



MUN DES LYCEENS

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TOPIC 1:

Closing sweatshops and tackling child labor

Child labor is more than ever a burning issue : **it's the first time in 20 year that progress to end child labor has turn back.** 1 in 10 children are subjected to child labor worldwide, with some force in hazardoux work. It's an increase of 8 million in the last four years.

Million of them are **slaves of sweatshops**; grossly underpaid and cut off from schooling.

Sweatshops are defined by the Department of Labor as factories which violate 2 or more labor laws, with unfair wages, unreasonable hours and unhealthy working conditions. Nowadays million children are deprived of their childhood and slaves of the sweating system.

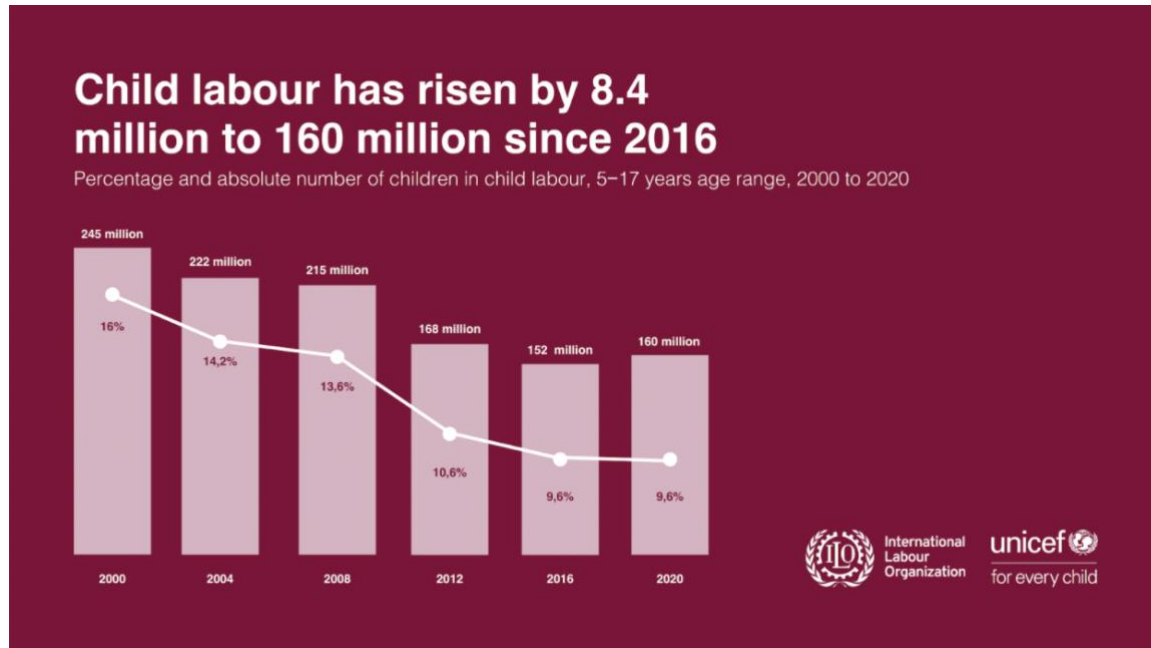
Sweatshops are not a new trend, the word was coined as early as 1870, when the issue was raised in the Western World. In the view of globalization and the growing number of subcontractors, the sweating system, including million children, spreads to developing countries, becoming a major issue of the 21st century. John Miller reminds us that developed countries didn't get out of the sweating system only by market forces, but thanks to trade union action and legislation, emphasis the need of a global agreement and regulations.

Global overview of child labor

The International Labor Organization (ILO) defines child labor as **work that deprives children of their chilhood, their potential dignity.** It interferences with their schooling and that's mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children.

Today child labour concerns mainly **developping coutrnies**, where 160 million children age 5 to 14 years old are forced to wok according to ILO, accounting for nealy 10% of the wolrd's children.

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source : report of ILO x Unicef

<https://endchildlabour2021.org/5-takeaways-from-the-2021-global-estimates-on-child-labour/>

For almost every country the majority is set at 18 years old, but the 138th convention of ILO adopted a legally binding text which set at **15 years old the minimum age to start working**. 156 member states have ratified the convention. Some countries did not, like India, which currently have plethora of child labor

To tackle child labor issue it's important to understand **why children are driven into work**.

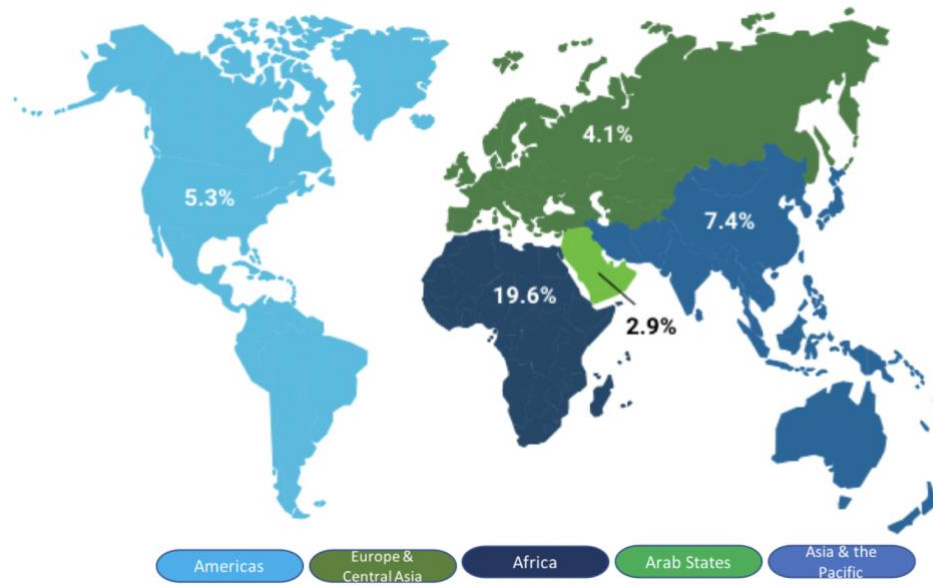
Usually children are forced to work when families face financial challenges, or uncertainties like poverty, illnesses or job loss.

Establish compulsory elementary school until the age to work, reduce underemployment, ensure decent wages, are some key positions that need to be questioned in the view of prevent from child labor.

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The **majority of child laborers are found in developing countries**. Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest prevalence, with one in five children in child labor. It takes advantage of the poverty and the lack of regulation of these countries. It's also in these same countries that we found most sweatshops.

Percentage of child involving in child labor



Source: 2017 Global Estimates of Child Labour - Results & Trends 2012-2016 - International Labour Office (ILO)

Why do sweatshops exist?

Sweatshops, or offshore sweatshops as 21st century sweatshops are called, are the **direct consequences of the globalisation of capitalism**. Companies try to increase their profits by driving down the cost of production with cheap labor. It looks for factories where workers will get very low wages, but even more, where local human rights are not strong. Factory owners have low bargaining power as this is a very competitive market, they don't have the choice but to please Multinational firms' expectations and pay very low wages for long hours of work. Nowadays, sweatshops are located only in developing countries, mostly because they exist under certain social and economical conditions.

To handle the sweatshops issue we **need to identify factors that favour the creation** of sweatshops:

- A mass of unskilled workers and unorganized laborers, including children
- A management system that neglects the human factor of labor
- A lack of accountability for poor working conditions

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→ A failure of the government of government to intervene on the behalf of workers.

Sweatshops will exist wherever there is an **opportunity to exploit workers who are not in a strong enough position to stand up for themselves.**

Why it is a global matter

Today most sweatshops are located in **South Asia, but also in Latin America and Africa.** It is essentially located in **South countries,** but it remains a global issue that needs a global legal framework. The purpose is to find resolutions that protect human rights in factories, but also to think about the outsourcing issue and renowned brands' accountability, located in developed countries.

To handle sweatshops issues it's important to take into consideration the reasons for the existence of sweatshops, this means **the role of North countries which play the system, and the lack of regulation and controls in South countries.**

Furthermore, with the migration issue some developed countries, such as Spain, experienced sweatshops too. This is more than ever a burning issue, concerning everyone.

A need of global regulation

The existence of sweatshops can be seen from **two perspectives.** First it's a local issue, where labor is not regulated enough to prevent this kind of slide, but also it's a global issue requiring a global regulation surrounding MNF.

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The root causes of the issue need to be taken into account, by regulating in the countries where sweatshops exist, but also the society that buys from it.

Actions should be taken both **nationally** and **internationally**.

At a national scale we notice the poverty of local laws about wage and labor.

Countries need to revalorize labor. A study showed that doubling the salary of sweatshops workers would only increase the consumer cost of an item by 1,8%, while consumers would be willing to pay more to know a product did not come from a sweatshop. As sweatshops are workplaces with poor ventilation, little to no breaks, inadequate work space, insufficient lighting and workers are often young and uneducated, unaware of their legal rights, with no bargaining power, education and new regulations of working conditions are at stake. Harder monitoring of compliance and labor inspectorate should be considered.

At a global level, **international competition, liberalization of international trade and labor price and most of all, global supply chains, need to be questioned.**

Multinational firms have a great responsibility in this modern form of slavery, even if it try to escape it by not employing factory workers directly. They turn a blind eye on low pay and bad conditions, while it can contribute to finding effective solutions against labor law violations. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) wrote a report "scandal" in 2016, denouncing that 50 mutli-nationals firms hiring 94% of the hidden workforce in their mechanisms of outsourcing. Leading us with a need to regulate outsourcing.

International framework

United Nations calls for the elimination of child labor in its Sustainable Development goal by 2025.

ILO (International Labor Organization) is a specialized agency of the UN dedicated to improving labor conditions and living standards around the world. ILO aims to develop and promote standards for legislation and improve working conditions and standards of living. It fosters cooperative organizations, compiles labor statistics and conducts research on the social problem of competition and underemployment. 183 member states are represented, they meet annually at the international labor conference.

IPEC (International Programm of the Elimination of Child labor) programm created in 1992 by the ILO, which purpose is to eliminate progressively child labor around the world.

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FLA (Fair Labor Association) : Since 1999, FLA has helped improve the lives of millions of workers around the world. As a collaborative effort of socially responsible companies, colleges and universities, and civil society organizations, FLA creates lasting solutions to abusive labor practices by offering tools and resources to companies, delivering training to factory workers and management, conducting due diligence through independent assessments, and advocating for greater accountability and transparency from companies, manufacturers, factories and others involved in global supply chains

UNICEF: this UN comitee works to prevent and respond to child labor, especially by strenghtening the social service workforcre, which play a key role in reocgnizing, preventing and managing risks that can lead to child labor.It also focuses on strengthening parenting and community education initiatives to address harmful social norms that perpetuate child labour, while partnering with national and local governments to prevent violence, exploitation and abuse.
With the International Labour Organization (ILO), it helps to collect data that make child labour visible to decision makers. These efforts complement our work to strengthen birth registration systems, ensuring that all children possess birth certificates that prove they are under the legal age to work.

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[Why do sweatshops exist?](#)

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TOPIC 2:

Regulation surrounding the right of abortion

Roe v Wade was a landmark legal decision concerning the abortion's division in the US population. In 1973 US supreme court guarantees women's right to abortion, striking down a Texas statute which banned abortion. By 7 votes against 2 the supreme court recognized abortion as a fundamental right, implicit in the right to privacy, protected by the 14th amendment of the American to the constitution.

Since 1973, many states have imposed restrictions on abortion right, just as it was done in parts of the world.

Currently, 90 million women of reproductive ages live in countries where abortion is fully prohibited, while the World Health Organization count 73 million induced abortion in the world each year.

The right to abortion and its restrictions has many consequences in terms of reproductive health, safety and inequalities. Those issues need to be addressed

A bit of history

Until 19th century abortion was legally restricted in almost every country in world. It was legally restricted by common law, civil law and islamic law in imperial countries which imposed it on theirto their colonies. The most common reason was that the practice was dangerous, killing a lot of women, hence laws had a public health intention to protect women. Moreover abortion was considered as a sin and a murder of fetal life. Now abortions methods had become safer, but last reasons are still acceptable in many countries.

Today the world is split between pro-life, who are against abortion for the grounds mentionned hereinabove, and pro-choice. Public health and humans right, promotion of smaller families, environmental issue, and women's education and socioeconomic improvement status are used to justify the legalization of abortion.

Prohibition, legalization, restrictions... a global overview regarding abortion

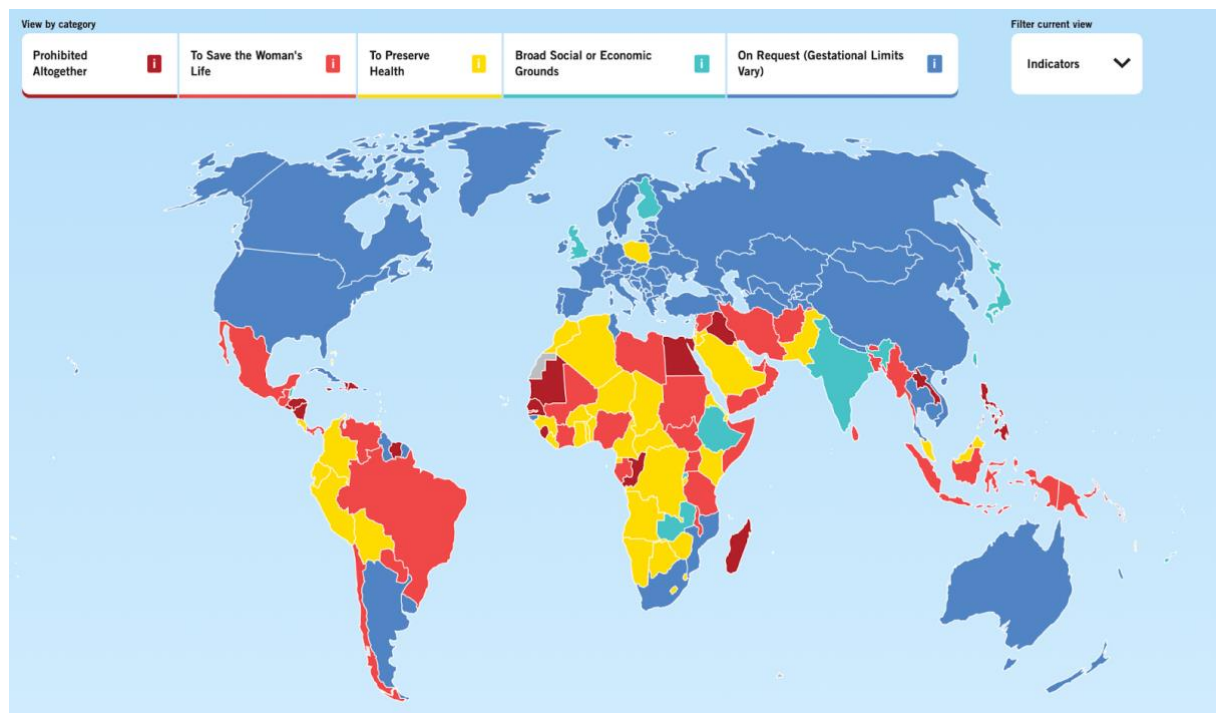
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Today, abortion is still strictly prohibited in about fifteen countries around the world. Women and doctor who practice abortion could be sentenced to imprisonment according to national laws.

Even if it's been legalized in most countries nowadays, it exists many grounds for allowing abortion apply, in this order:

- Risk to life for the woman
- Rape or sexual abuse
- Serious fetal anomaly
- Risk to physical and mental health
- Social and economic reason
- On request

Laws that allow abortion on social and economic grounds consider a woman's actual or reasonably foreseeable environment and her social or economic circumstances in considering the potential impact of pregnancy and childbearing.



The world Abortion Law - Center for reproductive rights
<https://maps.reproductiverights.org/worldabortionlaws>

According to a United Nations (UN) report with data gathered up to 2019, abortion is allowed in 98% of countries in order to save a woman's life.

Other commonly-accepted reasons are preserving physical (72%) or mental health (69%), in case of rape or incest (61%) in cases of fetal impairment (61%).

Only 590 million of women, which is 36% of women of reproductive age, live in countries that allow abortion on request.

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Some key figures:

- 90 million women of reproductive age live in countries where abortion is strictly prohibited, not allowed under any circumstances
- 360 million in countries where abortion is permitted only when woman's life is at risk,
- 240 million in countries where abortion is allowed on basis of health or therapeutic grounds.
- 380 million in countries which allow abortion for broad social or economics grounds.
- 590 million in countries that allow abortion on request.

More than statute laws, there exists a multitude of regulations about conditions for each grounds. These grounds are also authorized under certain conditions.

For underage women, a parental authorization is required to practice abortion, including in 25 European countries, 9 in Africa, 17 in Asia and 4 in South America.

In countries where abortion is strictly restricted:

- Authorization from the medical staff in case of health issues.
- Authorization from the husband in some countries in Africa and Asia.
- Judicial authorization from a prosecutor, filing of a complaint, or a report carried out by a healthcare professional in case of rape or sexual abuse.
- There exists a legal vacuum related to fetal malformation: few countries, such as, South Korea, Peru and Qatar, define it as genetic disease, terminal illness or mental disability.

Safety: a major issue

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Abortion is a common health intervention, it's one of the **safest medical procedures** when carried out using a method recommended by the WHO, appropriate to the pregnancy duration and by someone with the necessary skills. Unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal deaths and morbidities. It can lead to physical and mental health complications; social and financial burden for women, communities and health systems. It concerns 25 billion women per year in the world.

Nowadays, according to the WHO, around 45% of all abortions are unsafe, of which 97% take place in developing countries. According to the World Bank only 22% abortions are safe in low-income country. Of all unsafe abortions, one third were performed under the least safe conditions, which means by untrained persons using dangerous and invasive methods. Figures show that more than a question about developed versus developing countries, legislation plays a key role: 87% abortions are safe in countries where abortion is allowed on women's request, whilst only 25% are safe in countries where abortion is prohibited or only authorized to save women's life. A 2004 research by WHO showed that the broader the legal grounds for abortion, the fewer deaths there are from unsafe abortions.

Today the lack of access to safe, affordable and respectful abortion care is a critical public health and human rights issue. Inaccessibility of quality abortion care risks violating a range of human rights of women and girls. This is also an economic issue, estimates from 2006 show that complications of unsafe abortions cost health systems in developing countries US\$553 million per year for post-abortion treatments. In addition, households experienced US\$ 922 million in loss of income due to long-term disability related to unsafe abortion. Countries and health systems could make substantial monetary savings by providing greater access to modern contraception and quality induced abortion.

International framework

At an international level, abortion right is not yet recognized as a women's right, but the World Health Organization (WHO) recognized it as a public health problem in 2007.

Furthermore, comprehensive abortion care is included in the list of essential health care services published by WHO in 2020.

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Comprehensive abortion care includes the provision of information, abortion management and post-abortion care.

Fighting unsafe abortion is one its priority in its global strategy for reproductive health.

→ **Global Abortion Policies Database (GAPD)** : policy tool designed to increase the transparency of global abortion laws and policies and states accountability for the protection of women's and girl's health and human right. It can be used to strenghten knowledge, inform law and policy research to generate evidence on the impact of laws and policies in practices, and ease greater awareness of the many challenges to creating enabling policy environment for safe abortion.

→ **International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994)**: Raise awareness about the necessity for governments to consider unsafe abortion as a major public healthcare issue.

→ **IVth International Conference on Women in Beijing (1995)**: Putted emphasis on social discriminations caused by unsafe abortion. These two conferences have promoted the recognition of sexual and reproductives rights as human rights. It has contributed to define and implement treatment and care after abortion for health complications in developping countries under legal or restricted access.

→ **Guide of World Health Organisation (WHO)**: guide where WHO express its recommendations about abortion health care and complications. It explicits practices and methods to proceed to a safe abortion, and writes the List of medicines essentials used for medical abortion.

→ **Women on Waves**: international NGO which provides safe and legal abortion on a ship, outside territorial waters in countries where it's illegal. In international waters, the local laws do not apply. The NGO also sensibilizes, gives advice, workshops, information and contraceptives.

Others points to underline

Right of abortion raises up some others matters like that need to be adressed in this committee. It questions the recognition of abortion as a

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fundamental right of women, but also whatever concerning healthcare.
An abortion should be covered by social insurance?
To go even further, we can think about sexual education issue and access to contraceptives : how to raise awareness about contraceptives? Should means of contraception be free?

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Chair Human Rights Committee:

Marine Testé

Marine.teste@edhecnationsunies.com



EDHEC Nations Unies
24 Avenue Gustave-Delory
CS 50411
59057 Roubaix Cedex 1
France

www.edhecnationsunies.com
contact@edhecnationsunies.com

