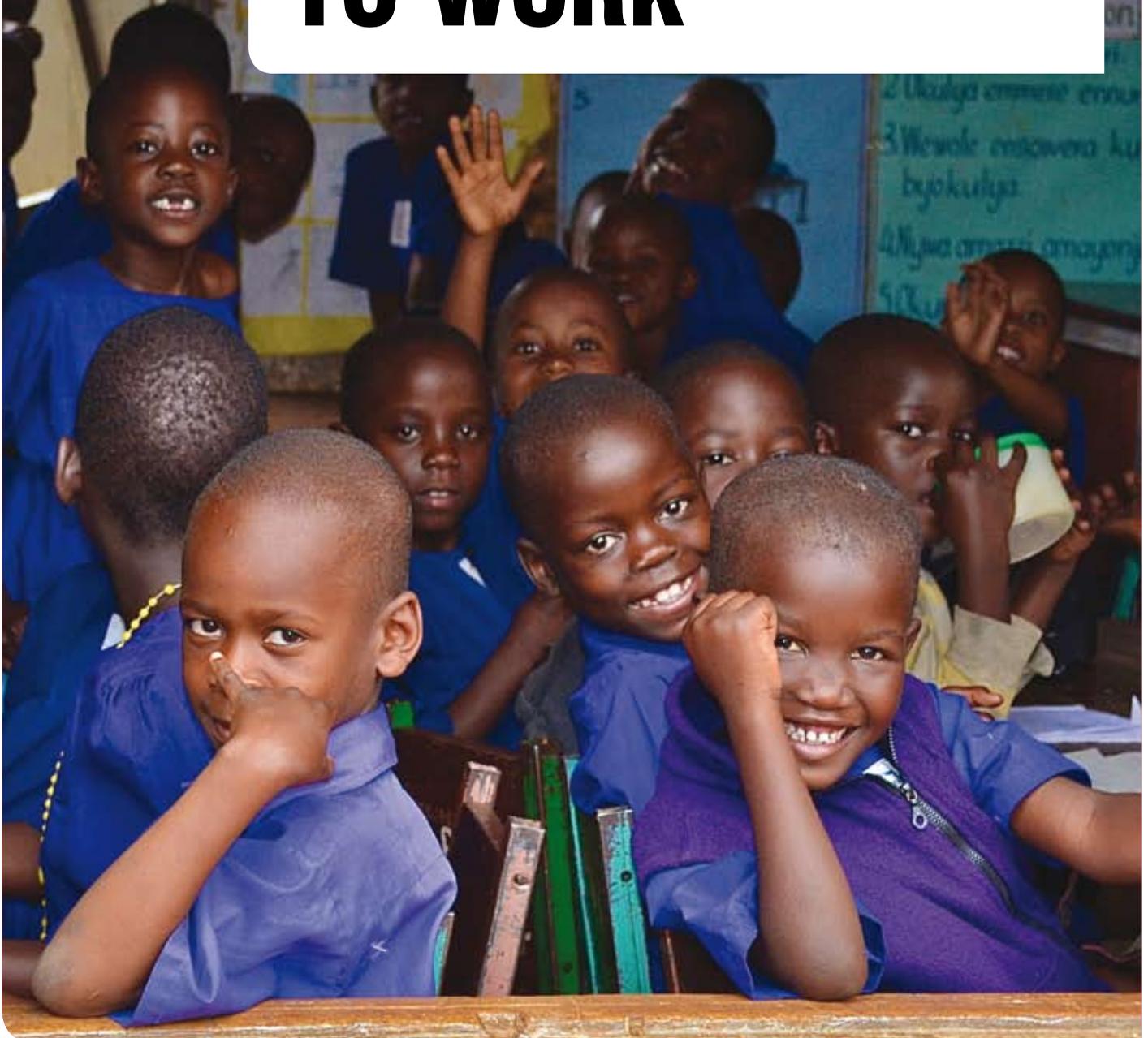


# SCHOOL: THE BEST PLACE TO WORK



**STOP**



**Child Labour**  
school is the best place to work

CHECK [WWW.STOPCHILDLABOUR.ORG](http://WWW.STOPCHILDLABOUR.ORG) TO FIND  
OUT WHAT YOU CAN DO AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

# FIGHT CHILD LABOUR TOGETHER

NALA (10) works in the fertile ricefields of Doho. Every day, 10-year-old Nala from Uganda ploughs the mud to prepare it for planting rice. She works together with her brother and some friends. Her younger sister Iba watches them carefully, while carrying her baby brother on her back. Nala, her friends and siblings don't go to school. Their parents never went to school either. Many people in Doho district live from the ricefields; that's just what they do. Nala dreams that one day she will be able to go to school and eventually become a teacher. The sun is bright and hot, and Nala's bare feet hurt.



## WHAT IS CHILD LABOUR ? A WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

Child labour is work performed by a child that is likely to interfere with his or her right to education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. It includes all forms of work done by children up to 15 years old that deprives them of their right to education, as well as dangerous work done by children up to the age of 18 years. Child labour is illegal. 

## FACTS & FIGURES:

- There are more than 215 million child labourers in the world
- 1 in 7 children between 5 and 17 years is a child labourer
- 1 in 5 children carry out paid work
- Every year, 22,000 children die because of work-related accidents
- 60% work in agriculture
- 25,6% work in the service sector
- 7,5% work in heavy industry

## Based on:

ILO (International Labour Organisation) Convention 138 on the 'minimum age for work', which states that the minimum age for work should not be less than the age at which compulsory education is completed, with a lower limit of 15 years of age. The convention allows for certain flexibilities in specific circumstances, including a lower limit of 14 years for developing countries.

ILO Convention 182 against the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which prohibits dangerous and unhealthy work for children and adolescents up to 18 years of age.

Millennium Development Goals to achieve access to primary education for all children by 2015.

African Charter on the Rights of the Child, which obliges governments to take measures to protect and advance the rights of children - including the right to education and protection against child labour.



**CHILD LABOUR EXISTS BECAUSE  
WE ALLOW IT TO EXIST**

Shanta Sinha, Chairperson of the National  
Commission for Children's Rights, India



**Worldwide, more than 215 million children work in agriculture, mines, households and factories or on the streets. Many people assume there is no solution, as families are poor and depend on the contribution of their children. But there is a solution: an area-based approach which leads to so-called Child Labour Free Zones in which all children go to school and no longer have to work.**

### **WHY CHILD LABOUR EXISTS BELIEFS, SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND LACK OF POLITICAL WILL**

Nearly everyone thinks it is a bad thing for children to work and not to go to school. Still, many people accept child labour as a necessary evil. It is widely believed that families will not be able to cope if their children do not work. Poverty, however, is usually not the biggest problem. It is entrenched beliefs, social injustice and lack of political will that sustain child labour.

### **CHILD LABOUR PERPETUATES POVERTY**

Child labour deprives children of their most fundamental rights: the right to receive an education and the right to protection from exploitation. It also denies them the right to enjoy their childhood and the chance of a better future.

Children who do not go to school tend to remain illiterate and are more likely

to end up in low-paid jobs. In addition children are cheaper to employ than adults. This fierce competition makes it difficult for adults to find work and keeps wages low. This is how child labour perpetuates poverty. Child labour is not only disastrous for children and their future but also for the development of the country in which they live.

In areas where child labour has been eliminated, however, the wages of parents start to rise because they no longer have to compete with low child labour wages, thus giving them in a stronger bargaining position. <sup>2</sup>

### **NO CHILD SHOULD WORK - EVERY CHILD MUST BE IN SCHOOL**

Because many people mistakenly assume that child labour is a necessary evil, only the worst forms of child labour (such as prostitution and slavery) are usually addressed. Certainly everyone

can agree that these forms should be abolished. But this does not help children who carry out work that is labelled as being less harmful.

About 70% of all child labourers work on the land, in households or in the home. These children, too, are seriously damaged. It is pointless to draw a dividing line between the worst forms of child labour and less severe forms, because all children have a right to go to school. This is why the Stop Child Labour campaign is calling for the elimination of all forms of child labour that prevent children from getting an education.

<sup>2</sup> FNV Mondiaal: 'Let parents earn and children learn', 2010



## **SCL WHO ARE WE:**

### **ABOUT**

#### **STOP CHILD LABOUR CAMPAIGN**

Stop Child Labour - School is the best place to Work (SCL) is an international campaign of development organisations, trade unions, education unions and local NGOs. The campaign aims to eliminate all forms of child labour and to ensure quality formal full-time education for all children, at least until the age of 15.

In Europe, Stop Child Labour (SCL) calls on consumers, companies, governments and international organisations to be part of the solution. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, local SCL-partners work closely with governments, trade unions, teachers and children. Together they promote the idea that children should be in school and not working on the land or in factories. Stop Child Labour works on the principle that 'no child should work; every child must be in school'. In doing so SCL works towards increasing and strengthening so-called 'Child Labour Free Zones'.

India, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Nicaragua and Albania are just a few of the countries where child labour is common. An increasing number of children in these countries are able to attend school thanks to the powerful local partners of the Stop Child Labour campaign.

#### **Stop Child Labour has four guiding principles:**

1. Every child has the right to regular full-time education;
2. All forms of child labour are unacceptable;
3. It is the duty of all governments, international organisations and corporate bodies to ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour;
4. Core labour standards must be respected and enforced to effectively eliminate child labour.



### GOOD EXAMPLE

'Poverty is not an excuse for child labour' is the credo of Shanta Sinha, the founder of MVFoundation. MVFoundation is an Indian organisation which developed the Child Labour Free Zones approach. MVFoundation does not create new school systems, but rather, gets the entire community involved in improving the existing education system. In recent decades, MVFoundation has managed to get 1,000,000 children out of work and into school. 1,500 Villages in India have been officially designated 'Child Labour Free Zones' and 1,000 other villages are on their way to that status.

## SCL WHAT DO WE DO: CHILD LABOUR FREE ZONES

### HOW WE DO IT

#### **SOLUTION:** **CHILD LABOUR FREE ZONES**

Experience has shown that child labour is not an inevitable fact of life but rather a problem that has a solution requiring concerted action and political will.

A Child Labour Free Zone is a place where no child labour exists and in which all children attend formal full-time school. In a Child Labour Free Zone everyone is convinced that children belong in school and not in the workplace. All parties – local organisations, trade unions, governments, employers, teachers, parents and children – co-operate to completely eliminate child labour and get all children into school.

The key to the success of the Child Labour Free Zones is the area-based approach against all forms of child labour. The aim is to get everyone within a certain geographic area involved.

When everyone works together and mindsets are changed, the rights of all children can be realized. The approach involves awareness-raising, the establishment of bridge schools, <sup>⑤</sup> support for teachers and parents, and policy advocacy and guidance.

The motto, '*Child labour is a necessary evil*' should be replaced by, '*Child labour, in whatever form, is unacceptable!*' This way, everyone is motivated and prepared to work together to get children into school and keep them there.

<sup>⑤</sup> Bridge schools (or transition classes) are special schools/classes to prepare children who have never been to school for the regular education system.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO:

## AS A COMPANY

When doing business across borders it is important for companies to do so in a socially responsible manner: with respect for people, resources, the environment and the immediate surroundings. Businesses sometimes have no idea where to start. Our recommendation is straightforward: first investigate how your own business might be involved in child labour, and from there you can extend this to your first-tier suppliers and then to suppliers further down the supply chain.

By adopting a thorough, step-by-step approach you can contribute to the fight against child labour. Trade unions and NGOs can help you to establish your company's corporate

social responsibility strategy. Embassies can help you to get into contact with companies that have experience in this area, or provide you with the contact details of civil society organisations or local consultants. Together with customers, suppliers, employees, civil society organisations and local governments, you can make a difference.

Stop Child Labour has an extended Action Plan for companies to combat child labour.

Check [www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do](http://www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do) for this Action Plan.

# **In Europe, Child Labour Free Zones are places like shops, businesses and schools where products made by children are not accepted. Stop Child Labour urges consumers, governments, international organisations and businesses in Europe to take an active stance against child labour and to become part of the solution.**

## **AS A CONSUMER**

As a consumer you have a powerful voice. Companies do not want to be associated with child labour and are sensitive to bad publicity and consumer campaigns. Many products on the market have been made with child labour. This is not always easy to trace, but we can try to pay as much attention to the issue as possible and take it into consideration when making purchase decisions.

As a consumer, you can help to protect and expand the Child Labour Free Zones. For instance, by telling companies that you don't accept child labour in the products you buy. If you are not sure where a product comes from or how it was produced, just ask! Raise your voice against child labour and encourage companies to produce child-labour-free goods.

Check [www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do](http://www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do) to find out how to raise your voice and for more information about initiatives that work towards introducing 'guaranteed child-labour-free products' in cooperation with businesses, such as those in the food and clothing sectors.

## **AS A POLITICIAN**

Where is the best place to start taking action against child labour? With employers who allow children to work in their factories? With importers who buy the products from the factories as cheaply as possible? With shopkeepers and customers who are not critical about what they buy?

Since each of these individual parties depend on each other, they would benefit from a more transparent system that involves labelling products to indicate whether they have been made "humanely" – or at least to provide a better understanding of the origin of the products. Stricter control and certification of products that are imported into Europe would be a means of addressing child labour in a broad way. Moreover, governments could develop more integrated policies on child labour and education; children with no access to education or no encouragement to attend school have little alternative but to enter the labour market.

See [www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do](http://www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do) for the SCL position paper and recommendations for coherent policies on the linked issues of child labour and education.

## **AS A PROCUREMENT OFFICER**

The government, in its role as buyer, is an important client for many companies. Many products which are purchased by public authorities are made by child labour, such as materials for construction work, motor vehicles, food and beverage products, electrical machinery, basic metals and chemicals. The procurement of products and services by public authorities is an enormous market in the EU. By refusing to accept products produced by children, governments can use this purchasing power to influence supplier companies. Governments in the EU have already developed policies to include social considerations in public procurement, including the labour conditions under which the procured products were produced. Stop Child Labour has created a toolkit for procurement officers which includes practical information on social conditions with specific attention given to eradicating child labour, plus tools for doing so. For procurement officers it is, for example, possible to include an additional requirement to combat child labour as a condition of performance in the contract with the supplier.

Check [www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do](http://www.stopchildlabour.org/what-you-can-do) for the toolkit.



**THERE ARE MORE THAN 215 MILLION  
CHILD LABOURERS IN THE WORLD**

**THEY WORK IN FACTORIES AND ON THE LAND**

**THEY MAKE FOOTBALLS AND T-SHIRTS**

**THEY WORK IN MINES AND AS DOMESTIC  
SERVANTS, THEY BREAK STONES**

**THEY FIGHT IN WARS OR ARE SOLD IN BROTHELS**

**YET THEY ARE ENTITLED TO AN EDUCATION.  
AND THEREFORE A FUTURE!**

## **STOP CHILD LABOUR**

'Stop Child Labour - School is the best place to work' is an international campaign of Alliance2015, coordinated by Hivos (Netherlands). The campaign is executed in co-operation with Cesvi (Italy), FNV Mondiaal (Netherlands), the General Education Union (Netherlands), Ibis (Denmark), ICCO & Kerk in Actie (Netherlands), the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), People in Need (Czech Republic), Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (Netherlands) and local partner organisations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. [www.stopchildlabour.org](http://www.stopchildlabour.org)



Alliance 2015

towards the eradication of poverty