

Child Labour Unions: AEJT Senegal

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Note

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- **Working Children's Movements in Peru. (van den Berge, M.)**
- **Child Labour Organisations in Eastern Africa. Still in the Making. (Nimbona, G & Kristoffel Lieten)**
- **Working Children's Organisations in India. (Heike Roschanski)**

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Glossary

AMWCY	African Movement of Working Children and Youth is a network of associations of working children and youth (for children and by children) in different countries of Africa, all supported by ENDA Jeunesse Action in Dakar. (In French: Mouvement Africain des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs; MAEJT)
AWCY	Association of Working Children and Youths. This is the regional chapter (at the city or provincial level) within the AMWCY. (In French: Association des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs; AEJT)
Groupe de Base	Local chapter of the AMWCY at grassroots level. The number of children in the Groupes de Base of the AEJT Dakar varies between 15 and 60 members.
WCY	Working Child and Youth; the membership of the AEJT entitles a child to call him or herself a WCY. (In French: Enfant et Jeune Travailleur; EJT)
Ainé(e)	An adult and experienced WCY
EDM	Employées de Maison (domestic maids); exclusively girls
FF	Filles en Formation (home economics training for young women). They help in household tasks or economic undertakings in the household. They are generally school dropouts. Their work is light compared to the work done by EDMs.
Apprenti	Apprentice (carpenter, solder, car mechanic, etc.)
AGR	Activités Génératrices de Revenues (Income Generating Activities)
ENDA T.M.	ENDA Tiers Monde (Environment Development and Action) is one of the largest South-South NGOs in Africa)
ENDA J.A.	ENDA Jeunesse Action (department dealing with children and youths)
Animateurs	ENDA staff supervising the programmes as the link between the children and the supporting structures.
Moniteurs	Adults in charge of WCY alphabetisation or/and skills training in a groupe de base

Preface

This report is part of a general study on the conditions of working children with a specific focus on the impact of self-organisation among a limited sample of organisations of working children in various countries. The research gives a partial answer to the general question as to which strategies and measures are conducive to ensuring the best interests of child labourers. It intends to give an informed answer as to whether child labour organisations make sense as a best practice.

The purpose is to analyse how working children in selected developing countries have been organised; and how, by their participation/non-participation in organised movements, they have effected changes in their working circumstances, in their self-esteem and in their futures. Many positive outcomes have been claimed by child labour unions/associations, but independent research has yet to establish whether the lofty ideals are being realised, and whether or not such unions are in reality condoning child labour.

The African Movement of Working Children and Youths (AMWCY) has been active since the early 1990s. It has contributed in a significant way to the international debates on child rights and the protection of working children. With funds granted by Save the Children Sweden, and through the technical backstopping provided by ENDA in Dakar, it has maintained a network of child-run based groups in various countries of Africa. ENDA works to organise the children, in an attempt to assist them in achieving their basic rights and protecting themselves from exploitation. The central management infrastructure at Dakar and the organisation of technical missions (*mission d'appui*) are important tools for accomplishing their aims. The centralisation of the management creates a common, pan-African approach.

Financial support for the research was granted Plan International in the Netherlands. At no point did Plan interfere with the way the research was conducted, nor with the presentation of the results. The support was immensely useful, and there is no better way to express our gratitude than by presenting a solid report, which will be useful for policy discussions.

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Introduction

This report aims to describe how the AMWCY and its supporting institutions are organised, before focussing on the activities of the AMWCY and the impact of the organisation on working children. But first let us draw the attention to the theoretical and contextual aspects of this study.

Child labour is a reality in many regions of the world, particularly in the Third World. Estimates on the numbers of child labourers vary enormously. ILO has put the number of children for whom work is the primary activity at 210 million. Many of them may be working in family undertakings, including agriculture, or in domestic situations. A number of these activities may not call for an immediate ban. A significant number of children, however, are involved in work of which the circumstances have been identified as 'worst forms', and as requiring an immediate and effective action for its eradication.

There are many ethical, social and economic reasons for children to go to school full-time rather than to work, and efforts to eliminate child labour should most definitely continue. However, the stark reality is that many millions of children do work and for a considerable time will unfortunately continue to work. Economic circumstances and lack of government interest have left many families and their children at the margins of society and make it necessary that the children contribute to the family income. Many child labour specialists and academics have therefore argued that the focus should be on ameliorating the circumstances under which children are made to work; they have thereby taken a stand against the abolitionists (see Myers and Boyden 1998 and in Lieten and White 2001). We believe it to be dangerous to accept poverty as a given and to agree that children need to work; this position means developing policies that accept injustices to these children. Improve the worst conditions, but do so with abolition in mind for the long run.

Ameliorating the working conditions of children involves an organised effort. One could imagine civil society organisations, including trade unions and employers' organisations, taking up this challenge and in the process working towards the abolition of child labour altogether. That would be one alternative to accepting conditions as they are and to focussing energy and resources on establishing trade unions for child labourers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the degree of organisation and the participation of working children in child labour unions. This study will attempt to get a picture of what working children are capable of. How and to what degree the child labourers are organised and to what extent their social, cultural and economic backgrounds impact upon the degree of participation in the organisations. It is an under-researched area, with nevertheless far-reaching implications for the implementation of the ILO Conventions on child labour and the application of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The ILO Conventions on child labour and the CRC provide the foundation to this research. Particularly important questions in this regard are whether or not the child labour organisations are helping to:

- Promote the implementation of the international standards on child labour, or whether they are helping to circumvent it;
- Increase the level of participation and empowerment of the children involved, or whether they reinforce conditions of marginalisation;
- Heighten the levels of awareness and self-esteem, or whether they help to reinforce existing conditions while simply doing some window-dressing.

Chapter 1

ENDA & AMWCY: Organisational Structure

ENDA Jeunesse was set up in Dakar, Senegal, in 1985 in response to emerging issues of child neglect, particularly in regards to street children. Gradually, starting with the inclusion of housemaids, a wider selection of children was included: not only children living on the streets but also those engaged in economic activities on the streets and in workshops. Up to around 1990 the approach was to act and decide on behalf of the children. It was then decided, in the wake of the UN CRC, that ENDA would start to support child protagonism, whereby the children themselves take part in decision making and the adults support them in their initiatives.

The breakthrough for the new approach of effective child participation is reported to have come from the involvement in a national survey on child labour in Senegal in 1992, for which ENDA was asked to do the qualitative study on young housemaids. The emerging contacts with housemaids led to their successful participation in the May Day celebrations in 1994, together with other child workers. In one of the reports it is stated: 'This was the spark that triggered the formation of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth'.

ENDA has played a decisive role in the formation of the AMWCY, and continues to support it, but officially it is stressed that the children manage the organisation themselves and that ENDA is only a technical support structure (*structure d'appui technique*).

This structure provides a number of supporting mechanisms that help the children to build up expertise and guide them in campaigns and in lobbying with national authorities and international organisations. For example, the African Training Programme (ATP) organises workshops, which last several weeks and which provide training to selected children who are brought in from different countries. It offers courses such as:

- Participative research and action
- Counselling
- Income generating activities
- Communication
- Alternative education

The technical support has been instrumental in supporting and sustaining the activities of the various groups that have been established in different countries. Without it, many groups would not have come into existence, and the pan-African appeal for an institute focussing on child rights and child participation would not have developed.

The AMWCY was created in 1994 by working children delegates from 5 African countries (Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea). ENDA was instrumental in bringing these children together. In the course of the following ten years many local groups

in various African countries were added and the applications for membership by a number of local groups in various countries are pending. Admission into the organisation is decided upon by the Rencontre Régionale, the major decision making body, which meets every second or third year¹. From each city (or provincial) WCY committee, 4 delegates attend: a male child, a female child, a youth and an *animateur*. It is desirable that the children attending the meeting are elected; that is unfortunately not always the case. Because of the logistics involved in travelling to a meeting, such as requiring a passport and preferably speaking one of the conference languages, the representatives are normally appointed by the co-ordinators, rather than elected by the local WCY.

The regional committee (Commission Regionale) meets in the intervening year and one delegate (le/la délégué nationale) per country attends. The CR monitors the progress, prepares the next Rencontre and allocates the budget. It also decides on the admission of new members. In addition, regional thematic meetings are organised on a regular basis, e.g. meetings on alternative education, remunerative activities, communication techniques, etc. These meetings are attended by a limited number of children and youths from each country.

If a group would like to join the AMWCY then it needs to have *groupes de base* that have conducted activities, a plan of action and a local support group (une institution d'appui). Over the years AWCYs from the following countries have joined the movement:

- Angola
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Congo
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Ethiopia
- Gambia
- Guinea Bissau
- Guinea Conakry
- Madagascar
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Niger
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- Chad
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Zimbabwe

¹ The 6th Meeting took place in Thiès, Senegal (7-19 April 2003). The earlier meetings were held at Bouaké (Côte, July 1994), Bamako (October – November, 1995), Ouagadougou (October 1996), Popenguine, Sénégal (February 1998), and Bamako (Mali, 31 October – 14 November 00).

AMWCY represents 400 groups in 57 towns in these countries. The structure of the movement is presented as follows:

- Groupes de Base: at grassroots level, groups of working children engaged in comparable labour environments and living in the same area
- AWCY in a city or rural region coordinating the grassroots groupes de base
- National Group
- Regional Commission

Any working boy or girl in the local area is a potential member of the grassroots groupe de base. They can register with the local organisation and then become 'card holding members' upon payment of a small card fee and a monthly contribution.



Association delegates in Ziguinchor

AMWCY Senegal-Gambia gathering in Ziguinchor (April 2004): delegates from the various associations are showing the names of their respective region. One may notice that they are not children anymore and do not seem to represent poor working children. Just to get an idea of the ages of the participants: among the 23 WCY delegates present in Ziguinchor, the youngest was 15 years old, and the oldest was 30 years' old; only 8 delegates were under 18 years. The average age was 20.6.

Depending on the size of the local membership, there is a further subdivision in area groups or in professional groups, but the latter usually does not happen. In most cases the local group has boys and girls belonging to different professions, and that means that the groups actually function more as interest groups rather than trade union organisations.

Ideally, the members in the subgroups elect from amongst themselves such functionaries as the president, vice-president, secretary, accountant, etc. They are expected to meet on a regular basis for discussions and activities. They can also take part in the activities of the city AWCY, which combines the different area groups and which also has an (elected) board with a president, secretary, etc. The organisational structure at the local level has the essential

elements of a democratic system, but it also appears that the appointed functionaries have a more than proportionate influence over the management and policies of the local and national AWCY.

At the local level, the animateurs play an essential role. They are supposed to oversee the process, suggest the type of activities and bring the children into contact with the outside world. The animateurs are usually paid a salary by a local partner organisation, which could be either an NGO (Caritas, Save the Children, WAO, etc.) or a government department.

The African charter of child rights, established by the AMWCY, is said to have been created by the working children themselves. At Bouake (Côte d'Ivoire), where the 12 rights were conceived in 1994, working children from Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina, and *animateurs* from some additional countries were in attendance. 'Only twelve rights were proposed because we were only twelve in number' (ENDA Jeunesse 2001: 13). The following list was composed:

- The right to read and write
- The right to express oneself and get organised
- The right to be taught a trade
- The right to play and leisure
- The right to health care
- The right to be listened to
- The right to rest when sick
- The right to work in safety
- The right to be respected and dignity
- The right to stay in the village
- The right to do light and limited work
- The right to equitable justice

The AMWCY agrees with the right to education in the CRC (and the African Charter of Child Rights) but stresses that education should be more pragmatic, in line with the actual lives of children, who need more of 'une formation pratique'. Such education could be provided by the state or by individual employers. The right to read and write is one of the rights children should have, but the AMWCY stresses that education is different from schooling in the sense that it is a much wider term. It wants 'literacy courses that can be combined with their work (in classes that allow them to have parallel activities, thus after the working day is over). In view of their appreciation of the importance of vocational education, they want to combine work and training. They insist on 'adapted forms of education, thus flexible and non-obligatory' (Bada et al. 2000).

'The right to work' is a request that seems to particularly deviate from the concept of child rights as stipulated in the CRC and the ILO conventions. The international conventions have been important, leaders of ENDA argue, but rights are 'stemming from God and culture rather than from international conventions', and 'by appropriating their rights, by rebuilding them through their own experience, African children not only become the defenders of their own

rights, but also the builders of rights with immediate effect on everyday life’ (Coly & Terenzio, 2004).

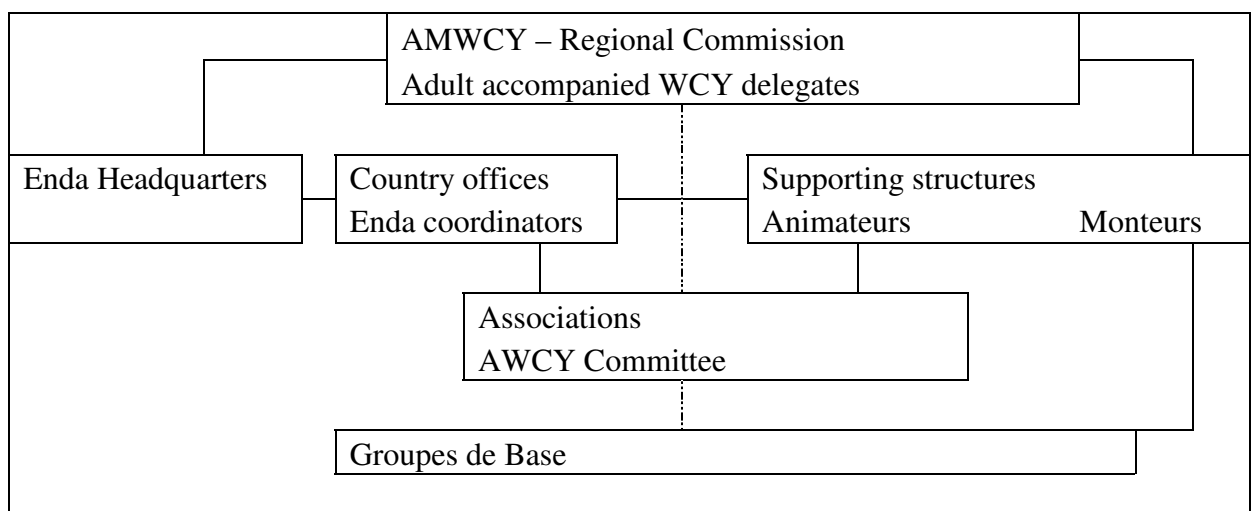
The right to work is highly controversial. The documents of the organisation argue that laws should take into consideration the capacities of children rather than their age, and ‘a minimum age regulation actually means that children are not allowed to work for their survival’. Work ‘is not a matter of age but of the power and the capacity to perform’, and article 32 (a) of the CRC (note: against work that harms children) is regarded as ‘a clear example of the perverse effects of excessive ethical attitudes’.

The right to respect is considered to support the right to work: the working children should not be treated with contempt and disdain, but ‘they want their professions and their contribution to the national economy to be respected’ (Bada et al. 2000). Also, the right to express themselves and to organise themselves is a right that should allow the children to defend their interests as the movement of working children and youth (rather than as children).

The 12 rights were adopted at a small gathering of working children, youths and ENDA staff, and it seems as if the charter has never been contested. It remains an important anchor for the organisation, and the impact of the organisation at each regional conference is measured in terms of these rights.

The system of partnerships between the AMWCY and the supporting structures is quite complex. According to Coly (a staff member of ENDA), the organisation has a three level structure: the AWCYs are composed of groupes de base, the coordination committee at the country level and the AMWCY at a pan-African level.

The chart below gives an idea of the organisational structure of the AMWCY and the ENDA. The solid line shows how the adults coordinate activities of the AMWCY through ENDA and other supporting structures. The link between the regional commission (highest body of the AMWCY) and the local level is represented by a discontinued line because of the perceived weakness of the communication between the top and the grassroots level.



Organisational chart of the AMWCY and its Supporting Structures

The complexity of the movement is a serious problem, the more so since adult functionaries control many of the institutions. The presence of ‘children’ on the bodies of the AMWCY does not amount to a command of the supporting organisation ENDA, nor indeed of the AMWCY itself.

The method by which the WCYs are selected to participate in important events, training workshops, committees and meetings is not transparent. They are basically chosen by the *animateurs* and are not delegated by WCY peers. The selection is not followed-up by an efficient communication system that could improve the transmission of information back to the grassroots level. For example, a WCY delegation was sent to the World Conference of the Working Children’s Movements in Berlin (April 2004). The national delegate of Senegal, who lives in Dakar and speaks French quite well, did not, upon her return, even attempt to communicate the outcome of the conference to the *groupes de base*. The Berlin Declaration, which was supposed to have been the result of a democratic process of unions and associations of child labourers, never became, to our knowledge, an issue within the *groupes de base*. A democratic body requires an adequate communication system, but it seems as though none is in place within the AMWCY.

The technical support which ENDA gives to the AMWCY is easy to summarise but less easy to monitor and assess. It is said that the technical support is provided by adult experts and experienced youths of the AMWCY, and that this mechanism manages and monitors the interregional activities and is available to local groups in order to solve problems, to do lobbying, to initiate new initiatives or to organise formation building activities. Some of the more visible products of that technical support are:

- The active participation of the AMWCY at international meetings (Kundapur, Amsterdam, UNGASS, Lima, Oslo, Cairo, etc.);
- Their publications, particularly the annual bulletin (*Défi des EJT*) and such occasional booklets as *Voice of African Children* and *Education: Alternatives Africaines*²;
- The reports of the meetings, e.g. *Les Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs Décident. 5ème Rencontre du MAEJT*.

Other technical support, which appears central to the relationship between ENDA and AMWCY, includes the technical training (formation technique). This can take on two forms: the invitation of youths to a central workshop or the visit of an *animateur* to the local grassroots to instruct the local members.

The central workshops can be organised in any of the participating countries. For some of the central workshops additional funds are requested. These funds make it possible to get children and youths, and their accompanying adults, to the workshops and to provide training

² See: ENDA Tiers Monde, *Education: Alternatives Africaines*. ENDA, *Etudes et Recherches*, No 222-3; ENDA Tiers Monde, *Voix des Enfants d’Afrique*. ENDA Editions, *Etudes et Recherches*, No 200-1. The complex language, the level of abstraction, and the strong focus on the work suggests that these texts, if really written by children, have been edited so much by adults that they serve more as a p.r. stunt than as text books that can indeed capture the attention of working children in Africa.

for a number of weeks in such subjects as accounting, communication, lobbying, and so forth; or on specific topics, such as HIV/AIDS and child trafficking.

The African Training Programme (ATP) has been in place since 1991. Workshops are organised on a regular basis.³ ENDA states that children are associated with the ATP and that the skills they acquire through its training programmes (technical missions) are passed on to all members. The ATP programme is currently composed of the following modules:

- Introduction to participative approach
- Participative action research (PAR)
- Listening and mediation
- Evaluation
- Alternative education
- Income generating activities (AGR)
- Communication

ENDA has identified a number of problems with these workshops. Capacity building, income generation, protection and health care are important objectives, but since technical missions focus on the more intelligent and more responsive children, only very few members actually attend such meetings. The communication within the groups and between the groups is not adequate; the information often never gets to the *groupes de base* because the group delegate does not share the information or doesn't even attend the technical meetings. Many groups have never been present at the training workshops, and AMWCY does not have an alternative system of spreading the information.

The technical missions, which visit the member countries, face similar problems. The problem of passing on the knowledge to the actual members is compounded by the lack of transportation (the local units are supposed to be responsible for local hospitality but there may be a lack of resources or the necessary level of interest), the illiteracy (many members do not understand French), and also the fact that missions seem to have been decided upon in Dakar without the explicit requirements expressed at the city level or by the base groups.

³ For example, a workshop on community capacity building was organised in Niamey, Niger, financed by Caritas, SKN, UNICEF and others. Children from 9 countries participated. They were instructed in aspects related to such things as internal communication, writing techniques and illustrations for disseminating knowledge and lobbying with the authorities and the different partners. They were also sent into the field to put their new knowledge of communication into practice with the groups.

Chapter 2

The AMWCY Participatory Approach

Fabrizio (ENDA J.A.) and Don Mc Fee (Regional Adviser Plan International) provided us with relevant information about the AMWCY. We were also able to observe a number of meetings and other activities during our visit, such as a national coordination meeting held in Ziguinchor (22-23 April 2004), which shed some light on how ENDA plays its role of coordinating activities at the grassroots level and how the participants obtain skills training. We also observed La Journée de L'Enfant Africain - Fatick (15-16 June), the radio broadcast on Afia FM, and the Campagnes pour les 12 droits (in Ben Tally and HLM Montagne).



The 16th June African Child Day Celebration March in Fatick

After calling in on the AMWCY and the ENDA headquarters in Dakar, visits were paid to various *groupes de base* of the AWCY Dakar. It was important to tell the WCYs and their supervisors (*animateurs* and *moniteurs*) the purpose of our study and to establish confidence among them. Individual WCYs were then selected randomly for interviews, which were mainly carried out in Wolof, the most predominantly spoken language in Senegal. Similarly, interviews were conducted with adults who supported the children, with parents of working children, as well as with unorganised working children.

According to Fabrizio, ENDA follows *la demarche participative* (participative road). 'I have a team of professionals who intervene when needed to support the AMWCY technically. We never impose or force the WCYs to do something. We intervene only when support is

requested by either the association or by the *groupe de base*.' The participative approach thus leaves the initiative with the children, and although many NGOs have now taken to the idea of participation, Fabrizio claims that quite a number of them still interfere with the children's '*participation*'.

The participatory approach, which ENDA enforces, only provides the supporting structures and allows the children to come to decisions themselves. For example, the *animateurs* facilitate the meetings of the children and provide them the space to take decisions. They intervene only to provide training or in case of conflict. As Fabrizio remarked, 'children and their *animateurs* know better how things should be done. Adults must learn to listen to and to understand the children.' He added that children in difficult circumstances similar to that of working children are not only fighting for their own rights but also for Human Rights in general, and that they are doing this with limited means: 'They know what they are doing, they know their rights. What they miss is the means to continue and to really achieve their objectives.'

In the *participatory approach*, working children take initiative, carry out projects and organise themselves into associations. The supporting structures of the adults (such as ENDA and its partner NGOs) simply guide the WCYs. ENDA claims that the problems of children with different interests and different levels of development can be overcome by analysing the objectives together with the children and involving them to find solutions. The participatory methods make the children actors in the improvement of their conditions of existence. The impression that we got from participating in some of the training sessions, however, was that the top-down approach is still very much in place.

Surveys have been conducted by the DSP (Direction des Statistiques et de la Prévision) of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Finances together with the ILO and UNICEF to get an idea of the nature and the magnitude of child labour in the country. But identifying child labourers is not unproblematic. In Dakar alone, which has a population of 3 million, the number is estimated to be as high as 400.000. In Senegal, in the year 2000, 37% of children in the 5-15 age category were said to be involved in child labour (UNICEF/PPS Dakar 2003). Child labour seems to be more common in the regions of the Thiès, Kaolack, Fatick and Louga (Plan Senegal: 2004) and among certain ethnic groups such as the Sérères, the Diolas and the Wolofs (ENDA, UNICEF and ILO 1996). All working children are potentially members of the AMWCY, but very few children are actually registered as members of a *groupe de base*.

The term '*Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs*' (EJT) or '*Working Children and Youths*' (WCY), as it is used by the AMWCY, involves the following two definitions according to Coly (2003):

- a working child (*enfant travailleur*) is a person under the age of 18 for whom the daily principal activity is work,
- a working youth (*jeune travailleur*) is aged between 19 -30 years.

The AMWCY's beneficiaries thus include persons that are well above the age of childhood. As a matter of fact, the average age of the respondents in this survey was 17.8 years.

According to the ILO definition, which is generally accepted as a good indicator for delineating child labour, persons above the age of 14 should be allowed to work. A child between the ages of 14 and 18 is only considered to be a child labourer if it is involved in dangerous or unhealthy activities. Many of the WCYs, it therefore appears, do not fall in the category of child labourer according to the ILO definition.

The so-called *missions d'appui technique* are supposed to educate trainers, spread information and to exchange expertise among different associations, but the WCY participation is practically non-existent. In the grassroots groups of Dakar, many WCYs were obviously unaware of how the movement functions.

The lack of knowledge that the WCYs had about the AMWCY could possibly be explained by the fact that many of them are illiterate, although even many of the literate WCYs would have difficulties in understanding the published materials. The publications of ENDA and the AMWCY are written in foreign languages (French or English), which doesn't make it easy for the WCYs. In fact, the general language of communication is French, rather than the local language, and this leads to the exclusion of many members.

The meetings that are regularly organised (at national and local levels) could contribute to spreading the messages and to collecting the opinions from the WCYs; but for the meetings to be effective members would have to attend, and feedback would have to be given to the *groupes de base*. This is not happening. The delegates we saw, whilst attending some meetings, were a handpicked few who turned up at each major event.

The delegates are typically older than the common child labourer, and no longer work out of necessity. These WCY delegates participating at high-level meetings are perhaps socially distanced from the grassroots level and possibly lack the means (time and financial) to reach the *groupes de base*. Their main responsibilities do not include mobilising other members – and the many thousands who are not members – but to work and earn a livelihood, and to occasionally participate in the AMWCY activities.

The coordinating teams of ENDA play a disproportionately important role; the *animateurs* are regularly sent on missions to provide technical support to WCYs in different regions. They coordinate the campaigns and political lobbying and are the most involved and the most informed persons, due to their close collaboration with ENDA headquarters in Dakar. ENDA Jeunesse Action tries to stimulate participation by children and youths, but the role of adults continues to be overpowering.

Chapter 3

Joining a Groupe de Base

The AMWCY was born out of small groups of working and street children who would come together to talk about and resolve problems related to their working and living conditions. They would spend time together, eating and drinking, and occasionally shelter was provided too. In fact, the site of the HLM Montagne group originally functioned as a rescue place for 'les bonnes' (housemaids). ENDA reached out to these children in need and provided with a more structured organisation; that was the beginning of the AMWCY.

Although each AWCY may have regional characteristics, each one is meant to be organised in an identical way. The criteria for a group to be recognised by the movement are rather simple. The group should have representative leaders, should meet on a regular basis and have an activity plan. Each group has a name (AWCY + town's name), an address and a contact person (i.e. grown up long-term member of the AWCY). Each group must have a bureau, managed by leaders of the group, together with a *moniteur*. The groups have a bank account to manage their finances.

The AMWCY aims to provide two basic services to its members: 1) training courses and literacy education, and 2) provision of small loans. The loans should enable those youths who have successfully completed the training and/or literacy courses to start up an individually owned income-generating business.

We found the reports on the group activities, which are supposed to be submitted annually to the AMWCY/ENDA headquarters, to have been presented in rather general terms and did not really provide an accurate idea as to what has been achieved. One report, for example, stated that:

- the association has been enlarged, an exposition has been held, May Day and the Day of the African Child were celebrated and sensitisation activities have been conducted,
- the association participates in various meetings, in which decisions concerning working children and youths are taken,
- there is progress in regard to the rights of working children and youths in the sense that the public opinion and the authorities recognise working children and their propositions are taken into account,
- the local administrative authorities and politics have made it possible for the AWCY-Dakar to participate in different important meetings.

AWCY-Dakar is said to have 23 *groupes de base* and a membership of 1653. Compared to the number of children in need in Dakar (estimated at 400.000), it is clear that ENDA only manages to support a marginal amount of children. There does not seem to be an active search for children in need; nor does there seem to be an active policy to establish more *groupes de base*. The most recent groups to be formed were made up of school dropouts who are not actually ‘child labourers’ and who only joined the organisation in order to receive ‘formation’ (vocational training).

According to ENDA principles, the creation of a *groupe de base* has priority over individual membership, and the initiative to create a group must come from the children themselves. The creation of the *groupes de base* occurs naturally, according to official sources; the groups are born out of solidarity and friendship in the work place, at their resting sites or in their homes.

An important aspect of the *groupe de base* is its participatory principle. The members of the *groupes de base* are considered to have specific opinions and demands. The common needs of the members of a group result in cohesion and mutual understanding. An *animateur* told us:

Support by the adult *animateur* for each group is not similar since groups are created in different contexts and therefore do not function in a similar way. This depends on what the needs in the group are. The group is created to respond to the needs of its members and therefore, activities on the agenda are tailored to each group.

This group cohesion is believed to promote child participation, but in practice, the *moniteurs* and *animateurs* play an important role. AWCY Dakar is divided into 3 sectors (the Guediawaye sector, the Pikine sector and the Dakar-Plateeau sector, supervised by 9 *animateurs*. Each AWCY is meant to have a committee composed of delegates from its different *groupes de base*. On each 5th of the month in the afternoon, delegates of the 23 *groupes de base* meet to evaluate their Dakar association. At one such meeting (May 2004), 11 WCY (10 girls and one boy) delegates turned up. They were asked to decide on a programme of activities which had been prepared by the *animateur*. After introducing the meeting, Malik Sy (ENDA *animateur*) left the room and the delegates discussed on how to invest their budget of FCFA 947.732 (some 1400 Euro). Officially the delegates decided how to divide up the money, but the process was carried out according to plans laid out by the supporting adult organisation. The activities programme was decided upon as follows:

- The promotion of the 12 rights by organising sensitisation campaigns in each of the 3 sectors of the association; this would necessitate the organisation of meetings of *groupes de base* in places where employers and authorities can be reached
- The transmission of WCY Radio programmes during the week of the child
- The participation at the national Journée de l’enfant on the 16th of June and at workshops
- Income generation activities: the rental of chairs and tents



At the National coordination meeting, one does not get the impression that it involves either children or poor youths. The opening session, which is addressed by the national coordinator, is attended by nicely dressed girls and boys in their late teens and twenties.

At the beginning of the fieldwork we visited the group of Medina Schub, a village just outside Dakar. The group was lacking a *moniteur* and obviously not functioning very well. It is likely that the absence of a supporting adult structure meant that the group had not yet chosen its committee to coordinate the group's activities and to deal with the finances. The non-functioning of this group confirmed what we had observed in other places, namely the limited potential of self-regulation by children, even though in this case the children were already adolescents. We often noted that the paid functionaries working on behalf of ENDA were the decisive factors in any group functioning.

Irregularity of attendance, both by WCYs and by *moniteurs*, is a major problem in the organisation. According to ENDA staff, absenteeism even occurs when the programme responds to the WCY needs and aspirations. Presently though, in the case of AWCY Dakar, the training courses are somewhat exclusively related to tailoring. Occasionally, some classes are given on health care and disease prevention, accounting, organisational skills, hairdressing etc. Surprisingly, we found few boys participating in activities organised by AWCY Dakar. The explanation is that the type of training simply attracts more girls than boys. Boys were found in the group of *apprentis menuisiers mécaniciens* of Pikine-Guinaw Rails and Diamague. Other boys, like shoeshine boys, were suspiciously absent.

Attendance is also irregular because the *moniteurs* also work elsewhere and consider the work with the WCYs as less important, especially since it is unpaid volunteer work. The *alphabetiseur* of the group of P.A.Unité 17, for example, is a fulltime teacher in a primary school. Others are not really committed and lack enthusiasm. Seynabou (a domestic worker, 16 years) said: 'Sometimes after work you rush in order to arrive in good time but when you get there you realise that the *moniteur* is not present. This discourages us'.

It is difficult for many WCYs to combine work and also attend the meetings and classes regularly. Sall (female, 18 years) has been a member of the *groupe de base* Nimzat in Dakar for 4 years. She completed school up to the 6th grade, and then decided to drop out: 'I failed, and then my mother told me to follow the vocational training here. If my parents had suggested that I reintegrate in school or do something else, I would have done it. My father is paying the contribution because I learn a lot.' Since Sall is neither going to school nor working, it is easy for her to follow the afternoon training at ENDA. However, many other young labourers, such as the domestic workers, cannot afford to participate, because they work until 6 PM and have no support system from parents or other family members.

Aissatou (18 years) said that she had been told by other girls that the classes were interesting, especially the training in dressmaking. That is what she wanted to do in the future and so she joined too. She was not a child labourer, but joined anyway to follow the vocational training sessions. Diouf (female, 17 years) did the same: 'I saw friends going to ENDA for training; they informed me how to become a member and as the costs are not so high, I joined and learned how to stitch and how to make designs'.

It is possible that, given the nature of its activities and its support facilities, the AMWCY attracts the more enterprising youths who, with a vision to develop technical skills, enrol in the ENDA training programmes. The members of the *groupes the base* are usually neither the needy nor the poorest, but the 'easy to help' girls who have decided to discontinue their studies and start an independent business as a dressmaker or a hairdresser. They join because they calculate that they can benefit from the training courses and possibly get financial support to set up a business.

The AMWCY thus appears to be attracting children who already are, in some way, helping themselves. It seems barely interested in the invisible and therefore vulnerable working child. The majority is made up of young upwardly mobile and assertive adults. Adults supporting the AWCY Dakar acknowledged that the beneficiaries no longer correspond with their initial target groups. However, 'ENDA intends to rejuvenate its targeted groups', we were told. The only way ENDA could achieve this aim would be to create new groups with younger members and to set a maximum age limit for membership. For that to happen, for them to reach out and attract the younger child labourers, boys as well as girls, belonging to different professions, a membership drive needs to be launched. Unfortunately, as it exists now, the organisational structure of the movement does not provide for that option.

Chapter 4

AMWCY as a Public Signboard

The AMWCY has quite an active official presence at the national and international level. These 'big events' usually have children in the forefront and suggest that children are in command or at least that the authentic voice of the African working child is being heard. The participation of children at these meetings is seen as a sign of a high degree of participation by working children. The Day of the Child in Fatick (15-16 June 2004), the WCY radio programme in Dakar and two awareness campaigns in the suburbs of Ben Tally and HLM Montagne are examples of such public events.

The national coordination meeting in Ziguinchor (22-24 April 2004) was attended by 9 associations from across the country: Dakar, Saint-Louis, Louga Tambakunda, Kaolack, Fatick, Thiès and Bara (Gambia). The hosting association was AWCY Ziguinchor. Each association was represented by two WCYs and one *animateur*. The meeting was an occasion for participation by a selected group of working children who could afford to stay away from work for 4 days. It would be difficult if not impossible for a housemaid to get permission to attend such a meeting. The meetings revealed much about the principle of participation and the role played by the adult.

During the discussions at the WCY National Meeting, it became clear that priorities appear to be set according to what the donors want rather than what is most urgently needed for the child labourers and deprived children in general. Projects are proposed depending on the priorities of sponsoring organisations. Since child trafficking, AIDS and participation are very much on the agenda of international organisations, these issues are emphasised in the projects and activities. Other problems, which are at least as serious, if not more serious, like poverty, malaria and non-enrolment in schools, do not seem to attract the attention of the organisation.

Each association has an annual activity plan based on the ENDA priorities: capacity building, protection, and AGR (income generating activities). Every 3 months, during the coordination meetings, the activities that have been achieved by the 9 AWCYs are discussed. The presentation of activities is an occasion to find out what other associations are doing, but it doesn't really accomplish much, since all evaluations have been done internally and are kept very general.

The underlying assumption of the discussions is that best practices in one region can be extended to other groups. Suggestions and strategies to manage the project were freely traded, but it was the adult co-ordinator who had the last word. The national coordinator (Pierre Marie) intervened occasionally to approve 'WCY initiatives' or to suggest what should be done. The adolescent delegates usually agreed with what the adults said, and their

participation (as delegates representing a '*mouvement*' in this case) was limited to expressing their opinions. However, there is no way of truly knowing whether the opinions voiced were their own, or conditioned by the movement. All delegates were accompanied by an adult, and may simply have been saying what they knew the adults wanted to hear. They appeared to have been well-trained in the language of their organisation.

During the Coordination Meeting, concrete proposals for capacity reinforcement (literacy and training), mobilisation (awareness building and lobbying with the authorities), and activities to improve the AGR (micro credits, production, entertainment services, the sale of products) were touched upon. The major difficulties with the AGR received considerable attention: difficulties to sell their products, lack of work places, late payments, expensive inputs and organisational problems. The participants were then asked to work out an action plan, which would take the various aspects into consideration. Each association worked out such an action plan, along very general lines, for the following 5 issues:

- AGR (or Income Generating Activities)
- Organisation
- Concretisation of the 12 rights
- Sensitisation/ mobilisation
- Skills training

AMWCY officially wants the decisions and new insights to be reported back to the *groupes de base*; they call this *restitution*. At no stage did we notice that such a process had been initiated. We did notice a lack of training to teach the delegates how to report to the groups (downward reporting), and we noticed the encouragement given to upward reporting.

The participants were trained in how to present a project to donor organisations. At a workshop on project management, where a dozen active members were trained, the following points came up for attention: relations with partners, relations with the supporting structures and relations at the association level. This observation highlights a source of weakness, and possibly strength, of the entire movement as well: not much attention is given to mobilisation and sensitisation within the organisation, but a large amount of attention is given to public relations and public performance.

The sources of sponsorship (financially and materially) are the ENDA partners: ILO/IPEC, UNICEF, Save the Children, Kinderpostzegels Netherlands, Plan International, etc. The government also contributes to some of the activities. Different projects are submitted to different donors and this source of various international organisations guarantees a regular (adult-generated and adult-controlled) flow of income.

Public activities are an instrument to create goodwill and opportunities for the movement to lobby with authorities, the media and with child-oriented sponsor organisations. For example, the WCYs perform plays about the 12 rights during public awareness campaigns, such as the Day of the African Child in Fatick (15-16 June 2004), which were two days rich in cultural and political actions. The evening programme on the first day was cultural: each regional association or group was invited to the podium to perform either a dance or a theatre piece; the following day was filled with political activities, such as the public march

throughout the town of Fatick. The participants marched from 5 different points and then converged at the Town Hall, where official speeches were given.



The honoured guests at the Day of the African Child, from the left to the right: the ainée WCY of the hosting AWCY-Fatick, the Governor of Fatick, the representative of the Ministry of the Family Solidarity and Social Development, the UNICEF representative and Awa Niang, the WCY national delegate.

The celebration was organised by ENDA Jeunesse Action, together with other youths supporting institutions and the local authorities. It was sponsored by UNICEF and ILO/IPEC. A major issue on the agenda was child trafficking. The general theme was: *L'enfant et la famille*. The sub theme was: *Lutte contre l'exode et le travail précoce des enfants*. These slogans were officially issued by the government and the AWCY made its organisational infrastructure available to put up a public event, in which the authorities were the focus of attention. The government was very much present, and even in charge of the meetings. Government officials, including the provincial governor, and the UNICEF representative spoke about the plight of children and about the reality of child labour in Senegal.

Awa Niang, the national delegate of the AWCY in Senegal spoke on behalf of all WCYs. In a well-prepared speech, written in the organisation's language, she touched upon the various points which all such speeches do. She referred to the AMWCY as big movement of housemaids, sales girls, vendeurs de sachets plastiques, des cireurs, chargeurs de briquets, apprentis menuiserie bois et métallique vulcanisateur, tapissier, apprentis couturières. Her speech can be summarised as follows (The full speech in French can be found in Appendix 2):

The AMWCY will never condone the exploitation of children; eradicating this threat is the movement's main preoccupation. The AMWCY is in agreement with convention 182 of ILO condemning the worst forms of child labour such as involving children in forced labour, drugs traffic, prostitution, pornography, war and other types of activities that are detrimental to physical and moral development of children. All the WCYs want is to work in a secure environment. The WCYs consider bad working conditions as a form of exploitation such as: heavy work and long working hours, without the opportunity to learn to read and write, the fact of being mistreated physically and/or verbally, and being obliged to work when you are ill.

A lot has been done concerning the legislations against child exploitation, but its implementation poses problems. The AMWCY is organising campaigns of sensitisation of the 12 rights, to raise awareness on new forms of child exploitation that are invisible. Child trafficking is one of them. Many children less than 14 years old are nowadays involved in risky work in the cities. This phenomenon is linked to the increasing shortage of family income and lack of infrastructure in their local communities.

Children, more than ever before, are obliged to do exploitative work in order to survive and to help their parents. The work given to children is often heavy, which is why the WCYs are calling for the right to limited work according to age, size and weight.



At the end of the fieldwork, delegations of all children in Senegal (school goers or not) were invited to the Parliament to talk with ministers and deputies. Among them was a delegation of WCYs. One such delegate, Ms Ndeye Coumba Gueye, emphasised the bad socio-economic conditions leading to school non-attendance and dropouts. Coumba's plea was to bring

reforms in the education system and to increase school infrastructure in remote areas (see Appendix). Her speech, like many other official speeches by AWCY representatives, was appropriate for the occasion: the language was very formal and the content fit nicely with the mainstream approach on education, falling in line with the pious policy framework of the government. The problems she pointed out were:

Many children, especially girls are not attending school. This is partly because of the high cost of school materials. In some schools the manuals are rented, making the access difficult for poor children. Some villages have no schools. Places with schools deny access to children without birth certificates. The school programmes are not tailored to the local reality and expectations of learners.

Creating public awareness of the 12 rights is carried out through public meetings and radio programmes. In one radio transmission, during the time we were visiting, 4 girls in the studio were interviewed about the 12 rights and about problems such as the working conditions of housemaids. The target audience appeared to be the same as in the two public meetings we had observed: a French-speaking middle class audience.

In Dakar, two awareness campaigns were organised in the suburbs of Ben Tally and HLM Montagne. Adults gave most of the speeches, and the audience was basically comprised out of an adult middle class. The plays that were performed had been written by the *moniteurs*. One such a play dealt with the interactions between domestic workers and their obnoxious employers. In short, the story is as follows.

A village girl has been sent to Dakar to earn money as a domestic worker. The parents are not aware of the hardships of urban life. All they know is that their daughter is going ‘to make it’, but the daughter is badly treated and hasn’t had a chance to play for months. She doesn’t get enough to eat even though she is the one who cooks the meals. She only gets the left-overs on the plates, after the family members have eaten. She is also accused of having broken kitchen utensils and so she does not get paid.



The young girls, participating in the radio programmes and in the plays, promote the policies of the AMWCY and the 12 rights. But their task is not easy and is in fact even a bit awkward. In the first place, they are not really child labourers themselves; they do not have direct experience with exploitation. In the second place, although they are not at school, these girls are all 15 years or older. They cannot relate to a 12 year old who works full time as a housemaid in Dakar. Ideally, it would be young child labourers that come to the events and studios to participate in the plays; and the audiences should preferably be child labourers as well.

Chapter 5

The Grassroots Reality

The main question posed by this study is “are the working conditions of these children being improved as a result of their AMWCY membership?” The hypothesis is that the participatory approach of the movement should indeed produce improvements. The beneficiaries of the movement, i.e. the child labourers, are expected to take initiative and carry out future projects to improve their life conditions.

The views of working or ex-working children were collected through 46 structured interviews with 32 WCYs and 14 non-WCYs. The age of most of the ‘child labourers’ was relatively high, high enough to not actually fall within the international definition of child labourer. The average age of the respondents was 17.8 years. Many of the WCYs did not fit the typical picture of child labourer in terms of educational standards either, since most were literate and had spent a number of years in school.

The highest educational level completed	WCY	Non-WCY	%
BFEM (4 th form secondary school)	1	1	4.4
2 nd year secondary school	1	0	2.1
CM (6 th year primary school)	13	1	30.4
5 th grade primary school	3	1	8.7
4 th grade primary school	0	2	4.3
3 rd grade primary school	1	1	4.4
2 nd grade primary school	0	1	2.1
1 st grade primary school	1	3	8.7
Koran school /literacy	12	4	34.9
Total	32	14	100

Almost half of the children had never attended ‘*l’école française*’ (the formal school) though, and the other children were school dropouts, for various reasons; one group (24 %) were school dropouts who claimed that they were no longer interested in school. They had left school because they had wanted to earn money. Many children in this group said that they had abandoned school because they preferred to learn practical skills. Another group (22 %) left school because they were falling behind and failed to make the effort to catch up. Instead, they chose to enter the labour market. Maty (female 17 years) did not manage to pass the CM2 (6th grade primary school):

My mother told me to stop going to school and to learn dressmaking; it was good to me because even if my parents had asked me to continue going to school, I would not have done it. I want to learn a profession. I agreed with my mother's advice to follow the training to become a dressmaker.

Like Maty, many *filles de formation* aspire to start their own 'atelier de couture'. Many of them think this will guarantee them access to luxuries in society. One of the respondents (female, 18 years) abandoned school so that she could make more money:

I dropped school to get a better life. I was living with my father here in Dakar and all what he could do was to purchase money for school materials but he was not able to buy me dresses for example. This situation was not pleasing to me and I stopped so that I can earn money to meet my needs.

Girls are subject to a dual pressure. They feel the need to satisfy both traditional and modern lifestyles, i.e. send money to the family in the villages and simultaneously behave like modern city girls. Harouna (19 years old and vendor) illustrated this situation:

I failed my exam and I was not really ready to continue at school. During festivities or during the traditional wrestling competition, I was envious of the other girls of my age who were nicely dressed and who even could send money back to the village. I work now in order to be like them.

The nature of the work which the AWCY members do varies according to the social milieu from which they come. The majority of the girls worked mainly in their own households. Some other girls were active in petty trade activities, such as the sale of cosmetic products, clothes or fruit. Only a few worked as housemaids.

Although many of the WCYs claimed to be 'child labourers', they were actually young girls and boys attending technical education and applying the technical knowledge to a new trade, e.g. as a tailor. Most of the girls and boys involved in the AWCY programmes visibly had a different (and a better) social background than the *real* child labourers, some of whom have also managed to become a WCY, i.e. working children who have never been to school and are working fulltime for money. The children in this category suffer from poverty and have to work in order to meet their needs and those of their families.

The *employées de maison* work very hard. Many of these children are illiterate and have no choice but to work. Anne (15) said:

I have to work to meet my needs and to help my parents... but unfortunately I get a miserable salary (CFA 6000). Even with the training which I get now, changing my life path will be not easy although I can solve some problem with the money I get!

The attention given to the *employées de maison* has recently diminished. ENDA's desire to provide support to this group is hampered by the fact that training sessions can only be attended after their required work has been completed. *Animateurs* and *moniteurs* should adapt their course schedules to the working demands of the children; teachers are rarely

willing to do this. An added obstacle to arranging evening courses is the fact that the regions where these children live are not decidedly safe places to venture into after dark.

The movement could attempt to improve the working conditions of these children, such as perhaps regulating the working times and salaries, i.e. acting as a child labour union. Nothing like this seems to be happening. The AMWCY does provide technical training, however, and the interviews showed that the desire to learn how to read, write, count and to learn to speak French was widespread among the illiterate child labourers. Unfortunately though, for those who have no choice but to work, the hours are so long and the work is so heavy, that they are too tired to attend evening classes.

The children who come to ENDA, even the housemaids, appear to be adolescents who have the time and some money to spare. This is the case with Khadiatou, an 18 year old female who has worked for 4 years as a housemaid in Dakar: 'I get 15000 CFA per month. I divide this money into three: one third for rent, one third is sent to my family in the village and the rest is reserved to pay for my needs like the contribution related to ENDA training (750 CFA).' Couba (female, 20), who never attended a formal school, was 13 when she came to work as a domestic maid in Dakar:

I always wished to study, but my parents ignored the importance of school. After my Koran school and before I came to work in Dakar I was helping my mother at the village. When I started earning money, I tried to find ways to follow alphabetisation course because I could pay it. Even before ENDA trainings, I was learning arithmetic and how to speak French. I could in this case pay the fees myself.

In the AWCY in Dakar, the so called *filles en formation* are basically all school dropouts and their aim is to learn vocational skills in order to start income generating activities. They cannot possibly be classified as child labourers. Their work as vendors or small entrepreneurs is not necessarily full-time and should not be compared with the work which so many young girls and boys are doing under exploitative and harmful circumstances.

For many WCYs, the activities offered by the organisation, specifically the training courses, function more like a tool for social advancement, rather than an instrument to fight exploitation. A 15 year old female helping and working in her mother's restaurant said: 'The advantage now of the movement is that it offers me the opportunity to learn. After work I go to the training centre instead of staying at home'. She is typical of a category of girls who have gone to school, and who, in addition to some work, are now provided an opportunity to learn more skills. ENDA, in actual fact, targets a group that could survive decently without ENDA's intervention.

At AWCY Dakar, some of the lucky girls play an important role in public relation activities. They are put forward as prime examples of what the movement claims to have achieved. When referring to what ENDA has accomplished in skill-training, and what has become of ex-WCYs, Oumy (female, 29 years) is often used as an example. She is one of the so-called *ainées* and as president of the association knows a lot of what happens at AWCY Dakar. She is considered to be one of the WCYs who succeeded in climbing the social ladder. Oumy has remarkably good communication skills with a good command of French. She told

us that when she joined the AWCY, she was illiterate, working as a housemaid; but today she is an *animatrice* and owns a small business. After more than 10 years the number of ‘success stories’ in the organisation are unfortunately few. This leads to questions about the efficiency of the ENDA programmes.

At AWCY-Dakar, the visible activities consist of courses in home skills for the WCY girls. Literacy courses are also supposed to be given in all groups (girls and boys), but this programme appeared to be poorly run, especially in the groups made up of boys. One reason for this is that the real child labourers do not have enough time or energy to follow the short evening courses: ‘You come when you can and when you want.’ This applies to the children but also to the *moniteurs*. There are no periodic tests to evaluate the levels achieved by individual pupils. *Moniteurs* do not have specific objectives to attain. The so-called ‘*alpha*’ sessions and ‘*formations qualifiantes*’ are short (2-3 hours per day) and are intended to produce significant results in a short time. Results, however, are not systematically monitored and there is little information about how much these boys and girls have learned.

On the other hand, the exceptionally motivated ‘*filles en formation*’ are being helped by ENDA slightly more vigourously. In fact the *groupes de bases* of the *filles en formation*, or other girls who, for one reason or another, have dropped out from school, are strong and function smoothly. The girls do not work long hours and have sufficient time for skills training. The training and the many workshops in the afternoon bring a rhythm to their daily lives. Having the status of trainee gives the girls in this group a step up on their social ladders. They are ambitious and have a clear perspective of the future; they wish to start their own businesses, in most cases a tailor shop. By being together, in an environment other than at home or work, the girls are able to freely express themselves. In this respect, Seynabou (19 years) said:

Besides selling cosmetic articles, there was nothing else to do. Since I joined the group, all has changed: friends, the way I use my time, etc. I have never thought I could learn so much. I am in the position to follow the training courses along side with Arabic courses so that I can learn more about my religion.

Another girl said that joining the group has helped her to find a new routine in daily life:

When you join the group, your daily schedule gets changed. The way we work helps to lessen worries. I can now better socialise with other children. I am becoming more and more open. Instead of staying at home or walking around, I learn dressmaking (broderie, crochets, tricoter) and French. Before, I did nothing else than cooking at home or watching TV.

Most of these girls are not working. The few girls who do work, fortunately do so in circumstances that still allow for further development. Bousso (15 years) has been lucky as a housemaid. She resides in the house of her patron, and considers the family to be kind people, unlike the family where she worked before. Her patron allows her to attend the ENDA training classes:

I saw other girls coming here at the centre. As I was willing to learn French and dressmaking, I asked my patroness if it was possible and she agreed. Although it will be not easy to attain my objective namely to open a tailor's shop, I am lucky that the patron does not put obstacles in my way. But sometimes, when I get a lot of work to do, I come late to the training session. It is important for because learn a lot here. Before I came here, the only thing I did was work. Nowadays, I come each week on Wednesday and Thursday from 18:00 to 19:30.

An important aspect concerning capacity building is participation in the running of the organisation. This aspect is lacking in the movement. Apart from the fact that the *animateurs* are usually the ones that manage the *groupes de base*, the child functionaries and delegates are no longer child labourers, if they ever were. In the AWCY Dakar, the *filles en formation* have taken on the role of representatives, a function formally carried out by *employées de maison*, vendors and shoe shiners. The situation of the *filles en formation*, as mentioned above, is not comparable to the *real* child labourers, those whose work is harsh, and no longer allows for self promotion and business expansion. Thus the children who 'speak' for the others are not necessarily those with most to say.

The *filles en formation* are selected to attend special activities and by doing so they have become a powerful interest group of the organisation. Around them, the policy of the AMWCY emphasises skill formation rather than the improvement of the working conditions of child labourers and on other disadvantages from which numerous children in the country are suffering. The *filles en formation* have the capacity, the drive and the opportunities to make use of the advantages which the movement offers them. The real child labourers in the country, including the *employées de maison*, neither have the time nor the capacity to benefit thoroughly from the organisation, nor are they successful in influencing the decision making process.

Young working children hardly ever become members of the association and ENDA is failing to support these children. Instead, the organisation seems to be helping the development of the vocational skills of enterprising and assertive adolescents. Assertive adolescents find the ENDA interesting because of the possibility of receiving micro-credits. These credits are provided to some WCYs. The *animateurs* have to assess which girls or boys are qualified to set up a viable business and could therefore be provided with a starting capital.

When listening to what the WCYs have to say and their reasons for joining the organisation, it becomes clear that setting up an AGR is basically always the priority. All of them hope to start a business, but only a few WCYs will be lucky enough to get such an opportunity. The *filles en formation* who are close to the *animateurs* are most likely to be the beneficiaries, even though they are not the most needy. The micro-credits usually bypass the many *employées de maison* who lack the assertiveness, the time and the networking.

Conclusion

ENDA Jeunesse Action has been working with working children for the past 10 years and has gained a name for itself as one of the important players on the African continent, especially in francophone Western Africa. Its activities and its expertise in this field of child-centred policies are well acknowledged.

The assertion that the AMWCY is a representative organisation of child labourers in Senegal, however, is not accurate. Whatever it has achieved in the past, in the present it is putting so much emphasis on the training and grooming of a limited number of adolescents that it has now taken on the character of a vocational training institute and its activities and interventions cannot possibly be classified as those belonging to a child labour union.

Most of the members are neither children nor labourers, and therefore hardly *child labourers*. The impact of the organisation is limited and is not reaching those most in need. It works through 23 groups, not all of which are active, and the striking reality is that most children in those groups are not representative of child labourers in the area. The many vendors, car mechanics and shoe shiners in the streets of Dakar are not enrolled in the programmes; worse than that, they are in fact mostly unaware of ENDA and the AMWCY.

The functioning of the *groupes de base* needs serious attention, for various reasons. Absenteeism of the WCYs and the *moniteurs* is a big problem. This fault is related to the way in which the participatory approach is applied without strict rules: the WCYs as well as their adult guides have the flexibility to do things as they want to, which generates a kind of *laissez-faire* attitude. Activities in some of the groups are stagnant. There is no active policy to mobilise new members or get absent members back into the group.

Communication between WCYs themselves, which is a prerequisite not only for participation but also for the diffusion of information and transfer of knowledge, hardly exists. The benefits are individualised. Furthermore, there is a need for using a language that is understood by all the WCYs. The official language (French) is an alien language to most, which moreover is a highly formalised adult one, inaccessible to the ordinary child.

Communications by ENDA and AMWCY appear to be directed at getting (national and international) public recognition rather than at getting the message across to the millions of deprived children. Public activities with the purpose of protecting working children include public awareness campaigns and lobbying with the authorities. The messages of the WCYs are heard on the radio, in the local schools and suburbs as well as in the parliament. However, it is not clear how far this message reaches beyond the middle class audience.

ENDA works with a conception of child labour that includes all types of work, even jobs carried out by adolescents that are perfectly permissible by ILO norms. The consequence of this is that many of the children brought together, and given material support, are far removed from those children ordinarily considered to be child labourers. The worst forms of child

labour fail to be targeted and by spreading the message that ‘children’ should have the right to work pushes the urgency to address these labour conditions into the background.

Participation in decision making by child labourers is not apparent. The adolescents who participate within the structure and discourse established by the *moniteurs* and *animateurs*, are, without exception, the well established children who already have capacities, drive, social capital and aspirations. They put these qualities to use in obtaining important roles in the organisation and to benefit from its support structures. The *real* child labourers, who work for survival, carrying out harsh work, for long hours, do not have these advantages; they also lack the time and energy to attend training and other classes.

The direct effects for a limited number of children/adolescents are obvious.

With the support of ENDA the authorities grant birth certificates to a number of WCYs.

Some WCYs follow vocational training but it is not clear whether such training is any different from what many girls learn as apprentices with tailors; it is also not clear how the adolescents will manage when they actually set up businesses.

A limited number of WCYs get loans to set up their business, but since the loans are usually not repaid and the number of loans is limited anyway, its spread is very much restricted to the happy few.

ENDA relies on many sponsors (government, UNICEF, ILO, Save the Children, Plan, and many others) and is active in the very broad field of child issues. The target group has inadvertently become very large and relatively indistinct. This set up enables ENDA to play all cards and to carry out interesting work that is appreciated by various donors, but the price to be paid is that the initial target group of child labourers has become marginalised.

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Appendix 1

List of Respondents

Resp.nr.	Type of work		Income per month (CFA)
1	Petty trade	Self-employed	10000-12000-15000
2	FF	Familial	
3	FF	Familial	
4	Vendeuse d'herbes parfumées	Helping mother	500
5	FF	Familial	
6	FF	Familial	
7	FF	Familial	
8	FF	Familial	
9	FF	Familial	
10	FF	Familial	
11	Vendeuse au marché	Aide sa mère	
12	Selling juice	Pour sa maman	
13	FF	Familial	
14	FF	Familial	
15	EDM	Pour tiers personne	6000
16	EDM	Pour tiers personne	15000
17	FF	Familial	
18	FF	Aidant sa mère	
19	FF	Familial	
20	FF	Familial	
21	FF	Familial	
22	FF	Familial	
23	EDM	Pour tiers personne	17500
24	FF	Familial	
25	EDM	Pour tiers personne	15000
26	Vendeuse de petit déjeuner	Pour son compte	500-1000/jour
27	Vendeuse de produits cosmétiques	Pour son compte	-
28	EDM	Pour tiers personne	15000
29	FF	Familial	
30	EDM	Pour tiers personne	15000
31	FF	Familial	
32	Cireurs	Indépendant	1500-2000/jour

Appendix 2

Discours a l'occasion de la journée de l'enfant Africain

Communication de Awa Niang le 16 juin

Monsieur le Gouverneur, Monsieur le Maire,
Monsieur le Directeur de la famille,
Monsieur les partenaires,
Chers enfants

Le AMWCY est une structure africaine de défense et de promotion des droits des enfants en général et des EJT en particulier.

Le AMWCY n'approuve guère l'exploitation des enfants. La lutte contre ce fléau est au cœur de ses préoccupations.

La convention 182 de l'OIT interdisant formellement les pires formes de travail des enfants, telles que : le travail forcé, le trafic de stupéfiants, la prostitution, la pornographie, les conflits armés et tous types de travaux portant gravement préjudice à la santé et au développement de l'enfant répond en ce sens aux aspirations des EJT. En fait les EJT veulent exercer leurs activités en toute sécurité.

En outre, ils considèrent les mauvaises conditions de travail comme formes d'exploitation :
Des travaux trop durs, des charges trop lourdes, et des horaires de travail trop long, ne leur permettant pas d'apprendre à lire et à écrire,

Le fait d'être maltraités verbalement ou physiquement,

De travailler quand on est malade,

Force est de reconnaître que beaucoup d'efforts ont été faits en matière de législation pour protéger les enfants contre toute forme d'exploitation mais il n'en demeure pas moins qu'il se pose un problème réel d'application des dispositions prévues par celle-ci.

Le mouvement organisé des séances de sensibilisation publique pour alerter l'opinion publique, des décideurs, les parents et les EJT sur les nouvelles formes d'exploitation qui ne disent pas leur nom.

Le AMWCY souhaite, de la part des autorités administratives et politiques et des institutions s'occupant des questions d'enfance, le développement d'une nouvelle approche visant à améliorer les conditions de vies et de travail des enfants

L'AEJT de Dakar est née vers les années 1990 suite à la volonté des employées de maison de Hlm Montagne de participer au défilé du 1^{er} mai à l'instar de tous les travailleurs.

Cette réflexion entamait à l'île historique et symbolique de Gorée a permis d'aboutir à la rencontre de Bouaké en 1994 où les EJT ont proposé et élaboré les 12 droits qui constituent le fondement du mouvement.

Ils sont employés de maisons, des filles vendeuses, vendeurs de sachets plastiques, des cireurs et chargeurs de briquets, apprentis menuiserie bois et métallique, vulcanisateur, tapissier, apprentis couturières.

Aujourd'hui la préoccupation majeure du mouvement est la concrétisation des 12 droits :

- le droit à une formation pour apprendre un métier,
- le droit à rester au village,
- le droit à exercer nos activités en sécurité,
- le droit à un travail léger et limité,
- le droit à être respectés,
- le droit à être écoutés,
- le droit à des soins de santé,
- le droit à apprendre à lire et à écrire,
- le droit à s'amuser à jouer,
- le droit à s'exprimer et à s'organiser,
- le droit à un recours à une justice équitable,
- Le droit au repos maladies.

Ces droits ne sont pas conçus sous forme de cahiers de doléances syndicales mais c'est plutôt le reflet des activités que doivent mener toutes les associations d'EJT pour améliorer leurs conditions de vie et de travail.

Aujourd'hui, de plus en plus, des enfants âgés de moins de 14 ans vont travailler dans les villes avec tous les risques que cela compromette.

Le travail précoce des enfants est un phénomène qui se développe de plus en plus. En effet, face à une pauvreté croissante se traduisant par une absence de ressources au niveau des familles, absence d'infrastructures dans leur localité, les enfants sont aujourd'hui plus que jamais obligés de travailler pour survivre et aider leur parent d'où le concept travail précoce.

Le travail précoce des enfants constitue un frein pour le développement.

Souvent le travail qu'on propose est trop lourd et d'une durée trop longue.

Conscient de cela, les enfants et jeunes travailleurs ont mentionné parmi leur droit, le droit à un travail léger et limité. Ce droit prône surtout que le travail proposé à l'enfant soit déterminé en fonction de ses capacités (âge, taille, poids...)

Nous vous remercions pour votre aimable attention.

Appendix 3

Lobby des Enfants à l'Assemblée Nationale

Discours de Mlle Ndeye Coumba Gueye, déléguée de l'AEJT du Sénégal, 5 juillet 2004

Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale,
Messieurs les Ministres
Honorables députés,
Chers parents,
Chers camarades enfants.

Nous, enfants et jeunes travailleurs, composés de chargeurs de briquets, employées de maison, vendeuses, couturières, maraîchers, apprentis, coiffeuses des huit villes du Sénégal que sont : Dakar, Fatick, Kaolack, Louga, St Louis, Tambacounda, Thiès et Ziguinchor, nous constatons que la plupart des enfants ne fréquente pas l'école particulièrement les filles. Le coût du matériel didactique est très élevé.

Certains villages n'ont même pas d'école. Certaines écoles sont éloignées des habitations des apprenants. Des extraits de naissance empêchent certains enfants d'avoir accès à l'école. Dans certains établissements, les manuels sont loués et donc les familles pauvres ne vont jamais y accéder.

Les effectifs pléthoriques dans les classes ne facilitent pas les choses. Certains enseignants ont un niveau faible. Le double flux est le système le plus mauvais et rend les élèves paresseux.

Les contenus des apprentissages sont inadaptés aux réalités des apprenants.

Pour vous aider et aider nos pairs, nous avons ouvert avec l'appui d'ENDA Jeunesse Action 62 classes d'éducation alternative au niveau de nos quartiers et villages.

Les programmes sont négociés et répondent aux préoccupations des apprenants qui en sont les principaux acteurs.

Chaque année nous participons à la campagne d'inscription aux CI avec la facilitation à l'acquisition de pièces d'état civil. Nous développons des séances d'initiation à la citoyenneté et à la démocratie pour former nos membres à devenir des citoyens responsables et agissants.

ENDA et ses partenaires nous soutiennent en matériels didactiques.

Certes beaucoup d'efforts sont faits, mais nous pensons, honorables députés, qu'il serait utile :

- de supprimer purement et simplement le double flux
- de construire des écoles dans les villages les plus reculés
- de recycler certains enseignants
- de reconduire les uniformes pour éviter la discrimination
- de prendre en compte les aspirations des populations

- de réorganiser et structurer l'enseignement coranique et les daaras
- de soutenir les familles démunies en matériels didactiques
- d'assurer un suivi de qualité de l'enseignement
-

Nous vous remercions pour votre aimable attention.