

# The Hidden Causes of Child Labour

**Aim:** to explore the different causes of child labour around the world.

**Age:** 11 years and over

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Photocopies of cause statements, paper and pens, large sheet of paper for each group, old newspapers, magazines, scissors and glue.



## What to do

Before the activity, cut out the 'cause' cards and hide them around the room. Break into seven groups, or if the numbers are small break into five groups and remove cards 3 and 5.

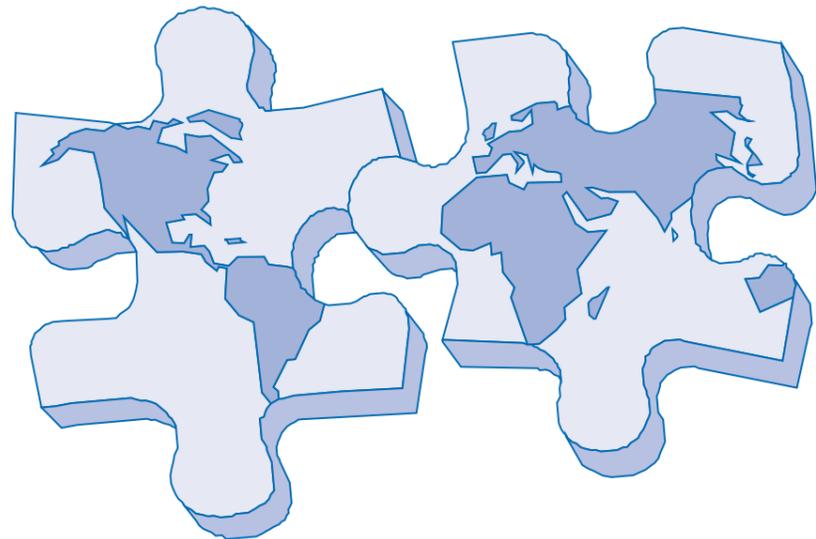
Explain that the groups must find the cause cards, one per group. If two members of a group find a card, collect it and give it to the group at the end that has no card. When the groups find their card, they sit down.

Ask the groups to list two ways in which their 'cause' leads to the exploitation of children and two consequences for the child's future. Give the groups pens and paper and allow ten minutes for this.

Give each group a large sheet of paper. Share out the newspapers and magazines. Explain that they have 20 minutes to make a collage depicting the causes and consequences of child labour. Stick the collages on the walls. Two people from each group explain their collage while the others move around the room to visit the different collages.

## Discussion Suggestions

- What is most responsible for children being exploited?
- Which of the causes should be tackled now and which can be left until later?
- What can we do to tackle the causes of child labour?



## Common Causes of Child Labour

### 1. Poverty

I work on the family farm. I help my mother and father in the fields every day. There's so much to do and we couldn't afford to hire somebody. My contribution helps my parents to put food on the table. Without me, the family would not have enough to eat.

### 2. Poor Education System

I would like to be able to send my children to school but the nearest school is over an hour and a half away. Anyway, we couldn't possibly afford the books, pens and paper, or the exam fees. So much for free education! Besides, my children will learn more by working than sitting in a classroom listening to a teacher who knows barely more than them.

### 3. Small Unregistered Businesses

As the owner of a small factory making carpets, I need to have children working to keep prices down. I know the law says that young children are not allowed to work, but since there are so few inspectors, there is no chance of me being caught.

### 4. Low Cost of Child Labour

It's a matter of profits. If I employed adults, I would have to pay them more and they would want better working conditions. It's easy to control children. If any of them complain, I give them a beating.

### 5. Lack of Child Workers' Organisations

I work stitching footballs. The hours are long and the room is hot and full of dust. If we complain, we get shouted at or beaten. One of the other workers tried to get us to form a group to stand up for our rights, but she was badly beaten and we didn't see her again. I just try and keep my head down.

### 6. Lack of Protection for Children

In my job as a community worker, I see large numbers of children being exploited because society is not able to provide them with appropriate protection. These include children who are abandoned or have been orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic or by floods and other natural disasters. It also includes those recruited as soldiers to fight in the civil war.

### 7. Social Customs and Attitudes

I come from a rich family. We have a maid who is twelve years old. She is from an ethnic minority group in our country. I think that children of poor people and ethnic minorities should have to work. My father who works in the Government says that they are always being urged to make commitments to end the exploitation of children, but it's much cheaper to employ children than adults. Anyway, we are doing her a favour. Her parents have little money to spend on education, so they choose to educate her brothers and the money she earns helps with this.