



Child Labor

All over the world, children are being exploited through various forms of work that deprives them of their fundamental human rights, potentially hindering their development and condemning them to a life of poverty and want. Children are forced to work under hazardous conditions and engage in illicit activities including drug trafficking, child prostitution, as well as involvement in armed conflict which are classified as some of the worst forms of child labour. Where children are engaged in activities that constitute sitting down, bent over in one position, or crawling in small spaces, they can become disfigured, suffer spinal injuries, and experience difficulty walking straight. This could be work such as sewing clothes, breaking bricks and rocks for construction purposes, making matchsticks, crawling through mines, or constantly carrying heavy loads. According to the head of the UN Labour Agency, “no child under the age of 18 should be toiling in mines, fields, factories and homes, carrying heavy loads or working long hours.” However, factors such as poverty, social norms, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, migration, and emergencies continue to contribute to child labour. Child labour should not be mistaken as work that children do to help their families in ways that are neither hazardous nor exploitative. It is rather any work related activity that can harm children mentally or physically, expose them to hazardous situations or interfere with their schooling which is a fundamental human right.

Facts and figures

- Recent global estimates show that 152 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour with 64 million girls and 88 million boys. For every 10 children in the world, 1 is engaged in child labour
- Nearly 73 million children whose ages fall below 12 years work under hazardous conditions which involves unsanitary, poorly lit, and poorly ventilated environments as well as exposure to all types of weather conditions
- While child labour is a global issue, it is prevalent in Africa and Asia Pacific with 72.1 million child workers in Africa and 62.1 million child workers in Asia Pacific
- 4.3 million children are engaged in forced labour which refers to working against their wishes; with 3 million of them in other forced labour imposed by private actors and 1 million victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
- While 11 per cent of the world’s children live in West and Central Africa (WCA), they are bearing a disproportionate share of the global burden of child right deprivations. Child labor is prevalent in the world’s poorest countries, where about 25% of children are engaged in exploitative work. Sub-Saharan Africa, with the world’s 28 lowest income countries, has more child laborers than any other country
- Between 2012 and 2016, there was a decline in child labour but the percentage was skewed in favour of the boys, The number of girls rescued from child labour were only half that of boys within the period.
- One of the major causes of child labour is poverty as households use every available means to survive. With every 1 percent rise in poverty, there is a corresponding 0.7 percent rise in child labour.
- Children forced by their household circumstances or other factors to leave school prior to their fifteenth birthday are less likely to ever find jobs and those who do find jobs take much longer to do so.

Effort being made around the world:

- How Nestle is tackling child labour: ([Learn more](#))
- How the International Labour Organization is using a monitoring system to track Child labour: ([Learn more](#))
- The effort of Cocoa Initiative towards ending Child labour by 2025: ([Learn more](#))
- What UNICEF is doing towards the prevention of Child labour in Ghana: ([Learn more](#))