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(Should any of our members find information on campaigns that is inaccurate we apologize for the same and request you to write to us with the corrections)

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EDITORIAL

No Minor Problem

This year the World Day against Child Labour, is being marked around the world with activities to raise awareness that Education is the right response to child labour.

Whether education alone could defend the child from all-pervading exploitation, is a question only time could answer but it certainly opens new vistas of vocation and employment to the millions of abused child miners who are compelled to go through the daily grind, risking their young lives. The International Labor Office (ILO) says its latest estimates indicate that of labourers worldwide, educational opportunities better future or must education.

Child labour is most small-scale, underground quarries in many countries America. Millions of site to work and not to play. rural children are forced to communities as their homes industries.



commonly prevalent in and open cast mines and in Asia, Africa and Latin children, exist in the mine Millions of indigenous and leave the safety of their attract the greed of mining

Many of them start working at the age of four or five and become sick or deformed by the time they reach adulthood. For example, in gem mines in Tanzania, children descend 30 metres underground to spend seven or eight hours a day digging through narrow passages without ventilation or proper lighting, with the threat of tunnel collapse looming large over them. In Mongolia children are employed in different mining activities, not only outside pits but also underground, where they have to carry sacks of ore.

Yet, what we see across governments and corporates in the mining industry-is the ubiquitous phenomenon called 'denial'. A response from the National Human Rights Commission of India after their committee made a whirlwind field visit to the iron ore mines in Bellary, Karnataka, was 'the situation of child labour is not as alarming as you NGO's project it to be'. Now, in Bellary a casual stroll along the miles of mine sites can reveal the unconcealed and the obvious - hundreds of thousands of little children forced to work in inhuman and highly exploitative conditions, facing mental and physical abuse, experiencing serious health problems and not having the opportunity to basic amenities like drinking water or a roof over their heads. Here children have to be fed by their mothers as their hands are too blistered to hold their food. The food gets choked as the children's tender guts are so clogged with iron dust, unless they eat a banana first. It is another thing that no mother here can afford to buy her child a banana. Yet, this is not alarming to our bureaucrats and leaders. Children forced into armed conflicts over diamonds and gold in most African countries is not alarming. Children forced into trafficking and drug abuse in mining regions is not alarming. Minors snaking down dangerous mine shafts and having their limbs blown off or broken is not alarming. Orphaned young populations due to HIV/AIDS in mining ravaged African countries is not alarming.

Can there be worse forms of abuse than what these children already face, for our societies, governments, international bodies and mining corporates to concede that these children actually exist in the mine sites?

Indigenous children displaced in large numbers joining the invisible force of migrant labour are not even considered as paying the price for our mining-obsessed, market-subservient globalised economies. National laws and international agreements will continue to be futile metaphors as long as governments and corporates in the entire chain of the mining economy do not stand up and take responsibility for this mining induced 'children-cide'.

While efforts at strengthening the education opportunities for children has a significant potential of relief for these children, unless we stop denying and following benchmarks that reflect the status of children living, working and affected by mining, governments and corporates should feel ashamed to claim that they can promote sustainable mining. For, children are the worst refugees of mining induced development and this is the global reality.

At the end of this dark tunnel there are flickering lights of hope from small human rights groups like the one lit by Santulan in the form of Pashan Shala in the stone quarries. Civil society groups can play the role of 'philanthropy' but our governments and companies should first play the role of 'responsibility.'

Education is the key

12 June 2008 -- This year the World Day against Child Labour is being marked around the world with activities to raise awareness that education is the right response to child labour: education for all children at least to the minimum age of employment; education policies that address child labour by provision of properly resourced quality education and skills training; and education to promote awareness on the need to tackle child labour.

More than ever today, children need a good quality education and training if they are to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in the labour market. However, in



many countries the schools which are accessible to the poor families are under-resourced and inadequate. Poor facilities, over-sized classes, and lack of trained teachers lead to low standards of education.

In the Millennium Development Goals the United Nations and the broader international community set targets of ensuring that by 2015 all boys and girls complete a full course of primary education and that there is gender parity in education.

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO)

From Horse Back to Mine Belly

There is a popular saying: "Mongols are born in the saddle". Children riding horses in races is a popular tradition, but as horse racing has become more and more commercialised, injuries and fatalities have increased drastically. The United Nations explicitly prohibited employment of children under 16 as jockeys in races in line with the minimum age for work set in labour law.

However, the children in Mongolia seem to have just got out of frying pan into the fire. Thanks to Mongolia's transition from a communist state to a multi-party capitalist democracy. Many trans-national companies have started eyeing Mongolia as a potential labour repository and for mineral prospecting. Quite naturally the children are the most vulnerable targets in this big buck game. Of the 100,000 people who work in informal gold mines in Mongolia, between 10 and 15 per cent are children.



Most children start mining at the age of 12, but there are those starting even before the age of 8. About 20 per cent of the child miners are between 5 and 12, while about half of all child miners are in the age group 15–17. The average age of a child miner is 14.

Surveys show that there are a higher proportion of younger children in gold mining than in other types of mining.

Children report working long hours in water, in narrow tunnels, in cold or overheated conditions, in dust and underground with limited oxygen and light. Most children lift and carry loads of rock, mud and sand which are much too heavy for them. Some handle mercury in the amalgamation process, others work with rotating items such as drills and compressors and many use explosives. Few children have any protective gear and many do not know how to protect themselves. Children's accident rate is

estimated to be as high as that of adults – 12 to 14 per cent – but could in real terms be higher as children may have been working for shorter periods of time than adults.

Overall in Mongolia, there are many more boys mining than girls. This is partly because boys are perceived as more suitable for the mining work and because girls work at home or goes to school. Further investigation of the reasons for this is needed. In general in Mongolia, parents attach more importance to the education of girls than that of boys.

42 per cent of the child miners state that they frequently suffer from pain in the back or limbs, 28 per cent report kidney and urinary diseases and 28 per cent complain of chronic fatigue. Exhaustion can stunt children's physical development and affect their intellectual development. Few children got any medical care when hurt or sick.

Twelve per cent of children surveyed said they had entered mining, with all its hardship and danger, because of parental pressure. Almost all the others said it was to help their parents. They would want to study if opportunities are offered, and they would like to do other, safer types of work. But there are rarely schools or colleges around the artisanal mining sites.

One in every 7 children above the age of 7 years old is illiterate. Between 25 and 35

per cent of the child miners are out of school.

The living conditions of the working children are of serious concern. Around 15 to 20 per cent of the mining children live in a structure which is not suitable for living i.e. in tent, hut or in cars. Most of them do not have access to toilets or washing facilities. Many of them drink alcohol and take drugs (inhaling petrol and glue or smoke cannabis). This is a reflection of the hardships children and young people are facing in informal mining. Children could easily adopt the same behaviours as adults, they have little time and space for play and fun.

Child miners contribute substantially to the income of their households and in some cases their income is even the main source of support for the family. Children in artisanal fluorspar mining earn a much higher monthly income (MNT 250,000) than children in gold mining (MNT 75,655). About 13 per cent of the children are in debt to friends, other people, relatives and employers.

Although it is risky to project trends based on studies that have been done by different agencies at different points in time, all research in Mongolia points to a steep and rapid increase in child labour in artisanal mining despite all the national and international efforts

www.ilo.org/ipeinfo/product

The Child-Eating Mountain

POTOSI, Bolivia

While most 15-year-old boys are on their way to school in the morning, Julio Cesar Sierrez is on his way to work. He toils inside the Cerro Rico, or "Rich Mountain" of Potosí, for the fabled Bolivian silver that looms at the peak at the Andes Mountains.

The entrance to the mine is muddy, with a sloping ceiling. At 15,000 feet above sea level you have to work to take in each breath. An estimated 20,000 people work each day, including 1,000 children. Inside there are no lights except for the workers' headlamps, and there is no ventilation, or safety equipment. Often there is just one exit; if a shaft collapses there is no way

out. The boy began working outside the mine when he was just 6 years old; he's been working inside since he was 12.

The Spanish discovered silver in Potosí in 1545. The mine was so rich that historians say its wealth single-handedly fueled the Spanish conquest of the Americas. They call it "The Mountain That Eats Men." It is estimated that 8 million American Indian and African slaves died in forced labor at the mine. Amid the colonial remnants of what was once a magnificent city sits the massive Spanish royal mint, now a museum that shows just a fraction of the

mother lode that made this remote mountainous place the largest city in the world by 1650. And yet all that is left behind is poverty, a poverty of such extreme desperation that it sends men and boys into the 400 mines burrowed into the mountain's belly to scratch out the most meager of livings. In this, the poorest country in South America, there are no safety inspections of mines. The government does, however, provide guidelines and seminars to promote safety.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/Story>

The Gem Slaves

Mererani, Tanzania: the only place on earth where the rare gem tanzanite is found. Despite the mire of poverty, this town is the source of a 300 million dollar a year industry - yet 30 per cent of the 200,000 people who call this place home, survive on less than a dollar a day. Each year, thousands of people from all over Tanzania rush here in hope of finding the rare gem. Most find an endless cycle of poverty. In this desperate daily battle for survival, children bear the heaviest load.

Everyday, 4000 child miners between the ages of 8 and 14 risk their lives in poorly constructed mine shafts for barely a meal a day. Those miners who can't find work in the pits are left to pan for tanzanite in a dry riverbed, most struggle for years without earning a cent. Dealers here sell raw, uncut tanzanite to regional brokers, who in turn, cut and polish the blue gem, and sell it on to local and international retailers. Much of the raw tanzanite sold here is mined by children.

Just 50 kilometers away from the filth of Mererani, Arusha town demonstrates the global hunger for tanzanite. Tourists here can spend between 5,000 and 20,000 dollars a day on the precious stone. But

while a minority of those in the tanzanite business have built a fortune from the gem, Mererani children remain caught in the grip of poverty. The battle against child labour in this region seems endless.

Though International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor from the International Labor Office in Nairobi, Kenya, believes the worst forms of child labour can be eliminated globally in 10 years, high population growth, stifling poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic has retarded its fight against child labour in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a result, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of child labourers of any region in the world. The causes and long-term effects of this reality are painfully bleak. The Tanzania government is part of an international strategy to eliminate child labour.

Wilson Peter has a simple solution for child labour. "If I were president of Tanzania, I wouldn't allow kids to work in the mines. I would take people who allow kids work in the mines and lock them up."

Source: Irin News
<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?>

In Angola

Lack of regulation, harsh labour conditions, and poor wages make child labour a regular practice in the conflict diamond trade. Children are commonly considered an easy source of cheap labour and are often sent into small areas of mines that adults aren't able to enter. They are often given dangerous and physically challenging tasks, such as moving earth from pits, or risking their lives to landslides to be lowered into small holes or pits on ropes.

In Angola, a recent study found 46% of miners are under the age of 16, with many of the children working because of war, poverty, and the absence of education. And in India, where more than half of the world's diamonds are processed, child labour is commonly used for cutting and polishing diamonds. Taken on as "apprentices," these children suffer for years in dangerous conditions for little to no pay until they are replaced, often by younger siblings.

<http://www.brilliantearth.com>

History of Child Labour Conventions

Almost all work performed by children in mining and quarrying is hazardous and considered to be one of the worst forms of child labour. Here is a brief history of child labour Conventions in relation to mining and quarrying:

The Minimum Age (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 (No. 123), defined the term "mine" as meaning "any undertaking, whether public or private, for the extraction of any substance from under the surface of the earth by means involving the employment of persons underground", and Article 2 provided that "the minimum age shall in no case be less than 16 years".

The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), became a basic pillar in the fight against child labour, proposing that each member ratifying the Convention should undertake "to pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment".

Convention No. 138 defined hazardous work as "any type of employment or work, which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety, or morals of young persons".

However, it was not until 1999, with the adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), which complemented rather than replaced Convention No. 138, that the worst forms of child labour were identified and specific measures for their immediate elimination implemented. By April 2005, 153 of the ILO's 178 member States had ratified this Convention, and by doing so agreed to take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour for children under 18 years of age.

Pashan Shala, A School Among Stone Quarries

Santulan, a voluntary social organization that came into existence in 1997, could successfully kindle a passion in the quarry workers' children to shed the hammer and pick up the pen. Responding to the plight of nearly one million children of the migrant quarry workers in Maharashtra who shove aside education, Santulan



initiated an educational program named "Pashan Shala" (School among the stone quarries), with the first unit set up on 2 Oct 1997 in Wagholi stone quarry units of Pune, Maharashtra, India. It is an Alternative Innovative Non-Formal Education Program evolved exclusively for the 'unreachable' children. After a long-drawn struggle, the government of India recognized the Pashan Shala module. Santulan also introduced mid-day meal scheme in its schools. Today the organization can boast of a long list of achievements with 12,807 children of 3 to 18 ages and 4,508 of 6 to 14 age groups covered under its educational program. 188 migrant children got enrolled in government schools. Girls constitute

nearly 55% of the students of Pashan Shala Centers. Out of this over 90% children belong to lower socio-economic strata. Most importantly, the scheme has helped in reduction of child labourers in stone quarry/crushing areas.

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Poem that Tugs the Heart

Sarah (at the Shaftesbury commission)

Sarah Gooder was a little girl

Of eight, just rising nine

***With a choice between the workhouse
Or toiling down the mine.***

She did not, unlike some children,

Pull tubs on all fours

But spent a happy childhood

As a trapper on the doors.

She went blithely down each morning

At the hour of half past three

At five-thirty in the evening

She skipped home to her tea.

She said "The darkness scares me

It is a fearsome thing

But sometimes I'm allowed a light

And often then I sing!"

"And then I sing!" Dear Christ above!

Poor little soul starved mite

To find her heart rejoicing

In simple candle's light.

When Herod slew the innocents

His weapon was the sword

But these babe's souls were murdered

By strict observance of God's word

And so we built an Empire

And forged a mighty nation

The navy was its bulwark

Child slavery its foundation.

<http://www.communicate.co.uk/lancs/coalmining/ineastlancashire/page3.phtml>



Roles and tasks of child workers in mining

Children are working in a wide range of activities related to the whole production line of small-scale mining and quarrying. It covers tasks from cooking and cleaning to the extraction of ore underground and on the surface, its transport and separation and subsequent metal production. Children are often required to do the same work as adult workers²⁹:

In underground mining operations (e.g. in Colombia³⁰, Niger³¹ and Peru) they work in:

- ore extraction (by hammer and chisel, with pick and shovel, etc.);
 - assistant in drilling;
 - hauling ore on their backs;
 - pushing carts;
 - cleaning galleries;
 - piling up of ore;
 - removing water from the mines.
- In open cast mines (e.g. in Nepal) in:
- digging pits;
 - removal of overburden;
 - pushing carts.

In alluvial (river) mining (e.g. in Bolivia, Colombia, Mongolia, Senegal and Tanzania) in:

- digging for sediments;
- assisting in diving for sediments;
- sieving ore and sediments;
- washing and drying of product;
- pushing carts and transporting the sediment.

In mineral concentration and stone crushing (e.g. in Nepal, Peru and Tanzania) in:

- piling up of ore, crushed stones or rejects;
- milling of ore;
- carrying stones from the mine or the river;
- crushing rocks;
- picking of gemstones;
- washing gold;
- amalgamating gold and burning of amalgam;
- fetching water for processing the ore.

In clay extraction and brick making (e.g. in Colombia) in:

- drying of green bricks;
- turning over the green bricks so they dry evenly;
- stacking bricks in drying sheds;
- transporting and carrying of green and fired bricks;
- stacking and unloading kilns;
- removing the clay and preparing it with water;
- loading and unloading the ovens;
- grinding;
- firing bricks.

In mining-related environment and in the household (e.g. in Mongolia, the Philippine and Tanzania) in:

- preparation and provision of food for the miners;
- washing clothes;
- working in the household;
- selling food;
- fetching drinking water and food to worksite;
- attending in bars and restaurants;
- fetching fire wood;
- cleaning of bars, restaurants, houses.

In addition, mining camps are often rough places in which to work and live. Some children are engaged in prostitution and there are also confronted by problems related to alcohol and drug abuse, and violence. So mining small-scale mining also involves aspects of the unconditional worst forms of child labor.

Source International Programme on the Elimination of Child labour (IPEC)

Profiles

Major writers who wrote miners' stories



Charles Dickens, the famous Victorian writer: As a reporter for "Household Words", he wrote a touching account of a miner's evidence on

accidents in NE England. He was born on February 7, 1812. 12-year-old Charles was removed from school and sent to work at a boot-blackening factory, earning six shillings a week to help support the family. This childhood poverty and feelings of abandonment would be a heavy influence on Dickens' later views on social reform and the world he would create through his fiction. He died on 9, 1870. Dickens' own childhood poverty influenced much of his writing, and he is known especially for characters pulled from the sooty streets of London: orphans and urchins, rogues, shopkeepers, stuffed shirts, widows, and other colorful characters.

He exhibited a great ability to spin a story in an entertaining manner and this quality, combined with the serialization of his comic novel *The Pickwick Papers* made him the most popular English author of his time. The serialization of such works as *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Dombey and Son*. His novels began to express a heightened uneasiness about the evils of Victorian

industrial society, which intensified in the semiautobiographical *David Copperfield*, as well as in *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*. His novel *A Tale of Two Cities* appeared in the period when he achieved great popularity for his public readings.

DH Lawrence

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), English novelist, storywriter, critic, poet and painter, one of the greatest figures in 20th-century English literature: The fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence, a barely literate miner, and Lydia (née Beardsall), a former schoolmistress, DH Lawrence, the famous English novelist, spent his formative years in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. His birthplace, in Eastwood, 8a Victoria Street, is now a museum. His working class background and the tensions between his parents provided the raw material for a number of his early works. Lawrence would return to this locality, which he was to call "the country of my heart," as a setting for much of his fiction. His novel *Sons and Lovers* is considered as an evocative portrayal of working-class life in a mining community.



Archives

Gory Past - Child Labour in Mining

With the boom of industrialization in Great Britain during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a dramatic change in the nature of children's work and the child labour became a social problem and a political issue.

Before industrialization, children of the poor and working class families worked for centuries, helping around the house or assisting in family's enterprises and this kind of child labour was accepted as a necessity for the survival of the family. With industrialization, the concept of child

labour changed. The factory system brought in strict discipline, harsh punishment, unhealthy working conditions, low wages and inflexible work hours, which were largely criticized.



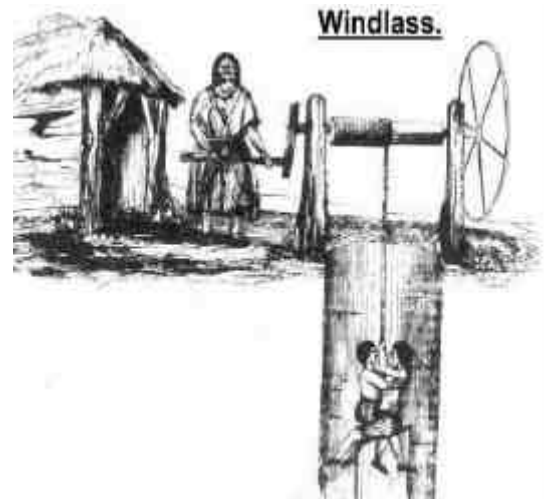
A hurrier and two thrusters heaving a corf full of coal as depicted in the 1853 book *The White Slaves of England* by J Cobden.

In 1842, 19 to 40% of the work forces in coal and metal mines in Britain comprised children and youth. Child labour was used for underground coal mining and for ore dressing on the surface of the metal mines. In iron and coalmines children, both boys and girls began work at age 5 and generally died before they were 25.

Child abuse in coal mining: In the early 19th century, children were usually employed as hurriers (also called coal drawers) to transport the coal from the mine to surface. The hurriers pulled a corf (baskets or small wagons) full of coal along roadways as small as 16 inches in height. Because of the size of the roadways, adults were not suitable for this job. The hurriers used to work 12 hours shifts making several rounds from the depths of the mines to the surface and back. They were equipped with a 'gurl' belt linked to the corf. They had to carry candles as it was too expensive to light the whole mine.

Children as young as three or four years were employed. The younger ones used to push the corf from the rear, often using their heads, leading to hair loss and the children becoming bald. Some children, particularly those who were not strong enough to pull or push the corf, were used as coal trappers. Their job was to sit in a

cutting , opening trap doors to allow the hurrier and his cargo through.



Children being lowered into the pit

As the volume of coal extracted grew beyond the pulling capabilities of children, horses guided by coal drivers were used to pull the corves. These drivers were usually older children between the ages of 10 and 14.

An act of Parliament drew up by the Children's Employment Commission in August 1842 prescribed minimum working age for boys in mines, though the age varied between districts and even mines. The mines and collieries Act also prohibited employment of women and girls in mines. Hurrying was much reduced when it was made compulsory for all children between 5 and 13 to go to school in 1870. However it was still a common profession for school leavers upto 1920.

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