



**MODERN**

**CHILD**

**SLAVERY**

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# MODERN CHILD SLAVERY

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# CHILD SLAVERY

Does Your Class Know...?

What does slavery mean?

Does slavery exist today?

Are there laws that protect the rights of children?

Which continent do you think has the largest percentage of modern child slavery (child labor)?

## Key Definitions

**CRC:** The **C**onvention on the **R**ights of the **C**hild is an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. It obligates states to ensure the rights to survival, development, protection and participation of all children without discrimination.

**CSEC:** **C**ommercial **S**exual **E**xploitation of **C**hildren. According to the World Conference against CSEC, "It comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object."

**UN:** **U**nited **N**ations is an international organization comprised of 191 member states. The purpose of the United Nations is to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development, based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people



# CHILD SLAVERY

## BASIC FACTS

- There are 27 million adult and child slaves in the world today.<sup>1</sup>
- There are more slaves today than were seized from Africa during the entire 400 years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.<sup>2</sup>
- The price for a slave in 1850 in Mississippi was \$40,000 (based on constant 1999 dollars.) The average price of a slave today is \$80.<sup>3</sup>
- 246 million children aged 5-17 are child workers throughout the world.<sup>4</sup>
- One in every six children aged 5 to 17 worldwide is exploited by child labor.<sup>5</sup>
- At least 179 million children are exploited by hazardous work.<sup>6</sup>
- There are approximately 9 million children involved in the unconditional worst forms of child labor, which we call slavery.<sup>7</sup>

■ Child laborers divided by continent.<sup>8</sup>

Asia	4.6%
Latin America	60.6%
Sub-Saharan Africa	9%
North Africa & Middle East	20.8%
Transition Countries	5%



<sup>1</sup> Bales, Kevin. 2000. Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy. University of California Press.

<sup>2</sup> Bales, Kevin. 2000. New Slavery: A Reference Handbook. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.

<sup>3</sup> Based on 1999 constant dollar adjusted for inflation. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> IPEC Action Against Child Labor: Highlights 2002. 2002. Geneva: International Labor Organization.

<sup>5</sup> Investing in Every Child: An Economic Study of the Costs and Benefits of Eliminating Child Labor. 2004. Geneva: International Labor Organization, v.

<sup>6</sup> UNICEF. <[www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_childlabour.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html)> (May 2, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 30.



# CHILD SLAVERY

## Definition

A child slave is under the age of eighteen, receives extremely little or no pay, is controlled by violence or other threats, and has no option to leave the situation. In addition, the child has no access to education or health benefits.

## What are the forms of child slavery?

### Forced Labor

Forced labor is defined as work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the person has not submitted himself voluntarily.

### Debt Bondage

Debt bondage occurs when an individual is pledged as collateral on a loan or to pay a debt. Sometimes parents will pledge their children into debt bondage or the entire family is bonded. However, youth are usually unaware of the debt. It is nearly impossible to pay off debt because bonded laborers are forced to pay for lodging and meals. As a result, the bond is passed from generation to generation.

### Chattel

Chattel slavery is the most widely documented historic manifestation of slavery. Chattel slaves are viewed as personal property and as such can be sold or traded at their master's discretion.. These slaves can be captured, born, or sold into permanent servitude.

### Religious Slavery

Religious slavery usually involves children dedicated to temple gods or priests. Religious slavery still occurs today in parts of Africa and India.

## WHERE SLAVERY OCCURS

### Forced Labor - United States & Europe

Domestic and agriculture slaves, usually within agricultural populations.

### Debt Bondage - India, Pakistan & Nepal

Carpet weavers are often bonded laborers, where children are bonded alongside their parents. Victims of CSEC are often bonded as well.

### Chattel - Mauritania & Sudan

For centuries, chattel slavery has existed in Mauritania. White Moors own Black Moors and these slaves remain within the master's family for generations. These slaves are not considered disposable and therefore are looked after; however, they have no choices. These slaves must follow their master's orders and are not free to leave or do as they choose.

### Religious Slavery - Ghana & India

Religious slavery in Ghana occurs under the form of Trokosi (meaning "slaves of the gods"). Children are given to priests and temples to atone for a sin committed by a member of the family. The girls must serve the priest in any way commanded. Often they are physically and sexually abused.

## Where is child slavery occurring?

Child slavery occurs worldwide. Some countries are more vulnerable to slavery because they suffer from profound poverty and/or are experiencing a population explosion. In addition, countries with changing economic conditions and political conflict are more likely to have child slaves. Some of the worst offenders of child slavery are India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Myanmar (Burma). However, even industrialized countries are not immune. Child slavery occurs in the United States and Europe, particularly through domestic service and agricultural labor.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND



# CHILD SLAVERY

## Who is affected?

Children living in poverty are most susceptible to enslavement. If a family cannot afford food, the parents may choose to sell their child or send their child to work without realizing what type of work the child will do. Homeless and street children, orphans, refugees, and trafficked children are among other vulnerable groups.

## HEALTH EFFECTS

### Tobacco Plantations-

Children working on tobacco plantations get nicotine poisoning and their skin is dyed yellow from the toxins.

### Charcoal Factories - Brazil

Children breathe in black air all the time because the huts where they are housed are in the charcoal mines. Their lungs deteriorate and they have difficulties breathing. Many die at young ages.

### Cocoa Harvesters- West Africa

Children must pick the beans by hand. They are poisoned by the pesticides they inhale while working, and often have vision problems from the chemicals.

### Carpet Weavers - India, Nepal

Children must crouch in dark corners. They ruin their eyesight and have debilitating back and leg pains throughout their lives.

## How are they affected?

### Health

A child slave's health is disregarded because the child slave can be easily replaced in today's market. It is more expensive to care for the health of the child slave than to buy a new slave. As a result, children do not get medical attention when they are ill. Children often suffer from deformed bones and joint problems because their small frames are unable to support the weight they are forced to carry. In addition to their physical well-being, a child slave's mental and psychological needs are disregarded.

### Education

Enslaved children are often denied access to education. As a result, even if the child slave is able to escape from his or her situation, the opportunities for a fulfilling, higher paying job are greatly reduced. Many jobs are unattainable without reading, writing, and basic math skills. Furthermore, slaves miss the social aspect of education, and therefore they often lack communication skills, mistrust others, and have difficulty controlling their emotions.

### Family Ties

A child slave is often separated from his or her parents. Even if the child slave is able to escape enslavement, the family may be hesitant to welcome the child home. This may be due to an inability to feed and care for the child or because the family views the child as irreparable due to the child's experiences.

## FAMILIES REFUSING TO TAKE THEIR CHILD BACK

### Retribution from Slave Owners

Indebted families may refuse their children because they are afraid they must pay money for the child to the child's "owner."

### Child Soldiers

Families may refuse their children because of the acts of war they may have committed.

### Child Sex Slaves

Families may refuse their child because he or she is no longer a virgin or "innocent."



# CHILD SLAVERY

## Why does child slavery exist?

### Poverty

Families are unable to support themselves or their children.

### Tradition

Children are viewed as the property of their parents. Who then have the right to determine the child's future.

### Control

Children can be easily manipulated and controlled. They tend to follow orders unquestioningly.

### Cheap and Replaceable

The average slave today costs less than \$100.

Overpopulation of some regions lead to a high number of children available as slaves.

### Vulnerable

Some children are more susceptible. They have no support system and often lack basic needs.

### Physical Size

Children have small fingers to pick cocoa and other agricultural products. They also have smaller frames which fit into smaller working

## What is being done to address child slavery?

Many different approaches to end child slavery exist. Many laws and conventions have been passed. Aside from the United States and Somalia, every country has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which outlaws child slavery. (<http://www.unicef.org/>

## THE MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Homeless & Street Children

Orphans

Refugees & Internally Displaced Children

Trafficked Children

crc). The International Labor Organization Convention 182 also provides protection against the worst forms of child labor. (<http://www.ilo.org>)

Government action also helps. For example, Brazil started a new program called Bolsa-Escola to encourage child laborers to attend school. The program pays mother and grandmother caregivers a wage for sending their children to school instead of ordering them to work. ([http://www.worldbank.org/education/economicsec/finance/demand/case/brazil/brazil\\_index.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/education/economicsec/finance/demand/case/brazil/brazil_index.htm))

Other organizations provide protection and opportunities for former child slaves. One example is RUGMARK, which helps children escape slavery in the carpet industry and provides needy former slaves with housing and education. RUGMARK also certifies carpet companies that qualify as "child labor free." ([www.rugmark.org](http://www.rugmark.org))

Consumer awareness is another way to fight child slavery. Many organizations have formed to create consumer awareness.

## How can you help?

You can help first by educating yourself about the issues, like you are doing now. Write letters to countries that allow child slavery and to companies using slave labor and ask them to stop. Join our mailing list. In addition, talk about child slavery with other people. You can also write letters of advocacy and participate in marches and rallies protesting child slavery.



# CHILD SLAVERY

## Questions

- Did you know that slavery still exists?
- Did you realize that children are enslaved?
- Did you expect that so many are enslaved?
- What do you think about the fact slavery still exists?
- Why do you think there are so many slaves in the world?
- Do you own clothing made in a country that uses slave labor?
- Do you use equipment, such as soccer balls or other sports equipment, that may be made from slave labor?
- What do you think about purchasing items made by child slaves?
- How can you continue to do what you enjoy and protect child slaves?
- What can you do to help stop child slavery?

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Clothing Labels

It is difficult to know which goods are a product of child slavery. Often, clothing is not labeled. However, there are countries that sometimes utilize child slave labor in manufacturing. Examples of such countries are:

Myanmar  
Indonesia  
China  
India

For more information about shopping responsibly see:  
[www.fairlabor.org](http://www.fairlabor.org)

### Soccer Balls

In the 1990s, the majority of soccer balls were hand stitched by children living in Pakistan. Public protest grew and advocates formed the Foulball Campaign. As a result of the campaign, companies such as Nike, Reebok, and Adidas participated in a monitoring program in conjunction with the International Labor Organization (ILO).

For more information about the campaign, see:  
<http://www.laborrights.org/projects/foulball/foulball.html>





# CHILD SLAVERY

## Introduction Activities

- Have students write about whether they think slavery still exists today, and if it does, where it exists.
- Discuss jobs students currently have and how they view those jobs.
  - Do they like their jobs?
  - Why do they have jobs?
  - Do students have a choice in working?
  - Do they get paid?
- Incorporate the topic of chores around the house. Make sure students understand the difference between doing chores as part of a family versus performing domestic labor.
  - What is the difference between helping out at home and domestic slavery?
  - What do you think of when you think of slavery? Have students discuss the meaning of slavery and give examples of it.
- Have students write out a daily schedule (on average or for that particular day).
  - How much time do students spend at school? At work? Studying? Watching TV, talking on the phone, relaxing?
  - Compare their daily schedule with that of a child slave.
- Brainstorm examples of groups or people in society who are ostracized and ignored. Discuss how it feels to be isolated and ignored. Slaves do not have choices. They experience isolation, hopelessness, and the lack of self-esteem and self-respect.

Assign students into groups and give out the

“When a child enters into slavery, another blot is put on the face of humankind, another heinous crime against the future is committed.”

-- Kailash Satyarthi  
Global March Against Child Labor

packets about a child slave.

Students should fill out the worksheet about the child they are studying to learn more about the life of a child slave.

## Class Follow-Up Activities

- Check the labels of students' clothing to see where it was made. Discuss whether slave labor may have helped make the clothing.
- Write a letter as a class or in small groups to a company asking about the labor practices and policies the company follows to avoid using child slavery.

## Homework Assignments

- Find organizations that fight child labor and write a summary about what they do.
- Write a letter to a clothing corporation explaining what was learned in class and asking for information about the company's policies regarding child labor.
- Write a paragraph about why people would want to use children as workers and then write a paragraph offering alternative solutions.
- Write your representatives and senators about child slavery.



# CHILD SLAVERY

## Projects

- Write letters of support for child protection measures.
- Find information on child slavery on the Internet.
- Study historic slave trades and compare them with modern slavery.

## Papers

- Research a country's use of child labor.
- Research one of the types of child labor and give current examples of it.
- Research an organization that works to end child labor.

## Extra-Curricular

- Begin a social awareness and/or human rights club.
- Volunteer at an organization working to help child slaves.
- Write a letter to a newspaper.
- Attend an advocacy meeting.
- Join a protest.

## JUST IN CASE...

### ■ Student Experience

- If you know the student has experience with this area, let him/her know of the class topic in advance.
- If the student volunteers this information, ask the student if he/she would like to talk about the experience.

### ■ Student Openly Emotional

#### Crying

- Don't draw attention to the student.
- Follow up with the student.

#### Angry

- Ask the student questions to try and channel the emotion positively.

#### Skeptical

- Find out what specific questions the student has.
- Encourage the student to complete additional research about the topic and report to the class.

#### Hopeless/Guilty

- Offer ways for the student to get more involved.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Youth Advocate Program  
International  
[www.yapi.org](http://www.yapi.org)  
UN High Commission on  
Human Rights  
[www.unhchr.org](http://www.unhchr.org)

UNICEF  
[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)  
ILO  
[www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)  
Anti-Slavery International  
[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)  
Free the Slaves  
[www.freetheslaves.net](http://www.freetheslaves.net)

Global March  
[www.globalmarch.org](http://www.globalmarch.org)  
US Senate  
[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)  
U S House of  
Representatives  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)  
White House  
[www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)



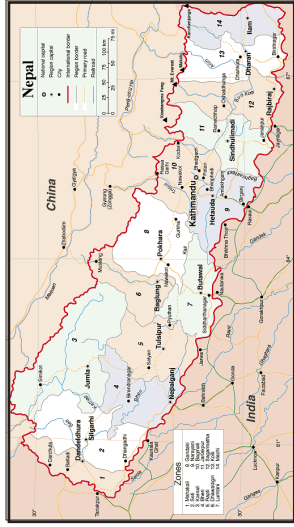
# CHILD SLAVERY

Nepal is famous for its towering mountains and its beautiful temples. It is also infamous for the child laborers who live there.

One example is a girl named Aarti. Aarti is seven years old and lives in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. In Nepal and India, there are many brick factories where people work. Aarti works there, too. She does not attend school, but has to work every day making bricks.

Making bricks is hard work and labor-intensive. Each brick has to be produced by hand and laid out to dry. To make a brick, Aarti kneads the clay until it's soft and can be shaped into a brick. She then puts sand into a mold and then fills it with the clay. Using a wire, she scrapes the excess clay off of the top. The brick is then placed in the sun to dry. Aarti works eight to ten hours everyday with her father. She makes between 1,000 and 1,500 bricks every day.

Her mother died a few years ago and now she must work at the factory to help her family. She can not attend school and

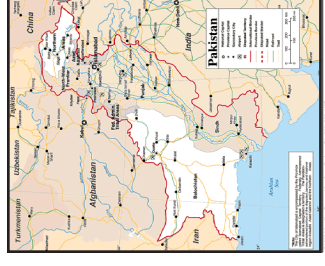


# CHILD SLAVERY

Iqbal Masih is a famous former child slave from Pakistan. He began working in a carpet factory when he was four years old. His parents were poor and did not make enough money to feed their family. They made the difficult choice to take a loan of \$16 in exchange for sending Iqbal to work at the nearby carpet factory. Iqbal had to work off the loan until it was paid in full.

The children worked 14 hours a day for six days a week. To make one carpet, workers tie more than a million small knots forming colorful patterns. The children do not take breaks and must hunch over the weaving looms to make the carpets. The children were mistreated and Iqbal was often beaten. If the children complained or tried to escape, they were chained to their looms.

Iqbal worked in these conditions until he was 10. One day he learned about a new law that prohibited bonded labor. With the help of a new friend, Essan Ulla Khan, he left the carpet factory. Khan helped Iqbal find a school. Iqbal studied hard and began speaking out on behalf of the children who still worked in the factories. However, Iqbal's actions made many people angry. In April 1995, Iqbal was shot and killed. He was only 12 years old.



Courtesy of *Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children*

## CASE STUDY I



Courtesy of *Stolen Dreams: Portraits of Working Children*

## CASE STUDY 2

# CHILD SLAVERY

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