of policy measures have contributed substantially to the reduction in the number of children at work. Recent numbers showed that between 2000 and 2004, the number of child labourers fell by 11 per cent and the number of children in hazardous work fell by 26 per cent.⁵

⁵ ILO. 2006. 'The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.' ILO, Geneva. p. xi.

Child labour

According to the ILO, it is widely agreed that ‘work that falls within the legal limits and does not interfere with children’s health and development or prejudice their schooling can be a positive experience’.⁶

However, lots of studies covering various different sectors have shown that this is not the type of work that children are facing. There are an estimated 218 million child labourers in the world, of which 126 million children work in a job that ‘by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on children’s safety, health (physical and mental), and moral development.’⁷

Paying less to children is often justified by the claim that they do petty jobs rather than adult jobs. In today’s world, this justification has lost its foundation since most children who undertake adult jobs regardless of their age can be found in nearly every sector of the economy from mining to agriculture.

Children tend to be concentrated in the informal sector; thus, their work is unofficial. Moreover, the employers are in many cases unregistered.⁸ This makes detecting and tackling child labour difficult.⁹ This situation also reflects itself in children’s working conditions. For some work, children are paid with some food and a place to stay. It is a dream to expect job security. They work under strict surveillance and violence is a common way to discipline them.¹⁰ Furthermore, their working environment is dirty and unsafe, and they might be in direct contact with poisonous chemicals.

Most of these children work despite the fact that their countries’ laws do not allow them to do so. If their work is illegal, how do they find employment? Children are an attractive source of labour since they are easier to control and abuse, and less able to ask for their rights.¹¹ Children can be forced to work longer hours with less food and poorer accommodation without any benefits. Even the trafficking of children is a result of unmet demand for cheap and docile labour in general.¹²

The causes of child labour are various. However, necessity or poverty is clearly the main cause. Most child labourers have to work since they or their families do not have another choice. Necessity and poverty might arise due to economic and political crisis, armed conflict, dislocation, natural disasters or illness of a parent

6 ILO. 2006. ‘The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.’ ILO, Geneva. p, 23.

7 Ibid. p, 26.

8 ILO. 2004. ‘Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students’. ILO, Geneva. p, 23.

9 Ibid. p, 8.

10 Ibid. p, 23.

11 Ibid. p,144.

12 Ibid.

(including, often, HIV/AIDS). Family values, expectations and cultural norms might be added to this combination of causes as they affect the way child labour is exercised.

No single factor can fully explain the persistence or increase in the number of child labour. Yet, a consensus is emerging around the idea that it is the current shape of globalization, far from creating opportunities for everybody, that is the main catalyst behind child labour.

Worst Forms of Child Labour¹³

The term “child labour” does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18. According to the ILO, many children, in very different national circumstances, carry out work that is entirely consistent with their education and full physical and mental development. Drawing on the provisions of Conventions Nos. 138 and 182, the report identifies three categories of child labour to be abolished:

- (1) Labour performed by a child who is under a minimum age specified in national legislation for that kind of work.
- (2) Labour that jeopardizes the physical, mental or moral well being of a child, known as hazardous work.
- (3) The unconditional worst forms of child labour, which are internationally defined as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for use in armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities.

13 Extracts from ILO (2002). ‘A Future Without Child Labour: The Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work. ILO, Geneva.

Girls' child labour

This year's World Day Against Child Labour will highlight the plights of girls. Out of 218 million child labourers, an estimated 100 million are girls.¹⁴

Until recently, policies, studies and programmes have been gender blind and concentrated on boys' child labour, assuming that girls and boys have identical needs and perspectives.¹⁵ However, recent studies pointed out that girls' child labour might be represented disproportionately among the worst forms of child labour as a result of multiple disadvantages girls face.¹⁶ Cultural stereotypes of women and girls replicate themselves in the labour market. Discrimination against girls together with child labour results in more dangerous working conditions.¹⁷

Girls can be found in every sector of the economy ranging from agriculture to manufacturing, domestic work to service sector. In spite of their broad engagement in economic life, girls' work is often invisible, leading to particular risks and dangers.¹⁸

Many girls can be found in domestic work. Domestic work is known as 'being undervalued and poorly regulated, and many domestic workers remain overworked, underpaid and unprotected'.¹⁹ Maltreatment and abuse especially for the live-in domestic workers are well-known.²⁰ In spite of projects targeting domestic work, improvement in the status and conditions of domestic labour is extremely slow and sluggish.²¹ This is partly because domestic workers are in a sense hidden from the eyes of the public.

The gender-based discriminatory practice of societies reveals itself in the allocation of children to basic tasks.²² Most working girls have to combine their economic activity with housework responsibilities, which include childcare, cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fuel. This combination between long hours of work outside and inside the house creates a double burden for girls by decreasing their chances to attend school yet alone be successful.²³ Moreover,

14 ILO. 2009. 'Action against Child Labour: IPEC Highlights 2008'. ILO, Geneva. p, 6.

15 ILO. 2004. 'Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students'. ILO, Geneva. p, 140.

16 ILO.2009. 'Global Employment Trends for Women'. ILO, Geneva. p, 19.

17 ILO. 2006. 'The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.' ILO, Geneva. p, 24.

18 ILO. 2009. 'Action against Child Labour: IPEC Highlights 2008'. ILO, Geneva. p, 41.

19 ILO. 2009. 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers'. ILO, Geneva. p, 1.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 ILO. 2009. 'World Day 2009: Give Girls A Chance: End Child Labour'. ILO, Geneva.

23 ILO. 2009. 'Action against Child Labour: IPEC Highlights 2008'. ILO, Geneva. p, 41.

boys are more likely to be paid for domestic tasks than girls although girls spend more time on them.²⁴

Girls' labour and education

Poverty is given as one of the main causes of child labour. However, it is also one of the main results.²⁵ In an area where poverty is widespread, families may send their children to work instead of school as a part of their survival strategy. But education is the first step towards having a decent job.

Dragged into the labour market without enough skills and knowledge, children often end up in the least productive jobs. This adversely affects their future chances to find a better job and climb the ladder of labour market. They are trapped in the low paid jobs with little or no social security which decreases their chances of getting out of poverty. As parents, they may in turn be forced to make the same choices for their children that their parents once made for them. Thus, child labour means compromising your future for your present. It imprisons today's children in child labour and future adults in poverty. It is a loss of human capital and hence, it adversely affects the development of the entire country.²⁶

In spite of the recent progress with respect to primary school enrolment and attendance rates, there is still a prominent gap between girls and boys.²⁷ Girls are still the last to be enrolled in school and the first to be withdrawn if their family needs to make a choice between sending their daughter or son to school. Girls' access to education is also limited by other factors such as safety of the journey to school or lack of adequate water and sanitation facilities.²⁸

According to the ILO Convention on the Minimum Age of Employment, governments should ensure that no children below the minimum age of employment work. Yet girls below the minimum age of employment can be found working in every sector of the economy. Girls therefore enter the labour market at an early age without sufficient skills and knowledge.²⁹ Therefore, they are more likely to end up in the lowest paid and worst forms of child labour without any or little access to vocational training.

Poverty reduction strategies have now begun to concentrate on women since women tend to spend their earnings in a more equal way than male household heads; meaning that women better balance the distribution of food and money

24 ILO. 2006. 'The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.' ILO, Geneva. p, 42.

25 ILO. 2006. 'The End of Child Labour within Reach: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.' ILO, Geneva. p, 20.

26 Ibid.

27 ILO. 2009. 'World Day 2009: Give Girls A Chance: End Child Labour'. ILO, Geneva.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

inside the household.³⁰ Women tend to value education more than men and treat their kids more equally with regard to household chores.³¹ They keep their local economy alive since they tend to get their needs from the local markets. Thus, improving women's life and giving women equal opportunities means improving everybody's life around them.

A study in Bangladesh showed that women are likely to see more benefits from additional education in terms of earnings than men since they tend to be stuck in lower-paying industries and not have access to the same types of jobs as men.³² It also indicates that higher levels of educational attainment enhance productivity and efficiency in the labour market. It reduces occupational segregation and gender-based earning inequalities. It means women's increasing access to education can bring broad based social and economic development to Bangladesh.³³

The same logic applies to educating girls. 'Educated girls are more likely to have better incomes as adults, marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and to have more share in decision making within the households.'³⁴ They are also more likely to send their children to school; thus helping to avoid future child labour. Hence dealing with girls' child labour and promoting their right to education should be central to the development strategies and decent work.

Girls' child labour in global supply chains

'The manner in which a society's production is organized can have a profound impact on the prospects of its children.'³⁵ In this regard, global supply chains are the best mirrors to reflect child labour practices and the plight of the girls.

The phase of globalization experienced after 1970s brought problems along with its benefits. After oil shocks, corporations began to shift their labour-intensive industries to the labour abundant countries of the South.³⁶ This created a competition between developing countries over attracting more capital. To this end, most of the developing countries re-oriented their economies. Yet structural changes were undertaken without necessary social security provisions. Unfortunately, the cost of labour which otherwise would have been covered by corporations was externalized by undermining the rights and securities of the

30 Chant, S. 1997. 'Women Headed Households: Diversity and Dynamics in the Developing World'. Macmillan Pres, London. p, 157.

31 Ibid. p, 158.

32 ILO.2009. 'Global Employment Trends for Women'. ILO, Geneva. p, 18.

33 Ibid.

34 ILO. 2009. 'World Day 2009: Give Girls A Chance: End Child Labour'. ILO, Geneva.

35 ILO. 2004. 'Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students'. ILO, Geneva. pp, 100-101.

36 Mies, Martina. 1998. sixth impression. Patriarchy and accumulation on a world scale: Women in the international division of labour. London: Zed Books Ltd. p, x.

workers.³⁷ This process created a shadow economy where millions of people work in ways that deny them the ability to fully utilize their creativity or maximize their productive potential.³⁸ Even in the formal labour markets the rights and securities of the workers were significantly reduced.

Global supply chains accommodate or realize different stages of production under one big brand or one corporation. Although global supply chains vary in character due to the nature of what they produce, they all need to ensure quick and mass production. Companies' ability to increase their profit and competitiveness depends on their ability to cut the cost of production and this is overtly reflected in the structures of the global supply chains. Workers mainly undertake low-paid and labour intensive jobs which provide them with little or no social protection. Furthermore, due to the intensity of production, factory owners who work for the global supply chains may prefer to subcontract with small scale producers who mainly undertake production at home or small workshops. Since national labour laws do not regulate the informal markets, the working conditions in these places tend to be far from decent.

Production of textiles, clothing and footwear are found in many developing countries such as India, Turkey, Bangladesh, China and Egypt.³⁹ An estimated 14% of all child labour work in manufacturing a variety of goods ranging from garments to toys, sportswear to soccer-balls etc.⁴⁰ Some of the production units are big but most of them are small workshops mainly dealing with hand-made stages of production. The example of entire household engaging in production of simple items, which are contracted out on a piece base, is very common in developing countries especially in India.⁴¹

Prejudices arising from set gender roles prevail in economic activities leading to the disadvantages being handed down from mother to daughter even outside the household. Global supply chains, where employment patterns tend to be gender-specific, are good examples of this.⁴² Girls may be preferred as employees in the clothing industry since they have already learnt to sew at home and have developed the manual dexterity and capacity to perform the necessary tasks from an early age.⁴³

37 Ibid. p, 110.

38 ILO. 2003. Report of the Director-General. International Labour Conference 91st Session: Working out of poverty. <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/kd00116.pdf> (accessed November 2, 2008). p, 6.

39 ILO. 2004. 'Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students'. ILO, Geneva. p, 29.

40 Ibid. p, 28.

41 Ibid.

42 Alais, F. B. & Hagemann, F. 2008. 'Child Labour and Education: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys.' ILO Working Paper (June 2008). ILO, Geneva. p, v.

43 ILO. 2004. 'Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students'. ILO, Geneva. p, 143.

Continuation of disadvantages from private life to work life leaves little mobility for girls to get better jobs since the jobs deemed appropriate for girls are low paid and low skilled ones. The factory owners, supervisors and machine operators are almost all men and nearly all the manual workers are women and girls. In the factories and sweatshops, a macho culture dominates.

Similar examples abound in agricultural production for global supply chains. In India, girls account for around 67 per cent of the children working in hybrid cotton seed production for national and multinational corporations.⁴⁴ They work long hours with little pay under strict surveillance and they are exposed to poisonous pesticides. Children are easier to control, whether through verbal or physical abuse or through inexpensive treats like chocolate or hair ribbons.⁴⁵ A seed farmer sums up why they prefer hiring girls:

“Cross-pollination work is very labour intensive and a large number of labourers is required to do this work. It is also delicate work and needs to be handled carefully. We prefer young girl children for this task because with their delicate fingers (nimble fingers) they can handle this work better than adults. They also work more intensively than adults. We can control them easily. They listen to us and do what ever we ask them to do. The most important thing is labour costs. Nearly half of our investment goes towards payment of labour charges. The wage rates for children are far lower than adult wages. We can reduce our labour costs considerably if we hire girl children. If we want to hire adult labour we have to pay higher wages. With current the procurement price we get from the seed companies we can not afford to pay higher wages to the labourers.”⁴⁶

Sometimes cultural stereotypes play a more indirect role. In other parts of the India such as Andhra Pradesh, girls are cotton labourers simply because boys are at school.⁴⁷

During the cotton season, hundreds thousands of children are moved away from their families to the farms. In Gujarat (India), girls working in the cotton farms live in sheds, sleep on the floor and wash in the open.⁴⁸ Moreover, these children

44 Environmental Justice Foundation. 2007. ‘The Children Behind Our Cotton.’ [online] Available from:

<http://www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/The%20Children%20behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL.pdf>. (last accessed May 19, 2009). p, 7.

45 Venkateswarlu, D. & da Corta L. 2001. Cited in Venkateswarlu, D. 2007. ‘Cotton Bondage Continues in Indian Cotton Supply Chains.’ p, 7.

46 Venkateswarlu, D. 2007. ‘Cotton Bondage Continues in Indian Cotton Supply Chains.’ pp, 7-8.

47 Environmental Justice Foundation. 2007. ‘The Children Behind Our Cotton.’ [online] Available from:

<http://www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/The%20Children%20behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL.pdf>. (last accessed May 19, 2009). p, 7

48 Pres. Communication. Prasad, M. (reporter). August 2007. TIMES NOW, India. Cited in 48 Environmental Justice Foundation. 2007. ‘The Children Behind Our Cotton.’ [online] Available from:

are trapped in debt bondage due to the loans extended to their families.⁴⁹ It is not always just the arduous working conditions that the girl child labourers face but also sexual harassment and abuse, of many cases have been reported.⁵⁰

This drive in the global supply chains towards cutting down labour costs by any means possible creates poverty for workers and their families. Furthermore, it decreases their and their children's chance to escape from the poverty. Families, who cannot earn enough money to support themselves even after working long hours, have to make the choice to send their children to work instead of school by unintentionally replicating a vicious circle of poverty.

Various initiatives have been taken by trade unions, NGOs and business associations to improve working conditions along the supply chains. Nonetheless, producers, traders, middlemen, retailers and brands should ensure better tracking of labour standards in their supply chains. Moreover, they should also take gender dimension into account.

<http://www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/The%20Children%20behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL.pdf>. (last accessed May 19, 2009). p, 6.

49 Environmental Justice Foundation. 2007. 'The Children Behind Our Cotton.' [online] Available from: <http://www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/The%20Children%20behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL.pdf>. (last accessed May 19, 2009). pp, 1-2.

50 Ibid. p, 4.

Global economic crisis

The world is going through a serious economic crisis and developing countries are facing additional difficulties due to rising food and fuel prices. Experiences of past crises have taught us that progress in eliminating child labour can be easily swept away.⁵¹ Thus, 2009 and the following years are especially important to ensure that progress made in eliminating child labour is not jeopardized.

Although it is early to talk about the current crisis' effect on children there is a growing concern that it threatens to push more children into work. In times of economic crisis, a common and immediate response is to introduce more child labour since parents or guardians lose their jobs.⁵² Moreover, governments have a tendency to cut public expenses including labour inspectorates, national education budgets and international aid going to education support.

The economic crisis has also put suppliers in developing countries under pressure to cut the cost of production since in advanced countries brands are trying to increase their sales by cutting prices. Moreover, the competition between suppliers has got fiercer as the demand for their products is decreasing. This might mean suppliers trying to make their products more attractive by cutting their prices and they will do that by outsourcing production to households where cheap labour is evident along with child labour.⁵³

It also means parents need to make choices between sending their children to school and as mentioned before girls are particularly disadvantaged when it comes to that decision. Although this increase in child labour might be temporary, the effects can be lasting; studies showed that most of the kids who drop school for full employment never go back to school.⁵⁴

Act now

One area where we can act to stem this tide, however, is in ethical sourcing and purchasing, and the forthcoming London Olympics 2012 provides an opportunity to do just that.

The licensing and merchandise for the Olympic Games is an industry worth hundreds of millions of pounds. The companies awarded Olympics licenses have great opportunities to make considerable profit and enhance their brand image since the licenses give them exclusive rights to produce and sell Olympic goods.

However, several studies of past Olympics have revealed that in the past workers who have worked hard to produce goods for the Olympics are not getting their fair share from the vast profits generated by the Olympics. Researchers belonging

51 ILO. 2009. 'Action against Child Labour: IPEC Highlights 2008'. ILO, Geneva. p, 9.

52 ILO. 2009. 'Action against Child Labour: IPEC Highlights 2008'. ILO, Geneva. p, 14.

53 Ibid.

54 ILO. 2004. 'Child Labour: A Textbook for University Students'. ILO, Geneva. p, 95.

to the PlayFair campaign 'Play Fair 2008' investigated working conditions in four Chinese factories producing bags, headgear and stationery bearing the Olympic logo - they found that the goods were being produced by children as young as 12 years old, adults earning 14p per hour (half the legal minimum wage), and employees being made to work up to 15 hours per day, seven days a week in unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

The PlayFair Alliance was formed in 2004 to campaign against this contradiction between the Olympics philosophy and the horrendous working conditions of sweatshop workers. The PlayFair 2012 campaign⁵⁵ is on the starting blocks getting ready to raise the bar on ethical trading for all goods bearing the Olympic logo ensuring workers' rights are respected throughout Olympic supply chains. Coordinated by the TUC and Labour Behind the Label, it intends to ensure an Olympics that, in the words of former London Mayor Ken Livingstone, "values the people who will work to produce it."

As trade unionists and as consumers of Olympics 2012 products, ordinary people have the power to make sure that people around the world producing the London Olympics goods feel at least some of the benefits.

⁵⁵ For further information see www.playfair2012.com

Conclusion

Education for children is the first step towards obtaining decent work and livelihoods for adult workers. Neither education for all nor decent work can be realised without taking the dynamics of child labour into account.

In order to eradicate child labour, it has to be seen in the wider context of socio-economic policies, employment programmes and women's equality, and educational expansion. A permanent end to child labour cannot be achieved if the current manner of global production does not meet the requirements of International Labour Standards. Children's lives can not be significantly improved if their families are left aside. In this respect, freedom of association and right to collective bargaining are essential.

Research shows that educating girls is one of the most effective ways of tackling poverty. However, girls face multiple disadvantages that keep them away from education and imprison them in the worst forms of child labour. Discrimination against girls together with child labour leaves them no chance of mobility. Thus, it is vital to extend secondary education and vocational training to girls and to take gender dimension of child labour into account in every stage of policy making and programme implementation.

Further reading and links

Websites

Further resources for the TUC's child poverty campaign are available at www.tuc.org.uk/childpoverty

Further information about the TUC's international development work can be found at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/index.cfm?mins=465&minors=465>

Further information about the ITUC can be found at www.ituccis.org

Further information about the ILO's work on child labour can be found www.ilo.org/ipecl/

Publications

TUC The Iron Triangle (2008) www.tuc.org.uk/extras/irontriangle.pdf

TUC Gender Pay Gap Update (2008) www.tuc.org.uk/equality/tuc-14435-f0.cfm

ILO The End of Child Labour within Reach (2006)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/rep-i-b.pdf>.

Environmental Justice Foundation The Children behind Our Cotton (2007)

www.ejfoundation.org/pdf/The%20Children%20behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL.pdf

Alais, F. B. & Hagemann, F. 'Child Labour and Education: Evidence from SIMPOC Surveys' ILO Working Paper (2008)

www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/productdownload.do?type=document&id=8390.