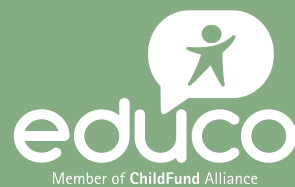




Educo's Position on

# Child Labour







# Content

<b>Child labour: Global situation and trends</b>	4
Key terms and definitions	4
Global principles and regulatory framework	4
What is the current magnitude of child labour across the globe?	7
What is the situation, and what are the consequences for children's and adolescents' lives?	9
Root causes	10
<b>Educo's vision and position</b>	13
<b>Conclusions</b>	15
Recommendations	15
Educo's Approach	18
<b>Annex 1: Evidence</b>	22

**Educo's Position on Child Labour (2021)**

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# Child labour: Global situation and trends

## Key terms and definitions

**Child labour** is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and psychological development. It interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, forcing them to leave school prematurely, or forcing them to attempt to combine school attendance with strenuous work and excessively long working hours.

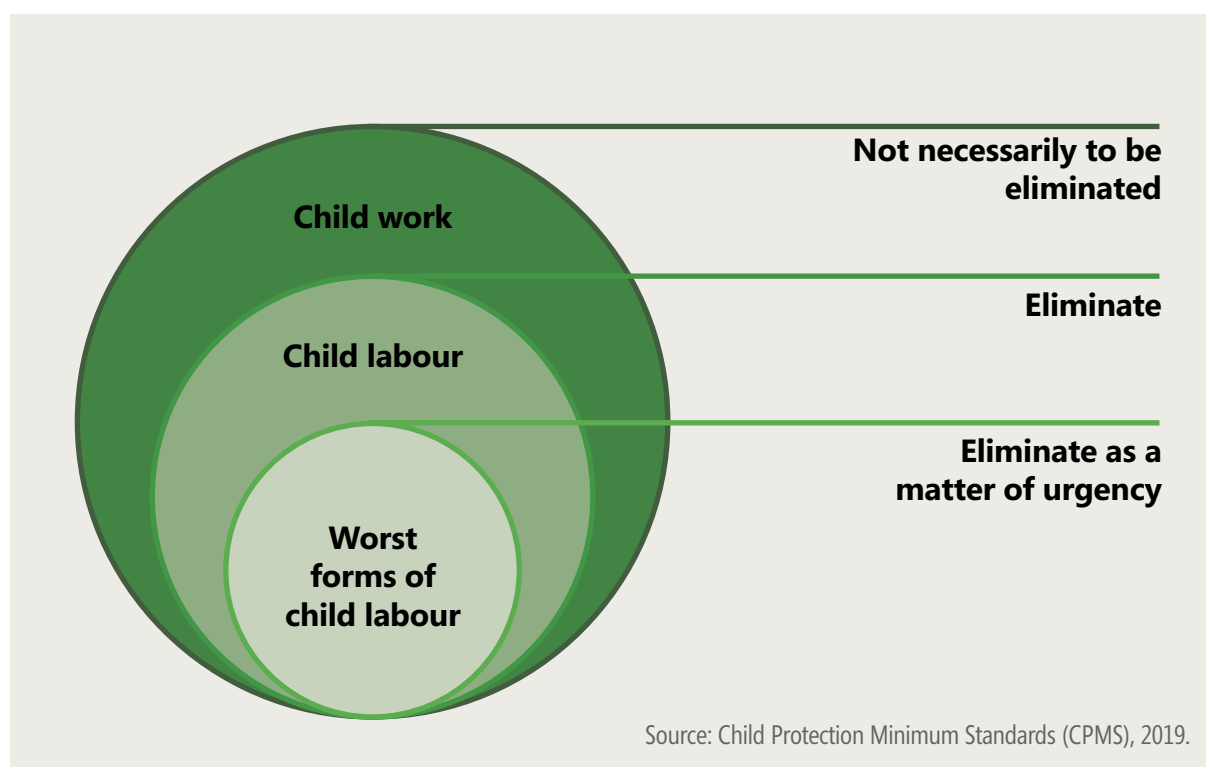
Child labour takes many forms, and the international community has defined key criteria (ILO, Convention 182) for the **worst forms of child labour** that must be eradicated as a priority. They include forced labour, recruitment into armed groups, trafficking for exploitation, sexual exploitation, illicit work or hazardous work. Hazardous work, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health and safety or morals of children.

The term **child labour** does not cover some **forms of economic employment or activity** – also referred to as “children’s work”, or “light work” as permitted in the ILO Convention 138 starting from age 12 – which, **if undertaken in proper conditions and without prejudice to other child rights**, can support adolescents in gaining skills and confidence, as well as contributing to wider projects within the community and society.

## Global principles and regulatory framework

### International conventions

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* explicitly condemns child labour in articles 32 to 36, as well as in additional protocols that accompany the document, like the *UN Convention on the Rights of the*





*Child Optional Protocols* on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the communications procedure for child rights violations.

*ILO Convention 138 (1973)* on the Minimum Age, ratified by 173 countries, establishes the age of completion of compulsory schooling as the minimum age for work; in general, never before the age of 14 years old, and 18 years old for hazardous work.



The *ILO Convention 182 (1999)* was ratified in 2020 by all 187 members of the ILO, to protect children from the worst forms of child labour.

## Other global frameworks and guidance

*The Sustainable Development Agenda:* Educo has a strong commitment to this Agenda, included in our Global Impact Framework and our Global Programmatic Framework, and it works globally with several alliances in relation to these goals and their achievement.

The 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals also address child labour, especially in SDG 8, Target 8.7: “Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of theyworst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms”.

SDG 16, Target 16.2 states: “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”. This is also of relevance for all actors and stakeholders engaged in fighting against child labour and its worst forms. Educo is also aligning its work with SDG 4 related to quality education, including targets related to technical and vocational education and skills, and SDG 5, related to gender equality, specifically targets 5.2 and 5.3 for ending all forms of violence against and exploitation of girls and women.

Type of work	Minimum age
Light work: children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education and vocational orientation and training.	Between 13 and 15 years old; in exceptional cases, between 12 and 14 years old.
Basic minimum age: the minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, and in any case not less than 15.	15 years old; in exceptional cases, 14 years old.
Hazardous work (a specific category of the worst forms of child labor): any work which is likely to jeopardize children’s health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.	18 years old; in exceptional cases, 16 years old (under strict conditions).

Source: Convention No. 138 of the ILO defines the minimum age for admission to employment.



# Global estimates OIT 2017

**48% of all children involved in child labour are between 5 and 11 years old**

Nearly **half of all child labour** (72.1 million) **is in Africa**; it is also where the highest prevalence (19.6 % of children work) is found

**62.1 million** in the **Asia and the Pacific**  
(prevalence 7,4%)

**10,5 million** in **Latin America and the Caribbean**  
(prevalence 7,3% - 5,3% in the Americas overall)

## 2016 Global estimates of Modern Slavery

**4,3 million children** involved in forced labour (18% of total forced labour victims); this includes **1 million children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation**, which represents one fifth of the total number of victims of forced sexual exploitation\*

## Hazardous work

Towards the urgent elimination of hazardous child labour, ILO, 2018.

**Sub-Saharan Africa**  
**31.5 million children**, 8.6 %

**Asia and the Pacific**  
**28.5 million**, or 3.4 %

**The Americas**  
**6.6 million**, or 3.2 %

Among the **73M children**  
**involved in hazardous work across the globe:**

**37.1 million** between **15-17** years old  
**16.1 million** between **12-14** years old  
**19 million** between **5-11** years old

Progress has been made over the last years,  
but not for this youngest age group (between 2012 and 2016,  
their absolute number increased from 18.5 to 19 million).

\* Global estimates of modern slavery: forced labour and forced marriage, International Labour Organization and Walk Free Foundation, 2017.

From the outset, the 2030 Agenda has had two main approaches:

- Universalisation and interrelation between the objectives: it is not possible to eradicate child labour if we are not able to eliminate poverty in the world, bearing in mind that none of these problems affect only one part of the world, but are global problems in which we all have a role to play.
- The need to generate alliances between all relevant actors to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

These are a key tool for fighting against child labour. It is for this reason that Educo works as a network and in alliance with all the actors committed to putting an end to this practice. As part of ChildFund Alliance, we are members of the 8.7 Alliance, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Global Compact, and others.

Standard 12 of the 2019 edition of the *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action* provides very useful guidance on prevention and response to child labour, especially its worst forms.

## Legal framework at regional level

Educo also takes into account legal frameworks at a regional level. In Africa, child labour and economic exploitation are addressed in article 15 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). Worth mentioning is also the multilateral regional cooperation agreement to combat trafficking in persons in West Africa. Key national laws and legal provisions in other regions, and for example in South Asian countries, are related to ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the ILO Convention concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, among our intervention countries there is one, Bangladesh, that has not yet ratified ILO C138.

## What is the current magnitude of child labour across the globe?

Child labour has decreased over the past 20 years – the number of children involved in child labour dropped by almost 100 million children between 2000 and 2016. Despite this global trend, 152 million children across the world are still involved in child labour (88 million boys and 64 million girls, i.e. 58% boys and 42% girls), according to the Global ILO estimates report in 2017. Among them, almost 73 million are involved in hazardous work. Unfortunately, all indications and evidence gathered from Educo programs in different countries and from other organisations working on this issue lead us to believe that the COVID 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on this decreasing trend. If confirmed (in June 2021 the ILO will update the global data), for the first time in 20 years we may see these numbers increase.

In many countries, including countries Educo works in, children are involved in the worst forms of child labour, such as bonded labour, recruitment into armed forces, and trafficking for exploitation including commercial sexual exploitation (online and offline, online facilitation of offline exploitation, etc.) and hazardous work. **For Educo it is important to highlight that, in this global document, commercial sexual exploitation will be considered as one of the worst forms of child labour, but Educo understands that it is also one of the worst forms of violence against children and a crime that should be punished as such.** Children can be found in a variety of sectors, especially in the informal economy, primarily agriculture and livestock farming, but also mining and industries such as carpet weaving, garment making and fisheries. An important proportion are involved in services such as commercial sexual exploitation and domestic labour.





## In many cases, children face the following

- **Emotional neglect and lack of proper care**, with deprivation of family love and affection. Several types of work or situations, like children on the move involved in child labour, domestic labour, trafficking for exploitation, involve being separated from their families, living in hostile environments, isolation, and a lack of safe relationships with peers or trustworthy adults, all of which dramatically increase children's vulnerability and leave them without proper protection.
- **Physical neglect**, through lack of adequate provision of food, clothing, shelter, and medical treatment.
- **Harsh working conditions** from working too many hours (often being exposed to the sun, climatic hazards and/or hostile environments), carrying heavy loads, manipulating highly dangerous materials, etc.
- **Physical, psychological, and sexual violence** mostly from employers and other children or adults present in their environment (scolding, shouting, humiliating, beating, sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence etc.)
- **Poor access to health, education, and protection services.**
- **Invisibility and scarce opportunities to exercise their right** to meaningful participation.

The consequences on children's lives, wellbeing and development are huge:

- **Delays in physical, psychological, and cognitive development.**
- **Impairments, illnesses, even death.**
- **Anxiety, mood disorders, low self-esteem, somatic complaints.**
- **Feelings of guilt, fear of reprisals, especially for victims of sexual commercial exploitation**, who also face social stigmatisation, marginalisation and even rejection by their own families and communities.



As for the data presented above, child labour and exploitation are still affecting many children around the world in an alarming way and, despite progress made in reducing their global incidence, very worrying trends are under way: increasingly younger children, who are more vulnerable, are becoming involved in hazardous work<sup>1</sup>, while online child sexual exploitation of children is growing exponentially and devastating many lives and families.

We can expect that the magnitude and scope of the phenomenon are far bigger than the available data show. Child labour and exploitation are not very visible, and are difficult to report and detect, especially as most of the time they happen in the informal sector or through trafficking networks.

## What is the situation, and what are the consequences for children's and adolescents' lives?

As we have seen, child labour is work that is harmful to children and adolescents. Risks of harm vary according to the nature of the work, the number of working hours and the conditions in which it takes place, the developmental stage of the children, as well as the level of interference with the exercise of other rights, such as the right to education. 1 in 3 children involved in child labour are outside the education system, and those who attend find it much more difficult to concentrate and learn properly due to their situation.

**Child labour is violating children's rights** to protection, education, health and leisure, and is seriously jeopardising their lives and their chances to find decent work, enhance their skills and help them live the life they desire. **This high level of vulnerability is further increased by their invisibility, the difficulty they have making**

**their voices heard and defending their rights** to minimum safety conditions, guaranteed working hours, minimum wages, education, etc.



*So as we give opportunities to speak as a child [...]. So, if we continue with these things, it will really improve the children to empower themselves so they can also air out what they feel... they can also give out their views... they can also share what they think is right. So, by that, you can know what children are going through and what is going on in the world.*

Shazmina, 14, Tanzania, Member of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth

It is crucial to listen to children and their experiences in order to inform our interventions, and support them to organise themselves.

Harm caused to children also has **consequences for their families**, with even broader social and economic effects. Injuries or illnesses suffered in childhood may result in lifelong physical and psychological consequences, healthcare costs, and can hinder the productivity of the adult workforce in the future.

Finally, the consequences of child labour also have a **social impact**, in the communities and in the countries where there is a high incidence of child labour. Not finishing compulsory education, not being able to access technical and vocational education and training (TVET), higher education or technological education has consequences for the productivity of the adults these children will become and, therefore, an impact on the development and transformation of their societies.

1 Towards the urgent elimination of hazardous child labour, ILO, 2018.



## Root causes

Child labour and exploitation are a result of multiple interconnected causes and risk factors that influence the incidence and forms of child labour. Some of these include:

- **Social and cultural norms, beliefs and practices:** in many contexts, societies give a high level of importance to work and believe that it is part of children's socialisation process and their contribution to the economic production of their family or community, and less importance to education, especially for girls. Also, **the structural inequality and violence that women and girls suffer because of the patriarchal system is a structural cause that contributes to some forms of exploitation, especially child sexual exploitation.** This, combined with the lack of knowledge or awareness in communities and society in general about child rights and the importance of education, and the impact of many forms of work as well as the risks involved in exploitation or trafficking networks.

“

*I am an 18-year-old girl from Baroueli in Mali. I came to Bamako at the age of 16 to look for work to earn money and set up my wedding kit. After a while working as a domestic worker, I was asked by my older sister to go and work in a gold mine. I did it, so I could earn more. However, I was forced to live with a man I did not know, and I got pregnant. The father of my child and my sister left me. After being homeless for some time, I was welcomed by a partner organisation of Educo, where I could access some counselling and medical care for myself and my new-born. They also helped me to start a dialogue with my family who welcomed me back.*

T.K. Project participant, Mali

- **Poverty, social exclusion and lack/decline of resources** put pressure on families and increase the risk of exposure to child labour and its worst forms; certain social events such

as illness, the death of one or both parents and the separation of households, weaken the household economy.

“

*I want to get back to school, get back to my school friends but unfortunately, it's still a dream for me. Earning and ensuring food are the only reality for me and my family members now.*

Sabina, 12, project participant in Satkhira, Bangladesh

- **Lack of enabling and safe educational environments and of opportunities to access decent work** - an insufficient offer of quality education, the high cost of school fees (visible or not), lack of inclusiveness in the system, with a poor integration of pupils who cannot follow the conventional system (due to their age, results or vulnerability), lack of safety in educational settings, and poor opportunities to access technical and vocational training or decent work are factors leading to high rates of school drop-outs and low retention rates in secondary school, which also increase the risk of child labour.
- **Weakness of child protection and social protection systems**, weak adaptation of laws and international standards and insufficient implementation and enforcement; low levels of reporting for child protection issues (due to poor case management systems, lack of trust, fear and poor knowledge of the reporting mechanisms available).

Other factors include a lack of a birth certificate or the economic gains for the employers or traffickers, or any person benefiting from the work or exploitation. Many causes and risk factors, as well as, on the other hand, resilience factors, are cross-cutting and feed off each other, at individual, family, community, and society levels. Children living in difficult contexts in

their families or communities, girls promised in child marriage, children on the move with no safe support, or facing discriminations, are more vulnerable to child labour and can experience various forms of violence and exploitation at the same time.

**Humanitarian crises**, which have been drastically increasing over the past years, are exacerbating the risk of becoming involved in child labour. Several areas Educo works in are in a situation of social and/or political conflict or prone to natural disasters like cyclones, floods or droughts, which further increases the vulnerability of the population – as a result of the loss of homes, crops and livestock, and the associated social and mental health impacts.







Over the past year, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, children in many contexts have become more likely to be involved in child labour as a coping mechanism or have been forced into the worst forms of child labour because their family situation was worsening. The ILO anticipated that in 2020 **Covid will drive 66 million more children into poverty**. In Latin America, the estimates indicate that over the last year between 300,000 and 370,000 more children were involved in child labour. Covid-19, like other types of crises, **has also made children more vulnerable** as a result of possible separation from their families due to illness or death, the disruption of education, the lack of access to protection services and the increased use of the internet – often unsupervised, which places children at higher risk from online exploitation.

Covid-19 is very likely to reverse the progress made so far and further increase gender inequalities, stigma and vulnerability among children involved in child labour. We can expect that in the post-pandemic situation, after the first waves, many families will still be under pressure to mitigate the financial impact of the crisis and repay all their debts. This pressure will mean that many children and adolescents will be forced to remain involved in child labour with less chances of returning to school or benefitting from adapted training opportunities. Therefore, it is urgent that joint efforts are made to effectively fight against it and ensure a decent education and work opportunities for children, adolescents, and young people.

## Educo's vision and position



Educo's vision is a world where all children fully enjoy their rights and lead dignified lives.

Our mission is to work with children and their communities to promote just and equitable societies that guarantee children's rights and wellbeing. For Educo, children's wellbeing "means the fulfilment of children's rights and opportunities so that every child can be and do what they value, in the light of their abilities, potential and skills".

Child labour is a human rights issue, stemming from several interrelated causes, linked with socio-economic issues and **gender** inequality. We work to reduce child labour and eliminate its worst forms,

so that children can enjoy their right to live in safe, healthy, and protective environments, and enjoy their right to **education** and leisure. We do this using an integrated and holistic approach, taking into consideration the complexity of the problem and the multiple factors that surround it. We foster interventions at various different layers of the socio-ecological model, to mitigate risk factors and to prevent and respond to child labour and various forms of violence against children.

We believe that to achieve this, it is important to improve our knowledge on the driving forces and the various situations and types of violence affecting boys and girls differently at different life stages, as

well as children with disabilities and in vulnerable situations, in a variety of contexts.

Our programs build upon our knowledge and expertise in education, child protection and child participation. The integration of these program areas, together with advocacy and awareness-raising work to change cultural and social norms, should create a space for creating opportunities for children involved in or at risk of child labour.

Educo believes that the best way to end child labour is to **guarantee safe, inclusive, and quality education for children and to actively engage families**. We believe that no child should be involved

in any form of child labour at least until he or she has completed compulsory education. This measure should be regulated by law in all the countries where the age for entering work is below the age at which compulsory education ends. It is therefore absolutely necessary that states implement measures to ensure effective compliance with the law and the minimum working age.

Educo believes it is critical to engage with various stakeholders at different levels in order to address child labour sustainably. We will therefore work to ensure that governments implement strategies and public policies that comply with international conventions and standards, but also that they make their own regulatory frameworks a reality.

We will promote changes in social protection systems, so that they take into account the realities and needs of families and place children at the centre of their actions.

We will seek allies in companies to put an end to child labour, seeking alternatives, promoting safe and decent work and eliminating economic exploitation, especially that of children.

We will also work with families, communities, and leaders to engage dialogue on the harmful cultural and social norms that favour this phenomenon and to promote positive change. Last but not least, Educo is committed to always taking into consideration the knowledge, opinions, and proposals of children themselves. Their participation is vital in order to be able to understand the dynamics of this phenomenon, its roots and consequences, and seek solutions together, according to their needs.





# Conclusions

## Recommendations

### Legal Framework

- Ending child labour and all forms of violence against children must be a global policy priority. Commitment to the 2030 agenda, to targets 8.7 and 16.2 in particular, must be part of the political agendas of all countries and work must be done to put effective measures in place and provide clear incentives for their fulfilment.
- Regular updating of the national lists of hazardous work, according to the ILO Convention 182 and ILO Recommendation 190, together with representatives of employers and workers.
- Gathering information on risks, causes and situations of children at risk or involved in child labour.

### Education approach

- Education is a fundamental children's right and one of the most effective tools in the fight against child labour. Compulsory education must be guaranteed for all children through effective strategies and quality educational programs that bring value to children and their families. It should also be established by law that the minimum age for employment should be aligned with the age at which compulsory education is completed, provided that it is not lower than 14 years of age.

Countries	End of compulsory education	Admission to employment
Bangladesh	10	14
Benin	11	14
Bolivia	17	14
Burkina Faso	16	16
Cambodia	No	15
El Salvador	15	14
Guatemala	15	15
India	15	14
Mali	15	15
Nicaragua	12	14
Niger	16	14
Philippines	17	15
Senegal	16	15
Spain	16	16

Source: Authors'own creation. May 2021.

- However, guaranteeing access to education and ensuring that all children complete their compulsory education in an appropriate manner is not enough; we need to work to improve the quality of education and ensure that it responds to the needs and expectations of children and society as a whole. The education we promote must be capable of enabling the construction of learning and the full development of children's capacities and personalities, ensure their self-realisation and mean they can live dignified lives. In this sense, our educational work must be especially sensitive to children who return to education after a work situation or those who combine their studies with work.

- Guaranteeing continuity for those adolescents and young people who want to continue studying and providing secure access to employment for those who want to work:
  - This employment must be commensurate with their physical and mental development.
  - It must be accompanied by technical or vocational training that enables the child's personal and professional development.
  - It must be free of economic exploitation and dignify the child who performs it.

To ensure this, states must strengthen their vocational and technical education systems as an alternative for adolescents and young people who cannot continue to study or who are on the move. This training will provide them with the personal and professional development that is essential for their future. In addition, they must put concrete reinsertion strategies in place as well as the incorporation of working children or former working children in the education system or vocational training.

- Early childhood education (0-6 years) plays a tremendously important role in reducing poverty and helps prevent child labour. Many mothers in poverty are forced to take their children to work or leave them with older sisters (preventing them from going to school), in many cases exposing them to dangerous environments. For this reason, we call for the universal guarantee of free early childhood education as a preventive measure against child labour and an effective tool in the fight against inequality and poverty.
- The fact that schools are still closed in many countries due to Covid-19 requires states to redouble their efforts to ensure that all



children have access to remote education in any of its modalities and to put effective measures in place to avoid school dropouts and prevent children who drop out from entering the labour market.

## Social Protection

- It is crucial to improve social protection systems so that they can support families and their children, and to include the child labour issue as a key child protection issue in social and child protection systems. In the current Covid-19 pandemic crisis, key responses and practices have been set up in various places that should be encouraged (strengthening social protection responses, including cash transfers, ensuring the continuity of service provision for vulnerable families, including those engaged in or at risk of child labour).

## Child participation

- Ensure child participation at all levels of decision-making processes concerning the protection of children from various forms of violence and exploitation, including child labour.
- Establish mechanisms for the participation of children by region, possibly in the form of advisory councils on child labour, in order to provide first-hand information to the ILO and the different states, thus guaranteeing one of their basic rights, but also to have access to proposals from children and try to ensure their correct implementation by the different governments.
- Provide age-appropriate and accessible information to children, families and communities on acceptable forms of work for children according to their age, and ways to access services that help prevent child labour, in particular the worst forms of child labour.

## Decent work

- End the economic exploitation of labour that forces families to seek alternative income in order to survive and promote decent work in all countries. Create and enforce laws related to protecting workers, and define exploitative informal types of work.
- Combat human rights abuses in global supply chains, including the use of child labour.

**It is urgent to protect children from the worst forms of child labour, where they experience serious harm and exploitation.**





## Educo's Approach

One of Educo's priority programmatic areas for 2020-2025 is to contribute to the reduction of the worst forms of child labour and exploitation. We work in 14 countries<sup>2</sup> in Africa, America, Asia, and Europe using a holistic approach that involves several actors and sectors of society, always taking into consideration the broader framework that contributes to reducing child labour and violence against children. We address this issue, central to child protection, with a strong focus on education and child empowerment, as well as gender as an essential cross-cutting issue. Our aim is to ensure child and adolescent wellbeing and the realisation of their rights, so that they can be what they can in the light of their abilities, potential and skills.

**Educo believes that guaranteeing equal access to education for all children is the best way to prevent child labour and exploitation.** In this sense, Educo aims to contribute to the eradication of any work that prevents or interferes with the proper schooling of children during the compulsory education period.

On the other hand, **we conceive education as a right that is exercised throughout life and as a fundamental tool for personal and professional development.** It is therefore essential that we work to improve the working conditions of adolescents and young people to ensure they work in dignified conditions and that their rights are respected, prioritising their participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training processes aimed at improving specific professional skills, but also life skills and **the achievement of their life plans.**

In this sense, we highlight that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "technical and vocational education shall be made generally available" (art. 26, para. 1). We know that many adolescents are not involved in any educational, training or employment processes. We consider it important that in these cases, **adapted educational alternatives** are promoted, either to encourage them to resume formal education or to facilitate, in an age-appropriate manner and in line with General Comment 20 of the CRC, an adequate transition to decent work through vocational and technical training. In this regard, states must ensure legislative coherence in labour and education and provide opportunities for both training and vocational guidance.

**Participation and hearing the voices of children and adolescents on this topic are crucial** to a better understanding of the experiences of children involved in child labour, in order to build from these experiences to improve laws and standards as well as ensuring enforcement, to improve support programmes with a gender approach, to foster peer support, and to help change the vision and perception common within society regarding children involved in child labour, especially in its worst forms, including commercial sexual exploitation. We ensure child participation in all our interventions and base our work on the best interests of the child and do no harm principles. In this way, we will ensure that we properly understand and consider the various contexts and situations, and that we provide sustainable alternatives to child labour.

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2 Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Niger, Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Philippines, India, Spain.





# Strategies



Our main **strategies to combat the worst forms of child labour** and exploitation are the following:

## 1 **Supporting safe, equitable and quality education for all, including safe access to suitable and sustainable alternatives and decent work.**

Educo supports reintegration into the formal school system especially for children who leave school temporarily or who have recently dropped out, with special attention paid to their vulnerabilities and needs and the importance of ensuring proper care and follow-up.

Educo also promotes the development of educational alternatives or decent work opportunities for adolescents that find themselves outside the school system. This option is being prioritised in cases where children have been distanced/excluded from the formal system for a long period of time or when children find themselves too fragile to enter the traditional school system or if they continue to work and do not have a flexible schedule.

## 2 **Strengthening child protection systems** at various levels, including the community level, from the generation of laws to their proper implementation, fostering coordination among actors, and between community and formal levels. It is crucial that children involved in child labour can access child protection services as well as prevention and support programmes. This includes providing safe spaces, care, health, and psychosocial support to children at risk and children involved in child labour.



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**3 Strengthening children and youth capacities and agency:** our commitment to children's meaningful participation implies supporting them, first and foremost, to protect themselves and their peers, and gain confidence, through various methods including peer education or peer support groups, and supporting them to make informed decisions that are not detrimental to their wellbeing. This also implies supporting children's right to express themselves and organise themselves in groups and associations, including children and young workers' associations. In this way, we contribute to children's agency so that they claim their rights to safe and decent work and to quality education and training opportunities, and they participate and influence decision-making and social attitudes and practices.

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**4 Fostering safe and protective families and communities:** promoting awareness about children's rights and positive changes in attitudes and practices. This line of action can be supported by actions aimed at generating family income (technical training for young people and families), therefore reducing barriers to child protection, participation, and education.

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**5 Supporting employers through capacity building:** we work to support changes in attitudes and practices in the private sector to improve working conditions and corporate responsibility, in line with the Children's Rights and Business Principles document. Our programs actively engage employers, especially in the informal sector, to enhance their knowledge and raise awareness of children's rights and the minimum working age, but also through concrete support to improve their environment and working conditions, especially for children. In Burkina Faso, our projects in artisanal and small-scale mining areas support the organisation of employers in cooperatives, and the formalisation and legalisation of their work.

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**6 Raising awareness and supporting change of vision among the broader society and the media:** we always engage broader audience than the direct participants of the projects we are implementing and aim at impacting the broader society, to engage sustainable change in social and cultural norms. We work in particular with the media to raise their awareness of children's rights and enable them to promote children's opinions and rights, and change society's perception, especially in relation to children involved in the worst forms of child labour and exploitation.

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**7 Advocating with governments to improve child labour related laws and policies as well as to ensure their proper implementation.**

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# Annex 1: Evidence

Educo **Bangladesh** has been working for many years with several partners to reduce the worst forms of child labour in the country, especially hazardous forms of child labour in informal sectors, and advocate at national level for policy change. Educo's Bangladesh's program is currently addressing the dry fish processing and supply chain of shrimp and crab industries in the coastal areas of the country, as well as transport and domestic labour in Dhaka, under its ODHIKAR project, funded by ChildFund Korea. These two projects are providing children involved in child labour with non-formal and formal education, as well as technical training opportunities and decent job placements, ensuring implementation of the existing laws and policies through advocacy, and capacity-building for relevant duty bearers. It is also conducting awareness-raising activities for families and promoting Codes of Conduct (CoC) for employers, especially to prevent children from entering into work at an early age. We build capacities of key actors like the Community Based Child Protection Committee (CBCPC), on child labour, child rights, gender-based violence, related laws and policies as well as their roles and responsibility to protect children from different forms of exploitation and support Child Labour Monitoring Committees for proper monitoring of the child labour situation at local level. Local and national level advocacy also provide important leverage to improve related laws and policies as well as their proper implementation; Educo Bangladesh is running these advocacy efforts in association with other civil society organizations and networks, including workers' and employers' associations.

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*Before joining ODHIKAR school I was a Leguna (human hauler). [...] My employer used to scold me for silly mistakes. [...] I have seen the street drama organized by ODHIKAR project. I loved them. I learned which works are hazardous for children. [...] I would like to say to the parents “Send your children to school. Don't send your children to transport and domestic works. These jobs are very risky for children like us, so at this age we shouldn't do these jobs.*

Arif, Class 4, ODHIKAR school

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*I want to go back to ODHIKAR Pathshala again because I miss playing sports with my friends as well as my studies. I want to be an automobile engineer when I grow up. Getting back to my school and studying will support me to achieve my dream.*

Shariful, 13, Dhaka





In **Benin**, Educo is also working with an integrated approach which encompasses the broad child protection system. Our interventions to reduce the worst forms of child labour are focused on 3 urban market areas in the South of the country (Dantokpa, Ouando and Fishing Port) but have a broader national extent through advocacy and system strengthening. Firstly, action research has been crucial in refining our knowledge of the situation and the phenomenon, and to better refine programming. Besides advocacy initiatives to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of children and youth on the move, Educo works to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Labour. Through Educo's technical support, the National Labour Directorate carries out checks in vocational training workshops to ensure that children's rights are respected in general and that master craftsmen apply child protection measures. Throughout this programme, we are also supporting the functioning of the Communal and Municipal Child Protection Frameworks and strengthening community associations and their link with formal structures of the child protection system. We

also support the initiatives of children and youth groups, particularly the Association of Working Children and Youth of Benin, which is part of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth. Through this programme, Educo and its partners also provide basic services for children and young people, such as listening and safe night-time spaces, gender and reproductive health counselling, as well as vocational training, and sustainable reintegration into educational settings and in the family when possible. Especially, we have been developing and supporting an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) for children and young people involved in child labour, adapted to their situation and allowing them to combine work activity with their studies and obtain the Primary School Certificate (CEP) after 3 years – with a success rate of 80% in 2019 and 2020. The organisation also provides children and young people with a network of artisans to facilitate their professional integration, with short- or long-term training courses leading to a Certificate of Qualification in Trades and support in the form of a starter kit.



