

COVALENCE INTERN ANALYST PAPERS

Companies attitude towards childhood

Are companies helping children through their corporate social responsibility or are they exploiting them through child labour?

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Problem: Are companies helping children through their corporate social responsibility or are they exploiting them through child labour?

Introduction:

Nowadays, corporate social responsibility is a common term when talking about multinational companies. By corporate social responsibility, we mean “a commitment to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of our workforce and their families as well as the local community at large”¹.

So, by undertaking corporate social responsibility, companies take actions that can be either environmentally or socially friendly.

However, on the other hand, enterprises are often criticized because, with their activities, they are causing damages on our society, on the environment, on workers and this happens also in companies that spend a lot of money on social responsibility.

This is the paradigm that we want to study in this paper, by focusing only in a very specific sector: children.

The problem that we are working on makes reference to two different aspects:

- The fact that companies, in order to improve their social responsibility, help in many ways children through education, health, or any other kind of activities, which help them to live longer and better.

- The fact that many companies, in order to increase their benefits, accept children labour, whatever their age is and whatever the labour conditions are.

In order to give a definition of what child labour is, we could say that Child labour refers to the employment of **children** at regular and sustained **labour**. 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.

So, what we are wondering is: are multinational companies helping children by achieving huge projects that focus on them or are they hurting them since in many countries they have to work for these enterprises?

To answer to that question, we will first take a look to the evolution of child labour through History in order to analyze whether child labour is something specific to multinational companies or something that already existed and that still exists in many other activities. Then, we will study what kind of projects companies are trying to achieve, where do they take actions, for what kind of children they do it. Finally, we will focus on how companies accept or not child labour in their own factories or in their suppliers' ones and what actions have been taken to fight against child labour.

All this should help us to conclude by answering our problem.

¹ <http://www.nexeninc.com/Sustainability/glossary.asp>

I- The evolution of child labour through history:

a) During the Industrial Revolution

Child labour is not a modern fact. In fact, we can say that this is something that has always been there, although it is nowadays when we try to take some actions against that.

If we take a look to some of the most important writers in Literature, we will find that Victor Hugo in Les Contemplations, had already written about this subject:

« Où vont tous ces enfants dont pas un seul ne rit ?
Ces doux êtres pensifs, que la fièvre maigrit ?
Ces filles de huit ans qu'on voit cheminer seules ?
Ils s'en vont travailler quinze heures sous des meules ;
Ils vont, de l'aube au soir, faire éternellement
Dans la même prison le même mouvement.
Accroupis sous les dents d'une machine sombre,
Monstre hideux qui mâche on ne sait quoi dans l'ombre,
Innocents dans un baignoire, anges dans un enfer,
Ils travaillent. Tout est d'airain, tout est de fer.
Jamais on ne s'arrête et jamais on ne joue.
Aussi quelle pâleur ! la cendre est sur leur joue.
Il fait à peine jour, ils sont déjà bien las.
Ils ne comprennent rien à leur destin, hélas !
Ils semblent dire à Dieu : « Petits comme nous sommes,
« Notre père, voyez ce que nous font les hommes ! »
Ô servitude infâme imposée à l'enfant !
Rachitisme ! travail dont le souffle étouffant
Défait ce qu'a fait Dieu ; qui tue, œuvre insensée,
La beauté sur les fronts, dans les cœurs la pensée,
Et qui ferait — c'est là son fruit le plus certain —
D'Apollon un bossu, de Voltaire un crétin !
Travail mauvais qui prend l'âge tendre en sa serre,
Qui produit la richesse en créant la misère,
Qui se sert d'un enfant ainsi que d'un outil !
Progrès dont on demande : « Où va-t-il ? Que veut-il ? »
Qui brise la jeunesse en fleur ! qui donne, en somme,
Une âme à la machine et la retire à l'homme !
Que ce travail, haï des mères, soit maudit !
Maudit comme le vice où l'on s'abâtardit,
Maudit comme l'opprobre et comme le blasphème !
Ô Dieu ! qu'il soit maudit au nom du travail même,

Au nom du vrai travail, saint, fécond, généreux,
 Qui fait le peuple libre et qui rend l'homme heureux ! »

Victor Hugo, *Les Contemplations*, 1838

We can notice that this poem was written in the XIX century, in 1838, during the Industrial Revolution so we could say that this is the moment when people start writing, talking, and taking decisions to fight against child labour. It is also in that period that we start having documents and statistics that explain how many children work, how old they are and where they work.

In England (the leader of the Industrial Revolution), the percentage of children at work in 1850 was 5% and in 1874 it was 14%. This increase is due to the economic crisis: that means that it wasn't the natural evolution since the statistics also show that there was 13,3% in 1834 and 5% in 1850, but we can notice in the following table that despite this increase from 1850 to 1874, the number of children under 15 years old at work decreased between 1851 and 1881 whereas the number of children over 15 increased. Even more, in Textiles and dyeing the number of females, even over 15, decreased during those years.

Table 1: Child Employment, 1851-1881²

Industry & Age Cohort	1851	1861	1871	1881
Mining				
Males under 15	37,300	45,100	43,100	30,400
Females under 15	1,400	500	900	500
Males 15-20	50,100	65,300	74,900	87,300
Females over 15	5,400	4,900	5,300	5,700
Total under 15 as % of work force	13%	12%	10%	6%
Textiles and Dyeing				
Males under 15	93,800	80,700	78,500	58,900
Females under 15	147,700	115,700	119,800	82,600
Males 15-20	92,600	92,600	90,500	93,200
Females over 15	780,900	739,300	729,700	699,900
Total under 15 as % of work force	15%	19%	14%	11%

As we can also see, and as we said, there is a huge difference between 1850 and 1880 referring to ages: the number of children at work decreases much faster when referring to children under 15 years old than over 15.
 ¿ Why did the number of children at work decrease?

In the USA, one child over six younger than 16 years old was working in 1880.

In France, *La Statistique générale de la France* from 1840 shows that there were 130 000 children younger than 13 years old who were working in factories with more than 10 people ; in 1850, 20% of the people working in the mines in Carmaux are children; in 1840, 12% of the people working in the Industry are children.

² Booth (1886, 353-399)

But we can't forget that child labour exists since the Antiquity, when children worked in their own houses or by doing some agricultural tasks.

However during the Industrial revolution, working becomes a very hard and dangerous activity: they were small enough to fit between tight fitting machinery that adults couldn't get between.

So, the consequences of this work were very important: tuberculosis, asthma, rachitic... There were many accidents in the factories, explosions in many mines and that causes too many deaths and injured children. As a consequence, people start paying attention to this fact, which explains the evolution of child labour in England during the XIX century.

For instance, the records of the Felling **Colliery disaster** show that many of the victims of the explosion were children. That's why the average age of the people killed was so small. Look at the chart below:

Felling Colliery Disaster				
Employed as	Number killed	Average age	Oldest	Youngest
Hewer	34	35	65	20
Putter	28	17	23	10
Waggon Driver	5	12	14	10
Trapper	14	14	30	8*

All these problems make the situation really tough; that's why some decisions have to be taken:

- UK: in 1833, the **Factory Act** is published which forbids work labour for children under 9 years old in the textile industry. Moreover, the working time will depend on the age of children (10 hours for 9 to 14 years old, 12 hours for 14 to 18 years old); however, we have to wait until 1853 to see this law generalized to any kind of industry.

- France: in 1841, a law that establishes that children have to be 8 years old or more to work is published. It also forbids work at night, it regulates the working time and it makes school compulsory until 12 years old. However this law seems not to be effective.

In 1874, another law is published: children must be 12 or more to be allowed to work.

- USA: in 1843, some States (for instance, Connecticut or Massachusetts) forbid more than 10 hours of work per day.

But the radical change, in France for example, will be the compulsory school in 1880-1881, by Jules Ferray.

After having analyzed what child labour looked like during the Industrial Revolution, we wonder what it has become nowadays.

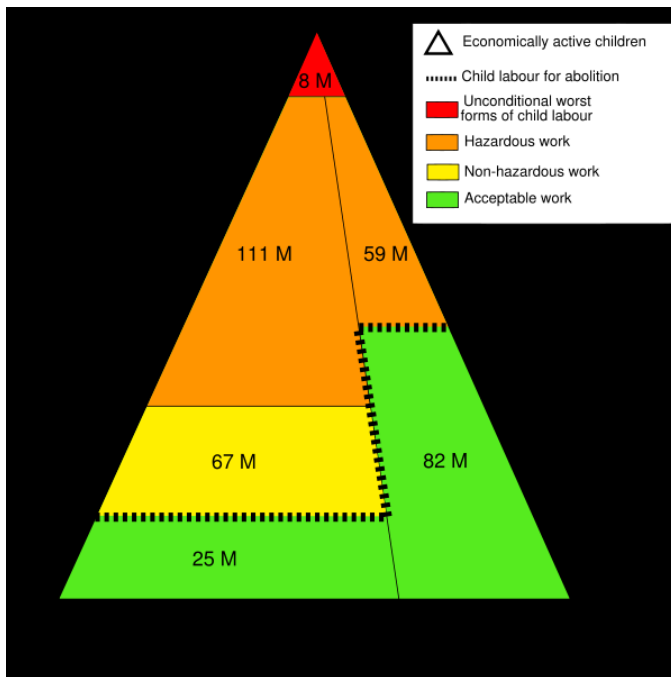
b) Child labour nowadays

Child labour nowadays is analyzed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which belongs to the United Nations.

The ILO says that in developed countries, only 3% of the children work.

However, the situation is very different in other countries. Current statistics are much better, especially thanks to the United Nations, and that's why we have very detailed data about these facts. But they are still only estimations, since it is difficult to know about all kinds of working activities, especially when talking about children that work in their own homes.

In 2000, 23% of the children from 5 to 17 years old were working (351, 7 million people), according to the ILO.

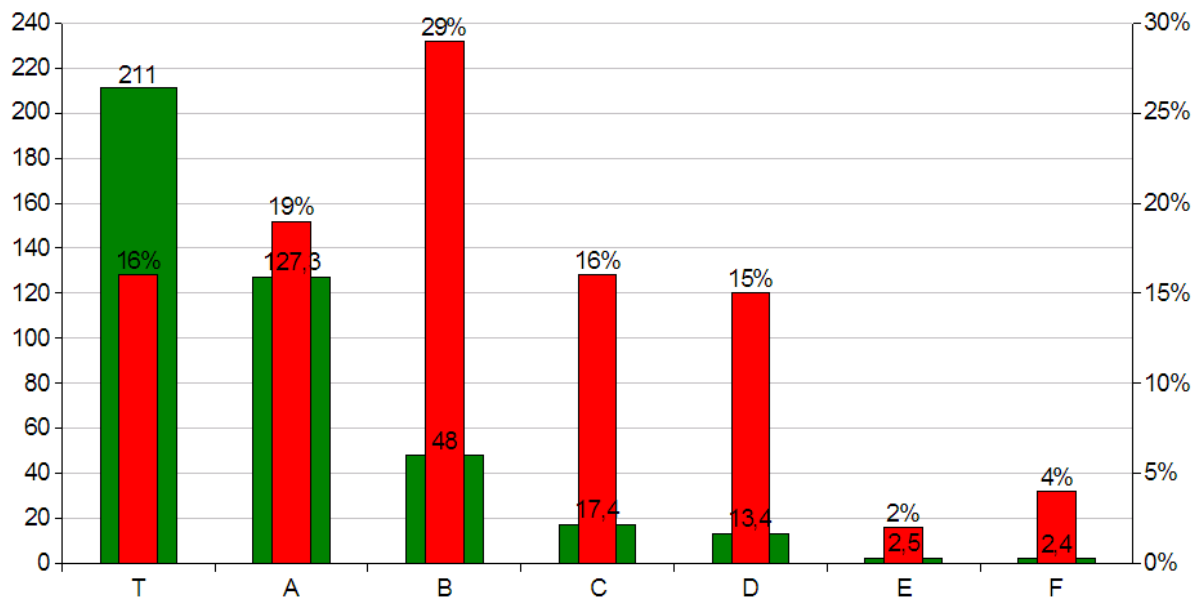


Different kinds of child labour³

If we look to this picture, we notice that only 107 million children are doing an acceptable work which represents only 30%. That means that 70% of children are doing some kind of work that should be abolished for being unacceptable.

67 million children are doing a non-hazardous work that should be abolished, though; 170 million children are doing a hazardous work and 8 million children are submitted to the unconditional worst forms of child labour.

But we have to take a look at what the distribution around the world is, to understand the situation:



Distribution of child labour per region, for children aged 5-14 years old³

³ OIT, *Un avenir sans travail des enfants*, Rapport global du directeur général, Conférence internationale du travail, 90^e session, Bureau international du travail, Genève, 2002 (ISBN 92-2-212416-2)

- T = Total
- A = Asia / Pacific
- B = Sub- Saharan Africa
- C = Latin America / Carribeans
- D = Middle East / North Africa
- E = Developed economies
- F = Transition economies.

The green column (left axis) shows the number in millions of children 5 to 14 economically active, while the red column (right axis) shows the percentage among children the same age in this region.

This information is very interesting because it makes it easier to understand how big the difference is between Developed economies (where child labour represents 2% of the total children) and Sub-Saharan Africa, where almost half of the children work. But it is also interesting because we always think that child labour is something that doesn't happen in developed economies, and that makes us understand that we are wrong and that, even if it's a low percentage, 2% of the children in those countries work.

Having analyzed what the situation has been through History and what the situation is nowadays, we can now continue to respond to our problem.

II- Companies projects to help children:

a) The situation in today's world: more and more projects...

1. Global Vision:

If we take a general overview to the situation nowadays in the world, we can see that multinational companies increase their actions in order to help children as the years go on.

We can analyze where this help come from, by studying Covalence, S.A. statistics, which tracks the ethical reputation of multinationals by sourcing online information.

As far as children are concerned, we notice that food and beverages are the sector that has helped children the most by taking 1125 actions, whereas construction and materials took only 38 actions from 2002 to 2008. However, Food and Beverages were also the reason of many problems, since there are 706 articles which explain how this sector caused damages to children.

That's why we have to look to rates which show that Insurance was the most helpful sector and chemicals the less one.

But if we want to know multinationals actions, we have to look at brands by themselves.

The results that we obtain are:

- Many companies have developed many programs in order to help children and these actions are more important than the number of actions causing a problem to children. Some examples of this are: Vodafone, Henkel, Harley- Davidson, Fiat, Lufthansa...
- Many other companies have been the origin of many problems for children, in the same way they have helped them, so the rate is 0,00: Allianz, Oracle, Repsol YPF...
- Many companies have caused more damages than profits so their rate is even negative: Yahoo, Shell, Bayer, Inditex, Google, Nestlé, Pfizer, Monsanto...

So, what conclusion can we get from all those statistics?

On the one hand, we can say that some progress is being made by some companies which sponsor many societies that help children, by donating money, goods or services and offering education or food.

On the other hand, we have to admit that other companies are very far from helping children since their products are unhealthy or dangerous for children, because they are using goods that belong to other countries causing poverty so that school is not an option anymore for those children, because they refuse selling products which are very important for children just because they wouldn't make so many benefits.

Any way, this is only a global vision of the situation, it only shows that ethical actions are more and more important, but if we really want to know what the concrete actions taken are, we should look at concrete examples.

2. Some specific actions:

We will focus on two examples: two companies that have undertaken projects in order to help children. That way, it will be easier to explain what projects look like. If we looked to all projects at the same time, it would be too general, not precise enough so it wouldn't help us to understand how projects contribute to social stability.

- *BBVA: Niños adelante*

In Mexico:

The program « Niños adelante » has been called « Por los que se quedan » (For the ones who stay here) in Mexico. It is based in scholarships that are given to some families to promote education so that students don't have to leave the country. This should help to the development of Mexico, since one of the biggest problems in these countries is that students are forced to leave the country in order to get a better education and children that stay there don't have enough money to pursue their studies, so they start working. As a consequence, most of the people are unqualified which makes the development very tough.

Estado	Número promedio de integrantes por familia	Promedio de ingresos mensuales por familia	% que la beca representa en el ingreso familiar \$1,000
Edo. México	5	\$4,086.05	24.4%
Guanajuato	5	\$3,689.96	27.1%
Jalisco	5.1	\$4,023.78	24.8%
Michoacán	5.1	\$3,381.28	29.5%
Morelos	4.6	\$3,821.96	26.1%
Nayarit	4.8	\$3,374.54	29.6%
Puebla	5	\$2,927.65	34.1%
San Luis Potosí	5.1	\$2,922.18	34.2%
Veracruz	4.2	\$3,316.47	30.1%
Zacatecas	5.1	\$2,506.50	39.8%
TOTAL	4.9	\$3,405.03	29.3%

Help given by the program « Niños adelante »⁴

- *L'Oréal*

L'Oréal celebrates 100 years and reaffirms its commitment to corporate responsibility by taking many actions that will help the most vulnerable communities. One of the most important aims is helping children.

For instance, in Brazil, L'Oréal is supporting the creation of a school that will train underprivileged youth in preparation for careers in the beauty industry.

We should also pay attention to L'Oréal's actions in France, since this is the country of origin of this brand. In that country, the citizens' projects are linked under the name "Première chance" and aim to offer opportunities to young people from underprivileged backgrounds or communities by providing them with the tools and knowledge to develop independent professional projects.

In Germany, the program is called "Starting School with Happiness," and aims to help the poorest children in a developed country by giving them a back-to-school kit, so that they have everything they need in order to pursue their studies.

In Morocco, the program tries to help young girls that want to integrate the school system, with support from the National Institute for Solidarity for Women in Need (INSAF), in a country where girls don't always have the same opportunities than boys.

All these projects try to help children in very different situations: some of them live in completely developed countries, the others live in undeveloped ones; some of them don't have money to go to school, the others have enough money but they don't have the opportunity.

⁴ http://www.ninosadelante.com/na/fileadmin/img_maquetas/home/accionsocial.pdf

<http://www.ninosadelante.com/na/index.php?id=30>

We also notice that programs are different if we compare the one from BBVA and the one from L'Oréal: BBVA thinks globally, L'Oréal thinks locally.

BBVA helps families from the middle class in Mexico, trying to make their children stay and hoping that these donations will help the whole country, since these children will be tomorrow's adults and they are the ones that will help in order to achieve the development of their country.

L'Oréal helps the most needed children, wherever they are and whatever the help represents in the future, focusing on very specific areas.

b) ...More and more ethical? Benefits of these projects

After having given some examples of responsible projects undertaken by multinational companies, there's something that we all wonder: what are the benefits of those projects?

It is true that, as we read these actions, we all think that this is a very ethical action and that companies only do that in order to help vulnerable children, but is it the truth?

1. Business benefits of corporate social responsibility

First of all, the very first benefit for a company by introducing corporate social responsibility in its business is the reputation that this company will have. In order to enjoy this benefit, it is imperative that the company advertises the activity that it has undertaken, but that is usually not a problem. As people get increasingly interested in responsible companies, such activities will differentiate brands.

As a consequence:

- Customers will buy more from a social responsible company, so there will be more sales.
- Suppliers will deal more with social responsible companies so the company will have more options.
- Employees will prefer working for a social responsible company so there will be less costs (employees won't leave the company and they won't ask for so high wages).

Secondly, we have to say that a company that invests in green technology will have lower costs by not wasting so much electricity, or water or any other good. This wouldn't work when we talk about projects that have to see with children, though.

Thirdly, corporate social responsibility is about risk management. Nowadays, any company can be destroyed when people know about corruption, environmental impact or child labour in that company so, why taking that risk when building up a company is so difficult? As an example of this idea, we should just talk about Nike: this is a huge company, with huge sales and that everyone in the world knows. However, when the story about children exploitation at work came out, every body was deeply concerned and, even if that happened in 1996, everybody remembers this story. The company continues to operate, since it was that big, but it was very hard for it to show a different picture of itself.

Finally, Corporations are keen to avoid interference in their business through [taxation](#) or [regulations](#).

All those ideas show that corporate social responsibility may help communities, but it is also the origin of many benefits for companies. This doesn't mean that companies shouldn't help anymore, since help is always welcome, it only means that we have to be conscious of that fact: they don't help only to make some communities happier.

2. Benefits for society

In this part, we will not focus on benefits for children, who are the main actors of this paper, but on society in general because there is not so much information about the benefits of CSR in our society, even if the main goal of CSR (at least, that's the way it should be) is helping our society and our environment.

In 2003, UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) hold a conference on "Corporate Social Responsibility and Development: Towards a New Agenda?"⁵. In this conference Monina Wong, from

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http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/httpNetITFrame?ReadForm&parentunid=3B9E23F717B84550C1256E23004DAB40&parentdoctype=eventauxiliarypage&netitpath=http://www.unrisd.org/unpublished/_tbs_/confsum/content.htm

Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (Hong Kong) made a speech about “What Difference does CSR make to development?”.

In her speech, Monina Wong focused on the situation in China and she tried to answer to a difficult question, which is not answered very often: Do CSR initiatives improve labour standards in China?

Firstly, the speaker said that labour standards had been improved in China during the last years. As she said, in the 90’s the only law that existed was an old labour law that could only be applied to state-owned enterprises and that didn’t give any safety at all. Thanks to NGOs and to TNC buyers, labour standards have been improved, at least a little bit, in the toy industry. However, as Minona Wong said, the positive impact of CSR in China depends on the industry and the economic sector. The private sector and the non-export-oriented sector have even less incentive to comply with labour standards. The reasons of that are:

- the supply of power is over abundant
- the non regulation of labour market
- the absence of freedom of association and collective bargaining

Another speaker, David Murphy (New Academy of Business, United Kingdom), talked about “Responsible Business Practice and Development: Perspectives from recent research by the New Academy of Business”. In this speech, he talked about Gender and Codes of conduct in Central America and the conclusions of the study were that even if Codes of Conduct exist, they are not being implemented properly so labour standards can not be improved.

David Murphy emphasized in the necessary facts to make these Codes of Conduct effective:

- emphasizing on priorities of women
- making workers know about the code of conduct
- creating local organizations trusted by workers
- suppliers must have the will of implementing codes, so retailers have to provide real incentives

Obviously, even if companies may take this kind of actions for their own interest, children are helped by corporate social responsibility so there are also benefits for them.

With all these programs, children receive a better education, or a better health system.

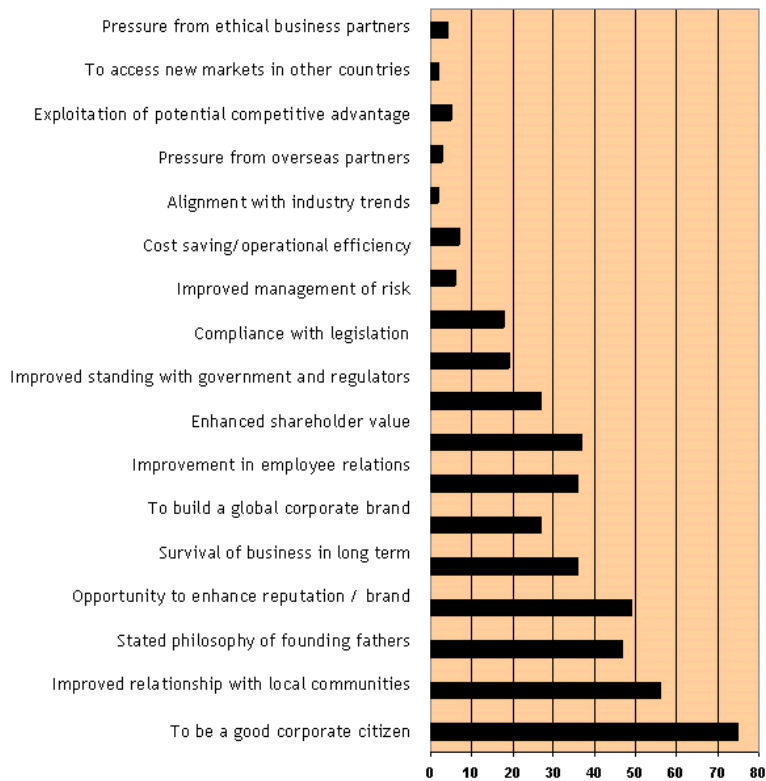
Besides, there are not only programs which are directly linked to children, but also other programs which will have a good repercussion on them. For instance, helping young mothers in order to teach them how to take care of their children, or how to find a job that will make them having enough money to feed their children will have benefits for children.

So it is clear that all this corporate socially responsible actions have huge benefits on children, even if companies don’t always choose the better areas to work. But trying to help is always something that we have to recognize.

3. Drivers of CSR

It is difficult to tell whether a company undertakes socially responsible activities in order to obtain some benefits for itself or for the community.

However, a survey was made in India that shows that sometimes we judge many companies too quickly. The Corporate Social Responsibility Survey 2002–India, conducted jointly by the United Nations Development Programme, British Council, Confederation of Indian Industry and [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), covering 19 industry sectors reveals that this interest is growing as more and more companies in India are keen to project themselves as good corporate citizens. That means that being good corporate citizens is the main driver for companies in order to take some actions. It is true that this driver is very linked, as we said before, with the reputation but the survey showed that the economic impact that responsible actions can have was not the most important driver.



Drivers of CSR⁶

There are two problems to these results:

- Can we be sure that companies were honest when answering to these questions? As we said, companies pay a lot of attention to what people think about them, so they could have answered what people want to hear. This might be wrong, but we can't be completely sure about these results.
- Can we make an extension of this information to the rest of the world? We can't be sure about that since every country has a different culture that makes companies taking some decisions instead of other ones.

However, if we just analyze this Survey, without wondering whether it is credible or not, what we can definitely conclude is that being good corporate citizens is an important matter for today's companies.

III- Child labour in multinational companies

a) Fast Facts

There are many ways to make children work: prostitution, factory work, mining... However, in this project we will focus on child labour for multinational companies. This seems to eliminate the worst labours, since we won't talk about prostitution, or drugs traffic, but there still are many works which are exploitive and with very dangerous consequences for children.

Besides, according to the ILO, worst forms of labour are "all forms of or practices similar to slavery, the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, use or procurement of children for prostitution or pornographic purposes, forced or compulsory recruitment of children for armed conflicts, using children in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs, and work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children"⁷. So although if it is true that multinationals don't use children for pornographic purposes, armed conflicts, or drugs traffic, we can't deny that they might use them in a way that may harm

⁶ Corporate Social Responsibility Survey 2002 – India (United Nations Development Programme, British Council, CII, PriceWaterHouseCoopers)

⁷ Convention No.182, ILO, 1999

their health, safety or morals. Again, we have to repeat that not all multinationals do that and, hopefully, most of them have very precise and concrete ethical codes that make it impossible to work with children. However, some of them do and that's why we are talking about it.

According to [UNICEF](#), there are estimated 158 million children aged 5 to 14 in child labours worldwide, excluding child domestic labour.

The main points of child labour are the following:

"WHO WORKS AND WHERE"⁸

Most of the world's estimated 250 million working children are 11 to 14 years old, but as many as 60 million are between ages 5 and 11.

Exact numbers are not known, but millions of girls work as domestic servants and unpaid household help and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The incidence of child labour is highest in Africa where 41 per cent of children 5 to 14 years old, are estimated to work, compared with 21 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While boys and girls who work in manufacturing export industries are often assumed to epitomize child workers, most children actually labour in the informal sector—doing agricultural work, peddling wares in the streets or working as household servants.

At least 60 million children work under especially horrific circumstances—forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery, or into prostitution or pornography or participation in armed conflict.

At least 1 million children a year are enticed or forced into prostitution, part of a huge network of sexual exploitation that stretches from South-East Asia and the former Soviet bloc to Latin America.

Children are increasingly being exploited as pliable labour by drug traffickers in cities of Asia and Latin America.

In war-torn regions, tens of thousands of boys and girls are abducted or lured into militias or regular armies.

Asia, excluding Japan, has the highest number of economically active children (5–14 years of age) at 61 per cent, followed by Africa 32 per cent, and Latin America and the Caribbean 7 per cent."

b) Understanding with some examples

1. Nike⁹

In 1996, Life magazine published a scandal that touched everybody in every part of the world. This article was about children working in Nike factories in Pakistan, their wage being 0,60 \$/hour.

Everyone felt deeply concerned about this situation, Nike being a leader in the sports sector: many children were wearing Nike clothes or shoes, many children had Nike balls and all this had been made by other children who were exactly the same age.

2. GAP¹⁰

⁸ UNICEF, "Beyond child labour, affirming rights"

⁹ <http://web.mit.edu/ipc/publications/pdf/02-007.pdf>

¹⁰ [http:// www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/28/ethicalbusiness.retail](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/28/ethicalbusiness.retail)

Another example of this phenomenon happened in 2007, when The Observer (UK) talks about child labour in GAP's factories.

Dan McDougall, writer in The Guardian, said: "Child workers, some as young as 10, have been found working in textile factories in conditions close to slavery to produce clothes that appeared destined for GAP kids". Children had been sold by their impoverished families and many of them were not paid for their work. Gap's reaction: "We appreciate that the media identified this subcontractor, and we acted swiftly in this situation," Gap spokesman Bill Chandler told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Under no circumstances is it acceptable for children to produce or work on garments." None of the products made in that factory were going to be sold, in response to that act.

3. Primark¹¹

After these scandals, many people thought that multinationals would take some actions about that, by eliminating child labour in their factories. However, 12 years later, another scandal appeared, this time in Primark, a very cheap British clothing store. Many children were working for this brand for 60p/day and the BBC Found out about it. These children were 8 years old, which is even younger than the ones that had been found in GAP's factories.

What was Primark's reaction? According to Primark, these children worked for illegal subcontractors and many of them were working at home.

This is something that makes things much more complicated. Even the ILO can't tell how many children are working at home. That's why its statistics can't be sure.

"Under no circumstances would Primark ever knowingly permit such activities, whether directly through its suppliers or through third party sub-contractors."

After this scandal, three Indian suppliers were fired because they used children to finish goods and Primark wrote a statement which explained what happened in these factories and what the company's philosophy is.

That shows that this is not something that happened once and that won't happen anymore. It is something that happened and that will happen in the future, if we don't take any actions against it.

c) Fighting against child labour

1. Companies: Johnson & Johnson

With all these scandals increasing and with consumers more and more concerned about child labour, many companies have become very strict with this issue and have adopted policies which are very restrictive.

As an example, we will show Johnson & Johnson's policy.

Johnson & Johnson produces health care products that are not only in many families but also in hospitals, for instance.

Its policy towards child labour is very clear as it appears in the Purchase order terms and conditions (December 23, 2004)¹²:

"In the manufacture of the goods or delivery of the deliverables which are the subject of the PO, Supplier shall employ young persons only as permitted by the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons and shall permit representatives of Buyer to enter Supplier's premises at any reasonable time to inspect relevant employment, health and safety records and to observe the manufacturing process. Supplier

¹¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7468927.stm

¹² <http://www.jnj.com/wps/wcm/connect/5d86b0004ae70e94bc2cfc0f0a50cff8/purchase-order-terms-conditions.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

shall maintain the records necessary to demonstrate compliance with such Policy on the Employment of Young Persons and shall provide to Buyer a written certification of such compliance, if requested. If Supplier shall fail to comply with this provision, then Buyer shall have the right to rescind in whole or in part any PO without penalty."

This shows that suppliers have to follow the same policy than the company. This is probably to avoid problems like the ones in Nike, Gap or Primark where, even if the company hadn't employed children, suppliers had done it.

However, the question now is: and what is the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young People? From this Purchase order we can access to that Policy, that explains clearly, what the restrictions are.

Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons¹³

This policy applies to the employment of persons under the age of 18 ("young persons") in the manufacture of any product, or any component of a product, by or for Johnson & Johnson or any of its affiliates worldwide.

Age, Health & Safety. No person under the age of 16 shall be employed. No person between the ages of 16 and 18 shall be employed unless such employment is in compliance with the health, safety and morals provisions of the International Labour Organization Convention 138 Concerning Minimum Age ("ILO Convention 138"), a summary of which is attached hereto.

Hours. No young person shall be required to work more than 48 hours of regularly scheduled time and 12 hours of overtime per week or more than six days per week.

Laws & Regulations. No young person shall be employed unless such employment is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations concerning age, hours, compensation, health and safety.

External Manufacturers. No manufacturer shall be engaged to manufacture any product, or any component of a product, for Johnson & Johnson or any of its affiliates worldwide unless such manufacturer has entered into an enforceable written agreement to comply with this policy, submit to periodic compliance inspections, maintain the records necessary to demonstrate compliance and provide annual certifications of compliance. If any such manufacturer shall be found to be in breach of such agreement, the manufacturer's engagement shall be terminated.

Exceptions & Interpretations. Upon good cause shown in a specific situation, an exception to the Age and Hours (but not Health & Safety) provisions of this policy may be granted by the responsible Executive Committee Member with the concurrence of the Vice President, Administration, if such exception is consistent with ILO Convention 138 and all applicable laws and regulations. (See attached summary of ILO convention 138.) Requests for definitive interpretations of this policy should be directed to the General Counsel.

NOTE. The Age provision of the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons is more restrictive than ILO Convention 138. The following summary is provided only as an explanatory supplement to the Health & Safety and Exceptions provisions of the Johnson & Johnson policy. For guidance on specific situations, please contact the Johnson & Johnson Law Department.

Summary of ILO Convention No. 138 Concerning Minimum Age

- 1.0 For work likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of the worker, the minimum age is 18; if there is adequate protection and training of the worker, then the minimum age for such work is 16. (No exception to this provision is available under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*
- 2.0 For work which is not likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of the worker, the minimum age is 14. (Requires an exception under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*
- 3.0 For light work which is (a) not likely to be harmful to the health or development of the worker, and (b) not such as to prejudice his/her attendance at school or participation in vocational training, the minimum age is 12. (Requires an exception under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*

So we can read that minimum age in order to work in Johnson & Johnson or in order to work for one of its suppliers is higher than the one that Convention No.138 determines.

¹³ http://www.ap.jnj.com/gppidocs/emp_policy_v1.0.htm

This kind of policies, which appear not only in Johnson & Johnson but also in many other companies are a way to fight against child labour, since we are talking about huge companies, so a lot of people must work for them. Then, the problem is that companies don't only have to make official this kind of policies, but also real: they have to respect them at any time.

Companies are the better way to fight against this phenomenon, but it is not always the most used one. That's why other actors try to help in this fight. The most active ones are IO's or NGO's.

2. International Organizations

When we talk about Child labour and about IO's, we talk about the ILO: the International Labour Organization. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote decent work throughout the world. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

Evidence points out to a strong link between household poverty and child labour, and child labour perpetuates poverty across generations by keeping poor children out of school and limiting their perspective for upward social mobility. This lowering of human capital has been linked to slow economic growth and social development. A recent ILO study has shown that eliminating child labour in transition and developing economies could generate economic benefits nearly seven times greater than the costs, mostly associated with investment in better school and social services¹⁴.

That's why the ILO has been fighting against child labour through two main conventions, although there also were many recommendations:

- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138): According to article 1, this conventions aims 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 or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons."

This fundamental convention sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 (16 under certain strict conditions). It provides for the possibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.

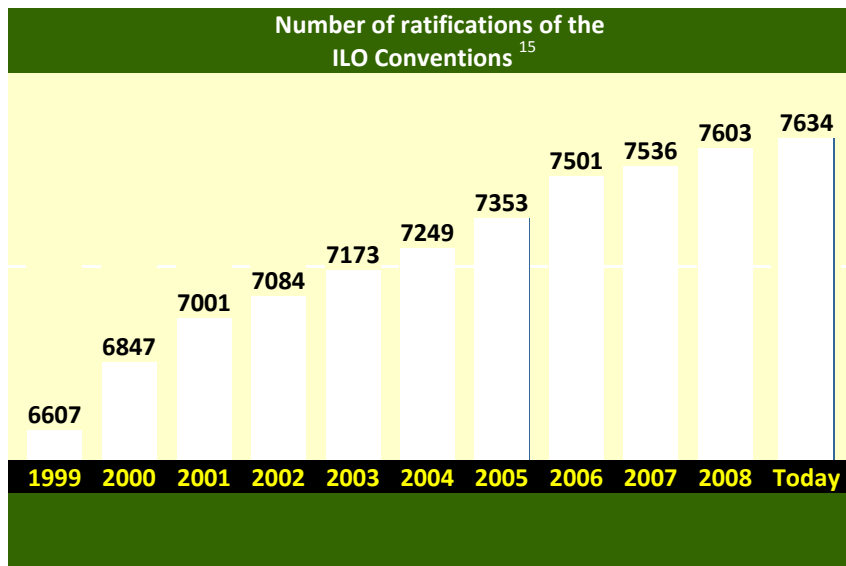
- Worst forms of child labour convention, 1999 (No.182): This convention has been ratified by 171 countries from all over the world. This fundamental convention defines as a "child" a person under 18 years of age. It requires ratifying states to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; child prostitution and pornography; using children for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; and work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. The convention requires ratifying states to provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration. It also requires states to ensure access to free basic education and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training for children removed from the worst forms of child labour.

These two conventions are the latest ones. After that, the ILO only published some recommendations but not any other convention.

This diagram shows the evolution of ratifications of conventions on international labour standards by countries belonging to the United Nations:



¹⁴ ILO: *Investing in Every Child: An economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour* (Geneva, IPEC, 2004), pp. 4-5



As we notice, more and more countries ratify these conventions, among which are No. 138 and 182.

The ILO has also created a programme called International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)¹⁶ in 1992. Its goal is eliminating child labour by dealing the problem and promoting a movement to combat it.

IPEC programme has operations in 88 countries all over the world and its actions are guided by the principles of Conventions No.138 and No. 182.

Many activities have been developed by this programme, such as traditional country programmes, campaigns, or capacity-building programmes.

As an example, in the Dominican Republic, IPEC launched a programme called Dominican Republic National Time Bound Programme in 2002. This was a country where such an action was essential since 75% of population lives in poverty and it looked for an agreement between enterprises and the “campesinos” organisations, to make sure that children went to school instead of working. The programme also made possible the creation of after-school-kid’s clubs (Salas de Tareas) that more than 1400 children attended¹⁷.

Besides the International Labour Organization, we could also talk about UNICEF (The United Nations Children’s Found, 1946) which is an organization that tries to protect children and which cares about children’s well-being, from all over the world.

Concerning child labour, UNICEF has also tried to take some actions, protecting children from violence, abuse and exploitation at work.

Besides, UNICEF supports the International Child Rights Information Network, which is a global network that promotes child rights. This organization made possible the United Nations on the Rights of the Child that protects children from economic exploitation and dangerous labour (art. 32).

1. NGO's

Talking about NGO's could mean writing another whole paper, since there are many NGO's which try to help children and protect them from child labour.

However, we will focus on a single NGO, not because it is the most important one, but because if we talk about all of them we will just get general information and it won't allow us to take a step forward in this paper, whereas if we select an NGO we will have detailed information that we can generalize to other ones.

¹⁵ <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-lastyearratif.cfm?Lang=EN>

¹⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/programme/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁷

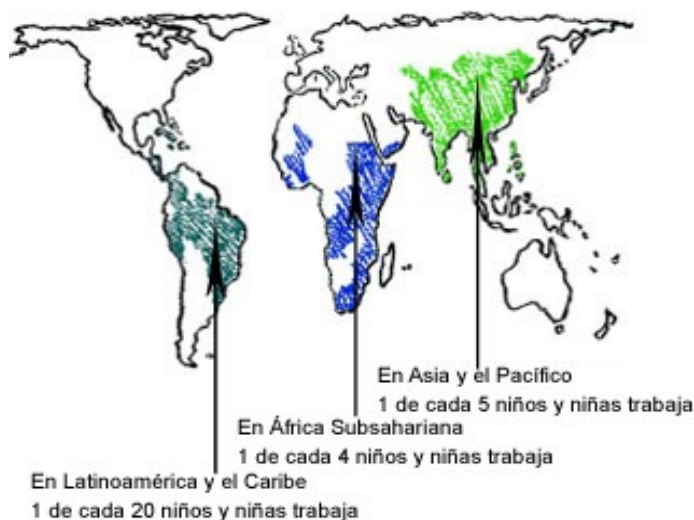
http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Video_News_Release/lang--en/WCMS_112437/index.htm

We have chosen “Save the children”, an NGO that works to ensure every child's rights. Save the Children was created 90 years ago and there are both employees and volunteers that mostly work with the money that donators give to the organization. Their main activities are: helping children to survive beyond the age of five, helping orphans, helping children to have a basic education and also helping the poorest children in developed countries.

Save the children also works to fight against child labour: they estimate that 8, 4 million children are trapped in the worst forms of child labour. They support projects that tackle child labour and its root causes in 15 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. They work at various levels, through education programmes and poverty reduction schemes and they've published guidance for the private sector.

One of the most important programs to fight child labour was the “Eye To Eye Project”¹⁸ which was a partnership between Save the Children UK and Save the Children Spain, and which received a financial aid from the European Commission.

By taking a look to the parts of the world that are the most touched by child labour, Save the Children chose three countries where they developed the project: Bolivia, Pakistan and India.



Save the Children gave cameras to working children (market work, carpet weaving and child domestic work) in Bolivia, Pakistan and India and they taught them how to use these cameras. After that, children had to take pictures of their day-to-day lives. At first, children were quite nervous because they didn't know how to use cameras but they learned very quickly and they achieved their goal. They showed their friends, their school, their work and they described their own pictures. What were these pictures for? After having taken these pictures, they were used by Save The Children UK and Spain by creating stimulating resources for secondary teachers. This project developed from April 2006 to March 2009 and, even if now it should be finished, it has been extended during the next school year.

Everyone got involved in the project: schools, teachers, students and, of course, working children. In Spain, there was even a working boy that went to a school to talk about his experience.

This is one of the projects that Save the Children has carried, but not the only one. Through its action, NGOs try to fight child labour not only by helping these children but also by talking to big organization, to companies and to governments which is the only way to help all the children.

¹⁸ <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/english.htm>



4. Individuals

It is more difficult to fight against child labour when you are alone. That's true, unless you are such an influential person that your thoughts and your actions are being listened and followed all over the world. That's what happens to Michael Moore, who decided to make a film, *The Big One*, about the world that results from globalization. To describe that, he uses an example, the more relevant one: he talks about Nike.

Moore informs us that Nike does not make its sneakers in the U.S.A. anymore, that all shoes are manufactured in Indonesia by teenage girls, who get about four dollars a day to do their job. When Moore asks Knight why Nike doesn't allow Americans to make their shoes, Knight starts laughing uncontrollably. Moore asks that because Nike is the most profitable sneakers company, so its decisions might be followed by many other companies. After a while, Knight finally says, 'Americans don't want to make shoes.' Then he continues his laughing.

It's obvious Knight's just mugging up to Moore's celebrity and his camera. Moore, of course, knows it, and Moore makes strong comic use of this shallowness. But it's also obvious that Knight knows what he's doing. He doesn't answer any of Moore's questions, offers little advice, and shows us only one thing: that people will do anything to be in the movies. And as an answer to the questions Moore poses throughout the film, this moment makes you think that, if nothing else, many of the other top executives are not too far behind Knight in their reasons.

As we said, Michael Moore has become a very influential person in our society. Through his actions against the American Government, or very important American Institutions, he has been able to change some things. So what were the consequences of this particular film? In a stunning announcement on May 12(1998), Phil Knight, CEO of Nike, declared that the minimum age of footwear factory workers in Indonesia would be raised to 18 years of age. The decision changes a history of child labour in Indonesia, where, according to watchdog groups, factory workers have been found as young as twelve years old¹⁹.

However, what did this promise mean? An article published in 2001 showed that this promise hadn't been kept and, even worse, in order to keep children away from the cameras children were working in even more dangerous conditions. That shows that even after a huge scandal as the one in Nike, some companies don't pay attention to child labour as far as they can get very big benefits²⁰.

¹⁹ <http://www.michaelmoore.com/dogeatdogfilms/nikerelease.html>

²⁰ <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/sweatshops/nike/stillwaiting.html>

Conclusion:

To conclude, we can say that child labour is still a reality: it exists, it has always existed and it will still exist if we don't all take strong actions and if we don't feel concerned about the problem.

We have to understand that the problem starts with consumers: if we buy products because they are quite cheaper without trying to understand how we get this price, then companies won't do anything about it.

Hopefully, our society is changing, we ask for more and more ethical products, environmentally and socially friendly products, and that's why companies are taking more and more actions to help children.

So we can be proud of that, but we still have to change many things and the abolition of child labour is imperative to make development and human rights possible.

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- IPEC: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/lang--en/index.htm>
- Minimum Age Convention (No.138) : <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C138>
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UNICEF: www.unicef.org

- Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse:
http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html
- CRIN: www.crin.org

Save The Children: www.savethechildren.org

- Eye to Eye Project: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/english.htm>

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Problem: Are companies helping children through their corporate social responsibility or are they exploiting them through child labour?

Introduction:

Nowadays, corporate social responsibility is a common term when talking about multinational companies. By corporate social responsibility, we mean “a commitment to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of our workforce and their families as well as the local community at large”²¹.

So, by undertaking corporate social responsibility, companies take actions that can be either environmentally or socially friendly.

However, on the other hand, enterprises are often criticized because, with their activities, they are causing damages on our society, on the environment, on workers and this happens also in companies that spend a lot of money on social responsibility.

This is the paradigm that we want to study in this paper, by focusing only in a very specific sector: children.

The problem that we are working on makes reference to two different aspects:

- The fact that companies, in order to improve their social responsibility, help in many ways children through education, health, or any other kind of activities, which help them to live longer and better.

- The fact that many companies, in order to increase their benefits, accept children labour, whatever their age is and whatever the labour conditions are.

In order to give a definition of what child labour is, we could say that Child labour refers to the employment of **children** at regular and sustained **labour**. 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.

So, what we are wondering is: are multinational companies helping children by achieving huge projects that focus on them or are they hurting them since in many countries they have to work for these enterprises?

To answer to that question, we will first take a look to the evolution of child labour through History in order to analyze whether child labour is something specific to multinational companies or something that already existed and that still exists in many other activities. Then, we will study what kind of projects companies are trying to achieve, where do they take actions, for what kind of children they do it. Finally, we will focus on how companies accept or not child labour in their own factories or in their suppliers' ones and what actions have been taken to fight against child labour.

All this should help us to conclude by answering our problem.

²¹ <http://www.nexeninc.com/Sustainability/glossary.asp>

IV- The evolution of child labour through history:

c) During the Industrial Revolution

Child labour is not a modern fact. In fact, we can say that this is something that has always been there, although it is nowadays when we try to take some actions against that.

If we take a look to some of the most important writers in Literature, we will find that Victor Hugo in Les Contemplations, had already written about this subject:

« Où vont tous ces enfants dont pas un seul ne rit ?
Ces doux êtres pensifs, que la fièvre maigrit ?
Ces filles de huit ans qu'on voit cheminer seules ?
Ils s'en vont travailler quinze heures sous des meules ;
Ils vont, de l'aube au soir, faire éternellement
Dans la même prison le même mouvement.
Accroupis sous les dents d'une machine sombre,
Monstre hideux qui mâche on ne sait quoi dans l'ombre,
Innocents dans un baigne, anges dans un enfer,
Ils travaillent. Tout est d'airain, tout est de fer.
Jamais on ne s'arrête et jamais on ne joue.
Aussi quelle pâleur ! la cendre est sur leur joue.
Il fait à peine jour, ils sont déjà bien las.
Ils ne comprennent rien à leur destin, hélas !
Ils semblent dire à Dieu : « Petits comme nous sommes,
« Notre père, voyez ce que nous font les hommes ! »
Ô servitude infâme imposée à l'enfant !
Rachitisme ! travail dont le souffle étouffant
Défait ce qu'a fait Dieu ; qui tue, œuvre insensée,
La beauté sur les fronts, dans les cœurs la pensée,
Et qui ferait — c'est là son fruit le plus certain —
D'Apollon un bossu, de Voltaire un crétin !
Travail mauvais qui prend l'âge tendre en sa serre,
Qui produit la richesse en créant la misère,
Qui se sert d'un enfant ainsi que d'un outil !
Progrès dont on demande : « Où va-t-il ? Que veut-il ? »
Qui brise la jeunesse en fleur ! qui donne, en somme,
Une âme à la machine et la retire à l'homme !
Que ce travail, haï des mères, soit maudit !

Maudit comme le vice où l'on s'abâtardit,
Maudit comme l'opprobre et comme le blasphème !
Ô Dieu ! qu'il soit maudit au nom du travail même,
Au nom du vrai travail, saint, fécond, généreux,
Qui fait le peuple libre et qui rend l'homme heureux ! »

Victor Hugo, *Les Contemplations*, 1838

We can notice that this poem was written in the XIX century, in 1838, during the Industrial Revolution so we could say that this is the moment when people start writing, talking, and taking decisions to fight against child labour. It is also in that period that we start having documents and statistics that explain how many children work, how old they are and where they work.

In England (the leader of the Industrial Revolution), the percentage of children at work in 1850 was 5% and in 1874 it was 14%. This increase is due to the economic crisis: that means that it wasn't the natural evolution since the statistics also show that there was 13,3% in 1834 and 5% in 1850, but we can notice in the following table that despite this increase from 1850 to 1874, the number of children under 15 years old at work decreased between 1851 and 1881 whereas the number of children over 15 increased. Even more, in Textiles and dyeing the number of females, even over 15, decreased during those years.

Table 1: Child Employment, 1851-1881²²

Industry & Age Cohort	1851	1861	1871	1881
Mining				
Males under 15	37,300	45,100	43,100	30,400
Females under 15	1,400	500	900	500
Males 15-20	50,100	65,300	74,900	87,300
Females over 15	5,400	4,900	5,300	5,700
Total under 15 as % of work force	13%	12%	10%	6%
Textiles and Dyeing				
Males under 15	93,800	80,700	78,500	58,900
Females under 15	147,700	115,700	119,800	82,600
Males 15-20	92,600	92,600	90,500	93,200
Females over 15	780,900	739,300	729,700	699,900
Total under 15 as % of work force	15%	19%	14%	11%

As we can also see, and as we said, there is a huge difference between 1850 and 1880 referring to ages: the number of children at work decreases much faster when referring to children under 15 years old than over 15.

¿ Why did the number of children at work decrease?

In the USA, one child over six younger than 16 years old was working in 1880.

²² Booth (1886, 353-399)

In France, *La Statistique générale de la France* from 1840 shows that there were 130 000 children younger than 13 years old who were working in factories with more than 10 people ; in 1850, 20% of the people working in the mines in Carmaux are children; in 1840, 12% of the people working in the Industry are children.

But we can't forget that child labour exists since the Antiquity, when children worked in their own houses or by doing some agricultural tasks.

However during the Industrial revolution, working becomes a very hard and dangerous activity: they were small enough to fit between tight fitting machinery that adults couldn't get between.

So, the consequences of this work were very important: tuberculosis, asthma, rachitic... There were many accidents in the factories, explosions in many mines and that causes too many deaths and injured children. As a consequence, people start paying attention to this fact, which explains the evolution of child labour in England during the XIX century.

For instance, the records of the Felling [Colliery disaster](#) show that many of the victims of the explosion were children. That's why the average age of the people killed was so small. Look at the chart below:

Felling Colliery Disaster				
Employed as	Number killed	Average age	Oldest	Youngest
Hewer	34	35	65	20
Putter	28	17	23	10
Waggon Driver	5	12	14	10
Trapper	14	14	30	8*

All these problems make the situation really tough; that's why some decisions have to be taken:

- UK: in 1833, the [Factory Act](#) is published which forbids work labour for children under 9 years old in the textile industry. Moreover, the working time will depend on the age of children (10 hours for 9 to 14 years old, 12 hours for 14 to 18 years old); however, we have to wait until 1853 to see this law generalized to any kind of industry.

- France: in 1841, a law that establishes that children have to be 8 years old or more to work is published. It also forbids work at night, it regulates the working time and it makes school compulsory until 12 years old. However this law seems not to be effective.

In 1874, another law is published: children must be 12 or more to be allowed to work.

- USA: in 1843, some States (for instance, Connecticut or Massachusetts) forbid more than 10 hours of work per day.

But the radical change, in France for example, will be the compulsory school in 1880-1881, by Jules Ferry.

After having analyzed what child labour looked like during the Industrial Revolution, we wonder what it has become nowadays.

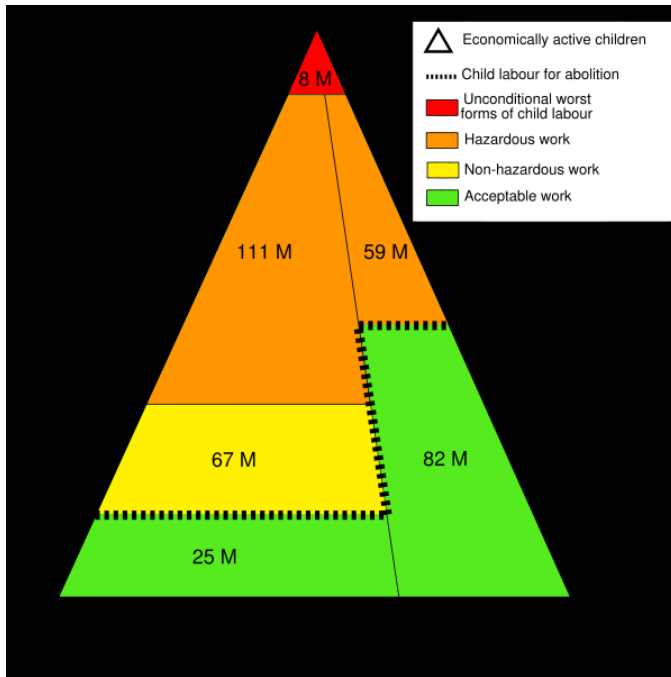
d) Child labour nowadays

Child labour nowadays is analyzed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which belongs to the United Nations.

The ILO says that in developed countries, only 3% of the children work.

However, the situation is very different in other countries. Current statistics are much better, especially thanks to the United Nations, and that's why we have very detailed data about these facts. But they are still only estimations, since it is difficult to know about all kinds of working activities, especially when talking about children that work in their own homes.

In 2000, 23% of the children from 5 to 17 years old were working (351, 7 million people), according to the ILO.

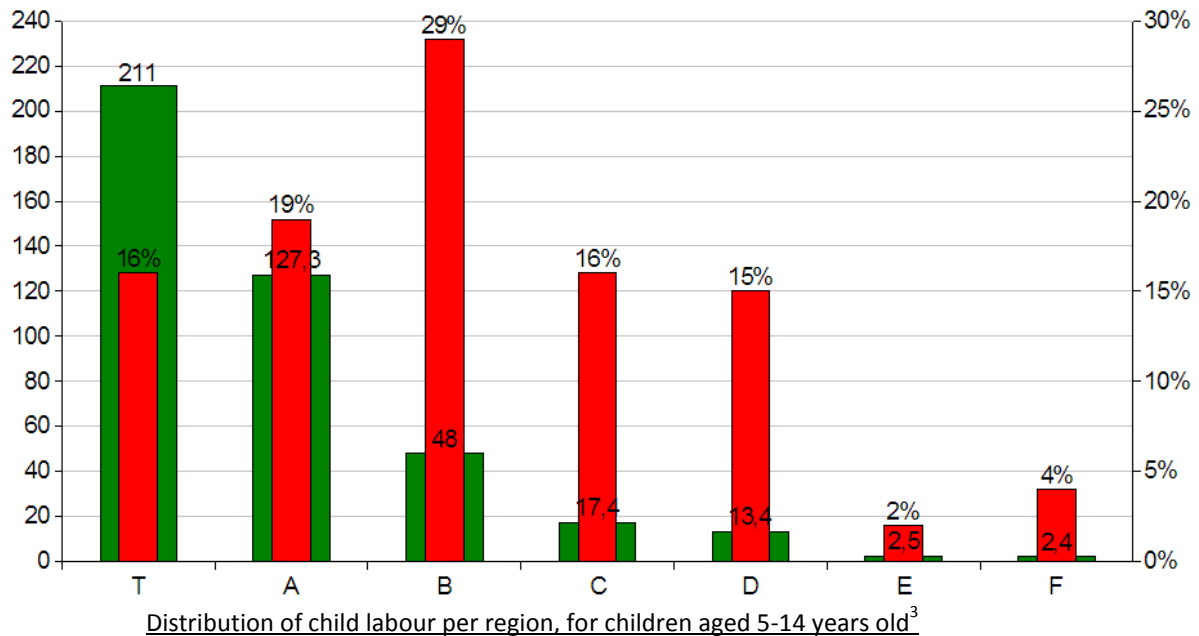


Different kinds of child labour²³

If we look to this picture, we notice that only 107 million children are doing an acceptable work which represents only 30%. That means that 70% of children are doing some kind of work that should be abolished for being unacceptable.

67 million children are doing a non-hazardous work that should be abolished, though; 170 million children are doing a hazardous work and 8 million children are submitted to the unconditional worst forms of child labour.

But we have to take a look at what the distribution around the world is, to understand the situation:



Distribution of child labour per region, for children aged 5-14 years old³

²³ OIT, *Un avenir sans travail des enfants*, Rapport global du directeur général, Conférence internationale du travail, 90^e session, Bureau international du travail, Genève, 2002 (ISBN 92-2-212416-2)

- T = Total
- A = Asia / Pacific
- B = Sub- Saharan Africa
- C = Latin America / Carribeans
- D = Middle East / North Africa
- E = Developed economies
- F = Transition economies.

The green column (left axis) shows the number in millions of children 5 to 14 economically active, while the red column (right axis) shows the percentage among children the same age in this region.

This information is very interesting because it makes it easier to understand how big the difference is between Developed economies (where child labour represents 2% of the total children) and Sub-Saharan Africa, where almost half of the children work. But it is also interesting because we always think that child labour is something that doesn't happen in developed economies, and that makes us understand that we are wrong and that, even if it's a low percentage, 2% of the children in those countries work.

Having analyzed what the situation has been through History and what the situation is nowadays, we can now continue to respond to our problem.

V- Companies projects to help children:

c) The situation in today's world: more and more projects...

3. Global Vision:

If we take a general overview to the situation nowadays in the world, we can see that multinational companies increase their actions in order to help children as the years go on.

We can analyze where this help come from, by studying Covalence, S.A. statistics, which tracks the ethical reputation of multinationals by sourcing online information.

As far as children are concerned, we notice that food and beverages are the sector that has helped children the most by taking 1125 actions, whereas construction and materials took only 38 actions from 2002 to 2008. However, Food and Beverages were also the reason of many problems, since there are 706 articles which explain how this sector caused damages to children.

That's why we have to look to rates which show that Insurance was the most helpful sector and chemicals the less one.

But if we want to know multinationals actions, we have to look at brands by themselves.

The results that we obtain are:

- Many companies have developed many programs in order to help children and these actions are more important than the number of actions causing a problem to children. Some examples of this are: Vodafone, Henkel, Harley- Davidson, Fiat, Lufthansa...
- Many other companies have been the origin of many problems for children, in the same way they have helped them, so the rate is 0,00: Allianz, Oracle, Repsol YPF...
- Many companies have caused more damages than profits so their rate is even negative: Yahoo, Shell, Bayer, Inditex, Google, Nestlé, Pfizer, Monsanto...

So, what conclusion can we get from all those statistics?

On the one hand, we can say that some progress is being made by some companies which sponsor many societies that help children, by donating money, goods or services and offering education or food.

On the other hand, we have to admit that other companies are very far from helping children since their products are unhealthy or dangerous for children, because they are using goods that belong to other countries causing poverty so that school is not an option anymore for those children, because they refuse selling products which are very important for children just because they wouldn't make so many benefits.

Any way, this is only a global vision of the situation, it only shows that ethical actions are more and more important, but if we really want to know what the concrete actions taken are, we should look at concrete examples.

4. Some specific actions:

We will focus on two examples: two companies that have undertaken projects in order to help children. That way, it will be easier to explain what projects look like. If we looked to all projects at the same time, it would be too general, not precise enough so it wouldn't help us to understand how projects contribute to social stability.

- *BBVA: Niños adelante*

In Mexico:

The program « Niños adelante » has been called « Por los que se quedan » (For the ones who stay here) in Mexico. It is based in scholarships that are given to some families to promote education so that students don't have to leave the country. This should help to the development of Mexico, since one of the biggest problems in these countries is that students are forced to leave the country in order to get a better education and children that stay there don't have enough money to pursue their studies, so they start working. As a consequence, most of the people are unqualified which makes the development very tough.

Estado	Número promedio de integrantes por familia	Promedio de ingresos mensuales por familia	% que la beca representa en el ingreso familiar \$1,000
Edo. México	5	\$4,086.05	24.4%
Guanajuato	5	\$3,689.96	27.1%
Jalisco	5.1	\$4,023.78	24.8%
Michoacán	5.1	\$3,381.28	29.5%
Morelos	4.6	\$3,821.96	26.1%
Nayarit	4.8	\$3,374.54	29.6%
Puebla	5	\$2,927.65	34.1%
San Luis Potosí	5.1	\$2,922.18	34.2%
Veracruz	4.2	\$3,316.47	30.1%
Zacatecas	5.1	\$2,506.50	39.8%
TOTAL	4.9	\$3,405.03	29.3%

Help given by the program « Niños adelante »²⁴

- *L'Oréal*

L'Oréal celebrates 100 years and reaffirms its commitment to corporate responsibility by taking many actions that will help the most vulnerable communities. One of the most important aims is helping children.

For instance, in Brazil, L'Oréal is supporting the creation of a school that will train underprivileged youth in preparation for careers in the beauty industry.

We should also pay attention to L'Oréal's actions in France, since this is the country of origin of this brand. In that country, the citizens' projects are linked under the name "Première chance" and aim to offer opportunities to young people from underprivileged backgrounds or communities by providing them with the tools and knowledge to develop independent professional projects.

In Germany, the program is called "Starting School with Happiness," and aims to help the poorest children in a developed country by giving them a back-to-school kit, so that they have everything they need in order to pursue their studies.

In Morocco, the program tries to help young girls that want to integrate the school system, with support from the National Institute for Solidarity for Women in Need (INSAF), in a country where girls don't always have the same opportunities than boys.

All these projects try to help children in very different situations: some of them live in completely developed countries, the others live in undeveloped ones; some of them don't have money to go to school, the others have enough money but they don't have the opportunity.

²⁴ http://www.ninosadelante.com/na/fileadmin/img_maquetas/home/accionsocial.pdf

<http://www.ninosadelante.com/na/index.php?id=30>

We also notice that programs are different if we compare the one from BBVA and the one from L'Oréal: BBVA thinks globally, L'Oréal thinks locally.

BBVA helps families from the middle class in Mexico, trying to make their children stay and hoping that these donations will help the whole country, since these children will be tomorrow's adults and they are the ones that will help in order to achieve the development of their country.

L'Oréal helps the most needed children, wherever they are and whatever the help represents in the future, focusing on very specific areas.

d) ...More and more ethical? Benefits of these projects

After having given some examples of responsible projects undertaken by multinational companies, there's something that we all wonder: what are the benefits of those projects?

It is true that, as we read these actions, we all think that this is a very ethical action and that companies only do that in order to help vulnerable children, but is it the truth?

4. Business benefits of corporate social responsibility

First of all, the very first benefit for a company by introducing corporate social responsibility in its business is the reputation that this company will have. In order to enjoy this benefit, it is imperative that the company advertises the activity that it has undertaken, but that is usually not a problem. As people get increasingly interested in responsible companies, such activities will differentiate brands.

As a consequence:

- Customers will buy more from a social responsible company, so there will be more sales.
- Suppliers will deal more with social responsible companies so the company will have more options.
- Employees will prefer working for a social responsible company so there will be less costs (employees won't leave the company and they won't ask for so high wages).

Secondly, we have to say that a company that invests in green technology will have lower costs by not wasting so much electricity, or water or any other good. This wouldn't work when we talk about projects that have to do with children, though.

Thirdly, corporate social responsibility is about risk management. Nowadays, any company can be destroyed when people know about corruption, environmental impact or child labour in that company so, why taking that risk when building up a company is so difficult? As an example of this idea, we should just talk about Nike: this is a huge company, with huge sales and that everyone in the world knows. However, when the story about children exploitation at work came out, every body was deeply concerned and, even if that happened in 1996, everybody remembers this story. The company continues to operate, since it was that big, but it was very hard for it to show a different picture of itself.

Finally, Corporations are keen to avoid interference in their business through [taxation](#) or [regulations](#).

All those ideas show that corporate social responsibility may help communities, but it is also the origin of many benefits for companies. This doesn't mean that companies shouldn't help anymore, since help is always welcome, it only means that we have to be conscious of that fact: they don't help only to make some communities happier.

5. Benefits for society

In this part, we will not focus on benefits for children, who are the main actors of this paper, but on society in general because there is not so much information about the benefits of CSR in our society, even if the main goal of CSR (at least, that's the way it should be) is helping our society and our environment.

In 2003, UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) hold a conference on "Corporate Social Responsibility and Development: Towards a New Agenda?"²⁵. In this conference Monina Wong, from

25

http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/httpNetITFrame?ReadForm&parentunid=3B9E23F717B84550C1256E23004DAB40&parentdoctype=eventauxiliarypage&netitpath=http://www.unrisd.org/unpublished/_tbs_/confsum/content.htm

Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (Hong Kong) made a speech about “What Difference does CSR make to development?”.

In her speech, Monina Wong focused on the situation in China and she tried to answer to a difficult question, which is not answered very often: Do CSR initiatives improve labour standards in China?

Firstly, the speaker said that labour standards had been improved in China during the last years. As she said, in the 90’s the only law that existed was an old labour law that could only be applied to state-owned enterprises and that didn’t give any safety at all. Thanks to NGOs and to TNC buyers, labour standards have been improved, at least a little bit, in the toy industry. However, as Minona Wong said, the positive impact of CSR in China depends on the industry and the economic sector. The private sector and the non-export-oriented sector have even less incentive to comply with labour standards. The reasons of that are:

- the supply of power is over abundant
- the non regulation of labour market
- the absence of freedom of association and collective bargaining

Another speaker, David Murphy (New Academy of Business, United Kingdom), talked about “Responsible Business Practice and Development: Perspectives from recent research by the New Academy of Business”. In this speech, he talked about Gender and Codes of conduct in Central America and the conclusions of the study were that even if Codes of Conduct exist, they are not being implemented properly so labour standards can not be improved.

David Murphy emphasized in the necessary facts to make these Codes of Conduct effective:

- emphasizing on priorities of women
- making workers know about the code of conduct
- creating local organizations trusted by workers
- suppliers must have the will of implementing codes, so retailers have to provide real incentives

Obviously, even if companies may take this kind of actions for their own interest, children are helped by corporate social responsibility so there are also benefits for them.

With all these programs, children receive a better education, or a better health system.

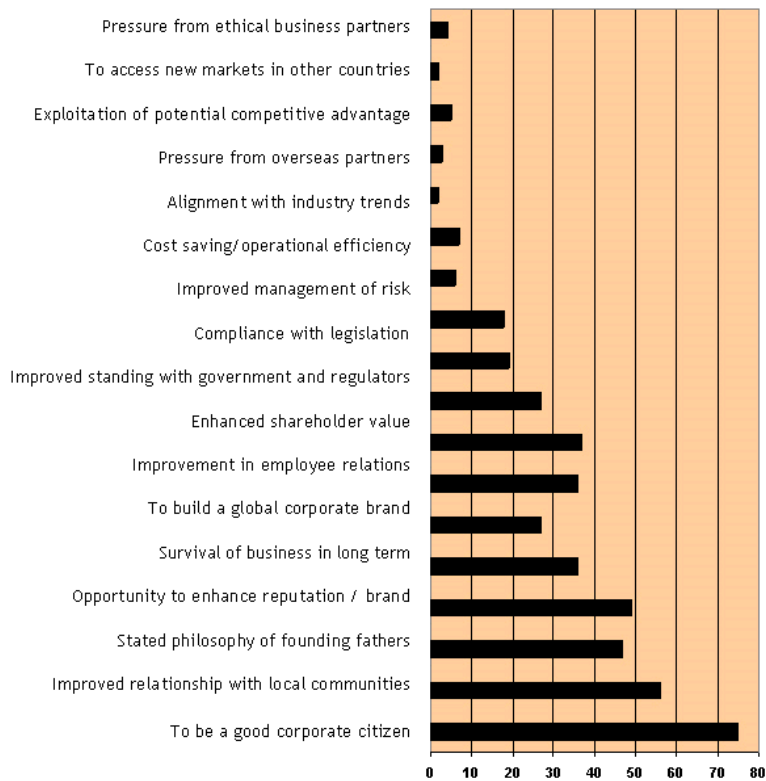
Besides, there are not only programs which are directly linked to children, but also other programs which will have a good repercussion on them. For instance, helping young mothers in order to teach them how to take care of their children, or how to find a job that will make them having enough money to feed their children will have benefits for children.

So it is clear that all this corporate socially responsible actions have huge benefits on children, even if companies don t always choose the better areas to work. But trying to help is always something that we have to recognize.

6. Drivers of CSR

It is difficult to tell whether a company undertakes socially responsible activities in order to obtain some benefits for itself or for the community.

However, a survey was made in India that shows that sometimes we judge many companies too quickly. The Corporate Social Responsibility Survey 2002–India, conducted jointly by the United Nations Development Programme, British Council, Confederation of Indian Industry and [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#), covering 19 industry sectors reveals that this interest is growing as more and more companies in India are keen to project themselves as good corporate citizens. That means that being good corporate citizens is the main driver for companies in order to take some actions. It is true that this driver is very linked, as we said before, with the reputation but the survey showed that the economic impact that responsible actions can have was not the most important driver.



Drivers of CSR²⁶

There are two problems to these results:

- Can we be sure that companies were honest when answering to these questions? As we said, companies pay a lot of attention to what people think about them, so they could have answered what people want to hear. This might be wrong, but we can't be completely sure about these results.
- Can we make an extension of this information to the rest of the world? We can't be sure about that since every country has a different culture that makes companies taking some decisions instead of other ones.

However, if we just analyze this Survey, without wondering whether it is credible or not, what we can definitely conclude is that being good corporate citizens is an important matter for today's companies.

VI- Child labour in multinational companies

d) Fast Facts

There are many ways to make children work: prostitution, factory work, mining... However, in this project we will focus on child labour for multinational companies. This seems to eliminate the worst labours, since we won't talk about prostitution, or drugs traffic, but there still are many works which are exploitive and with very dangerous consequences for children.

Besides, according to the ILO, worst forms of labour are "all forms of or practices similar to slavery, the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, use or procurement of children for prostitution or pornographic purposes, forced or compulsory recruitment of children for armed conflicts, using children in illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs, and work that is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children"²⁷. So although if it is true that multinationals don't use children for pornographic purposes, armed conflicts, or drugs traffic, we can't deny that they might use them in a way that may harm

²⁶ Corporate Social Responsibility Survey 2002 – India (United Nations Development Programme, British Council, CII, PriceWaterHouseCoopers)

²⁷ Convention No.182, ILO, 1999

their health, safety or morals. Again, we have to repeat that not all multinationals do that and, hopefully, most of them have very precise and concrete ethical codes that make it impossible to work with children. However, some of them do and that's why we are talking about it.

According to [UNICEF](#), there are estimated 158 million children aged 5 to 14 in child labours worldwide, excluding child domestic labour.

The main points of child labour are the following:

"WHO WORKS AND WHERE"²⁸

Most of the world's estimated 250 million working children are 11 to 14 years old, but as many as 60 million are between ages 5 and 11.

Exact numbers are not known, but millions of girls work as domestic servants and unpaid household help and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

The incidence of child labour is highest in Africa where 41 per cent of children 5 to 14 years old, are estimated to work, compared with 21 per cent in Asia and 17 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While boys and girls who work in manufacturing export industries are often assumed to epitomize child workers, most children actually labour in the informal sector—doing agricultural work, peddling wares in the streets or working as household servants. At least 60 million children work under especially horrific circumstances—forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery, or into prostitution or pornography or participation in armed conflict.

At least 1 million children a year are enticed or forced into prostitution, part of a huge network of sexual exploitation that stretches from South-East Asia and the former Soviet bloc to Latin America.

Children are increasingly being exploited as pliable labour by drug traffickers in cities of Asia and Latin America.

In war-torn regions, tens of thousands of boys and girls are abducted or lured into militias or regular armies.

Asia, excluding Japan, has the highest number of economically active children (5–14 years of age) at 61 per cent, followed by Africa 32 per cent, and Latin America and the Caribbean 7 per cent."

e) Understanding with some examples

3. Nike²⁹

In 1996, Life magazine published a scandal that touched everybody in every part of the world. This article was about children working in Nike factories in Pakistan, their wage being 0,60 \$/hour.

Everyone felt deeply concerned about this situation, Nike being a leader in the sports sector: many children were wearing Nike clothes or shoes, many children had Nike balls and all this had been made by other children who were exactly the same age.

4. GAP³⁰

²⁸ UNICEF, "Beyond child labour, affirming rights"

²⁹ <http://web.mit.edu/ipc/publications/pdf/02-007.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/28/ethicalbusiness.retail>

Another example of this phenomenon happened in 2007, when The Observer (UK) talks about child labour in GAP's factories.

Dan McDougall, writer in The Guardian, said: "Child workers, some as young as 10, have been found working in textile factories in conditions close to slavery to produce clothes that appeared destined for GAP kids". Children had been sold by their impoverished families and many of them were not paid for their work. Gap's reaction: "We appreciate that the media identified this subcontractor, and we acted swiftly in this situation," Gap spokesman Bill Chandler told The Associated Press on Sunday. "Under no circumstances is it acceptable for children to produce or work on garments." None of the products made in that factory were going to be sold, in response to that act.

3. Primark³¹

After these scandals, many people thought that multinationals would take some actions about that, by eliminating child labour in their factories. However, 12 years later, another scandal appeared, this time in Primark, a very cheap British clothing store. Many children were working for this brand for 60p/day and the BBC Found out about it. These children were 8 years old, which is even younger than the ones that had been found in GAP's factories. What was Primark's reaction? According to Primark, these children worked for illegal subcontractors and many of them were working at home. This is something that makes things much more complicated. Even the ILO can't tell how many children are working at home. That's why its statistics can't be sure. "Under no circumstances would Primark ever knowingly permit such activities, whether directly through its suppliers or through third party sub-contractors." After this scandal, three Indian suppliers were fired because they used children to finish goods and Primark wrote a statement which explained what happened in these factories and what the company's philosophy is

That shows that this is not something that happened once and that won't happen anymore. It is something that happened and that will happen in the future, if we don't take any actions against it.

f) Fighting against child labour

2. Companies: Johnson & Johnson

With all these scandals increasing and with consumers more and more concerned about child labour, many companies have become very strict with this issue and have adopted policies which are very restrictive. As an example, we will show Johnson & Johnson's policy.

Johnson & Johnson produces health care products that are not only in many families but also in hospitals, for instance.

Its policy towards child labour is very clear as it appears in the Purchase order terms and conditions (December 23, 2004)³²:

"In the manufacture of the goods or delivery of the deliverables which are the subject of the PO, Supplier shall employ young persons only as permitted by the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons and shall permit representatives of Buyer to enter Supplier's premises at any reasonable time to inspect relevant employment, health and safety records and to observe the manufacturing process. Supplier shall maintain the records necessary to demonstrate compliance with such Policy on the Employment of Young Persons and shall provide to Buyer a written certification of such compliance, if requested. If Supplier shall fail to comply with this provision, then Buyer shall have the right to rescind in whole or in part any PO without penalty."

³¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7468927.stm

³² <http://www.jnj.com/wps/wcm/connect/5d86b0004ae70e94bc2cfc0f0a50cff8/purchase-order-terms-conditions.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

This shows that suppliers have to follow the same policy than the company. This is probably to avoid problems like the ones in Nike, Gap or Primark where, even if the company hadn't employed children, suppliers had done it.

However, the question now is: and what is the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young People? From this Purchase order we can access to that Policy, that explains clearly, what the restrictions are.

Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons³³

This policy applies to the employment of persons under the age of 18 ("young persons") in the manufacture of any product, or any component of a product, by or for Johnson & Johnson or any of its affiliates worldwide.

Age, Health & Safety. No person under the age of 16 shall be employed. No person between the ages of 16 and 18 shall be employed unless such employment is in compliance with the health, safety and morals provisions of the International Labour Organization Convention 138 Concerning Minimum Age ("ILO Convention 138"), a summary of which is attached hereto.

Hours. No young person shall be required to work more than 48 hours of regularly scheduled time and 12 hours of overtime per week or more than six days per week.

Laws & Regulations. No young person shall be employed unless such employment is in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations concerning age, hours, compensation, health and safety.

External Manufacturers. No manufacturer shall be engaged to manufacture any product, or any component of a product, for Johnson & Johnson or any of its affiliates worldwide unless such manufacturer has entered into an enforceable written agreement to comply with this policy, submit to periodic compliance inspections, maintain the records necessary to demonstrate compliance and provide annual certifications of compliance. If any such manufacturer shall be found to be in breach of such agreement, the manufacturer's engagement shall be terminated.

Exceptions & Interpretations. Upon good cause shown in a specific situation, an exception to the Age and Hours (but not Health & Safety) provisions of this policy may be granted by the responsible Executive Committee Member with the concurrence of the Vice President, Administration, if such exception is consistent with ILO Convention 138 and all applicable laws and regulations. (See attached summary of ILO convention 138.) Requests for definitive interpretations of this policy should be directed to the General Counsel.

NOTE. The Age provision of the Johnson & Johnson Policy on the Employment of Young Persons is more restrictive than ILO Convention 138. The following summary is provided only as an explanatory supplement to the Health & Safety and Exceptions provisions of the Johnson & Johnson policy. For guidance on specific situations, please contact the Johnson & Johnson Law Department.

Summary of ILO Convention No. 138 Concerning Minimum Age

- 4.0 *For work likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of the worker, the minimum age is 18; if there is adequate protection and training of the worker, then the minimum age for such work is 16. (No exception to this provision is available under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*
- 5.0 *For work which is not likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of the worker, the minimum age is 14. (Requires an exception under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*
- 6.0 *For light work which is (a) not likely to be harmful to the health or development of the worker, and (b) not such as to prejudice his/her attendance at school or participation in vocational training, the minimum age is 12. (Requires an exception under the Johnson & Johnson policy.)*

So we can read that minimum age in order to work in Johnson & Johnson or in order to work for one of its suppliers is higher than the one that Convention No.138 determines.

This kind of policies, which appear not only in Johnson & Johnson but also in many other companies are a way to fight against child labour, since we are talking about huge companies, so a lot of people must work for them. Then, the problem is that companies don't only have to make official this kind of policies, but also real: they have to respect them at any time.

³³ http://www.ap.jnj.com/gppidocs/emp_policy_v1.0.htm

Companies are the better way to fight against this phenomenon, but it is not always the most used one. That's why other actors try to help in this fight. The most active ones are IO's or NGO's.

2. International Organizations

When we talk about Child labour and about IO's, we talk about the ILO: the International Labour Organization. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states in common action to promote decent work throughout the world. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Its main aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues.

Evidence points out to a strong link between household poverty and child labour, and child labour perpetuates poverty across generations by keeping poor children out of school and limiting their perspective for upward social mobility. This lowering of human capital has been linked to slow economic growth and social development. A recent ILO study has shown that eliminating child labour in transition and developing economies could generate economic benefits nearly seven times greater than the costs, mostly associated with investment in better school and social services³⁴.

That's why the ILO has been fighting against child labour through two main conventions, although there also were many recommendations:

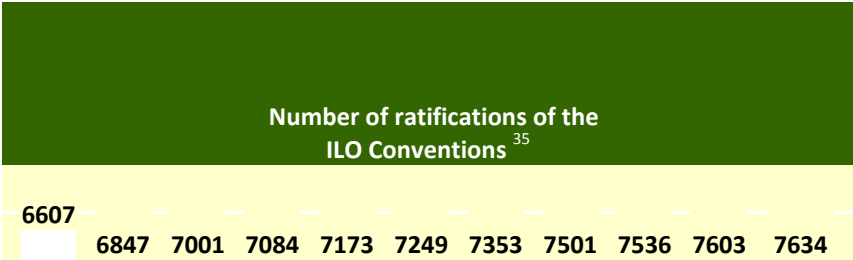
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138): According to article 1, this conventions aims to "pursue a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour and to raise progressively the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons."

This fundamental convention sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 (16 under certain strict conditions). It provides for the possibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.

- Worst forms of child labour convention, 1999 (No.182): This convention has been ratified by 171 countries from all over the world. This fundamental convention defines as a "child" a person under 18 years of age. It requires ratifying states to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; child prostitution and pornography; using children for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; and work which is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. The convention requires ratifying states to provide the necessary and appropriate direct assistance for the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour and for their rehabilitation and social integration. It also requires states to ensure access to free basic education and, wherever possible and appropriate, vocational training for children removed from the worst forms of child labour.

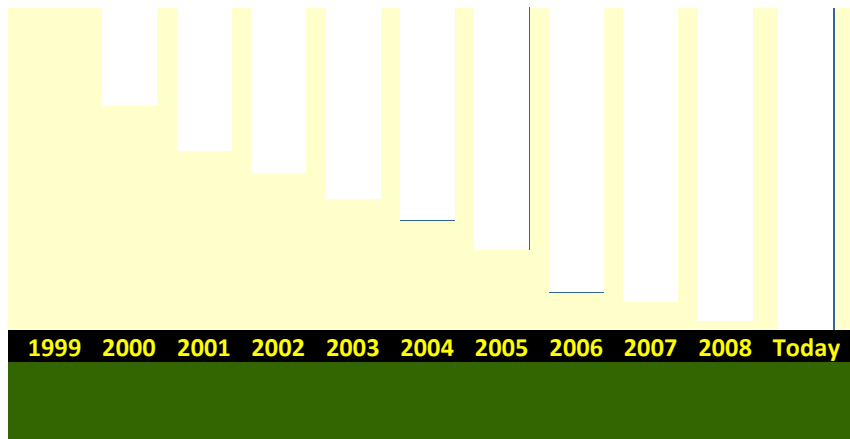
These two conventions are the latest ones. After that, the ILO only published some recommendations but not any other convention.

This diagram shows the evolution of ratifications of conventions on international labour standards by countries belonging to the United Nations:



³⁴ ILO: *Investing in Every Child: An economic study of the costs and benefits of eliminating child labour* (Geneva, IPEC, 2004), pp. 4-5

³⁵ <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-lastyearratif.cfm?Lang=EN>



As we notice, more and more countries ratify these conventions, among which are No. 138 and 182.

The ILO has also created a programme called International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)³⁶ in 1992. Its goal is eliminating child labour by dealing the problem and promoting a movement to combat it.

IPEC programme has operations in 88 countries all over the world and its actions are guided by the principles of Conventions No.138 and No. 182.

Many activities have been developed by this programme, such as traditional country programmes, campaigns, or capacity-building programmes.

As an example, in the Dominican Republic, IPEC launched a programme called Dominican Republic National Time Bound Programme in 2002. This was a country where such an action was essential since 75% of population lives in poverty and it looked for an agreement between enterprises and the “campesinos” organisations, to make sure that children went to school instead of working. The programme also made possible the creation of after-school-kid’s clubs (Salas de Tareas) that more than 1400 children attended³⁷.

Besides the International Labour Organization, we could also talk about UNICEF (The United Nations Children’s Found, 1946) which is an organization that tries to protect children and which cares about children’s well-being, from all over the world.

Concerning child labour, UNICEF has also tried to take some actions, protecting children from violence, abuse and exploitation at work.

Besides, UNICEF supports the International Child Rights Information Network, which is a global network that promotes child rights. This organization made possible the United Nations on the Rights of the Child that protects children from economic exploitation and dangerous labour (art. 32).

2. NGO's

Talking about NGO's could mean writing another whole paper, since there are many NGO's which try to help children and protect them from child labour.

However, we will focus on a single NGO, not because it is the most important one, but because if we talk about all of them we will just get general information and it won't allow us to take a step forward in this paper, whereas if we select an NGO we will have detailed information that we can generalize to other ones.

We have chosen “Save the children”, an NGO that works to ensure every child's rights. Save the Children was created 90 years ago and there are both employees and volunteers that mostly work with the money that donators give to the organization. Their main activities are: helping children to survive beyond the age of five, helping orphans, helping children to have a basic education and also helping the poorest children in developed countries.

³⁶ <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/programme/lang--en/index.htm>

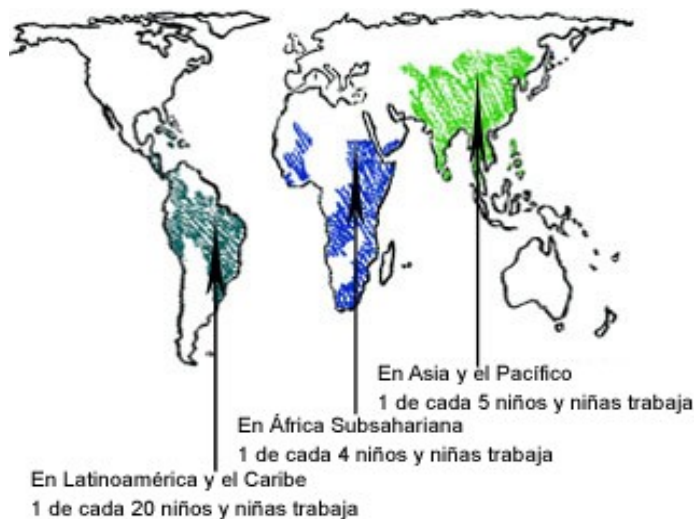
³⁷

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Broadcast_materials/Video_News_Release/lang--en/WCMS_112437/index.htm

Save the Children also works to fight against child labour: they estimate that 8,4 million children are trapped in the worst forms of child labour. They support projects that tackle child labour and its root causes in 15 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe. They work at various levels, through education programmes and poverty reduction schemes and they've published guidance for the private sector.

One of the most important programs to fight child labour was the "Eye To Eye Project"³⁸ which was a partnership between Save the Children UK and Save the Children Spain, and which received a financial aid from the European Commission.

By taking a look to the parts of the world that are the most touched by child labour, Save the Children chose three countries where they developed the project: Bolivia, Pakistan and India.



Save the Children gave cameras to working children (market work, carpet weaving and child domestic work) in Bolivia, Pakistan and India and they taught them how to use these cameras. After that, children had to take pictures of their day-to-day lives. At first, children were quite nervous because they didn't know how to use cameras but they learned very quickly and they achieved their goal. They showed their friends, their school, their work and they described their own pictures. What were these pictures for? After having taken these pictures, they were used by Save The Children UK and Spain by creating stimulating resources for secondary teachers. This project developed from April 2006 to March 2009 and, even if now it should be finished, it has been extended during the next school year.

Everyone got involved in the project: schools, teachers, students and, of course, working children. In Spain, there was even a working boy that went to a school to talk about his experience.

This is one of the projects that Save the Children has carried, but not the only one. Through its action, NGOs try to fight child labour not only by helping these children but also by talking to big organization, to companies and to governments which is the only way to help all the children.

³⁸ <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/eyetoeye/english.htm>



4. Individuals

It is more difficult to fight against child labour when you are alone. That's true, unless you are such an influential person that your thoughts and your actions are being listened and followed all over the world. That's what happens to Michael Moore, who decided to make a film, *The Big One*, about the world that results from globalization. To describe that, he uses an example, the more relevant one: he talks about Nike.

Moore informs us that Nike does not make its sneakers in the U.S.A. anymore, that all shoes are manufactured in Indonesia by teenage girls, who get about four dollars a day to do their job. When Moore asks Knight why Nike doesn't allow Americans to make their shoes, Knight starts laughing uncontrollably. Moore asks that because Nike is the most profitable sneakers company, so its decisions might be followed by many other companies. After a while, Knight finally says, 'Americans don't want to make shoes.' Then he continues his laughing.

It's obvious Knight's just mugging up to Moore's celebrity and his camera. Moore, of course, knows it, and Moore makes strong comic use of this shallowness. But it's also obvious that Knight knows what he's doing. He doesn't answer any of Moore's questions, offers little advice, and shows us only one thing: that people will do anything to be in the movies. And as an answer to the questions Moore poses throughout the film, this moment makes you think that, if nothing else, many of the other top executives are not too far behind Knight in their reasons.

As we said, Michael Moore has become a very influential person in our society. Through his actions against the American Government, or very important American Institutions, he has been able to change some things. So what were the consequences of this particular film? In a stunning announcement on May 12 (1998), Phil Knight, CEO of Nike, declared that the minimum age of footwear factory workers in Indonesia would be raised to 18 years of age. The decision changes a history of child labour in Indonesia, where, according to watchdog groups, factory workers have been found as young as twelve years old³⁹.

However, what did this promise mean? An article published in 2001 showed that this promise hadn't been kept and, even worse, in order to keep children away from the cameras children were working in even more dangerous conditions. That shows that even after a huge scandal as the one in Nike, some companies don't pay attention to child labour as far as they can get very big benefits⁴⁰.

³⁹ <http://www.michaelmoore.com/dogeatdogfilms/nikerelease.html>

⁴⁰ <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/sweatshops/nike/stillwaiting.html>

Conclusion:

To conclude, we can say that child labour is still a reality: it exists, it has always existed and it will still exist if we don't all take strong actions and if we don't feel concerned about the problem.

We have to understand that the problem starts with consumers: if we buy products because they are quite cheaper without trying to understand how we get this price, then companies won't do anything about it.

Hopefully, our society is changing, we ask for more and more ethical products, environmentally and socially friendly products, and that's why companies are taking more and more actions to help children.

So we can be proud of that, but we still have to change many things and the abolition of child labour is imperative to make development and human rights possible.

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