



المؤسسة العربية لحقوق الإنسان  
Arab Association for Human  
Rights (HRA)

جمعية صوت العامل النقابية  
Sawt el-Amel/The  
Laborer's Voice



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## World Day against Child Labour: Local Organisations Get Down to Work

In the week of June 12, World Day against Child Labour, the Nazareth-based organisations Sawt el-Amel and Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA) have launched a groundbreaking campaign within the Palestinian Arab community in the Galilee (northern Israel): the two organisations combined their expertise in human rights, child rights and workers' rights to raise awareness about economic exploitation of children and the worst forms of child labour.



*Local youths attend information and awareness events on child labour and specific rights of minors over 15 at work, organised by the Arab Association for Human Rights and Sawt el-Amel.*

The topic of child labour is not a priority issue in Israel, and there are no reliable data available on the prevalence of economic exploitation of children in the country.<sup>1</sup> Illegal employment, however, does occur especially among Palestinian Arabs, where child poverty has reached an alarming 60%, and new immigrant children. Moreover, Sawt el-Amel and HRA maintain that the issue has to be addressed as a global problem, for child labour can only be eliminated worldwide if all the world's population is aware of the various forms of exploitation and possible collective action to prevent it.

Therefore, the joint initiative of Sawt el-Amel and the HRA tackles a number of inter-related issues in order to sensitise the Arab population inside Israel to aspects of child labour and economic exploitation of minors: it provides general information on child rights and rights at work; it raises awareness about the worst forms of child labour on a global scale; and it explains the specific rights of minors above age 15 at work. The action comes at a crucial time as thousands of high school students will take up holiday jobs during the summer break, and a brochure provides practical information on working hours, hourly wages and other specific rights for workers below 18.

Activities include: distribution of stickers, information brochures on specific rights of minors at work, and a written message to students, teachers and parents; lectures in secondary schools; community action days in towns and villages in the Galilee; and screening of films dealing with child labour.

<sup>1</sup> The section on child protection on the official UNICEF statistics page on Israel is blank (see: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/israel\\_statistics.html](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/israel_statistics.html)).

This initiative is a pioneer project for the Palestinian Arab community in Israel, and it has been met with great interest and indignation, especially among the young generation. Both Sawt el-Amel and the Arab Association for Human Rights will build on this unique project experience and continue addressing child labour and the struggle for its elimination as an integral part of their respective awareness activities. The joint capacities of the two organisations in youth work, human rights reporting, and legal advice and action for workers offer a solid basis for the challenges ahead.

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