

Children in Ethiopia's Traditional Textile Industry

The high demand for traditional textile products in Ethiopia has had a major influence on the industry, leading many to employ children as cheap labor in order to meet demand. Many of these children are exploited for textile production in the industry, forced to work long hours in gruelling conditions.

- Government of Ethiopia, *MOLSA Child Labor in Ethiopia Analysis*

Child Safe Certification

Background

The idea for creating a 'Child Safe' certification came about through the desire for the E-FACE project to promote change in the textile industry. Although laws are in place to protect children engaged in labor, enforcement of these regulations is inconsistent, meaning many children and youth are exploited.

To promote a behavioral change in the industry, the 'Child Safe' certification aims to differentiate the products of designers associated with the E-FACE project as items that are not complicit in exploitative labor practices with children. E-FACE intends to use the trend of social-impact certification as a marketing tool to entice consumers into making purchasing choices that are sensitive to social and environmental issues.

Creating 'Child Safe' Certification

The main goal in establishing a Child Safe certification is to bring E-FACE clients into a formal and internationally recognized certification system, similar to other popular social marketing programs, such as *The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO)*, *GoodWeave*, and *Fair for Life*. This is intended to create the necessary peer network and support for the promotion of 'Child Safe' textiles as a competitive marketing edge for E-FACE clients. E-FACE has assisted a group of designers, retailers, and traders in creating a certification standard and establishing a business model that promotes sustainability in the textile production process.



Benefits of Certification

- Creation of a Child Safe certification and labelling system benefits all stakeholders across the market.
- **Youth engaged in child labor** benefit through exclusion in the textile production process, allowing instead for participation in education.
- **Designers'** brands are improved by using a label that attracts consumers to purchase their "no child labor" products.
- **E-FACE** benefits from a labeling program that creates additional disincentives for the use of child labor in the Ethiopian textile industry.
- **Consumers** benefit by accessing products that provide a sense of assurance in not being complicit in exploitative labor practices.

What is E-FACE's role in establishing certification?

To this point, **E-FACE** has: ① **Facilitated the establishment of an exploratory group** to draft a preliminary 'child safe' label business model and conduct initial research. ② **Assisted in the development of a recruitment plan** to create a business plan, develop a structure and build the labelling program. ③ **Supported in developing brand promotion and a detailed operations plan** that outlines costing, value creation, and governance. Once the certification system is established and receives legal endorsement, the system will operate independently, without project support.