

ACTIVITY 3.6

Football simulation

Summary

A substantial role play where pupils represent different groups concerned with a possible campaign calling for a boycott of footballs stitched by children. This may take up to two lessons of an hour each.

Learning objectives

- To evaluate the value of boycotts in combating child labour.
- To recognise and explore a range of opinions on how best to help working children.

Preparation

Copy and cut out a set of *Football cards* (activity masters 17 and 18).

Instructions

1. The class is divided into six groups. Each group is given the role-play card best suited to them.
2. The teacher sets the scene. A football team has been asked by campaigners to launch a boycott of popular leather footballs stitched by children, as well as adults, in Pakistan. The children often miss out on school and the campaigners say this is totally unacceptable. (See below.)
3. The teacher explains the concept of a boycott.

4. Each group is given 15–20 minutes to discuss their position and carry out the tasks on their card.
5. The football team hosts an enquiry, sitting at the front of the class. They introduce themselves by reading out their statement and listen to representations from the other groups who read out what they have prepared: for example, the 'children' read out their letter. While the enquiry is taking place, the 'reporters' finish their report in a quiet place.
6. The football team retires to a quiet place to discuss their decision. The reporters return and read out their report to the class.
7. The football team returns and announces their decision.
8. The teacher debriefs the class, encouraging them to set their roles aside and review the football team's decision.

Talking points

- Why can boycotts do more harm than good?
- What needs to change so the children do not have to stitch footballs?
- What other actions could the team take to help improve the lives of working children?
- Why is it important that children go to school?



i**Football, brand names, boycotts and working children**

The involvement of children working in the football stitching industry first became widely known around the time of the 1994 Football World Cup. In the US, pressure groups became aware that children were involved in football stitching in Sialkot, an area of Pakistan in which footballs are produced for export. Consumers were mobilised to bring pressure on international brands such as Nike and Adidas, and on the International Federation of Football Associations (FIFA) and the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industries (WFSGI).

Concerns about children working in the football stitching industry led to research by Save the Children into the situation faced by these children. In 1997 the weight of international pressure led to the signing of an agreement between the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF to eliminate child labour in the football stitching industry in Sialkot. Together with Save the Children, these organisations attempted to get children out of football stitching and into school. As part of this process, families were provided with credit to set up businesses to reduce the household poverty that pushes children into work.

The approach, then, was not a crude boycott or blanket ban – although a boycott had been threatened. Rather, the organisations involved were keen to provide alternatives to football stitching to children and families. Today, the vast majority of children involved in the project no longer work full-time in football stitching, and many children who were not previously going to school have now started doing so.



Football team

You are shocked to hear that children stitch the footballs used by your club. But you want to find out more about the situation before you decide what to do.

You have organised an enquiry and the following groups will be present:

- The children
- The campaigners
- The company
- The local charity

Prepare the statement that you will read to introduce your team at the enquiry. Write down your team name and the football history of your club.



Children

Like many other children in your village, you help your parents stitch leather footballs.

You say:

- Stitching means you have to sit still for a long time and it strains your hands and eyes.

But

- You have to work to help your family to buy food and

other items. Football stitching is better than any of the other jobs you could do.

- Some of you go to school and school costs money. If you didn't stitch footballs you wouldn't be able to go to school at all.

So

You are **AGAINST** a boycott even though you would like to stop work.



Write a letter to the football club to tell them why you are totally against the boycott.

Campaigners

Your campaign will ask football clubs not to buy the footballs made by children.

You argue:

- It is wrong for children to work.
- Every child has the right to go to school and to rest and play.

- The only way to help these children is to stop buying the footballs.
- A boycott will force the company that sells them to stop employing children.

So

You are **FOR** the boycott.

Decide on a name for your campaign group.

Write a leaflet asking all footballers to support the boycott and explain why they should, as simply as possible. Make up a slogan for your campaign.



Company

Your company sells top-quality leather footballs. They are hand stitched by adults and children in Pakistan.

You want to point out that:

- You are simply providing work for people who want to work.
- The work you provide is not dangerous or unhealthy, unlike some other work

children do in the area (such as brick making and making surgical instruments).

- The pay per football is the same for children and adults. In other work, children are paid less.

So

There is NO REASON for a boycott.



Decide on a name for your company.

Prepare a short statement for your company website, giving your point of view. Remember that you want to come across as a responsible, caring company.

Local charity

You are a charity planning to work with poor families who stitch footballs for a living.

Your research shows that:

- Many families could not survive without the money that their children earn from stitching footballs.



So

You intend to:

- meet with the football companies and try to get them to pay adults more so that their children don't have to work
- offer to lend money to families who want to try to make more money by starting their own small businesses

- encourage schools to help the working children by, for example, allowing them to come to school when they can and arranging classes for them.

Think of a name for your charity. Then write a letter to your local newspaper, setting out what you intend to do.

Reporters

You are writing a newspaper/ radio/TV news report about the proposed boycott campaign. You need to find out more. Send a reporter to interview each group and get their views.

They are:

- the football team
- the children

- the parents
- the campaigners
- the company
- the local charity.

Bring back your findings and write a short news report together.

