

Risks for Children Impacted by Global Supply Chains

A Review of 20 Child Rights Risk Assessments between 2019–2022

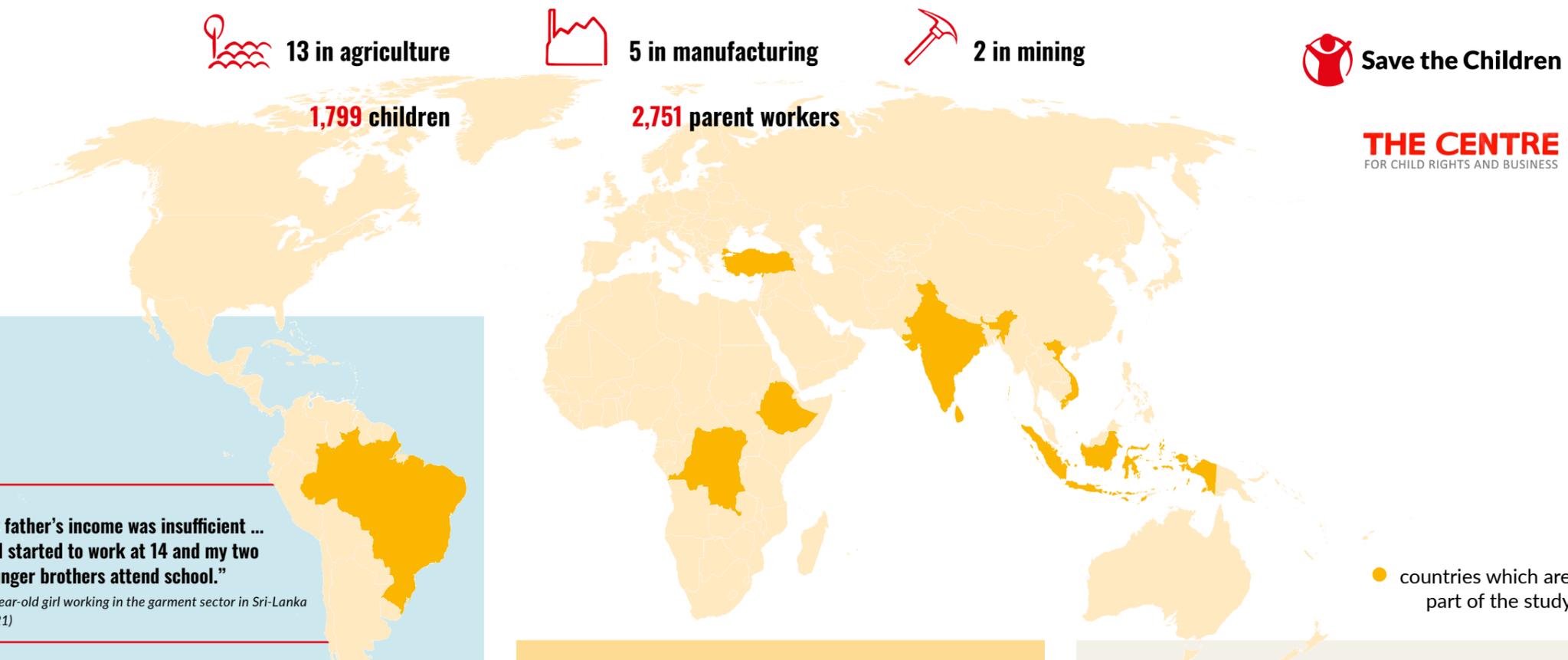
 13 in agriculture

 5 in manufacturing

 2 in mining



THE CENTRE
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

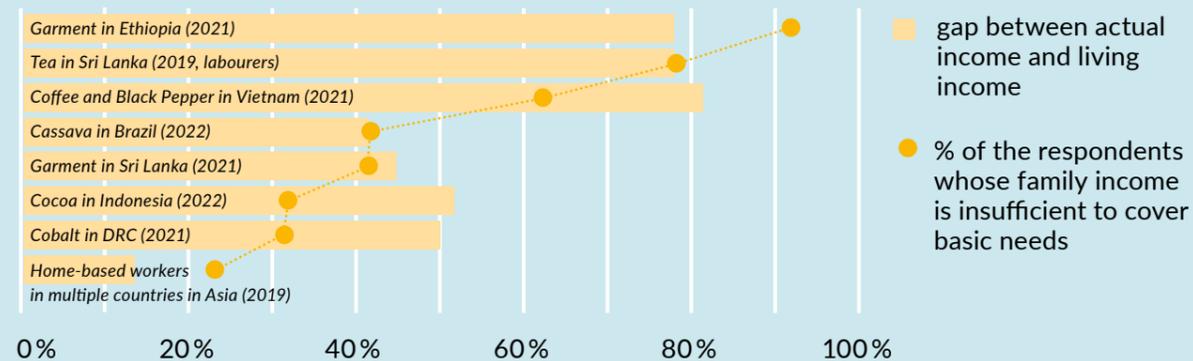


Overarching issues

- 10 out of 20 assessments revealed cases of **child labour**.
- Another 8 assessments showed high risks thereof.
- Workers and farmers in all sectors earn significantly **below a living wage or living income**.
- The bigger the gap, the more likely workers and farmers cannot pay for necessities for their families, such as education.

“My father’s income was insufficient ... So I started to work at 14 and my two younger brothers attend school.”

17-year-old girl working in the garment sector in Sri-Lanka (2021)



- Around **60%** of surveyed workers and farmers struggle to afford education for their children.

“The school has agreed to give us time to pay the fee. However, I am not even in a position to buy books for my children. The books cost around INR4,500, which is more than we currently make in a month.”

A female garment worker in India (2021)

- Supply chains rely heavily on **informal labour**, leaving workers and their families with no social security or other safety nets, exposing children to high risks in case of accidents, illness or other shocks.
- **Female temporary workers** are significantly less paid even though they work the longest hours.
- **Young workers** are completely excluded from the formal supply chains, and systematically pushed into informal, unregulated, often hazardous work.

“I now live here and work about nine hours a day, in busy times even 13 hours. I don’t get any salary. My boss says I still have to learn and once I am a professional in this work, they want to give me a part of the business.”

17-year-old male worker who participated in a homemaker study in Asia

Sector specific issues

 **Manufacturing**

Working mothers in the manufacturing sector struggle with childcare – leading to significant risks for children of neglect or reducing the mother’s ability to work.

 **Agriculture**

Most agriculture communities rely heavily on children’s involvement in work, negatively impacting children’s school attendance.

Children of seasonal migrant workers are the most vulnerable group, often exposed to hazardous work, poor living conditions and missing the longest periods of school.

 **Mining**

Children impacted by or working in mining experience extremely hazardous work and living conditions resulting in severe child rights violations.

Not enough is done

Current monitoring mechanisms contribute little to the reduction of child rights risks but shift it to the invisible part of the supply chains. Few systems are in place to enable access to remedy.

The majority of existing community initiatives focus on awareness raising and are limited in scope.

Very few companies directly relate their purchasing practices (including pricing) to the impact it has on workers and their children.

What needs to be done

- Increase **visibility** by promoting transparency
- **Acknowledge child rights risks** both internally and externally
- Ensure **responsible sourcing practices** and pay fair prices
- Promote **decent work for youth** in the formal sector
- Set up a **child rights-centred remediation system**
- Facilitate **access to quality education** affordable **childcare, social security and health care**