

## About UNICEF Canada

UNICEF is the world's leading child-focused humanitarian and development agency. Through innovative programs and advocacy work, UNICEF secures children's rights in virtually every country. UNICEF's global reach, unparalleled influence on policymakers, and diverse partnerships make it an instrumental force in shaping a world fit for children. UNICEF is supported entirely by voluntary donations and helps all children, regardless of race, religion or politics.

## Webkinz Foundation supports UNICEF in tackling child labour in Bangladesh

Day in and day out, children as young as five years old break up discarded batteries with hammers in order to remove the recyclable carbon rods and pieces of reusable metal. Working environments in some factories are so polluted and hazardous that most suffer from chest and eye infections. In conditions often lit by a single sixty-watt light bulb or a small window, these children labour for hours. The work is hard and everything, including walls, ceilings and even the children's faces, is covered with black carbon dust.

Millions of children across the world are victims of exploitation, abuse and child labour. In Bangladesh, children account for about 44 percent of its estimated population of 135 million and child labour is a major concern. In 2006 a shocking survey revealed that approximately 13 percent of children aged 5 to 14 years were involved in child labour.

Child labourers are extremely vulnerable. They are forced into dangerous situations and risk grave harm from trafficking, exploitation, physical or sexual abuse, forced domestic labour and begging or prostitution. Some children slave for hours just to eat one decent meal. Their wages are paltry. Depending upon their speed and strength, they can earn between 30 and 50 taka (40 to 70 cents) per day. For the younger children it can often take more than a week to earn the equivalent of just one or two Canadian dollars.

UNICEF, the world's leading child-focused humanitarian and development agency, upholds the right of every child to grow up protected from harm. UNICEF works to create safe, protective environments in which all children are free from violence, exploitation, and unnecessary separation from family. The only organization named in the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* as a source of expertise for governments, UNICEF is uniquely positioned to promote changes that help children grow up unharmed.

Thanks to supporters such as Webkinz Foundation, UNICEF can continue working in Bangladesh, as in many other countries around the world, to tackle the issue of child labour and help secure a better future for vulnerable children.