

Cocoa Supplier Training on Forced Labour

Lesson 5: Understanding the Root Causes of Forced Labour

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To help participants understand what makes people vulnerable to forced labour

In order to design successful interventions, it is important to understand what makes people vulnerable to forced labour.

In other words,

what are the root causes of forced labour?



Forced labour is caused by both 'push' and 'pull' factors

Push factors include:

- ▶ high levels of unemployment
- ▶ income shocks
- ▶ debt
- ▶ absence of social safety nets
- ▶ low awareness of risks

Pull factors include:

- ▶ pressure on employers to minimize cost of production
- ▶ gaps in legal frameworks
- ▶ weak enforcement of laws



These factors are all linked to poverty, inequality, and social exclusion.

Identifying root cause

To effectively address forced labour vulnerability, one must be able to identify the root causes that are contributing to it.

As the following examples will show, this is best done by asking ‘Why’?



Step 1. Identify the problem

Were workers recruited without understanding the conditions of work?

Step 2. Ask ‘Why’?

Why didn’t workers understand the conditions of work when they were recruited?

- ▶ Is it because they could not read the written contracts provided by their employer?
- ▶ Is it because the labour recruiter did not provide them with accurate information?

Then ask why again!



Step 1: Identify the problem

Step 2: Ask ‘Why’?

Step 3:

3. Ask ‘Why’? again

Why can't workers read written contracts provided by their employer?

- ▶ Workers speak a different language than employers or cannot read complex written documents.

Why are labour recruiters providing workers with inaccurate information?

- ▶ Labour recruiters are paid by the number of workers they provide to the employer, so they are motivated to recruit a high volume of workers but not to provide them with accurate information.

Based on the answers to the 'Why' questions, design interventions to address the underlying root cause.



Step 1: Identify the problem

Step 2: Ask 'Why'?

Step 3: Ask 'Why'? again



Step 4: Design interventions to address root cause

Employers may be required to:

- ▶ provide contracts in a language that workers understand
- ▶ hire directly rather than using recruiters
- ▶ change the system for compensating recruiters so that recruiters are no longer compensated based on volume

OR

Industry actors might undertake an awareness-raising campaign targeting potential workers to educate them on acceptable conditions of work in the cocoa sector.



Root causes of forced labour

- ▶ Poverty and hunger
- ▶ Child labour
- ▶ Lack of education and illiteracy
- ▶ Health issues
- ▶ Migration
- ▶ Discrimination and gender inequalities
- ▶ Environmental degradation and natural disasters
- ▶ Weak safeguards for civil liberties
- ▶ Conflict



Root causes of forced labour

Poverty and Hunger can leave people with few choices and push them into vulnerable and exploitative situations.

Migration may be the only option for a job, but it leaves the worker vulnerable to deceptive recruitment and exploitative labour conditions.

Child labour can result from children migrating for their education or to work for their family, as the children lack traditional support mechanisms.



Root causes of forced labour

Lack of education and illiteracy can hinder workers' ability to decline exploitative work, recognize risks, and advocate for assistance.

Health issues can result in lost income and medical debt, which can push workers to accept or keep undesirable jobs.

Discrimination and gender inequalities may push women and girls into less desirable work.



Environmental degradation and natural disasters can displace local populations and generally increase their vulnerability.

Weak safeguards for civil liberties can hinder monitoring and advocacy for workers in the face of abuse and exploitation.

Conflict increases the risk of human trafficking in a number of ways, including through displacement of communities, increasing economic desperation, weak rule of law, and direct or indirect reliance on human trafficking by armed groups.



Questions for consideration

What are the links between concepts such as poverty, freedom, coercion, and power?



How do social hierarchies within a country contribute to the supply of people vulnerable to forced labour?

References

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