

ELIMINATING CHILD LABOR

Prevention



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BEST PRACTICE IN CHILD LABOR PREVENTION

- Engage stakeholders in worker communities
- Offer educational opportunities to children
- Improve conditions for adult workers

Ending child labor requires programs to address the root causes including lack of access to education, poverty, worker exploitation, as well as social and cultural norms. Preventative strategies can ensure clean supply chains and can have life-long, positive impacts for children.

Prevention is at the heart of the GoodWeave model, and includes changing practices in companies and communities to ensure schooling for children and improved working conditions for adults. This brief highlights methodologies employed by GoodWeave, beyond supply chain monitoring, to prevent child labor and establish long-term, sustainable solutions to end it.

GoodWeave stops child labor in global supply chains. Permanently.

This brief is one of a five-part series that explores best practices for companies and nongovernmental organizations combating child labor in supply chains and sectors where they work. The information is based on GoodWeave's extensive on-the-ground experience in tackling child labor.

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ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN WORKER COMMUNITIES

Establishing a presence in worker communities enables meaningful stakeholder engagement to help document the root causes of child labor, such as poverty or lack of education, and can turn prevention programming into a community-wide effort.

When engaging stakeholders, such as employers, workers, children, educators and local leaders, GoodWeave aims to:

- Understand the reasons why child labor and worker exploitation persists
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data to inform program interventions and track progress
- Raise awareness in the community about child and workers' rights
- Include all actors in the fight against child labor

Best Practice Applied

Outside of the factories and production units, there is a wider community that supports human rights and especially the development of children. Eliminating child labor means working within and going beyond the supply chain to address a range of factors that result in child labor. The first step in doing this is to evaluate the circumstances in a given community.

Since GoodWeave teams are embedded in the worker communities, data collection is an ongoing process and is part of their daily work. For example, inspectors speak with employers and workers every day, and through formal interviews and informal conversation, document priority needs. At the household level, program team members meet with families and assess information about the status of the family and children in particular. Through formal surveys enrollment, attendance and learning level data is tracked to identify and serve at-risk children; while informal visits to the family identify barriers to school attendance. Community level mapping documents the local people, organizations and infrastructure that can be leveraged to build and implement strong and sustainable programs.

Eliminating child labor means going beyond the supply chain to explore the social and cultural norms that allow child labor.



Photographed by Nitin Gera © GoodWeave International

The sections below provide concrete examples of how GoodWeave stakeholder engagement strategies result in targeted programming that facilitates access to rights for children and workers, as well as meets their basic needs. With everyone involved, trust is created, livelihoods are improved, and the entire supply chain is strengthened by ensuring a ready workforce free from child labor and worker exploitation.

OFFER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CHILDREN

School enrollment and high attendance rates are indicators that a producer region is at low risk of child labor, and therefore offering educational opportunities to children helps build child friendly supply chains and communities.

Once local stakeholders are consulted and needs assessed, GoodWeave develops educational programs that:

- Increase access to education for rescued child laborers and those at-risk of exploitation
- Align with existing government or other local schools and services
- Engage parents and other stakeholders to ensure the best outcomes for all children

Best Practice Applied

Based on data collection and needs assessments, GoodWeave establishes a range of educational opportunities for children across worker communities. Assessments help GoodWeave understand the needs of individual children and guide interventions that may include:

- Early education and daycare centers provide parents with an alternative to bringing children to work or leaving older children to care for younger ones. It also puts children on an early track for education.
- Non-formal education and bridge schools that provide additional learning support to help children enroll and succeed in local and government schools at an age-appropriate level.
- Enrollment in local primary or secondary schools for those on track for an age appropriate learning level.
- Center-based rehabilitation programs that provide care, shelter and access to education for children who were rescued from child labor.

GoodWeave works closely with stakeholders to provide resources and raise community awareness about the importance of education. Monitoring local school attendance and offering other assistance as needed ensures children, families and schools are progressing.

Many schools serving the communities where GoodWeave operates are underfunded, and teachers are underpaid, negatively impacting learning and achievement. GoodWeave addresses these barriers by providing teacher training and educational materials, assisting teachers and schools in creating a more engaging environment that motivates students and improves learning outcomes.



Photo credit: U. Roberto (Robin) Romano
Papers, University of Connecticut Library

Parents are engaged through enrollment drives, household visits for children with irregular attendance, and parent-teacher meetings. Each community faces different challenges, so approaches are tailored to the community and children's needs. For example, in Jaipur, India, young girls regularly face the prospect of arranged marriage, limiting their education and stifling growth. In-depth engagement with families can help stop child marriage and ensure educational opportunities for children.

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE CHILD CARE IN NEPAL

When GoodWeave inspectors in urban areas in Kathmandu saw workers bringing their young children to factories, they understood the need for accessible child care. Together with local education partners, GoodWeave established four early childhood education centers in factory cluster areas in Kathmandu.

These subsidized education centers provide a safe space where workers' children can socialize, play, receive hot meals and prepare for primary school, putting them on track for learning and valuing education. Employers cover a portion of the cost, and workers pay a nominal fee to cover lunch, which invests them in the success of the program. Counseling for parents encourages them to engage and support their children's education.

Once one child is enrolled, parents realize the value of early education and enroll their other children.



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Employers also reap benefits from these centers – workers, especially mothers, can focus on their work without being distracted, and the risks of young children on the factory floor are resolved. After many years, these education centers continue to support early education and regularly enroll new children.



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In addition to improving working conditions, GoodWeave supports adult workers with a variety of programs to increase wellbeing and earning potential, such as:

- Adult literacy classes and vocational training
- Health clinics
- Training in financial literacy

Inspectors are trained to identify unacceptable labor conditions and facilitate remediation. In cases of unsustainable or unsafe work situations, workers may need support in developing new skills so they can find better work. The [Workers' Rights videos](#) exemplify this strategy to empower workers while also preventing child labor.

IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR ADULT WORKERS

A lack of decent work and low wages create barriers to families meeting basic needs, and any approach to ending child labor must ensure workers' rights and wellbeing.

To do this, GoodWeave acts to:

- Enforce prohibitions on forced and bonded labor
- Ensure payment of wages and benefits for adult workers
- Offer vocational training and job placement
- Provide information on rights in the workplace

Best Practice Applied

When parents enjoy decent work, higher wages, and increased security, the risk for child labor is reduced. GoodWeave prohibits forced and bonded labor, provides skills training and job placement and improves working conditions, so that adult workers are ensured rights and are more likely to send their children to school.

GoodWeave requires enforceable, written contracts as a core requirement in the GoodWeave Standard. This requirement means that every worker is entitled to an employment agreement that includes a description of the work, working hours, and pay rate, regardless of whether the worker is paid by piece rate, quota, hourly or monthly. GoodWeave assesses piece rate wages and ensures workers understand how their piece rates relate to local minimum wages.

LEARN MORE

Find more information about eliminating child labor in GoodWeave's five-part series on best practices at www.goodweave.org or contact capacitybuilding@goodweave.org.

