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Albania: 2,400 Children in School Thanks to Unions

Brussels, 11 June 2008 (ITUC OnLine): World Day Against Child Labour on 12 June will be held under the theme "Education is the Right Response to Child Labour". In Albania, where over 40,000 children are working rather than attending school, a project led by two teaching unions (1) has demonstrated how emphasising the importance of education can yield concrete results. The members of the two unions recognise that their job is not limited to teaching alone and that they also have a responsibility towards the children not on the school roll. Thanks to this project, if children do not attend or stop attending school, the teachers go to their home and discuss the reasons with their parents. They try to find solutions with them, to convince them of the vital importance of schooling for the future of the child and the family. The moral authority the teachers enjoy in the community generally helps them to convince the parents. Over 2,400 children, including many from the Roma community, are now back in school or have been saved from dropping out thanks to this trade union project.

The entire Albanian trade union movement is now looking to the success of the teaching unions' project as an example in its efforts to combat child labour. During a round table attended by the ITUC in Tirana on 26 April 2008, a number of unions launched an appeal for international trade union support to assist in the fight against child labour in export manufacturing

[<http://www.fnv.nl/binary/oproep%20Albanese%20vakbonden_tcm7-17453.pdf>](http://www.fnv.nl/binary/oproep%20Albanese%20vakbonden_tcm7-17453.pdf) .

The problem lies in the clothing and footwear sectors, where firms subcontract part of the production out to home workers, some of whom use their children's help, making it difficult for them to keep up with their schooling. The indecent prices international buyers impose on Albanian firms go some way towards explaining this exploitation and the need for international trade union action.

(1) FSASH and SPASH, affiliated to Education International

For further information, also see the Union View on child labour in Albania and the project of the Albanian unions:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article1204>

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates. Website: <<http://www.ituc-csi.org>>

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