

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/design-for-freedom/>

Sharon Prince, CEO and founder of Grace Farms Foundation, explains the motivation behind and initiation of the Design for Freedom movement, which aims to remove forced and child labor from the building supply chain. She gives examples of materials that are at high risk of involving forced labor and shares how the movement is beginning to create change.



Transcript

- We're taking on the entire construction sector 00:00:06,780 and creating this radical paradigm shift to remove force and child labor from the building material supply chain.. And it takes a whole industry to become a part of that.. And that's what we did.. The built environment does have a relationship to nature and people.. And the question that brought people around the table is, is your building ethically sourced, forced labor-free, as well as sustainably designed? As a question I asked end of 2017, beginning of 2018, to get people on board, and the answer is, "We don't know." If you look around here, you don't know where these materials are made from.. You've, there's, unlike even clothing, the provenance, you might not know who, but you know, oh, I know the origin and a piece of clothing.. But you don't know, and these are materials that are highly fraught.. So the one thing to note is that with construction, you think about labor, but it's mainly on the job site.. The whole sector's been given a labor transparency pass on the material procurement side, and half of the cost of a building is the material procurement.. So construction is the largest industry that has the largest industrialized industry at risk of force and child labor..

It's also the most egregious violator of carbon emissions at 37%.. And they do go together, and we can talk about that another time, why that relationship might be studying that.. But the size of the industry, 14 trillion in consumer spending, I mean, in spending globally.. And there are new numbers that just came out of estimates of the illicit profits that are being earned by subsidizing with forced labor, 236 billion of which, that's on modern slavery, of which \$63 billion derived are from forced labor.. At that time, there was no list of materials.. And this is literally only five, six years ago, right? 2018, the beginning, no list of the materials.. So we issued that.. And I'll explain how that happened because we started to, and before I do, the most important thing is people, not the numbers.. There's 28 million people in forced labor conditions around the world, estimated, likely more.. And it's been escalating..

The last estimate that was revealed was 25 million a few years ago, five years ago, and it's escalating.. It's not decreasing even with more knowledge about supply chains and forced labor.. Here's that list of materials that really, some of them have longstanding histories of forced labor, rubber, you might be studying these in different ways, but rubber, glass, fiber, textiles, steel, electronics, bricks, think about, right? It's crazy.. Timber and copper, stone.. So you repeat the rest of them? Iron, minerals, and polysilicon.. Okay, these are at-risk materials and we're not expecting our supply chain.. Now, solar panels, you

saw polysilicon is fraught.. I mean it's definitely is.. Solar panels are not sustainable if they're subsidized with forced labor and made with that.. So I know you're working on projects that, okay, this is a very important concept because 35 to 45% of all the polysilicon in the world is being sourced from the Uyghur region of China..

But that's not the only at-risk material, you have steel, copper, aluminum, glass.. Glass, also, when I described that before, there are no third party audited certifications for glass that include fair labor.. There are for many others that we put in our toolkit.. So now, we also see some low hanging fruit.. There's been, I said first food is called to be accountable, then clothing, next to shelter.. Clothing has already been accountable and there are certain transparency certifications that have been put into play.. There's more transparency in that sector.. So now, we're looking to take that sector and that accountability and convert that into interiors.. So are they curtains, chairs, carpet, right? Just the textiles alone from the garment industry, we can convert and we're doing that..