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## Child Labor in Myanmar

Across the world, there are children working fifteen hour shifts every day to make only a dollar. They are as young as seven years old, trapped in a system hardly better than slavery. The country of Myanmar is allowing for the abuse of these children's lives with their child labor laws. No child should be forced to work days twice as long as the average adult. No child should be forced to work for only a dollar a day. No child should be forced to work at all. This injustice can be stopped if the people of America take practical action to oppose child labor.

In Myanmar nearly 33% of children ages 7 to 16 have jobs. The U.K. risk analysis firm Maplecroft ranks the country's child labor problem as the seventh worst in the world. "A lot of shops and restaurants opened up in the cities, and they need a cheap and reliable labor force. And a lot more people ... have more disposable income, so they demand more services, which also requires more labor." (Hardy 12). Every day from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Soe Min Lwin takes orders, serves food and washes dishes at a tea shop in Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon. Every night, he climbs onto a wooden table and falls asleep. He's 12, and by earning just over a dollar a day, he is his family's main breadwinner. "When I don't work," he said softly, "sometimes my family is all right, but sometimes they're not. It depends on whether my stepfather can find work. He doesn't have a steady job." (Lwin 2). Since Myanmar began major economic and political reforms in 2011, more and more children have moved from the country's rural areas to cities. "Child labor is a big issue," he said, "but it is the result of poverty. The country is poor, so the children have to help their families make money. To address this, we need economic development, and this will take a very long time." (Shein 14).

By the mid-1800's, child labor was a major problem. Factory owners found a new source of labor to run their machines — children. Operating the power-driven machines did not require adult strength, and children could be hired more cheaply than adults. By 1810, about 2 million school-age children were working 50- to 70-hour weeks. Most came from poor families. When parents could not support their children, they sometimes turned them over to a mill or factory owner. A child with a factory job might work 12 to 18 hours a day, 6 days a week, to earn a dollar. Many children began working before the age of 7. Tending machines in spinning mills or hauling heavy loads. The factories were often damp, dark, and dirty. Some children worked underground, in coal mines.

Today, many children across the globe are beginning to look forward to a break from school for summer vacations. However, for millions of children across the globe, there is no "break" and there is no classroom because they are forced to into child labor. The term "child labor" is most often defined as work which deprives children of their childhood, potential, dignity, education,

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and that is harmful to physical and mental development. (Foreign policy blogs 1). According to the International Labor Organization's most recent estimate, some 215 million children—127 million boys and 88 million girls— are in situations of child labor exploitation. UNICEF places 16 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old living in developing countries in forms of child labor, and, in the least developed countries. (Foreign policy blogs 2). These children are often forced to work long hours, often in harsh and dangerous conditions. Child labor has a direct link to poverty and provides a substantial barrier to a child's education, thus enabling a barrier to a child's education and increasing the literacy gap. Education is often taken for granted in developing nations; however, many poor and impoverished families are forced to face the choice to send their child to school or work to help the family.

One of the reasons the injustice prevails is because most families in Myanmar are very poor, and they need their children to help them out with money. "These kids have to work because their families don't have enough money." The relatively low wages paid to children are often a reason why employers prefer them to adult workers. Some children work unpaid, particularly as domestic workers, in conditions that would be termed as "slavery" if they involved adults. Employers find children more obedient and easier to control. (New Lanark 4). It exists because people accept it and make excuses for it. There are no excuses for child labour. All forms of child labour are unacceptable. It exists because the right of children to full-time education is not respected. It exists because consumers do not care enough about who makes the products they buy as long as they are cheap. It exists because farmers are not paid a fair price for their crops (cotton, coffee, cocoa) so they are unable to afford school fees for all of their children.

Social media guarantees that consumers nowadays have very powerful voices. Negative consumer feedback and campaigns, bad publicity – companies avoid all this. Not one organization wants to be accused of employing child labor as this will affect their profitability when consumers boycott their products. This is how we could prevent Child labor. As a consumer, you can make sure that the products you're buying does not employ child labour. If you're not sure how a product was produced you can do some research. Just simply being aware of the latest news and efforts on the child labour industry can give you the information you need to make responsible choices. If there's no market for the products being made by children, there won't be any point producing them. If you're wondering how to stop child labour the answer is simple – Stop Buying Their Products. We have to stop buying from companies that have child labor. If they want their products to be bought then they should stop using children to make them – or we won't buy it. In conclusion, child labor is a major problem in the world. Many children have lost their childhood because of it. Many children have got hurt because of it. Many children have become criminals because of it. Even though some people believe it should not be banned, more and more people started to protest against it. With The development of human right, child labor should be banned in modern society. To help end these childrens suffering we need to step up and speak out for them. What we need to do as a society

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is continue to be against child labor. Ways we can help days at a time is to research where you buy your products from. Do not purchase anything that children have slaved over. This will make owners need to hire adult workers to make their products.

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