

I. Introduction

This report outlines stakeholders and activities to promote decent work in cotton cultivation in India. The narrative report is accompanied by:

- more detailed database of information of each relevant project
- table of tools identified for the promotion of decent work in Indian agriculture.

Decent work has been understood as farmers' and workers' rights at work (compliance with ILO core labour standards and national legislation) and the promotion of safe and productive work, as encapsulated within the BCI Production Principle and Criteria on Decent Work.

Cotton farmers and labourers in India

Estimates of the number of farmers involved in cotton cultivation vary widely: a reliable estimate appears to be about 4 million farmers¹, while campaigning organisations² have claimed that there may be as many as 10 million. Though some processes in some states are mechanised, picking is entirely by hand. In the central and south areas, cotton farms are usually family-run, mixed, and small (according to ICAC 2005, 55% are less than 2 hectares and 32% between 2-6 hectares). The Indian government classifies farmers as marginal or small as follows: a marginal farmer is defined as 'cultivating agricultural land up to 1 hectare. A small farmer is defined as cultivating between 1 hectare and 2 hectares'³.

Cotton cultivation in India is a labour-intensive crop with peaks of demand at weeding and harvesting time for female labour. The most common type of contract offered to adult field-workers/pickers is a piece-rate contract. The implications of piece-work have been explored in depth by ILO India⁴. This study, based on close primary research in Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh, notes that the piece rate contract system is replacing the daily wage system mainly because it solves the problem of labour scarcity in the peak season. However, piece-rate contracts made with individual labourers have an adverse social impact because children may also accompany the parent to boost the parent's income for the day. An adult female labourer earns about Rs.40 per day and child will add about Rs.20–30 per day. Thus, female labourers have an incentive to involve their children in harvesting activity. The report concludes that a potential solution to this problem lies in shifting cotton harvesting remuneration from a piece-rate to a daily wage rate or contracting work out to a group of labourers.

¹ Commodity Specific Study: Cotton, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mumbai, 2006

² The Deadly Chemicals in Cotton, Environmental Justice Foundation in collaboration with Pesticide Action Network UK, London, 2007

³ Cf Indian government debt waiver scheme announcement, 2008 <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=39122>

⁴ Labour and financial markets from the employers' perspective - Ranga Reddy District in Andhra Pradesh (ILO, 2006)

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Geographical focus

While cotton is grown in a number of Indian states, this report focuses on the BCI focus states: Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka.

Thematic focus

This report endeavours to address all aspects of the decent work agenda – in particular the situation of women and men working in situations of informality, vulnerability and potential danger. However, it should be understood that most of the decent work promotion activities currently underway in the agriculture sector relate to child labour, and even in this sphere many efforts are limited to campaigning and awareness-raising.

The bulk of labour remediation efforts in the cotton sector have to date focused on cottonseed cultivation. Cottonseed production came under international scrutiny with regard to labour practices from 2000 onwards, in large part due to the involvement of large biotech multinationals. Given the high profile of this issue, and the fact of activities already underway by some key potential partners, BCI needs to give careful consideration to its scope with regard to hybrid cottonseed production.

While some small farmers use only family labour, research indicates that others may use community labour, migrant workers or other forms of seasonal labour especially at harvest time. Women are heavily involved in cotton farming, with some estimates giving them 70% of the labour burden, and may receive only half the male wage rate. Hybrid cottonseed production is more labour intensive and requires significantly higher labour inputs (figures as high as ten times are cited in the literature) than cotton fibre production, due to the need to cross-pollinate by hand, in particular.

Research also indicates a high proportion of child labour, bonded labour and migrant labour, with a defined system of gang labour agents and trafficking of adults and children also in place in some areas. Women and girls also constitute a large proportion of the cottonseed workforce, and much migrant labour is from scheduled tribes, either from within particular states, or beyond them (for example from Rajasthan to Gujarat).

Promoting decent work in a context where the bulk of employment is informal is likely to be very different from promotion activities in a formalised working context with paid, contracted employment relationships. There is still much work to do to understand adequately, and to address, the needs and challenges of rural workers – including significant numbers of internal migrant workers – involved in Indian cotton cultivation.

II. Overview of stakeholders involved in promoting decent work in Indian agriculture

This section of the report lists all relevant stakeholders involved in promoting decent work in Indian agriculture. This is not an exhaustive list of every stakeholder, but indicates the main players active in decent work promotion in Indian agriculture.

2.1 Indian central and state government

Central government

The Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) has primary responsibility for policy and programmes related to decent work, including labour policy and legislation, health and safety, social security, gender equality, child labour, industrial relations, worker education, worker emigration, employment services and vocational training.

Particular ministries take a lead role on specific issues, such as the Ministry of Rural Development in relation to the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in relation to employment opportunities for the scheduled castes.

Enforcement of child labour and forced labour laws is primarily the responsibility of state and local governments, with the MOLE providing oversight and coordination. The National Planning Commission is responsible for national planning and strategies and includes a division on labour and employment, as well as having an established relationship with the ILO. The National Labour Institute is an autonomous body connected to MOLE, and is involved with research, training, education, publication and consultancy on labour related issues, including with the ILO.

The Central Bureau for Workers Education is an autonomous body of MOLE with tripartite board-level representation. It has a broad mandate to educate workers on various subjects including quality of life, empowerment of the unorganised sector, increased productivity and participative management. It works through a network of 263 education officers, making annual contact with around 300,000 workers in urban and rural locations. The Bureau has worked with the ILO on child labour and AIDS projects.

The National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) lies under the direction of the Ministry of Small Scale Industries. NCEUS was set up as an advisory body and a watchdog for the informal sector to bring about improvement in the productivity of informal SMEs to encourage employment creation on a large scale, particularly in the rural areas. It has completed reports on the following aspects of the informal economy: working conditions for workers, legislation for minimum working conditions and social protection. NCEUS also has a working relationship with the ILO.

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State government

State governments also play an important role, for example, through state-run vocational education and training programmes. State government positions responsible for labour law are the Labour Commissioner, Deputy Labour Commissioner and Labour Inspectors. Many states also have Labour Welfare Centres. At local Panchayat level (elected village council responsible for municipal administration in the village), rural agricultural workers' issues are usually not effectively represented. Though in some cases trade union workers and voluntary agencies actively participate in Panchayat elections, their membership and areas of influences remain limited resulting in limited influence at Panchayat schemes and institutions.

There is also a National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) which aims to promote sustainable and equitable agriculture and rural development through effective credit support, supervision of cooperative and rural regional banks and other related services. (See accompanying report on Access to Finance for more detail on NABARD and other financial institutions.)

Key Indian labour law applicable to agriculture	Key Indian OHS law applicable to agriculture
Minimum Wage Act 1948 Plantation Labour Act 1951 Bonded Labour System Act 1976 Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 Equal Remuneration Act 1976 Child Labour Act 1986 (amended in 1999) Unorganised Labour and Agricultural Workers (Welfare) Act, 2006	Plantation Labour Act, 1951 Insecticide Act, 1968

2.2 International and intergovernmental organisations

The majority of international and intergovernmental organisations in India are using a development approach, with financial institutions aiming to accelerate rural growth. It appears that this does not often overlap with recognisable activities to promote decent work in an employment context (formal, informal or for farmers). Work in agriculture tends to be addressing agricultural yield, sustainable farming and improving livelihoods and food security.

Bilateral assistance

In 2003, India announced that it would only receive official bilateral assistance from a limited number of donors including Germany, the UK and the EU; this list was later expanded to include Italy and France. (Accepted non-European donors are Japan, the USA and Russia.) Consequently, a number of member states have phased out their bilateral programmes, including Denmark and the Netherlands, while Sweden expects to phase out development assistance to India in the long term. Italy funds a number of projects through the ILO and NGOs on child labour in India.

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India represents the UK's largest bilateral programme and has received over £1 billion in bilateral aid from the UK since 2003. The UK funds a number of relevant projects in India, both through DFID and through international institutions (e.g. ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIFEM) and is providing significant support for projects on microfinance, SME development, awareness of labour rights and social protection.

India is also a priority partner country for Germany. GTZ runs a number of relevant projects as a result of Germany's focus in India on sustainable economic development; these notably include vocational training projects. GTZ also works on decent work projects in partnership with the private sector in India and has worked with SEWA (see below) on social protection for women in the informal sector.

United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

The overarching goal of the UN in India during 2008-2012 is “promoting social, economic and political empowerment of the most disadvantaged, especially women and girls”, prioritising India's 7 least-developed states. One of the 4 major objectives of the UNDAF is a commitment to support India's large-scale national and state policy and programmes, including NREGS, the National AIDS control programme and the National Child Labour Project.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The ILO's main activities in India are on child labour, HIV/AIDS, gender and post-tsunami reconstruction. The Decent Work Country Programme for India, adopted jointly by the ILO and tripartite partners (Government of India – represented by MOLE - and the workers and employers representatives) contributes to three priorities:

- a) employment: work both at the policy and implementation levels addressing labour market access for women and men, opportunities for decent and productive work, especially for vulnerable groups;
- b) social security – which includes social protection for the vast informal economy, HIV/AIDS and occupational safety and health; and
- c) tackling the worst forms of labour – child and bonded labour.

The ILO has a long-running and substantial involvement on child labour issues in India, including the €25m INDUS programme, jointly funded by the Indian and US governments, and an ongoing UK-funded project in Andhra Pradesh. The ILO also has projects on income-generating

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opportunities for women, including in the informal sector. Other areas of activity include: social dialogue, HIV/AIDS, youth employment, SME creation, and microfinance⁵.

UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund has some relevant activities in agriculture in India, outlined in the programmes section below. UNICEF's 2008-12 programme in India aims to advance the rights of women and children in India to survival, development, participation and protection by reducing social inequalities based on gender, caste, ethnicity or region.

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme in India deals with both child labour and trafficking issues, focusing on the informal sector, HIV/AIDS and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. IKEA has a long-running partnership with UNICEF to eliminate child labour in the cotton seed plantations of Andhra Pradesh and the carpet weaving industry in Uttar Pradesh.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

The FAO's current focus in India is on plant production, forestry, fisheries, nutrition and food quality and safety. A recent relevant programme relating to cotton – the large-scale EU-funded IPM cotton programme – is outlined below.

The FAO Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development initiative (SARD) is active in India, in particular in terms of support for the introduction of the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGS – see below). FAO SARD has worked in particular with the GTZ Sustainable Agriculture Information Network (Sustainet⁶) to evaluate successful approaches for the scaling-up of good practices in sustainable agriculture and rural development in India and consider next steps for promoting such practices more widely. FAO-India is also working in collaboration with LEAD India and BAIF to prepare a study on good practices and lessons learned from the implementation of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP supports governments to implement inclusive poverty reduction programmes and initiatives that promote income opportunities for poor people. In 2004 it produced a film regarding sustainable agriculture in cotton cultivation in the Punjab.

The UNDP has also been active in vocational training and employment, providing training for women workers with HIV/AIDS and supporting the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

⁵ See Report on Access to Finance: the ILO has employed microfinance in several programmes in India, particularly in order to address bonded and child labour. The ILO Social Finance Programme is currently undertaking research on decent work promotion through microfinance, working in particular with BASIX.

⁶ www.sustainet.org

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United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

One of UNIFEM's focus areas in India is to reduce feminised poverty and exclusion, which has encompassed work on the value of women's work, their access to markets and financial services, organisation of women workers within the informal economy, business development, and support to policy makers. As such, UNIFEM is a potentially important partner to BCI.

European Commission External Relations (EU Relex)

The EU Relex Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2007-2010 includes support for India's universal elementary education programme, an important aspect of ongoing efforts to address child labour, and the implementation of the EU India Action Plan, including policy dialogue on employment and social affairs. Policy dialogue on employment matters is based on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Labour.

2.3 Rural trade unions

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

The vast majority of IUF affiliates' members are those working in plantation agriculture, not small farmers or their workers. However, the IUF has a number of affiliates in India - including unions in Gujarat (Gujarat Agricultural Labour Union, GALU, see below), Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Some of these do have some small farmer and/or rural worker representation. These include two affiliates, GALU and SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), are known to conduct activities on smallholder agriculture which are explored below. At an international level, the IUF has been involved in dialogue relating to poor labour standards on cotton production.

National and state-level unions

While there are several national and some state/local level trade unions with members working in Indian agriculture, the membership is focused at plantation level, thereby largely excluding cotton. There is some representation of informal economy agricultural workers, for example by the All India Agricultural Workers Union – nevertheless, fewer than 5 per cent of rural workers in India are organised.⁷ Registrars of Trade Unions in rural areas have been known to refuse the registration of informal agricultural workers owing to the absence of a clear employer/employee relationship, though this has been addressed and overcome in some states such as Kerala.

⁷ Decent work in agriculture in India, Dr T Haque, ILO 2004

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While there is some union involvement in broader government schemes promoting employment with agricultural workers, research indicates that this stems from the efforts and interest of local trade union leaders, not central policy. Two trade unions working in this area are:

- Dakshin Rajasthan Mazdoor Union (DRMU) an organisation of seasonal tribal migrants from South Rajasthan working to ensure decent wages, social security, and human rights for the unorganised sector workers.
- Gujarat Agricultural Labour Union, a local organisation that has worked for the past three years on labour rights in the agriculture sector.

National Centre for Labour (NCL) & Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)

Instead, some small farmers are organized into co-operative societies, and some rural workers are members of organisations representing informal economy workers such as the National Centre for Labour (NCL, a federation of unorganised workers organisations) and the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). While neither work specifically on cotton, they do work on agriculture.

2.4 Producer organisations and trade bodies

Cooperative societies

In addition to trade unions, about 3.1 million agricultural workers are organized in cooperative societies (1998) across India. There are about 7700 thousand farmers' societies with 354 000 members; 4700 thousand women's cooperative societies with 530 000 members. The largest number of farmers' societies is in Andhra Pradesh, but they are also strong in Gujarat and Karnataka. The women's co-operative societies are strongest in Maharashtra.

Agrocel

Agrocel is private Indian agricultural and chemical producing company. The company's cotton production includes conventional cotton, as well as organic, IPM and Fairtrade-certified cotton. The company has a farm services division offering established in 1989, with the primary objective of serving the farming community and in particular the small and marginal farmers by providing them high quality technical advice, agricultural inputs and guidance at a fair price and also supporting the farmers in the agricultural output marketing with value addition. Agrocel offers a wide range of extension services to farmers, including on health and safety and knowledge exchange. It has a chain of 19 service centres in India (9 in Gujarat) with a team of agronomists at each centre.

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Association of Seed Industries

The Association of Seed Industries (ASI) is a national association of the planting seed industry in India. All the major MNCs namely Monsanto, Syngenta, Advanta, Proagro, and Pioneer are members of this association. The major Indian companies such as Mahyco, Raasi, Ankur and Nath Seeds are also members of this association.

2.5 Multi-stakeholder initiatives and other private initiatives

Fair Labour Association

FLA is developing a role in promoting responsible labour practices in Indian agriculture - hybrid cottonseed production in particular. There is a current project with Syngenta which began in 2006, described in detail below.

Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO)

FLO is the international standard setting body of the Fairtrade-certification national agencies. FLO developed a standard for Fairtrade cotton in 2005. In view of the paucity or absence of formal structures for farmer organisation in India, FLO certifies only contract farming situations (rather than focusing on the activities of producer organisations per se). In practical terms, this means that Fairtrade cotton is regulated by the product-specific standard for seed cotton⁸ and the generic standard for contract production⁹.

Such 'contract production' standards are currently restricted to India and Pakistan for the production of basmati rice and cotton. In these regional specific standards, farmers that are not yet organised or loosely organised are allowed to enter the Fairtrade system with the support of a 'promoting body'. This can be any entity that is capable and willing to support farmers in organising into a Small Farmers' Organisation and provides capacity building for them to become independent in the future. The Promoting Body takes responsibility to organise the producers groups into Producer Organisations and to enable them to gain autonomy. This partnership between the Promoting Body and the producers is intended to enable the producers to access the benefits of Fairtrade.

Accordingly, all Fairtrade Certified Cotton Producers in India are in contract production situations. These include:

- Pratibha-Vasudha Jaivik Krishi Kalyan Samiti (contracted to Pratibha Syntex Ltd)
- Agrocel – several projects: in Rapar, Orissa, Salur, Zolarpet, Yamakanmardi (contracting

⁸ www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/Seed_Cotton_SF_Jun_08_EN.pdf

⁹ www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/Contract_Production_standards.pdf "The scope of the Fairtrade Standards for Contract Production Projects is applicable to products and / or countries where producers are not realistically able to be certified against the Small Holder standards or Hired Labour standards."

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with Agrocel – with support of several other partners, including Shell Foundation and retailers)

- Arvind Limited- Arvind Organic Producer's Society (working with Arvind Mills)
- Suminter - Gujarat Sustainable & Organic Farmers Association
- EcoFarms Growers Social Development Body (EGSDB), Orissa
- Shiv Krishi Utthan Sanstha
- ETC CHETNA (a project established by Solidaridad Netherlands)
- AOFG – Zameen

The full list of FLO-certified producers and traders is available from www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/operators.php?id=10

Promoting Fair Trade in India (PROFIT)

PROFIT is a national fair trade initiative that was initiated in India in early 2006 with a view to enable small and marginalised producers to access the Indian middle-class consumer market on fairer trade terms. The aim is to establish a national fair trade standard and system by end 2008; this has not yet seen the light of day.

PROFIT includes a project with cotton producers called DOMESTIC. PROFIT members are BTC (Belgian Development Cooperation); Traidcraft UK; International Resources for Fairer Trade, India; and the European Union.

Information on their activities with regard to cotton is not yet available, but they are aiming for increased livelihood and sales opportunities for cotton producers. How labour standards will be incorporated into their standards is not yet clear.

IFOAM India Organic Service Centre

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) India Organic Service Centre is a joint initiative between IFOAM and the International Competence Centre for Organic Agriculture (ICCOA) and aims to promote nationwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems based on the principles of organic agriculture in India.

2.6 NGOs and other civil society organisations

International NGOs

A number of international NGOs have offices in India including Oxfam UK, Save the Children UK, World Vision, Caritas, Hivos, DanChurchAid and the Karl Kübel Stiftung. In several cases, these organisations have recently sought to establish national autonomous entities, as is the case with Oxfam and Save the Children.

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For the most part, international NGOs' activities most relevant to decent work are the programmes they run on child labour. In addition, Action Aid works with workers from the informal economy and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung's projects on rural development include vocational training components.

Several European trade union groups are also active in India. The Danish Trade Union Council for International Development, SASK, the Swedish LO-TCO Secretariat of International Trade Union Development Co-operation and FNV Mondiaal all run social dialogue related projects across a range of sectors. The UK trade union movement has links with Indian trade unions and worker organisations, and trade unions are a focus for the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung office in India.

Hivos

Hivos is a Dutch NGO with a regional office in Bangalore. Hivos has worked on child labour in India for some time and is the implementing agency for an EU project called 'Elimination of Child Labour through Universalisation of Elementary Education'. Hivos has also worked with the MV Foundation (see below).

Oxfam International and Oxfam GB (OGB)

Oxfam GB, in collaboration with Oxfam International, has supported the setting up of Oxfam India as an autonomous, Indian organisation, working for national and international development. Oxfam GB will continue to work in India, but will now be supporting Oxfam India to implement their programmes.

Traidcraft / Traidcraft Exchange

Traidcraft is a UK organisation made up of two parts: a fair trade trading company (Traidcraft plc) and an international development charity (Traidcraft Exchange). Traidcraft Exchange has recently received a grant of £355,500 from UK DFID to extend the learning from the 'More from the Cotton Fields' project (with Agrocél and Shell Foundation – more below) to Karnataka state.

National NGOs

MV Foundation

The MV Foundation is a prominent local NGO working to eliminate child labour, predominantly in Andhra Pradesh. One of the primary goals of the Foundation is to eliminate child labour by universalising school education. It receives support from ILO-IPEC, HIVOS, UNICEF, UNDP, ActionAid, India Committee of the Netherlands and others and has been active in the cottonseed industry amongst others.

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Centre for Education and Communication (CEC)

CEC is a Delhi-based resource centre on labour issues that is particularly focused on informal and unorganised workers. It does not directly implement programmes at the community level but works in partnership with trade unions, labour support organisations and people's movements. CEC works on issues such as child labour, forced labour, HIV/AIDS in the workplace, labour migration, workplace health and safety, gender and caste. It has worked with a number of international NGOs, as well as with Traidcraft (UK) to implement a project to build the capacity of tea growers for social dialogue.

CREDA (Centre for Rural Education and Development Action)

CREDA focuses on child labour-related activities and has undertaken projects for the elimination and rehabilitation of child labour around Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh). CREDA also works on women's empowerment and vocational training, and has partnered with ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, NORAD, Oxfam and Terre des Hommes.

Care India

Care India is part of the international CARE group, and receives funding from DFID, EU and American sources. Its headquarters are in New Delhi, with 14 other regional offices in India. Care is focused principally on women's empowerment. Education for young girls is a key focus area in India. For example, CARE provides microfinance for women and communities and works with saltpan workers in Gujarat to help them become better aware of their rights at work.

International Resources for Fairer Trade (IRFT)

IRFT works on CSR and fair trade projects, some of which are closely linked to labour standards and several of which have been in agriculture. IRFT has worked with French association *Ethique sur l'étiquette* on monitoring labour standards in the leather and textile/garment sector. Other partners include European Commission, DFID, BTC (Belgian development cooperation), Hivos, and Oxfam GB. IRFT was responsible for undertaking significant parts of the development of assessment materials for FLA labour compliance in seed production (see below).

Mahatma Gandhi Labour Institute (MGLI)

MGLI is a research and training institute in relation to labour and employment. It specialises in training unorganised workers and rural workers with the relevant knowledge and skills to improve their working conditions, particularly on issues such as child labour, women's labour and agricultural labour. MGLI is a partner of the German labour foundation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

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Save the Children (Bal Raksha Bharat)

Bal Raksha Bharat is an independent member of the international Save the Children alliance, established by Save the Children UK. BRB works on child labour, with a particular focus on child domestic workers, and trafficking. Corporate partners include Coca Cola, American Express and Reckitt Benckiser (UK).

The Concerned for Working Children (CWC)

CWC works in the field of child labour in Karnataka, with two programmes – one urban and one rural. CWC has created a working children's union in Karnataka.

Oxfam India

Oxfam India was formally launched, with support from OGB and Oxfam International, in September 2008. It works on improving livelihoods and lobbying on trade issues. Oxfam India also supports training for women given through women's empowerment programme.

Campaigning organisations

At a campaigning level, the following international NGOs have been engaging in advocacy work with relevant multinationals and Indian state authorities with regard to child labour (and its replacement with decent work for adults), particularly in cottonseed production:

- Netherlands: India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), Amnesty International Netherlands, NOVIB and the Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions (FNV)
- UK: Anti Slavery International (ASI)
- Germany: Coalition against Bayer-Dangers, Germanwatch and the Global March Against Child Labour.
- USA: International Labour Rights Forum (ILRF) and the International Centre on Child Labour and Education (ICCLE).

III. Main programmes and projects promoting decent work in Indian agriculture

3.1 Agriculture programmes

Government and regional authority programmes

The Government of India has passed several labour laws intended to promote the welfare of agricultural workers. However, a number of ILO Core Conventions remain unratified, and implementation and enforcement is weak so that even organized workers remain largely unprotected. Various labour laws and anti-poverty programmes undertaken by the Government are in conformity with the spirit and contents of relevant ILO Conventions.

Ratification of ILO core conventions and other conventions relevant to agriculture by India	
ILO Convention	Ratified?
29 (Forced labour)	Yes
87 (Freedom of Association)	No
98 (Right to Organize)	No
100 (Equal Remuneration)	Yes
105 (Forced labour)	Yes
111 (Discrimination)	Yes
138 (Child labour)	No
182 (Worst forms of child labour)	No
110 (Plantations)	No
141 (Rural workers' organisations)	Yes
184 (Safety and Health in Agriculture)	No

Government action to promote decent work in India is primarily focused on child labour, though there are also a number of employment creation programmes (some of which began recently and others decades ago). However, these employment schemes did not address qualitative aspects of decent work and have therefore had limited effect on improving the socio-economic condition of agricultural workers¹⁰. A National Commission on Agricultural Labour exists, which makes recommendations on action by government and other stakeholders.

¹⁰ Decent work in agriculture in India, Dr T Haque, ILO 2004.

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India's National Charter for Children (2003) lays out the country's commitments to protect children from hazardous child labour and to provide universal access to primary education with a focus on children with special needs. The National Policy on Child Labour lays out concrete actions for combating child labour, including legislative reforms and projects to provide direct assistance to children. These direct assistance projects are collectively known as the National Child Labour Projects (NCLP), which operate at the district level to identify working children; withdraw them from hazardous work; and provide education, vocational training, mainstreaming into formal education, stipends, meals, and health checkups.

UNICEF is supporting MOLE in developing a system to track the progress of children in the NCLP schools, and the NCLP scheme is linked to the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) program, to ensure children's smooth transition from NCLP schools into the formal education system. A prototype of the National Tracking System has already been developed and field trials are underway in the states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The MOLE has a 'Grants in Aid Scheme' which funds NGOs to provide working children with education and vocational training opportunities, health care, and nutrition supplements. The MOLE also carries out large-scale awareness-raising activities on child labour and operates a helpline. The state government of Karnataka (funded by the Italian government) is participating in a USD 3.6 million ILO-IPEC project to combat exploitive child labour and economic exploitation of adolescents in the sericulture (silk farming) industry; the project ended in August 2008.

The Labour Ministry announced in January 2008 that it would be expanding the list of hazardous processes and occupations where the employment of children below 18 years of age is strictly prohibited, and developing a detailed protocol for the rehabilitation and repatriation of rescued migrant and bonded child labourers. This would be the cue for relevant states to start to take action on new areas of work on those lists. While it appears that agriculture, including potentially cottonseed production may feature on the list, an updated version is not yet available.

The states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Punjab are implementing state-level action plans to eliminate child labour from hazardous industries, some with help from foreign donors. (UK DFID funded the state government of Andhra Pradesh to pilot its action plan.) In Karnataka, there are 36 Labour Welfare Centres functioning in the state promoting labour welfare, and providing free facilities and also training classes for dependants of workers. The Government of Karnataka has also set up a social security authority to provide social security benefits to unorganised workers.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) by the Indian Government ensures 100 days of employment for each person against official minimum wages which is significantly higher than local market wages. This has resulted in wages increasing since 2004 when the scheme was introduced.

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ILO - Subregional project on Prevention and Elimination of Bonded Labour in South Asia (PEBLISA)

This ILO project, in partnership with the MOLE, to reduce debt bondage in poor households had three activities:

- 1) strengthening national legal and policy frameworks on bonded labour;
- 2) increasing the capacity of the social partners, law enforcement and other agencies to tackle the issue; and
- 3) field-testing models for the prevention of bonded labour and for the rehabilitation of bonded labourers, with micro-finance led interventions as a key component.

The project's approaches were mainstreamed in social partners' activities and in major poverty reduction programmes targeting the very poor. One area of its activities was in farming, including cotton and cottonseed, in the Ranga-Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh. An excellent ILO study of the rural agricultural labour market from the employer's perspective nevertheless provides good background on the decent work deficits to be addressed related to wage rates and bonded labour systems.

INDO-USDOL Child Labour project for Preventing and Eliminating Child Labour in Identified Hazardous Sector (INDUS project)

The INDUS Child Labour Project ran from 2003-06 and was a Technical Cooperation Project of the Government of India (GOI), Ministry of Labour and Employment and Directorate of Education, and the United States Department of Labour (USDOL). While addressing child labour, the project was designed to include adult labour issues affecting child labour, such as educational and training opportunities, reliable and decent incomes for adults and adolescents in the family, and awareness creation. The project's objective was to contribute to the prevention and elimination of hazardous child labour by enhancing the capacity of target communities and stakeholders and improving compliance with child labour policy and legislation in the target districts.

The project was implemented with partners in selected sectors in selected districts of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi with the following approaches:

- Identifying children in selected hazardous occupations in the target districts in collaboration with communities and other partners
- Providing children withdrawn from hazardous work with transitional and pre-vocational education, and social support

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- Providing adolescents withdrawn from hazardous work with vocational training and alternatives for income generation
- Increasing economic security of families who withdraw their children from hazardous work by encouraging savings and development of alternative livelihoods
- Providing access to quality education to prevent children from entering or re-entering hazardous work
- Monitoring and tracking children released from hazardous work to ensure that their situation has improved
- Creating public support and momentum against child labour and in favour of educational opportunities
- Strengthening capacity of national, state, district, and local institutions so they can function as ongoing support for eliminating hazardous child labour.

The project developed various tools to carry out these activities, listed in the Tools table.

Agriculture-specific programmes by multi-stakeholder and private voluntary initiatives

Syngenta / Fair Labour Association

Syngenta seed company joined FLA in 2004 following publicity regarding labour issues in cottonseed production. The FLA then developed a monitoring plan with Syngenta focusing initially on cottonseed, and later expanding to include the company's other kinds of seed production. The plan included development of an internal monitoring system for agricultural production processes and independent verification.

In 2005 Syngenta sold its cottonseed business, and the FLA and Syngenta agreed that the company's monitoring efforts would shift to hybrid vegetable seed production in India, as these represented the next highest area of labour compliance risk after cottonseed. Following the adoption of a monitoring system for vegetable seeds, the plan dictates the extension of the system to all field-based crops. Currently, a risk mapping of issues in vegetable seed production was undertaken in 2007. The mapping activities have included:

1. Task- and risk-mapping for production processes of vegetable seed crops.
2. Identification of tasks and timelines for monitoring of the production processes.
3. Identification of training and capacity-building needs for Syngenta field staff, seed organisers and farmers in implementing the FLA labour compliance methodology.

The mapping has addressed workforce and employment issues: labour intensity, gender division of labour, child labour and the terms and conditions of employment have been assessed for

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different vegetable seed crops. The assessment found that farmers and extension staff were often unaware of company standards and policies, and that policies terms such as ‘child labour’ lacked a working definition for staff or farmers to use. The mapping report recommends increased awareness, communication and training for all local parties. Monitoring of labour standards so far has revealed labour rights violations across the FLA standard (forced labour, child labour, harassment & abuse, OHS, freedom of association, hours of work and wages & benefits). However, the bulk of findings relate to health and safety and to workers and staff lack of awareness about the standards in the code of conduct in use.

Independent monitoring of this work to date has shown some systemic issues in the agriculture sector that will pose challenges to remediation:

- women workers are reluctant to attend training or education workshops
- low literacy level in villages make it difficult to maintain proper hiring, wages, hours of work and age verification documentation at the farms, and difficulty in establishing non-compliance reporting mechanisms at farm level
- no communication technology exists in villages to aid the process
- the prevailing practice of non-payment of legal minimum wages and the traditional practice of paying lower wages to women than to men requires behavioural change intervention strategies.

Programmes of rural trade unions and producer-employers’ associations

Agricultural workers in India do not have a strong voice in parliament, government or central trade unions, especially in comparison with other relevant BCI countries such as Brazil. As a result, there is little social dialogue or joint work with regard to projects aimed at improving agricultural workers’ quality of life.

However, the emergence of an effective panchayat raj system in some regions has helped evolve a kind of mechanism in which political representatives of agricultural workers in panchayat bodies participate in planning, implementation and evaluation of economic and social development projects.

Some individual unions have taken action. The All-India Agricultural Workers Union and the Bhartiya Khet Mazdoor Union have previously done some work on land reform and minimum wages, including campaigns on the implementation of minimum wages and the need to keep them raised in line with prices. Activity to promote decent work by SEWA and NCL includes campaigns on recognition of informal sector workers and campaigns for a floor level national minimum wage. However, overall little progress has been made.

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Almost all the national level trade unions have committed themselves to combat and eliminate child labour through awareness generation campaign by:

- organising workshops and seminars
- printing posters and handbills
- staging street plays
- organising demonstrations demanding the children's right to basic education, a rise in the minimum wages and proper enforcement of labour laws.

Some unions manage non-formal schools for child labourers. Others work in networks or collaboration against child labour with NGOs and other institutions. In some cases this has been an opportunity to expand their work in the informal sector.

3.2 Cotton-specific programmes

Central Government consultation is underway with Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat requesting them to place hybrid cottonseed production on the list of hazardous activities forbidden to children under the law.

Government in Andhra Pradesh programmes

The state government in AP began to take action on child labour in cotton in 2000. However, the change of government in 2004 had some negative impacts and has slowed down the ongoing efforts of the government to eliminate the child labour. The pro-farmer attitude of the present state government has put the Labour Department under pressure to act very cautiously with regard to taking action on labour issues, and residential bridge course centres in some areas have been closed down.

In Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu the response of state governments on labour issues is generally cautious.

International and intergovernmental organisation programmes

FAO-EU-Government of India IPM Programme for Cotton in Asia

This programme was implemented in southern India from 1999 - 2004. While its aims were to promote the use of IPM in cotton, an evaluation of the programme has indicated that there were significant socio-economic benefits for cotton farmers. As a result the methodology might be considered as relevant with regard to promoting decent work, so it is included in this report.

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The programme used Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) to provide people-centred learning experiences that promote the empowerment of farmers through education. Evaluation of the FFS reported significant gains beyond the reduction of pesticide application, such as improved managerial skills, better health, strengthened social ties and connections with institutions, higher self-confidence and social recognition. It also noted that where livelihoods improved, increased household cash was mainly spent on physical assets for men. The methodology involved:

- Team-building activities which emphasised participants' self-development, partnership and collaboration
- Conducting weekly training sessions in the villages during the cropping season for a group of 25–30 farmers using expert facilitators.
- Developing the FFS curriculum in collaboration with farmers to address their most relevant agro-ecological problems with place-specific solutions
- Engaging researchers, extension agents and farmers in on-site participatory research to compare change options (on IPM in this case) with whatever practices the farmers currently use.
- Basing management decisions on changes on field observation analysis and measurements taken by the farmers
- Encouraging critical thinking and dialogue among participant farmers during the analytical process
- Local post-FFS self-development projects following the farmers' own interests
- Formation of farmer alumni groups in the villages the year after the conclusion of the schools, not only to continue experimenting on crop production methods but also to organize social activities for the benefit of other members of the community.
- Training a sample of women farmers to identify the signs and symptoms of acute poisoning and to analyse the consequences of unsafe pest management behaviour.

UNICEF

Since 2005, UNICEF with the support of IKEA, has been implementing special projects in collaboration with Andhra Pradesh government to address the problem of child labour in Kurnool and Mahaboobnagar districts where cottonseed production is concentrated in Andhra Pradesh.

Under the UNICEF project, 139 villages in five mandals in Kurnool (Gonegandla, Nandavaram, Kosigi, Manthralayam and Peddakadubur) are covered. The activities in the UNICEF supported project include community motivation and mobilization against child labour, improving the quality of education in government schools, running short term bridge course centres for working children and mainstreaming them in schools. A follow-up study in one area showed

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that the project activities had some positive impact on children working on cottonseed farms in that area – the proportion of under-14 year olds against the total workforce has declined by 20%, and the proportion of employed children under 10 declined significantly from nearly 20% of in 2003-04 to 8% in 2006-07.

Another BCI retailer member, H&M, commissioned a study from UNICEF in order to work on a joint project addressing child labour in cotton and cottonseed in specific districts of Tamil Nadu. The project aims to create a protective environment for children and promoting their rights to health, education and participation in the selected cotton districts.

ILO-IPEC

Since 2000 ILO-IPEC (funded by DFID UK) has been implementing a state-based project for combating of child labour in Andhra Pradesh. The first phase (2000-2003) aimed to tackle child labour by working closely with the government, employers, social organisations, NGOs and trade unions. As part of its project, ILO-IPEC brought together various trade unions and employers associations to work against child labour. In particular the project entailed:

- Working with the Government on child labour policies and programmes through partnerships with relevant AP Government departments, Education and Labour and a state-level steering committee. This developed a policy framework, and tested pilot models introducing new practice in areas such as law enforcement, education, pre-school education, and rehabilitation.
- Federating trade unions on child labour. Six unions came together in the form of a federation called the Informed Work Force, undertaking awareness raising work, including with agriculture labourers
- Bringing employers together as a consortium. A consortium of 24 employers' associations in the state was created to work together on the elimination of child labour. The consortium called CEASE Child Labour (Consortium of Employers Associations for the Elimination of Child Labour), includes state level associations of national level employers' organizations eg FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), EFI (Employers' Federation of India) and associations of employers in which child labour is actually present, and represents more than four-fifths of the state's trade and industry. The consortium has been registered as a society and now raises awareness about child labour among members and other affiliated bodies. It has also facilitated the development of common approaches and codes of conduct for employers' associations in eliminating child labour.
- Mobilising civil society organisations (CSOs) on child labour. As part of the project, CSOs formed a network across the state in combating child labour. This network consists of associations of lawyers, engineers, doctors, social clubs like Rotary and Lions, religious leaders, women's groups, non-government and other civil society organizations, all of whom try to raise awareness about child labour in their day to day work. The network works

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closely with the district and local administrations, bringing in convergence with the Government's efforts in eliminating child labour.

With a special focus on girl child labour in hybrid cottonseed production, ILO-IPEC implemented a pilot project during 2002-2003 in two mandals of Mahaboobnagar district. In the second phase of the project which began in 2005 three more districts were to be covered, with the state contributing Rs.180 million and the ILO Rs 20 million. However, the project reportedly ran into trouble as the state government refused to pay its share of the budget.¹¹

Industry programmes

National Association of the Planting Seed Industry members (Bayer, Emergent Genetics) Child Care Programme (CCP)

There has been some work by cottonseed trade association members to address child labour problems in AP. However, they have not extended beyond child labour, nor much outside of AP. The National Association of the Planting Seed Industry in India (ASI) began to collaborate with the MV Foundation (the leading child rights organisation in India) in AP in 2003, in order to eliminate child labour in cottonseed industry. The ASI membership is made up of international seed companies, with some Indian members. The collaboration initially involved initiatives to try to motivate seed organisers and farmers to stop employing children through meetings, posters, pamphlets, print and electronic media. Initial action was found to have been limited to increasing farmer awareness, and cooperation during 2003/2004 was minimal. The MV Foundation withdrew from the joint process at this stage. However, work continued as part of an ASI project (Child Care Programme – CCP) which included a state-level steering committee.

In February 2005, Bayer, Syngenta and Emergent Genetics (part of Monsanto) initiated a further dialogue with local NGOs for joint action to eliminate child labour in their suppliers' farms. After several rounds of discussions these companies agreed to implement a new joint action plan for the crop season 2005-06. Implementation plans included:

- Information sharing
- 'No child labour' clause in contracts
- Setting up joint monitoring committees at various levels;
- Scheme of incentives and disincentives
- Educational programme for rehabilitation of child labourers
- Measures for safe use of pesticides and improving crop productivity¹²

¹¹ *Child Bondage Continues in Indian Cotton Supply Chain*, Davuluri Venkateswarlu, India Committee of the Netherlands, Intl. Labour Rights Fund, 2007

¹² Detailed information on the implementation and learning from these activities can be found in *SEEDS OF CHANGE: Impact of Interventions by Bayer and Monsanto on the Elimination of Child Labour on Farms Producing Hybrid Cottonseed in India*; Davuluri Venkateswarlu, June 07

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However, a report analysing these plans found that the joint action plan had limited impact in 2005-06. Children continued to be employed on the farms producing seed for these companies though in reduced numbers. There was a lack of effective implementation of the plan at the field level, and the plan lacked a holistic approach – for example not addressing the issue of procurement price. The role of procurement prices in causing child labour or as an action to help eliminate it has been the subject of widespread debate and research on the subject.¹³

Specific action by Bayer

During 2006/2007, Bayer's plans included to continue to work collaboratively with Emergent Genetics, but also do undertake certain individual activities. The action plan includes continuation of joint monitoring of fields, an incentive and disincentive scheme with a small modification (an incentive hike from 5% to 7% over the previous year) and a child labour rehabilitation programme with local NGO Naandi which it initiated in 2005- 06. The new elements are credit support to farmers (with the help of banks) and a 'Target 400' scheme to enhance crop productivity. With regard to geographical scope, Bayer agreed to implement all the elements of its action plan in 100% of the farms in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (where it is directly involved in cottonseed production). However, it then outsourced production in Karnataka. In Tamil Nadu, Bayer has asked its seed supplier to 'take all the necessary steps to eliminate the child labour' from the farms producing seed exclusively for Bayer.

Specific action by Emergent Genetics

Emergent Genetics' most recent action plan for 2006-07 includes the continuation of efforts initiated 2005-06: joint monitoring of fields; incentive/disincentive scheme and child labour rehabilitation programme with local NGO Naandi. With regard to incentives and disincentives, Emergent Genetics the 06/07 policy has changed from 05/06. As an incentive to the farmers who completely avoid using child labour, it agreed to pay an extra Rs.15 per Kg (4.8%) on top of the procurement price. No financial penalties will be imposed on those farmers who violate the norm of 'no child labour', but they will be blacklisted from next year's production. In terms of supply chain coverage, the company stated that it will first try to implement the policy within the company where it has direct control over the production and evaluate the possibility of including its joint ventures and sub-licensees. This work was focused in Andhra Pradesh, since production in Tamil Nadu was outsourced.

¹³ See in particular *The price of child labour*, Davuluri Venkateswarlu and Lucia da Corta, India Committee of the Netherlands/One World Germany, 2005

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Multi-stakeholder initiatives and other private initiatives

Fair Labour Association project with Syngenta on seed production

This project began in 2006. Cooperation between FLA and Syngenta showed that all major components of the FLA system (adopting the code, collecting information and addressing compliance issues) could be applied to compliance work on farms. In particular, the current FLA 3.0 methodology which emphasises local stakeholder engagement in defining and addressing compliance issues lends itself to the agricultural sector. The FLA worked with Syngenta to develop appropriate standards and benchmarks against which monitors could measure the level of compliance on farms, and held stakeholder dialogues with NGOs and other representatives of the industry to discuss the main compliance issues and remedial strategies.

Project activities so far include:

- Completing a Task and Risk Mapping Study to clarify compliance risks and appropriate remedial strategies (methodology maps each task in production cycle, then assesses risk associated with each task)
- Within Syngenta, developing internal communications, systems and training for staff
- Conducting on-farm monitoring and remediation of health and safety non-compliances
- Developing guidance on the application of its labour standards code of conduct to cottonseed production in three local languages - Marathi, Gujarathi and Kannada
- Developing an awareness campaign on the child labour element of its work with the help of local NGOs and schools (leaflets, posters and drama productions)
- Drafting social compliance contracts to be signed by farmers
- Strengthened procurement policy by integrating compliance as a determinant for business and incentives.

Following Syngenta's sale of its cottonseed business¹⁴, it began the same process in its vegetable seed business, using the following methodology:

- Conduct interviews in three production locations (Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat), interviewing field staff, local growers, organizers (3rd party agents) and workers to assess their needs. Anecdotal data and secondary sources were also used to add to the needs assessment.

¹⁴ Syngenta joined the FLA in 2004 with the intention of applying the FLA's methodology to its cottonseed production processes. In 2005, the company sold its global cottonseed business to Delta and Pineland, a U.S.-based seed company. Following the sale, the FLA and Syngenta determined that monitoring efforts would shift to hybrid vegetable seed production in India, which represented the next highest area of labour compliance risk after cottonseed.

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- Develop, translate and distribute a Seed Production Practices Code of Conduct
- Provide additional awareness on the standards through joint meetings with farmers in each location; additional explanations of contractual provisions; verbal communication
- Develop and submit an Internal Monitoring Plan to the FLA
- Compile list of farms and submit list to the FLA
- Develop appropriate tools for collecting and analyzing compliance data, including questionnaires and a data base
- Identify and train Syngenta production staff and organizers to collect information on each field visit, receive and analyze checklists.
- Organise additional stakeholder forums to agree on monitoring matrixes that (report data missing)

Staffing and implementation

Staffing: a full-time monitoring manager was hired and Production Managers, Senior Supervisors and Key Organisers (ie agents) trained to conduct monitoring activities. Additional staff were identified to support the data collection and analysis. A Project Supervisor was nominated at each production location in order to supervise and coordinate all activities.

Syngenta has developed an internal monitoring tool and corresponding guidelines to monitor labour conditions based on the results of the task mapping and risk mapping study. Production staff, organizers and supervisors were then trained on the use of these tools, before implementation. The first implementation phase planned to collect data from 5% of small seeded farms and 20% of large seeded farms producing for Syngenta by the end of 2006, then aiming to progressively increase these percentages to 100% by the end of the third year of project implementation. In order to collect data, the company agreed to use the following protocol a) Identify farms to be monitored; b) Monitoring visits combined with production visits; and c) Visits during the three activities which were identified as high risk. The plan is then to analyse data from all locations, per crop on a seasonal basis, and generate a report twice a year for the FLA. The report will include an implementation plan of the remedial activities required.

Learning from FLA's work to address labour standards in the cotton sector so far includes: using a 'mixed approach' rather than radical activism; a holistic approach (not just addressing labour standards); building on existing management systems; interaction within business and sourcing departments; stakeholder engagement; transparency; extensive awareness building, training and capacity building; and vocational training.

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FLA tools on monitoring labour standards in agriculture

The FLA is working with an accredited third-party monitor, International Resources for Fairer Trade (IRFT) based in Mumbai, to develop a methodology and independent external monitoring tool for the agricultural sector. Other tools being developed include:

- The FLA Workplace Code of Conduct and the benchmarks have been adapted to the agricultural sector
- Needs and impact assessment tools
- Guidance for independent external monitors, laying special emphasis on external information gathering on local labour practices, the review of field operations and practices, root cause and gap analysis, and review of the internal monitoring system of the company.
- Qualifications and accreditation criteria for independent external monitors for agriculture.

Protocols for IEMs/assessments/remedies and reporting requirements for agricultural entities are also being drafted. Company participants send details of their production locations, which are held on a database by FLA. A random sample of 5% of these will then be independently monitored.

In a separate move, with the support of ILO-IPEC, the Seedsman Association of Andhra Pradesh (a state level association of seed companies) initiated awareness-raising steps to address child labour problems in cottonseed production during 2004.

FLO-certified cotton

FLO-certified cotton in India differs from other regions, due to the contract farming structure which is used, whereby producer organisations trade with the collaboration of a ‘Promoting Body’. For FLO, the ‘Promoting Body’ can be any intermediary organisation, either a trader (exporter / processor), or non-trader (NGO or private) with trading activities, which is a legal entity forming a partnership with the producers it contracts from. In practice, this role has been assumed by mills (such as Arvind or Syntex) and NGOs (including Solidaridad and Oxfam).

To avoid conflicts of interest between commercial activities and the interests of producer development, the Promoting Body must ensure that its responsibilities for producer development activities are clearly separated from its role as trader. The Promoting Body is demonstrably willing and able through its corporate mission and business practises to enable the producer organisation(s) to gain autonomy. In writing and in practice it is responsible for and uses resources independent of FLO to help producers organise themselves. It accepts in writing responsibility for ensuring the smooth flow of premiums to producer organisations as well as for the safe custody of the premiums.

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FLO fairtrade price for Indian cotton, from December 2007			
Type	Origin	Fairtrade Minimum farm-gate price per kg	Fairtrade Premium per kg
Conventional and Organic seed cotton	India	US\$ 0.487 (including Direct Fairtrade Costs of 0.037)	US\$ 0.05

Therefore in India the Fairtrade Minimum price (FTMP) is the minimum price paid to the promoting body – elsewhere this is paid direct to producers. The promoting body can deduct Direct Fairtrade Costs amount up to a maximum of US\$ 0.037 per kg from the Minimum price or market price, and pay at least the remaining amount to the individual farmers.

Additionally, under the FLO cotton seed standard, pre-export lines of credit are given to producers if requested, of up to 60 % of the purchase price.

There is very little information available on actual practices deployed by promoting bodies and other supporting agencies to address challenging labour issues, including child and bonded labour, in order to achieve compliance with FLO standards.

Agrocel, Shell Foundation, Vericott, Traidcraft Exchange

Agrocel, the UK-based Shell Foundation and UK-charity Traidcraft Exchange have worked together to improve the environmental, economical and social standards of cotton farmers and provide them with a stable livelihood through means of sustainable organic farming on a joint project since 2001. The initial project (2001-04) was entitled ‘Straight from the Cotton Fields’ and was followed from 2004-07 by ‘Move from the Cotton Fields’. (Its successor project, from 2008-12 is outlined below).

An independent assessment of the projects found positive impacts for farmers with regard to increased income; decreased costs and pesticide use; improvements in health, soil and water quality, amongst others. However, impacts for farmers’ workers were inferred from farmers’ responses, and appear to have been limited to farmers’ perception of their workers social standing and whether they have increased pay for their workers. While farmers state that they did increase pay to workers, this was not verified by the workers concerned and can not be seen as reliable data. The assessment is unclear as to how farmers were encouraged, through fair trade mechanisms or otherwise, to ensure decent work standards for their workers.¹⁵ Activities related to decent work beyond health and safety are unclear, though seminars and training on fair trade were conducted with farmers.

¹⁵ Agri Impact Assessment -II ‘More from the Cotton Fields’, Zainab Kapasi, Mott MacDonald India, 2007, p 35.

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Organic Exchange, Shell Foundation, C&A partnership

European retailer C&A has just begun to work in partnership with Organic Exchange (OE) and the Shell Foundation to support farmers to transition from conventional to organic farming by facilitating market access, linkages to capital and providing vital business and technical expertise. OE will serve as the project manager for the effort, focusing on supporting farm development, developing tools and approaches to support supply chain planning and implementation activities. The Shell Foundation will be supporting leveraging of knowledge at farm level as well as helping build value added business development capacities in India. The Foundation's 'Trading UP' programme has already helped other companies – including Marks & Spencer – source organic and fair-trade cotton from India.

Over the course of the next five years the three partners aim to help bring up to 20 organic cotton value chains based in the sub-continent through a systematic sustainable business development process. Suppliers taking part in the project will have access to a broad array of organic farming experts, financial institutions, community development specialists and other organisations that can help them enhance their knowledge of organic farming and manufacturing practices and successful business practices. In 2008 the partnership will work with four C&A value chains and their farming partners whilst mapping and evaluating the remaining C&A suppliers and cotton projects, adding 16 more value chains in 2009 and beyond.

The partnership aims to disseminate methods and approaches developed so that they can be replicated by other interested companies. Therefore the three organisations will also oversee the creation of an umbrella support and capacity building organisation in India called the 'India Organic and Sustainable Development Network' which will help others replicate and scale-up sustainable business activities by sharing best practice learnt during the initiative.

By its completion in 2012, the partnership hopes to have positively affected thousands of farmers by expanding economic opportunity and improving social conditions through the generation of new jobs and subsequent increases in income, as well as adding business and social investment in the farming communities that supply organic cotton to the C&A supply chains. An additional benefit will be improved environmental conditions of up to 60,000 hectares of land.

ICCOA, IFOAM and the International Research Institute for Organic Agriculture (FIBL) Organic Cotton project

IFOAM has a number of organic cotton projects in Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. A three-year research project by FIBL analysing organic cotton farming in one project developed several tools for farmers – some of which may be relevant for BCI, such as a training manual, extension toolkit and guide on soil fertility.

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Rural trade unions

Gujarat Agriculture Labour Union (GALU)

GALU began a campaign against child labour in Bt cotton farms across north Gujarat in 2007. The campaign began following a study by civil society organisations of Gujarat and Rajasthan (grouped in a network called the Migrant Workers Protection Front) which indicated that thousands of tribal children from Rajasthan were being employed during the harvest season. Campaign activities have included: distributing pamphlets to farmers on illegal employment of children; posting volunteers at check posts on state borders to check the trafficking of children and co-coordinating with civil society groups in Rajasthan.¹⁶

Recently, a few NGOs in Gujarat and Rajasthan (DISHA, South Rajasthan Mazdoor Union) started active campaigning against the employment of child labour in cottonseed farms in Gujarat. The NGOs working on child rights issues in Gujarat and Rajasthan brought the issue to the notice of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and National Child Rights Commission. In September 2007, the NHRC issued notices to the Chief Secretaries of Gujarat and Rajasthan and asked them to enquire into the issue and submit reports within four weeks. The chair person of National Child Rights Commission (Prof. Shantha Sinha) visited Rajasthan and Gujarat in July and August 2007 and conducted public hearings on this issue.

Dakshin Rajasthan Mazdoor Union (DRMU)

Dakshin Rajasthan Mazdoor Union (DRMU) has worked on labour rights in the agriculture sector since 2005, focussing on northern Gujarat owing to the child labour in BT cotton farms there. Most workers migrate from the nearby state of Rajasthan with their families. None of these states have laws governing the rights of migrant workers. Since 2006 the union has been organising workers and advocating for workers rights at state level in Gujarat and Rajasthan. This has involved highlighted abuses in the media and with the police where relevant, as well as union organising activities and pressing for wage increases. In 2008 the Union has conducted research into child and migrant labour and is now planning further action with other stakeholders.

NGOs and other civil society organisations

MV Foundation

In 2003, MVF, with the support of the local community, initiated a massive campaign against the employment of children in Rangareddy, AP, which then spread to Kurnool and Mahaboobnagar districts in AP. Special bridge course camps for older (10-14 years) girls are being conducted to

¹⁶ Ahmedabad Newline, June 2007, GALU gears up to stop child labour on Bt cotton farms in North Gujarat, Saurav Kumar.

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bring them into the fold of mainstream school education. The issue of child labour in cottonseed production received special attention in this campaign because there is a high concentration of cottonseed production in this district. With the support of MV Foundation, the local youth and other people concerned with child rights formed a separate organisation called the 'Child Rights Protection Forum' (CRPF) in 2004 and since then, the members of CRPF in Kurnool and Mahaboobnagar districts have been actively campaigning against violations of child rights in general and in the cottonseed sector in particular, bringing to light individual cases (rape and murder of two minor girls working on cottonseed farms in 2006 and the deaths of three children due to pesticide poisoning in 2004). MVF has taken the following actions as part of its child labour programmes:

- Mobilising all those concerned with the process of withdrawing children from work and enrolling them in schools: parents, teachers, youth, employers, women's groups, elected representatives and the children themselves, in order to change attitudes and create an environment that is supportive of children's education.
- Establishing motivation centres at villages which serve as the nerve centre to bring working children into school.
- Conducting bridge courses, camps and residential programmes as part of a process to encourage children to attend school.

Oxfam

Oxfam GB has been working with farmers, weavers and garment workers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka since 2003. The most relevant project for BCI is the programme established since 2007, whereby Oxfam is working with seven partners to support cotton farmers, handloom weavers and garment workers. The aim is to improve the quality of life for people working across the textile industry by:

- encouraging cotton farmers to take up organic farming, promoting cheaper and more sustainable practices
- supporting the work of a farmers' trading company, made up of four farming co-operatives, to improve incomes and reduce costs
- assisting farmers and weavers to collectively secure more contracts for their products
- encouraging weavers to work in groups to increase their bargaining power and supporting a handloom trading company, made up of two weaving co-operatives
- assisting people working across the cotton textile industry to become better organised to demand their rights and negotiate more effectively with employers and other authorities

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- supporting women worker's to better understand their labour rights and improve their working conditions through collective action, and by making sure that gender concerns are fully addressed in this project.

Information is available on the project activities, as follows:

- Oxfam works with four partner organisations in Warangal district training 15 000 cotton farmers in organic methods
- Oxfam partners provide technical and financial support to four farming co-operatives to purchase raw materials and equipment and assist them in sharing their learning on organic farming methods with other villages and farmers
- The programme has so far enabled 2000 new farmers to certify their cotton as organic
- Oxfam continue to support the work of the new Farmer's Trading Company to assist 4000
- Oxfam is undertaking research relating to farmers, weavers and garment workers and advocate for improved working conditions for cotton industry workers.

IV. Summary of effective practices in promoting decent work in Indian agriculture

This section aims to summarise effective practices promoting decent work for smallholders in India drawn from analysis of the projects and programmes identified during the research.

However, most projects listed here are either current or very recent, many are lacking evaluation and almost none have a direct aim of promoting decent work (as opposed to ending child labour or promoting farmer health and safety). As a result, clear effective practices are few. Nevertheless, they can be summarised as follows:

- *Farmer field school or similar approach:*
A farmer field school or in-depth extension services approach usually used on agriculture issues can also yield decent work benefits (as evidenced through the FAO-EU-IPM and Agrocel/Shell Foundation projects)
- *Taking costs and prices into account:*
Addressing labour standards for farmers' workers can be successful where farmer's costs and prices received are taken into account (as evidenced by the FLA Syngenta work)
- *Adequate attention to accessible, ongoing awareness-raising and training:*
Awareness-raising and training on decent work standards are effective where they are given sufficient early importance, are made accessible to farmers and are ongoing. They are most successful when combined with ongoing, accessible training regarding the standards in use and their practical implementation for field staff and extension service officers.
- *Taking migration and trafficking into account:*
Work to address bonded labour and child labour is most successful where migration and trafficking patterns are taken into account (as evidenced by cottonseed evaluations and rural union activity).