

The Hidden Cost of Cheap Clothes

Malie's hands were already calloused, and were bleeding. She was 8 and was wearing a dress, merely rags sewn together by herself, and her hair had never touched a wonder called 'shampoo'. Everyday, she wakes up at midnight, and walks the 3km road to a fast fashion clothes factory. She has no shoes and gravel and stones dug into her soles as she continued walking. The next year, the soles of her feet were already infected.

Malie is just one of the many voices of the voiceless, nameless children that are confined to child labour. When the owner of the factory got arrested, Malie had said that, "I was a caged bird in a rusty cage. My wings were chipped and my feathers were pulled. Scars adorned my body, like a coat to a man. Everyday, the cage grows thicker and rustier." What's your t-shirt really costing you?

Everyday, millions of t-shirts are produced by factories worldwide, by children. In Ghana, more than 10000 cases of child labour have been reported by police from a variety of countries. Child labor isn't limited to Gaza, in almost every place, children are being beaten up, and forced to work, for a salary of \$5 a day. This is just enough for them to buy a cheap dinner and keep working. Conditions are horrible in factories, and life-threatening diseases have been reported in almost all of them.

Children's lives are not the only ones affected in the Fast Fashion Era. Marine lives are also constantly in danger. Over 100 tons of clothes are being transported to landfills, and nearly 67% are clothes that have been worn fewer than 10 times. Noted the University of Harvard. "The marine animals were witnesses that have been impacted. "They are choking and gasping for another breath. They are scavenging the ocean floors for food that they have never thought to eat." quoted Marie who is a marine expert. In the past 5 years, the number of species going extinct is doubling then what should have been.

But, whilst this all seems hopeless, many people are fighting this. Factories owners' have pledged to raise higher pays, offer insurance, and improve working conditions. More have recycled their fast fashion clothes to other items like blankets or donate them to charity. This isn't much, but it's a start. An inferno starts from a single spark. Together, we can stop child labor and save marine lives.