

1000

REPORTS OF CHILD LABOUR

**LESSONS, INSIGHTS, REFLECTIONS FROM OUR
CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION WORK**



This is not a photo of child labour! This is Nguyen Quang Huy from Vietnam who has more time to help with light chores at home because he's part of a factory youth development programme that gives fair pay and regulated working hours.
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Children's names under 'Stories from the Ground' have been changed to protect identities.

FOREWORD

A letter from the CEO

Over 1000 cases of child labour have been reported to The Centre as of June 2024. While this is not a cause for celebration, the journey to getting here has been a valuable learning experience that we want to share through this publication.

For the last couple of years, The Centre has been gathering information on every child labour notification sent to us. This has helped us gain a better understanding of the push and pull factors leading to child labour, as well as the factors that affect remediation outcomes.

Among those 1000 cases, 70% of children could be enrolled in the remediation programme and given a second chance at a brighter future. All of the children who completed our remediation programme were given access to learning opportunities – some returned to formal education, others attended vocational training courses, and some got private tutoring. With 68% of the children being girls, the remediation programme has helped break gender barriers in countries where girls are most often the first ones to sacrifice their education. While this underscores the transformative power and impact of remediation, the overall picture is not perfect.

It is clear that 1000 cases within the last few years reported by around 35 companies means we only see the very tip of the iceberg. Global statistics show how progress in eliminating child labour is stagnating and that cases are growing. Furthermore, a range of data and lower-tier risk assessments have shown that child labour is widespread in lower tiers. A lack of effective monitoring, identification and reporting systems in the deeper supply chain means most cases never come to light and children stay trapped in a cycle of poverty. Meanwhile, issues around fair pricing, living wages and accountability remain largely unaddressed.

Child labour remediation is a complicated endeavour but one that is absolutely crucial to support. It is a lifeline for children in dire situations, and its impact can transform the fate of an entire family. Businesses have an obligation and responsibility to act – even more so in the face of human rights due diligence regulations.

We hope that by sharing our learnings in this publication, we can inspire businesses to think about their current approach to child labour and to understand the importance of taking action through a child rights lens. No one actor can tackle child labour alone, but together, we can make a difference.



Ines Kaempfer
CEO, The Centre for Child Rights and Business



The Centre's Myanmar case manager Juanna on a family visit as part of the remediation process.
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BY THE NUMBERS

POVERTY

is the number one reason for children to go into child labour, cited by more than half of the children



70%

are girls who are often pulled out of school to work, denied education, or forced into early marriages, to contribute to their family's income

71%

of cases found through audits were unannounced audits, with more than half within first-tier indirect suppliers

78%

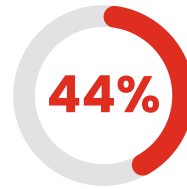
of cases were found in smaller factories

45%

of the cases are young workers found in hazardous working conditions

44%

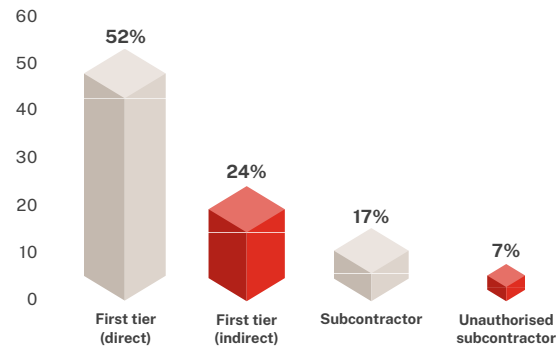
had used fake IDs during recruitment, signalling a need for more robust age verification mechanisms



of the cases were introduced to work by their relatives

76%

of child labour cases are found in first-tier factories



While child labour is more common in the lower tiers, this result shows that the majority of companies have little visibility in lower tiers

LOCATIONS OF OUR CHILD LABOUR PREVENTION AND REMEDIATION SERVICES*



REMEDIATION IMPACT

92%

of those enrolled into education and/or skill-building opportunities through their remediation programmes have successfully completed the course

53%

of the factories have accepted training to strengthen their child labour prevention and remediation systems



*Locations: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Türkiye, Vietnam, and the United States.

KEY LEARNINGS FROM 1000 CASES OF CHILD LABOUR

One thousand cases of child labour make for a compelling awareness campaign. But let us be honest: What does it say about the realities of child labour? And most importantly, what key learnings can we extract from these 1000 cases?



Phyu Phyu, a 14-year-old girl who was taken out of hazardous work and enrolled in a vocational sewing programme.
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SCRATCHING THE SURFACE?

1000 is not a large number in the grand scheme of things. We know that child labour affects tens of millions of children worldwide, a problem exacerbated by the pandemic and other socioeconomic and political factors in recent years. Despite this, we must acknowledge that companies investing resources to tackle child labour are driven by a sincere desire to make a difference. All the children who completed our remediation programme have been given learning opportunities, including re-integration into formal education, vocational training, private tutoring, and skills training. These outcomes have the potential to impact entire families and even future generations.

However, the fact remains that child labour is not going anywhere. As we strive to meet climate targets and transition to a greener future, child labour in the mining and extractives sector remains a reality that can't be ignored. In countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which produces 70% of the world's cobalt, 30% of this supply comes from small-scale and artisanal mining, where children and families live and work in hazardous conditions to make a living.

While we may be living in a time of exciting technological advances that could someday solve some of the world's problems, we cannot ignore the stark reality that children continue to sacrifice their childhoods to fuel our desire for goods and low prices, and in some cases, to enable the green transition.

2

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT MONEY

Poverty is the number one cause of child labour, according to our 1000 cases. This is not surprising. What's surprising is the lack of evidence showing companies assessing or changing their purchasing practices to provide supply chain workers with fairer wages that support a family's living costs. While some countries, like Bangladesh, have increased the minimum wage, this is only good news if buyers absorb these costs in their pricing agreements with suppliers. If buyers do not absorb at least part of these costs, suppliers face higher production costs, which could fuel child labour and other cost-cutting measures that can negatively affect workers' health, safety, income and security. Workers in supply chains constantly straddle the line between abject poverty and staying afloat. Until this changes, children – especially girls – will be compelled to leave school early and endure a life of low-paid labour.

3

WHO SHOULD PAY?

A key issue is addressing who should be responsible for remediation costs when child labour is found. This is a tricky issue, with different companies adopting different approaches. About 15% of buyers have paid for the full remediation programme, which always includes a monthly living stipend and access to education. However, in most cases (74%), intermediaries like vendors, agents and importers have footed the bill. These intermediaries are directly responsible for cascading their clients' (i.e. buyers) child labour prevention and remediation requirements to the suppliers. However, since remediation programmes can be costly, especially when the children need support for several years before reaching the minimum working age, we do see pushback from all parties involved.

Out of our 1,000 cases, 118 did not result in a rapid assessment, meaning we could not contact the child and their family to gather the facts and initiate a remediation programme. Additionally, in another 196 cases, we could not move the assessment to the remediation stage. Several factors contribute to this, with the most common being factories refusing to cooperate, either outright or by threatening the families of the concerned children. When no rapid assessment occurs, or the family suddenly refuses to collaborate, there is a higher risk that the case gets dropped, especially when the buyer is not prepared to cover the remediation costs instead of the supplier.

Unfortunately, we have observed several instances where factories threatened families, leading to their refusal to join the programme. As a result, the case was dropped, and a few months later, the international unit continued to work with the same suppliers. This allows the factory and intermediary/buyer to avoid responsibility for child labour. No remedial actions are taken to support the child, nor are the gaps that led to child labour addressed at the operational level.

A key learning is that clients must ensure no business partners are incentivised to disrupt rapid assessments and remediation outcomes. This can be achieved by adding specific wording to supplier codes of conduct and child labour policies that encourage collaboration. Business termination should be a last resort only when all remedial actions have failed. Another measure is including a clearly communicated cost-sharing system to cover remediation.

4

DIFFERENT CONTEXTS, BUT THE SAME RIGHTS

Historically, over 90% of the child labour cases we have handled are in manufacturing, and we are now addressing cases in the agriculture and mining sectors. These sectors are more informal and require a different approach to remediation. Our experience across all sectors remains the same: child labour remediation is rarely effective without financial and long-term support.

5

RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES MATTER

Child labour remediation must respond to, and prioritise, the rights of children. The context surrounding child labour cases can vary significantly. When not done properly, there is a risk that poorly designed remediation can place the child in a situation far worse than before. For example, in Bangladesh, we have encountered families trying to marry off their daughters as a coping mechanism to reduce their economic burden after the daughters were found in a child labour situation. While we were able to intervene in these cases, the fate of countless girls who have been stopped from working but were not offered alternative support remains unknown.

6

REMEDATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF PREVENTION

Another key learning is that there is still insufficient emphasis on child labour remediation. Many companies lack clear wording and guidance in their supplier codes of conduct on how to remediate cases properly and ensure a child rights approach that enables the best possible outcomes for children. Child labour remediation is a crucial part of addressing child labour and has the potential to drive its prevention. For example, connecting youth in hazardous work to decent employment through a youth development programme removes them from child labour while providing greater career development prospects through vocational learning and on-the-job skills training.

Child labour typically occurs in countries with weak enforcement mechanisms and inadequate legal protections for children. Effective remediation must, therefore, provide direct support to affected children and link to improvements in child labour awareness, age verification, and hiring practices within the factory. This process often enables factories to become stronger business partners after the incident.



Trung (on the right) received support from The Centre's emergency fund after suffering a severe accident that partially severed his arm.

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MONITORING SYSTEMS BEYOND TIER-1

Receiving a report of child labour is an example of a functioning monitoring system and should be seen as such. However, with only 24% of the 1000 cases found among sub-contractors (authorised and unauthorised), companies need to do more to ensure an effective monitoring system extending to lower tiers. It is no secret that child labour violations increase in the deeper tiers, and we know that this can be a challenging reality to face. However, increasing human rights due diligence regulations and evolving stakeholder expectations mean that brands must extend monitoring, prevention and remediation systems to address risks beyond tier one.

8

RETHINKING GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS FOR CHILD LABOUR

Another learning is that traditional grievance mechanisms are ineffective in identifying child labour. Only 0.2% of the 1000 cases came to light through a worker helpline. Often, these mechanisms are inaccessible to children and unavailable beyond Tier 1. This is why The Centre is expanding its network of Child Rights Action Hubs worldwide in different sectors. These hubs provide a bottom-up community structure that empowers trusted local networks to be the eyes and ears on the ground.

For more information about grievance mechanisms in the context of child labour, please look out for a new white paper titled “The Suitability of Operational-Level Grievance Mechanisms in Addressing Child Labor” by The Remedy Project, with support from The Centre, to be published in June 2024.

Combating child labour still requires the combined efforts of government, businesses, and CSOs. However, we must not let the issue's complexity become an excuse. Our 1,000 cases show that companies can play an important role in minimising their contribution to increased risk and maximising their positive impact in the fight against child labour.

For more useful insights and tips, please see our [“12 STEPS FOR COMPANIES TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR”](#) and [Child Labour Principles](#).

CHAMPIONING CHILD RIGHTS IN SUPPLY CHAINS: 12 STEPS FOR COMPANIES TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS IN ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR

The call for companies to uphold human rights in their supply chains is gaining urgency, spurred on in no small part by an ever-expanding and stringent human rights due diligence regulatory landscape. With this, comes an increasing need to understand a business' impact on children's rights and to act accordingly to address any issues. Failure to do so goes beyond reputational damage for the company; it can have serious legal and ethical implications too. Child labour remains one of the most salient child rights risks in supply chains today that is keeping millions of children and families trapped in a vicious cycle. From pricing to engagement, companies can take several key steps to accelerate progress in breaking this cycle and prioritising child rights in their supply chains. Here are 12 essential actions that can make a significant difference.

PRICING

THE ISSUE

A relentless focus on the lowest price can lead producers to cut wages and reduce social welfare protections for workers, leading to poverty, greater susceptibility to financial shocks, denying children and families their basic rights, and aggravating child labour risks.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Assess how your pricing impacts the income and wages of workers and families in your supply chains and make the necessary adjustments.

VISIBILITY

THE ISSUE

Most companies focus solely on the direct parts of their supply chains, overlooking the child labour risks that exist deeper in supply chains.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Human rights due diligence (HRDD) legislation (e.g. EU CSDDD) mandates companies to ensure responsibility for human rights throughout their supply chains. One way of doing this, while also increasing visibility, is by investing in bottom-up communication structures in the upstream supply chain, which can provide companies with ongoing and accurate information on child labour risks and set the stage for meaningful intervention.

DECENT WORK FOR YOUTH

THE ISSUE

Hiring policies that exclude under 18s who've reached the legal minimum working age often drive youths into child labour, forcing them to find work in lower tiers or the informal sector.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Companies can create decent work opportunities for young workers by ensuring their supply chain partners are open to hiring youth and developing their skills. Youth development programmes can build supplier management's capacity to lawfully manage young workers while also helping them build a young, motivated workforce.

ACCOUNTABILITY

THE ISSUE

Companies focus their investments in traceability systems, which can create a false narrative of child labour-free supply chains. Traceability alone does not prevent or address child labour.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Transparently acknowledging areas of child labour risks linked to supply chains and working to address these issues is vital. Ensure all suppliers, including sub-contractors, are educated on child labour and effectively implement child labour policies and processes.

PRIORITISATION

THE ISSUE

Addressing child labour is deprioritised in boardrooms when companies face economic challenges and supply chain disruptions.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Even during economic challenges and supply chain disruptions, companies should maintain their commitment to addressing child labour. This ensures the development of more resilient child labour risk management structures capable of meeting future challenges and ensures compliance with human rights due diligence regulations.

ACCESS TO REMEDY

THE ISSUE

Companies lack robust systems and budgets to deliver effective, long-term child labour remediation designed with the best interests of the children in mind.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Companies should be prepared to support effective child labour remediation in their supply chains, including being open to cost-sharing systems when suppliers cannot bear the full brunt of remediation costs. Buyers are also encouraged to work with their suppliers to close gaps in their recruitment process.

REMEDICATION COST-SHARING

THE ISSUE

Companies put the sole financial responsibility of remediation on the supplier and thus incentivise suppliers to disrupt the remediation process to evade costs. This puts children at risk of continuing to work in precarious conditions and stagnates progress in eliminating child labour.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

The company should have a cost-sharing system to indicate its accountability level. It can assess and develop the cost-sharing system with suppliers or develop a joint remediation funding pool to pay for remediation when a supplier fails to cover the costs.

REPORTING

THE ISSUE

Few companies transparently report on child labour, which hides the extent of the issue, hinders effective solutions and fails to address human rights due diligence, modern slavery and forced labour reporting obligations.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Transparency, collaboration with peers and suppliers, and addressing child labour directly are crucial for addressing child labour. Companies should strive to accurately report on child labour to highlight the extent of the issue and work towards solutions.

RISK-ORIENTED APPROACH

THE ISSUE

Many companies treat child labour solely as an ESG risk to be mitigated, prioritising solutions that push the problem down supply chains out of sight, missing opportunities to actually advance child rights.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Instead of pushing the problem of child labour down supply chains, companies should adopt child rights-centred remediation approaches.

POOR WORKING CONDITIONS

THE ISSUE

Companies are missing out on how poor working conditions increase child labour risks.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Supporting parent workers with living wages, decent hours, childcare, strong health and safety measures, and social security benefits can significantly reduce the risks of their children falling into child labour.

SKILLS

THE ISSUE

Companies, supply chain auditors, and suppliers often lack the expertise needed to identify and address child labour risks.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

Strengthen child labour prevention and remediation by building the capability of HQ teams, internal and external auditors, and suppliers.

DISENGAGEMENT

THE ISSUE

When facing child labour challenges, companies sever business relationships with suppliers. This might offer temporary respite from risks, but it fails to tackle the root causes.

A CHILD-RIGHTS APPROACH

It is crucial to establish long-lasting partnerships with suppliers and work collaboratively with them to address child labour challenges. Instead of severing relationships when facing child labour challenges, companies should work together with suppliers to tackle root causes. This can include responsible lead times, long-term contracts, on-time payments, or ensuring pricing levels that give farmers and workers access to living income or wages.

By implementing these 12 steps, companies can accelerate progress in preventing child labour in their supply chains. A child rights approach to child labour benefits the children and families directly involved and contributes to building more ethical, sustainable, and resilient supply chains.



Children in a school in Madagascar fill out a worksheet to provide information about their work, education and living conditions as part of a child rights risk assessment in the mining sector
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DUE DILIGENCE PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION

Every company has the responsibility to both prevent and remediate child labour. The Centre's Due Diligence Principles For Child Labour Remediation provide high-level guidance for businesses to drive practical action covering responsibilities to deliver child labour remediation in supply chains. These principles aim to promote effective child labour due diligence, resulting in sustainable outcomes while prioritising the rights of the child in remediation approaches.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- 1 The rights of the child are always prioritised over commercial or other interests.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPANIES

- 2 Establish a comprehensive child labour policy.
- 3 Establish multi-tiered supply chain monitoring capacity in all sourcing countries.
- 4 Ensure monitoring programmes are adapted to supply chain risks and structures.
- 5 Prevent and mitigate business practices (in particular purchasing practices) that directly or indirectly increase the risk of child labour.
- 6 Establish a remediation mechanism that ensures access to appropriate remedy for victims of child labour.

KEY ELEMENTS OF CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION MANAGEMENT

- 7 Remediation responds to the needs of the child.
- 8 Remediation responds to the scale and severity of each case.
- 9 Child labour cases are remediated with professional support from independent child rights experts.
- 10 Access to adequate remedy is provided to ensure appropriate support for each case.

LINKS TO GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

- 11 Where functioning government structures are available, companies shall support and build on these.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD ARE ALWAYS PRIORITISED OVER COMMERCIAL OR OTHER INTERESTS

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child illustrates the basic human rights of children everywhere including the right to non-discrimination; the best interest of the child; the right to life survival and to develop to the fullest; the right to be heard; the right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and the right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPANIES

ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE CHILD LABOUR POLICY

Defines a commitment to effectively identify, prevent and remediate all forms of child labour (e.g. hazardous work, underage work etc.), including all direct and indirect suppliers.

ESTABLISH MONITORING CAPACITY IN SOURCING COUNTRIES

Supported by the company's responsible sourcing teams or appropriate partnerships with the capacity to effectively monitor high-risk supply chains. Partnerships may involve sector-led initiatives such as certification initiatives and multi-stakeholder programmes to address child labour.

ENSURE MONITORING PROGRAMMES ARE ADAPTED TO SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS AND STRUCTURES

Supply chains that have complex or informal features require an alternative approach to traditional audit methodologies. In this case, robust local stakeholder engagement is key to establish effective and sustainable approaches to monitoring.

PREVENT AND MITIGATE BUSINESS PRACTICES THAT DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INCREASE THE RISK OF CHILD LABOUR

Examples include assessing buying practices; supporting pricing that allows the payment of a living wage; providing decent work opportunities for youth; supporting the formalisation of informal work settings etc.

ESTABLISH REMEDIATION MECHANISMS THAT ENSURES ACCESS TO REMEDY FOR VICTIMS OF CHILD LABOUR

Mechanisms include sufficient funds, as well as personnel with adequate skills and a mandate to support remediation (see also Principles 7-10). This includes the company's commitment to contribute to or cover the remediation costs.

KEY ELEMENTS OF CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION MANAGEMENT

REMEDATION RESPONDS TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD

Each case is remediated based on a full understanding of the circumstances and needs of the child(ren) concerned. (e.g. informed by comprehensive needs assessments, which allow both children and parents to have a voice, and permit informed consent). This includes economic support (cash transfers, wage substitutes), normally at least until the child reaches the minimum working age; access to education at a minimum until mandatory schooling is completed; and psychosocial support for all instances of child labour; and where relevant access to skills development and/or decent work.

REMEDATION RESPONDS TO THE SCALE AND SEVERITY OF EACH CASE

For example, community programming may be adapted to support large-scale cases with lower individual severity levels, whereas severe cases may require more intensive support.

CHILD LABOUR CASES ARE REMEDIATED WITH THE PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT OF INDEPENDENT CHILD RIGHTS EXPERTS

Independent child rights experts should NOT be linked to the employer who hired the child/children or to any of the employer's business partners.

ACCESS TO ADEQUATE REMEDY IS PROVIDED TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR EACH CASE

The company ensures that there is funding to provide the remediation activities as described above. Ideally, remediation is funded jointly by buyers and supply chain partners to secure sustainable outcomes. Companies do not create situations where suppliers have an incentive to hinder the remediation (e.g. by threatening families) to avoid payment.

LINKS TO GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

WHERE FUNCTIONING GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES ARE AVAILABLE, COMPANIES SHALL SUPPORT AND BUILD ON THESE

This may include sharing information on cases with government agencies and/or integrating child labour victims into government run structures. These actions should only be taken if the services are accessible, effective, transparent and where the wellbeing of the child is guaranteed.

THE CENTRE'S CHILD RIGHTS ACTION HUBS



**THE RIGHTS OF
THE CHILD ARE
ALWAYS
PRIORITISED
OVER
COMMERCIAL OR
OTHER
INTERESTS.**

THE CENTRE'S DUE DILIGENCE PRINCIPLE 1

A child from a plantation school, whose teachers are trained as Child Labour Case Managers under the Child Rights Action Hub initiative in Malaysia.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

To prioritise the rights of children more effectively and at scale, The Centre has established three Child Rights Action Hubs in Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Malaysia.

The Action Hubs work closely with existing systems, such as government-run services and CSOs, that can be tapped into to provide the best possible solutions for a child labour prevention and remediation programme. We also develop a network of trained case managers who provide individualised support to each child. Our programmes meet evolving due diligence expectations in a way that drives direct and positive change for children on the ground and addresses the risk of child labour along the supply chain. Our Hubs recognise the importance of providing long-term support to the most vulnerable children, and our approach leverages local resources in a systematic, bottom-up manner. This includes education programmes and regular communication with the government to ensure our approach aligns with local efforts.

HOW THE HUBS WORK

BANGLADESH

The Child Rights Action Hub in Bangladesh focuses on the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, empowering fashion brands and retailers to engage lower-tier suppliers in preventing and addressing child labour.

It facilitates collaborative action, enabling brands to participate in joint activities to address child labour risks in their supply chain. Four different workstreams have been initiated, starting with research and mapping.

Research, Mapping and Networking

Data from Tier-1 factories is collected to understand suppliers' selection process and map the supply chain down to their Tier-3 and Tier-4 suppliers. The next step is to conduct risk assessments to focus on lower-tier suppliers and understand the context and needs of workers. The Hub also creates a strong network of stakeholders by establishing relationships with private entities, CSOS, and governmental bodies, allowing us to leverage available resources for the prevention and remediation of child labour.

Training and Capacity Building to Lower Tiers

The second workstream is delivering training and capacity building to lower tiers, including a broad programme for lower-tier supplier tiers in Bangladesh. This programme will include training on child labour prevention, improvement of broader HRDD standards at each factory, and training that addresses workers' challenges.

Youth Development

This workstream aims to promote decent work for youth. Young workers are often forced to work in the informal sector. This puts them at risk of abuse, child labour, forced labour, and trafficking. By enabling young workers to secure jobs in the formal sector and supporting their growth opportunities, they can avoid or transition out of hazardous positions in lower supply chain tiers and the informal sector.

Child Labour Remediation

Child labour is most prevalent in lower-tier factories that are often unregulated and opaque. The last workstream focuses on child labour prevention and remediation training. It aims to equip factories with the necessary resources to establish an effective child labour prevention and remediation programme. There are currently 84 active child labour cases under The Centre's remediation programme in Bangladesh, and we are hoping that the Action Hub can expand its reach to support more children in lower tiers.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

The DRC Hub, established with support from the Fair Cobalt Alliance (FCA) and initial funding from Save the Children Germany, works to build a strong, local network of child rights practitioners in the Kolwezi area. It addresses the need for sustainable solutions to child labour prevention and remediation in artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM).

Child Labour Remediation

This programme focuses on building the capacity of local partner organisations to co-develop and manage cases of child labour remediation over the long term. It provides support to children who have worked in mines, including access to education, medical and psychological support until they turn 16. A monthly stipend is provided to the family or guardian, and each child has a dedicated case manager for regular support.

Emergency & Education Fund

The Hub's Emergency Fund provides extra medical, psychological, or other support to children in the remediation programme, or other support to the children in the remediation programme who need interventions beyond the standard remediation programme. The Education Fund pays for education or vocational training for children and youth at risk of child labour in mining communities. It also provides stipends for those who wish to continue higher education after reaching the legal working age.

Youth Development Programme

This programme connects out-of-school youth aged 16-18 in mining communities with non-hazardous work and training opportunities offered by companies. Participating companies receive guidance to establish a safe apprenticeship management system, while the youth receive technical and soft skills training.

School Support & After-School Centres

The Hub School Support targets principals and teachers and trains them to adapt curriculum and teaching methodologies to meet the special needs of children in our remediation programme (who have been out of school) or are at risk of dropping out. The After-School Centres offer a range of recreational and learning activities, such as homework support. This keeps children engaged outside of school hours and improves their success rate. These programmes are run in collaboration with experts in childcare protection and support.

MALAYSIA

In Malaysia, the Child Rights Action Hub, implemented under the MY Voice initiative, is working to address child labour in palm oil plantations. The Hub collaborates with local solution providers to build a network of remediation service providers and case managers, aiming to implement private sector-driven child labour remediation. Funded by USDOL, SAI is the lead grantee, and The Centre, Our Journey, and Proforest are the implementing partners.

Child Labour Prevention and Remediation Support System

The child labour remediation programme includes individual solutions, corrective and preventive actions for employers, and community initiatives. It aims to utilise and enhance existing local child labour remediation efforts that are already in progress.

Case Manager Training

The Hub provides capacity-building and support services for Malaysian palm oil plantations, particularly in lower tiers. This involves training Case Managers, Community Focal Points, and Service Providers. Potential case managers and Community Focal Points are selected among the community actors who live close to the workers, such as school teachers, social workers, and community leaders/representatives.

Awareness of Child Labour Prevention and Remediation

In collaboration with local stakeholders (e.g., plantation companies, NGOs, and government agencies), MY Voice conducts awareness-raising campaigns on child labour prevention and remediation. It aims to increase understanding of child labour, the relationship between business and child labour, and the private sector-driven child labour prevention and remediation system through good practices.

Funding for the MY Voice initiative is provided by the United States Department of Labor under cooperative agreement number 6.37521-21-7516. 100% of the total costs of the project is financed with USG federal funds, for a total of \$5,000,000 Dollars. This material does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the United States Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Child Rights Action Hub is open to all interested brands, retailers, and supply chain intermediaries.

To get involved, please [reach out](#) to us.

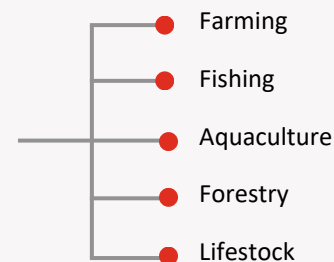
CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE: THE CENTRE'S APPROACH TO REMEDiating CASES AT SCALE

In line with child labour trends in the US that show increasing instances of child labour, especially among migrants, coupled with a growing need for companies to understand, address and remedy human rights violations across their entire supply chain as part of human rights due diligence legislation, The Centre is now handling an increasing number of child labour cases in the agriculture sector, both in the US and globally.

98 MILLION

children in child labour worldwide in the 5-17 age group work in agriculture

AGRICULTURE SECTORS*



LEAST VISIBLE

It is also typically the least visible part of companies' supply chains.

* Source: <https://www.ilo.org/international-programme-elimination-child-labour-ipecc/sectors-and-topics/child-labour-agriculture#:~:text=In%20many%20countries%20child%20labour,98%20million%20girls%20and%20boys.>

WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A DIFFERENT APPROACH?

Unlike child labour in the manufacturing sector, which often involves individual or smaller clusters of cases, child labour in agriculture often presents at a larger scale. It may involve dozens of children who are engaged in work and need different levels of support at any given time. This calls for child labour remediation approaches that provide tailored support to many children while not compromising the quality of support. While landscape approaches are making a difference, a general shortcoming in many projects is a lack of continuity of the remediation activities after the end of the programme, coupled with a lack of revenue replacement.

Moreover, many initiatives do not fully use their potential leverage and opportunities to strive for structural changes that can prevent child labour.

HOW CAN WE APPROACH CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION IN AGRICULTURE AT SCALE?

The Centre has developed an approach that includes one-on-one and collective remediation options. Considering their specific circumstances, the approach is centred around the **child's best interest**.

ONE-ON-ONE REMEDIATION

ONE-ON-ONE REMEDIATION IS NECESSARY WHEN THE CHILD IS:

- Systematically recruited and used as child labour
- Being kept against their will, at risk of being physically and psychologically harmed
- Doing hazardous work, including excessive overtime or night shifts
- Dropping out of school and cannot complete compulsory education due to work

ELEMENTS CONSIDERED IN ONE-ON-ONE REMEDIATION PLANS INCLUDE:

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT:

This covers fees associated with education, such as school search and enrollment, tuition, stationery, and uniforms

MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Ensures the child will not drop out of school due to the family's poverty

MONITORING SERVICES:

Regular contact with key stakeholders until the child reaches the minimum working age and finishes the school year to ensure the child won't work again

CONNECTING WITH LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS:

For psychological consulting when necessary

COLLECTIVE REMEDIATION

COLLECTIVE REMEDIATION IS NEEDED WHEN THE CHILD IS:

- Regularly working longer than 14 hours/week, 8 hours on a particular day or at night
- Regularly working with their families but dropping out of school imminently is unlikely
- Experiencing disruptions to their school attendance or performance due to work and not having enough time to play, rest, or study
- Doing work that is not immediately hazardous but potentially harmful to their health and development due to the long hours

ELEMENTS CONSIDERED IN COLLECTIVE REMEDIATION PLANS INCLUDE:

TUITION FEES:

For the children previously engaged in work

LOCAL FOCAL POINTS:

Selected and trained to monitor the risks and provide support closely

CASE REFERRALS:

To the local child protection system when necessary

MONTHLY TRAINING/MEETINGS:

With parents and community actors

COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS:

When needed, such as school improvement, after-school centres, youth development programmes

The **key difference** between one-on-one remediation and the collective approach is that children in the one-on-one programme have an **individual case manager** who regularly checks in with the child, their family, and key stakeholders until the child reaches the minimum working age. The collective approach, on the other hand, focuses on creating systematic change by engaging community actors without the need for individual case management.

The Centre's tailored and comprehensive approach is cost-effective for buyers and production units and ensures that remediation efforts are effective and sustainable.



Mothers working in a rattan village in Indonesia. They often leave their children near the creek as they wash rattan.

© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

STORIES FROM THE GROUND

This section highlights five case stories from our child labour remediation work, showcasing the transformative impact of our remediation programme in various countries and sectors. These stories demonstrate the commitment of brands and suppliers to bring positive change and the resilience and determination of the children we are helping. Join us in celebrating these stories and the potential of tailored remediation programmes to bring positive changes to children's lives.

Disclaimer: Pseudonyms are used to protect the child's identity in all featured stories.

BANGLADESH

Hasan, who was once found working long hours in a factory, successfully entered college thanks to a brand's Educational Support Fund.

CHINA

Xiang experienced domestic violence, resulting in psychological trauma. However, she found support through a remediation programme, including counseling and educational assistance, which helped her recover and return to school.

DRC

Ana grew up facing a double challenge - she came from a broken home and lived in poverty. However, through her remediation programme, she was able to stop working in the mines and continue her education in order to pursue a future career as an electrician.

INDONESIA

Bunga overcame the challenges of illness and early marriage with the help of her remediation programme. She gained financial support, counseling, and vocational training, preparing her for motherhood and future learning opportunities.

VIETNAM

Tin Tin was found working on a farm due to her family's financial struggles. With the intervention of her remediation programme, she received education and sewing skills, providing hope for a stable future.

BEHIND OUR WORK

The unwavering commitment of our case managers, such as Tangina and Zhinan, who work tirelessly on the ground, drives the success of our child labour prevention and remediation programme. Let's look at what it is like to be a case manager!



HJ from China is undergoing a vocational course in cooking as part of his remediation programme.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

BANGLADESH

EDUCATION SUPPORT FUND

When Hasan should have been starting secondary school, he had to drop out due to his family's severe financial hardship. His parents had migrated from Sirajganj to Narayongonj in Bangladesh in search of a better life, but the struggle to make ends meet was relentless. To support the family, Hasan started working in a factory at the tender age of ten. He began working 12 to 17 hours daily in a printing factory, a harsh reality for such a young boy. His parents could not afford the educational expenses of their two eldest children, and they believed that Hasan's income could provide some stability.

Hasan underwent 38 months of remediation. Upon completing this remediation programme, he received an additional 19 months of support from a brand's Education Support Fund (ESF) to complete his higher education. The fund provided essential resources like textbooks, stationery, and tuition fees, allowing Hasan to focus on his studies without financial worries.

The ESF was pivotal in Hasan's transformation. By alleviating financial constraints, he could re-enter the educational system and break free from labour exploitation. This support improved his quality of life, reduced the need for factory work, and bolstered his psychosocial well-being, instilling hope, purpose, and confidence.

**"BECAUSE OF [THE ESF],
GETTING AN EDUCATION NO
LONGER REMAINS A DISTANT
DREAM FOR ME. AND BECAUSE
OF IT, I HAVE HOPE."**

—Hasan, 12 years old

Throughout his journey, Hasan's personal development was profound. With the fund's support, his confidence soared as he transitioned from child labour to active learning. The stability provided by the fund allowed Hasan to explore new interests and passions beyond mere survival. His involvement in the remediation programme and academic success gave him a newfound sense of purpose and direction.

Hasan achieved one academic milestone after another. He joined Grade 7 in April 2019 and continued to excel, progressing through Grades 8 to 10. In 2023, Hasan achieved a remarkable GPA of 4.72 in his SSC board exams. By September, he had started college, driven by his dreams of completing his Higher Secondary Certificate and aspiring to graduate one day.

The brand's ESF paved the way for Hasan's academic achievements and future opportunities, positioning him to secure a brighter future, thus breaking the cycle of poverty in his family.



Thanks to the remediation programme, this child gets to study at home.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business



GOOD TO KNOW

According to the [Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics \(BBS\) 2022 survey](#), the poverty rate stood at 18.7 per cent in the country.

Another [survey](#) by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) released in March 2024, found that the number of secondary school students in Bangladesh has decreased by 1 million over four years. The BBS also says the number of students in the 11-15 age group has decreased.

Born into a broken home, Xiang and her mother, Mei, endured relentless domestic violence from her father. Their small apartment was often a battleground, filled with fear and anxiety. To distance herself from abuse and to provide for Xiang, Mei worked far from home in a garment factory in Jiangsu Province, China, indirectly casting her husband's violent shadow over her daughter.

In December 2022, amid a bitter divorce, Xiang, then 13, had to drop out of school in Grade 7. With no options, Mei brought Xiang into the factory to keep her close. However, the financial strain of single parenthood was immense. While Mei wanted to prioritise Xiang's education, she could not afford the tuition fees for private schools that admitted out-of-town children. She had planned to send Xiang back to school earlier, but without enough money, Xiang was put to work in the factory.

An audit team from the brand discovered Xiang's situation by April 2024, prompting the buyer to notify The Centre's child labour remediation team to intervene. The Centre worked with the brand to offer financial and educational support through the remediation programme for Xiang, which brought hope. Xiang joined the remediation programme, envisioning a future where she could return to school. As the team monitored Xiang's progress, deeper psychological issues surfaced. Xiang participated in online tutoring but struggled more than she let on.

Interactions with Xiang revealed severe psychological trauma. She suffered from insomnia, obsessive thoughts, emotional outbursts, and flashbacks of her father's violence. She had a history of self-harm and struggled with self-esteem and guilt. Despite her reluctance to burden Mei, Xiang confided in the case manager about her trauma. The case manager's support became a lifeline for Xiang, who feared sharing her pain with Mei would cause more worry and blame.

Efforts to gain Mei's support for professional psychological help initially met resistance due to cultural stigma and lack of awareness about mental health. Instead, the case manager provided Xiang with resources like a psychological counselling hotline and continuous emotional support. They also arranged one-on-one tutoring to help Xiang rebuild her confidence in her studies.

In September 2023, Xiang returned to school to repeat Grade 7. The instability in her life led to numerous school transfers, affecting her ability to form lasting friendships. Despite initial challenges, she slowly built confidence, winning academic awards and peer recognition.

However, when Xiang's father resurfaced, causing renewed distress in Xiang's mental health, she could no longer attend school regularly. Yet, her ability to articulate her pain and ask for help improved.

The case manager found a public welfare organisation in Shanghai that provides remote psychological counselling. After persistent efforts, Mei agreed to take Xiang to a psychiatrist, with the remediation plan covering the costs. Xiang began medication to stabilise her emotions and returned to school.

Our experience with Xiang highlighted the benefit of tailoring the remediation programme to each child's needs. With that new knowledge about Xiang, The Centre was able to speak to the brand to include psychological support for Xiang's remediation efforts. Moving forward, The Centre's team is focused on strengthening Mei's understanding of mental health and improving family dynamics, with the goal of creating a safe and supportive environment for Xiang to heal and thrive.



GOOD TO KNOW

According to the country's latest population census in 2020, more than one in five children in China, nearly 67 million under age 17, are left behind by their parents. Numerous studies and surveys have also shown that such children are more vulnerable to mental health issues like depression and anxiety, and to abuse and bullying.

CHINA

SPECIALISED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT



Z.L.W. from China who took part in The Centre's remediation programme in 2020. The buyer continued supporting her after she turned 16 so that she could continue her studies.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

“I’M HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS REMEDIATION PROGRAMME AS IT HELPS ME TO CONTINUE SCHOOL AND LEAD A NORMAL LIFE AS A CHILD. I’LL BE INVOLVED IN THE [REMEDICATION] PROGRAMME UNTIL I COMPLETE SCHOOL.”

—Ana, 14 years old

Ana’s upbringing was defined by struggle, navigating poverty and a fragmented family. With her father absent and her mother residing in a town miles away due to remarriage, Ana found stability with her grandparents in Kolwezi, DRC.

Financial hardship led Ana to join her grandparents in the local artisanal mine, where she spent long hours collecting and washing mineralised ore. She earned a meagre USD 50 per month, far below the average living wage. Despite the toil, she was determined to continue supporting her family.

The intervention of the remediation programme changed Ana’s path. Due to the hazardous nature of her work, she underwent a medical check and was enrolled in a 35-month remediation programme. This programme ensured she could continue her education from Grades 9 to 11, with a monthly stipend to cover her living costs so she no longer had to consider working in the mines.

Returning to school, Ana found renewed purpose. She excelled as a student and had a clear vision for her future— never to step into a mine again.

The remediation programme offered Ana hope during difficult times. Throughout the programme, she received support and guidance from her case manager. The emergency fund provided crucial help when she needed it most, and the education will equip her with the necessary skills to change the trajectory of her family’s financial struggles.

Setting her sights on becoming an electrician and grateful for the opportunities afforded by the remediation programme, Ana pledged to see it through to the end.

Ana’s path to a promising future is only possible through private sector investments in The Hub for Child Labour Prevention and Remediation, which aims to provide long-term support to children in artisanal and small-scale mining communities.



DRC

**NO
REASON
TO GO
BACK TO
THE MINES**



GOOD TO KNOW

According to the [Anker Living Income Reference Value](#) for the rural Democratic Republic of Congo in 2022, the average living wage is CDF 405,685 (USD 203).

The DRC produces 70% of the world’s cobalt, and 30% comes from artisanal and small-scale mining. Due to a complex supply chain, it is almost impossible to guarantee that no ASM cobalt ends in a global brand’s supply chain.

INDONESIA OVERCOMING CHILD MARRIAGE



Bunga (right) with her psychologist.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

At just 17, Bunga has faced challenges that many could not imagine. When we first met Bunga in a remote village in South Kalimantan, Indonesia, her shaky hands, low self-esteem, and avoidance of eye contact painted a picture of a life marked by hardship. An illness since toddlerhood had left her hands unsteady, a condition worsened by years of labour in the rattan fields. Earning a meagre USD 2 a day, Bunga had also been out of school for years—a bleak reality for a young girl. Fearing societal rejection, her parents reluctantly agreed to her early marriage despite our warnings about the dangers of child marriage.

In early 2023, she joined our remediation programme, a turning point in her young life. Understanding her dire situation, The Centre crafted an individualised remediation plan to provide financial support, improve her well-being, and offer training opportunities.

Over six months, Bunga received monthly stipends, participated in eight counselling sessions with a certified psychologist, and engaged in vocational training—three sessions in makeup and four in health and nutrition. Midway through the programme, she married her boyfriend and gave birth to a beautiful baby. Recognising her new responsibilities as a mother, the programme adapted to meet her evolving needs. She received a cooking set to nurture her passion for cooking and entrepreneurship. The remediation programme will continue with more counselling sessions throughout 2024 for Bunga and her husband.

Bunga's transformation has been profound. No longer burdened by the harsh conditions of the rattan sector, she has gained a deeper understanding of self-care and well-being through counselling and training.

Now, Bunga is better prepared to embrace the joys and challenges of motherhood. She cherishes time with her family and eagerly anticipates her 18th birthday next year. She dreams of continuing her education and plans to join a vocational programme to explore new learning and working opportunities.

"I AM BLESSED TO SEE MY DAUGHTER NOW. EVERYONE SUPPORTS HER, AND BECAUSE OF THE REMEDIATION PROGRAMME, SHE NOW DOES WHAT SHE LIKES."

—Bunga's mother



GOOD TO KNOW

Despite reforms raising the legal age of marriage in Indonesia from 16 to 19 in 2019, the national prevalence rate of child marriage in Indonesia is 6.9 per cent.

In most cases of child marriages, the marriages are not registered legally because parents must request a marriage dispensation from the court. Most child marriages are conducted traditionally based on religious teachings (*nikah siri*). *Nikah siri* requires only parental consent and does not need to adhere to the minimum age law. Positive law in Indonesia does not recognise *nikah siri*. However, *nikah siri* remains widely accepted within the community, particularly among the Islamic population.

VIETNAM

A MORE STABLE HOME

In Dong Thap Province, deep in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta, lives Tin Tin, a 13-year-old girl. Tin Tin grew up without the presence of her unknown father, and her mother had moved to the city to start a new life with a new family. With little attention from her parents, Tin Tin's world revolved around her grandparents and the seasonal migrations they made for work.

Since she was five, Tin Tin accompanied her grandparents and cousins to different agricultural plantations for several months each year. She was involved in demanding fieldwork and missed out on carefree childhood days. By age ten, she had dropped out of school due to the family's financial struggles and the constant need to travel for work.

Tin Tin was discovered working on a coffee farm alongside her grandparents during The Centre's child rights risk assessment. Her daily routine often mirrored the long hours of adult workers. She worked from early morning until late afternoon, adjusting her schedule to the weather and harvest demands. Over the years, her responsibilities grew heavier; she climbed trees to pick cherries and carried heavy coffee bags for weighing, contributing significantly to the family's income.

"I REALLY LIKE GOING TO THE CLASS TO LEARN SEWING DURING THE WEEK. I WANT TO STUDY MORE SO I CAN DO SEWING JOBS WHILE STAYING IN MY HOMETOWN, WITHOUT TRAVELLING TO OTHER PROVINCES LIKE BEFORE."

—Tin Tin, 13 years old



Staff from The Centre's Vietnam team walk through a pepper plantation during a child rights risk assessment in 2021.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business



GOOD TO KNOW

According to the second [Vietnam National Child Labour Survey 2018](#) conducted by the ILO, 5.4% of Vietnamese children aged 5-17 is engaged in child labour. The vast majority (84%) live in rural areas, working in agriculture or as unpaid domestic workers. The survey also revealed that 48.6% of children in child labour were school dropouts, while 1.4% had never been to school.

Realising the hazards of this work and its bleak future, The Centre intervened in collaboration with an involved brand. Tin Tin was offered a remediation programme to remove her from the dangerous labour and address her illiteracy. Although finding a school willing to enrol her due to her age was challenging, a local schoolteacher and his wife offered to tutor her in literature and sewing skills.

The family received weekly check-in calls from The Centre's case managers and monthly stipends from the brand to ease their financial burdens, allowing Tin Tin to focus entirely on her education and preventing her from re-entering the workforce. The remediation programme began to bear fruit as the girl diligently attended every session. Her teachers noted her remarkable progress in sewing, cutting, and basic English communication.

The supporting brand eventually took over the remediation process, committing to support Tin Tin until she reached 15 years old. Her sewing and cutting skills improved dramatically, giving her a valuable trade promising a stable future.

Tin Tin continues to live with her extended family and determinedly pursues her sewing career. Her story is a testament to a young girl determined to change her destiny and the power businesses have to keep children away from child labour and support the education of those in their supply chains, one stitch at a time.

BEHIND OUR WORK MEET OUR CASE MANAGERS

Child labour case manager training for plantation school teachers in Malaysia.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE AS THE CENTRE'S CHILD LABOUR CASE MANAGER?

Tangina:

I oversee Bangladesh's child labour prevention and remediation programme. My responsibilities include conducting rapid assessments, coordinating with clients and their business partners, planning and implementing remediation solutions, supporting budget preparation and monitoring, and organising and facilitating child labour prevention and remediation training to help suppliers address gaps in their recruitment procedures and mitigate future risks.

Zhinan:

My job focuses on conducting on-site assessments for new cases, maintaining monthly contact with ongoing cases, and delivering factory training to enhance awareness and ability to prevent child labour.

HOW DOES THE CENTRE DEFINE AND MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE REMEDIATION PROGRAMME?

Tangina:

Through our programme in Bangladesh, children who have dropped out of school can return to school and learn primary education, including life skills and vocational training, which empowers them to change their lives.

Zhinan:

The project's impact is twofold, benefiting children and their families and factory staff. We provide financial support for children to return to school, mediate parent-child conflicts, promote family communication, and provide psychological counselling while also training factory staff to improve their awareness and responsibilities in child labour prevention.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES YOU'VE ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD?

Tangina:

Parents' negligence and reluctance pose challenges, as well as children's tendency to miss school and the negative influence of their surroundings.

Zhinan:

Convincing parents and factories that remediation is better than having underage children work instead of going to school has been a significant challenge.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BEING A CHILD LABOUR CASE MANAGER?

Tangina:

I take pride in being part of my country's social welfare system. It's not just a job for me; it's a noble cause that helps poor, marginalised, and underprivileged people.

Working with child labour requires empathy, emotion, and moral responsibility to help those in need, but it can also be frustrating and disheartening due to societal challenges. Some cases go smoothly, while others can be stressful and emotionally exhausting. It is incredibly rewarding to see positive changes in the lives of these children, such as their return to school and improving their working conditions.

Zhinan:

I find the work quite challenging. However, at the end of the day, seeing children taken out of hazardous positions, given the opportunity for education, and some even going on to achieve success and have the potential to change their family's financial trajectory brings me immense fulfilment and meaning.



ABOUT TANGINA

Tangina joined The Centre as a case manager in 2020. Before joining The Centre's team in January 2020, Tangina spent the previous eight years working for several national and international organisations, focusing on Bangladesh's youth population.

As a Project Manager in Bangladesh, she supervises the child labour prevention and remediation programme. Tangina completed her BSS and MSS in Anthropology from the University of Dhaka and also earned a Joint European Master in Comparative Local Development from the consortium of Corvinus University in Hungary, Regensburg University in Germany, Trento University in Italy and Ljubljana University in Slovenia.



ABOUT ZHINAN

As a social worker and case manager in The Centre's global child labour remediation (CLR) team, Zhinan is responsible for conducting onsite rapid assessments and case analyses and developing and monitoring remediation plans for children in child labour situations.

Before joining The Centre, Zhinan was a social worker in a social enterprise in China. She was previously involved in a migrant worker protection project in which she provided courses on labour protection, gender equity and other services to vocational school students. Zhinan has successfully managed nearly a hundred cases and is pursuing a National Social Work Certificate.

A CHILD RIGHTS APPROACH TO CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION



War War Nwe from Myanmar, learned sewing in a vocational training centre as part of her remediation programme with The Centre. She was 14 when she joined the programme.

© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

Since 2015, The Centre has been supporting global brands to implement child labour prevention and remediation programmes in their supply chains, initially in China and later expanding to close to 20 countries and covering a wide range of sectors and contexts, from manufacturing to agriculture to mining.

While our child labour remediation programme has dealt with 1000 cases, it is clear that there is a prevalent issue of child labour that demands urgent attention. The hazardous nature of child labour poses significant risks, and there is a genuine concern that abrupt removal from such situations without proper support may exacerbate the situation for children.

Children identified in labour situations are frequently immediately withdrawn from work without compensation or assistance. Without appropriate support, including financial and educational aid, these children may find themselves in even more precarious situations, jeopardising their health and development.

This is why we always stress the importance of a child rights approach in remediation, ensuring that all decisions and actions taken are in the best interest of the concerned child. A child rights approach also acknowledges that each child has unique needs and interests. For this reason, child labour remediation is managed by specifically trained case managers who provide individual support to each child. No one remediation is the same – just like no two children are identical.

The remediation process usually begins when clients inform The Centre during internal or external audits, whether announced or unannounced. Once a case is identified or suspected, the client contacts us at or directly reaches out to the contacts in The Centre Global CLR team to schedule an on-site rapid assessment. This assessment helps to evaluate the situation further and develop a potential remediation plan. There are instances where The Centre's project team has identified an underage worker during field visits or in-depth interviews with workers.

OUR CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROCESS

1

THE DISCOVERY

Suspected case of child labour discovered by an employer.

2

CONTACT THIRD-PARTY REMEDIATION PROVIDER

Employer contacts third-party remediation solution provider.

3

RAPID ASSESSMENT AND REMEDIATION MODEL

Solution provider conducts a rapid assessment and develops a remediation proposal. Proposal contents will vary based on the child's age, type of work, and other contextual factors. All proposals will generally have three levels of intervention.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

At the individual level, the child is removed from the child labour situation and given access to education/skills training, health and survival allowance or offered non-hazardous work, if above the minimum working age.

EMPLOYER LEVEL

At the employer level, the company is guided to take corrective actions to mitigate child labour risks and take remediation actions.

COMMUNITY LEVEL

The community level intervention focuses on eradicating child labour through collective efforts such as income-generating activities.

4

SUPPORTED REMEDIATION PROCESS

Remediation is carried out with the support of independent child rights experts and case managers who ensure affected children have access to appropriate remedy and support.



Staff from The Centre's Vietnam team speaking to workers on coffee and pepper plantations as part of a child rights risk assessment.

© The Centre for Child Rights and Business

HUMAN RIGHTS REGULATORY LANDSCAPE AND CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION

The following is a summary of **three** key human rights due diligence regulations that may pertain to your business and supply chains globally. This is significant as it underscores the importance of not only adhering to human rights due diligence, but also of implementing corrective measures upon identifying adverse human rights impact. Neglecting these responsibilities could have a substantial impact on your business.

This summary provided by The Centre for Child Rights and Business ("The Centre") does not constitute legal or compliance advice and cannot replace the advice of a lawyer. The Centre does not guarantee that their understanding of legal requirements corresponds to the interpretation of public authorities or courts. The liability of The Centre for slight and medium negligence is excluded. Liability for auxiliary persons (e.g., employees or agents) of The Centre is completely excluded.

1

EU CSDDD CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY DUE DILIGENCE DIRECTIVE

WHEN DOES THE EU CSDDD APPLY TO YOU?

EU COMPANIES

If the entity has a place of business in the EU:

- With more than 1000 employees; and
- A net worldwide turnover exceeding EUR 450 million in the previous financial year

NON EU-COMPANIES

If the entity is not in the EU but does business in the EU:

- A net turnover of EUR 450 million in the EU in the previous financial year

Article 3 (a)(b)

"Companies shall be required to take the following appropriate measures, where relevant:

(a) neutralise the adverse impact or minimise its extent. The action shall be proportionate to the severity of the adverse impact and to the company's implication in the adverse impact;
(b) where necessary due to the fact that the adverse impact cannot be immediately brought to an end, without undue delay develop and implement a corrective action plan with reasonable and clearly defined timelines for the implementation of appropriate measures and qualitative and quantitative indicators for measuring improvement. Companies may develop their action plans in cooperation with industry or multi-stakeholder initiatives. The corrective action plan shall be adapted to companies' operations and chain of activities."

Article 8C

"Member States shall ensure that where a company has caused or jointly caused an actual adverse impact, that company shall provide remediation."

"Where the actual adverse impact is caused only by the company's business partner, voluntary remediation may be provided by the company. The company may also use its ability to influence the business partner causing the adverse impact to enable remediation."



GOOD TO KNOW

The directive's implementation will be phased in, with companies with over 5,000 employees required to comply from 2027. Companies with 3,000 and 1,000 employees will have until 2028 and 2029, respectively, to comply.

2

LKSG

GERMAN ACT ON CORPORATE DUE DILIGENCE OBLIGATIONS IN SUPPLY CHAINS

WHEN DOES THE LKSG APPLY TO YOU?

LEGAL OBLIGATION

- With registered office, administrative seat, central administration or principal place of business in Germany or with a branch in Germany (within the meaning of Section 13(d) of the Commercial Code Handelsgesetzbuch); and
- Employment of generally at least 3,000 employees in Germany in the financial year (from January 1, 2023)or generally at least 1,000 employees in Germany (from January 1, 2024).

Official interpretation on Remedial Action:

If it is found that human rights or environmental violations have taken place in its own business area or at the direct supplier of the company (that fails under the application of the law), the buyer will take steps to end or minimise the violation

Section 7

"If the enterprise discovers that a violation of a human rights-related obligation has already occurred or is imminent in its own business area or at a direct supplier, it must, without undue delay, take appropriate remedial action to prevent, end or minimise the extent of this violation"

"If the violation at a direct supplier is such that the enterprise cannot end it in the foreseeable future, it must draw up and implement a concept for ending or minimising the violation without undue delay."

Section 9

"If an enterprise has actual indications that suggest that a violation of a human rights-related obligations at indirect suppliers maybe possible (substantiated knowledge), it must without undue delay and as warranted.... draw up and implement a prevention, cessation or minimisation concept..."

3

SUPPLY CHAINS ACT (B-S211)

FIGHTING AGAINST FORCED LABOUR AND CHILD LABOUR IN SUPPLY CHAINS ACT CANADA

WHEN DOES THE SUPPLY CHAINS ACT APPLY TO YOU?

ENTITY

A corporation, trust, partnership or other unincorporated organisation that:

- Is listed on a stock exchange in Canada;
- Has a place of business in Canada, does business in Canada or has assets in Canada; or
- Is prescribed by regulations

THRESHOLD

If the entity has a place of business or does business in Canada:

- At least \$20 million in assets;
- At least \$40 million in revenue; or
- Employs an average of at least 250 employees

APPLICATION

An entity that is:

- Producing, selling or distributing goods in Canada or elsewhere;
- Importing into Canada goods produced outside of Canada; or
- Controlling an entity engaged in such activities

Article 6(2)e:

Company' annual report must include "any measures taken to remediate the loss of income to the most vulnerable families that results from any measure taken to eliminate the use of forced labour or child labour in its activities and supply chains..."



GOOD TO KNOW

The "loss of income" is specifically mentioned in Bill S211, which is not the case in any other HRDD laws.

THE LINK BETWEEN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND CHILD LABOUR PREVENTION

Child labour does not only include work by children under the minimum wage. It also includes children above the legal minimum working age but under 18 who, because of work, experience disruption to their compulsory education, and whose health, safety or morals are jeopardised (known as hazardous work). The ILO estimates that roughly half of the 160 million children believed to be in child labour are working in hazardous conditions.

It is therefore crucial to ensure young workers who have completed their compulsory education but are still under 18, have access to decent work. While it may seem counterintuitive to prevent child labour by offering work to children, it is important to challenge and change that mindset.

“WE STARTED OUR YOUNG WORKER RECRUITMENT PROGRAMME IN 2018 BUT BESIDES THE POLICY, WE DIDN’T KNOW HOW TO TURN IT INTO ACTION AND HOW TO CORRECTLY RECRUIT, DEVELOP AND SUPPORT YOUNG WORKERS. NOW WE ARE RUNNING A SYSTEMATIC WAY OF SUPPORTING A YOUNG WORKER INCLUSION PROGRAMME AT OUR FACTORY.”

Human Resources Manager from a factory in Vietnam

A widespread trend among formal Tier 1 employers is a tendency only to hire individuals above 18. This is largely driven by a fear of hiring child labour and a reluctance to change management and workplace systems that comply with young worker regulations. With under-18s effectively shut out from jobs in formal factories and business units, they often turn to the informal sector, finding jobs among sub-suppliers and sub-contractors deeper within the supply chain where they are more likely to be exposed to hazardous, exploitative conditions. Discriminatory hiring practices, therefore, not only put young workers at risk, but they also increase child labour risks in the lower tiers.

Buyers can play an important role in breaking this trend, while also contributing to the elimination of child labour. Youth development programmes have demonstrated success in this regard. The Centre’s youth development programme gives buyers access to a comprehensive framework designed to integrate decent work opportunities into their supply chains while nurturing the growth of young employees. This initiative includes specialised training and guidance for suppliers on employing young workers, incorporating onsite assessments and walkthroughs to identify suitable roles and workstations that mitigate risks associated with hazardous work. It also includes thorough reviews of internal policies and management processes, including recruitment protocols, to ensure compliance with international and local regulations.

For young workers, the programme offers soft and technical skill building, that covers such topics as effective communication with peers and supervisors, conflict management, personal finance management, personal & reproductive health, sexual harassment violence at the workplace, and career orientation.

**“I STARTED
WORKING WHEN I
WAS 17 YEARS OLD
IN A VEHICLE
REPAIR SHOP. I WAS
WORKING
EXCESSIVE HOURS. I
WISH I COULD HAVE
KNOWN MY RIGHTS
BACK THEN.”**

—A young worker who took part in a youth development programme in Türkiye in 2023



A young worker in a youth development programme in Vietnam is given support and guidance by a supervisor.

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DECENT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Unlike many young workers at risk of informal or hazardous work, because many businesses want to avoid implementing special protections for young workers in their formal supply chains, Nguyen Quang Huy is one of the fortunate ones. He participates in the Young Worker Development Programme, which offers young people access to decent employment and skill-building opportunities within a Tier 1 supplier.

[Watch](#) his story.



EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR A YOUNG WORKER IN HAZARDOUS WORK

At the age of 14, Shimu was found in a child labour situation doing hazardous work in a garment factory. She had dropped out of school because her family couldn't afford the cost of her education.

What followed was a 20-month remediation programme sponsored by the buyer, which allowed her to resume her education and dream bigger.

[Watch](#) her story.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: THE CRIB WORKING GROUP

The Centre's Child Rights in Business (CRIB) Working Group is a membership network of global brands and retailers committed to learning, sharing and collaborating on various child rights issues. Curated by The Centre, members get access to exclusive resources related to child rights, sustainability and human rights due diligence. They also engage in three meetings a year in Europe and Asia, serving as incubators for collaborative initiatives and opportunities for high-level two-way information-sharing.

Photo on p30: The launch of our study with Save the Children on child rights in homeworker settings, Hong Kong, 2019. When possible, we organise in-person events to disseminate knowledge to the business community on child rights issues.
© The Centre for Child Rights and Business



THE CRIB WORKING GROUP

All members of the CRIB Working Group get priority access to The Centre's Child Labour Rapid Response service, which guarantees The Centre's readiness to act immediately when a case of suspected child labour is reported at a supplier factory or production site. Through this service, members have a clear and reliable channel for reporting child labour, allowing The Centre to take immediate action and thus increasing the chances of a successful outcome.

To date, one key outcome of the working group is the Joint Action Pledge, which is to strengthen the protection of children's rights and accelerate action to address child labour in global supply chains. The pledge emerged as a key campaign of the 2021 UN International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour, bringing together 12 brands and retailers. The signatories pledged to make progress in five activity areas:

1

Further extending due diligence, remediation and monitoring activities to increase understanding of child labour in supply chains.

2

Delivering programmes to support juvenile workers and to create decent work opportunities for young workers.

3

Building the capabilities of companies and their suppliers to address child labour risks through training and support.

4

Offering practical support to parent workers and their children through practical, family-friendly workplace activities and programmes.

5

Working collaboratively as a group to share learnings and establish best practices to address child labour.

Building on this momentum, The Centre is planning to launch a new Call to Action with Working Group members in 2024 in collaboration with the [Global Child Forum](#) that focuses on initiating actions to combat child labour in agriculture. More details on this will be shared in due course.

RESOURCES

TACKLING CHILD LABOUR: A GUIDE FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In June 2023, following concern from member banks over the persistent scourge of child labour in global value chains and recent reports of the alarming increase in child labour - particularly migrant child labour - in the United States, Shift held a peer-learning session of its Financial Institutions Practitioners Circle ('FIs Circle') on the topic. The session explored how banks and financial institutions can strengthen their efforts to respect children's rights, particularly in the context of child labour. As a report by UNICEF, Save the Children and the UN Global Compact noted, children are still too often invisible in ESG reporting; and the financial sector can play an important role in changing this.

This resource is a joint publication by Shift, The Centre, and UNICEF. It captures some of the key take-aways from this session, and draws on the experience of the three organisations working with real-economy companies and financial institutions.

[READ HERE](#)

IMPROVING YOUR SUMMER HIRING: EMBRACE RESPONSIBLE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES FROM THE START

As summer approaches, many factories ramp up their workforce to meet the demands of the peak season. This period also presents an opportunity for young workers to gain valuable experience through internships. However, addressing potential risks and ensuring responsible recruitment practices is crucial. The Centre has compiled a concise guide outlining key legislation, potential risks, and measures you can take to mitigate them.

[READ HERE](#)

CHILD RIGHTS RISKS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS: WHY A 'ZERO TOLERANCE' APPROACH IS NOT ENOUGH

Save the Children and The Centre published a study on "Child Rights Risks in Global Supply Chains: Why a 'Zero Tolerance' Approach is Not Enough" in 2023.

The study involved 20 assessments across eight countries, with over 2,751 parents and 1,799 children interviewed, and focused on areas such as child labour, education, childcare, and young worker protection. The study also took into account other variables, including working conditions, gender, human trafficking, and forced labour.

[READ HERE](#)

EXPLORE OUR WORK

We work in a growing number of countries and sectors to help businesses embrace child rights, support working families, create opportunities for youth, mitigate risks, strengthen business outcomes and meet human rights due diligence goals.

Read more about our work [here](#).

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Children's names under 'Stories from the Ground' have been changed to protect identities.

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