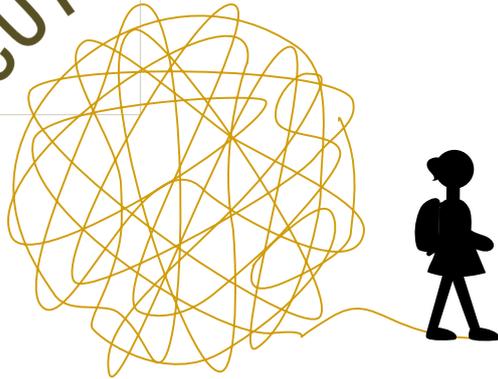


CLEAR COTTON



ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR IN THE COTTON, TEXTILE AND GARMENT VALUE CHAINS: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH



International Labour Organization



Co-funded by the Development Cooperation Instrument of the European Union



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GLOBAL ESTIMATES OF CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR

152 MILLION CHILDREN AGED 5-17 ARE IN CHILD LABOUR



Globally, **152 million children aged 5-17** are in child labour.

71% OF CHILD LABOUR IS IN AGRICULTURE



71% of child labour is in agriculture. Cotton is one of the most common commodities produced with child labour and forced labour in at least 18 countries.

73 MILLION OF THEM ARE IN HAZARDOUS WORK



73 million of which are in **hazardous work**, one of the worst forms of child labour.

25 MILLION MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE VICTIMS OF FORCED LABOUR



25 million men, women and children are victims of **various forms of forced labour**, including forced labour exploitation, forced sexual exploitation and State-imposed forced labour.

CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR IN THE COTTON, TEXTILE AND GARMENT VALUE CHAINS

Cotton is one of the world's most widely grown crops. It is also the most used natural raw material in the textile industry. For many countries, cotton production and textile and garment sectors are central to economic growth and employment.

There is a high incidence of child labour in the cotton, textile and garment supply chains and cases of forced labour have also been identified. Both child labour and forced labour are connected to systemic challenges impeding the sustainability of the supply chain and to the other fundamental principles and rights at work.

Because child labour and forced labour are deeply embedded and hidden in the supply chain, the problem is out of sight for businesses, making it difficult for them to ensure sustainable solutions.

The cotton production system is dominated by smallholder farms or by tenancy and sharecropping. Workers in ginning, spinning, weaving, cotton seed oil factories face harsh working conditions. Depending on the context, children might be involved in land preparation, crop protection; ginning; weeding; irrigation; hybridization; manual harvesting; weaving; cotton seed oil production.

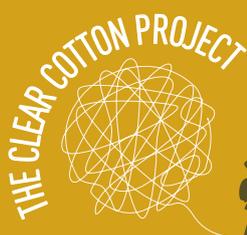
Indicators of forced labour in the cotton, textile and garment value chains include bonded labour, withholding wages, restriction of movement, excessive overtime, abusive working and living conditions involving adolescent labour.



Many children engaged in cotton related activities work **long hours**, way above the limit set by national legislation and may receive **little or no pay**. Children may also **manipulate harmful pesticides** and work in **isolation**, in **extreme temperatures**, **without sufficient food and rest** and in conditions which can seriously harm their physical and psychological development. Often this work is **at the expense of their education**.

Using child labour to meet high labour demand is exacerbated by weak legal enforcement, socio-cultural norms and challenges in making sure children are in school. Added to this, small producers' low profit margins hinder hiring adult workers and youth above minimum age, in conditions of decent work. Migration can also lead to the use of child labour. Many children of migrant farm workers work alongside their parents, moving with them from their home villages according to crop cycles.

Governments, workers, employers, civil society organizations, and other actors along the value chain from producers, to cooperatives, to factories, to global companies, to consumers have been working together to a more sustainable supply chain free of child labour and forced labour. During the last decade, a number of relevant initiatives were developed. While the primary role of implementing International Labour Standards and enforcing the law remains with the governments, there are good examples of businesses working to tackle child labour and forced labour. Good practices include the adoption of internal policies and codes of conducts that address sourcing, costing and procurement, information sharing and others.



The Clear Cotton project "Eliminating child labour and forced labour in the cotton, textile and garment value chains: an integrated approach" is co-funded by the European Union (EU) under the Development Cooperation Instrument and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The project is implemented over a period of four years (March 2018 – February 2022) and targets four countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, Pakistan and Peru.

The project supports the above partners to contribute to sustainable cotton, textile and garment value chains that is free of child labour and forced labour by:

1. Strengthening policy, legal and regulatory frameworks to combat child labour and forced labour in the cotton, textile and garment sector:
 - review policy, legal and regulatory framework to identify gaps, provide concrete recommendations and undertake necessary revisions, in line with International Labour Standards;
 - map the cotton, textile and garment supply chains taking into consideration fundamental principles and rights at work;
 - build the capacity of target countries to eliminate child and forced labour;
 - strengthen the role of employers' organizations in eliminating child labour and forced labour;
 - strengthen the capacity of workers' organizations and cotton, textile and garment production workers to exercise their right to freedom of association and other fundamental worker rights.
2. Supporting local governments, public services providers, and other relevant stakeholders to take effective action to stop child labour and forced labour in target cotton growing districts and communities and garment/textiles factories:
 - develop community-based multi-stakeholder monitoring and remedial mechanisms to combat child labour and forced labour with additional focus on gender issues;
 - support due diligence initiatives and grievance mechanisms concerning child labour and forced labour along the value chain;
 - strengthen livelihoods of local and vulnerable families;
 - raise awareness on child labour and forced labour in cotton, textile and garment value chains;
 - develop model youth and women employment and self-employment schemes and their supporting functions;
 - improve children's access to education.

For more information, please contact: fundamentals@ilo.org

Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)
International Labour Office

www.ilo.org/clearcotton

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