

Preface

“Don’t grow up too fast”.

This is a very common saying in life. It means that you’re only young once so don’t feel the need to rush away from youth. For Canadian citizens, growing up too quickly is no more than attempting to be mature, but for child labourers it is very different. Millions of children around the world are forced into working, forcing them to grow up at a very young age. Once a child has been forced into work, his or her childhood is over, his or her playful mentality is destroyed, and they are expected to mature instantly.

Anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child, but there are different limitations set for specific age categories. United Children’s Fund (UNICEF) defines child labour as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of a child and on the type of work. Such work is considered harmful to the child and should therefore be eliminated. The guidelines are: At ages five to eleven, at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week. At the age of 12 until age 14 the hours are extended to 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work. Finally at the age of 15 the hours greatly increase to 43 hours of either economic or domestic work per week.¹

1 UNICEF - Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse - Child labour. (2011, February 23). *UNICEF - UNICEF Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from

The most recent world conference on child labour was held in 2010 in Hague, Netherlands. The main effort of this conference was to set a plan to eradicate the worst forms of child labour. By 2016 that goal is planned to be completed, which would be a huge step in completely abolishing child labour worldwide.²

Child labour has been occurring globally for many years. The industry has gone underground as the world has progressed due to morals, but has not been eliminated because there is a lack of laws prohibiting it. At a glance, the industry has all but disintegrated, although upon closer examination, business is booming.

Children are employed in all sorts of labour ranging from mining to prostitution, most of which are extremely hazardous. Children are employed because they are cheap workers. Also, in some industries they are employed because of their small hands and ability to fit into small areas such as mines.³

http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

2 The Hague Global Child Labour Conference - 10-11 May 2010 - Campaign and advocacy . (n.d.). *International Labour Organization* . Retrieved May 11, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Campaignandadvocacy/GlobalChildLabourConference/lang--en/index.htm>

3 Child labour - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, May 7). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour

The growth of child employment is fueled by the desire and demand for cheap labour, which increases profit margins. Most adults are not willing to work for unfair wages, meaning that employers move their attention to the young, innocent, and naïve children.

Today's poor economic state is another cause of the exponential growth of child labour. The increasing numbers of impoverished people are looking for any way possible to make money. When parents are not able to earn enough money on their own, they often resort to selling their children into the industry.

There are two classifications of child labour, bonded and unbonded. Bonded labour is defined as labour to pay off a debt over a period of time.⁴ Children are tricked into working for such low wages that they are never released from the bond because the debt will never be paid. Unbonded labour is work done simply for money. Children often go into unbonded labour to support their family and themselves.

Efforts have been made by countries to stop child labour, but it is a global issue, not a federal one. Many countries have made child labour illegal in certain industries.⁵ The

4 Debt bondage - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, May 2). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonded_labour

5 Child labour - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, May 7). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour

criminalization of child labour is beneficial because it stops a lot of children from working, but harmful because, it pushes them into more dangerous forms of work because they still need money. Many children that lose their jobs because of new laws resort to selling their bodies on the streets. They become prostitutes because they see no other option and they feel guilty about not bringing money to their families. They lose their innocence forever in the matter of a night.

The United Nations has developed international framework against child labour.⁶ The problem is, making something illegal is useless if not properly enforced. Countries are not supervising factories at all carefully enough to eliminate child labour.

The youth are the future. So much time and effort has been focused on preserving the environment for the future, but it's all a waste, if we don't first save the people who are to be living on it.

Summary

This report provides a detailed explanation of what child labour is and why it is an issue. It focuses on three major case studies of: labour in India, the child soldiers and

6 UNICEF - Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse - Child labour. (2011, February 23). *UNICEF - UNICEF Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

diamond mines of Sierra Leone, and the sexual exploitation of children in Cambodia. The role of control, who has and who needs control is researched and the report also includes how Canada is affected by this problem and the different cultural views of this issue. Finally, this report includes an examination of solutions to this problem and organizations that are helping to end child labour

A range of resources were used to research this paper. Those resources include books, internet, newspaper articles, and an interview with an expert involved in an organization combating child labour.

Background:

Between 1780 and 1840, there were huge increases in child exploitation in the form of labour. Before this time children had simply accompanied their fathers in agriculture and other jobs and this was not an issue. It became an issue during the industrial revolution when machines dominated the workplace. Factories were popping up everywhere, in England first and then in the United States. Children didn't need the strength of an adult to operate the power-driven machines and they could be hired more cheaply, making them a prime target. Mining also quickly became a popular place for children to find work because they were needed to fit into small tunnels. Prostitution was a growing profession at the time as well, making it an attractive way to make some quick cash. Children were now being employed in all sorts of labour.⁷

Views towards child labour have changed in time. In the beginning it was viewed as normal, a way of life, but today it is viewed as a form of child abuse. Many laws have been put in place to stop it, but they have just caused the industry to go underground and have not stopped the growth by any means. Within the past few decades child labour has gone from being viewed as a way of life to a child rights issue.

7 History of Child Labor | Scholastic.com. (n.d.). *Teaching Resources, Children's Book Recommendations, and Student Activities* | Scholastic.com. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=5428>

Two United Nations organizations, United Children's fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) are giving much of their attention towards stopping child labour. It is because of their work that the world views child labour as an issue. As a result of their work, there are several treaties (or conventions), banning child labour and identifying concrete measures for Governments to implement in an effort to end child labour.

We now have multiple treaties banning child labour. Once a country ratifies a convention, UN bodies monitor compliance and hold countries accountable for violations.⁸ This vigilance should motivate countries to enforce the laws to avoid violations, but that is not the case in most situations. Most countries simply ignore the conventions and continue business as they had before.

Estimates from an ILO report done in June 2006 show that globally there are 190 million children between the ages of five and 14 working. Asia is the area with the highest number of child labourers at 122 million and the next highest region is sub-Saharan Africa where 50 million children are at work. This number greatly decreases to five million in Latin America, leaving an

⁸ International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *International Labour Organization*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/>

estimated 13 million children working in other parts of the world. One in seven children is affected by child labour.⁹

The ILO has also done a survey stating that 126 million of these children are working in jobs considered to be dangerous forms of labour. These forms of labour include slavery, bonded labour, child trafficking, prostitution, and any work which is harmful to health or safety. Very few children escape labour without some sort of injury. Injuries are often caused by poor machinery or cleanliness. Common injuries range from broken bones to skin disease and even to breathing problems.¹⁰

There are 70% of working children are involved in agriculture, forestry and hunting. More often than not the children are working on family farms that sell their produce to commercial plantations. This is viewed as a form of domestic labour. The amount that the plantations pay for the raw materials is very low; therefore the families rely on their children to help harvest more crops. Most child labour begins with the family needing money. As long as family poverty exists, children will continue to be forced or sold into industries.

9 International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *International Labour Organization*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/>

10 Background: Child Labour. (n.d.). *Kindernothilfe*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://en.kindernothilfe.org/Rubrik/Topics/Child+Labour/Background_+Child+Labour.html

Role of Control and Power

The industry of child labour is not different from other industries in the sense that it thrives on supply and demand. In this business, the demand is cheap labour and the product is the workers, the children. The employers who buy children for cheap labour have the power. However, the children are the ones who need it. The voice of the children is almost never heard or expressed for fear of punishment. They are constantly mistreated in this business, but do not have the power to speak up. Children are the most vulnerable beings in our society.

The buyers in this industry are the employers; they often buy children from third parties such as their families. The main factor pushing families into selling their children is money. It is hard to imagine how a mother could make that decision. But, living in poverty, a child is another mouth to feed and is not bringing in money. When sold into the industry of child labour, the family is no longer responsible for feeding the child and, although minimal, the child is making money for the family.

Buyers know the families are living in poverty, making them vulnerable. They trick the families into selling their children for a small sum. They convince the family that their kids will have the opportunity to have better living conditions, but the reality is they get far worse.

Families sell their children believing that it is the right thing to do. The power and money of the employers is overwhelming to the poverty stricken children and families.

It is common for children in sub-Saharan Africa to be orphaned because of HIV/AIDS.¹¹ This reality takes them out of school to care for younger siblings and earn an income by any means possible. At this time, the power and money of large factories is dangerously attractive to the orphaned children. All they see is the power and the misconceptions of a better life, so they are drawn in only to have their childhood life taken away from them forever.

Another way employers keep the children locked in their control is through bonded labour. The buyers tell the children that they will be released when they have made enough money to pay back the money spent on buying them because they are convinced that the buyers have saved them.¹² The issue is, the children have no idea of how much money they have made or how much they need to make, therefore they are never released.

The other power holders in this issue are the customers that purchase goods made by the children. Whether it is produce, clothing or toys, the people who buy the products do have

11 UNICEF - Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse - Child labour. (2011, February 23). *UNICEF - UNICEF Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

12 Child labour - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, May 7). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour

control. The control in this situation can be positive if used correctly, but also very harmful. Currently goods such as clothing from factories using child labour are in such high demand that it is hard to produce them fast enough. Because of the necessary production rate, the children in the factories are mistreated even more. They are required to work for longer hours, for less money, because more workers are employed.

With the ability to control sales, customers can also control production. By limiting demand, customers can ensure that the product is not being produced as quickly; therefore children are not required to work as long hours. If customers were to completely boycott the sales of products of child labour, production would cease and factories would shut down. But is that really a wise choice?

The complication is that by boycotting; the children will lose employment in relatively safer industries than others, and become unemployed or forced into more hazardous jobs. If millions of factory working children lose their jobs, their families may lose all income. They may lose their only power in the world, and they may be forced to become involved in higher risk jobs such as prostitution.

The customers have a great deal of responsibility with their control. They have the ability to simply ignore the issue and allow it to escalate to worse conditions. Or they could

attempt to do a good thing by boycotting, but by doing so make matters worse for many, if not most of the children. It is not as easy as saying “let’s stop buying any product involved with child labour”. The solution will come with finding a balance between boycotting and buying freely.

The control is in both good and bad places. Ultimately, it is dangerous for the employers to have the amount of control and power that they do. But, there is a potential solution in the control held by the customers who buy the products around the world. When the time comes that the world possesses more knowledge about the issue, consumers will gain even more power and find the balance which will ultimately protect the children.

Expert

Craig Kielburger is an expert on the topic of child labour. At the age of 12 he was inspired by a 12 year old Pakistani boy named Iqbal to help in the fight against child labour. He read in a newspaper that Iqbal was formerly involved in bonded labour and escaped. Iqbal, being an international figurehead for the fight against child labour, was a threat to the industry, and consequently was murdered in 1995. This began Craig's legendary journey against child labour.¹³

Craig Kielburger began, at his school, forming a group of friends the same age and called it the "Twelve-Twelve-Year-Olds". This group has evolved into an international organization involving 45 countries called "Free the Children". The organization focuses on freeing children from labour as the name suggests. To date, they have built over 500 schools and implemented projects in 45 developing countries.¹⁴

13 Free The Children - Issues Library. (n.d.). *Free The Children - Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/issues/index.php?type=childlabour>

14 Free The Children - Issues Library. (n.d.). *Free The Children - Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/issues/index.php?type=childlabour>

When he first showed interest in saving children, Craig visited Bangladesh to see conditions for himself. Shortly after that he arranged a meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, Jean Chrétien and convinced him to raise the issue of child labour. As a result of Craig's persistence, Prime Minister Chrétien also talked with the Prime Minister of Pakistan and India about the matter. He also helped in convincing the Canadian and Italian governments to be stricter with laws against their citizens who sexually exploit children in developing countries. More specifics on the actions of Free the Children are mentioned in the section titled: International Organizations.¹⁵

15 Free The Children - Issues Library. (n.d.). *Free The Children - Home*. Retrieved May 8, 2011, from <http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/youth/issues/index.php?type=childlabour>

Religious and Spiritual views

There is no research that shows any religious support for child labour. No religion in the world believes it is morally correct to abuse children by making them perform strenuous and dangerous labour, or any labour at all for that matter.

Although it is not directly supportive, Buddhism could be a contributing factor to child prostitution in Thailand and other parts of the world. Buddhism beliefs state clearly that women are inferior to men and that they are “impure, carnal, and corrupting”. There are ten types of wives in the form of Buddhism practiced in Thailand. The first three kinds are: those wives who are bought, those who are voluntarily living together, and those to be enjoyed occasionally. Buddhist wives view sex with prostitutes as meaningless, therefore they are more accepting of their husbands having empty sex with young girls than finding other wives.¹⁶

¹⁶ Child prostitution in Thailand - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2010, December 25). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved May 12, 2011, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chi>

Case Study: Sierra Leone

Around the world there are 300,000 child soldiers fighting for 30 countries. 10,000 of them fought in Sierra Leone's 10 year civil war beginning in 1991.¹⁷ This situation vaulted child labour to the forefront as a major issue in the West African Republic of Sierra Leone.

Quite often during the civil war, Sierra Leonean children were drugged, mostly likely with amphetamines, to believe they could do anything.¹⁸ Apart from amphetamines, the soldiers also smoked marijuana and sniffed "brown brown", a mixture of cocaine and gunpowder. The combination of drugs made them numb and gave them limitless energy, to the point where they would not sleep for weeks. The children were shown films like "Rambo" and "Commando" to make them want to be like the characters depicted in the movies.¹⁹ With the drugs, and images from films they developed an almost in-human mind set, they lost all sense of survival and the only thing they wanted to do was kill.

With the end of the war came the end of the need for child soldiers, but child labour did not decrease. The children who survived the war had no home to return to so they found other jobs. According to a report by The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU),

17 What's Going On?: Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone. (n.d.). *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://www.un.org/works/goingon/soldiers/goingon_soldiers.html

18 Wessells, M. (1997, December 1). Sierra Leone: Child Soldiers. *Pangaea Publishing and Design for Nature & Peoples of the Earth*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://pangaea.org/street_children/africa/armies.htm

19 Beah, I. (2007, January 14). Ishmael Beah - "A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier" - New York Times. *The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/14/magazine/14soldier.t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=2

about 72% of Sierra Leonean children between age five and 14 are effected by child labour in either paid or unpaid forms.²⁰

Being rich in minerals, the country relies heavily on the mining industry to produce income. Sierra Leone is among the top 10 diamond exporters in the world and is well known for producing gem-quality diamonds which are their greatest foreign currency earner.²¹

Diamond mines are one of the major contributors to child labour in the country. Children work from sunrise to sunset sifting, digging, and carrying bags of gravel in conditions that closely resemble slave labour. The working condition puts them at risk of accidents due to faulty equipment, diseases, and falling debris. They are usually without proper food or medical care.²²

Sierra Leone was 176 out of 177 countries listed in the UN's Human Development Index. Poverty is widespread throughout the country, and 11% of children are orphans.²³ These conditions cause children to be forced into labour. When the family is too poor to support children, it will sell them for some money. When children are orphaned, they need to provide

20 News. (2011, February 9). *afrol News - Child labour affects 72% of Sierra Leone's children. afrol News - African News Agency*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.afrol.com/articles/15568>

21 Sierra Leone - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, March 3). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra_Leone

22 News. (2009, May 7). *RIGHTS-SIERRA LEONE: Child Miners: Legacy of Conflict - IPS ipsnews.net. IPS Inter Press Service*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46765>

23 UN welcomes child rights bill in Sierra Leone. (2007, June 13). *Welcome to the United Nations: It's Your World*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=22884&Cr=Sierra&Cr1=Leone>

for themselves forcing them to look for any job possible. Orphaned children become distressed and will become enslaved in any form of labour no matter how dangerous.

Sierra Leone, because of its large mining industry, is a prime example of a physically harmful form of child labour. Mining is very strenuous work which requires one to carry heavy loads, and move sharp rocks. When the environment is not inspected, it is very possible and common for rocks to fall. Also, with the un-kept workplaces, the children's vulnerable bodies are at great risk for disease.

Despite the massive numbers of child labourers in Sierra Leone, there are efforts to combat the issue. In 2008 the Child Rights Act was ratified, criminalizing child labour.²⁴ The action was not meant to harm the poverty stricken families who push their children into labour, but instead to make them aware of other choices.

The Sierra Leonean government has, subsequently made schooling mandatory for all children less than 13 years of age, after that light labour is permitted. Schooling is also available beyond this point, although it is not mandatory.²⁵

A major problem with child labour in the country is the lack of statistics. In 2010, the government collaborated with Statistics Sierra Leone to produce a survey of the number of

24 "IRIN Africa | SIERRA LEONE: Whether to criminalize child labour | Sierra Leone | Children | Economy | Education | Human Rights." *IRIN • humanitarian news and analysis from Africa, Asia and the Middle East - updated daily*. N.p., 4 Sept. 2009. Web. 11 May 2011. <<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86002>>.

25 "IRIN Africa | SIERRA LEONE: Whether to criminalize child labour | Sierra Leone | Children | Economy | Education | Human Rights." *IRIN • humanitarian news and analysis from Africa, Asia and the Middle East - updated daily*. N.p., 4 Sept. 2009. Web. 11 May 2011. <<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86002>>.

children who are economically active. The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports is also working hard to limit child labour.²⁶

Case Study: India

India has a greater number of child labourers than any other country in the world. The government claims there are approximately 20 million. Other organizations have stated that it is closer to 50 million.²⁷ The main cause of child labour in the country, like many others, is poverty.

The widespread poverty causes families to push their children into harsh labour, the worst being bonded labour. Bonded labour makes the children a hostage of the factories they work in and does not give them a chance to realize the need for formal education. Children never see the benefits of schooling and by being introduced to financially beneficial activities they see no need to go to school once they are freed.²⁸

Children are sold like commodities to big businessmen who take advantage of the poverty stricken families' vulnerability.²⁹ They see that the family will do anything for money

²⁶ CHILD LABOUR ON THE INCREASE IN SIERRA LEONE. (2010, June 12). *MTC - Child Soldiers*. Retrieved May 12, 2011, from <http://www.mindtochange.org/?p=85>

²⁷ Child Labour in India. (n.d.). *Child Labor*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.childlabor.in/child-labour-in-india.htm>

²⁸ Child Labour in India. (n.d.). *Child Labor*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.childlabor.in/child-labour-in-india.htm>

²⁹ Bonded Child Labour in India. (n.d.). *Child Labor*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.childlabor.in/bonded-child-labour-in-india.htm>

with the allusion they are giving their children a better life. Often they are tricked into believing that by selling their child into bonded labour for a period of time they will be given a chance at a better life. But, this is far from the truth.

One of the common places to find child labourers in India is carpet factories. More so in the northern parts because child labour is viewed as a necessity to overcome poverty.³⁰ Factories pay children ridiculously low wages for which no adults are willing to work. Most of the children are migrant workers sent away by their families to earn money which is sent directly to the home. Therefore children must endure the dangerous and unhygienic conditions of factories as their parents are depending on their wages to survive. Even in unbonded labour, the children are morally bonded because they know their families need the money that they are making. If they do not work, the whole family will suffer worse than necessary.

Children in carpet factories work 12 hour days with short breaks for food which usually consists of cheap grains such as rice. The already malnourished migrant workers are forced to sleep at the factories, giving them an increased risk of illness and poor health.³¹

The Indian government has taken action against child labour. In 1989 a law was created to make it illegal to employ anybody under the age of 14. This law is rarely followed as it is loosely enforced. Also, factories use loopholes in the law to employ children. The law does not apply to family, so employers claim that the employed children are distant relatives.

30 Burton, D. (1995, July 25). Child Labor in India. *Pangaea Publishing and Design for Nature & Peoples of the Earth*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://pangaea.org/street_children/asia/carpet.htm

31 Burton, D. (1995, July 25). Child Labor in India. *Pangaea Publishing and Design for Nature & Peoples of the Earth*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://pangaea.org/street_children/asia/carpet.htm

The lack of adherence to the law is due to the fact that it is very difficult to enforce in rural areas and 75% of the Indian population lives in small, rural villages. Also, punishments for factories violating this law are almost nonexistent.³²

India, being the seventh largest country in the world, has many rural areas.³³ The size and amount of rural areas plays a major role in enforcement of laws. It is not economically practical for the country to enforce its own laws in rural areas. It is expensive just to commute to and from these areas as well as to move the equipment required for inspecting facilities.

As long as family poverty exists in India, child labour will continue to grow. As it stands the children have little alternative than going into dangerous work to support their poverty stricken families.

The Indian government has shown recent success in multiple sectors. They have prosecuted violators, increased spending on their educational system, and begun to provide rehabilitation for children withdrawn from work. In the state of Kerala, schooling is compulsory. The state has had much educational success and is a perfect role model for the others to follow.³⁴

32 Burton, D. (1995, July 25). Child Labor in India. *Pangaea Publishing and Design for Nature & Peoples of the Earth*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://pangaea.org/street_children/asia/carpet.htm

33 India - Wikipedia. (2011, May 12). *wikipedia.org*. Retrieved May 12, 2011, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India

34 Child Labor Laws | Criminal Justice Degree. (n.d.). *Criminal Justice Degree : Resources & Information*. Retrieved May 12, 2011, from <http://www.criminaljusticedegree.net/resources/child-labor-laws/>

Case Study: Thailand

Thailand is one of the worst countries when it comes to child labour. It is home to what is the worst and most disgusting form of child labour, sexual exploitation of children. This is a thriving industry that Thailand has become well known for by sex tourists. Sex tourists are people who travel to countries simply to find prostitutes and in this case, they are pedophiles.

The sick and twisted trade that is sexual exploitation of children is nothing less than physically, mentally, and emotionally scarring for the children involved. Their innocence is taken in one night with no hope in getting it back. The non-profit organization End Child Labour has estimated that over one million children are drawn into prostitution each year.³⁵

35 Nair, S. (n.d.). Sex Tourism. *Welcome to the United States Department of Justice*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos/sextour.html>

The exact number of child prostitutes in Thailand is impossible to tell, although Thailand's Health System Research Institute estimates that 40% of prostitutes in Thailand are children. The same statistic is true in India, but the child sex tourism business is more famous in Thailand.

Children are forced into prostitution by poverty as is the case for most other forms of child labour. Often they are sold or rented by their parents who are desperate for money. They use an agent to carry out the deal. Some children are homeless and turn to selling their bodies as a way to make money to survive. In other cases, siblings or friends pressure them into the business. The worst situation is when they are raped and too scared to confess, so they resort to selling their bodies to cover it up.³⁶

Although prostitution is illegal in Thailand, it is not difficult to find in any way. Many bars, clubs and other businesses run prostitution businesses on the side. It has become so popular in Thailand because of its lucrative return compared to working in the rice fields or in factories. It is also very easy for desperate children to find a place to sell their bodies. Also, there are many child sex tourists who create a large demand for young prostitutes. The accessibility combined with the profitability makes prostitution a very attractive option for children living in extreme poverty.

One of the most horrific parts of this business is what the children are taught. The prostitutes as young as nine do not speak functional English, but many of the clients are only English speaking. The children are taught two phrases: 1) bam bam (full sex) 2) yum yum (oral

36 Daily News. (2010, July 11). Breeding a Culture of Child Prostitution in Thailand | Pattaya Daily News - Pattaya Newspaper, Powerful news at your fingertips. *Pattaya Daily News - Powerful news at your fingertips*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.pattayadailynews.com/en/2010/07/11/breeding-a-culture-of-child-prostitution-industry/>

sex).³⁷ This is disgusting because all they know of the English language are those two phrases and all they know in life is sexually pleasing the pedophilic men that visit Thailand as sex tourists.

Child prostitution is the worst form of child labour because it is harmful to the children in so many ways. Even if they escape the profession, they will never be innocent nor will they be able to erase the images of sexual abuse from their minds. No, it is not legal in Thailand, but without enforcement, laws are useless. The government needs to take action against child sex tourism in the country.

International Organizations

International organizations have played a huge role in the industry of child labour ever since it became an issue. There are many non-government organizations that focus on freeing children from labour as well as giving them the opportunity to have a normal childhood. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that devotes a great deal of its efforts to halting child labour. The ILO has departments of its own that deal with child labour in unique ways.

One of the largest organizations fighting for the freedom of child laborers is Free the Children. Founded in 1995 by Craig Kielburger, the organization has been successful for many years. Beginning as a small group of 12 year old students, it has rapidly grown to a global non-government organization (NGO). Free the Children is the largest network of children helping

37 Krueger, T. (2010, December 8). Global Ambassador Seeking to Beat Child Prostitution by Empowering Pimps. *Free Articles Directory | Submit Articles - ArticlesBase.com*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.articlesbase.com/womens-issues-articles/global-ambassador-seeking-to-beat-child-prostitution-by-empowering-pimps-3810819.html>

children through education. The organizations goal is to free children from poverty and exploitation around the world and free them from feeling powerless.³⁸

Free the Children has made great progress in recent years. Because of their overseas projects, 55,000 children have access to education in 650 schools and school rooms built buy the organization. 207,000 school and health kits have been sent by the organization to children in need and 91 cents of every dollar donated to Free the Children goes to programs that are beneficial to children. 30,000 women are now economically self sufficient because of alternative income projects.³⁹ These projects benefit children because if their mothers can bring in enough money to support the family, the children are given the chance to become educated, play games and simply grow up with a healthy childhood rather than being forced to mature instantly.

The ILO has many initiatives in the fight against child labour. One department of the ILO is called IPEC which stands for: International Programme to Eliminate Child Labour (IPEC). The IPEC is working towards eliminating child labour gradually by increasing countries' ability to deal with the issue and they promote the worldwide battle against child labour. The programme currently has operations in 88 countries and expenditure in 2008 reached \$61 million. The IPEC is the largest single operational programme of the ILO.⁴⁰ The IPEC takes action

38 Free The Children - Home. (n.d.). *Free The Children - Home*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.freethechildren.com>

39 Free The Children - Home. (n.d.). *Free The Children - Home*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.freethechildren.com>

40 SCREAM - Stop Child Labour ! ... - Organizations - TakingITGlobal. (n.d.). *TakingITGlobal - Organizations*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://orgs.tigweb.org/scream-stop-child-labour---supporting-childrens-rights-through-education-the-arts-and-the-media-trabajo-infantil-le-travail-des-enfants>

in multiple ways. They help children through education; they monitor places where boys and girls are commonly found working; they inspect environments where children who are of legal age in their country work.⁴¹

They have a project called SCREAM which means: Supporting Children's rights through Education, the Arts, and the Media. They believe that to break the cycle between child labour and poverty you must introduce education as well as media.⁴² These two combined information sources broaden knowledge of human rights and capability to succeed.

The ILO has also created two conventions against child labour. The first, created in 1973, ILO convention no.138, is one of the most effective ways to fight child labour. It creates a minimum age at which children can be employed. Ratified countries can choose the age under certain guidelines: 1) It cannot be younger than the age for compulsory schooling, 2) It cannot be younger than 15, and 3) if the job may jeopardize health, safety or morals the minimum age can be no less than 18.⁴³ This convention ensures that children are able to attend school and become educated in safer, more valuable skills. The second convention, ILO convention no.182, was created in 1999 to provide focus on eliminating the worst forms of child labour. For this convention a child is considered anyone under the age of 18. The worst forms of child labour

41 International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) . (n.d.). *International Labour Organization* . Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc>

42 International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) . (n.d.). *International Labour Organization* . Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc>

43 ILOLEX: English display cgi. (n.d.). *International Labour Organization* . Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C138>

are classified as anything that is harmful to health, mentally or physically. Two of the major issues are child prostitution and child trafficking.⁴⁴

There are many other organizations working around the clock to combat child labour. The above are examples of large, unique organizations that have been successful in their fights against the issue.

Bringing It Home: Child Labour in Canada

Many people believe that child labour is non-existent in most first world countries. At first glance this seems to be true however; it does exist, just in very small amounts. Child labour makes up 1% of the workforce in Canada which is very low compared to 32% in Africa.⁴⁵

In the early 1800's, in England and The United States, power-driven machines took over factories leaving men jobless. Factories found children to operate the machines because it was

44 ILOLEX: English display cgi. (n.d.). *International Labour Organization*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C138>

45 Child labour - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (2011, March 28). *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_labour

cheap and adult strength was no longer necessary. Canada did not have this issue because it did not become industrialized until the 1900's.⁴⁶

Similar to almost all countries, Canada has laws and restrictions against child labour. The reason Canada maintains such a low rate of child labour is law enforcement. The laws are enforced much more and therefore facilities adhere to them far better. Enforcement is the big difference between child labour rates in first world countries and third world countries.

Canada has multiple age restrictions depending on province. Some allow children as young as 12 to work, but only for two hours on school days and eight hours on weekends. Each province also has its own limitations on certain industries. By limiting age, hours and industry, the workplace is kept quite safe. See appendix "A" for a chart outlining labour laws in each province.⁴⁷

Solutions

There are multiple theories as to the proper method to solve child labour. One of which is very popular, but not very effective. Contrary to popular belief, simply boycotting sales of products made using child labour will not help the children.

As it is, most child labourers are working in dangerous conditions making clothes, carpets, anything. The only reason they are working is the necessity of survival, they do not

46 Fried, M. (n.d.). History of Child Labor | Scholastic.com. *Teaching Resources, Children's Book Recommendations, and Student Activities* | Scholastic.com. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=5428>

47 News. (2006, October 9). CBC News In Depth: Child labour. *CBC.ca - Canadian News Sports Entertainment Kids Docs Radio TV*. Retrieved April 4, 2011, from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/child-labour/childlabour-canada.html>

have another option. Now, if society completely boycotts sales, there is no longer demand, therefore factories shut down. At first thought, this seems pretty reasonable, but when you take a closer look it does more harm than good.

If the clothing factories children are working in cease to operate, the children are right back out on the street and still without money to survive. So what do they do? They seek more dangerous professions that will not be boycotted such as mining or more commonly prostitution.

At a quick glance, eliminating demand for goods made by children seems right, but in reality it is even worse than doing nothing at all. This is because currently, at least the children making clothes are surviving and still have their sexual innocence.

Of course, doing nothing has its consequences as well. As it is, millions of children worldwide are employed, some in more dangerous conditions than others, but none are considered safe for their health.

By doing nothing we allow employers to continue abusing children in all forms of children labour. In no way is the current situation good, but it is better than possible others, one of which was previously mentioned.

Until there is a more concrete understanding of the issue worldwide, as well as an increased level of cooperation, nothing should be done. It is easier to make the matter worse than it is to make it better. A thorough step by step action plan needs to be made before any actions are taken.

The positive to leaving the situation as is, is that children will not be forced into more dangerous positions, especially sex tourism. For example, allowing clothing, toy, and car

factories to continue operating with child labourers is better than forcing the children out of the factories and onto the streets. On the street, all humans, not children, will become desperate and therefore resort to crime. One common crime for abandoned children in third world societies is prostitution, which is permanently harmful to both mind and body.

A three tiered action plan should be put into place to solve the issue. First, poverty needs to be eliminated. Second, education needs to be both available and encouraged. Third, labour laws need to be enforced far more strongly.

The main cause of all sorts of child labour is poverty. Extreme poverty makes families so desperate for money that they will either sell their children or force them to work in dangerous conditions. Poverty is also the cause for orphaned children to put themselves into labour, they become desperate for any means of survival. By erasing poverty from the world, children will no longer be so desperate for me and neither will their families.

One of the major causes for poverty is lack of education. In many developing countries education is not freely available, making it hard for the average people to obtain. Without education it is very hard for anybody to get a job that pays well enough to support a family. With formal schooling available and compulsory, literacy rates would soar and unemployment rates would plummet. Children would be able to have healthy childhoods while their parents work in safe conditions to support the family. Most likely foreign aid would be necessary to make schools possible, but it would be such an economic boost the loans would be paid back quickly.

Most, if not all countries have laws against child labour. In developed countries there is no issue, laws are enforced and closely adhered to by businesses. The problem is in developing

countries while they may have the laws necessary to stop child labour, they need to enforce them. By enforcing labour laws and not allowing children to work in factories and other places, employers would have to fix up working conditions so that adults are willing to work in them. This creates more jobs for unemployed adults and gives children the chance to escape poverty by obtaining an education.

Everything about this plan seems good, with one exception, the cost. To eliminate poverty, social programs must be supported by governments to raise impoverished families higher up the social ladder. Programs such as welfare are useful, but don't have many long term effects. Families living in poverty are typically uneducated simply because education is unavailable to them.

The main focus for funds to end family poverty and in turn child labour should be focused on making education available everywhere. With education comes wealth. In many third world countries, it is very difficult to find jobs anywhere, but education does more than give you the ability to be hired for better jobs. Education could also mean, teaching families how to provide for themselves, which could be anything from a small farm area in the yard to keeping a few chickens. With education about growing and providing food sources for themselves, families would learn to overcome poverty or at least make it less severe. With decreased severity, the attraction of selling a child into labour would no longer be strong.

Yes, providing education in all areas may be expensive in the beginning, but after a short period of time, it will not be necessary everywhere. Citizens in poverty stricken areas will be able to teach each other and help each other to survive. By doing this, they will have created their own, self sufficient lifestyles and societies.

If the world comes together and provides aid for countries in need, child labour can be stopped. Aid money needs to be put toward solving poverty through education, meaning schools need to be built in impoverished countries. Also developed countries need to send officials to developing countries to teach them effective methods of enforcing labour laws. These three actions will save children from the bonds of labour and allow them to be children.

Appendix

A.)

Alberta

An employer can hire an "adolescent" (defined as a person between 12 and 14 years old) to work two hours on a school day or eight hours on a non-school day, only between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. A parent or guardian must provide written consent to the employer. A permit is required from the Director of Employment Standards.

British Columbia

Children under 12 years old can work, but need permission from the Director of Employment Standards, who may also set the conditions of employment. This usually applies in "exceptional circumstances," such as when the child is in the entertainment industry. Youths between 12 and 15 years old need written consent from a parent or a guardian.

Manitoba

The minimum age is 16 years old. Under the age of 16, the worker needs a permit from the Employment Standards Office. A parent, legal guardian, employer and the principal of the child's school must also sign the permit application form.

New Brunswick

Youths between the ages of 14 and 16 can work no earlier than 6 a.m. and no later than 10 p.m. Those younger than 16 cannot work more than three hours on a school day and no more than six hours on weekends. School and work combined must not exceed eight hours in a day. Anyone under 14 years old is banned from working in any industrial undertaking, in the forest industry, the construction industry, a garage or automotive service station, a hotel or restaurant, a theatre, dance hall or shooting gallery, or as an elevator operator.

Newfoundland and Labrador

A 16-year-old can work between the hours of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., as long as he or she also has a 12-hour period of rest between shifts. Time in school and work cannot exceed eight hours. Work cannot exceed eight hours in a day or three hours in a school day. The Act also prohibits youth from working during a strike or a lockout period. After obtaining written consent from a parent or guardian, a child younger than 16 years old can work. A child under 14 is banned from hazardous work unless prescribed in the regulations under the Act.

Nunavut and Northwest Territories

Anyone under 17 should not work in the construction industry, underground or in an open pit and quarry, as a hoist operator, or where asbestos or silica is handled. Children under 19 years old cannot work where liquor is sold or kept for sale.

Nova Scotia

Restrictions apply to those who are younger than 14. Children are not permitted to work more than eight hours a day and no more than three hours a day without a certificate. Hours of work must fall between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. and the combination of school and work is eight hours maximum.

Unless a youth under 16 years old is employed by family members, he or she is restricted from working in the mining industry, in manufacturing, in construction, in forestry, in garage and auto service stations, in hotels and restaurants and in billiard rooms.

Ontario

There is no specified minimum age, but there are specific restrictions on types of work based on age. For instance, a window cleaner or a worker in underground mines must be at least 18 years old. A youth can work for a surface mine or a mining plant at the age of 16, as well as do construction and logging. A 15-year-old can work for factory operations and repair shops and a 14-year-old can start working at other "industrial establishments."

Prince Edward Island

The minimum age, with restrictions, is 16. The young employee works no earlier than 7 a.m. and no later than 11 p.m. On a school day, the youth should not work longer than three hours and never during school hours. In one week, work hours should not exceed 40. No employer is allowed to hire a child in construction.

Quebec

From 6 a.m. until 11 p.m., a 14-year-old can work, though not during school hours. Those under 14 also need a written letter from a parent or a guardian to work.

Saskatchewan

The minimum employment age is 16 years old. The youth cannot work more than two shifts in any 12-hour period. Employers must also pay for or provide transportation between the hours of 12:30 a.m. and 7 a.m.

Yukon Territory

There is no provision for a minimum age and no minimum wage for children under 17.

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