

Child labor in the clothing industry – Bangladesh

Partly thanks to the contribution of the Coolcat foundation, UNICEF is tackling child labor in the cotton and textile production in Bangladesh. UNICEF ensures that children's rights are respected throughout the entire world. Preventing child labor is important to ensure that children grow up healthy and go to school. That's why UNICEF works together with the government, companies and civil society organizations to prevent child labor.

Low income and poor working conditions

Bangladesh has 163 million inhabitants, of which 40% are children. 4.6 million children of primary school age do not attend school, and of these children, 1.7 million are in a situation of child labor. Many of these children live in slums, and have no other option. Bangladesh is known for its low wages. The income is still far below a living wage, namely 18 American dollars per month. Workers are often unable to make ends meet on their wages. This is one of the reasons why children are put to work when they should still be at school.



Workers in Bangladesh often have to deal with poor working conditions and long working hours. In addition to this, there are poor facilities such as child care and there is little or no opportunity for female workers to breastfeed during the working day. This makes it more difficult to combine work and family life.

Child labor has serious consequences; children suffer mentally and psychically from work and cannot attend school. This also has a negative impact on society. Obtaining a school diploma increases the chance of a better job and a higher income in the future. Since many children have to work instead of going to school, breaking the cycle of poverty remains difficult.



The work of UNICEF in Bangladesh

To prevent child labor in Bangladesh, UNICEF has a number of objectives. UNICEF wants more than 15,000 children to stop working in Bangladesh by 2021 and 50 companies in the textile industry to work together to ensure that children's rights are respected in the workplace. UNICEF also wants to contribute to better access to social services such as childcare and health care.

In 2015, the Children's Rights and Business Principles were developed: guidelines describing how a company can respect and implement children's rights. UNICEF ensures the publication of these guidelines among companies, but also helps to develop child-friendly business practices. For example, UNICEF cooperates with clothing factories to prevent child labor in the chain, but also provides training on raising awareness and improving the working conditions of workers outside of

work. For example, by increasing access to care, or the 'Second chance education' program where children go back to school. This approach breaks the cycle of poverty and ensures that children go to school rather than work.

Jui's story

Daughter Jui (2) is happy to have her picture taken with her father Jamal Hossain (26). Jamal and his wife Shumi Akhter (20) both work in a clothing factory in Gazipur, just outside Dhaka. Thanks to the UNICEF-supported child care in the clothing factory, both parents can work and earn money, while being sure that their daughter is getting the right care during the day "This is a great solution for us" says Jamal, "I visit our daughter at least once a day to see how she is doing" When Jui was even smaller, her mother could even visit her three times a day to breastfeed her.



Partly thanks to Coolcat Foundation's help, UNICEF can do better to prevent child labor in Bangladesh! Thank you Coolcat Foundation.