



THE ROLE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES IN ENDING CHILD LABOUR

A CALL TO ACTION

In May 2021, Alliance 8.7, the global partnership aiming to eradicate child labour by 2025 as set out in Sustainable Development Target 8.7, and its Partner, the Work: No Child's Business alliance, jointly organized a webinar and one-week online discussion on the role of local businesses in ending child labour.

A total of 200 participants joined the webinar, which featured five expert speakers, including two representatives from Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Countries. In addition, 500 people joined the online discussion. Together, they identified the following priorities for action.

- 1. Children belong in school, not in child labour. We need to make this a global social norm.**
- 2. COVID-19 continues to increase the vulnerability of children around the world to child labour. To reach Target 8.7 we need immediate and urgent action and make the most of the momentum generated by the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour.**
- 3. Economic development and child labour interventions should be linked. Build Back Better provides the perfect opportunity to do so.**
- 4. Worker and business organizations reduce vulnerability to child labour and should be encouraged and supported.**
- 5. Partnership working at local level delivers. Involve communities!**
- 6. If businesses accept responsibility for their role in child labour, they have taken the first step to fulfilling their potential to be part of the solution.**

This document provides more information on each priority action, and on the speakers and their presentations. A list of resources shared by all participants is also included.

SDG 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 the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.**

THE ROLE OF LOCAL BUSINESSES IN ENDING CHILD LABOUR

SPEAKERS

Ines Kaempfer (Chair)
CEO, The Centre for Child Rights & Business, China

Fanta Sadibou Koné
Programme manager, Enda Mali (civil society organization), Mali

David Zamora
Secretary of Economics, Municipal Government of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Mexico
Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country

Lanny Vu
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Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder Country

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR THE ALLIANCE 8.7 COMMUNITY & BEYOND

1. Children belong in school, not in child labour. We need to make this a global social norm.

We can create a global social norm by raising awareness, through communications and advocacy activities, by embedding responsible business conduct, and changing hearts and minds. Crucially, we need to create as many child labour free zones as possible. These are geographical areas such as a village, plantation area, urban neighbourhood, or a cluster of communities where all children are systematically being taken away from labour and (re)integrated into formal, full-time schools.

Where the whole community is dedicated to keeping children in education and out of labour, vulnerable children are effectively protected. This can be achieved by joining up relevant stakeholders from civil society, and the public and private sectors to find solutions that work for all.

2. COVID-19 continues to increase the vulnerability of children around the world to child labour. To reach Target 8.7 we need immediate and urgent action and make the most of the momentum generated by the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour.

In 2016, there were 152 million children trapped in child labour. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated root causes.

A growing number of partners on the ground report increases in the number of children in child labour. Two-thirds (62%) of webinar participants said that in their view, and in their area of work, child labour has increased compared to before COVID-19.

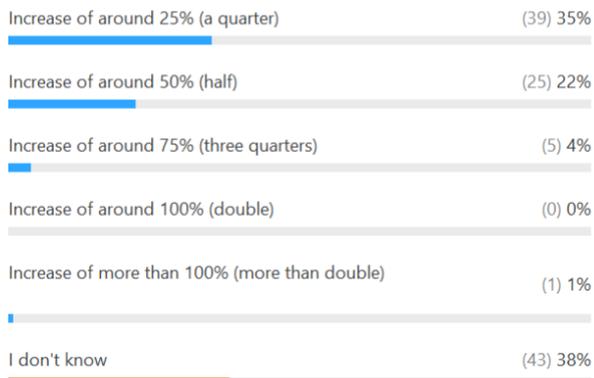
Probably at least in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated socio-economic impacts, just over half (55%) of webinar participants do not believe that reaching Target 8.7 is achievable, with others being more hopeful. What is clear from the discussion, is that we need immediate and urgent action on child labour to reach Target 2025.

We have the tools and knowledge to eliminate child labour. We know what needs to be done. This year is the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour and over 300 regional bodies, countries and organizations have made Action Pledges to eliminate child labour, including WNCB. We can use this year as a springboard to drive and lead the legislative and practical actions needed to eliminate child labour for good.

3. Economic development and child labour interventions should be linked. *Build Back Better* provides the perfect opportunity to do so.

Economic development and regeneration can be linked to great effect for both. Child labour eradication must therefore be integrated in the push to *Build Back Better*, an approach which integrates social, economic, and environmental concerns in COVID-19 recovery interventions.

3. It's difficult to get exact data, but in your view and in your area of work, by what proportion has the number of children in child labour increased compared to before the COVID-19 crisis, more or less?



2. SDG Target 8.7 aims to end child labour by 2025. Do you think this is achievable?





The Punta Tuxtleco initiative in Mexico, presented by webinar panellist David Zamora, successfully brings together local government economic regeneration and efforts on child labour. As a result, around 38 local micro-enterprises improved the production and marketing of their goods while at the same ensuring no child labour was used, as indicated by a label on the goods themselves (shown on the left). The label is used extensively to raise community awareness of the issue.

Consumers need to understand the child labour risks associated with the products they buy, and we need to urgently raise their awareness. While it is difficult to guarantee a product is 100% child labour free, certification schemes such as that used by the Municipal Government of Tuxtla-Gutiérrez in Mexico clearly pay off.

4. Worker and business organizations reduce vulnerability to child labour and should be encouraged and supported.

Both workers' and business organizations in the form of cooperatives, unions, employers' organizations, chambers of commerce, and more, are key to child labour eradication by helping to address root causes. These organizations raise awareness, provide support and training, and are effective at representing the interest of their members. Joining such organizations also reduces the chance of individuals and businesses working informally, and therefore not having access to safety nets where they encounter shocks.

5. Partnership working at local level delivers. Involve communities!

When all players, including the children themselves, their families, businesses, government at all levels, NGOs, schools and teachers, community-based organizations and leaders, work together in partnership they make real impact. Raising awareness among partners and building trust is necessary for all to work towards the same goal.

Local knowledge is everything. Local partners need to identify those children at risk of/in child labour and support them and their families so that the children can go to school. The ILO's Child Labour Risk Identification Model can be helpful here (see the resources section for further information).

Moreover, communities and parents need to understand the damage that child labour inflicts and the benefits of schooling to avoid accepting child labour as a normal practice. Communities and parents that are aware do not allow child labour in their midst.

Moreover, experience shows that when parents see that support is available, they are often open to sending their children to school. Similarly, child labourers often feel guilty at the thought of not working and therefore

not supporting their families. When they see that practical support is available to their family and understand that they, as children, do not need to contribute financially they become open to alternatives, namely attending school.

Elimination of child labour and access to formal full-time quality education are inextricably linked. Child labourers should therefore not only be supported to exit child labour, but also to (re)integrate formal education to prevent them from becoming trapped again. This is likely to involve bridging courses, allowing children who have been outside the formal education system to catch up with their peers before reintegrating mainstream schooling.

As set out in the presentation by Fanta Sadibou Koné on a child labour free zone in Mali, interventions need to be simultaneously bottom-up and top-down to make the most significant impact. Bottom-up action by community actors leads to getting children out of work and into school, and improved monitoring. Top-down actions means involving businesses and governments and encouraging all stakeholders to fully play their role.

6. If businesses accept responsibility for their role in child labour, they have taken the first step to fulfilling their potential to be part of the solution.

Businesses, while major players, are not usually the main cause of child labour, which is predominantly caused by social norms and traditions, social exclusion and discrimination, as well as poor functioning education systems. Furthermore, the lack of decent work for adults, weak laws and/or law enforcement by government, and failing labour inspections also contribute to the persistence of child labour.

For effective eradication of child labour it is essential to improve labour conditions, including better wages, and ask fair prices for products. Governments clearly have a responsibility when it comes to developing and implementing coherent policies on child labour and education and developing and implementing the right mix of measures on business and human rights.

Where there is child labour, there is a vicious cycle of poverty. Children who work and do not go to school will end up in low paid jobs, and so will their children. Businesses can play a major role in preventing and mitigating child labour risks by helping to break this vicious cycle.

A great example of a company making a difference is Smart Elegant Vietnam Ltd., presented by webinar panellist Lanny Vu. Smart Elegant is a garment manufacturing company putting in place a child labour prevention and remediation strategy

Businesses of all sizes need to take responsibility for child labour prevention and elimination, including by developing no child labour policies

and procedures, and taking preventive measures such as providing decent work, childcare support for parents, on-the-job training for young people, (supplier) inspection protocols, and more.

Child labour is bad for businesses and there are many incentives for businesses to eliminate it. We need to better communicate these, and work with businesses at local level. Building trust between supply chain actors is key.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESSES

1. **Make labour rights part of your operations and procedures.**

These can be based on international standards such as:

- The ILO's labour standards
- The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- The OECD due diligence and responsible business conduct guidelines
- And the UNICEF, UN Global Compact and Save the Children's Children's Rights and Business Principles.

2. **Think not only about your (global) supply chains (first suppliers), but also act inside the workplace and at community level (lower tiers).**

It is important to map the entire supply chain, even if this represents a challenge, because it is not always clear who provides resources and labour at the very local level.

3. **Focus on all forms of child labour occurring in all sectors and in all sourcing and production areas.**

Action with too narrow a focus will not yield sustainable results and risks leading to displacement, with child labour simply shifting somewhere else. A strong social norm against child labour is needed to ensure that children taken out of labour are not simply replaced by others and end up in similar situations.

4. **Cooperate with all relevant stakeholders on all levels.**

This means working with governments, businesses, local organizations and more, at community, sub-national, national, regional, and international level to offer children an alternative through quality education and/or decent youth employment.

5. **Embed sustainable, long-term solutions in corporate policies, practices, and relationships.**

To realise the potential of global supply chains for improving the health, welfare and development of children, business approaches need to address the rights and specific vulnerabilities of children and youth.

INSPIRING EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS TO END & PREVENT CHILD LABOUR BY, OR TOGETHER WITH, LOCAL BUSINESSES

The webinar panellists presented three real-life case studies from different corners of the globe evidencing the ability of local businesses to play a major role in ending and preventing child labour. In each case study, action was driven by a different player: A civil society organization, a city government, and a local business.

- **Fanta Sadibou Koné from civil society organization Enda Mali** presented a successful intervention in a Mali community affected by child labour in informal gold mining businesses. She explained how they are working towards the creation of child labour free zones. Teachers, local authorities, village leaders, employers, parents, and children in these zones work together to get children out of work and into school. Child labour is no longer accepted because all children are entitled to, and seen to be entitled to, quality full-time education.
- **David Zamora from the Municipal Government of Tuxtla-Gutiérrez in Mexico** set out how the city government linked economic development with child labour elimination. Among other things, the city government organized micro-enterprises selling local food products into a cooperative and improved their marketing, including through a code of ethics and a logo 'made without child labour'.
- **Lanny Vu from Smart Elegant International Vietnam Ltd.**, a garment manufacturing company employing just over a thousand staff, shared the company's child labour prevention and remediation strategy. This includes training for staff who are parents, childcare support, and training and opportunities for younger workers, as well as working with suppliers and contractors.

To access the panellists' presentations, biographies, and any additional information they shared, please see this [Google drive](#).

The webinar recordings can be accessed [online](#) in English, French and Spanish.

RESOURCES SHARED BY PARTICIPANTS IN THE WEBINAR AND ONLINE DISCUSSION

General

ECLT Foundation. La Máquina Youth Employment Model
<https://eclt.org/en/skills4youth>

Grameen Foundation. Reducing Incidence of Child Labor and Harmful Conditions of Work in Economic Strengthening Initiatives

<https://grameenfoundation.org/riches>

ILO 2021. Supplier guidance on preventing, identifying, and addressing child labour https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_792211/lang--en/index.htm

ILO 2020. L'abolition effective du travail des enfants en Côte d'Ivoire: Les orientations offertes par la Déclaration de principes tripartite sur les entreprises multinationales et la politique sociale de l'OIT.
https://www.ilo.org/empent/units/multinational-enterprises/WCMS_762229/lang--en/index.htm

ILO's Child Labour Risk Identification Model.

In English:

Child Labour Risk Identification Model: Methodology to design preventive strategies at local level

https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/child-labour-risk-identification-model_RI.pdf

In Spanish:

Modelo de Identificación del Riesgo de Trabajo Infantil: Metodología para diseñar estrategias preventivas a nivel local

https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/modelo-de-identificacion-del-riesgo-de-trabajo-infantil_IR.pdf

ILO. Territorializando la respuesta al trabajo infantil - Sistematización de la fase II del modelo de identificación del riesgo de trabajo infantil: Tuxtla-Gutiérrez, Mexico.
https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/sistematizacion-Fasell-MIRTI_TuxtlaMexico.pdf

ILO GBNFL 2021. Calling all SMEs! Ten steps on the journey to ending forced labour by 2030. <https://flbusiness.network/calling-all-smes-ten-steps-on-the-journey-to-ending-forced-labour-by-2030>.

ILO GBNFL 2021. Podcast series on how SMEs can end forced labour.
<https://flbusiness.network/listen-to-ilo-gbnfls-first-podcast-series/> **PODCAST**

Save the Children 2020. Save our education: Protect every child's right to learn in the COVID-19 response.
[https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17871/pdf/save_our_education_0.pdf?mc_cid=2e184f2f7d&mc_eid=\[45cb23437d\]](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17871/pdf/save_our_education_0.pdf?mc_cid=2e184f2f7d&mc_eid=[45cb23437d])

Stop Child Labour 2017. Cooperating with the private sector in child labour free zones in India. https://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/assets/HI-17-06-SKA-CSR-guidelines-India_HR_03.pdf

Stop Child Labour 2017. Cooperating with the private sector in child labour free zones in Africa. <https://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/assets/HI-17-06-SKA-CSR-guidelines-Afrika.pdf>

Stop Child Labour 2015. Guidance on how to create a child labour free zone.

In English:

5X5 stepping stones for creating child labour free zones

https://www.stopkinderarbeid.nl/assets/Creating_Child_Labour_Free_Zones.pdf

In French:

5X5 éléments essentiels pour la creation de zones libres de tout travail d'enfants [https://www.stopchildlabour.org/assets/SKA-handbook-](https://www.stopchildlabour.org/assets/SKA-handbook-Compleet-FR-LR.pdf)

[Compleet-FR-LR.pdf](https://www.stopchildlabour.org/assets/SKA-handbook-Compleet-FR-LR.pdf)

In Spanish:

5X5 trampolines para crear zonas libras de trabajo infantil

<https://www.stopchildlabour.org/assets/HI-16-04-SKA-Handbook-ES-LR.pdf>

Stop Child Labour. Examples of the creation of child labour free zones in Ethiopia, India, Mali and Uganda. <https://15years.stopchildlabour.org/stories/VIDEO>

The Centre for Child Rights and Business 2019. Community Youth Gain Skills through Laos Youth Inclusion Programme <https://www.childrights-business.org/impact/community-youth-gain-skills-through-laos-youth-inclusion-programme.html>

The Centre for Child Rights and Business. Young and juvenile workers: Understand the needs of young workers, respond to regulations, incorporate best practices and create decent work opportunities <https://www.childrights-business.org/young-and-juvenile-workers.html>

UNICEF & ILO 2020. COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_747421.pdf?mc_cid=17b84c35d9&mc_eid=\[45cb23437d\]](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_747421.pdf?mc_cid=17b84c35d9&mc_eid=[45cb23437d])

WESWA 2010. Empowerment of rural Dalit girls. <http://www.weswa.org/educate.dalit.girls.project.2010.htm>

&Wider podcast 2021. Tackling child labour in a global pandemic. Interview with Kunera Moore from the Rainforest Alliance, who outlines six steps for businesses on how to deal with child labour in their supply chains. https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9hbmNob3luZm0vcy8zYjc2ZmViOC9wb2RjYXN0L3Jzcmw?sa=X&ved=0CAMQ4aUDahcKEwjwrp-Vg_vwAhUAAAAAHQAAAAQAQ **PODCAST**

Coffee & cocoa

GAWU. [Ghana Union Fights Child Labor in Cocoa Production](#)

A three-minute video on how the Ghana's General Agricultural Workers' Union (GAWU) is setting up child labour free zones. [VIDEO](#)

Rainforest Alliance, Kyagalanyi Coffee, Hivos/Stop Child Labour, local Uganda government, UNATU and Ceford [Fighting Child Labor in certified value chains – An example from the Ugandan coffee sector](#). A short version of the video can be found [here](#). [VIDEO](#)

Mining

Fairphone. Going for gold in a new partnership.

<https://www.fairphone.com/nl/project/partnership-for-responsibly-sourced-gold/>

Good Shepherd International Foundation 2015. Maisha: A New Life Outside the Mines (on artisanal mining for cobalt and copper in the DRC).

<https://youtu.be/rb0a0t8JJnc> [VIDEO](#)

Solidaridad 2021. Striving for impact in tackling child labour and creating a fair gold supply supply chain in Ugandan mines.

<https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/news/striving-for-impact-in-tackling-child-labour-and-creating-a-fair-gold-supply-chain-in-ugandan-mines/>

WNCB 2020. Uganda: Tackling child labour and creating a fair supply chain in gold mines <https://wncb.org/news-uganda-tackling-child-labour-and-creating-a-fair-supply-chain-in-gold-mines/>

Garments and textiles

ASOS Modern Slavery Statement April 2018 – March 2019.

https://www.asosplc.com/~/_media/Files/A/Asos-V2/documents/asos-modern-slavery-statement-2018-2019.pdf

Stop Child Labour 2020. Results of a collaborative project to combat child labour in the garment supply chains. <https://stopchildlabour.org/results-of-a-collaborative-project-to-combat-child-labour-in-the-garment-supply-chains/>

Stop Child Labour. Five lessons on combating child labour in the garment and textile industry <https://stopchildlabour.org/five-lessons-on-combating-child-labour-in-the-garment-and-textile-industry/>

Packaging/Recycling

Miss-Collect 2021. When industries return, women earn, and children will learn. <https://www.misscollect.org/2021/05/20/when-industries-return-women-earn-and-children-will-learn/>