

Introduction

This tool outlines the basics in regards international frameworks on child labour and highlights the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. It provides guidance on core principles to ensure a sustainable and rights-based approach to address child labour, as well as additional resources and key messages to target stakeholders.

Core principles for sustainably addressing child labour

- A comprehensive rights-based approach
- On-going due diligence adjusted to the local context
- Risks understood through a child-focused lens
- Consultation leads to improved prevention, mitigation and remediation

What is child labour?

Not all work done by children is child labour. Children's or adolescents' participation in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as something positive. This includes activities such as helping their parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays.

These kinds of activities contribute to children's development and to the welfare of their families; they provide them with skills and experience, and help to prepare them to be productive members of society during their adult life.

Simply put, child labour is work that harms children.

According to the International Labour Organization:

Child labour

Child labour is work that deprives children¹ of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that:

- » is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or
- » interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Hazardous child labour

Hazardous child labour is defined as: (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. Hazardous work should not be done by anyone under the age of 18.

¹ A child is a person under the age of 18

Light work

Light Work for children aged 13–15 (for limited hours and not harming their health, safety or school attendance and achievement), or for those aged 12–14 if the minimum age is set at 14 or 15, can be permitted. Light work, however, should not be for more than 14 hours per week.

Decent youth employment

Children above the minimum working age (age 15–17 in most countries) can work full time if they are not doing work which is considered a Worst Form of Child Labour, including hazardous work.

International frameworks on child labour

Here are the core international conventions and frameworks on child labour.

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- **The International Bill of Human Rights**
<https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/compilation1.1en.pdf>
- **ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138)**
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138
- **ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182)**
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C184
- **ILO Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)**
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C184
- **ILO Declaration on the Fundamental Rights and Principles at Work**
<https://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>
- **ILO Declaration on NMEs**
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms_627351.pdf
- **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**
https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinesshr_en.pdf
- **UN Global Compact 10 Principles**
<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>
- **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises**
<https://www.oecd.org/corporate/mne/>
- **OECD Guidelines for Sustainable Agricultural Supply Chains.**
<https://www.oecd.org/daf/inv/investment-policy/rbc-agriculture-supply-chains.htm>
- **UNICEF: Children's rights and Business atlas**
<https://www.childrensrightsatlas.org/>

The role of different stakeholders

International organisations

Create treaties and conventions and monitor state parties' compliance, ensuring that states live up to their obligations under the treaties. They also provide technical assistance in complying with these international frameworks.

Governments

Ratify convention and treaties and translate them into national law. The state has a duty to protect, respect and fulfil the full range of human rights of its citizens including the rights of the child, which it does through policies, legislation, regulation and services. This also means that the state has an obligation to ensure that businesses respect human rights within their territory and/or jurisdiction, including the elimination of child labour.

Businesses

have a responsibility to respect all human rights including the rights of the child. Besides following national law, businesses are expected to have in place a human rights policy commitment and a due diligence process and provide for or participate in remedy to affected stakeholder, when they cause or contribute to the adverse impacts, and use their leverage when they are linked to an adverse impact through their operations or business relations.

Civil society and communities

Work towards promoting human rights, ensuring that all people within the community enjoy their full range of rights. Organisations can also support government, businesses and other stakeholders to increase their capacity, transparency and progress under these national and international standards.

Local organisation, cooperatives, associations

provide guidance and support to businesses in building capacity on human rights, use their convening power to build partnerships and promote best practices.

Unions

Raise awareness of and increase capacity on human rights standards in the workplace. They promote decent work, hold businesses and states accountable for respecting human rights and assist members in access to remedy, by supporting workers whose rights have been adversely impacted.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Understanding child labour around the world

US Department of Labour Bureau of International Labour Affairs (USDOL ILAB) - annual report for child labour by country and tools on eradicating child labour forced labours etc. See [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/for more information](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/for-more-information).

International Labour Organization (ILO) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) offers materials on:

<https://www.ilo.org/ipec/programme/lang--en/index.htm>

- National child labour surveys, baseline survey reports, rapid assessment reports and micro data sets by country;
- Manuals, tools and training materials
- Child Labour Statistics: Manual for methodologies on data collection through surveys, guidance on designing and conducting child labour surveys and for researchers collecting information on all aspects of issues related to child worker and more

ILO NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards:

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0::NO:>

- information on International Labour Standards (such as ratification information, reporting requirements, etc.)
- national labour and social security laws.

ILO NATLEX database

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.home>

- information on national labour, social security and related human rights legislation (full texts or abstracts of legislation and citations).

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations

<http://www.fao.org/home/en>

- reports on various topics including child labour and humanitarian crises.
- Online training programmes

UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS):

<https://mics.unicef.org/>

- survey reports for different countries

World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS):

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/lsm>

- information about the World Bank's household survey programme, focused on generating high-quality household data to inform development policies.

US Department of State

<https://www.state.gov/>

- Trafficking in Persons Report. Annual numbers by country, and the world's most comprehensive resource of governmental anti-human trafficking efforts.

World Food Programme's Coping Strategy Index (CSI)

<https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/the-coping-strategy-index>

- measures the severity and frequency of the strategies that households use to cope with acute food insecurity.

Best practice resources for different types of actors

Key resource centres for publications related to child labour:

Governments and Businesses

- **The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:**
https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/guidingprinciplesbusinessshr_en.pdf
- **UN Global Compact:**
<https://unglobalcompact.org/take-action/business-actions-to-eliminate-child-labour>
- **The Child labour platform:** <https://childlabourplatform.org/#>
- **UNICEF:** Tools such as the Children's Rights and Business Principles:
<https://www.unicef.org/documents/childrens-rights-and-business-principles>

Communities

- **Save the Children:** <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/>
- **Child Rights International Network:** <http://www.crin.org/>
- **International Initiative to End Child Labour:** <http://endchildlabour.net/>
- **Anti-Slavery International:** <http://www.antislavery.org/>
- **Human Rights Watch:** <https://www.hrw.org>
- **Stop Child Labour: The Child Labour Coalition:** www.stopchildlabour.org
- **Delta 8.7** The global knowledge platform of the Alliance 8.7. A platform that focuses on the SDG 8.7. Access to data, evidence, research and news related to child labour.
<https://delta87.org/>

KEY MESSAGING

Over 70% of child labour in agriculture so it's important to support both farmers and families distinguish between child labour and appropriate child work. To do this we often encourage them to ask themselves the following question. If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes' then it is child labour and should be stopped immediately.

- Would this work take up too much time and prevent the child from going to school?
- Would this work make the child too tired to go to school or do homework?
- Would this work stop the child from having time to play and participate in social/family activities?
- Does any part of the work make the child feel unsafe, excluded or threatened?
- Does any part of the work harm the child physically or morally?
- Does this work involve using or being around chemicals, like fertilisers, heavy machinery or sharp tools?
- Is any part of this work illegal?