

# Child Labor

### **Definition of Child Labor:**

**Child labor, as defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO) is work done by children under the age of 12; work by children under the age of 15 that prevents school attendance; and work by children under the age of 18 that is hazardous to their physical or mental health. Child labor is an economic activity or work that interferes with the completion of a child's education or that is harmful to children in any way.**

## Child Labor Facts

**-246 million children worldwide are child laborers**

**-73 million working children are less than 10 years old**

**-There are 2.5 million working children in the developed economies**

**-Every year, 22,000 children die in work related accidents**

**-The largest number of working children - 127 million - age 14 and under are in the Asia Pacific region**

**-Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest ratio of working children: nearly 1/3 of children age 14 and under (48 million children)**

**-8.4 million children are trapped in slavery, trafficking, debt bondage, and other illicit activities**

**-Most children work in the formal sector: 70% in agriculture, commercial hunting, fishing, or forestry; 8% in manufacturing; 8% in wholesale and retail trades, restaurants, and hotels; 7% in community, social, and personal services, such as domestic work**

Source: International Labor Organization (ILO)

# **Why Children Are Forced To Work?**

- In groups of three, come up with a list of reasons why children might be forced to work**
- Be prepared to present your reasons to the class.**

**Answers should include:**

- lack of decent jobs for adults;**
- Large families require a variety of incomes to feed their members;**
- Some jobs require small hands and bodies (sewing, crawling in small spaces);**
- agricultural jobs pay by the amount of produce picked=system encourages families to bring more children into the field to help collect farm goods;**
- poor families can't afford to send their children to school;**
- cheaper to pay small children because less likely to complain than adults;**
- many families are unfamiliar with the rights of their children and deem it acceptable to send children to work;**
- girls are often kept home to look after younger children and do household chores;**
- families think that school won't help their children survive and work is where they can make money to feed self and family;**
- migrant children don't live in one place long enough to attend school so work in fields with parents**

**Are there any jobs that children, under any circumstance, should not be permitted to do?**

**Think about it.**

**Do any of the above reasons justify child labor?**

**Should children work to help feed their families?**

**What if a parent is disabled or incapable of providing food for the family, should the child forego school and work instead?**