

# NO CHILD SHOULD EVER BE FOR SALE

JOIN THE FIGHT TO END CHILD SLAVERY

World Vision

For Children. For Change. For Life.

## COTTON UNRAVELLED

Cotton is woven into every aspect of our lives. We slip it on when we get dressed in the morning and we slip into it when get between the sheets at night. We dress in it, we decorate our homes with it and, in the form of cottonseed oil, we even eat it.

Cotton is commonplace; it's not surprising then that it's one of the most widely grown crops in the world. But what is surprising—it's also an industry that uses child labour.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 60% of the world's child labourers are working in agriculture. That's 129-million girls and boys, from the age of 5 to 17 of those 85 million are involved in hazardous labour<sup>1</sup> including toiling in cotton fields.

Cotton is grown all over the globe, from the United States, China and India (the world's leading exporters<sup>2</sup>) to Brazil, Australia, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Turkey. In the Western world and Australia, machines are used to harvest the crop. But in developing countries—China, India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Brazil—cotton is picked by hand, and in many cases, the hands of children<sup>3</sup>. And because of this underpaid or free child labour, there is little incentive for mechanization of the industry and for change.<sup>4</sup>

## COTTON: THE HUMAN COST

Boys and girls work in every stage of cotton production<sup>4</sup>. In the fields, children plough, sow, weed and take part in pest control, which includes spraying toxic pesticides. They harvest the crop, picking cotton and packing it into huge sacks that are hauled onto trucks. In factories, they work in the ginning process, feeding cotton into gin machines that separate the cotton fibre from the seed and, at the other end, shoving bales of processed cotton out for shipment. But the cotton-and-child-labour issue doesn't stop there. Countless other children work in factories and sweatshops around the world—sewing the cotton fabric into clothing.

## THE ISSUE: CHILD LABOUR

"Child work" is work done by a child that is age-appropriate, safe and doesn't compromise schooling. A child might work around the house or assist in farm tasks or with a family business. This work is considered helpful to the individual's development and life experience.

"Child labour" on the other hand, refers to jobs that may be physically, mentally or psychologically damaging, and that deprive a child of proper education. In its worst forms, this labour is dirty, dangerous and degrading – it is hazardous, harmful to a child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development, and interferes with his or her education. Children can be trafficked into these jobs and are not free to leave them. It is a form of exploitation and slavery.



**1.2** BILLION  
THE ESTIMATED  
VALUE OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
COTTON  
INDUSTRY, WHICH  
ROUTINELY USES  
CHILD LABOUR  
FOR PROFIT.

[www.panna.org/resources/cotton](http://www.panna.org/resources/cotton)



VISIT [www.nochildforsale.ca](http://www.nochildforsale.ca)

1. ILO Child labour in agriculture, [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) 2. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/crops/cotton-wool.aspx> 3. US Department of Labour: 2011 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor <http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/ocft/2011TDA.pdf> 4. Environmental Justice Foundation (2007) The Children Behind Our Cotton, [http://efjfoundation.org/sites/default/files/public/The%20Children%20Behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL\\_small.pdf](http://efjfoundation.org/sites/default/files/public/The%20Children%20Behind%20Our%20Cotton%20FINAL_small.pdf) 5. Gujarat Visit Report - To Assess the Child Labour and Child Trafficking Situation in the 81 Cotton Seed Farms of Gujarat, [http://www.academia.edu/1312033/Child\\_Labour\\_in\\_81\\_Cotton\\_Farms\\_of\\_Gujarat\\_6\\_Children\\_in\\_hazardous\\_work\\_What\\_we\\_know\\_What\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_do\\_International\\_Programme\\_on\\_the\\_Elimination\\_of\\_Child\\_Labour\\_IPEC](http://www.academia.edu/1312033/Child_Labour_in_81_Cotton_Farms_of_Gujarat_6_Children_in_hazardous_work_What_we_know_What_we_need_to_do_International_Programme_on_the_Elimination_of_Child_Labour_IPEC) [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_135428.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms_135428.pdf) 7. Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) and hazardous work of children in agriculture, 30 January 2012 [http://www.ilo.org/pec/areas/Agriculture/WCMS\\_172349/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/pec/areas/Agriculture/WCMS_172349/lang-en/index.htm) Accessed on March 10, 2014 8. Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) and hazardous work of children in agriculture, 30 January 2012 [http://www.ilo.org/pec/areas/Agriculture/WCMS\\_172349/lang-en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/pec/areas/Agriculture/WCMS_172349/lang-en/index.htm) Accessed on March 10, 2014 9. US Department of Labour: 2011 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor <http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/ocft/2011TDA.pdf> 10. US Department of Labour: 2011 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor <http://www.dol.gov/whd/programs/ocft/2011TDA.pdf>

# NO CHILD SHOULD EVER BE FOR SALE

JOIN THE FIGHT TO END CHILD SLAVERY

## YOU CAN HELP HERE'S HOW

### SHOP WISELY

Choose ethical consumer goods. Look for labels bearing the Fairtrade, UTZ and Rainforest Alliance-approved seals, and visit [www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com) to verify the ethical standards of products and brands before you buy. And, if you're in doubt, ask the company directly about its policies and practices to be sure child labour isn't a part of their business.

### SPREAD THE WORD

Share this information, send friends and family to [www.nochildforsale.ca](http://www.nochildforsale.ca) to learn more, and pass it on.

### SIGN OUR PETITION

Visit [www.nochildforsale.ca](http://www.nochildforsale.ca) and encourage Canada's leading companies to take steps to ensure every link in their supply chains support good labour practices.

## DESPERATION AND DANGER

The worst forms of child labour are common in the cotton industry. Children work long hours, often in extreme temperatures.<sup>5</sup> They suffer from exhaustion, heat stroke and malnutrition. Working in fields treated with pesticides, they experience blurred vision, dizziness, headaches, numbness,<sup>6</sup> and are exposed to the dangerous effects of toxic substances on their nervous systems, which may not be evident until they are grown.<sup>7</sup> In both fields and factories, the physical strain and repetitive movements required for their tasks can deform bones and injure muscles, causing lifelong disabilities.<sup>8</sup> On top of this, these children are often in poor health and have limited, if any, access to health care, making the impact of hard work on their bodies even more pronounced.

For all their effort, child labourers earn little or no money. Some are working as a means to support or help their families. Others are forced. In the country of Uzbekistan, for example, hundreds of thousands of children—along with adults—are ordered by the government to work in cotton fields to meet mandated harvest quotas each year. Schools are closed for two months, and boys and girls—threatened with expulsion, detentions or physical violence—are forced to comply.<sup>9 10</sup>

World Vision

For Children. For Change. For Life.

# FIVE YEARS OLD

CHILDREN  
AS YOUNG AS  
THIS ARE  
RECRUITED  
AND SOMETIMES  
FORCED TO  
WORK IN  
COTTON FIELDS  
OR FACTORIES  
FOR LITTLE  
OR NO PAY

[www.ejfoundation.org](http://www.ejfoundation.org)



PICTURED, ABOVE: Serkalem in Ethiopia has been working as a weaver for her family and others since she was a young child.

Cotton touches every part of our lives in more ways than we realize. All the more reason to be aware, and to shop ethically.

**CLOTHING:** Cotton is used to make T-shirts, shirts, jeans, underwear, socks, bath robes and anything made of denim, corduroy, terry, twill, chambray, velour, velvet, jersey or flannel.

**FURNISHINGS:** Cotton is used in upholstery fabric, drapes, sheets, towels, bath mats, dish towels, candles and paint.

**PERSONAL PRODUCTS:** Cotton is used in the manufacturing of soap, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, diapers, bandages, swabs and cotton balls.

**FOOD:** Cotton is used in to make coffee filters, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressing, vegetable oil and potato chips.

**MONEY:** Cotton is used, in most countries, to produce the actual dollar bills that we use for currency to pay for these cotton-containing products.

VISIT [www.nochildforsale.ca](http://www.nochildforsale.ca)