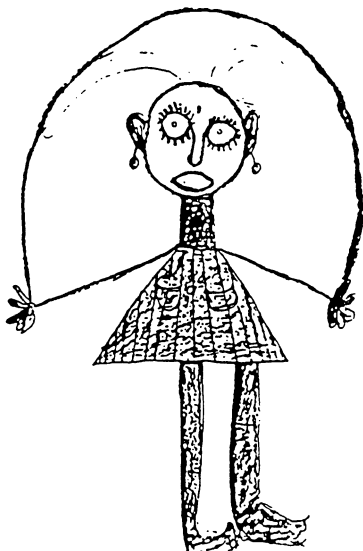


## Aid

A great deal can be achieved through Australia's aid programme, and the problem of child labour must be explicitly included on the aid agenda. Specific programmes are necessary to end the economic exploitation of children, including increased funding for primary education and vocational training, support for non-government organisations dealing with child labour at a community level, health care for working children, strengthening of labour inspectorates and rehabilitation programmes for children who have been freed from bonded labour, prostitution and other forms of exploitation.



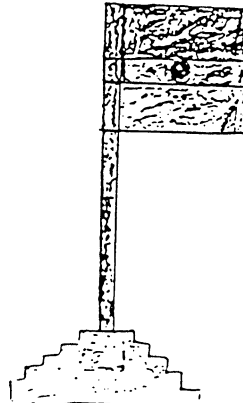
Adeline — India

## International Efforts

Australia should support the strengthening of the ILO and the protection of international labour standards. We should ratify ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and apply pressure to international financial institutions and National Governments to recognise the importance of a commitment to social spending and poverty alleviation, particularly primary education and health care.

We should also press other Governments to eliminate harmful child labour within their own country, to ratify ILO Conventions and to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(This is an edited summary of DCI's Submission to the Parliamentary Working Party on International Labour Standards. The full submission is available from DCI-Australia.)



## Is child labour ever an acceptable thing?

Article 32 of CROC bans child labour which is exploitative, hazardous, harmful to the child's development or interferes with the child's education. ILO Convention No 138 defines the minimum standards for working children including minimum age (15 years), health, safety, training and supervision.

These instruments do not ban *all* child labour. They recognised that the work done by children is often a crucial contribution to the struggle for survival and development in poor communities and families. But they attempt to protect the education, health and safety rights of working children.

In Australia, some forms of work are seen as a valued learning experiences for children. Delivering junk mail, cleaning cars, mowing lawns, busking, baby-sitting, helping around the family farm or business are seen as experiencing material benefits from useful effort.

Of course there are subtle differences between child labour and child work. Or perhaps they are part of a continuum which leads on to learning and personal development. Learning involves work, but not labour, and play is sometimes seen as children's 'work'.

At a recent Workshop in Canberra, participants came up with some positive characteristics of work which might also apply to children's work:

"It involves the child in family and community life, and indeed their survival, gives rise to feelings of satisfaction and self-worth, imparts positive community values and useful skills, and gives the child, now or later, choices of lifestyle, activity and independence."

Needless to say, the protections of CROC and ILO 138 must still apply! What do you think?