

ACE (Action against Child Exploitation)URL: www.acejapan.org

ACE was established in 1997 and its mission is to eradicate and prevent child labour in the world. Focusing on child labour in agriculture, its projects address the cocoa industry in Ghana and the cotton industry in India. ACE has rescued 1,637 children from child labour and provided them with education, and supported 13,263 children to go to school regularly by improving school environment in each of its project communities. ACE's efforts in Japan include mobilising citizens to its cause and collaboration with private sectors and trade unions through its awareness raising activities. The number of people involved amounts to more than 1.61 million.

Child Labour in Japan

The Sustainable Development Goal 8 Target 7 is “Ending child labour by 2015 all over the world.” ACE (Action against Child Exploitation) is determined to contribute to the achievement of this target not only in developing countries but also in Japan. On the basis of twenty years of experience in conducting activities on elimination of child labour and promotion of education, ACE started taking actions by carrying out research on child labour in Japan.

Definition of child labour in Japan

- Minimum age for work: fifteen years old (after nine years of compulsory education)
- Ban on hazardous work: eighteen years old

Japanese government's commitments

The Japanese Government has ratified:

- Convention on the Rights of the Child (in 1994)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (in 2005)
- ILO Convention No. 138, Minimum Age Convention (in 2000)
- ILO Convention No. 182, the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (in 2001)

Japanese laws related to child labour:

- Labour Standards Act (1947)
- Child Welfare Act (1947)
- Act on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business, etc. (1948)
- Act on Regulation and Punishment of Acts Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children (1999)
- Act on Regulation on Soliciting Children by Using Opposite Sex Introducing Service on Internet (2003)

Violation of laws related to child labour

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Labour Standards Act	230	222	277	291	297
(Minimum age)	(13)	(21)	(16)	(21)	(16)
(Hazardous work)	(21)	(31)	(29)	(39)	(25)
Human trafficking (below twenty years old)	n/a	2	6	5	8
Act on Control and Improvement of Amusement Business, etc. (use of children)	260	261	212	227	205
Child pornography	1,445	1,596	1,644	1,828	1,938
Child prostitution via internet	n/a	299	297	334	402

Case 1: Violation of the minimum age for work

A junior high school boy (fourteen years old) worked as a part-time worker, and died at a construction site in 2012. Later, it was found that 27 students worked or were suspected to have worked between 2004 and 2012 in Ashikaga city.

Case 2: Violation of the engagement in hazardous work

Boys below eighteen years old worked in the nuclear power plant in Fukushima or engaged in decontamination work in Fukushima and Ibaraki.

Case 3: Human Trafficking

Five girls below eighteen years old were rescued from human trafficking in 2015. They were detained for forced prostitution.

Case 4: JK business and enjo kosai (compensated dating)

In JK business, girls are employed to entertain men by providing such services, as hugging, simple massaging, going to karaoke, and chatting in private rooms. This business is said to be a hotbed of child prostitution. Police is tightening control on JK business, while managers find loopholes of laws and create new types of business. In one case, a man was arrested on charges of using twelve-year old girl for providing simple massaging to men.

Case 5: Child pornography

A father forced his daughter to wear micro bikinis and be taken photos. It started when she was five years old. The father and a cameraman were arrested by police. The girl said that she did not like it, but did so because her family need money.

Our action

Awareness on human rights including child's rights is low in Japan. At present, one out of seven children are living below the poverty line, but the government neither has comprehensive data on child poverty and child labour, nor taken sufficient measures. ACE is going to advocate protection of child rights based on the survey results, and conduct a new project to support children and parents, in particular single mothers, of low-income families, in order to prevent children from being engaged in illegal work and provide proper education in Japan.