World Vision’s guide to ... shopping more ethically

Your easy guide to buying more ethical products made without the use of forced, child and trafficked labour.

Shop more ethically and use your purchasing power to help keep children safe from harm. Use this guide to discover how easy and inexpensive buying more ethically really is. Then you can feel even better about your purchases!

Elverina, aged 12, risks injury sifting through loose rock in search of chromium, a metal used to make stainless steel. “The hardest part is carrying the buckets [of rock], it’s not an easy job for children,” she says. Photo by Paul Bettings/World Vision.
There are 168 million child labourers worldwide

Poverty makes many children vulnerable to child labour. Child labour deprives children of their childhood, their potential and dignity. It involves work that is harmful to their physical or mental development. Often this work interferes with their education by depriving them of the opportunity to attend or stay in school, or requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively demanding work.

Start by looking for these logos when you’re shopping:

When these independent organisations certify that a product is fairly traded and is made under good working conditions with fair wages, it is the most credible assurance against the use of forced, child and trafficked labour.

The Fairtrade certification scheme is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. Companies can be certified for single products and ingredients, without it applying to their whole range. fairtrade.com.au

The World Fair Trade Organization helps small and disadvantaged producers benefit from the trade of their products, and ensures their livelihoods are more sustainable. Unlike the other three certifications, WFTO status applies to a company’s whole model, not specific goods they produce. wfto.com

The Rainforest Alliance certification scheme is about environmental protection, social justice and economic sustainability. It focuses on improving farm management practices, but also considers issues of labour exploitation. Companies can be certified for single products and ingredients, without it applying to their whole range. rainforest-alliance.org

The UTZ Certified scheme stands for sustainable farming and better opportunities for farmers. It enables them to learn better farming methods, generate more income, improve working conditions and take better care of their children and the environment. Companies can be certified for single products and ingredients, without it applying to their whole range. utzcertified.org

Want more information?

Go to ethical.org.au to research ethical food products. Download the Shop Ethical! app to help make your everyday purchasing ethical and easy.
Coffee’s hidden kick

You may spend a few dollars on your morning coffee, but coffee growers may receive as little as three cents. Often, this is not enough to support their families.

Child labour is common in the global coffee industry. Coffee farmers often live in poor rural communities in Asia, South America and sub-Saharan Africa, and are not paid a fair and decent wage for their product. Child labour is often the only way families can make ends meet. If children are forced to work they miss out on school.

Like their parents, children may be exposed to hazardous working conditions and excessive hours — labouring in intense heat, carrying heavy loads and working with sharp tools and pesticides.

Your small actions can make a difference. When you buy your next coffee, an ethically-certified purchase can help ensure children and families are not being exploited.
What ethically-certified coffee means for children and their families

Through certification schemes like Fairtrade, farmers in Ethiopia are able to improve their living conditions. Five years ago, 40-year-old Tesfaye was struggling to provide for his wife Marta and their children. Despite living in the Kochore district of southern Ethiopia, one of the best coffee growing places in the world, Tesfaye and other coffee farmers found it almost impossible to make ends meet.

“I did not have anything,” Tesfaye said.

Since then, World Vision has supported Tesfaye and other coffee farmers in his community through training and development programs, and the revitalisation of their coffee growing cooperative.

Tesfaye receives added security because his farming cooperative works with Fairtrade, the ethical certification scheme that guarantees a better price and conditions for coffee farmers. This scheme also provides consumers with assurance against the use of forced, child or trafficked labour in a product.

Through these efforts, local coffee farmers have been able to increase the income they receive from the sale of their coffee.

Now Tesfaye’s children are able to go to school and he feels secure that he is now earning enough money to give them all an education.

Buy ethical and help end exploitation

By shopping ethically you can help reduce the demand for products that use forced, child and trafficked labour. Find out more at worldvision.com.au/buyethical

World Vision also works with families and communities around the world to help prevent child labour at the start of the supply chain. Find out more about World Vision’s work to protect children from child labour and exploitation at worldvision.com.au/childrescue