

7. Hard evidence of the impact of RUGMARK on the released children's life prospects is not yet available. Children now displaced from carpet manufacturing as a result of RUGMARK, unlike carpets, are not registered and whether they are better-off as a result of no longer working in the carpet industry is not known. The pre-occupation with carpets has not yet been transferred to children.
8. Labels help consumers choose between two or more similar products (detergents, brands of coffee, etc.); but since hand-knotted carpets are typically very individual pieces, the basis for comparison - and for the label to tip the balance in favour of one carpet - is not really there.
9. By themselves, commodity labels are seldom a comprehensive solution, and they carry the risk of not only unsubstantiated claims but of imposing an overly simple logic on complex problems. The challenge is to combine the demand for consumer choice with wider measures to improve public understanding of complex problems. In the case of child labour, a potential problem is that consumers might interpret a label to mean 'no child labour', whereas it might only guarantee no *illegal* child labour.
10. Unlike Germany, Canada is not a society in which hand-knotted carpets are extremely common possessions or purchases. Since these are infrequently purchased in the life of an individual or a family, the opportunity for consumer education through labelling is a small one, and consumers may even be tempted to ignore the label question 'just this once'.
11. The solution to the problem of child labour, especially the most exploitative forms, goes well beyond labelling of products in the export trade. Both the number of children involved and the variety of industries using child labour are such that export-oriented labelling can only affect a very limited number of exploited children.

4.2 Should Canada include the investment in RUGMARK / product labelling in the government's strategy to eliminate child labour?

RUGMARK is still largely experimental; based on assumptions about the influence of regulatory measures in an industry which has been able to avoid regulation for many years. Canada should consider observing RUGMARK, and when the programme begins to show as much interest in registering children as it does carpets to monitor the whereabouts of children, then perhaps consider supporting RUGMARK on the basis of what it can do for children.

At present, it's not known how a consumer based movement can be sustained, nor whether it can and contribute to social change. RUGMARK can heighten public awareness of child labour and possibly the removal of children from the carpet sector; but the question remains, is this enough? Canada must weigh the investment in the experiment versus increasing its focus on a mix of preventative and rehabilitative interventions with far reaching effects.