



Child Labour - the numbers

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that children have a right to play and also to rest from labour. There are also Conventions regulating child labour and banning its worst forms. Here are just a few statistics about the scale of child labour worldwide.

- 1) **The International Labour Organization estimates there are 218 million working children aged between five and 17** (2006)—In Cambodia the average age of children rescued is 3-14!
- 2) **126 million are estimated to work in the worst forms of child labour** — one in every 12 of the world's five to 17 years olds (2006)
- 3) **74 million children under 15 are in hazardous work** and should be "immediately withdrawn from this work" (2006)
- 4) **8.4 million children are in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour**, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities.
- 5) **There are around 3000 enslaved Albanian children used for begging and cleaning windows and cars** without payment in Italy and Greece.
- 6) **An estimated 496,000 children are in slavery in Bangladesh.**
- 7) **Over 10-20 million people are subjected to debt bondage** largely in India, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru and Philippines.
- 8) **Of 35 million soccer balls stitched in Pakistan, children produce one quarter of the balls**, most of them as bonded servants.
- 9) **Nearly 500,000 minors work in virtual slavery conditions in Senegal.**
- 10) **"Restavek" the practice of sending children to serve as unpaid domestic labour for more affluent city dwellers exists in the country of Haiti.** UNICEF estimated that 25,000 to 300,000 children, 85% of them girls, are victims of this practice.
- 11) Information gathered by the British charity, Christian Aid, and reported by Reuters, indicates that **up to 10,000 children between ages 6 and 14 are enslaved in brothels in Sri Lanka.**



- 12) There are no universally accepted figures for the number of bonded child laborers in India. However, in the carpet industry alone, **human rights organizations estimate that there may be as many as 300,000 children working, many of them under conditions that amount to bonded labor.**
- 13) Some NGOs estimate that the number of bonded laborers in India is 5 million persons. However, in a report released during the year, **Human Rights Watch estimated that 40 million persons, including 15 million children, are bonded laborers.** The report notes that the majority of bonded laborers are Dalits, and that bondage is passed from one generation to the next.
- 14) **90% of the 100,000 women in prostitution in Bombay, India, are indentured slaves.**
- 15) Persons sometimes are sold into virtual slavery. **Many boys from India, some of whom are as young as 4 years, end up as riders in camel races in West Asia and the Gulf States, especially to the United Arab Emirates, or begging during the Haj. Girls and women end up either as domestic workers or sex workers.**
- 16) **It takes up to 15 years for girls held in prostitution via debt-bondage in India to purchase their freedom.**
- 17) The number of street children worldwide is almost impossible to know, although **the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF in the mid '90s estimated the number to be 100 million.**
- 18) **The social phenomenon of street children is increasing as the world's population grows;** six out of ten urban dwellers are expected to be under 18 years of age by the year 2005
- 19) **According to UNICEF, there are about 25 million street children in Asia and an estimated 10 million in Africa (1998).**
- 20) **Africa today has 10.7 million orphans just as a result of AIDS and the numbers are growing (UNAIDS).** With fewer and fewer family members left to care for them, many—if not most—of these children will join the street children of Africa who are already there because of poverty, wars and ethnic conflicts
- 21) **In the Philippines, the Department of Social Welfare and Development estimated, in 1991, 1.2 million street children. Action International Ministries says 50,000 to 70,000 street children live in Manila alone.**
- 22) **India's Ministry of Social Welfare estimated that of the 10.9 million people residing in Calcutta in 1992, there were 75,000 to 200,000 children living in the**



PlayAction Facts

www.fairplayforchildren.org

streets. Agencies agree the number is much higher now, and deaths of parents from HIV/AIDS are likely to cause the numbers to rise more rapidly.

Our daily news service, ***PlayAction Online***, features regularly stories about child labour throughout the world: <http://www.fairplayforchildren.org/index.php?page=News>

Fair Play for Children gratefully acknowledges all sources used in creating this publication. We publish PlayAction Guides and Facts in downloadable PDF format. The full list may be accessed at:

http://www.fairplayforchildren.org/index.php?page=Playaction_Guides§ion=Publications

Published by Fair Play for Children : playaction@fairplayforchildren.org

Working for the Child's Right to Play