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Department for International Development

The Department for International Development (DFID) is the UK government department responsible for promoting development and the reduction of poverty. The government first elected in 1997 has increased its commitment to development by strengthening the department and increasing its budget.

The central focus of the Government's policy, set out in the 1997 White Paper on International Development, is a commitment to the internationally agreed target to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, together with the associated targets including basic health care provision and universal access to primary education by the same date. The second White Paper on International Development, published in December 2000, reaffirmed this commitment, while focusing specifically on how to manage the process of globalisation to benefit poor people.

DFID seeks to work in partnership with governments which are committed to the international targets, and seeks to work with business, civil society and the research community to this end. We also work with multilateral institutions including the World Bank, United Nations agencies and the European Community.

The bulk of our assistance is concentrated on the poorest countries in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. We are also contributing to poverty elimination and sustainable development in middle income countries in Latin America, the Caribbean and elsewhere. DFID is also helping the transition countries in central and eastern Europe to try to ensure that the process of change brings benefits to all people and particularly to the poorest.

As well as its headquarters in London and East Kilbride, DFID has offices in many developing countries. In others, DFID works through staff based in British embassies and high commissions.

Cover picture

Calcutta, India.

Child labourers from various parts of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal demonstrate in Calcutta to demand an immediate ban on the exploitation and torture of child labourers. More than two thousand children took part in the rally. The Global March on child labour started in Manila and ended in Geneva.

Joy Shaw/Reuters

issues

DFID Department for International Development



Liberating children

COMBATING HIDDEN AND HARMFUL CHILD LABOUR

Since 1997, DFID has been working to establish the 2015 poverty reduction targets as the central objective of the development effort of the entire international community. These efforts received a huge boost in September 2000 when the United Nations Millennium Summit, attended by 149 Heads of State, endorsed the Millennium Development Goals (see box below). The Millennium Development Goals correlate with the International Development Targets.

A range of indicators has been set up to measure progress in achieving the MDGs. These include reducing the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day, increasing primary school enrolment, increasing access to safe water, reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and improving the life of slum dwellers.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal 1.

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Goal 2.

Achieve universal primary education

Goal 3.

Promote gender equality and empower women

Goal 4.

Reduce child mortality

Goal 5.

Improve maternal health

Goal 7.

Ensure environmental sustainability

Goal 8.

Develop a Global Partnership for Development



Mirpur, Bangladesh.

A young man lifts dusty bricks on to his head. He carries twelve at a time.

Trygve Bolstad/Panos Pictures

Foreword



In recent years media stories and images of children working in factories to producing goods for western consumers have, rightly, caused outrage. There have been demands for action by business and governments. But they have caused some misunderstanding of the issues. Child labour is concentrated

in the informal economies of developing countries. This sector tends to be hidden from the scrutiny of the world's media. But it is here that millions of children are being deprived of their childhood and education, facing physical, mental and moral danger each day.

The numbers are very high. They include most of the children who are also being deprived of an education. The International Labour Organisation now estimates that there are 246 million working children in the world and 179 million of them are engaged in activities that put them in danger. Many of these children work in agriculture and domestic service. This is where some of the worst abuses are found – affecting the very poorest people in the world. And it is particularly nasty when families are persuaded to give their children to unscrupulous traffickers who tell them they will be offered good jobs and improved life opportunities. Children are taken away from their communities, often to foreign countries, with little hope of contact or return home, leaving them highly vulnerable to the worst exploitation.

There is now clear international agreement that we must take action. This is clear from the rapid ratification of the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the commitments made by governments at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children.

Our purpose in preparing this paper is to increase public understanding of the worst forms of child labour and what has to be done to tackle it. We believe that everybody has an interest and a role to play – governments, international organisations, businesses, civil society, the media and the British public. With your help and support we believe it is possible to liberate these children from the drudgery that is denying them their childhood and their prospects for a decent future.

Clare Short

Secretary of State for International Development

May 2002



Liberating children

COMBATING HIDDEN AND HARMFUL CHILD LABOUR

At the heart of DFID's development efforts is a commitment to tackling poverty. In order to reach the international goals for poverty elimination we need a sharper focus on the 600 million children who make up half the world's poorest people. It is a reminder of how desperate this poverty is that 246 million children work, amongst them, **179 million are in the worst forms of child labour**. But we need to be clear. These children do not work because their parents are cruel. They work because their families are desperately poor. We have to find ways to help these children so that we improve their lives.

We are working with many others to help people achieve their human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is critical that this effort includes promoting the rights of all children who are the world's hope for a better future. We need to **invest** in children, and **protect** them from abuse.

International efforts since 1999 have suggested that there are large numbers of children working in the informal economy in developing countries and that their needs are much greater than those who work for the kinds of companies that have been the target of campaigns up to now.

In recent years, we have made important progress. There is now a global agreement defining the worst forms child labour. Many programmes are in place to stop child exploitation. There are internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals for eliminating poverty and getting children into education. These are having real impact on improving the lives of children.

We are working towards long-lasting changes, tackling the underlying poverty and discrimination that forces children into harmful work. We help governments provide more and better education for many more girls and boys. Our policy is very clear – all children should receive education. They should not have to work to survive. But, we are also very clear that our immediate priority is to tackle the worst forms of child labour and remove children from harm and danger.

By building alliances with others we can make a real difference. International agencies, governments, the private sector, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the people of Britain all have a part to play in promoting a just future for the neediest children around the world.

India.

Young apprentice in an iron workshop.

Fernando Molerres/Panos Pictures

Six years in domestic service in Gabon: Alima's story

Alima was trafficked from Togo to Gabon at the age of ten, by an "auntie" [term for a woman known to the family but not a relative]. Over the next five years, she worked for four different employers and never received any payment, though her trafficker did receive some money.

At the age of 15, Alima became very unhappy with her situation, and a local NGO in Gabon, ILEDA, intervened on her behalf with her employer. The NGO's director spent three months trying to persuade her employer to let Alima return home and to pay for the journey. Eventually the employer agreed and Alima went back in the same way she had arrived – by wooden canoe.

She returned home after six years absence. It was not easy for her to reintegrate into her family, which had also expanded with new brothers and sisters. Her father's war pension was irregular and insufficient for the whole family. Though her family were very happy to see her.

Source : Story as told to Anti-Slavery International staff and their partner NGO, ILEDA in January 2002:

Where are children working?

Most of us have seen images from television and newspapers highlighting child labour in sweatshops and factories. But, on the whole, formal, export-oriented sectors are better regulated and have higher labour standards. The public are less aware that the majority of people in poorer countries work in the unregulated, informal economies. They work in workshops, garages, small businesses, private houses, and small restaurants, on farms or plantations. These workplaces are frequently beyond the Government's reach in terms of health and safety standards, labour inspectorates, taxation systems or social security provision. For many poor countries, it is here, outside the regulated sectors that the bulk of the economy operates. We refer to this as the informal economy.

Working for export industries is only a small part of the picture. We need to turn our attention to helping children in the informal economy. We now know that the majority of working children are found in domestic service or in small-scale agriculture. And, we now know that it is here that some of the most hazardous and intolerable forms of labour are found.

Part of the problem in the developing world has been the lack of good information. We needed better child labour data to ensure policies and services reach the children at greatest risk. But information is improving and we are helping provide it. For example, in India, we are helping the Government to collect information on child labour through their collaboration with the International Labour Organisation. This will help Indian policy makers develop programmes targeted at the worst forms of child labour.

MAY 2002

ILO Release New Estimates of the Number of Working Children:

179 MILLION CHILDREN IN THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

In its new report "A Future Without Child Labour", the ILO estimates that 246 million children – one in every six children aged 5 to 17 – are involved in child labour.

The report also says that:

- One in every eight children in the world – some 179 million children aged 5-17 – is still exposed to the worst forms of child labour which endanger the child's physical, mental and moral well-being.
- About 111 million children in hazardous work are under 15 and should be "immediately withdrawn from this work".
- An additional 59 million youths aged 15-17 should receive urgent and immediate protection from hazards at work, or also be withdrawn from such work.
- Some 8.4 million children are caught in "unconditional" worst forms of child labour including slavery, trafficking, debt bondage



*Nr. Dhaka, Bangladesh.
Crushing bricks at the
Narajanganj river harbour -
a very common job among
unskilled children and women.*

Heldur Netocny/Panos Pictures

From Bangladesh comes Nafisa's tragic story

Nafisa is a 14-year-old girl living in Bangladesh. Her story is a harrowing case that shows how her family were faced with economic ruin after her father died suddenly when she was about five years old. This was an event that pushed the family into poverty and had devastating consequences for Nafisa.

At the age of 10 Nafisa started working as a prostitute.

Nafisa explained how her husband tied her up on her wedding night and received money for allowing another man to have sex with her. She was then kept against her will and forced into sex work. She eventually decided to escape when she realised that she was being exploited and could earn more money if she worked independently. Nafisa carried on working as a prostitute for another year or so after she left her husband. During this time, she slept in the verandas of offices and solicited customers by visiting market places in a nearby town with other prostitutes. Nafisa had sex with 3 or 4 men every night.

Nafisa was desperate to leave prostitution behind her. She was able to when she married a man she met in a teashop. However, this marriage may not last as Nafisa's husband's family do not accept her because of her past. Her 'spoiled' reputation also makes it very hard for her to find other work:

"No one wants to employ us [prostitutes] in work. I have to go far away from here where no one knows me [to get work]".

All names have been changed

*Source: Emily Delap
Save the Children, UK.*

and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities.

These figures give us a more reliable picture of the scale of the problem than previously. But there is more work to be done and we still need to find a better way to estimate accurately the number of children in hidden and illegal activities.

Source: "A Future Without Child Labour, Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work", International Labour Conference, 90th Session, 2002, Report I(B).

What are the worst forms of child labour?

Millions of children work worldwide. It is clear that some of this work does not harm children. Work can be beneficial, particularly where it contributes to family tasks, gives children new skills or confidence and does not interfere with schooling. But harmful work impairs children's mental, social and physical development. Defining harmful child labour is complicated. In many countries the process is politicised around extreme positions. This means it is sometimes difficult to get agreement on strategies for action.

In 1999 there was a major breakthrough. Employers, governments and trade unions gathered together at the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. They committed themselves to a global agreement for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO Convention 182). This international agreement defines the 'worst forms' of work as including prostitution, trafficking, child soldiers and work that affects the health, safety and morals of children. This Convention adds weight to existing agreements that prohibit work by under-aged children (Convention 138) by stressing the urgency of tackling the worst forms of child labour.

The 'worst forms' of work undertaken by children are different in each country. National priorities need to be identified. In Ghana, for example, government and civil society have identified the tradition of 'Trokosi', which commits young girls to religious shrines, as an area for action. Other countries, such as Tanzania, have identified domestic service or work in plantations and mining as priorities.

Many children, particularly girls, end up in domestic service. Several countries recognise this as one of the worst forms of child labour. Children in domestic service are separated from their families and they are at the mercy of their employers. Girls, boys and young women are frequently subject to physical and sexual abuse. They work long hours and they are denied access to education or health care. In many cases they receive no wages.

One of the most abhorrent abuses that has been highlighted in recent years is child trafficking into exploitative labour. Many of the children trafficked find themselves in the sex industry. We know that this is taking place across national boundaries around the world. Children are being moved from the poorer to

Quote from parent of trafficked child...

"When she (the intermediary) came, she gave me 25,000 FCFA (US\$35) to take care of my children. She promised to find my son a job and said that I would receive some money every month. I thanked God, because I thought I had at last found a way of taking care of my seven children. I had no idea what she really had in mind for my child."

Source: ILO: Combating trafficking in children for Labour exploitation in West and Central Africa

Abalvi (15 years)

"The two of us, my little sister and I, were taken to Gabon."

I was placed with one family and my sister with another, that I never met. During the three years that I worked over there, I never saw her again. Every time I asked the lady that took us about her, she told me she was doing fine and that I need not worry. She always gave me the same answer until I had to be repatriated. Today, I still do not know where my little sister can be found."

Names have been changed

Source: ILO: Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa

the wealthier regions or countries. But, by setting national priorities and encouraging regional agreements, governments can work with the international development community, the police and immigration services and civil society who, together, can identify and combat trafficking that results in hidden and harmful work wherever it occurs.

HALTING THE TRAFFIC

All over the world, there are examples of children being treated as goods to be bought and sold for financial gain. Trafficking of children is the movement of children from one place to another for profit. Children are often trafficked for work in agriculture or domestic service and sometimes for sexual exploitation. Traffickers transport children with promises of well-paid work or a good education. Poor families want the best for their children and let them go. UNICEF estimates that in West Africa and Central Africa 200,000 children are traded each year.

The story of 'ID' is typical of the hardship these children experience. Now 15 years old, he has returned to Mali after two years, having been trafficked to work on a coffee and yam plantation in Bouafle, Côte d'Ivoire.

'Our day began at 5am. Carrying heavy tools on our head, we had to walk six kilometres through mud and stones in bare feet to reach the fields. By the time we reached them we were soaked through and exhausted. Once we arrived the overseer showed us the area we each had to plant before the day's end. We were afraid of what he would do to us if we could not finish the work. This threat and the threat of being denied food if we could not finish in time forced us to work quickly. The work was hard and bending all day gave us back pains. If we were ill and couldn't work we were afraid that we would be tortured to death. One day I witnessed two of my colleagues being tortured for trying to escape. They became seriously ill and died.'

Source: Anti Slavery International

DFID is supporting an ILO-IPEC programme to counter trafficking of women and children in the Mekong region of South East Asia. Here, trafficking is closely associated with sexual exploitation and drug trading. The programme provides lessons for other parts of the world. Governments must provide leadership to combat the problem – community level action is not enough. Some Governments need to address the exit of children leaving their countries. Others on the receiving end must address children arriving in their countries. Trafficking is a complex regional and international problem – not just a national one. Internationally, we need stronger and better co-ordinated institutions to address this.

Andhra Pradesh, India.
Young boy carrying limestone to
kilns outside the town of
Dronachellam. 80% of the 2000
people employed are children.

Photographer: Heldur Netocny/Panos



What have we learned about combating the worst forms of child labour?

Many organisations, including DFID, are now taking a ‘child rights’ approach to tackling all forms of child labour. We believe that all children should be **protected** from abuse, neglect, violence, exploitative labour and conflict. Children also have **rights to survival and development** – that is, rights to high standards of health, education, food, shelter and welfare. Children need secure relationships. We also believe that children should have the right to **participate** in decisions that affect them. Working children are often seen as helpless victims. We run the risk of making them so unless we listen to their views before taking action.

Children’s rights to survival, development and participation are clearly set out in another important international convention. The United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child forms the basis for upholding children’s rights. It recognises their special vulnerabilities. When we use this convention in combination with the others addressing international labour standards, the international development community, governments and civil society can clearly recognise their responsibilities.

We need carefully targeted programmes to recognise children’s rights and help take children out of hazardous work. Not all programmes achieve what they hope. Occasionally well-intentioned actions cause misery for children. We have learned not to rush in and assume we know best. Children and their families must be involved in the decisions affecting them and have the right – under international law – to be consulted.

It is important to remember that most children live within households. They have families that care for them. Occasionally, when we start discussing working children, we forget this. We can improve the lives of children by improving the working conditions of adults. If adults are earning a decent living wage they can support a family. Then children should not need to work.

There is a close relationship between the position of women, women’s access to productive work and the situation of children in harmful work. Women do not choose lightly to send their children into hazardous work. But, in many countries, women have limited access to education, few skills for employment and limited legal protection. Too often women are the first to lose their employment when there are shocks in the economy. Social protection schemes – where they exist at all – are often less supportive of women.

There is a well-recognised cycle of deprivation and discrimination affecting women and girls. A failure to invest in education for girls means low skills and high fertility rates as they grow to adulthood. This results in women working in poorly paid and insecure occupations. They are likely to have larger numbers of children to support. Families are therefore forced to rely more

Varanasi, India.
Child working in a carpet factory.

Hartmut Schwarzbach/Still Pictures



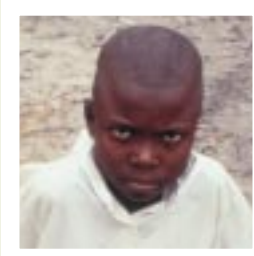
Stories and photos of three boy soldiers from the Democratic Republic of Congo

These were collected by John-Pierre Joyce (Journalist/Editor, Publications) with photographer Tim Hetherington in June 2001.

All three boys are being helped by ASCDE (Alliance de Secours Chrétien pour le Développement de l'Enfant). This is a local non-governmental organisation supported by Save the Children. ASCDE helps former child soldiers support themselves and their families financially. The project helps them to get over their bad army experiences and reintegrate into civilian life finding acceptance with their families and communities:

Dorant, 12

"I was ten when I joined the army. I stopped going to school around that time. I was in class five of primary school, but my family couldn't afford to pay school fees for me, so I quit. Then I heard the story about the army giving \$100 a month to boys who became soldiers, so I went.



Tim Hetherington/ONNetwork

I saw a lot of bad things in the army. The soldiers used to steal from people. I didn't steal. But what really stopped me from doing it was the thought that if I did it, maybe somebody could do it somewhere else to my grandmother or my parents.

Here, I'm very happy. My garden is like my mother and father - it gives me everything I need. Since I came back from the army, all the food I eat is from here. ASCDE also asks us what we want, and they help us to get things. And we've had training. This is a big, big difference from the army."

on the labour of their children. Improving the status of adult workers, giving women special attention, through better education, skills development, access to markets and decent jobs is key to reducing harmful child labour.

Poor households are extremely vulnerable to any loss of adult labour. The death, absence or incapacity of a parent often forces children into work. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria take their toll on poor households. We are supporting a UN Global Health Fund to help governments tackle these devastating diseases. Ensuring access to good quality health care will help tackle some underlying causes of child labour.

Conflict, drought and economic crisis can have very far-reaching and disastrous effects on families and children in poor households. These effects are all known to drive children into hazardous work and alienate them from their rights. An estimated half a million children are serving in armies or militias. Children continue to be drawn in and they are brutalised by their experiences. Some children become soldiers while other children are sexually exploited by soldiers or aid workers. Across the world conflict displaces children from their families and communities and forces them into circumstances where they have to fend for themselves. Our programmes must be designed to co-ordinate efforts to prevent global conflict.

Long-term solutions can best be achieved through the collaboration of different agencies. Government departments, international agencies, the private sector, civil society and consumer groups all have different strengths and a role to play. United Nations agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have the authority to develop international laws and assist governments to promote child rights. Non-governmental organisations, on the other hand, may be more skilled in working directly with local communities. Trade unions have particular strengths – including using their organising capacity to help working people pursue labour protection – to take action against harmful child labour. Developing alliances between these agencies is essential for tackling harmful child labour. Part of our task is to help forge these alliances.

What are the lessons for governments?

What governments do is key to eliminating all forms of child labour. Over one hundred countries, including the UK, have committed themselves to eliminating the worst forms of child labour, by ratifying ILO Convention 182. Governments are busy developing national action plans to prioritise what they mean by the 'worst forms' of child labour. Many governments are involving trade unions, employers, civil society, parents and children themselves in formulating these national plans. Experience has taught us that it is essential for departments to collaborate with each other across government as well as with other agencies.

Jeampi, 13



Tim Hetherington/ONNetwork

"I went to the army because there was no food or water in the house. I wasn't going to school any more

because my mother and father couldn't pay school fees for me. So I said, 'Let me go to the army, where they're promising \$100 a month.'

One day some of my friends came back from the front. They brought back their bodies. Others were wounded. Some had their legs and hands cut off. I can't forget that.

I like this project very much, because it's helping me. If you come back in two weeks, you'll find my vegetables ready. It doesn't take long. Any time I need some money, I just sell my vegetables. For example, I bought this shirt and trousers from money I earned with this garden."

Jueir, 11



Tim Hetherington/ONNetwork

"I joined the army because we were suffering. I wasn't going to school. If it wasn't for the money, I would

never have joined the army.

One day, I saw soldiers coming back from the front, where they'd been fighting. Some were dead; some had their hands and legs cut off, and there was blood everywhere. At the same time, they said we'd have to replace those and that it was our turn to go to the front.

In the future, I'd like to be a mechanic. I just love cars. And I'd be happy if I knew how to read and write. I stopped school when I was nine. Reading and writing is the most important thing. If you can't read and write, you're nothing compared to other people."

Somalia.
Child soldier.
Giacomo Pirozzi/
Panos Pictures



WHAT CAN GOVERNMENTS DO?

Tackling child labour through poverty reduction in Vietnam:

Vietnam is a notable success story. In the late 1980's and early 1990's Vietnam enjoyed rapid economic growth of over 6% per annum. This in turn led to impressive reductions in the incidence of poverty. Between 1993 and 1998 the number of people falling below the poverty line dropped dramatically from 58% to 37%. During this time there were also reforms in agriculture and improved access to education.

Recent research has shown that the probability that a child (ages 6 to 15) works in agriculture, a family operated business, or wage employment has dropped by 28% between 1993 and 1998. Much of the drop in child labour is due to improvements in household economic status.

But the economic growth of the 1990's has not delivered benefits evenly across all groups of children. Girls and migrant children have not benefited to the same extent. Children from ethnic minorities are more likely to work. Ethnic minorities face many disadvantages in Vietnam. They are more likely to live in poverty, have less access to health and education services and are more likely to be malnourished. These are critical areas for action that are likely to form part of the Government of Vietnam's ethnic minority development plans.

Economic growth is important. But it is important that the benefits of growth are widely shared across all sections of society including disadvantaged children. The Government of Vietnam remains committed to equitable growth and poverty reduction that is likely to generate further reductions in child labour.

Source: Edmonds and Turk, World Bank 2002

Governments select between different policy approaches to remove children from the worst forms of child labour and, to prevent them entering exploitative labour. These policy choices include enacting effective labour law and its enforcement, education and skills development policy designed to reach the poor, targeted health and welfare services for social protection.

For example, governments can decide that harmful child labour is unacceptable. They can and should take action to enforce the laws they have and to fill any gaps that exist. Particularly abusive forms of child labour should be defined as criminal and appropriate penalties specified. Governments need to ensure that those who exploit children through serious criminal activity are removed from their role in exploiting children. Governments need to be active in training law enforcement agencies such as the police, immigration officials, labour inspectors, judges and public prosecutors to achieve this.

Government policy needs to set priorities for achieving social justice through service provision. In protecting children's rights, governments need to be very specific about their education and health policies. Promoting women's rights is an essential component in tackling child labour. Governments also need to promote appropriate social protection programmes designed with the most vulnerable people, including children, in mind. In some countries, vulnerability is deeply engrained into wider patterns of social exclusion and discrimination. This needs to be recognised and tackled in order to overcome systematic discrimination against certain caste groups, indigenous people, religious or ethnic minority children.

Perhaps governments' most central role is in creating an environment for economic growth in order to eliminate poverty. Their responsibilities include measures to encourage trade and investment, ensuring social justice through appropriate budget processes and taking measures to counter corruption and conflict. These will contribute greatly to tackling the causes of child labour and provide some lasting ways to prevent children having to work. Creating conditions for growth that enables decent work and sustainable livelihoods, investing in health and education and adult skills for development is essential for combating poverty and harmful child labour.

A number of the world's poorest countries are presently developing national policies to reduce poverty – known as Poverty Reduction Strategies. These are based on wide consultation with the private sector and civil society. The best of these include special measures to tackle child labour. For example, the Honduras poverty strategy is very child focused. It includes commitments to improve the quality and quantity of education and health, to revise the national labour laws and provide social protection for vulnerable children. Local government officials, civil society organisations, the private sector and trade unions were all involved in developing this.

Philippines.

Young girl working in a paddy field during the rice planting season.

Fernando Moleres/Panos Pictures



Valérie's story from Benin

She was placed in Cotonou, the capital city, as a child domestic worker when she was ten years old. Her "auntie" [term for a woman known to the family but not necessarily a blood relative] made the arrangements for the job and paid for her transport to Cotonou. The aunt also received a payment each month, she thinks about 6,000 CFA Francs (£6).

She was the only child domestic worker in the household. Her employer had two children. Her employer used to beat her whenever she did anything wrong. Valérie found her employer's behaviour toward her 'incorrect'. She was not allowed to carry out any work outside the house and knew nobody in Cotonou. In the end she left, of her own accord, on the grounds that her employer beat her regularly. She was lucky in that she managed to get a taxi driver to bring her home. She arrived home this year and is now working with her father. Valérie is now 18 years old. She would like to be on an apprenticeship.

Source : Story as told to Anti-Slavery International staff and their partner NGO, ILEDA in January 2002:

Education

Many governments, including ourselves, are committed to providing universal primary education for boys and girls. Access to good quality, free education is an important strategy for combating child labour, including its worst forms. But, in many countries, education has hidden costs such as uniforms and books that become a major deterrent for poor families. Accessible education needs to be free and relevant to provide a meaningful alternative for working children. Governments are tackling these issues, but some solutions seem better than others.

The relationship between education and the worst forms of child labour is a complex one. The immediate international priority is to achieve universal primary education. This has been an effective way of helping children leave harmful work. But many children finish primary school by the age of 10. Lack of secondary education and poverty has pushed many older children back into hazardous work. A key challenge is finding opportunities for further learning after primary education. Governments need to find ways in which young men and women can combine safe work with learning new skills.

Experience from South Asia has shown that it is possible to reduce hazardous work and combine work and learning through vocational training. This can help young people gain skills in health and safety, literacy and numeracy and reduce their working hours. Parents and children can see the advantages of this.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

Vocational training can provide alternative opportunities for young people to combine work and study in non-hazardous conditions.

In Uttar Pradesh in India, a lot of children work in the hazardous glass bangle industry, where children are at risk of injury from severe burns from the intense heat and molten glass. Save the Children are working with a local organisation, CREATE (Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship and Technical Education), which runs alternative non-hazardous skills and trades for children (vocational training for 12-18 year olds, electric works, leather work etc.). They have also established children's groups, self-help groups for women and village co-operatives for adults.

Pramod, aged 17, is keen to join an alternative vocational training scheme in less hazardous leather stitching, run by CREATE. The scheme offers children the chance to learn new skills and to leave the glass bangle industry. CREATE finds markets for the goods, and commissions the children to make them at a higher rate of pay.

"I started working a year ago, because I needed to earn something. I have to put the bangles in front of a flame and press them with pincers. I don't like doing it because it's very hot where I work. My parents don't force me to work, but I have to, because there's nobody else to work in my family. I want to get out of this work. I want to stitch leather bags instead. I prefer that kind of work because you can put the machine outside and work there at your

Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, India.

Young girl making matches.

David Browne/Parachute Pictures/ILO



Case story of Najma Begum

Najma Begum came to Chittagong with her father, her mother and her two sisters from Phulgazi Thana (Police Station) of Feni District to find work. They got shelter in the Pahartoli slum. Her father found a job as a hotel attendant but his pay was too meagre to keep the family. So Najma, her mother and the sisters started making paper envelopes and bags for packing for shopkeepers. The parent's priority was survival, not education for their daughters.



The situation changed for the better when Najma got admission into an UCEP School. She was an intelligent girl and successfully completed her Grade-VIII level education. She was then admitted to the Garments Unit of A.K. Khan-UCEP Technical School from where she graduated at the end of 1999. She was employed by the B.S.A. Garments Industries where she was earning TK. 3,300 per month in 2001.

Source: UCEP: Education for Underprivileged Children in Bangladesh.

DFID, along with the Governments and NGOs from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland has been supporting UCEP since 1984. It is one of very few organisations in Bangladesh providing a complete training system for working children.

Poor children and adolescents working in the big urban centres of Bangladesh can receive formal and non-formal education, skills training and job placements through UCEP's facilities. UCEP has also made a special effort to include disabled children. Through its Child Rights Forum, UCEP is also active in encouraging others to protect and promote children's rights to education and skills.

leisure. Also, it's up to you what you want to make. You can make school bags, or different designs of purses. It's your choice, and that's why I like it".

Source: Save the Children, UK

Why do we need the help of international institutions?

Harmful child labour is a worldwide problem that requires action on a global scale. The international conventions are the mechanism forming and codifying agreements about what children have the right to expect. International agencies have an important part to play in promoting and monitoring internationally agreed child labour laws, upholding internationally agreed children's rights, providing technical assistance and sharing global lessons. We are therefore supporting two United Nations agencies whose contribution is critical.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), representing governments, workers and employers sets global labour standards. It is also supporting practical activities to combat child labour. The ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour, IPEC, is operating in an expanding number of countries providing governments and the international development community with valuable lessons for tackling the worst forms of child labour. For example, important lessons have been learnt from their projects aimed at preventing trafficking.

UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund) has a critical international role highlighting children's rights. It is highly regarded for its 'long reach' into difficult circumstances. We are supporting many aspects of UNICEF's child protection work, including children affected by conflict. They are helping to prevent children being pulled into conflicts and working hard to rehabilitate children traumatised and orphaned by war.

What can the private sector do?

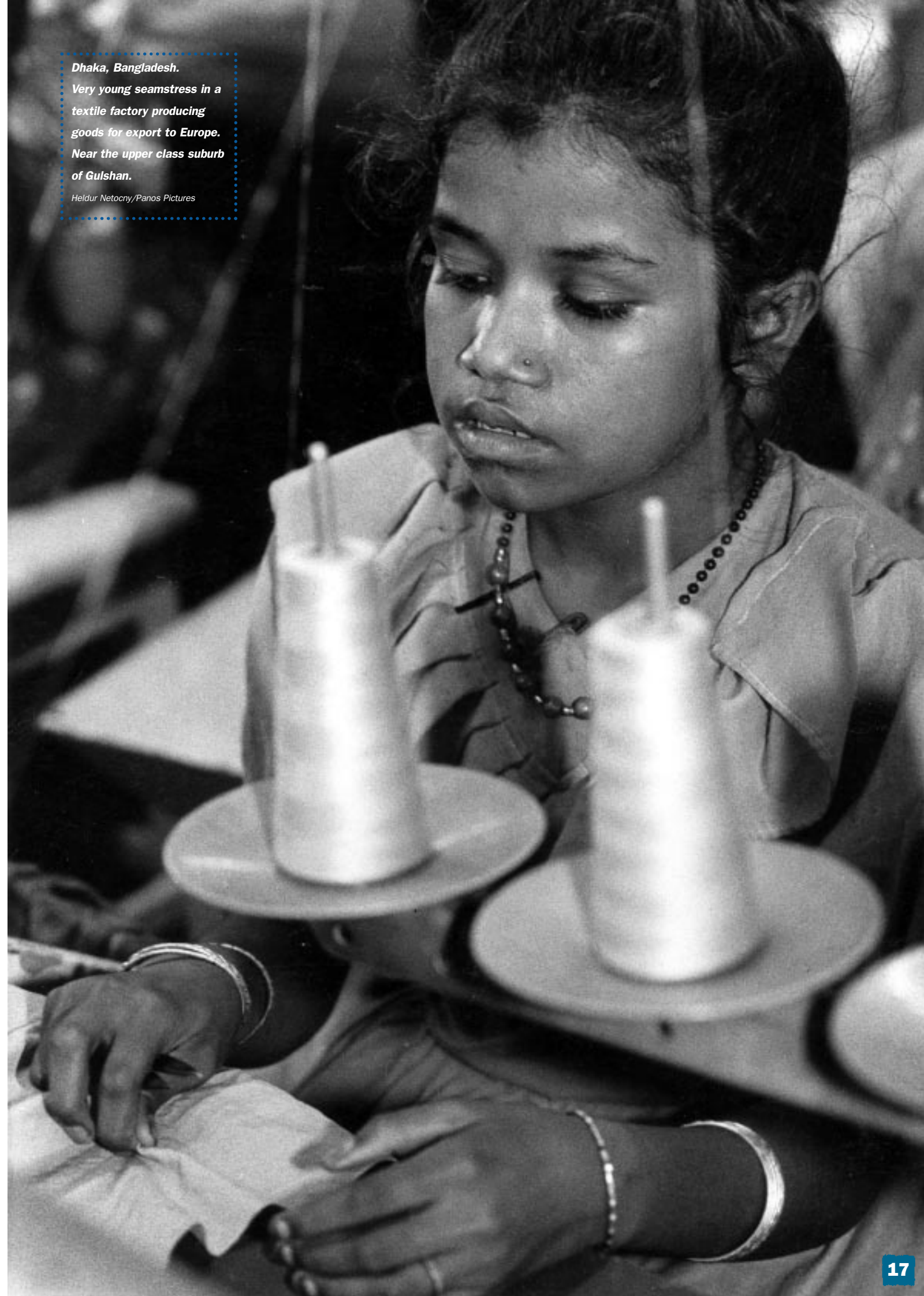
Consumers and investors are a powerful force for change. They are using their purchasing power and influence to lobby for more ethically made products. Ethical investment funds are becoming increasingly popular with investors concerned about where their money is going. Ethical purchasing includes goods made without harmful child labour. Businesses are acutely aware that exposure as users of harmful child labour can destroy corporate reputations. We believe business leadership is essential in improving labour standards and promoting children's rights. But businesses need to be very clear in their choice of action.

Some businesses have set up trusts or funded local charities to demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and to benefit the communities in which they work. These programmes can help tackle poverty and child labour, particularly when developed in consultation with communities and government.

Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Very young seamstress in a textile factory producing goods for export to Europe. Near the upper class suburb of Gulshan.

Heldur Netocny/Panos Pictures



Tanzania: Working with the local community to prevent children entering harmful work

From Tanzania there are two examples of pioneering approaches to tackling harmful child labour developed with support from ILO/IPEC. The ILO estimates that 4,200 children have been withdrawn from plantations, domestic services, prostitution and mining and provided with education or training alternatives.

One of the new approaches adopted was to set up committees in the local community to include local government officials, schoolteachers, health workers, magistrates and local opinion leaders. The committees have helped develop byelaws on child labour. These have been enacted in forty-eight communities in seven regions. The community structures have been important in counselling working children and their parents and in helping reintegrate children removed from work.

ILO/IPEC has also been supporting the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) work with the growing numbers of girls under 14 years who are recruited from rural areas to work as domestics in the cities. The programme is raising awareness and lobbying parents to combat this. Information aimed at parents and community leaders exposes the harsh realities that can face girl domestics in towns. TAMWA expects that there will be a sharp decline in recruitment from the rural areas. Where they are already working, girl domestics are paired with adult women domestics who can offer them individual guidance.

Source : IPEC / International Labour Organisation's office in Tanzania and their partner TAMWA

Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Boy working in the ship-breaking industry, reducing rusting hulks to scrap iron and other reusable materials.

Fernando Molerres/Panos Pictures

through supply chains into the informal economy. Those doing the monitoring need the skills and integrity to enable workers to raise their concerns. Particular attention needs to be given to the most vulnerable workers including women, migrants, contract or seasonal workers. Workers themselves need a voice in monitoring processes.

When companies have found children working in supply chains, it has been common to fire them immediately. This is not the best approach. Sacking children, without a package of compensation or sensible alternatives in place can force children into work that is more hidden and harmful. Companies need to make sure that their actions are in children's best interest. Children should be removed from immediate hazards and safeguards should be in place to prevent employing under-aged workers. Businesses can have a positive impact by exploring ways to ensure young people – above the minimum working age – can combine earning with learning. This can be done through investing in programmes to remove hazards from their work or setting up appropriate apprenticeship schemes.

But corporate social responsibility also requires a more fundamental commitment to improving the ways in which businesses themselves operate.

We think it is extremely important for companies to tackle labour issues within their central business practices. This includes promoting core labour standards beyond factories or plantations, down the full length of supply chains. Labour standards should apply in the less visible informal economy so that they include the conditions of home-workers or out-growers. Businesses need to be particularly sensitive to their impact on women workers. Decisions to retain or increase employment for women are likely to have a positive impact on preventing children's entry into work.

Many companies have developed 'codes of conduct' to improve labour standards in their supply chains. For these codes to be treated seriously they need to be in line with international labour laws. The situation of children cannot be improved unless we tackle adult labour standards as well. Therefore codes should address all four core labour standards.

Codes of conduct are worthless if they are merely statements of intent. Effective monitoring systems are needed to reach right

The Ethical Trading Initiative confronts the challenges of HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe has a population of approximately 12 million of whom 47% are under 16 years of age. And, at least 1 in 4 of the adult population are HIV positive. The Government of Zimbabwe estimated that there were 600,000 orphans in Zimbabwe in 1999. About 20% of these live on commercial farms and estates. Research by the Farm Orphan Support Trust (FOST) has estimated there are 12 orphans per farm. There are 33 child headed households on farms in two provinces.

From 1998-2000 ETI monitored working conditions and devised a programme of improvements for farms. The study was co-ordinated by Save the Children in collaboration with the horticultural commercial farms and UK supermarkets. One of the issues identified was orphan welfare and work.

ETI established links with the Farm Orphan Support Trust. FOST has been working with farmers to set up a registration scheme for orphans and set aside land for the community to farm on their behalf.

Save the Children believes that the impact of HIV/AIDS on child welfare in farms and farm communities may mean that children should be offered legal, paid, light part-time work. This should be offered alongside education. This may represent the only feasible livelihoods option currently available for HIV/AIDS affected children in parts of Africa. But understandably, the UK Company buyers met the issue of whether orphans could be offered any work on the ETI participating farms with mixed reactions. They were fearful of consumer reactions.

This year, ETI intends to strengthen focus on HIV/AIDS.

Source: Fiona King, Save the Children & Pilot Chair for the Ethical Trading Initiative

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP FOR COMBATING CHILD LABOUR

A number of well-known UK companies, along with trade unions and non-government organisations have formed an alliance known as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI). The ETI, with DFID funding, is committed to improving labour standards in companies' supply chains. The ETI has developed a 'code of conduct' that covers all the ILO core labour standards. This means it is based on internationally agreed principles.

Where the child labour standards have been contravened the ETI encourages companies to take responsible actions to tackle it in their supply chains. Companies are encouraged not to 'pull out' immediately from a supplier. Abandoning suppliers may result in working children being worse off. Instead the ETI encourages companies to work with their suppliers to take action to tackle children working under age and in hazardous conditions.

Through encouraging such sustained and continuous improvements at work, workers young and old have been enjoying positive changes in their working conditions.

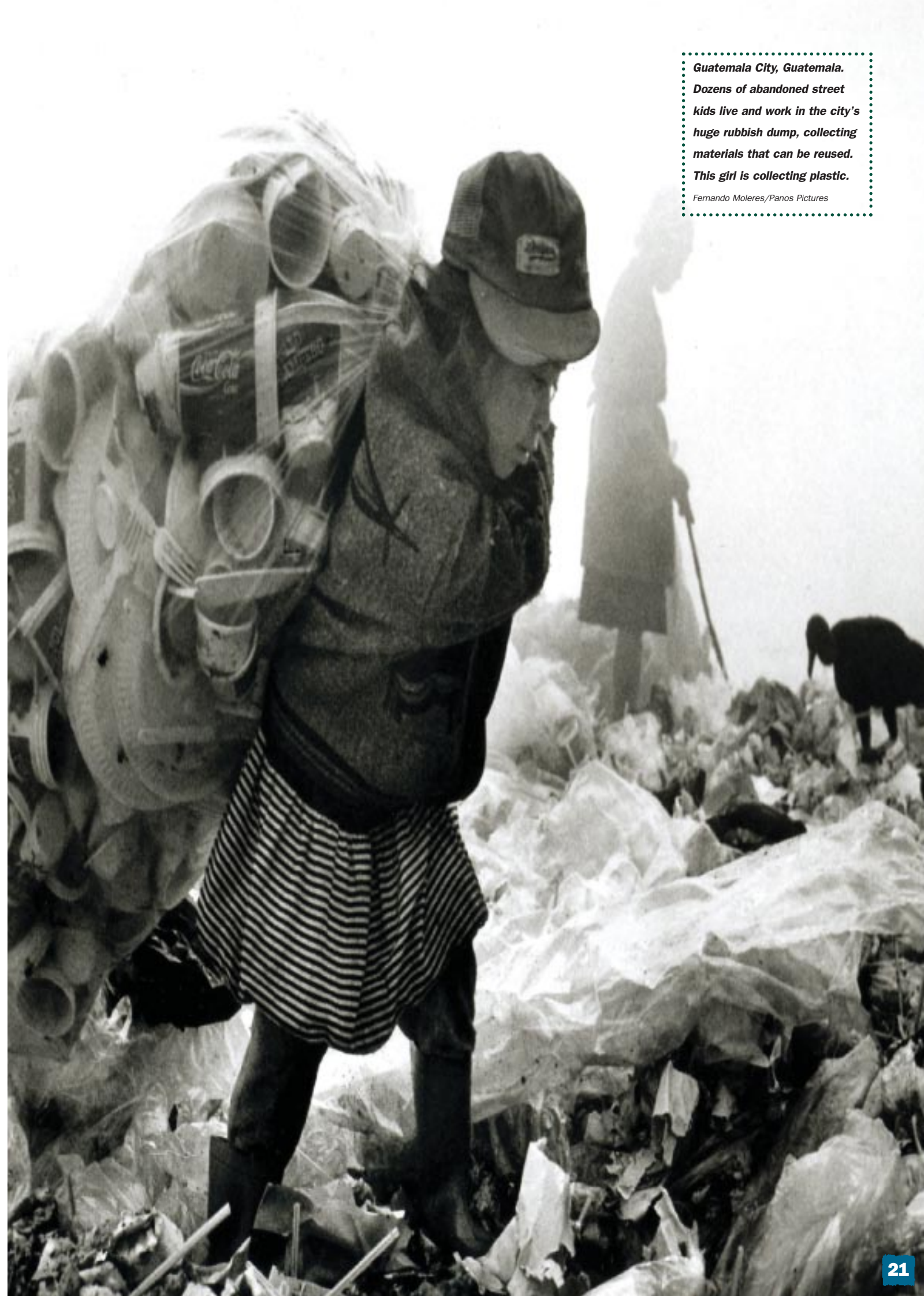
The Ethical Trading Initiative is a very important example of corporate social responsibility that promotes the implementation of codes of labour practice and monitors them. A second example is the response to allegations of child slavery in West African cocoa industry where representatives of the chocolate industry have agreed a Global Protocol on Cocoa Working Practices. This commits them to the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in the growing and processing of cocoa. Some business associations, such as the American Chocolate Manufacturers Association (CMA) have set up foundations for funding programmes to eliminate harmful child labour.

We believe such industry-wide responses are more helpful than boycotting suppliers using child labour. But sound advice should be sought. The CMA developed its four-year plan in close consultation with the international development agencies and NGOs to ensure that activities were in line with international child labour laws and best practice.

What part can civil society play?

When we talk about civil society we mean a wide variety of groups: trade unions, non-governmental organisations, professional associations, faith groups and business trusts, groups of working children and concerned parents. These groups have different viewpoints and varying strengths in tackling child labour. In the past, competition between different agencies has diverted attention away from helping children. Working together though, civil society organisations can have a significant impact.

Guatemala City, Guatemala.
Dozens of abandoned street
kids live and work in the city's
huge rubbish dump, collecting
materials that can be reused.
This girl is collecting plastic.
Fernando Molerres/Panos Pictures



Listening to children

A community survey carried out by Save the Children in Sialkot, Pakistan, amongst child football stitchers and their families, revealed some surprises. Firstly, local communities did not see work in football stitching as very hazardous or exploitative, compared to work in other industries. Secondly, children were deterred from attending school because of the poor quality education rather than because they were working. Thirdly, many women said that the centralisation of football production away from their villages (to enable better monitoring of child labour) made it more difficult for them to work. In some cases this meant less income for stitcher families

This information has led to:

- Switching focus to more hazardous sectors, such as the surgical goods industry;
- Actions to improve the quality (as well as quantity) of education;
- Registering local stitching centres to increase the benefits for women.

A key lesson from this project was the importance of consulting children and their wider community about decisions affecting them.

The Global March Against Child Labour, for example, is a movement of northern and southern civil society organisations. Working together, many organisations became involved in helping focus world attention on the worst forms of child labour. Trade unions, NGOs and the private sector have joined forces under the umbrella of the Ethical Trading Initiative.

Civil society organisations play an important part in lobbying for change. We think they have a major role in focusing the spotlight on hidden child labour and helping governments develop and implement policies that can remove children from harmful work. But shock tactics and sensationalist campaigns can result in unhelpful responses. Consumer boycotts are known to drive children into more harmful work.

Organisations that work closely with local communities can help them understand the hazards children face at work. It is important that parents really understand what happens to their children when they are sent away to work or the real outcome of trafficking agents' visits to villages. They can also help ensure that the views of less visible working children and their parents are reflected in policies and programmes.

GRASS-ROOTS RESPONSES TO TACKLING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

International NGOs such as Save the Children and Anti-Slavery International, have been working in poorer countries to support civil society organisations take action against harmful child work.

The involvement of local voluntary groups, non-government organisations and local community-based organisations has ensured that national action plans on the Worst Forms of Child Labour prioritise children at greatest risk. They have helped spotlight children working in hidden forms of work, such as domestic child workers. In Costa Rica, Anti-Slavery International has been working with Defensa los Niños Internacional to promote greater understanding of the Convention in civil society including community leaders, teachers, religious organisations, social workers, trade unions and local government officials.

These organisations have demonstrated ways to involve working children in identifying harmful work, and strategies to combat it. This has been achieved through child-centred research and young people's participation in national and regional workshops.

Civil society organisations have pioneered new approaches to eradicating harmful child work. The challenge is to make sure that government policy makers learn the lessons from these grass-roots projects. This can be made easier when civil society organisations work closely with government during project design and implementation. Working with government magnifies the results of small and innovative approaches by 'scaling up' to benefit more children.

What can the UK public do?

Images of exploited children on television or in newspapers make us question whether we should buy certain products. What people chose to buy and why is a matter of personal choice. Experience has shown that mass boycotts and sanctions may do more harm than good for working children. In Bangladesh, the threat of a boycott of textiles made with child labour led to thousands of children being sacked. Many of these children were driven into more hazardous conditions. Likewise, in Morocco, a factory producing for a British high street retailer sacked all its adolescent female workers. We do not know where they ended up.

The power of consumers is considerable. Used wisely it can lead to positive change for children. People in Britain can play a critical role in asking some key questions about tackling the worst forms of child labour. **Ask retail companies:**

- What action are you taking to combat the worst forms of child labour?
- How do you ensure that your labour practices are in line with international labour standards?
- How are your child labour policies or codes of conduct enforced and monitored?
- Does your monitoring reach into those parts of the informal economy that supply you with goods and services?
- Have you fired any children without providing a package of compensation? What steps have you taken to ensure children are not driven into more harmful work?
- Do you work with your suppliers to solve problems or do you change your supplier?
- Are you working with government, trade unions and NGOs to develop effective solutions?
- Are you selling any ethically traded products that have been made in decent working conditions?

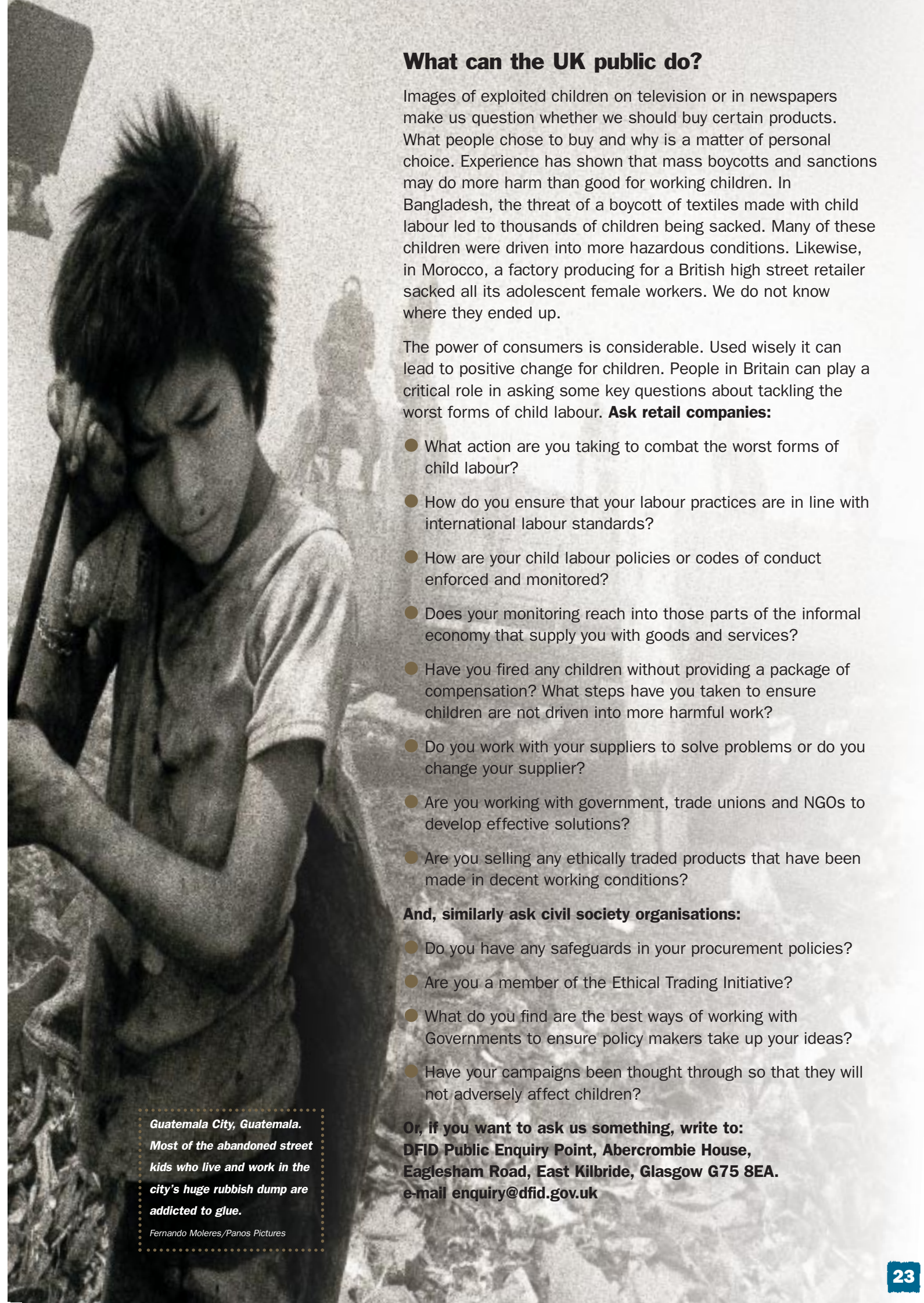
And, similarly ask civil society organisations:

- Do you have any safeguards in your procurement policies?
- Are you a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative?
- What do you find are the best ways of working with Governments to ensure policy makers take up your ideas?
- Have your campaigns been thought through so that they will not adversely affect children?

**Or, if you want to ask us something, write to:
DFID Public Enquiry Point, Abercrombie House,
Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA.
e-mail enquiry@dfid.gov.uk**

*Guatemala City, Guatemala.
Most of the abandoned street
kids who live and work in the
city's huge rubbish dump are
addicted to glue.*

Fernando Molerres/Panos Pictures



Mongolia.

Ex-child labourers protesting against the exploitation of children.

Fernando Molerres/Panos Pictures

Challenging the media

The media has a very important role to play in exposing where children are working and highlighting the worst forms of child labour. In recent years documentaries and news items on child slavery and trafficking have captured public attention. It is very important that people know what is going on.

But the UK public should also be challenging the media if their portrayal of child labour becomes too one-sided or if it becomes too sensational. Media presentation should ensure a balanced picture of where children work. And, some examples of the good work that is being undertaken to combat the worst forms of child labour would help too. Placing high-street brands under scrutiny can pressure retailers to monitor what happens in the supply chains. But, sometimes it has disastrous consequences for children.

Our main message to the media is that it is not in factories that the majority of children are found in hazardous work. Please help spotlight hidden and hazardous forms of work in the informal economy and focus action where it is most acutely needed.

What are our future challenges?

We have learned a lot in recent years. But we still do not have all the answers. New issues continue to emerge and they need new solutions. One of the greatest challenges at this moment is how to improve the lives of AIDS orphans driven into work. The problem is particularly acute in parts of Africa where millions of children are essential income earners supporting themselves and their brothers and sisters. Banning them from work or building them schools will not be enough. We need to find ways to ensure that they are safe with access to food, health-care and money to live on. Governments, the private sector and civil society need to ensure HIV/AIDS prevention and care is a priority action to help people affected.

Trafficking children and young women for labour exploitation is a particularly heinous form of exploitation. It is a global issue, affecting us in Europe as well as the rest of the world. We are taking co-ordinated action within the UK as well as with the international development community to end this abuse.

We do not underestimate the future challenge to ensure that globalisation delivers benefits to children. Many people are really concerned that unregulated international trade policy may lead to a 'race to the bottom' for cheap, compliant labour – including children's labour. This was discussed at the international trade talks in Doha in November 2001. As a result, we are working hard to ensure that poorer countries have their say in the way trade policy can be made to work to their advantage. And, we are supporting the ILO's newly established "World Commission" which will be reporting in 2003 on the labour dimensions of globalisation. We believe that, managed wisely, the benefits of international trade can lift millions of children out of poverty.

Future commitments

We are optimistic. Considerable progress has been made in tackling the worst forms of child labour. We are starting to get more reliable information. This helps us reach the most vulnerable child workers. New data systems are helping track children removed from harmful work. Governments around the world are demonstrating more commitment to addressing the problem by ratifying the international conventions to remove children from the Worst Forms of Child Labour and from under aged work. They are translating this commitment into action by developing programmes to tackle child work along with trade unions, employers and NGOs.

We are committed to providing better opportunities for millions of children in harmful work. Tackling child labour is an essential component of the way we eliminate international poverty and promote human rights and social justice. These are central to our development policy and include a commitment to halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. We are committed to promoting children's potential as well as defending their vulnerability by helping provide education and health care.

DFID will contribute to this in two ways; firstly we will continue to support and strengthen organisations tackling child labour internationally, nationally and locally. We want to see UN agencies, governments, the private sector and local civil society groups all able to respond effectively to the needs of the most exploited children. We will encourage processes that bring these agencies together to learn from and support each other to bring about real change for children.

Secondly, we want to make sure that appropriate policies are in place for long-term, sustainable changes benefiting children. We will promote international agreements to combat abuses against working children, and help governments apply these effectively. Governments' policies should promote poverty elimination and achieve social justice for children. We are already doing much to help governments develop Poverty Reduction Strategies that provide for social justice for poor people.

We will continue to help governments plan for growth in their national economies. Trade is an integral part of poverty elimination. We will continue to promote global trade policies that give the poorest countries fair access to international markets and inward investment. We will promote financing for development that benefits the poor. We will continue to be at the forefront of the international debate on debt relief, so that governments' resources are freed up for investing in children. And, we will continue to press for international action in support of pro-poor development.

Combating hazardous child work is possible; both through targeted programmes to remove children from harmful work and through broad-based promotion of human rights and poverty elimination. We firmly believe that with the continued interest and support from people and organisations in the UK effective international action is possible. It is possible for children to be liberated from harmful work so that they will have a brighter future.

LINKS ON CHILD LABOUR

African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN)
email anppcan@arcc.or.ke

Anti-slavery international
www.antislavery.org

Child workers in Asia
email cwanet@loxinfo.co.th

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers
www.child-soldiers.org

Defence for Children International
www.defence-for-children.org

ECPAT International (End Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes)
www.ecpat.net

Ethical Trading Initiative
www.ethicaltrade.org

Global March Against Child Labour
www.globalmarch.org

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
www.icftu.org

International Labour Organisation - International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).
www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/

International Save the Children Alliance
www.savethechildren.net

Save the Children, United Kingdom
www.savethechildren.org.uk

UNICEF
www.unicef.org