

# Ashique's story

*Child labour creates necessary income for families and communities.  
Take it away and it is the children who will suffer most. Is it so?*

<b>Themes</b>	Children, Social rights, Globalisation
<b>Complexity</b>	Level 3
<b>Group size</b>	5+
<b>Time</b>	90 minutes
<b>Overview</b>	This activity uses small group discussions to explore the issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The reality of child labour</li> <li>▪ The causes of child labour and how to end it</li> </ul>
<b>Related rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The right to protection against harmful forms of work and exploitation</li> <li>▪ The right to education</li> <li>▪ The right to play and recreation</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To increase knowledge about the reality of child labour</li> <li>▪ To develop critical thinking about the complexity of the problem</li> <li>▪ To encourage the values of justice and the feeling of responsibility for finding solutions</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copies of the facts of Ashique's life; one copy per participant</li> <li>▪ Pens and markers</li> <li>▪ Flipchart paper or large sheets of paper (A3)</li> </ul>
<b>Preparation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Copy the design for the "ideas for solutions" sheet onto large, A3-size sheets of paper or flipchart paper: one per small group, plus one for the plenary</li> <li>▪ Gather some of the further information below to use to introduce the activity</li> </ul>

## Instructions

1. Tell the participants that the activity is based on a case study of Ashique, a child worker in Pakistan. The aim is to try to find possible ways of changing Ashique's situation.
2. To warm up, do a round of "composed story-telling". Make up an imaginary and imaginative story about a day in Ashique's life. Go round the circle asking each person in turn to add a sentence.
3. Divide the participants into small groups with a maximum of 5 people per group. Give everyone a copy of Ashique's life facts. Allow 5 minutes for reading and sharing comments.
4. Give each group a copy of the "ideas for solutions" sheet. Explain that their task is to brainstorm solutions to the problems faced by Ashique and other child labourers. They must write down in the appropriate columns the possible steps that can be taken to

**THEMES**



CHILDREN



SOCIAL RIGHTS



GLOBALISATION

**COMPLEXITY**



LEVEL 3

**GROUP SIZE**



5 OR MORE

**TIME**



90 MINUTES

- solve the problem “by tomorrow”, “by next month” and “in the future”. They have 30 minutes to complete this task and to nominate a spokesperson to report back.
5. In plenary, take it in rounds to get feedback on each column in turn. Summarise the ideas on the flip chart. Allow discussion on the ideas if desired, but be aware of time constraints!
  6. When the table is complete, move on to a fuller discussion and debriefing.

### Debriefing and evaluation

The depth of the discussion will depend on the participants' general knowledge but try to cover questions both about their views on child labour as well as on the possible solutions.

- How much did people already know about the existence of child labour before doing this activity? How do they know? Where did they get the information from?
- Is there child labour in their country/town? What work do children do and why do they work?
- Should children work? Should they be able to choose whether to work or not?
- “Child labour creates necessary income for families and communities. Take it away and it is the children who will suffer most.” How do you answer this?
- In what ways do we, as consumers, benefit from child labour?
- How difficult was it to think of possible steps to solve child labour? Which of the three columns - “by tomorrow”, “by next month” and “in the future” - was the most difficult to fill in? Why?
- There have been many national and international declarations and conferences about the issue of child labour. Why is it still such a large-scale problem in the world?
- Who should be responsible for the solving the problem? (Take a different colour pen and write the suggestion on the chart.)
- Can ordinary people like you and me help solve this problem? How and when?

### Tips for facilitators

If participants know very little about child labour, you may want to start the activity by giving them a few facts about child labour and its consequences. A fun way to do this might be to take the statistics below and turn them into a short quiz.

It may be difficult for groups to find ideas for the first two columns (tomorrow and next month) which might create a feeling of powerlessness and frustration. You could motivate them by reading out the following statement:

*“The task is big, but not so big as to prove either unwieldy or burdensome. It is worth developing countries dealing with child labour. This shows that what has caused the problem of child labour here is really not a dearth of resources, but a lack of real zeal. Let this not continue.”*

Supreme Court in the case of *M. C. Mehta v. the State of Tamil Nadu and Others*, India, 1986

Usually participants realise that, in order to find effective and lasting solutions to a problem, it is first necessary to identify the causes. Having analysed the causes, solutions often become more apparent. However, you may have to point this out to some groups, especially if they are getting bogged down with identifying solutions.

You could provoke ideas for solutions by suggesting one or more of the following:

- reduce poverty so there is less need for children to work
- increase adults' wages so there is less need for children to work

- develop education so that it is more attractive and relevant to children's needs
- develop international standards for the employment of children
- ban products made with child labour
- develop global minimum labour standards as a requirement for membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)

Use any current news reports about child labour - either local or global - to make the activity topical and more interesting.

### Variations

If you want to develop participants' knowledge on the concept of child labour, previous to the activity, you can use a quiz. You can find numerous quizzes on the ILO web page (<http://us.ilo.org/ilokidsnew/whatis.html>) and on the Unicef web page ([www.unicef.org/aclabour/quiz.htm](http://www.unicef.org/aclabour/quiz.htm)).

### Suggestions for follow up

Find out more about youth campaigns against child labour, for example, "Kids Can Free the Children", a children's rights foundation, which was created by a 12-year-old Canadian boy ([www.icomm.ca/freechild/](http://www.icomm.ca/freechild/)).

### Further Information

In chapter 5, in the background information sections on children and on social rights, there are statistics about child labour, and information about what is made with child labour, about international law and about child labour and the consequences of child labour for the child.

The scale of the problem of child labour means that there is a wealth of information available on this issue. Useful Internet sites include the International Labour Organisation ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)), Unicef ([www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)) and Save the Children ([www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)).

### Key date

#### 2 December

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

**HANDOUTS**

**Ashique's life facts**



**Personal Data**

*Name:* Ashique Hashmir  
*Age:* 11 years old  
*Nationality:* Pakistani  
*Family:* Parents, 2 grandparents, 1 sister and 3 brothers  
*Family Income:* about 70 € /month

**“Professional” Data**

*“Profession”:* worker in a brick factory  
*Working Hours:* between 12 to 16 hours a day (1/2 hour break) – 6 days a week  
*Working Production:* about 600 bricks a day  
*Wage:* 1.3 Euro for 1000 bricks (but 50% goes for repayment of loan made by his family)  
*Working since* he was 5 years old

**Other Information**

His family has been bonded for 2 years because they took a loan of about (P)Rs. 6000 (110 €). Now, with the loan interest, the amount owed is about 280 € .

Ashique was sent to school for 3 months by his father but the factory owner removed him and put him back to work. His father was punished because of what he had done.

The family income is very low and consequently insufficient to send the children to school and to provide adequate food and health care.

**Real life situation.**

Information gathered from ILO and Free the Children materials.

**Source**

*Free the Children campaigns:* [www.freethechildren.org](http://www.freethechildren.org)

**Ideas for solutions**

What can be done about Ashique's situation - and that of other child labourers?

By tomorrow?	By next month?	In the future?