

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON CHILD LABOR

*www.fieldsofhope.org*

The following lessons are intended for ages 12-15 (grade levels 6-8), although it is flexible and teachers of other levels may find them useful. All activities may be completed using the Fields of Hope web page and its links.

The lessons are intended to enhance students' **knowledge** and understanding of child labor issues internationally, to develop **skills** in organizing and using the information contained in the Fields of Hope web site and other sites devoted to child labor, and to foster **attitudes** of social responsibility.

### Expected Learning Outcomes

1. **Knowledge:** Students will be able to:

1. Define *child labor* and distinguish between abusive child labor and allowable work for children.
2. Describe reasons why child labor is a problem.
3. Understand the contributing factors that lead to the existence and spread of child labor, and the reasons why many working children are not in school.
4. List the health dangers to which child laborers are exposed.
5. Discuss ways to end child labor.

2. **Skills:** Students will be able to:

1. Read, assess and contribute to information on a multi-media web.
2. Organize and use information gained from pre-selected Internet-based sources.
3. Write a fact-based letter, newspaper article, editorial or story about child labor.
4. Participate in an interactive web-based discussion.
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of real-life program interventions.

3. **Attitudes:** Students will have an opportunity to:

1. Communicate their own beliefs, feelings and convictions about child labor.
2. Assess the value of their own opportunity and right to education.
3. Understand the importance of citizen action in a local and international problem that affects children.

## CHILD LABOR JOURNAL

Ask students to open a page in their notebooks and title it "Child Labor". This will be used as a learning journal throughout the activities.

## ACTIVITY 1: TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Time: Possibly two 15-30 minute sessions.

Objective: To place the issue of child labor into the context of students' own lives.

*Session 1:*

Questions for the class:

How many of you do chores at your house? How many of you work during the summer?  
How many of you have worked on a farm?

Ask students to:

1. Make a heading on your Child Labor page that says "Work I Do".
2. Make a list of the chores or work that you do during the school year. Write down your summer job(s).
3. Next to each item on the list, write down how long it takes to do it and/or how many hours per week you work.
4. Write down the total number of hours you spend on chores each week and circle it. Write down the number of hours per week you work during the summer (or during the school year if applicable) and circle it.

Ask the class to say some of their numbers out loud. Who has the highest numbers? The lowest?

Today we are going to look at the issue of child labor. Some children have to work such long hours they don't have a chance to go to school. Is there a relationship between the number of hours a student works outside of school, and the time and effort they are able to put into their schoolwork?

**Homework:** Interview family members about child labor. Ask them what they know about children working in agriculture. For instance, the student can discuss with family members the types of work done on farms, and who does them. Has anyone in the family, including the student, ever worked on a farm? If so, how did the experience compare with the information on the website (see "A Day in the Life" or the story of Linda Chavez-Thompson). Was it similar? Different? If not, what do they think it is like to be a child working in agriculture?

*Session 2:* The teacher will ask for volunteers to share the information they gathered at home.

## **ACTIVITY 2: A DAY IN THE LIFE**

Time: 15-30 minutes

Objective: To sensitize students to the situation of child laborers and stimulate their interest in the topic.

“A Day in the Life: The Story of a Child Worker in Agriculture.”

For one-computer classrooms, show Flash Presentation to whole class. Ask children to read captions aloud. For computer lab or small group work, instruct students to visit the FieldsOfHope.Org web site and click first on “A Day In The Life”. (Flash presentation takes about 3-4 minutes).

Questions for Discussion:

How did this presentation make you feel? Write down several thoughts on your journal page.

How does this child’s experience compare to our analysis of our own chores and work?

How do you feel about your *opportunity* to attend school every day? Write down in your journal about this.

### **ACTIVITY 3: WHAT IS CHILD LABOR?**

Time: 30-45 minutes

Objectives: To learn the definition of child labor, to understand the scale of the child labor problem, it's root causes, and its impact on children.

- Read for comprehension: Students are asked to read the information under What is Child Labor. Cooperative learning approach: In groups of four, ask each student to read two sections. Students then report to each other about the content in their section. Explain that they will all take a quiz on the content of all sections.
- Take the Quiz: Students independently take the on-line question-and-answer section "Take the Quiz." Cooperative learning approach: Students take the quiz individually, based in information they learned themselves and from their peers.

Review questions for the class:

1. What is child labor? How is it different from doing chores or working on a family farm? Write the definition of child labor on your journal page.
2. What kind of child labor is most widespread?
3. Why don't some families send their children to school?
4. What are some of the dangers of child labor in agriculture?

## **ACTIVITY 4: CHILD LABOR AROUND THE WORLD**

Time: Two 45 minute class sessions

Objective: To gain a geographical perspective on the child labor problem, to learn basic information about how one's own country compares to neighboring countries, and to learn the relationship between laws and practices.

### *Session 1:*

1. Teacher demonstrates use of the "Around the World" section. Provide a basic explanation of the data included for each country. Use hyperlinks within the site to give basic explanations of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.
2. Students visit the "Around the World" section of the website. Explore the map and various countries, and read the information contained in 3-4 countries, each from different continents.
3. Students read about their own country and two neighboring countries. What is different about the three countries, and what is the same? Do you think any changes are needed in your home country? Why or why not? Make notes in your journal.
4. Allow students to reflect and discuss as a class.

### *Session 2:*

1. Revisit the hyperlinks of the countries already studied above, focusing on the section describing child labor laws and education laws. Click on "more" to find out additional background information on these topics. Note: if the link is to the U.S. Department of State Country Reports, scroll down to Section 5 (children) for more information about education and Section 6(d) for more information about child labor.
2. Divide the class into groups of 4. Describe/discuss what you notice about how the laws do or do not reflect the actual practices in each country.
3. Ask students to discuss why child labor laws and education laws are important. Are they enforced? Why or why not? What are the goals of the laws? Are the goals accomplished? Why or why not? What could be done to strengthen or improve the situation?
4. Student groups will identify 5 facts that they learned about child labor and education laws, how they are enforced, and how this affects children. Each group should report these findings back to the class as a whole.

## **ACTIVITY 5: CREATIVE WRITING/EXPRESSION ABOUT CHILD LABOR**

Time: a) Students work independently on a creative assignment (30 minutes of class time to be turned in at a later date)

b) Group work: 15 - 30 minutes

Objectives: a) To research the topic of child labor using Internet resources; b) To organize and use the information and communicate it effectively.

**A. Independent Writing:** Use information learned from the website and research further information about child labor using the “Use Our Resources” section of the website. Students may choose 1 of the following:

- A) Write a 3-4 paragraph letter to your governmental representatives about child labor in your country and around the world.
- B) Write a 3-4 paragraph newspaper article about child labor. Include facts that you learned from the web site in your article.
- C) Write 3-4 paragraph editorial article about child labor. Include facts that you learned from the web site and your opinion about what can be done to stop child labor.
- D) Write a creative story about child labor. Use the information contained in the web sites and resources as a basis for the characters and setting of the story. Note the descriptions of different agricultural child laborers under “A Day In the Life.”
- E) Choose one of the following to illustrate child labor:
  - i. song
  - ii. poem
  - iii. rap/rhyme
  - iv. drawing/cartoon
  - v. poster
  - vi. skit or play
  - vii. advertisement
  - viii. diarama/mobile
  - ix. other (be creative!)

**B. Group Work:** Put students in groups of four. Share the activity around the group. Add at least one presentation from each group to the Chalkboard section of the web site.

## **ACTIVITY 6: YOUTH ACTIVISM AND CHILD LABOR**

Time: Two class periods

Objectives: a) To foster civic responsibility and action in an area that affects children around the world; b2) To build skills in critique, analysis and comparison.

### **WORKSHEET ON YOUTH ACTIVISM IN CHILD LABOR**

1. Name of the Web Site.
2. What are the main programs offered for youth?
3. What geographic area(s) are served by these programs?
4. Do you think the programs would help stop child labor? If yes, in what way? If no, why?
5. What are the strengths of this site?
6. What are the weaknesses of this site?
7. Do you think you would want to get involved in one of the programs? If yes, which one, and why? If no, why not?

Provide 15-30 minutes for independent free exploration of the websites found in the “Resources” section. In addition to the Youth Activism section, students should be encouraged to visit a couple of other sites in the Resources section for comparison. Then place students in groups of 4 to research one of the Youth Activism sites. Each group of 4 will visit a different site. (1) Assign one student to facilitate the group. His or her role will be to ensure each person gets a chance to speak. (2) Assign one student to be the recorder. His or her role will be to complete a group worksheet about the web site. (3) Assign one student to be the timekeeper. His or her role will be to allow 3 minutes for each student to report, to allow 10 minutes for general discussion, and to allow 5 minutes for wrap up and conclusions. (4) Assign one student to be the reporter. His or her role will be to report the conclusions of the group to the rest of the class.

**After the reporters have given their presentations, the class will discuss the following questions:**

- Which program appears to make the greatest impact on the child labor problem?
- Which program would you like to get involved in most?

**Follow-Up or Extra-Curricular Activity:** Students may want to organize to get involved in activities included in the web sites or activities they have created themselves. This may involve school clubs or after-school activities.

## **ACTIVITY 7: DEBATE**

Time: Two class sessions

Objective: The student will demonstrate his or her understanding of child labor in agriculture as well as some of the challenges involved in creating solutions and alternatives.

Divide the class into seven groups (teachers should feel free to modify/reduce the number of groups as appropriate to their classes). Each group will represent the following person:

1. child worker
2. family of child worker
3. local plantation owner
4. teacher
5. doctor
6. local government official
7. Grocery store owner

Each group will research and present the point of view of their character regarding why, how, when, and where children work in the fields. Use the first class session for research, using the website and its resources. During the second class session, ask each group to give a 5 minute presentation about child labor in agriculture from the point of view of their assigned character.

Following the initial five minute presentations, allow 5 minutes for group discussion, with the teacher serving as moderator. Ask each group to prepare a two minute follow up statement in which they highlight at least one point raised by other speakers with which they agree and one point with which they disagree.

At the end of the session, the students will step out of their roles and create a short list of opportunities and obstacles to ending the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, based upon their discussion.

## ACTIVITY 8: EDUCATION AND CHILD LABOR

Time: a) Independent Internet time; b) 50-60 minutes class time

Objectives: a) To learn about the relationship between education and child labor; b) To understand and process information provided in web site; c) To understand and use information provided in chart form and create a chart based on new information.

1. Provide independent Internet time for students to explore the "Use Our Resources" and "What is Child Labor" pages of the FieldsOfHope.org website to find examples of child labor and its causes.
2. Copy onto overhead or pass out copies of the chart on the following page, *Causes of Child Labor* and *Benefits of an Education*.
  - a) Give students 5 minutes to think about the chart in relation to the information they uncovered on the web. Then, ask students to write in their journal three examples from the "Use Our Resources" and "What is Child Labor" links that illustrate the *Causes of Child Labor* listed in the chart. Discuss as a class.
  - b) Ask students to relate the bottom part of the graph, *Benefits of an Education*, to the lives of the children involved in child labor. How would education change the lives of these children? Ask students to create a list in their journals of ways that accessible education affected their own lives. How would their lives be different if they had been denied the right to a quality education?
3. Place the second chart, *Cycle of Poverty and Illiteracy*, on an overhead or copy onto the blackboard. Ask students to draw the chart in their journal.
  - a) Discuss as a class ways to break the cycle of poverty and positive and negative effects on children, parents, employers and government officials. (For example, if the parents' wages went up, they may not have to send their children to work, but the employers would lose some of their profit. Or if the government provided welfare to supplement wages, they may have to spend less on subsidies to farm owners. Maybe the government decides to provide a quality education for all children at the cost of increased taxes on businesses?)
4. Ask students to read "Why Invest in Education" and consider some of these benefits of universal quality education: (Teachers may print the information sheet or direct students to the web site: Oxfam Canada at [http://www.oxfam.ca/why\\_invest\\_in\\_education.htm](http://www.oxfam.ca/why_invest_in_education.htm)).
  - a) Place students in pairs and ask them to create a new cycle chart that displays the positive impact of education. Create a title for the chart. Ask pairs to share their charts with the class by drawing them on the board or flipchart.

## Information Sheet

### **WHY INVEST IN EDUCATION?**

#### **Education gives people an escape route from poverty**

The undereducated are more likely to be unemployed or engaged in poorly paid work. In an increasingly knowledge-based economy, education and training in technology are becoming key factors in determining people's wealth. Education gives people the chance to support themselves and their families.

#### **Education saves lives**

Every year, almost 12 million children under the age of five die from infectious diseases directly associated with poverty. Educated mothers have better access to information about health and nutrition and are more likely to take a sick child for treatment at an early stage than women who cannot read or write. International evidence shows that for each extra year spent by mothers in primary school, their children's risk of premature death is reduced by about eight percent. In Niger, which has the world's highest infant-mortality rate, the children of mothers who have received primary education are 60 percent more likely to survive.

#### **Education gives people a voice**

Education enables people to take control of their lives. It unlocks a wide range of civil, political, social, and economic rights. It gives people the confidence to speak out and to make their opinions heard. At a community level, it provides the skills with which people can protect their rights: to education; to land; to health care; and to participation in public life. Education is fundamental for meaningful democracy.

#### **Education and gender equality**

Girls account for two-thirds of the children not in school, and the gender gap is widening in many countries. For example, Ethiopia has one of the lowest rates of female school enrolment in the world and one of the largest gender gaps. The worldwide discrimination against girls must change. If more girls are educated, it will lead to greater equality between men and women in all spheres of life.

**In short, without vigorous efforts to reverse current trends, inequalities in education will create an increasingly unequal, less prosperous, and more unstable world.**

To the above information from Oxfam, we would pose another important question:

#### **Is providing accessible quality education too expensive for developing countries?**

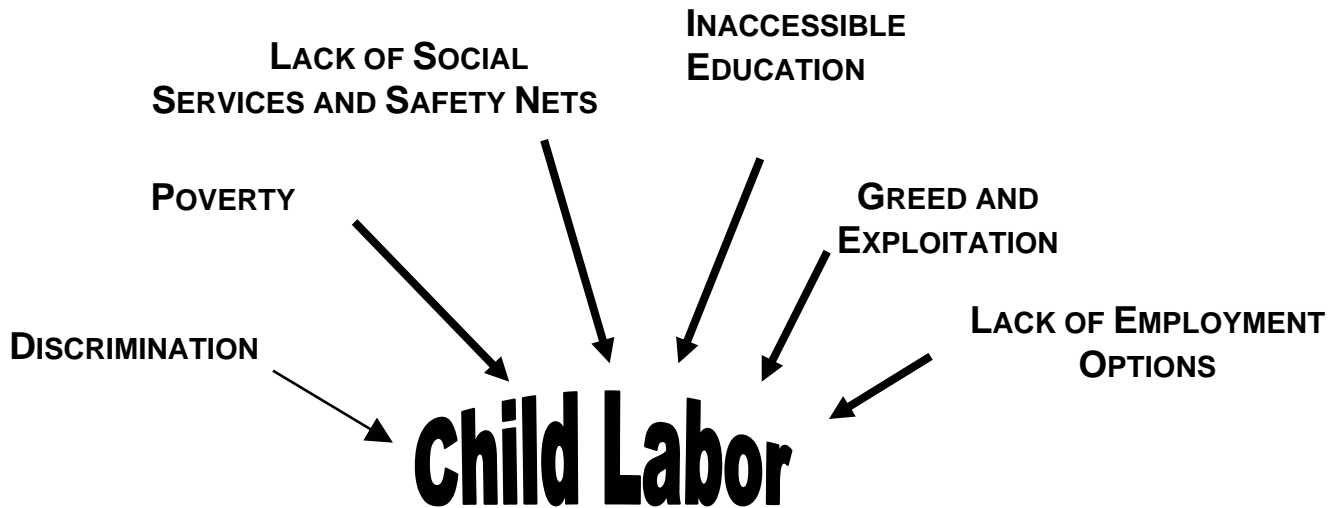
Consider the successful examples of some of the "Asian Tigers": South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, and Taiwan. In just a few decades they have been transformed from poor developing countries to advanced industrial nations. The first step was a major investment in their education systems.

For more information on providing universal, quality, primary education and the Global Campaign for Education, see the Web sites of some of the founding organizations:

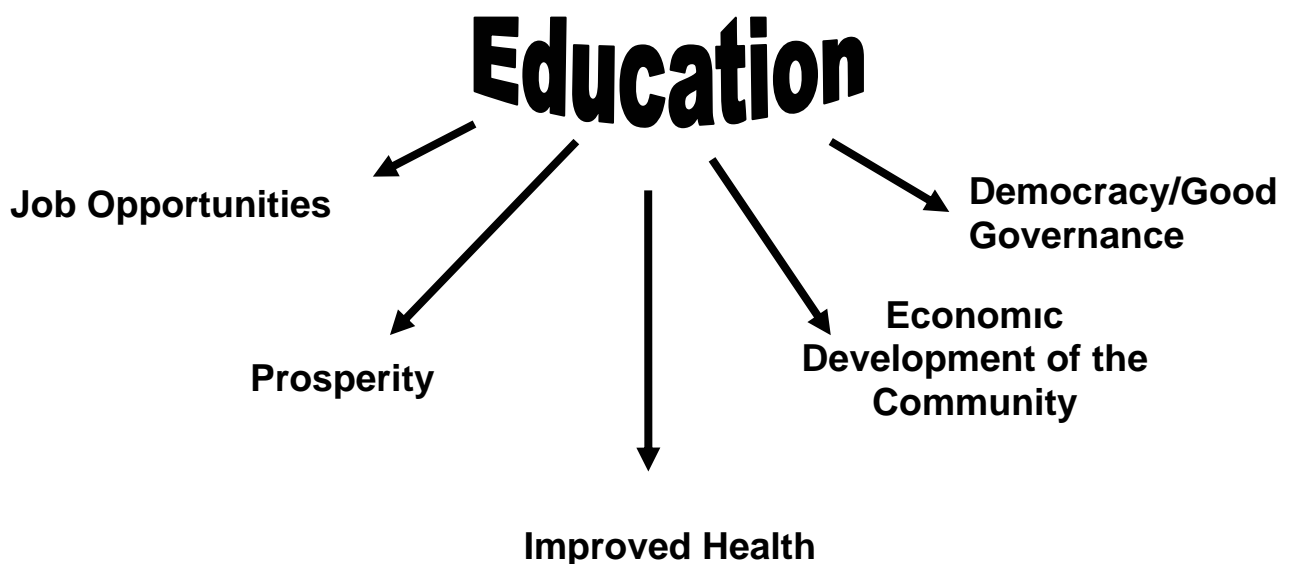
<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/>

<http://ei-ie.org/>

# Causes of Child Labor



# Benefits of an Education



# Cycle of Poverty and Illiteracy

