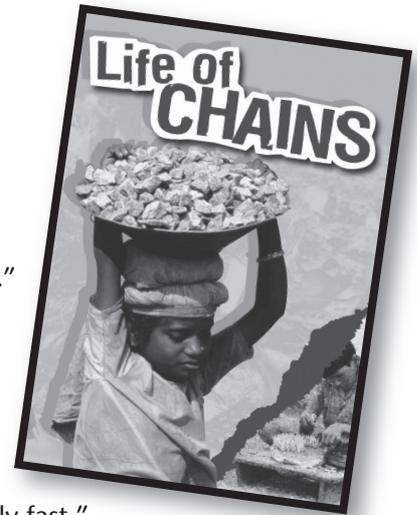


Life of Chains

Young people

- "I've worked at a supermarket and I baby-sit sometimes."
"I work in a department store."
"I help my mum around the house sometimes."
"I'm currently working as a sales assistant at a shoe store."
"I've been doing a pamphlet run for about 2 months."
"I work at home with my mum and I help her out, and do housework and stuff."
"I'm a salesperson for a men's clothing chain."
"I work in a meat department at a supermarket. Not exactly a glorious job but it brings in the money."
"Why do I work? Just to get some extra money, you know, so I can buy my clothes and my stereo and stuff."
"I spend it on movies or whatever – CD's, music, anything really. It goes really fast."
"I get about \$50 a month which is quite good cause I save it up and buy softball gear."
"I just spend it on clothes or music, concerts and stuff like that."
"Like everybody else, you just get money so you can go places and do stuff."
"Felt good, cause when I move out of home I'll have to be doing that by myself."
"It's quite hard ... cause you have to stand all day and your legs get really tired."
"On your feet all day gets a bit of a problem – sore legs, get a bit tired."
"Yeah, it's quite hard when you have to go out and it's raining, it's real annoying."



Narrator

Around the world, the words 'hard work' can mean very different things. Many cultures rely on the children to help support the family. But in some places, children work long hours in atrocious conditions. How much work is too much? Where is the point where kids are being exploited?"

Young people

- "Any sort of work is too much work for a kid, I reckon."
"It's not on that kids work hard out all day and they only get 50 cents."
"Surely when you're older you're going to have to work for the rest of your life so those childhood years should be the years where you do what you want."

Life of Chains

Narrator

Kuntear is ten years old, and lives in Cambodia. When her father died, her mother went away to find a job, but never came home. So Kuntear and her six-year-old sister went to live with their aunt in Phnom Penh, the capital city. Her aunt was very poor, and couldn't afford both food and extra school fees. So Kuntear started scavenging in the Stung Mean Chey rubbish dump. Each day, amongst the swarms of flies, she would hunt through piles of rotten, filthy garbage looking for paper, plastic and metal to sell for recycling. Then she would clean herself up as best as she could, and go to school for a few hours. After school, she helped with the family chores. She had no time to play or have fun.



Scenes in a fireworks factory in India, children filling fireworks tubes, scraping gunpowder into trays, cutting fuses, winding strings of firecrackers together. People scarred by accidents.

Narrator

Easwari is 13. She used to work in a fireworks factory a lot like this one. She took the work to help buy rice for her family. For working six 12-hour days a week, Easwari was paid around \$1.40. She was only seven years old when she started working - even though the factory foreman knew it was against the law for anyone under 14 to work in this kind of factory. The work is very dangerous - in this room, kids are filling firecracker tubes with chemicals. In the room next door, they coat the fuses with gunpowder. Three years ago, some sparks caused an explosion which badly burned Easwari and killed her sister, along with thirteen other children. Easwari was in hospital for three months before her wounds healed. And accidents like this are happening all the time.

Young people

"It just makes me sad to see all this stuff going on in under developed countries."

"Quite stink. I mean, here we are for Guy Fawkes, two seconds of a fire cracker, and here they are risking their life just to make this 2 seconds of ours to go 'Wow'. It's not fun."

"It just makes me really sick how people can be so greedy that they'd let people die just so they can get some money and that they'd do that to other human beings when they're a human being too. And what makes them so special that they should get all this money when all these other people are like practically dying just to make this stuff for them."

"They're risking other people's lives for the enjoyment of everybody else's lifestyle. These children getting burnt and blown up by the firecracker factories - when something goes wrong, they can't do nothing about it. The mess gets cleaned up and nothing is said about it."

Scenes of brickmaking, with young children packing mud into frames, stacking the frames, emptying out the finished bricks and then stacking them in huge piles.

Narrator

These kids have to work horribly long hours making bricks. The mud needs direct hot sunlight to dry hard, so that is where the kids have to work - under the hot sun. The work is hard and heavy, and the pay is lousy. When young kids are forced to work like this for too long, they often suffer severe muscle strain - over the long term, they can be damaged permanently, since their bodies don't get the rest or the energy they need to develop properly.

Scenes of rock-breaking in Bangladesh with children and entire families amongst the huge piles of gravel.

Narrator

These kids in Bangladesh are working with their families breaking rocks into gravel. They sit out here in the sun, day in, day out, amongst these huge hills of rock, smashing the stones. The gravel gets used to make roads and concrete. As well as stifling heat, they have to put up with choking dust that could eventually damage their lungs. For a lot of these people, they'll be here for the rest of their lives.

Young people

"Pretty sickening to think that the kids are just there, that's all they're doing. What sort of life is that? Just sitting there, breaking up little rocks to go on some road so the big rich people can drive their Rolls Royces down it."

"If I was one of those people over there, I'd be ... I'd just want to, I'd rather want to die."

Scenes of match making, with kids boxing matches and working with phosphorus.

Narrator

This factory makes matches. And it is the children who have the dangerous job of working with raw phosphorus. It's poisonous to breathe or even touch - yet they are surrounded with the stuff and handling it all day.

Scenes of children working in a Cambodian factory.

Narrator

Sometimes kids are sold into slavery by their own families. Usually, these families are so far in debt they see this as the only way they can pay back the money they owe. So the children end up chained in a factory.

Young people

"I just think it's really bizarre how all over the match's packets that say 'don't let them go near children' and all that ... and yet the children are making the matches."

"It made me kind of sad 'cause I've got a little brother and sister and they could be doing that or something."

"I thought – like working at my business is hard, where you're always rushing round. You think you feel you're, like you're going really fast. You know, rushing around and serving all these customers ... but when you look at them, how fast they're moving, you realise that compared to them, you've still got it easy. It's just a sweet job."

"You get these kids walking around in dumps and stuff, scavenging away and you get little kids working with phosphorus and you'll people all around the world sitting back watching clips just like that and they'll say, "That's a shame, poor kids." But it's like no one does anything to help it. We just sit back in our western countries, just content to let it keep going and ... I guess a little bit of blame can fall back on us, and we need to do something about it."

Why are children made to work?

Scenes of both rural and urban poverty.

Narrator

Millions of families around the world don't have enough resources to cover their basic needs. Even if they can afford adequate food and shelter, things like medicine, school and even clothing for the kids are out of reach. And any sudden events like an illness, loss of a job, a natural disaster, or even a family wedding can stretch their resources past breaking point.

Scenes of adults working at hard menial tasks, families travelling into the city, and scenes of urban slums.

Narrator

These families have got three choices - they can earn more money, borrow money, or give up. Earning more money is difficult. The parents are already working as hard and as many hours as they can - and they don't have the skills to get higher paying jobs. They go to the city in the hope of earning more, but often end up living on the streets. The kids need to help earn money if they want to keep the family together.

Scenes of children working in a textile factory, working on looms, and other manual work.

Narrator

The second choice is borrow money. But the only people who'll lend money to a very poor family are moneylenders who charge high interest rates. Often the family can't earn enough to pay the interest back, let alone the original loan. So the moneylender "bonds" a family member - usually a child - to work for them until the loan is paid back. In some cases, it can take 3 or 4 years to pay back as little as fifty dollars. And if a family needs more money, then they'll have to bond another child.

Scenes of street kids.

Narrator

The third choice is give up. Parents abandon the kids, or the kids run away, hoping for a better life. Either way, the children end up left to fend for themselves on the street and in low-paying jobs.

Young people

"It just doesn't seem real, I guess. Cause just watching it, it could just be a story. You just can't comprehend it and if you've never seen anything like that, if you've never been over there, I find it ... pretty hard myself to imagine it just being around all these luxuries, you just couldn't imagine a kid scrounging through the dump."

"I couldn't understand how, no matter how bad things get, I couldn't imagine my parents selling me."

"It shows the difference is, how we work for leisure and stuff, and they work to live, to survive."

What are the immediate effects?

Narrator

Work like this affects children physically and psychologically. They risk getting injured or even killed in dangerous work accidents because of inadequate safety measures. Long hours and unhygienic conditions mean they get more infections and diseases, as well as suffer from physical strain and poor development. Many children are beaten by their boss or attacked and robbed. They have to cope with the trauma of being threatened, mistreated, or forced to do something against their will.

Young people

"It makes you realise that you could have been born into a different family and that could be you."

"The physical part of them – like they could have even a life term injury and they'll still have to work with that. But like us, we could get days off work just to go to the doctors and get medicine for it. They can't do that, they've got to live with it."

What are the long-term effects?

Narrator

These children get little or no education, since schooling costs money, and the families couldn't survive without the kids working full time. The odds are against these kids ever learning how to read or write. And if they don't get education, they don't get to learn new skills. So even when they grow up, they'll be stuck in low-paying unskilled jobs or unemployed. This is when the cycle begins again - because as adults they won't earn enough to care for their own children, their kids will probably have to work as well. So the chain continues.

Young people

"It makes you think about all the things we take for granted, like watches and jewellery and that, whereas they're trying to make this money to buy clothes and a pair of shoes. I mean, most of us have at least two pairs of shoes, and they don't have any."

"I know for a fact that I couldn't do the work that they do, because I do a seven or eight hour day at work, and then I come home and I sit there and complain for the next three hours, and go back to bed and go to sleep and then wake up in the morning and complain again about having to go to work to do another seven or eight hours. It's just like them. They're doing 14 or 15 hours and then they're doing it every single day, in the heat and their conditions are so much worse, and I don't think I could survive and do that. It would be like way too much."

"How would you feel like being bonded to one of those companies or being sold and owned by one of those factories? You'd like lose all sense of self worth and it's like, as if you're like a machine."

Who puts them to work and why?

Scenes of children performing specialised tasks - stamping down bolts of cloth in the textile factory, winding firecrackers together, loading matches in boxes, sorting threads on looms.

Narrator

Lots of people are happy to employ kids. Some employers may make so little profit they cannot afford to provide for their own families unless they employ children. Children get paid less, they do what they are told and they are less likely to fight back if they are abused. In a lot of jobs, their small size makes people think they're better at some tasks than adults. And they can't quit, because they have nowhere else to go.

Sometimes they're trapped because of their position in the community - their family's caste or class - or sometimes even gender can make a huge difference to the way they are treated.

Sometimes, the Government considers the way these bosses treat the children working for them as illegal. But no-one speaks out against them, because these employers are the main source of money in the area. In some places, there are no laws at all protecting the children who work in these conditions. These countries are often so far in debt that they see the work children do as an easy way of increasing exports, and attracting multinational companies to set up factories based on cheap child labour. There are countries where children have begun to protest against this exploitation - but in most places, they keep their heads down and their mouths shut.

What is the world doing to stop child labour?

Narrator

The United Nations has written a convention that describes the rights and needs of children. It also describes the responsibilities of adults and governments towards children and families. The Convention on the Rights of the Child covers three main areas...

The Right to Survival - this covers the most urgent needs of basic healthcare, clean water, adequate food and shelter. Without all of these, children die.

The Right to Protection - kids are vulnerable and need protection from abuse and neglect. This is especially true in times of war and other danger, and

The Right to Develop - to be a real part of society, children need education and recreation. They need opportunities to develop in all aspects of community life.

Child labour infringes on all of these rights - it puts kids in danger. There's a big difference between working for a living and working to stay alive. Because we're talking about a cycle that runs for generations, it's a very hard pattern to break. But you can see people are doing something about it. Education, community support and income generation programmes are working around the world to help eliminate the grinding poverty that families face. Which means less chance of the children being sent to work.

Young people

"Instead of like paying an extra 50 cents or changing the price or something, you could just not buy one shirt ... Skip your pair of Nike shoes or something and buy some cheaper ones, or not buy that shirt that you wanted and maybe give a bit of money directly to the organisation that's going to help these guys. Sure you can buy stuff that'll keep the guys in labour but maybe it'll be better off just giving money directly to something that's going to help these guys straight up."

"What it comes down to really is that if people just think "What can I Do? I can't do anything – just little old me – I can't do anything" it's just a 'huge as' problem. But you can just start off by yourself."

"It's got to start somewhere, so just start with yourself, basically."

"We don't have to give physical things. I mean, we could spread awareness, we can tell all our mates at school there's a real problem overseas with child labour."

"I think that people who live in wealthy countries or countries that don't use kids for labour should speak up, because if the kids speak up they'd probably be scared again of getting a hiding or being abused."

"So if we can go out and tell other people about that and then they maybe would catch onto the same awareness and same motivation to go and help someone. Cause it's not that hard if everyone puts in their little bit. But as long as each of us says 'Oh nuh, I can't do anything. What would my money do or what would my time do?' then nothing will be done. We've got to try and do something about it."

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves."

The Bible, Proverbs 31:8