

Policy Suggestions

Brandon, Mar. 198

March 20 through 22nd a group of high-school students participated in a youth seminar. It engaged them in interactive workshops dealing with issues such as Native cultural awareness, forced labour in Burma, and global action against poverty. The diversity of speakers brought a variety of perspectives to the issue of youth exploitation.

Some points that were addressed, both through the speakers and the provided pamphlets, touched on a variety of concerns. The International Labour Organization estimates that more than 73 million children in the 10 to 14 age group alone were economically active in 1995. This number represents 13.2 per cent of all 10 to 14 year olds around the world. In many countries there is the cultural belief that cash right now is better than education for their children's future.

We recognize that youth exploitation is an issue of poverty, development, and labour rights. Effective action will require a variety of legislative and developmental assistance measures. As a non-profit group we held our conference to educate and to assist in the development of policy alternatives.

Once we considered the problems and recommendations presented at each workshop we decided to categorize them into four groups: support for education, enforced labour laws, social clauses in trade agreements and group credit schemes.

Support for Education

One of the most important actions that governments can take against youth exploitation is to give the priority to funding education.

- The Canadian Government should increase investment in programs and education that promote the rights of children around the world.
- Canada should support effective low-cost education compulsory for all children in foreign countries. Action must be taken to get unemployed adults doing the jobs currently done by children so that children have the opportunity to be educated.

Group Credit Schemes

- Canada should provide funding for nonprofit organizations to work on cooperative micro-enterprise schemes. This would allow individuals the opportunity to get out of debt while being self-sufficient.