

News

A new label to identify child labour free clothing



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Child Labor Free

Child Labor Free banner and logo.

- The banner features a dark background with a grayscale image of two children. The text 'JOIN THE JOURNEY' is prominently displayed in large, bold, red capital letters. Below this, a short paragraph in white text reads: 'Consumers care. They are looking for brands and organisations that do too. We work to detect risks of child labor within the various layers of supply chains.' This is followed by a red line and the text 'Talk to us today about how your brand can join the journey.' At the bottom, there are three circular icons, each containing a red heart and a small red tag with a white letter. The first icon has an 'M' tag and is labeled 'MANUFACTURING STAGE ONE'. The second icon has a 'C' tag and is labeled 'COMPONENT STAGE TWO'. The third icon has a 'S' tag and is labeled 'SOURCE STAGE THREE'.

Stages to get accredited by Child Labour Free / Image: Child Labor Free.



The Rana Plaza factory collapsed in April 2013. 1,138 workers were killed / Photograph: Wikipedia.



Moda Sostenible Barcelona / Photograph: SoGood, SoCute.

Child Labor Free wants to make sure that big fashion brands and their suppliers do not work with children along the production chain.

"**They treat us like animals, like a dog or cat**". These are the words of an Asian female worker in the textile industry who appeared in the *Salvados* TV Show called [Fashion Victims](#). Big fashion firms like Zara, H&M, Mango or Primark are under suspicion because of their labour practices in Asian countries, where staff costs are considerably lower than in Europe. **Child labour** is also one of the most problematic issues. According to the [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO), around the world **more than 168 million children** work six days a week, sometimes for more than 16 hours a day. The salary they get for these long days, however, is somewhere between 9 and 13 cents an hour.

Rebelling against these abusive practices we find the NGO [Child Labor Free](#), a non-profit organisation based in **New Zealand** that saw the light with the aim to create an **ethical and responsible label** for clothes coming from the large textile industry. After going through an independent audit carried out by the consultancy firm Ernst & Young, companies can guarantee that neither the company nor its suppliers use child labour in their production. "Just like we look for organic products in stores, we believe child labour free clothing must become a standard that is recognised globally", says [Michelle Pratt](#), the general director and founder of the organisation to Muhimu.

Child Labor Free is the result of the work done by New Zealand designers like Hailwood, Kate Sylvester or Stolen Girlfriends Club, with the support of UNICEF and the advertising company [Saatchi & Saatchi](#). Through this initiative, the NGO wants **greater transparency and commitment from big fashion labels towards ethical values**, to ensure that their business is child labour free.

What is hiding behind Low Cost?

There are many who still remember the events occurred in [April 2013 at a textile factory in Dacca](#) (Bangladesh), where more than one thousand workers died after the building collapsed. Since this event, **3,500 factories have been inspected**, but **only eight of them** have successfully completed the security checks.

According to an article in Telva, the fashion industry engages 40 million workers around the world, and **85% of these are women**. In Bangladesh, one of the countries exporting fashion items the most, women **are paid 3 dollars a day**. Another significant piece of data is that fashion is the most polluting industry in the world after the oil industry. The reasons being: the millions of litres of water that are used to dye clothes, the large amount of waste stemming from the use of chemicals or transgenic seeds used to grow cotton.

The SlowFashion movement

The [SlowFashion](#) movement is gradually reaching more and more sectors of population. In Barcelona, on Thursday 7 April 2016 the [contest Fashion Revolutionaries 2016](#) was launched by [Moda Sostenible Barcelona](#). Raising awareness, through initiatives such as the one by the Barcelona association, is essential in this sense to generate awareness and to come up with alternatives to a fashion industry that favours and promotes worker exploitation and child labour.

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