

# Child labor in mining industry



For the first time in decades, the number of exploited children has risen to more than 160 million worldwide. This problem is global, it affects and appeals to all countries, no matter what continent you live in, as everything is connected.

minerals. They often spend endless hours in the sun, or in water and mud in riverbeds, and then carry sacks heavier than their own bodies on their heads and/or shoulders.

Children do not have the knowledge to work safely, dig or handle explosives or other dangerous products safely. There are different levels of exploitation, depending on the poverty level of the family, the regulatory environment of the country they are in, the age and sex of the children involved, and the real alternatives of schooling or other less dangerous jobs, depending on the country or environment in which the child lives. For example, some children work in the mine with their families or other community members after school or during holidays. Some drop out of school to work full-time. In the worst cases, they are trafficked to work in the mines, where they are forced to work in horrendous, slavery-like conditions.

In some places, such as the Sahel region or the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa, 30-50% of mineworkers are minors, most of them under the age of 15.

[Here you can find more information.](#)



**About one million children work in mines and the number is increasing.** In rich countries, products consumed may involve child labor, for example, electronic and technological devices that contain minerals extracted by children from mines in overexploited countries. Mining is an extremely dangerous job when you don't invest in adequate safety measures, and even more so if you are a child.

Mining can take place in tunnels and shafts or on the surface. Sometimes children are employed to pass through narrow, fragile tunnels that would be too narrow for an adult body to fit through. In addition to the risk of being crushed to death by collapsing or sliding rocks, they are exposed to breathing toxic gases and dust for many hours when their respiratory systems are not yet fully formed.

On the surface, children are used to dig, crush and transport the



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We cannot close our eyes to child exploitation. We are all responsible for this.”

– Pope Francis



INTERNATIONAL YEAR  
FOR THE ELIMINATION  
OF CHILD LABOUR

# What can you do?

## Global

The UN and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have launched the [8.7 Alliance](#), an inclusive, multi-stakeholder global partnership - at regional, national, organizational or personal level - committed to achieving SDG Target 8.7 by 2025 through a 3-pillar strategy: Act, Inspire and Scale Up.

On [their website](#), you can discover ways to identify commitment to **act**; share experiences and stories that can **inspire** others and draw on the experience of other change agents to **scale up** action.

## Local

Never forget **responsible consumption and demanding that companies and governments** ensure that the technology consumed in your country does not come from blood minerals or child labor. In each country there are organizations that can inform you and with which you can collaborate, such as [Tecnología libre de Conflicto](#), in Spain, look for them!

