

Give girls a chance - End child labour!

10 years ago the UN Convention No. 182 on the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour was adopted and eight years ago the World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) was celebrated for the first time. This year the theme for the WDACL was “Give girls a chance – End child labour!” and focused on the exploitation of girls in child labour. More than 200 million children are estimated to be involved in child labour in the world today; an approximate 100 million of these children are girls. Girls are often exposed to some of the worst forms of child labour; they are also frequently doing work hidden from the public eye, leading to particular dangers and risks.

Better Factories mini-campaign against child labour.

Even though the export garment industry has been spared severe child labour situations in recent years it is important to continue to lead the way and for workers and employers alike to make sure that there is no child labour in the work place.

To highlight this year’s World Day Against Child Labour and to stress the importance of working together against child labour, Better Factories has published a brochure on child labour accompanied by posters aimed at workers, employers and trade unions in the export garment industry. For the WDACL-week Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) also helped produce three radio shows about different child labour issues on Radio Mohanokor’s Voice of workers programme. First show was a roundtable discussion broadcasted the 10th of June, the second a show about children and their education broadcasted on the 11th and the third and last one a special airing of the official celebrations at the Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh broadcasted in the afternoon of the 12th of June

The first show aimed at raising the listener’s awareness and knowledge about generic child labour issues with invited guests from the ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MoLVT), the Independent Democratic Informal Economy Association (IDEA), International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) and BFC.



On the 11th of June interviews with children from the NGO Enfants d'Asie ASPECA and statements from French and French-Cambodian children was alternated with a live interview with the director of ASPECA, Ms. Kem Kimlang.

Education is crucial when talking about ending child labour as labour often interferes with children's education leading to a vicious circle where undereducated children of today become adults who cannot lift their own families out of poverty. Education is important and good quality schooling is necessary to succeed in today's labour market. Education at least until the minimum age of employment is a major step towards a society without child labour. The radio show expressed children's future expectations, their dreams and their thoughts about school and education. Below are some of the voices collected from the children in France:

Sokhéna a 14 ans. Elle est née en France et est en 3eme actuellement dans un collège à Thourotte dans l'Oise. Ses deux parents sont cambodgiens. Un des parents a vécu entièrement l'époque des Khmers rouges. Les 2 parents travaillent. Elle n'a pas encore d'idée précis du métier qu'elle veut faire plus tard, mais elle voudrait exercer un métier qui lui plaira. A l'école, elle aime apprendre de nouvelles langues comme l'anglais ou l'espagnol et approfondir la langue française. Elle aime pratiquer des sports différents. Elle aime apprendre la géographie du monde. Et elle aime aussi apprendre des choses sur l'être humain et son environnement. Elle pense qu'il faut aller à l'école pour apprendre des choses afin de réussir des examens et de pouvoir, plus tard, faire un métier que l'on aime. Grâce à l'école, on rencontre des amis. Elle pense qu'on ne devrait pas obliger un enfant à travailler. Un enfant est trop jeune pour cela. Pendant son temps libre, elle aime passer du temps avec ma famille, aller sur l'ordinateur, lire, faire du sport, regarder la télé. » (6 juin 2009)

“Sokkhena is 14 years old and was born in France. Both her parents are Cambodian and one of them has lived in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period. Both her parents work. She doesn't know yet what job she wants to do but she would like to find a profession she likes. She likes learning new languages, such as English or Spanish and studying French. She likes exercising, learning about the world's geography and also learning things about the human being and its environment. She thinks that children should go to school to be able to pass their exams and do a job they like. Thanks to school she can meet new friends. She thinks that children shouldn't be forced to work because they are too young to be working. She likes spending time with her family, playing on her computer, reading, exercising and watching TV.” (6th of June 2009)

« Yann Narith et Hugo Sovann sont deux frères nés en France de père cambodgien et mère française, habitant à Patay dans le Loiret. Un des parents a vécu entièrement l'époque des Khmers rouges. Hugo-Sovann a 9 ans et est en CMI dans l'école de Jacqueline Auriol, à Patay en France. Quand il sera grand, il aimerait être styliste. A l'école, il adore les maths. Il trouve que c'est très bien d'aller à l'école car à l'école, on apprend des choses qui permettent de réussir sa vie. Il trouve ça inhumain de faire travailler des enfants dans des usines. Il pense qu'il ne faut pas faire travailler les enfants car ils ont besoin d'apprendre et non pas de travailler à longueur de journée.

Pendant son temps libre, il lit ou bien il dessine. Yann-Narith a 11 ans et est en CM2. Plus tard il aimerait être paléontologue parce qu'il aimerait déterrer des fossiles et qu'il est intéressé par les dinosaures. Ce qu'il aime à l'école ce sont les mathématiques, l'histoire et la biologie. Il pense qu'on ne doit pas faire travailler des enfants, car lui personnellement, il n'aimerait pas que ça lui arrive et parce que si on ne va pas à l'école pour apprendre à lire et à écrire, on ne peut pas apprendre un métier. Et si on n'a pas de métier, on ne peut pas s'occuper de sa famille. Il faut que (tous) les enfants puissent aller à l'école. » (6 juin 2009)

“Yann Narith and Hugo Sovann are brothers. They were born in France and have a Cambodian father and a French mother. Their father lived in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period. Hugo-Sovann is 9 years old and wants to be a fashion designer. He loves mathematics and thinks that it's good to go to school because he can learn things which will help him succeed in life. He thinks that it is not humane to send kids to work in factories because they need to learn and not work all day long. When he has some time he likes to read and to draw. Yann-Narith is 11 and wants to be a paleontologist because he would like to dig up fossils and he's interested into dinosaurs. At school he likes studying mathematics, history and biology. He thinks children shouldn't be working and he wouldn't like having to work. He also thinks that if they don't go to school to learn how to read and write, then they can't learn a job and without a job they can't take care of their family. That's why all children should be allowed to go to school.” (6th of June 2009)

Antoine est Français et a 10 ans. Il va à l'école du Centre (Le Coteau). Il pense que c'est important d'aller à l'école pour faire un métier qui lui plait: astronaute, policier, paysan, militaire... et pour être heureux dans la vie, pouvoir se payer des matériaux pour faire la maison qui lui plait, pouvoir s'acheter de quoi se nourrir et s'habiller, pouvoir s'offrir des animaux: hamster, chats, chiens... et payer les factures d'eau, d'électricité, s'acheter une voiture. Plus tard, il veut être paysan. » (9 juin 2009)

“Antoine is 10 years old and he goes to school in France. He thinks that it is important to go to school to be able to do a job he likes: astronaut, policeman, farmer or military, and to be happy in life, to buy materials to build a house he likes, to buy food and clothes, buy some domestic pets (hamster, cats, dogs...) and pay the bills for water and electricity, and to buy a car. He wants to be a farmer.” (9th of June 2009)

The third show broadcasted the celebrations at the Olympic Stadium in Phnom Penh. The celebrations included a children's parade from a nearby location to the official celebration. There were also a youth group performing a role play and speeches by Mr. Joseph Menacherry, Chief Technical Advisor at IPEC, HE. Mr Hou Sry, Member of the National Assembly and the Secretary of the Commission of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Information, HE. Mr. Mao Sambath, Under Secretary of state of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and HE. Mr. Nos Slef, Under Secretary of state of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

