



MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE  
A SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER MUSEUM

## Teacher's Guide



We the People American history timeline exhibit at the Museum of Tolerance

## CHILDREN WHO LABOR

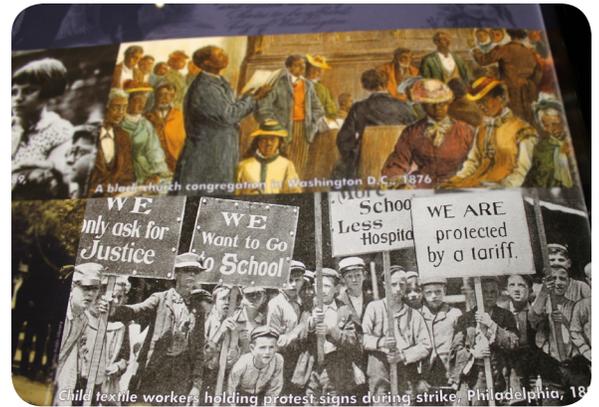
learn from the past   engage the present   shape the future

## LESSON: CHILDREN WHO LABOR

RELATED EXHIBIT: MILLENNIUM MACHINE, WE THE PEOPLE HISTORY WALL.

**“...the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.”**

- Preamble, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



### OVERVIEW

The Millennium Machine exhibit at the Museum of Tolerance raises awareness about the abuse and exploitation of children around the world today. Society is supposed to protect children, yet they are often targets of abuse. Children are forced to fight in wars, used in pornography, made to work for substandard wages, sometimes even sold into slavery. Worldwide there are an estimated 246 million children, between the ages of 5 and 14, who are engaged in child labor. Child laborers are exposed to conditions that restrict their basic human rights. In this lesson, through cooperative learning experiences, students will become experts on child labor exploring topics like child labor during the Industrial Revolution and today, as well as child soldiers and child trafficking. They will evaluate types of work and working conditions, especially for children, as being acceptable or unacceptable, and be introduced to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and fair trade.

### ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Children’s rights are human rights.

Human rights abuses against children are particularly cruel.

Child labor is a complex issue.

History is full of moments that cause us to look deeper and learn more.

Empathy for others is required to impact positive social change in the world.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Why should child labor matter to us?

Why is child labor still prevalent today?

What are the main causes of child labor?

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

What is fair trade?

### OBJECTIVES / STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will:

Define child labor.

Identify what factors have contributed to child labor in the past.

Identify what factors contribute to the problem today.

Distinguish between child work and child labor.

Develop curiosity and empathy for all human beings

Be familiar with the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Explain fair trade.

## KEY ISSUES / CONCEPTS

child labor, child work, work conditions, exploitation, industrial revolution, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Labor Organization, ratification, ethical consumerism, fair trade, globalization, child trafficking, child soldiers

For other definitions see key *Vocabulary and Terms*

## SUBJECT AREA / CONTENT AREA CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, U.S. History, World History, Geography, Government, Civics, Economics, Language Arts, human rights, global issues, industrial development, social justice

## TIME / MATERIALS

Time frames will vary based on available hours in any given class. This lesson can be divided up and expanded out up to three class periods.

HANDOUT : What kinds of work and working conditions are acceptable?

Child Labor Today fact sheet

Child Soldier fact sheet

Child Trafficking fact sheet

Child Labor during the Industrial Revolution fact sheet

Teacher Background sheet

Paper clips, rubber bands, index cards or safety pins

Convention on the Rights of the Child

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>, and a shorter version at [http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what\\_rights\\_flyer\\_english.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf)

## RESOURCES / LINKS

History of child labor

<http://www.history.com/topics/child-labor>

Facts and figures on child labor

<http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/237384/toolkitfr/pdf/facts.pdf>

How common is child labor in the U.S.?

<http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/12/how-common-is-child-labor-in-the-us/383687/>

Child soldiers videos

<http://www.warchild.org.uk/issues/child-soldiers/child-soldiers-videos>

Find out which companies source materials and products that use child labor.

[http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/responsibleshopper/learn\\_hub.cfm](http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/responsibleshopper/learn_hub.cfm)

## PROCESS

Note: Teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the difficult emotions this lesson may arouse in students. Review all content before using in the classroom.

### STEP 1:

In small groups, distribute copies of the handout, "What kinds of work and working conditions are acceptable?" Students will discuss each situation and evaluate what makes each scenario acceptable and what makes each unacceptable forms of work.

### STEP 2:

Introduce the concept of child work and child labor. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labor is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It involves working under conditions that violate age standards, interferes with education or causes physical, emotional or developmental harm. Child work involves children or adolescents' participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling. It is generally regarded as being something positive. This type of work done by children is legitimate and can be beneficial for learning and development.

Ask, "**What do you think are the main causes of child labor?**"

Current causes include:

- poverty
- limited access to education
- existing laws are violated
- rights are prohibited

### STEP 3:

Using a cooperative learning jigsaw activity, students will become "experts" on Child Labor during the Industrial Revolution, Child Trafficking, Child Soldiers and Child Labor today. With this approach, students work together as a team toward learning the target material. Assign each student to a "home group" of 4-5 students. Students are directed to read the selection of text assigned to them. Have additional resources (e.g. websites, articles, photographs, books) available. When the reading has been completed, the students meet for approximately 20 minutes with others assigned to the same topic. They discuss the material, identify the most important learning points, and return to their "home groups" to instruct the others about information in which they have become an "expert". Each student takes turns teaching what he or she has learned to the other home group members. Optional: Prepare a summary chart for each home group as a guide for organizing information.

Debrief the jigsaw activity by asking students to consider the similarities and differences between the lives of young people in developing or war torn countries, and young people in a developed or peaceful country.

### STEP 4:

In the same groupings, explain to students they will role play child factory workers of the early 20th century. They will do this by repeating a specific but repetitious task over and over again. Be creative with this. The task can include stacking chairs, linking paper clips, sorting index cards, attaching safety pins, etc. Have this task go on long enough for it to become boring and even tedious.

Stop the activity when you think it has gone on long enough, and ask students how doing this made them feel.

## STEP 5:

Introduce the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. The Convention establishes in international law that States Parties must ensure that all children, without discrimination in any form, benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner. This document has been signed by all but two countries--Somalia and the United States. Distribute copies of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Download at

<http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>, and a shorter version at [http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what\\_rights\\_flyer\\_english.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/what_rights_flyer_english.pdf)

Ask, **“What role should government have in ensuring the rights of children?”**  
**“How can these rights be enforced?”**

If time allows, also introduce students to the International Labor Organization Conventions on child labor:

- ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age sets out clear guidelines for governments to define the minimum age at which children should be allowed to work. It states that children should complete compulsory education before being allowed to work.
- ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour was designed to tackle child labor more specifically by focusing first on its worst forms, including the use of a child for prostitution, the use of children in armed conflict, drug trafficking and dangerous work.

Currently, 1 in 3 child laborers live in a country that has not yet adopted these resolutions to protect such basic rights of children. Organizations like The Child Labor Coalition work to bring awareness to this issue by influencing public policy and promoting initiatives and legislation that support children’s rights.

## STEP 6:

In this next section, student will be introduced to Fair Trade. Fair Trade is a system of exchange that honors producers, communities, consumers, and the environment. It is a model for the global economy rooted in people-to-people connections, justice, and sustainability.

Americans know that many of the products they buy everyday come from other countries. Many of us do not know about the conditions under which the products we buy are produced. Child labor can be found in nearly every industry around the world. An estimated 60% of child labor occurs in agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry.

Distribute Fair Trade handout and have groups, or pairs, discuss the following questions:

1. What evidence can you find of U.S. imports in the classroom and in your backpack (from the clothing you are wearing to materials in the classroom)?

Consider the following:

What is being produced?

What goods/materials are used to produce the product?

What services are used to produce the product?

How will goods/materials be produced? Consider natural, human and capital resources

Who is the consumer?

What do you know about conditions for workers in the countries where these items are made? How could you find out?

2. Why are millions of laborers, including children, working in deplorable conditions?

3. Are their circumstances in which some workers decide that they are better off working in factories, sweatshops and industries with substandard conditions? Why or why not?

4. Why don't people working under miserable conditions, like in apparel factories, just quit?

With a small group or for homework, choose a product (for example, an article of clothing, a chocolate bar or an electronic device) and find out if child labor is involved in making it. To do this, you can write to companies to discover their policies on the use of child labor. Some companies post this information on their website.

Vote by a show of hands on the following question from the Millennium Machine exhibit in the Museum of Tolerance:

Would you be willing to pay more for a bar of chocolate if it meant that child labor would not be used in the process of producing it?

Yes                      No

## REFLECTION

On a large piece of butcher paper, students are asked to symbolize, with words or pictures, what they learned, what action they would like to take and/or how they feel about the issue.

## DISCUSSION / WRAP UP

Why should child labor matter to us?

Why is child labor still prevalent today?

What factors contribute to the problem today?

Does poverty lead to child labor?

What can you do to help stop child labor?

## **ASSESSMENT**

Participation in group discussion, analyzing, synthesizing and summarizing information, active listening, ability to identify main ideas from a text, demonstrate empathy for others

## **CONNECTING LEARNING AND THE COMMUNITY - EXTENSION EXPERIENCES**

Students research companies that use fair trade practices, then create a fair trade booklet (e.g. chocolate, coffee, clothing) or develop a mobile app.

Create a simulation of a town meeting in which the issue of child labor is discussed. Participants may play the roles of: parents, employers, children, mayor, social reformers, and journalists.

Students determine what types of child labor may have existed in their own town during the Industrial Revolution. They compile an archive of facts and photographs.

The following scenarios are all based on fact.

1. A 12 year old girl takes out the trash and washes dishes each night. She receives a \$10/week allowance if all her chores are completed.
2. A 13 year old boy picks grapes for eight hours a day, six days a week throughout the winter and spring, and is paid the equivalent of about \$3-\$4 per hour.
3. A 9 year old girl from Haiti, who escaped the 2010 earthquake disaster, is sent to live with an unfamiliar family in the Dominican Republic, where she is responsible each day for cleaning, ironing, gardening, cooking meals, carrying water, washing dishes, and washing clothes, and sometimes watching the family's 1-year-old baby or grandfather in the evenings. She is provided room and board, but no additional pay.
4. A 15 year old girl who aspires to be a dentist volunteers to work full-time at a clinic over the summer, for no pay.
5. A 12 year old boy decides to leave his home to live and work on a cocoa plantation after being promised a bicycle and \$125 a year to help support his family. Once he arrives, he receives no pay and is assaulted if he does not continue to work.
6. A 14 year old boy in Tennessee is employed at a lumber mill operating a chainsaw, removing lumber from a conveyor, and loading scrap wood into a wood chipper.
7. A 12 year old boy in Sierra Leone starts his day at 6am and spends his day in the mud up to his waist mining for diamonds. If he finds a precious gem he will receive a bag of rice for his family.
8. A 6 year old boy ties knots for rugs for 12 hours each day. He sleeps on the floor in the workshop and is fed two meals a day, but is not paid because he is a bonded laborer working to pay off debts his family cannot afford to repay.
9. A 16 year old girl works at a restaurant after school for 5-6 hours, three days a week and is paid minimum wage. She usually gets off work at 10pm, but sometimes works until almost midnight restocking supplies, closing out the cash register and cleaning the waiting area for an additional hour.
10. In 2014, the Governor of Maine said he wanted the state to allow 12 year olds to work. A proposed sub-minimum wage for young workers was \$5.25.
11. In states such as Kentucky, Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina, child workers spend 50 to 60 hours a week in tobacco fields, where they are exposed to nicotine, toxic pesticides, and other dangers.

**THEN:**

Although children were servants and apprentices throughout most of history, child labor reached new levels during the Industrial Revolution. Historical documents reveal American children worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, textiles, agriculture, canneries, and as newsboys, messengers, shoe shiners, and peddlers. Children worked long hours in dangerous factory conditions for very little money. Children were favorable laborers because their size allowed them to move in small spaces in factories or mines, were easier to control than adults, were less likely to strike and could be paid less. Child laborers often worked to help support their families, but were forced to sacrifice an education. Nineteenth century reformers and labor organizers tried to restrict child labor and improve working conditions. In Colonial America, child labor was an integral part of the agricultural and handicraft economy.

**NOW:**

Whether or not particular forms of work can be called 'child labor' today depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is done and the intentions sought by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as within countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports the largest number of child workers are in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

It is reported that an estimated 158 million children, aged 5-14, are engaged in child labor—one in six children in the world. Millions of children are engaged in hazardous situations or conditions, such as working in mines, with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery. They are everywhere hidden from view, working as domestic servants in homes and laboring in workshops.

Exploitative child labor includes paid and unpaid work that is forced or results in unfair wages. Slave labor can be a result of human trafficking and can occur in a variety of work settings, such as factories, mines and farming, and as well as in domestic environments. International efforts to combat exploitative child labor includes resolutions and acts like the International Labor Organization's Convention.

**CHILD LABOR IS CONSIDERED EXPLOITATIVE IF IT INVOLVES:**

- Full-time work at too early an age.
- Too many hours devoted to working.
- Work that has excessive physical, social, or psychological stress.
- Bad working and living conditions.
- Inadequate pay.
- Too much responsibility.
- Work that limits access to education.
- Work that undermines children's dignity and self-esteem, such as slavery, bonded labor, or sexual exploitation.
- Work that is harmful to social and psychological development.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. The Convention establishes in international law that States Parties must ensure that all children, without discrimination in any form, benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner. This document has been signed by all but two countries--Somalia and the United States. The United States has indicated its intention to ratify, but has yet to do so. By signing and ratifying the Convention, governments agree to be legally bound by it. State parties are obligated to amend and create laws and policies to fully implement the Convention; they must consider all actions taken in light of the best interests of the child. The task, however, must engage not just governments but all members of society.

Article 32 of the CRC refers specifically to child labor. Based on the CRC, organizations like UNICEF help governments create laws and services that will protect children's rights.

According to Human Rights Watch, double standards in U.S. labor law today allow children to work at younger ages, for longer hours and under more hazardous conditions in agriculture than in any other industry. These circumstances endanger children's health and safety and access to education is at stake.

#### **FAIR TRADE:**

Americans know that many of the products they buy everyday come from other countries. Many of us do not know about the conditions under which the products we buy are produced. Child labor can be found in nearly every industry around the world. An estimated 60% of child labor occurs in agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry.

Fair Trade is a system of exchange that honors producers, communities, consumers, and the environment. It is a model for the global economy rooted in people-to-people connections, justice, and sustainability. When one makes Fair Trade purchases they are:

- Creating opportunities for economically and socially marginalized producers
- Developing transparent relationships
- Paying promptly and fairly
- Supporting safe working conditions
- Ensuring the rights of children
- Cultivating environmental stewardship
- Respecting cultural identity

During the Industrial Revolution in the United States, many new jobs were created. Many of the workers who filled these new jobs were children. The problem of child labor was not that children were working, but rather they were being exploited or taken advantage of in the work place. Children were often preferred employees over adults. Instead of paying higher wages for adults to perform the same duties, children could be employed at a much cheaper rate. They were working long hours, for little pay, in unsafe working conditions, not permitting them to be children and getting an education.

Children worked in large numbers in mines, glass factories, the textile industry, agriculture, canneries, and as newsboys, messengers, shoe shiners, and peddlers. As America was becoming more industrialized, many poor families had no choice but to send their children to work in order to help the family survive. Working children were often hurt due to industrial accidents on unsafe machinery, uneducated since there was no time for school after working over 12 hours a day, and were infected with illness and disease due to the unsafe working conditions in which they were exposed.

Children in the mills usually worked eleven or twelve hour days, 5-6 days a week. Windows were usually kept closed because moisture and heat helped keep the cotton from breaking. Crushed and broken fingers were common in the coal mines. Most children working here were boys earning \$0.50-\$0.60 a day. Underground, a boy might work 14 hours a day. Working in a cannery was a seasonal job, very common for six and seven year old boys and girls. An ordinary day began at 3 a.m. At the height of the season, children often worked eighteen hours a day. Children carried boxes of produce weighing over 40 pounds. Three and four year olds often worked, unpaid, as "helpers."

By the late 1800s, over 1,000 laws regulating work conditions and limiting or forbidding child labor were passed. In many cases the laws did not apply to immigrants, therefore they were often taken advantage of and wound up living in slums working long hours for little pay. Opponents of the laws argued that child labor was an unavoidable and even beneficial part of national economic growth and development. Twice reformers tried to pass an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to allow the federal government to regulate child labor, and twice these measures failed. Some states tried to pass laws to prohibit child labor from factory employment. Unfortunately, these laws were often difficult to enforce or ignored by factory managers and owners. It did not help that children also lied about their ages in order to have jobs in order to put food on their family's table. Working children even formed unions themselves to improve conditions in industries where they were the primary workforce. For example, Seattle newsboys organized in 1892 and even went on strike to improve wages or to protest newspaper's attempts to restrict them from selling other publishers' newspapers.

In the early 20th century, almost three-quarters of all child laborers worked in agriculture. Many children were working land that did not belong to their families. Living conditions were deplorable. Several workers would be crammed together in one shack. There was rarely running water. Children worked late into the evening, often without a meal break.

In 1904, the National Child Labor Committee was organized by citizens and politicians, and was defined by Congress in 1907. Their main goal was to achieve federal child labor legislation that would apply to all children. The National Child Labor Committee led efforts to provide free, mandatory education for all children. By 1918, all states had passed some form of education requirement legislation.

From 1908 to 1912, photographer Lewis W. Hine took his camera across America to photograph children as young as three years old working long hours, often under dangerous conditions, in factories, mines, and fields.  
**<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/index.html>**

Laws that were passed by government were later found unconstitutional by our Supreme Court, until the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938 was passed. In this act, children had to be at least sixteen years of age before they were permitted to work for full-time hours and were not allowed to help make products that were transported across states.

Sources: HISTORY.com; UNICEF; The National Archives; The Social Welfare History Project; Child Labor in America: Photographs of Lewis W. Hine **<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/>**

Whether or not particular forms of work can be called 'child labor' today depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is done and the intentions sought by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as within countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) reports the largest number of child workers are in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

It is reported that an estimated 158 million children, aged 5-14, are engaged in child labor—one in six children in the world. Millions of children are engaged in hazardous situations or conditions, such as working in mines, with chemicals and pesticides in agriculture or working with dangerous machinery. They are everywhere hidden from view, working as domestic servants in homes and laboring in workshops.

Exploitative child labor includes paid and unpaid work that is forced or results in unfair wages. Children may be forced into marriage, to work in sweatshops, on construction sites, on the streets as child beggars, in wars as child soldiers, on farms, or in restaurants and hotels. Some are forced into commercial sexual exploitation, prostitution and other illegal activities, such as trafficking drugs. In 2005, an estimated 5.7 million children were in forced and bonded labor.

Millions of girls work as domestic servants and unpaid household help and are especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Servitude may include cleaning, childcare, cooking, gardening and looking after the elderly. In its most extreme forms, child labor involves children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to provide for themselves on the streets of large cities at a very early age.

International efforts to combat exploitative child labor includes resolutions and acts like the International Labour Organization's Convention.

Child labor is considered exploitative if it involves:

2. Full-time work at too early an age.
3. Too many hours devoted to working.
4. Work that has excessive physical, social, or psychological stress.
5. Bad working and living conditions.
6. Inadequate pay.
7. Too much responsibility.
8. Work that limits access to education.
9. Work that undermines children's dignity and self-esteem, such as slavery, bonded labor, or sexual exploitation.
10. Work that is harmful to social and psychological development.

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Article 32 of the CRC refers specifically to child labor. Based on the CRC, organizations like UNICEF help governments create laws and services that will protect children's rights.

According to Human Rights Watch, double standards in U.S. labor law today allow children to work at younger ages, for longer hours and under more hazardous conditions in agriculture than in any other industry. These circumstances endanger children's health and safety and access to education is at stake.

Sources: UNICEF, <http://www.unicef.org>; Convention on the Rights of the Child; International Labor Organization' World Bank Facts and Figures <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/237384/toolkitfr/pdf/facts.pdf>  
<http://www.socialwelfarehistory.com/programs/child-labor/>, UNICEF, International Labor Organization, Fair Trade International <http://www.fairtrade.net>

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. It is a violation of rights, well-being and a denial of the opportunity for children to reach their full potential. Human Trafficking is a crime against humanity.

Children may be forced into marriage, to work in sweatshops, on construction sites, on the streets as child beggars, in wars as child soldiers, on farms, or in restaurants and hotels. Some are forced into commercial sexual exploitation, prostitution and other illegal activities, such as trafficking drugs. In 2005, an estimated 5.7 million children were in forced and bonded labor.

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While human trafficking spans all demographics, there are some circumstances or vulnerabilities that lead to higher susceptibility of victimization. Runaway and homeless youth, and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war and conflict, or social discrimination are frequently targeted by traffickers. Also poverty, dropping out of school, losing parents, natural disasters and migrant status make children vulnerable to exploitation.

It is estimated that there are 30 million people enslaved around the world today, which is double the number of Africans who were taken during the trans-American slave trade. For as little as \$18-dollars, generations of people can be enslaved. There are approximately 700,000 victims trafficked through international borders every year, which does not include the millions trafficked domestically within their own countries. 55% are women and girls. Human trafficking is the third largest international crime industry, behind illegal drugs and arms trafficking. According to the International Labor Organization, forced labor reportedly generates a profit of \$150 billion every year.

Human trafficking leaves almost no country untouched, including the United States. The U.S. is a source, destination, and transit point for trafficking victims. According to CIA estimates, as many as 15,000 to 17,500 men, women and children are trafficked into the United States every year. Anyone can be trafficked, regardless of citizenship, class, education, gender, or age when forced or tempted by false promises. Slavery exists almost everywhere in the world, and yet it is illegal in every part of the world.

Sources: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children <http://www.nspcc.org.uk>, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking <http://www.castla.org>, Polaris <http://www.polarisproject.org>, Five Things You Didn't Know about Human Trafficking <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/5-things-you-didnt-know-about-human-trafficking-20140819>

Research has shown that child soldiers have been used in armed conflict for years. Governments and armed groups in more than 87 countries recruit children as soldiers. Although it is impossible to accurately calculate the number of children involved in armed forces and groups, the United Nations estimates there are 300,000 child soldiers. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers defines a child soldier as “any person under 18 years of age who is a member of or attached to government armed forces or any other regular or irregular armed political group, whether or not an armed conflict exists”.

Child soldiers may perform tasks including participation in combat, laying mines, spying, sabotage, acting as decoys, messengers or guards; training and drills; carrying out domestic tasks, like cooking and washing clothes; transporting equipment; sexual slavery and forced labor. The International Labor Organization Convention has identified forced or mandatory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict is one of the worst forms of child labor.

Rebel groups around the world use child soldiers often to fight the government. Governments use child soldiers in armed conflict. Some countries actively recruit children as young as seven years old.

Countries who are known to recruit child soldiers include, among others, Iraq, Sudan, Uganda, Afghanistan, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Burma, India, the Philippines and Democratic Republic of Congo. Africa has the largest number of child soldiers. Youth are recruited by the National Army, rebel forces, insurgent groups, Taliban militias and guerilla forces.

Some children are abducted or forced into conflicts while others volunteer or are volunteered by their families. Reasons to join include salary and money paid for work, a promise of a better life, status, a sense of power or revenge for a wrongdoing. In some cases, there is simply no other choice.

Children are used as soldiers because they are easier to train, force and brainwash, and they are expendable.

It is believed that all child soldiers are male. In fact, 40% of all child soldiers are female. Many girls are used as “wives” and sex slaves for the soldiers and officers.

Violence is a part of daily life and many children are forced to kill, as well as witness atrocities to horrendous situations. Child soldiers have to deal with cruelties like malnutrition and exposure and force to taking drugs. As a result, trauma is greatly suffered.

Recruitment often requires unheard of acts, including forcing young children to kill or seriously injure family members. This makes it difficult for them to ever return home. The effects on these children remain long after they are set free or escape. Psychological damage can remain with them for life. Most have had no continuing education and without this, future employment is near impossible. As a result, some choose to return to the rebel groups, as it seems they have nowhere else to go.

Many governmental and non-governmental organizations are working to put an end to this problem. In 2013, the United Nations set a goal to get rid of all child soldiers in the world by 2016. Organizations around the world have created rehabilitation and reintegration programs, as well as are providing education, health and counseling services. Article 38 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that children under 15 years of age are not to be recruited into armed forces. Since the Convention was written, two other protocols have been added.

Sources: Child Soldiers 1379 by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers; War Child <http://www.warchild.org.uk>, Amnesty International <http://www.amnesty.org.uk>; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers [www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org).

Many of us do not know about the conditions under which the products we buy are produced. Americans know that many of the products they buy everyday come from other countries. Americans sell goods in their country that have been imported for industry ranging from shoe leather (about 65%) and clothing (about 45%) to computer equipment (about 40%) and petroleum (about 38%).

Child labor can be found in nearly every industry. An estimated 70% of children are performing forced labor work in agriculture, fishing, hunting, and forestry. Children work on farms picking bananas in Ecuador, oranges in Brazil, cocoa in the Ivory Coast, vegetables in California and cotton in Egypt. Children in commercial agriculture work long hours in extreme temperatures, suffer health risks from pesticides, earn little or no pay, and receive inadequate food, water, and sanitation.

Approximately 13 million children are estimated to be involved in manufacturing goods like carpets in India, clothing in Bangladesh, soccer balls in Pakistan and fireworks in China.

Children are working in mining operations around the world in places like Colombia, Brazil, Sierra Leone, and Mongolia. They are mining gold, charcoal, diamonds, coal and emeralds. Children as young as 6 or 7 years old break up rocks, and wash and carry ore. Nine-year-olds work underground setting explosives and carrying loads. Child laborers in underground mines and quarries suffer extremely high illness and injury rates.

The government of Uzbekistan is continuing to remove millions of children across the country from school and forcing them to pick cotton during the harvest season. While over 65 of the world's largest apparel brands and retailers have developed policies related to Uzbek cotton, two companies were known to remain silent. Gymboree and Abercrombie and Fitch were reported refusing to support human rights and speaking out against forced child labor in the cotton industry. Abercrombie and Fitch has since announced that it has a policy of not sourcing Uzbek cotton. (Source: Green America)

The Gap clothing company, which also owns Old Navy and Banana Republic, is one of the most successful clothing retailers in the world. And yet over time, The Gap has been accused of exploiting its workers all around the globe. The Gap Chairman has denied any abuses of its workers have ever occurred. In 2007, Indian authorities raided factories that produce clothing for the Gap and found children as young as 10 working there. Studies show that Gap workers from China, Thailand, Bangladesh and the Philippines must sign contracts before they are employed, giving up such human rights as the freedom to join unions, attend religious services, quit or marry. They work 12-16 hour days and are not paid for overtime. In Russia, workers earn 11 cents an hour. (Green America).

Some people argue that even if workers suffer in sweatshop conditions, many of these laborers are better off than they would be if they didn't have access to such jobs. Others argue that no human beings should have to work under such conditions.

Fair trade is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers, communities, consumers and the environment. When farmers can sell on fair trade terms, it provides them with a better deal and improved terms of trade. Fair trade offers consumers a better way to reduce poverty and cruelty through every day shopping.

Fair trade outlines all sorts of protections and standards. These include opportunities for economically and socially marginalized producers. Transparent relationships are developed guaranteeing fair prices are paid and workers earn decent wages. They also have the right to join unions and are ensured safe working conditions. Children and their rights are protected.

Fair trade establishes environmentally sustainable practices, including organic certification and non-GMO products. It protects the environment in which people work and live. This includes clean air, natural water, virgin forests and waste management, as well as efficient farming techniques. Fair trade ensures a positive impact is made at all stages of the chain.

Consumers also benefit from fair trade. Shoppers can buy products in line with their values and principles. By buying fair trade, one supports producers who are working to improve their lives. There are now thousands of products that carry the fair trade mark. Fair trade standards exist for food products like tea, coffee, fresh fruit and nuts. There are also standards for products such as flowers and plants, sports equipment and seed cotton.

Sources: The Conference Board, New York Times, 3/20/03, The Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights <http://www.globallabourrights.org/>, "Child Labor Can Be Found in Nearly Every Industry," U.S. Department of Labor, The Social Welfare History Project