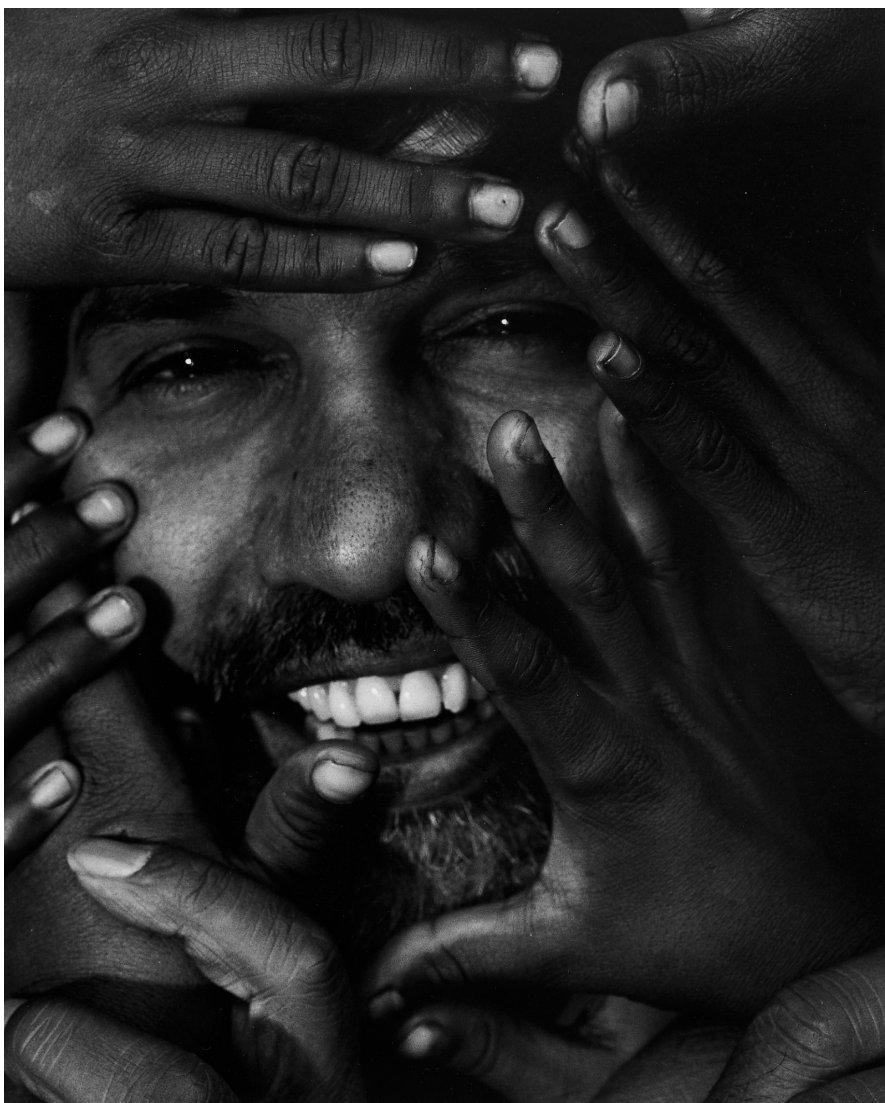


# KAILASH SATYARTHI

“SMALL CHILDREN OF SIX, SEVEN YEARS AND OLDER ARE FORCED TO WORK FOURTEEN HOURS A DAY, WITHOUT BREAKS OR A DAY OF REST. IF THEY CRY FOR THEIR PARENTS, THEY ARE BEATEN SEVERELY, SOMETIMES HANGED UPSIDE-DOWN FROM THE TREES AND EVEN BRANDED OR BURNED WITH CIGARETTES.”

*Kailash Satyarthi is India's lodestar for the abolition of child labor. Since 1980, he has led the rescue of over 75,000 bonded and child slaves in India and developed a successful model for their education and rehabilitation. Kailash has emancipated thousands of children from bonded labor, a form of slavery where a desperate family typically borrows needed funds from a lender (sums as little as \$35) and is forced to hand over a child as surety until the funds can be repaid. But often the money can never be repaid—and the child is sold and resold to different masters. Bonded laborers work in the diamond, stonecutting, manufacturing, and other industries. They are especially prevalent in the carpet export business, where they hand-knot rugs for the U.S. and other markets. Satyarthi rescues children and women from enslavement in the overcrowded, filthy, and isolated factories where conditions are deplorable, with inhuman hours, unsafe workplaces, rampant torture, and sexual assault. Satyarthi has faced false charges and death threats for his work. The constant death threats are taken seriously—two of Satyarthi's colleagues have been murdered. He has been recognized around the world for his work in abolishing child labor. Satyarthi organized and led two great marches across India to raise awareness about child labor. On the global stage, he has been the architect of the single largest civil society network for the most exploited children, the 'Global March Against Child Labor', active in over 140 countries.*

*Kailash Satyarthi was the recipient of the 1995 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award and the 2002 Raoul Wallenberg Human Rights Award. The U.S. State Department's 2007 Trafficking in Persons Report has named him a "Hero Acting to End Modern-Day Slavery."*



Kailash Satyarthi, ©2000 Eddie Adams

Satyarthi rescues children and women from enslavement in the overcrowded, filthy, and isolated factories where conditions are deplorable, with inhuman hours, unsafe workplaces, rampant torture, and sexual assault. Satyarthi is now out on bail on false charges brought against him by a disgruntled carpet export company executive, after Satyarthi appeared on an exposé aired on European television. The constant death threats are taken seriously—two of Satyarthi's colleagues have been murdered. Satyarthi heads the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, which he cofounded in 1989. Under his leadership, SACCS carries out public awareness campaigns, advocacy, legal actions, and direct intervention to emancipate children and women from bonded and child labor. SACCS rallies national and international institutions and nongovernmental organizations to bring pressure on governments, manufacturers, and importers to stop exploiting illegal labor. Satyarthi organized and led two great marches across India to raise awareness about child labor, and, in 1998, organized over ten thousand NGOs around the world to participate in the Global March Against Child Labor. Still there is much to do. There are 6 to 10 million children in bonded labor in India alone. There are 250 million children forced into child labor across the world, including 246,000 children working at agricultural labor and in

sweatshops in the United States. Satyarthi's job has just begun.

Bonded labor is a form of modern-day slavery, where ordinary people lose the most basic freedom of movement, the freedom of choice. They are forced to work long hours with little rest. Over five million children are born into such slavery. Their parents or grandparents may have borrowed a petty sum from a local landlord and consequently generations and generations have to work for the same master. They are prisoners—forbidden to leave. Another five million children are sent to work when their parents receive a token advance and this small amount is used to justify unending years of hardship.

The conditions of bonded labor are completely inhuman. Small children of six, seven years and older are forced to work fourteen hours a day, without breaks or a day of rest. If they cry for their parents, they are beaten severely, sometimes hanged upside-down from the trees and even branded or burned with cigarettes. They are often kept half-fed because the employers feel that if they are fed properly, then they will be sleepy and slow in their work. In many cases they are not even permitted to talk to each other or laugh out loud because it makes the work less efficient. It is real medieval slavery.

We believe that no other form of human rights violation can be worse than this. This is the most shameful defeat of Indian law, our country's constitution and the United Nations Charter. Our most effective armor in this situation is to educate the masses and to create concern and awareness against this social evil. In addition, we attempt to identify areas where child slavery is common. We conduct secret raids to free these children and return them to their families. Follow-up on their education and rehabilitation is an equally vital step in the whole process. We lobby different sectors of society, parliamentarians, religious groups, trade unions, and others, who we believe could influence the situation. We have about a hundred full-time and part-time associates in our group. But we have also formed a network of over 470 nongovernmental organizations in India and other South Asian countries.

For us, working with enslaved children has never been an easy task. It very often involves quite traumatic situations. These children have been in bondage ever since the time they can remember. Liberty for them is an unfamiliar word. They don't know what it is like to be "free." For us, the foremost challenge is to return to them their lost childhood. It is not as simple as it might sound—we really have to work hard at it. For instance, one of the children we've freed was a fourteen-year-old boy, Nageshwar, who was found branded with red-hot iron rods. Coincidentally, at that time, an official from the RFK Center for Human Rights was in India and she came across the boy in New Delhi. The trauma Nageshwar went through had made him lose his speech. He was even unable to explain his condition. It was only later through other children that we came to know about what had happened to him. We really have to work hard to reach such children.

As you may be well aware, marches and walks have been an integral part of our Indian tradition. Mahatma Gandhi marched several times to educate the people (and also to

learn something himself!). Keeping in view their strong impact, especially when it comes to mass mobilization, marches have always occupied a prominent place in our overall strategy to combat child slavery. Marching doesn't mean that we are trying to impose anything. Our demonstrations have about 200 to 250 marchers, half of whom are children—children who have been freed from bondage and slavery. They act as living examples of the dire need to educate people about both the negative impact of the bonded labor system and the positive impact of their newly gained freedom. The other marchers are representatives from human rights organizations, trade unions, and social organizations who join in solidarity. We go to different villages every day, and conduct public meetings, street theater, cultural activities, and press conferences to put across our message to the people.

Two years ago we welcomed the prime minister's promise to act against child labor, if not against bonded labor. We were hoping for some positive results, some impetus to reforms. But even after all this time, no action has taken place. It is very unfortunate. The pronouncement initially created some fear in the minds of employers, but now it is going to prove counterproductive to reform.

People by now realized it was nothing more than a political gimmick and that there was no real will behind it. The employees are a varied lot. When a child is bonded to a street restaurant, the employer is usually an ordinary person of some remote village or town. But when children are employed in carpet weaving, or the glass industry or the brassware industry, the employers are "big" people. They generate a lot of foreign exchange through exports and are always considered favorably by the government.

Despite this, I am not in favor of a total boycott or blanket ban on the export of Indian carpets. Instead I have suggested that consumers buy only those carpets that are guaranteed made without child labor. Consumer education is a must to generate demand for such carpets. We believe that if more and more consumers pressed this issue, more and more employers would be compelled to free child workers and replace them with adults. It is unfortunate that in the last few years in India, Pakistan, and Nepal, the numbers of children in servitude have gone up, paralleling the growth in exports. For instance, today in India we have about 300,000 children in the carpet industry alone with the export market of over U.S. \$600 million a year. Ten or fifteen years ago, the number of children was somewhere between 75,000 to 100,000 and at that time the exports were not for more than U.S. \$100 million. The direct relation between these two is clearly evident. This fact compelled us to launch a consumer campaign abroad. Health and environment have been the prime concerns among the consumers in the West—in Germany, in the U.S. But the issue of children was never linked with this consumer consciousness. People thought of environment and animal rights, but they never thought about children. But in the last couple years, I am proud that the child labor issue has gained momentum and has become one of the big campaigns

in the world. What began with awareness and publicity has now expanded to issues of compliance.

We have recommended the establishment of an independent and professional, internationally credible body to inspect, monitor, and finally certify carpets and other products have been made without child labor. We formed the Rugmark Foundation as an independent body with nongovernmental organizations like UNICEF. They appoint field inspectors, and give all carpets a quote number that gives the details of the production history of the carpet. The labels are woven in the backside of the carpet, and nobody can remove or replace them. This is a significant step in ending this exploitation.

But even this task of educating Western consumers is not so easy. It does involve its share of risks. For example, a German TV film company, after initial research, exposed the employment of children in the carpet export industry. The story was of an importer in Germany, IKEA, who had announced that they would deal only with child-labor-free goods. So reporters started investigating. They came to my office and ashram and interviewed me. Their interview was of a very general nature but when the film was shown later it mentioned Sheena Export in detail, which resulted in the cancellation of a big order from IKEA. Sheena Export, one of the biggest players in the field, became notorious, which affected their exports to other countries, including the United States, which was worth U.S. \$200 million a year. The company is politically very powerful (one of the brothers is the transport minister in the state of Haryana) and so they decided to fight back.

I know that the entire carpet industry, or the majority of it, opposes me. They believe I am their enemy; they just want to eliminate me. They wanted to take me to Haryana, the state known for the worst human rights violations, fake encounters, illegal custody, and killings of people in jail and in police stations. I was arrested on June 1. They wanted to arrest me legally, but they never informed the Delhi police, which is required under Indian law. Because the police came from another state and had no jurisdiction, they couldn't legally arrest me in my home in Delhi. But they tried. I was able to make phone calls and consult a few people on this, and finally I told them that they could not arrest me. The Haryana police did not pay any attention and threatened to break in. They took out their pistols. As you can imagine, their presence had created terror in the whole neighborhood. I was finally arrested and later released on bail. It was not the first time, though it was the first that such a big plot was cooked up against me. At times in the past I have faced such threats. Two of my colleagues have also been killed.

I think of it all as a test. This is a moral examination that one has to pass. If you decide to stand up against such social evils, you have to be fully prepared—not just physically or mentally, but also spiritually. One has to pull oneself together for the supreme sacrifice—and people have done so in the past. Robert F. Kennedy did, Mahatma Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, John Kennedy—the list can go on endlessly. Resistance—it is there always, we only have to prepare ourselves for it. We will have to face it, sooner or later. It is the history of humanity, after all.

# CHILD LABOR

KAILASH SATYARTHI

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 6-8

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND CHILD LABOR

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

- **Article 4:** Freedom from Slavery
- **Article 23:** Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions,
- **Article 24:** Right to Rest and Leisure
- **Article 25:** Right to Adequate Living Standard
- **Article 26:** Right to an Education

**TIME REQUIREMENT:** 120 minutes

## GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- Why does child labor exist?
- How can I make a difference in ending child labor?
- What examples of child labor can I find closest to my community?

## OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will be able to

- Understand the causes and conditions of child labor in South Asia (rug-making industry), Ecuador (banana industry) and the United States (migrant farm workers).
- Explain how Kailash Satyarthi fights against child labor in South Asia.
- Understand how RugMark and Fair Trade advocate for fair labor practices.
- Determine the causes of child labor and what can be done to prevent it.
- Research one area or industry where child labor is prevalent and prepare and action to address it.
- Create an action plan to fight child labor.

## STUDENT SKILLS:

- Collecting data, facts, and ideas
- Discovering relationships, concepts, and generalizations
- Using knowledge from oral, written, and electronic sources.
- Interpreting information in one's own words
- Applying information from one context to another

## NEW YORK STATE

### LEARNING STANDARDS:

- English Language Arts: Standard 1 Language for information and understanding

- Intermediate Reading PI 1, 3, 4; Writing PI 2, 3, 4
- English Language Arts: Standard 2 Language for literary responses and expressions
  - Intermediate Reading PI 3, 4, 5; Writing PI 1, 3
- English Language Arts: Standard 3 Language for critical analysis and evaluation
  - Intermediate Reading PI 1, 3; Writing PI 1, 2
- English Language Arts: Standard 4 Language for social interaction
  - Intermediate Reading PI 2; Writing PI 2
- Social Studies: Standard 1 History of the United States and New York
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 2; KI 2 PI 4; KI 3 PI 3; KI 4 PI 2
- Social Studies: Standard 2 World History
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 1; KI 2 PI 1; KI 3 PI 1, 2; KI 4 PI 3
- Social Studies: Standard 3 Geography
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 1; KI 2 PI 1
- Social Studies: Standard 4 Economics
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 2, 4; KI 2 PI 3
- Social Studies: Standard 5 Civics, Citizenship, and Government
  - Intermediate KI 1 PI 1, 2; KI 2 PI 5; KI 3 PI 3; KI 4 PI 1

## MATERIALS:

- Poem: "Questions from a Worker Who Reads" by Bertold Brecht, <http://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/rg/RGQuest.shtml>
- A banana
- Student journals
- Articles on Child Labor on the Banana Plantations of Ecuador:
  - <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2002/04/24/ecuador-widespread-labor-abuse-banana-plantations>
  - <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/wr/article/0,28391,409798,00.html>
- Student question sheets (PDF FORMATS HERE)

- Video Clips of Kailash Satyarthi [http://www.google.com/search?q=kailash+satyarthi&hl=en&rlz=IT4RNWE\\_enUS318US318&prmd=ivno&source=univ&tbs=vid:l&tbo=u&ei=3f17TO-xHoWDnQf4kZGdCw&sa=X&oi=video\\_result\\_group&ct=title&resnum=9&ved=0CD0QqwQwCA](http://www.google.com/search?q=kailash+satyarthi&hl=en&rlz=IT4RNWE_enUS318US318&prmd=ivno&source=univ&tbs=vid:l&tbo=u&ei=3f17TO-xHoWDnQf4kZGdCw&sa=X&oi=video_result_group&ct=title&resnum=9&ved=0CD0QqwQwCA)
- Kailash Satyarthi interview from *Speak Truth to Power* <http://www.speaktruth.org/ClickDefenders/Clickinterviews/scrollforKailashSatyarthi>
- Stolen Childhoods resource <http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/index.php>
  - Purchase DVD of Stolen Childhoods to view the Kailash Satyarthi section.
  - Texas fields – United States migrant children [http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories/texas\\_fields/index.php](http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories/texas_fields/index.php)

## VOCABULARY:

- Bonded labor
- Parliamentarians
- Mass mobilization
- Prominent
- Solidarity
- Boycott
- Fair Trade
- Migrant worker
- South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude
- Advocacy
- Emancipate
- Caste system
- Untouchables

## CONCEPTS:

- Bonded labor
- Child slavery
- Migrant labor
- Human dignity
- Courage

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- Computer, projection equipment for online videos, DVD player for videos.



## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### ANTICIPATORY SET:

- Show a banana to students.
  - Ask them, "What do you see?"
  - Instruct students to describe what they see in their journals.
- Ask students to share their responses with a partner.
- Ask one or two students to share. Note if the students described what they saw on the banana, but did not describe where the banana came from or who is behind the banana industry, ask the students "How did this banana get to the grocery store?" Allow about five minutes for students to respond.

### ACTIVITY 1:

Have the students sit in a circle.

- Hand students the poem, "Questions from a Worker Who Reads." (link here)
- Ask students to read it silently.
- Then read it aloud to them.
- Ask the following questions:
  - What literary device does the poet use over and over? (Allusion). Do you recognize any of the allusions?
  - Why does the poet use this device in particular? (He wants the reader to think about important historical events and figures who were made possible by an army of nameless, mostly exploited workers.)
  - What is this poem about? What is the author's purpose/point?
  - Is there anything you don't understand?
  - What does the poet mean by the question, "Who paid the piper?" What does this mean for us?
- For Grade 6 students:
  - Hand the students the article "Hard at Work." Time for Kids January 24, 2003, vol 8 no. 14  
<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids/wr/article/0,28391,409798,00.html>.
  - This is a story about a boy working on a banana plantation.

**TEACHER TIP:** This article would also be useful in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade for second language learners and students with disabilities.

- For students in Grades 7 and 8, or gifted and talented students in Grade 6:
  - Hand to students the Human Rights Watch Article
- Instruct students to read the article with a partner.
  - Instruct students to answer the questions, finding text support for the answers by underlining the info/answer in the article and writing the question's # next to it.
  - Have students complete the interdisciplinary worksheet "Human Rights Watch Report."

### ACTIVITY 2:

- Show the students the following clips with Kailash Satyarthi
  - Video from World Vision Australia:  
<http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=EJXfILoTeXQ&feature=related>
  - Youtube clip from the Global March for Education on child labor in India.  
[http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=0bpl\\_Eqa4g8&NR=1](http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=0bpl_Eqa4g8&NR=1)
  - Purchased video, Stolen Childhoods, segment on Child Labor in the Carpet industry and the Rescue and Rehabilitation programs Kailash Satyarthi runs.
- Instruct students to read the *Speak Truth to Power* interview with Kailash Satyarthi  
<http://www.speaktruth.org/> Click on Defenders/Click on list/scroll to find Kailash Satyarthi.
- Instruct students to answer the questions found on the worksheet "Meet the Defenders: Kailash Satyarthi. (PDF HERE)"
- After reading the interview and answering the questions, engage the students in a classroom discussion using these discussion questions:
  - Are children who work in carpet factories in South Asia slaves? Why or why not?
  - Why are these children sold into slavery?
  - Why do you think factories like this still exist in India even though child labor is illegal there?
  - How does the Rugmark foundation help fight against child labor?
  - What can we do as Americans to defend child laborers in South Asia?

### ACTIVITY 3:

- Show students the following videos on child labor in the United States agricultural industry.
  - The segment in Stolen Childhoods on the Onion Pickers is good.  
[http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories/texas\\_fields/index.php](http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories/texas_fields/index.php)
  - AFT produced a video, Lost Futures,  
<http://www.ourownbackyard.org/>
  - Dateline NBC's America Now: Children of the Harvest. July 19, 2010. Parts 4-6 are the best.  
[http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38312193/ns/dateline\\_nbc/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/38312193/ns/dateline_nbc/)
- After viewing, engage students in a class discussion using the following questions:
  - Why does child labor occur in the United States?
  - What can we do to prevent this?
  - Who is in charge?
  - Why are these laws so unfair?
  - What can be done about them?

## ACTIVITY 4

- Ask the students to respond to the following quote and ask them to think of how it applies to some of the stories or articles they have read throughout these lessons.

*"Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

—Margaret Mead

- After discussing the responses to the quote, do one or more of the following activities:
- Show the students Fair Trade: The Story video by TransFair <http://eqtvconnect.ning.com/video/801594:Video:1147>
- They could also see Green America's website, What is Fair Trade? [www.greenamericatoday.org/programs/fairtrade/whattoknow/index.cfm](http://www.greenamericatoday.org/programs/fairtrade/whattoknow/index.cfm)
- Show students the GoodWeave label [www.rugmark.org](http://www.rugmark.org) so they know which carpets are guaranteed to be produced without child labor.
- Bring in Fair Trade chocolate, coffee and/or bananas to show students the label.
- Teacher Tip: Students could play the Banana Split Fair Trade game [www.cafod.org.uk/content/download/5884/50213/version/2/file/bananasplit.pdf](http://www.cafod.org.uk/content/download/5884/50213/version/2/file/bananasplit.pdf)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How does Fair Trade help fight against the problem of child labor? How does it help workers and the environment? (certification means no child labor was used in production, parents are paid a living wage so children do not need to work, profits are invested in the community for education, health care, etc.)
- What are some products you can find in your grocery store that are Fair Trade? (coffee, chocolate, sometimes bananas)
- Fair Trade organic bananas cost about 99 cents a pound, vs. about 69 cents for regular bananas. Would you be willing to pay the extra cost? Why or why not?
- How can we get our grocery stores to get more Fair Trade products? (ask manager, etc.)

Instruct students to choose one of the following to become a defender of human rights.

- Write a letter to your US Senator or Representative to ask them to sponsor HR 5117, Education for All Act of 2010. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.5117>
- Write a detailed letter of opinion or inquiry to someone connected with these issues, for example, the Labor Secretary, Agriculture Secretary, the CEOs of supermarkets, Dole, Chiquita, or other corporations, or to a carpet retailer. In this letter, you can both make a strong point and back it up with evidence from class and your own research, or you can raise important questions. Remember to cite at least two sources in your letter. You must use proper business letter format and include the address of the person you are writing to.
- Speak to the manager of your local grocery store or coffee shop and ask him or her to sell Fair Trade products. Explain why this is important.
- Write a poem to share about child labor, and send it to your local newspaper, or state representative, or member of Congress. You may also be able to publish your poem on the web. Make sure you include information from at least two sources. Your poem should be at least 20 lines.
- Create a poster which teaches the issue to other students. You must use at least 2 sources. Write the info IN YOUR OWN WORDS (no plagiarizing) LARGE enough to be read from a distance, and have graphics to illustrate your points. Your poster will be prominently displayed in the school.
- Write a story to share with the class as an illustrated children's book. You may use PowerPoint to do this, but it will be printed out in book format. You may work on this with a partner.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation to teach others about what you have learned. E-mail a copy to a government official or executive in the carpet or banana industry who has the power to make a change.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the problem of child labor and what readers can do about it. You may want to encourage the readers to support the Education for All Act.
- Produce a song or video. (You would also need to accompany this with a paragraph explaining and defending your point of view.) You can write new lyrics to an existing song. You will have to sing your song or show your video to the class. You may work on this with a partner.

### EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES:

- Visit [www.freethechildren.com/we](http://www.freethechildren.com/we) Create an action plan to raise funds to Adopt a Village Campaign or the Brick by Brick campaign to build a school in a developing country.
- Read “The Circuit” by Francisco Jimenez, a short story told through the voice of a migrant worker child, written by a former migrant worker.
- Visit The Fair Food Project to see the current state of farm workers in this country and what is being done to make their lives better. <http://www.fairfoodproject.org/main/>
- Visit AFT’s site on child labor in the United States for an excellent overview of the history, state, and past and current legislation regarding child labor on America’s farms. <http://www.ourownbackyard.org/>
- Show children video of how some American middle school students were moved to action to become Human Rights Defenders by Iqbal’s story.
- Local Heroes: Students of Broad Meadows Middle School. Watch segment (chapter 4 of AFT’s DVD—Child Labor Resources) about the visit of Iqbal Masih to a school in Quincy, MA, and how the students were moved to action. Another great student-made video about this is Freedom Hero: Iqbal Masih <http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=t0D6K18wq8A&feature=related>
- See suggestions of current legislation and actions students can do on AFT website: <http://www.ourownbackyard.org/what.shtml>
- AFT: In Our Own Backyard
- Part III: What Can Be Done?
  - This section is intended to provide alternatives that address the problem of American child farm workers. These alternatives include amending existing laws, improving enforcement of those laws, and expanding services for child farm workers. The options presented, however, are by no means comprehensive. As you review them, consider which are most feasible and most desirable, then try to develop your own strategies.
  - The final step in a public policy project is one you will need to take on your own—deciding exactly what policy should be recommended. As you review the alternatives in this section and develop your own ideas, try to make a list of the objectives, costs (or disadvantages), benefits (or advantages), and practicality of each. When your list is complete, review it in order to help you make your decision of which specific policy to recommend. In making your recommendation, keep in mind the need not only to defend your choice, but also to say why it is more important to pursue than the other options being considered.
  - Video Introduction
  - Motivation, Education and Training
    - An excerpt from the video “Stolen Childhoods” that highlights one program for serving child farm workers
  - What Kids Can Do
    - A brief list of actions students can take to address child labor presented in the film “Lost Futures”
  - How Should the Problem Be Addressed in U.S. Laws?
  - Recommendations
    - Additional limitations on child labor proposed in a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health report
  - Child Labor Coalition Recommendations
    - How one nongovernmental organization suggests U.S. law should change
  - H.R. 2870: Youth Worker Protection Act
    - Text of a bill considered by Congress to reform U.S. child labor laws
  - H.R. 3564: Children’s Act for Responsible Employment (CARE Act)
    - Text of a bill recently introduced to the House of Representatives that would change child labor laws
  - Summary of the Children’s Act for Responsible Employment (CARE Act)
    - Summary and explanation of how the CARE Act could change U.S. law
  - What Services Should Be Offered To Support Child Farm Workers?
  - Motivation, Education and Training
    - Description of an organization that provides education and job training to migrant workers in four states
  - Migrant Education Grants
    - Explanation of federal grants that encourage states to develop programs to help children of migrant workers and examples of resulting state programs
  - Conexiones community outreach program
    - Description of a program designed to teach technology and communications skills to children of migrant workers
  - What Can Citizens Do Directly?
  - Ending Child Labor
    - Different strategies for ending child labor, such as unionism, universal education and universal minimum standards
  - Student Farmworker Alliance
    - Student organization that works to improve conditions for farm workers
  - Consumers Movement
    - How consumers have united to bring about change in working conditions over time

## TELL US ABOUT IT

The Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights is sponsoring an annual contest honoring a student who submits the best advocacy activity based upon the lesson studied. A goal of the lesson is to instill into each student that one voice, one person can make monumental changes in the lives of many. Tell us how you “Became a Defender”!

### THE CRITERIA FOR THE CONTEST ARE:

- A one-page summary of the advocacy activity
- Digitized copies of materials that can be sent electronically
- Photos of the activity (please include parental consent form)
- A one-page summary of how the activity made a change in the lives of one person or many

### THE PRIZES INCLUDE:

- A week long “virtual” internship at RFK Center
- An opportunity to meet the defender through a SKYPE visit,
- A visit from Kerry Kennedy or a defender to your school
- A poster of a *Speak Truth to Power* Human Rights Defender
- A donation of a signed copy of *Speak Truth to Power* for the school library

The application and instructions for entry can be downloaded [here](#) (link for materials)

The deadline for all applications is the third week in November.

The winning student and teacher will be notified by the last week of January.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Video: *Stolen Childhoods* (2005) Galen Films.

<http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories>

Documentary on global child labor; segments on the rug workers and Kailash Satyarthi. There are also many excellent clips available online if you cannot purchase the film. The Nightline segment is excellent.

### *Stolen Childhoods* Teacher Resource Guide

[http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/2006/03/view\\_the\\_guide.php](http://www.stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/2006/03/view_the_guide.php)

There is also an online Teacher Resource Guide with excellent resources for further research.

### *Stolen Childhoods* Trailer

<http://stolenchildhoods.org/mt/archives/videostories/trailer/index.php>

<http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=v9biF7ha3yk&NR=1>

Model student poem

### Brick Stacking

<http://artsyprints.wordpress.com/2007/12/23/childrens-human-rights-poetry-brick-stacking/>

DVD and teacher resources are available from the American Federation of Teachers at

<http://www.aftstore.org/aft/productenlarged.asp?peid=283&pid=900376>





# SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS WHO ARE CHANGING OUR WORLD

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

## INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECT

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### HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT ON CHILD LABOR ON BANANA PLANTATIONS IN ECUADOR

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#### PART I: WRITE THE LETTER ON THE LINE TO THE LEFT OF THE NUMBER.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Most bananas are grown in
- a) Bolivia
  - b) Ecuador
  - c) United States
  - d) European Union
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which of the following is NOT a concern for the workers who pick bananas?
- a) Children as young as eight are working in the fields and packing plants.
  - b) Poisonous pesticides are used.
  - c) Workers eat too many bananas.
  - d) There is little or no job security.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Why did Human Rights Watch go to Ecuador?
- a) To investigate violations of the UDHR
  - b) To bring food and clothing to the poor farmers
  - c) To start a school for child workers
  - d) To buy Fair Trade bananas
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. How many hours a day do most workers on banana plantations work?
- a) Eight
  - b) Thirteen
  - c) Twelve
  - d) Ten
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. All of the following are dangers faced by child workers on banana plantations EXCEPT
- a) Exposure to pesticides and dangerous chemicals which make them sick
  - b) Using sharp tools which can cut them
  - c) Having to carry very heavy loads with iron pulleys
  - d) Falling off high mountains
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Why have many children in Ecuador left school to work?
- a) They did not like doing homework
  - b) The money they earn is so great
  - c) Their parents needed extra income to feed and clothe the family
  - d) There were no schools in the area past third grade
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. From this story you can conclude that growers like to hire children because
- a) They are really helping them to survive
  - b) They can pay them much less than adult workers
  - c) They children can carry as heavy loads as adults
  - d) It is legal and encouraged by the government
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What is the meaning of the underlined word in the sentence below:  
**If implemented, the laws could also prevent children from engaging in employment likely to interfere with their right to education.**
- a) Enforced or used
  - b) Real
  - c) Violated
  - d) Asked

**PART 2: BASED ON THE INFORMATION IN THE ARTICLE, DECIDE WHETHER EACH SENTENCE IS TRUE, FALSE, OR AN OPINION. WRITE YOUR ANSWER ON THE LINE PROVIDED.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The government should provide drinking water and toilet facilities to banana workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Children as young as five and six years old are working on banana plantations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The pesticides which are sprayed on the bananas are harmless to humans.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Ecuador has laws governing child labor, but the government does not enforce them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Americans should not buy bananas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Most Ecuadorean children who work on banana plantations manage to finish high school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. South American governments are corrupt and don't care about their people.

**PART 3: GEOGRAPHY. USE THE MAP TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

16. Which large body of water borders western Ecuador?

\_\_\_\_\_

17. Ecuador is located in which continent? \_\_\_\_\_

18. The 0° line of latitude, known as the \_\_\_\_\_, passes through Ecuador.

19. The tallest mountain range in the western hemisphere, the \_\_\_\_\_, runs through Ecuador.

20. Eastern Ecuador has many rivers that flow into the second longest river in the world, the \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

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## HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH REPORT ON CHILD LABOR ON BANANA PLANTATIONS IN ECUADOR

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*“When the planes pass, we cover ourselves with our shirts... We just continue working... We can smell the pesticides.”*

**Enrique Gallana, a fourteen-year-old working on plantation San Carlos**

Roughly one-quarter of all bananas on tables in the United States and the European Union are grown on plantations scattered along Ecuador's coast, where workers' international labor rights are flouted daily. . . . Nor do those laws fully meet international standards. Ecuadorean children as young as eight labor in banana fields and packing plants where they are exposed to toxic pesticides and other unsafe working conditions in violation of their rights, while adult workers toil in the same hazardous worksites, often with little or no job security. . . .

In May 2001, Human Rights Watch conducted a three-week fact-finding mission in Quito and the Guayas and El Oro provinces in Ecuador to investigate child labor and obstacles to freedom of association in the banana sector. During the investigation, Human Rights Watch spoke with seventy current and former banana workers, adults and children, whose real names are not used in this report to protect them from potential employer reprisals.

### CHILD WORKERS

Human Rights Watch interviewed forty-five children who had worked or were working on banana plantations in Ecuador. Forty-one of them began in the banana sector between the ages of eight and thirteen, most starting at ages ten or eleven. They described workdays of twelve hours on average and hazardous conditions that violated their human rights, including dangerous tasks detrimental to their physical and psychological well-being. The children reported being exposed to pesticides, using sharp tools, hauling heavy loads of bananas from the fields to the packing plants, lacking potable water and restroom facilities, and experiencing sexual harassment. Children told Human Rights Watch that they handled insecticide-treated plastics used in the fields to cover and protect bananas, directly applied fungicides to bananas being prepared for shipment in packing plants, and continued working while fungicides were sprayed from planes flying overhead. Sometimes the children were provided protective equipment; most often, they were not. These children enumerated the various adverse health effects that they had suffered shortly after pesticide exposure, including headaches, fever, dizziness, red eyes, stomach aches, nausea, vomiting, trembling and shaking, itching, burning nostrils, fatigue, and aching bones. Children also described working with sharp tools, such as knives, machetes, and short curved blades; and three pre-adolescent girls, aged twelve, twelve, and eleven, described the sexual harassment they allegedly had experienced at the hands of the administrator of two packing plants where they worked. In addition, four boys explained that they attached harnesses to themselves, hooked themselves to pulleys on cables from which banana stalks were hung, and used this pulley system to drag approximately twenty banana-laden stalks, weighing between fifty and one hundred pounds each, over one mile from the fields to the packing plants five or six times a day. Two of these boys stated that, on occasion, the iron pulleys came loose and fell on their heads, making them bleed.

Fewer than 40 percent of these children were still in school at age fourteen. When asked why they had left school to work, most answered that they needed to provide money for their parents to purchase food and clothing for their families, many of whom also relied on the nearby banana plantations for their income. Though important for their families, the average income contributed by the children with whom Human Rights Watch spoke was only U.S. \$3.50 for every day worked—roughly 64 percent of the average wage earned by the adults interviewed by Human Rights Watch and 60 percent of the legal minimum wage for workers.

If applied, Ecuadorean laws governing child labor could go a long way to protecting the human rights of these children—preventing them from laboring in conditions that violate their right to health and development. If implemented, the laws could also prevent children from engaging in employment likely to interfere with their right to education. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources (Ministry of Labor) and the juvenile courts—from which employers must obtain authorization prior to hiring any child under fourteen—fail to fulfill their legally mandated responsibility to enforce domestic laws governing child labor, and the other governmental entities commissioned to address children's issues do not include child banana workers in the scope of their activities. The result is an almost complete breakdown of the government bureaucracy responsible for enforcing child labor laws and preventing the worst forms of child labor in Ecuador's banana sector.

Excerpted from *Tainted Harvest: Child Labor and Obstacles to Organizing on Ecuador's Banana Plantations* (New York: Human Rights Watch, April 2002). <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/ecuador>. Reprinted by permission. Copyright © Human Rights Watch 2003.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH ARTICLE

1. What percentage of children work in Ecuador?
2. What are some of the dangers faced by these children on banana plantations?
3. What are the effects of children working on the plantations?
4. According to the article, why are children forced to work?
5. How can this problem be solved?
6. Why is simply banning child labor not a good solution?
7. What would the effect of higher wages in Ecuador be on Americans who eat bananas?
8. The average price of bananas, which travel from South America, in US supermarkets is .49 to .69 cents per pound. Apples, which are grown here in the US, cost about \$1.29-\$1.69 per pound. Why do you think that is? Who is "paying the piper?" Use your calculators and the information from the article to figure out how much of the price of our bananas goes to the workers who pick them.
9. Why doesn't the government enforce the child labor laws? Have students calculate the parents' wages.

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## QUESTIONS FOR KAILASH SATYARTHI

1. What is bonded labor?
2. Describe the conditions in which children who are in bonded labor live and work. Why are these children forced into this situation?
3. What are some actions Kailash and the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS) take to fight directly against child slavery? (Give at least 4 ways)
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.
4. How can consumers in America help in the fight against child bonded labor in the carpet industry?
5. How does the RugMark Foundation help fight against child labor in the carpet industry?
6. What are some ways you as a student can help this situation?



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## FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR THE POEM, "QUESTIONS FROM A "WORKER WHO READS."

- I. What literary device does the poet use over and over?
  - a. Do you recognize any of the allusions?
  
2. Why does the poet use this device in particular?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is this poem about?
  - a. What is the author's purpose/point?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Is there anything you don't understand?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What does the poet mean by the question, "Who paid the piper?" What does this mean for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How is the photo related to the poem?

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## QUESTIONS FROM A WORKER WHO READS

By Bertolt Brecht

Who built the seven towers of Thebes?  
The books are filled with names of kings.  
Was it kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone?  
And Babylon, so many times destroyed,  
Who built the city up each time? In which of Lima's houses,  
That city glittering with gold, lived those who built it?  
In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished  
Where did the masons go? Imperial Rome  
Is full of arcs of triumph. Who reared them up? Over whom  
Did the Caesars triumph? Byzantium lives in song,  
Were all her dwellings palaces? and even in Atlantis of the legend  
The night the sea rushed in,  
The drowning men still bellowed for their slaves.  
Young Alexander plundered India.  
He alone?  
Caesar beat the Gauls.  
Was there not even a cook in his army?  
Philip of Spain wept as his fleet  
Was sunk and destroyed. Were there no other tears?  
Frederick the Great triumphed in the Seven Years War. Who  
Triumphed with him?  
Each page a victory,  
At whose expense the victory ball?  
Every ten years a great man, Who paid the piper?  
So many particulars.  
So many questions.

*Last Updated Spring 2002*