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Child Labour

Project on eliminating child labour and forced labour in cotton-growing communities

The Issue

Cotton production is heavily demanding in terms of labour, natural resources and chemicals. It is also a crop vulnerable to pests and climate change.

Child labour is prevalent in agriculture and is extensively present in cotton production. Children are involved in a wide range of tasks and stages, depending on the system of production and varying across countries. Many of these tasks are hazardous and/or physically demanding. Common activities undertaken by children include land preparation, ploughing with oxen, the use, application and exposure to hazardous chemicals, and long-hours of work with handpicking of cotton balls, transportation and carrying of heavy weights at harvest time.

Eliminating child labour in cotton cultivation is not an easy task. Besides household poverty, factors such as seasonality of agricultural production, migration, lack of technology, workplace hazards, limited access to schools, weak labour inspection and weak labour law compliance in rural areas, and ingrained attitudes about the roles of children provide obstacles.

The work that children perform is often invisible, unacknowledged and unpaid because they assist their parents, often in family enterprises, which are not viable enough to hire paid adult labour. In some situations, children undertake piecework or work under a quota system on larger farms, sometimes as part of migrant worker families.

Child labour has negative impacts on several levels: it infringes on the rights of a child; it hinders their education and future employability; it perpetrates the cycle of poverty amongst families and communities; and it undermines sustainability of the cotton value chain.

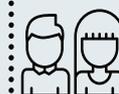
The Action

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).

FAO is in charge of one component of activities in Burkina Faso, Mali and Pakistan, focusing on enabling farmers to end their economic dependency on child labour, strengthening their livelihoods through income generating activities, educating agricultural stakeholders, and raising awareness at the community level.



Statistics



71 percent of all child labour is in agriculture



World cotton production is valued at about USD 50 billion



Around 100 million family farmers depend directly on the cotton industry for their livelihoods

Project's components



Improving the livelihoods of cotton-growing households who engage in child labour



Raising awareness among cotton-growing communities and developing the capacities of agricultural stakeholders engaging in cotton-growing areas

About the project



Budget: USD 1.2 Million



May 2019
January 2022



Burkina Faso, Mali,
Pakistan



For more information please visit:

