



"Let our voices be heard!" Proposals of working children & youth around the globe

This document shares advocacy priorities and messages developed by 29 working Children's Advisory Committees (CAC) with more than 500 members aged 10 to 18 years, across 18 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East involved in the global participation project "It's Time to Talk!".

Protect us from labour exploitation, harsh conditions and risks, and allow us to do suitable and dignified work!

Working children want their right to protection from exploitation to be respected. They don't want to do work that is too heavy, harmful, in harsh or risky conditions. Boys face increased risks to do heavy work, whilst girls face increased risks of doing unpaid household work for long hours. However, many working children do not want to or can stop all of their work. They want to do work that is suitable to their age and capacity in order to contribute to their families, to learn skills and to earn money. They are proud to help their families and they want their work to be valued. Nevertheless, children also want sufficient time to study, rest, and play.

Key messages from working children's committees:

"CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE EXPLOITED. CHILD LABOUR SHOULD BE STOPPED NOW."
(CAC, ETHIOPIA)

"PARENTS AND COMMUNITY SHOULD SUPPORT AND PROTECT CHILDREN FROM HARMFUL WORK. EVERY CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO AGE-APPROPRIATE CHILD WORK."
(CAC, KENYA -WCY)

"RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT DANGERS THAT WORKING CHILDREN FACE. CHILDREN'S PLACE IS NOT IN THE STREETS, BUT INSIDE THE SCHOOLS."
(CAC, KOSOVO)

Prevent and protect working children from violence and discrimination!

Working children want their right to protection from all forms of violence and discrimination to be respected. Girls and boys experience different forms of violence (physical, emotional and sexual) in their homes, schools, on the street, and in the workplace. Some working children also experience discrimination and exclusion, especially when working on the streets. Working children with disabilities face increased risks of sexual and physical harassment; and across many countries girls also have a heightened risk of sexual harassment.

Key messages from working children's committees:

"ERADICATE VIOLENCE IN ITS DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS IN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT. GENERATE GREATER AWARENESS AND RESPECTFUL ATTITUDES, BUILDING A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE SOCIETY."
(CAC, BOLIVIA)

"OUR PRIORITY PROBLEM IS PHYSICAL, VERBAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE BY THE EMPLOYERS."
(CAC, NEPAL)

PROMOTE EDUCATION OF GIRLS, AND INVOLVE GIRLS AND BOYS TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT."
(CAC, TANZANIA)



Address poverty, provide decent jobs for our parents, and ensure that our basic needs are met!

Working children want their right to develop physically, mentally, spiritually and socially to be respected. Poverty, as the main driver of child labour, must be addressed so that families have enough resources to meet children's basic needs for decent housing, food and access to clean drinking water, sanitation and health care, clothes and education. In order to provide this, parents and caregivers need regular and dignified work opportunities in rural, remote, and urban settings so that they can earn fair wages. Poverty, migration, displacement, discrimination, and environmental damage have made it even harder for families to meet these basic needs.

Key messages from working children's committees:

"PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN ACCESSING THEIR BASIC NEEDS. EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO EAT." (CAC, ETHIOPIA)

"MORE MUST BE DONE TO INCREASE FAMILY INCOME AND TO RAISE GOVERNMENT AWARENESS OF PUBLIC WELFARE, ESPECIALLY FAMILY WELFARE OF WORKING CHILDREN, TO FREE CHILDREN FROM OBLIGATION TO WORK." (CAC, INDONESIA)

"THE PRIORITY PROBLEM IS THE LACK OF DRINKING WATER IN HOMES AND COMMUNITIES, THE CONTAMINATION OF STREAMS (ESPECIALLY DUE TO THE USE OF AGROTOXICS)." (CAC, PARAGUAY - ALTO PARANÁ)

Take our education seriously and provide quality education and skill training!

Working children want their right to education to be respected. There are many links between education and children's work. Children want free, friendly, flexible, accessible, relevant, non-violent and non-discriminatory quality education and skill training, including digital education. Children do not want to miss school because of their work. Schools should be flexible to adjust their timing to the realities and needs of working children, and school admission should be easy. Many children described how their earnings enable them to pay school costs (including school fees, school materials, school transport or school uniforms), thus allowing them to continue their education. When children do not attend school they are more likely to engage in work, and face increased risks of labour exploitation.

Key messages from working children's committees:

"CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOODS" (CAC, RWANDA)

"WE NEED QUALITY SKILL BASED AND RELEVANT EDUCATION." (CAC, KENYA-WCY)

"[WE WANT] AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL RESPECTING THE RIGHTS OF WORKING CHILDREN. A TOLERANT SCHOOL WITH STUDENTS STUDYING AND WORKING. A SCHOOL THAT ADAPTS TO THE LIFE OF THE WORKING CHILDREN FIRST AND NOT ONLY THE WORKING CHILDREN THAT ADAPT TO THE SCHOOL." (CAC, PERU-MANTHOC)

Listen to us, understand us, and implement laws that respect our rights!

Working children want their right to participation to be respected by taking seriously their views, feelings and suggestions and by being valued by parents, caregivers, teachers, employers, general public, practitioners, police, and policy-makers – including government authorities and other national and international agencies. Children's views need to be heard in order to make decisions and policies that are in their best interests. Children should be informed about their rights, and about policies and laws affecting them. Children's associations and networks should be supported.

Key messages from working children's committees:

"[OUR GOAL IS] TO PRESENT THE PROPOSALS OF WORKING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS TO DECISION-MAKERS." (CAC, GUATEMALA)

"ENSURE THAT THERE IS LEGISLATION IN PLACE TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WORKING CHILDREN." (CAC, KENYA-AFCIC)

"LOCAL INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ACCOMPLISH (...) PROMISES AND RESPECT THE LAW. COMMUNITIES AND PEERS SHOULD SUPPORT US AND RAISE (THEIR) VOICE. LET OUR VOICES BE HEARD IN MEDIA. THE OMBUDSMAN SHOULD RESPECT EVERY CHILD'S COMPLAINT." (CAC, KOSOVO)



Terre des Hommes
International Federation

More information online: www.time-to-talk.info