

What can be done to end child labour?

Individuals, communities, businesses, organisations and governments around the world have been working to end child labour. The United Nations' International Labour Organisation monitors the use of child labour. Between the years 2000 and 2012, considerable progress in addressing child labour was observed:¹

- The total number of child labourers globally reduced by almost one-third or almost 78 million children.
- The total number of children in hazardous work fell by over 50 per cent.

Activities aimed at addressing child labour

There are a range of activities that either directly or indirectly work to reduce the use of child labour. Broadly these activities tend to focus on either addressing the “supply” of child labour, or on reducing the global “demand” for goods produced using child labour. Activities include:

❖ **Governments:**

- Create and enforce laws that set work standards, such as a minimum age before people can start work, minimum wages for workers, and anti-discrimination.
- Create and enforce laws that uphold child rights, such as prohibiting child labour and compulsory education.
- Create and deliver policies that help address domestic poverty, such as making education free, and providing social protection in the event of injury, illness, and unemployment.
- Create purchasing policies that when buying goods for government use, seek child labour free options.
- Advocate to other governments to take action against child labour, and support efforts to reduce global poverty and address child labour.

❖ **Businesses:**

- Review supply chains and implement practices to end child labour and promote fair wages for workers in their business and across their sector.
- Apply for certification that their goods are child labour free.
- Practice ethical consumerism when buying goods and component parts.

❖ **Organisations:**

- Advocate domestically and internationally to governments, businesses, communities and individuals to take action against child labour.
- Deliver community programs aimed at addressing extreme poverty, for example skills training, business start-up equipment, savings and interest-free loan programs to support adults in working and earning higher incomes.
- Deliver community programs aimed at helping child labourers to leave work and return to school, such as providing remedial education, supporting access to school materials, and advocating for girls' education.
- Provide independent certification that goods have been produced for a fair wage and are child labour free, and promote ethical consumerism.

❖ **Individuals / Communities:**

- Organise and undertake campaign activities encouraging governments, businesses and other individuals to practice ethical consumerism and take actions to address child labour.
- Practice ethical consumerism.
- Participate in community based activities to learn about and deliver child rights, and address child labour.

In order to successfully address child labour over the long term it is important to take action addressing poverty as an underlying cause of child labour. Typically child labourers work because their families can't survive without the additional income. Once adult wages increase, parents will usually remove their children from work.²

For you to do

1. Research 'ethical consumerism'. Write a short paragraph explaining what it is.

2. Look at the photos in the *What can be done to end child labour?* photo kit. Identify and list two photos that:

- Show an action/project aimed at increasing the demand for and/or availability of ethically produced goods.

Photo # _____

Photo # _____

- Show an action/project aimed directly at/for children.

Photo # _____

Photo # _____

- Show an action/project aimed at increasing the income of adults/families.

Photo # _____

Photo # _____

3. Every year on the 12th of June the United Nations recognizes the World Day Against Child Labour. The aim of this event is to “focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it.”³

With a partner, create a poster for the World Day Against Child Labour. When planning your poster consider:

- Who is the target audience for your poster?
- What key points do you want to make about child labour? What do you want the audience to know?
- What action would you like the audience to take to help address child labour?

4. Do you agree or disagree with the statement: “Australian businesses have a responsibility to take action to help end child labour.” Give a reason explaining your position.

¹ ILO, *Marking progress against child labour – global estimates and trends 2000-2012*, 2013, p. 3-4

² WV, *Unlucky for some: 13 myths about child labour*, 2014

³ United Nations, “World Day Against Child Labour”, www.un.org/en/events/childlabourday/ [accessed Nov 2015]