

Child Labor

Should child labor be abolished?

FOCUS ON BANGLADESH

CONCERN
WORLDWIDE
USA

CHILD LABOR

Are you a child laborer?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you believe these numbers?

How many child laborers are there really?

It is difficult to count the number of child laborers around the world because most governments don't want to publicize something that is illegal. The ILO says there are 250 million child laborers, but this number doesn't include child laborers in industrialized countries like the US and it doesn't count hidden child workers, like girls doing domestic work or migrant farmers.



DID YOU KNOW?

- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** is one of the most important legal documents defining children's rights. The United States and Somalia are the only two countries in the world that have NOT ratified the CRC. According to Human Rights Watch, the US violates children's rights and the CRC in three main ways: the conditions for children in prisons and the justice system, the detention of children by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the use of children (17 years old) as soldiers. For more information, go to <http://www.hrw.org/children/us.htm>
- There are almost as many child laborers around the world as there are citizens of the United States.

WHAT IS A CHILD?

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is any person under the age of 18.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKING CHILDREN

Economically Active Children are children involved in any kind of work, legal or illegal, paid or unpaid. This category includes a 15 year old who delivers papers as well as an 8 year old who works in a sweatshop.

352 million children ages 5 – 17 are economically active.

Child Laborers are children 5 – 15 doing work that prevents them from going to school or is dangerous or hazardous. Children who are older than 15 and are involved in "hazardous" work or the "unconditional worst forms" of child labor are also considered child laborers. A 15 year-old who delivers papers is not considered a child laborer, but a 14 year-old working in a shop for more than 14 hours a week is considered a child laborer.

246 million children ages 5 – 17 are child laborers.

Children Doing Hazardous Work do work that jeopardizes their physical, psychological or emotional health - construction workers, welders, some factory workers, children working excessive hours, etc. 171 million children ages 5 – 17 are working in hazardous conditions.

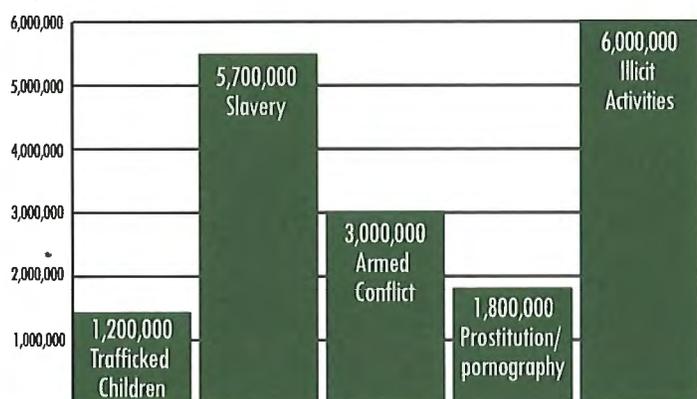
Unconditional Worst Forms of Child Labor are the forms of child labor that the international community has said are illegal and must be abolished immediately. The unconditional worst forms of child labor include child slavery, children in armed conflict, sexual exploitation of children, children in drug production and trafficking.

8.4 million children ages 5 – 17 are engaged in unconditional worst forms of child labor.

(Defined by the ILO, statistics from 2000)



Numbers of Children in Unconditional Worst Forms of Child Labor



CHECK IT OUT

Read the Convention on the Rights of the Child: www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm

Definitions of Child Labor: <http://us.ilo.org/ilokidsnew/whatis.html>

CHILD LABOR AROUND THE WORLD

Did a child laborer harvest the food you ate for lunch?

WHY DO CHILDREN WORK?

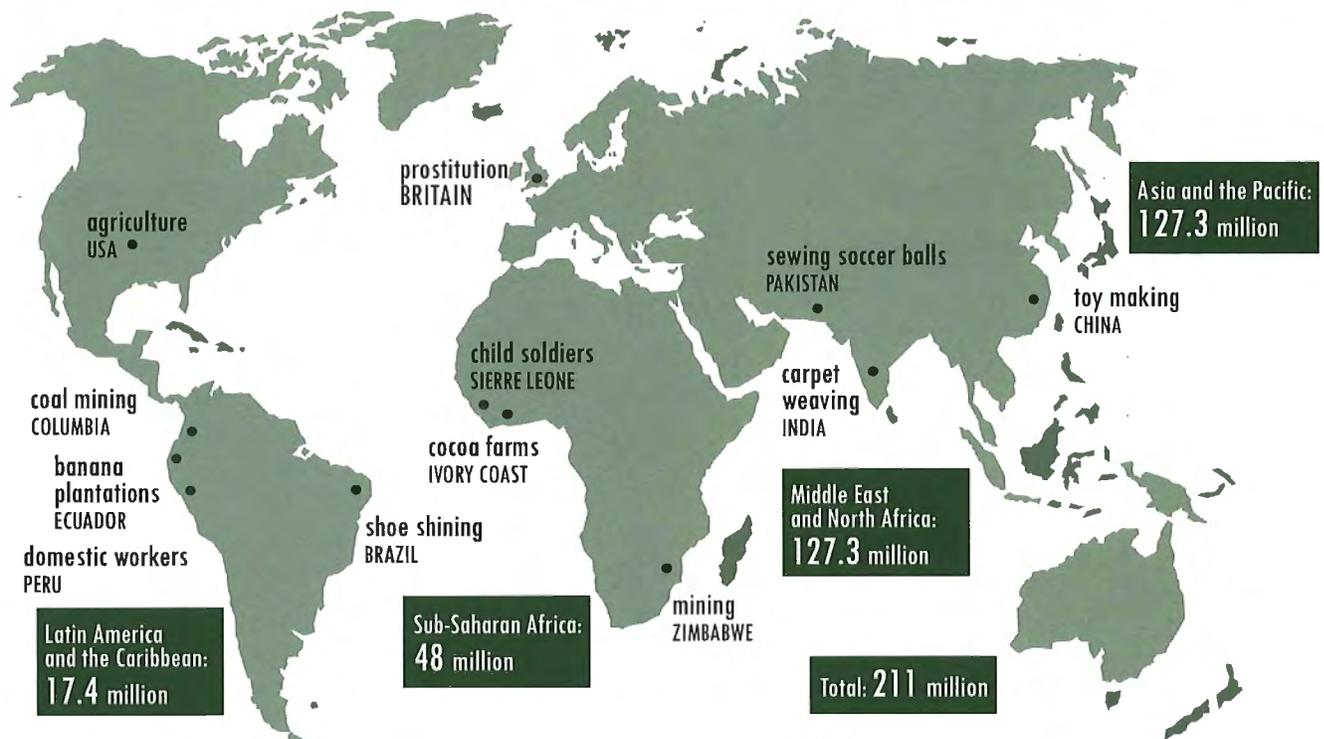
POVERTY: In countries where the average person earns less than \$500 per year, children make up nearly half the labor force and a working child usually contributes over 20% of his or her family's income. Parents need children to work, often for family farms or businesses, to support the family. Sometimes a working child is the only way to ensure a family's survival.

LACK OF QUALITY SCHOOLS: When schools are few and far between or of poor quality, many children end up working.

One of the most effective ways to prevent child labor is by providing a free and quality education to all children. Sometimes children and parents believe the children will benefit more from working than from going to poor schools.

CHEAP LABOR: Employers can usually pay children less and demand more of them because children often do not know or understand their rights. Parents often have children working on the family farm because they cannot hire paid laborers.

CHILDREN ARE WORKING ON EVERY CONTINENT — HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES: (1998)



DID A CHILD MAKE YOUR SHOES?

From clothing production to toy manufacturing, corporations are continually able to skirt international laws and use child labor. Manufacturers such as Nike, Pepsi, Disney, Gap, McDonalds, Guess and Adidas have been accused of using child workers. Nike, a corporation with strict age policies for its employees, has admitted that children as young as 10 are making shoes, clothing and soccer balls. But lack of birth records and easily forged documents make it difficult to keep kids out of the factories. Additionally, many argue that children working in factories are learning valuable skills and earning a salary that might be their families' only source of income. Should Nike fire or hire child laborers?

? DID YOU KNOW?

- 8.4 million children worldwide are involved in "unconditional worst forms" of child labor - slavery, bondage, prostitution, pornography, armed conflict and illicit activities. This is more than the total number of people living in New York City (8 million).
- 300,000 children under 18 serve in government military forces or armed rebel groups. Some of these children are as young as 8 years old.

CHECK IT OUT

Learn more about child slavery and trafficking: <http://www.antislavery.org/>
Read about child labor in the US: <http://hometown.aol.com/munmei/labor.html>

BANGLADESH

*Child labor gives children an income
and skills—should it be banned?*



BANGLADESH COUNTRY INFORMATION

LOCATION: Southern Asia, bordered by India and Myanmar.

POPULATION: 137,400,000

SIZE: Bangladesh is slightly smaller than Iowa

ETHNIC GROUPS: 98% Bengali, 2% tribal groups

RELIGIONS: 83% Muslim, 16% Hindu, 1% other

LANGUAGES: Bangla or Bengali is the official language. English is the second most used language.

GOVERNMENT: Parliamentary Democracy; Prime Minister: Khaleda Zia

INFANT MORTALITY RATE: 67 infants die per 1,000 births

LIFE EXPECTANCY: 58 years

Source: UNDP, 2002

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Most Bangladeshis are Muslim. The Five Pillars of Islam are the five obligations that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

The Five Pillars consist of:

SHAHADAH: sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith.

SALAT: performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day.

ZAKAT: paying an alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy.

SAWM: fasting during the month of Ramadan.

HAJJ: pilgrimage to Mecca.

? DID YOU KNOW?

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest and most densely populated countries. Most people in Bangladesh live crowded onto a delta of rivers that empty into the Bay of Bengal. Floods and cyclones frequently ravage the country. In 1991 a tidal wave killed approximately 138,000 people and in 1998 the worst ever flood devastated two-thirds of the country.



CHECK IT OUT

See pictures and learn about Bangladesh: <http://www.virtualbangladesh.com>

To learn more about Islam: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam>

CHILD LABOR IN BANGLADESH

What would you do about child labor in Bangladesh?



Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. The average annual salary is just \$350 and at least 33% of the population is undernourished. This devastating poverty has forced many families to send their children to work at a very young age. Over 7 million children work in Bangladesh. Working children in Bangladesh provide as much as 25% of their families' income.

Bangladesh has several laws prohibiting child labor and the Bangladeshi government has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the ILO Conventions 59 and 138, making it illegal for children under the age of 14 to work in industrial manufacturing or other industries considered the worst forms of child labor. Although these laws exist, they are not always enforced and many children are able to get jobs. Births in Bangladesh are often not registered so there is no accurate documentation of a person's age. This means children are able to pretend they are old enough to work. Governments are often reluctant to admit that child labor exists in their countries because it might lead to industries shutting down, having a negative impact on their economies.



DID YOU KNOW?

In Bangladesh...

- 12% of the entire work force is children
- 6,584,000 children ages 5-15 work
- 15,000 children are involved in street prostitution
- 3% of the armed forces are children
- Girls are bought for prostitution for \$175
- 20,000 women and girls were trafficked for prostitution in 2000
- 35,000-45,000 children are involved in drug trafficking

Source: UNDP, 2002

BANNING CHILD LABOR

The Child Labor Deterrence Act (1993) is a bill to prohibit the US from importing goods produced abroad with child labor. It also requires the development and maintenance of a list of foreign industries that use child labor. Companies violating the prohibition against importing these products would be subject to stiff penalties.

WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN WHO AREN'T ALLOWED TO WORK?

As a result of this bill, 50,000 child garment workers in Bangladesh lost their jobs in 1994. But what happened to these children? Most of them relied on their pay from the garment factory to support themselves and their families. Once out of a job, these children had to seek work elsewhere. Programs were set up to give the newly unemployed children an education, health care and a stipend. But only 7,000 of the 50,000 children benefited from these programs and many began working in more dangerous jobs than the garment industry, such as prostitution and construction work. **Would you have passed the Child Labor Deterrence Act?**

This is what Sohel, a manager at a garment factory in Bangladesh says about the bill:

"As a student, I too hailed the bill. I was happy that someone was fighting for children's rights. But now that I work in a factory and have to turn away these children who need jobs, I see things differently. Sometimes I take risks and, if a child is really in a bad way, I let them work, but it is dangerous."

CHECK IT OUT

Read about child garment workers in Bangladesh: <http://www.banglarights.net/HTML/garmentworkers.htm>

Nike, Adidas, Gap... Read about working conditions in these garment industries: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/companies.htm>

SHOULD CHILD LABOR BE ELIMINATED?

*Does child labor violate a child's rights?
If you boycott your favorite sneaker company because it employs children in its factories, what might happen?
What should be done about child labor?*

What do you think?

Imran, 42 YEARS OLD, chairman Carpet Manufacturing Company, PAKISTAN

Children have helped construct Pakistan's infrastructure and advanced its industry. For thousands of years children have worked alongside their parents in their villages. The work they now do in factories and workshops is an extension of this tradition, and in most ways an improvement on it. The children earn more than they would elsewhere. They contribute significantly to their families' security and raise their standard of living.

Damaris, 13 YEARS OLD farmer, USA

I work in the broccoli and lettuce fields in Arizona. During the peak season, I often work 14 hours a day in 100-degree temperatures. For months I have suffered from frequent nosebleeds and have passed out on several occasions. Even though I've been sick from being exposed to dangerous pesticides, I keep on working. It's very difficult. I just endure it.

Faiz, 9 YEARS OLD, factory worker, PAKISTAN

I work in a factory sewing soccer balls. I work 80 hours a week and make \$1.20 each day. Sometimes we have to work in the dark because the foreman doesn't want the people who come to visit to be able to take photographs. I never speak because I'm afraid of being punished. One time, the foreman punished me for wasting material. He took me into the storage closet and whipped me."

These stories are adapted from: All Work and No Play, Development Education for Youth, 2001, Human Rights Watch, www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/voices.htm and Child Labor in Pakistan, The Atlantic, 1996.

Chandra, 14 YEARS OLD tea estate worker, NEPAL

Last year I started working on a tea estate. My parents work on the tea estate also, but they do not make enough money for food and clothes for my brothers and sisters and me. It takes me over an hour to walk to the estate. I spend my days picking and loading tea and fetching water. I had to provide my own tools and I don't get paid when I'm sick. I want to go to school, but my family doesn't have enough food so school is out of the question.

Nelson, 10 YEARS OLD jewelry maker, PERU

I work with my uncle who makes gold jewelry for tourists. I mix the ore with mercury and the gold can then be extracted. Sometimes, the mixture splashes on my body. I work from seven in the morning until six in the evening. I get Sundays off and I like to play soccer.

Ana, 8 YEARS OLD home-maker, MOZAMBIQUE

I look after my brother and sister while my mother and father work in the fields. I clean the house and start preparing the food. When my parents and my older brother who is in school come home in the evenings, I help my mother get dinner ready and clean up afterwards.

Nouroudine, 11 YEARS OLD cocoa farmer, BENIN

When I was 9 years old my uncle sold me to a man going to Nigeria. I worked sifting sand from gravel in a quarry. There were lots of other kids at the quarry. At night, we slept on sacks of corn in a warehouse. One day, my boss hit me on the shoulder with a shovel. I started crying and he hit me again. He hit me so hard I decided to escape. I went back to my village but a few weeks later my mother paid a man to take me to Ivory Coast where I am now working on a cocoa farm with my brother. I miss my parents. If I ever get home I'm going to tell my dad that I want to go to school.

Marvin, 12 YEARS OLD shoe shine NICARAGUA

I work all day beginning at 5:30 am shining shoes. I earn about \$6 a day. My mother uses the money to buy food for me and my two brothers and three sisters. I'm going to go to school soon, even though I'll only be able to work half the day.

Patricia, 49 YEARS OLD mother of child laborer, ANGOLA

I have seen children forced into armed conflict, children tied to their workbenches to keep them from running away and children beaten because they fell asleep on the job. My daughter had to spend her childhood working in our fields because we couldn't afford for her to go to school. Children should not grow up this way. All child labor must be eliminated.

Nadia, 17 YEARS OLD prostitute, IRELAND

I am originally from the Ukraine. Last year, a man came to my house and told my mother he could get me a good job cleaning houses in another country. I came on a truck with twenty other girls. When I first arrived in Ireland, I was put to work on the streets as a prostitute. I complained, but the man threatened to tell my mother I am a prostitute. I couldn't bear the shame. He holds onto my identification documents.

Joey, 16 YEARS OLD drug dealer, USA

I started smoking dope when I was 13. Every once in a while my friends would ask me if I had any extra and I would give it to them. Then they started paying me to hook them up. Dealing isn't a full-time job for me, but it gives me extra cash to go out with my friends and to buy clothes and DVDs and stuff. I don't smoke much anymore and I'm doing well in school. I even want to go to college.

Mirza, 30 YEARS OLD mother of child laborer, INDIA

My son is bright and ambitious. He will learn far more practical skills in six months at the loom than he would in six years of school. He will be taught by experienced craftsmen and his pay will rise as his skills improve. He is thankful that I have given him the opportunity to work.

Paul, 15 YEARS OLD grocery packer, FRANCE

I work at a supermarket packing people's groceries into bags. I work night and early morning shifts – right before and after school. Sometimes it's hard for me to stay awake in class, but I need the money so I can afford good clothes. My parents are happy because I don't ask them for money.

Susan, 15 YEARS OLD, rebel soldier, UGANDA

Last year, the rebels came to my town and took all the kids to fight in their army. One boy tried to escape, but he was caught... His hands were tied, and then they made us kill him with a stick. I felt sick. I knew this boy from before. We were from the same village. I refused to kill him and they told me they would shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, so I had to do it. The boy was asking me, "Why are you doing this?" I said I had no choice. I still dream about the boy from my village who I killed. I see him in my dreams, and he is talking to me and saying I killed him for nothing, and I am crying.

Salani, 7 YEARS OLD, servant, SRI LANKA

I work in a house that has five family members. I'm the only servant. I'm very busy all day working, washing, cleaning and preparing food. The children in the family go to school, but I don't get to go. They can also watch television, but I'm not allowed. I'm not allowed to play with the children. I'm always working. I sleep on the floor in the dining room. I've never been home to visit since the beginning of this work. My parents came to visit twice, and collected some money from the family, but I don't know how much.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

CHILD LABOR

International Labour Organization

<http://www.ilo.org/>

<http://us.ilo.org/>

ILO report: A Future Without Child Labor,
May 2002

[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/
standards/decl/publ/reports/report3.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/decl/publ/reports/report3.htm)

UNICEF

<http://www.unicef.org>

BANGLADESH

CIA World Factbook

<http://www.odci.gov>

Virtual Bangladesh

<http://www.virtualbangladesh.com>

Child Workers in Asia

<http://www.cwa.tnet.co.th/>

Bangladeshi Government

<http://www.bangladeshgov.org/>

ACTIVIST ORGANIZATIONS

Human Rights Watch

<http://www.hrw.org>

Child Labor Coalition

<http://www.stopchildlabor.org/>

Free the Children

<http://www.freethechildren.org/>

Child Rights Information Network

<http://www.crin.org>

Labor of Love

<http://www.childlabor.org/frames.html>

NEWS

National Public Radio: A Child's Work

http://marketplace.org/features/child_labor/

Child Labor Photo Project

<http://www.childlaborphotoproject.org/>

New Internationalist

<http://www.newint.org/issue292/thank.htm>

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