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Ending Child Labor

“Anderson, think what we're going to do to him.' ... 'We're going to make him the best military commander in history.' 'And then put the fate of the world on his shoulders.'” (Card 36). In *Ender's Game*, child labor is the major human rights issue. Orson Scott Card shows what it is like for a child to not have a choice in the kind of work they do. It harms them physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. They are abused. We see this especially in *Ender's Game* when Ender is pushed to the breaking point and nearly dies at the end of the novel. This is happening to children all around the world every day. To end child labor, we must review laws and make changes to them, reduce poverty around the world, and donate to establishments that are helping to end child labor.

Reviewing and changing labor laws based is exceedingly important in ending child labor. The minimum age convention “sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 (16 under certain strict conditions).” (ILO 2013) Any countries violating these international standards, aside from a few special cases, need to change and update their laws, or even create new ones. In 2005, Congress passed the “Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005.” This act requires the Labor Department to make a list of any goods made from child labor. Though it

may seem minimal in that it only requires a list be made, this act can save lives. People will no longer buy these products if they know, and that will make some of the companies lose business. Updates to existing laws must be done to keep everyone in check and to keep children safe.

Poverty and child labor are linked together very closely; to end child labor, we must end poverty. One way is to create more access to better education, which will create more access to better jobs. This would allow parents to make more money; maybe enough to allow their child to go to school. In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 80% of the poor work on farms. 75% of their children will go hungry each night because they cannot make enough money. 14 million farmers could benefit from irrigation. One irrigation pump has the power to lift a family into the middle class in one harvest. This would give the family enough money to send their child to school for the first time. Many things can be done to reduce poverty around the world, and, thus, end child labor.

Another way to end child labor is through donations to organizations that are working to end it. Compassion, a child charity, is one of these organizations. Compassion is a Christian-based charity organization. They state on their “What We Do” page that they begin “with prenatal care and go all the way through leadership development for qualified young adults. It means we take a long-term approach to what we do and go beyond simple involvement in the lives of the children and families we serve.” They provide care for at risk babies, and train children 12 and older based on their individual talents. Another charity organization is the International Initiative to End Child Labor (IIECL). Their mission is to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. This includes slavery, prostitution, soldiering, and hazardous work. IIECL states that, “education should be the first priority for all children.” By donating money to charities, anyone can contribute to ending child labor.

Of course, many people would be affected by these changes. Companies would be put out of business because of laws that were being broken, and this causes more people to be out of work. However, with the new laws and regulations in place, those people would be able to find better jobs through better education. They would be able to support their families without their children having to work. Children would be the most affected by all of this. They would have more time to focus on their education, and they would not have to worry about how they are going to eat that night or what they must do to keep their families alive.

In short, international law changes and updates should be implemented to prevent child labor. The number of people in poverty must continue to grow smaller. Donations should be given when they can to organizations that are saving children every day. This is not something that can be done by one person or even by one group of people. Everyone must work together for a better world, rich with opportunity for all. All people should look for ways to influence the world around them. If someone has the money, they should consider giving to organizations working to end child labor once and for all.

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