Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA)
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Design for Freedom: Eliminating Modern Slavery in the Building Material Supply Chain

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NESEA BuildingEnergy Boston
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Grace Farms Foundation’s interdisciplinary humanitarian mission is to pursue peace through five initiatives — nature, arts, justice, community, and faith — and Grace Farms, a SANAA-designed site for convening people across sectors.

Our stake in the ground is to end modern slavery and gender-based violence, and create more grace and peace in our local and global communities.
The built environment has a relationship with nature and people.

Are your buildings ethically sourced, free of forced labor, as well as sustainably designed?
Design for Freedom is a movement to create a radical paradigm shift and remove slavery from the built environment.
Design for Freedom Working Group
(80+ CEOs, Principals, Industry Experts)
25 million people enslaved

Occurs in every region of the world

“...all work or service that is performed involuntarily and under the menace of any penalty.” (ILO)

Penalties include violence, intimidation, debt, retention of identity papers, immigration threats

Work performed by a child under coercion applied by a third party either to the child or the child’s parents, or work performed by a child as a direct consequence of his or her parents being engaged in forced labor. (GEMS)

160 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 years old in 2020 (ILO)
are owners subsidizing their ROI with slavery?

likely, yes.
There is an inverse relationship between driving costs lower and the risk of raising human cost.
Construction is the largest global industrialized sector and at the highest risk of forced labor.

150 billion

dollar value of the modern slavery criminal industry worldwide

152 million

children aged five to 17 are subjected to child labor

12 materials

(raw and composite) at highest risk of forced labor in buildings

11.4 trillion

construction-related spending globally (USD)
Construction lags other industries in supply chain transparency
The next step in architecture justice must include social equity and ethical material transparency.

- Climate justice and climate action
- Embodied carbon movement
- Social equity and ethical material transparency
Addressing on-site labor is only half of the equation.
Global laws forbid the use of slave labor in the built environment, yet our buildings, and the materials that go into our buildings, are heavily reliant on slave labor.
Slavery is illegal in every country. Countries are moving to make corporations more accountable.

178 jurisdictions are parties to the United Nations’ Trafficking Protocol’s call for prosecution, protection, and prevention. Supplementing other jurisdictions’ reporting-based laws, the U.S. is using its tariff authority to prevent any products made with forced labor entering the country.
all forced labor produced goods as well as illegally logged timber are prohibited from importation into the U.S.
what are the riskiest products?
raw and composite materials at the highest risk of embedded slavery

Source: Verité "Commodities Atlas" and the U.S. Department of Labor’s List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, Grace Farms analysis
Timber

The US is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest importer, following China.

48.7 billion

value of timber products imported into the U.S. in 2018

38%

percentage of wood products globally used for buildings and construction.
Nations producing timber at risk of forced labor and human trafficking

Source: Verité and Global Forest Atlas, Grace Farms analysis
Lauded as a major innovation in the sustainable building movement, timber itself is one of the most ubiquitous building materials that is at the highest risk of forced labor worldwide.
at-risk
sawnwood

BRAZIL SOFTWOOD
Pine

RUSSIA SOFTWOOD
Pine, Spruce, and Fir

BRAZIL & PERU HARDWOOD
Peru | White Oak and Walnut
Brazil | Tropical Lumber (Teak, Mahogany, Ipe, etc.)

RUSSIA HARDWOOD
Oak, Birch, Aspen, and Elm
Textiles are found in shades and rugs, furnishings and walls; most anti-slavery efforts have been in garment production, but materials supply chains can include slave-made cotton, carpet, jute, sisal, and silk.
India and Bangladesh are the only countries in the world to produce jute in commercial quantities.
gravel &
calcium chloride
(concrete)
Brick is one of the most used at-risk materials. Children and adults are often held in debt bondage and breathe hazardous dust all day.
Mica is at high risk for forced labor

- Mica is used in building materials including insulation, concrete, and paint
- Mining is one of the worst forms of child labor
- Of all forms of hazardous work, mining is by far the most mortally dangerous for children
MICA PRODUCING COUNTRIES CLASSIFIED BY RISK

- Red: Guilty of child labour in mica mining
- Orange: Suspected of child labour in mica mining
- Pink: Suspected of illegal mica mining (high risk child labour)
- Blue: Substantial sheet mica production (high risk child labour)
- Purple: High usage of mica mined with child labour
what can we do as owners, designers, engineers, and construction professionals?
1. talk to your clients and colleagues about the issue
2. add requirements to specifications and contracts
3. ask where materials come from
4. use certifications and measure impact

Call to Action
what certifications can help identify ethical products?
There are dozens of certification and resources to help you examine your supply chain.
design for freedom
pilot projects
Design for Freedom pilot projects

Accelerate awareness of forced labor in building materials supply chains

Enhance Material Transparency by adding ethical labor inputs

Add to the industry’s body of knowledge with ethical provenance and risk assessment research and case studies

Transform the market through pressure points and purchasing power
Design for Freedom Pilot Projects

Temporal Shift by Alyson Shotz
design for FREEDOM summit

march 31, 2022

presented by grace farms
We have harnessed the knowledge and insight of our partners and team to advance a non-negotiable challenge: that every building should be designed and built for freedom.
once you know
you can’t un-know it
and now
there is a duty to act
“There is no sustainable future without an equitable future.”

Mahesh Ramanujam
Stung Meanchey landfill, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
MANIFESTO

COOKFOX Architects pledges to do our part to purge the building industry of unethical labor practices by shining a light on forced labor within the building supply chain. As we continue confront the social and racial injustices that surround us, we must use this same lens to focus on the injustices within the construction industry.

We believe:

Freedom is fundamental to the equity, health and well-being of humans.
The well-being of humanity depends on a healthy planet.
Sustainable buildings are vital to creating a healthier planet.
A sustainable future is meaningless without an equitable future.
We have a professional, ethical and moral responsibility to pursue sustainable, equitable design.

We must:

Eradicate the inhumane practices that permeate the supply chain and harm individuals and the global community.
Educate industry colleagues and consumers on the hidden and pervasive nature of forced-labor practices.
Establish resources that enable our studio to specify healthy, ethically sourced, forced labor-free building materials and products.
Create documentation and accountability practices.
Use our practice to set a new standard for forced labor-free buildings.

WHAT CAN WE DO?
EDUCATING OURSELVES

**We can:**
Commit early in the design process to ask where each material comes from and revise selections to avoid benefiting from slavery.

**We must:**
Heighten requirements for slave-free materials in the proposal process.
Enact a system for tracking and monitoring where materials and equipment originate.
Proactively collect, analyze, and share information about products.
Assess what is in our materials library.
Get buy-in from all other stakeholders on the project.
GOING PUBLIC

We can:

We can become aware of which Force Labor Free products are available to specify in project manuals and educate ourselves about slavery free labor in the building industry.

We must:

Publicize our policy
Participate in efforts to change the industry
Publicly disclose anti-slavery commitments
CREATING A MOVEMENT

We must:
Join the Design For Freedom movement and social media campaign.

Together, we can:
Work to make sure that the environment we design into reality does not embody forced labor.
Spread the word about slave-free labor practices in the building industry so we can affect market transformation.
Make every effort to effect positive and sustainable change to eliminate forced labor in the built environment.
Forced Labor Free Resources

We are creating a consolidated list of forced labor free certifications and starting a database of certified materials.

STEPS WE ARE TAKING
PRACTICE

Pilot Project

We are working on a white paper and a parallel path innovation model to investigate the ways COOKFOX can adapt the design and specification process of a speculative, developer-driven large-scale project in NYC to reduce the impact of forced labor.
MARKET TRANSFORMATION

We must:
We are educating colleagues, clients, and peers about forced labor issues.

We are:
Including Design for Freedom principles in all discussions with clients and proposals for new projects.
Our vision is to achieve forced labor free building supply chains. While it is easy to be overwhelmed by the enormity and complexity of this challenge, we believe that all of us can contribute, one building block at a time, to our vision of material transparency and reduced risk of forced labor in our buildings.
DISCUSSION

HOW WOULD YOU BEGIN IN YOUR CONTEXT?