

### Title of project

#### Assessing business efforts to reduce child and adolescent labour in developing countries: the case of adolescent girls in India's cotton garment industry

This research project seeks to better understand how community-level institutions – both public institutions (State and local government) and private business institutions – affect adolescent girls working in the global cotton value chain. The focus is on the start of the value chain, from the farming and ginning of cotton, to the spinning, weaving/knitting of yarn to make textile/fabric. We hypothesize that the policies, practices and codes of conduct that business enterprises use to manage risks related to human resources and employment can improve working conditions and influence a reduction in harm among adolescent labour, and government institutions can moderate the strength of that relationship. For these reasons, we are interested in understanding how to measure the effect of business employment practices on child labour and adolescent labour risks with a special focus on adolescent girls so that this is most meaningful for workers, firms/organizations and at the community-level. The research is comparative and examines community-level institutions in two parts of India (Andhra Pradesh/Telangana and Gujarat). The research is policy relevant and will lead to better knowledge on how to improve community-level institutions.

The business enterprises that we will look at include business enterprises with or without certification standards (e.g., Better Cotton, Fairtrade, GOTS and the Organic Content Standard), including companies, farmer producer organizations and other cotton value chain actors (i.e., cotton producers, ginners, traders, textile and garment manufacturers), standard setting bodies and industry auditing firms. This research will engage the perspectives of other stakeholders, including government representatives responsible for labour, employment and child protection including the inspectorate; worker representatives including trade unions and informal worker groups, and other social actors particularly non-governmental organizations.

This research takes place over nine months. Following the pilot process started in August 2021, the first phase of this research will be started. Desk reviews of approximately 60 businesses will be completed, and follow-up research (surveys and interviews) with approximately 30 industry stakeholders (business and non-business) will be organized.

- Business and non-business participants in the first phase of the research will be asked to commit 12 minutes of their time to a survey, which was sent out starting in September. Follow-up interviews will be organized and take approximately 60-90 minutes.

During the second phase of the research:

- Business participants will be asked to complete a shorter survey, which will take less than 10 minutes.
- Approximately ten business enterprises with locations or operations in Gujarat, Telangana or Andhra Pradesh will be invited to take part in a follow-up interview, which will take less than 20 minutes.

This research is financed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC - a Canadian federal Crown corporation that funds research in developing countries), and the Fonds de Recherche du Québec Société et Culture (FRSCQ – the province of Quebec's public granting agency for academic research). This research complies with expectations of the ethical conduct of research. **Project File # S-02-21-5106.**

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This research is conducted by the School of International Development and Global Studies at the University of Ottawa in Canada. It is conducted in affiliation with the Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR) in Ahmedabad and with collaboration from Glocal Research in Hyderabad. Local research assistants in Gujarat and Telangana will assist with the data collection.

As a participant in this research project, the principal investigator assures:

- That you can ask the researcher any question about any part of the research being conducted.
- You have the right to refuse to participate in this project, and to refuse to answer any questions in the questionnaire or interviews.
- Your comments will remain anonymous so that neither you (nor your organization) will be identified, unless you explicitly consent to be cited. In other words, any publication resulting from this study will not identify you by name or include any information that you may permit you to be identified, unless you have agreed to be identified.
- You may withdraw your participation in the research project (questionnaire, interviews) at any time, and can instruct the researcher (using contact information below) to destroy all information gathered from you in the course of the research (questionnaire, interviews) prior to publication of the results of the study.

<p>If you wish to know more about this project, please contact Andrea Khan, the principal investigator.</p> <p>Andrea Carina Khan School of International Development and Global Studies University of Ottawa Ottawa, ON Canada K1N 6N5, Email: akhan298@uottawa.ca Web: <a href="https://uniweb.uottawa.ca/members/1657">https://uniweb.uottawa.ca/members/1657</a></p>	<p>Inquiries about the ethical conduct of this research project may also be directed to:</p> <p>Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research Room 159 Taberet Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, University of Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5, Canada Phone: +1-613-562-5841 Email: ethics@uottawa.ca</p>
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**Please keep this document for your records. This signed information is a symbol of our commitment to ethical research.**

*Andrea C. Khan*

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