

CHILDREN AND COTTON CULTIVATION

Good Practices and “Worst Forms of Child Labour”



Eastern and Southern Africa Edition

Foreword

“Cotton made in Africa” (CmiA), an initiative of the Aid by Trade Foundation (AbTF), aims at improving the social, ecological and economic living conditions of a large number of African cotton farmers and their family members. Together with partnering cotton companies and the COMPACI (Competitive African Cotton Initiative) project, CmiA ensures trainings in modern, efficient and environmentally friendly cotton cultivation methods. Through its independent verification system, it has set up social, economic and environmental criteria to follow the 3 P “people – profit – planet” philosophy.

AbTF is actively engaged in protecting children. Under the CmiA sustainability standard, all “worst forms of child labour” as defined by the ILO Conventions 138 and 182 are prohibited, and compliance is regularly controlled on site. In the case of family smallholdings, children may exceptionally help on their family’s farm provided that the work is not liable - according to ILO - to damage their health, safety, well-being, education or development, and that they are supervised by adults who give them appropriate training.

The present CmiA picture block “Children on smallholder cotton plantations in Eastern and Southern Africa” is designed by the Aid by Trade Foundation and its Cotton made in Africa initiative to stand up for the rights of children and to sensitize all actors in the cotton production, especially cotton producers.



How to use the image block?

The picture block is an instructive tool, which can be used during a training session by displaying the included set of images. Its structure, with image on the front and text on the back, allows the user (trainer or extension worker) to pass the key messages on the subject in an interactive, participatory way.

The trainer stimulates reflection and discussions amongst participants. The interaction is based on the real concerns of the participants and takes the form of a continuous dialogue of “question-answer” with the participants. The transfer of key messages and their understanding is fully ensured by a set of questions and answers listed in the overleaf.

During a session, the images will be shown (one after the other) to the audience and the participants should interpret and discuss the activities shown in the image, with the aim to make the participants understand the importance of the addressed topic. The proposed questions and answers can serve as guidance to the trainer. If the answers of the participants do not instantly bring the key messages across, further leading questions should be asked by the trainer to help the participants discover the key message. These questions should start with: Who/What/When/Where/Why? to gather relevant information.

Questions and answers act as a guide for the trainer and should not be read continuously during the session with the participants. After discussing a specific image and going through the questions, ask one of the participants to summarize it again to make sure that the mes-

sage of the picture is understood. Then the next image can be shown and discussed in the same way.

Leave time for the audience to look at the pictures and think of it. Actively involve also the more quiet participants!

Each image is accompanied by a page facing the trainer, holding the narrative text with a set of questions and answers, as well as key messages in English.

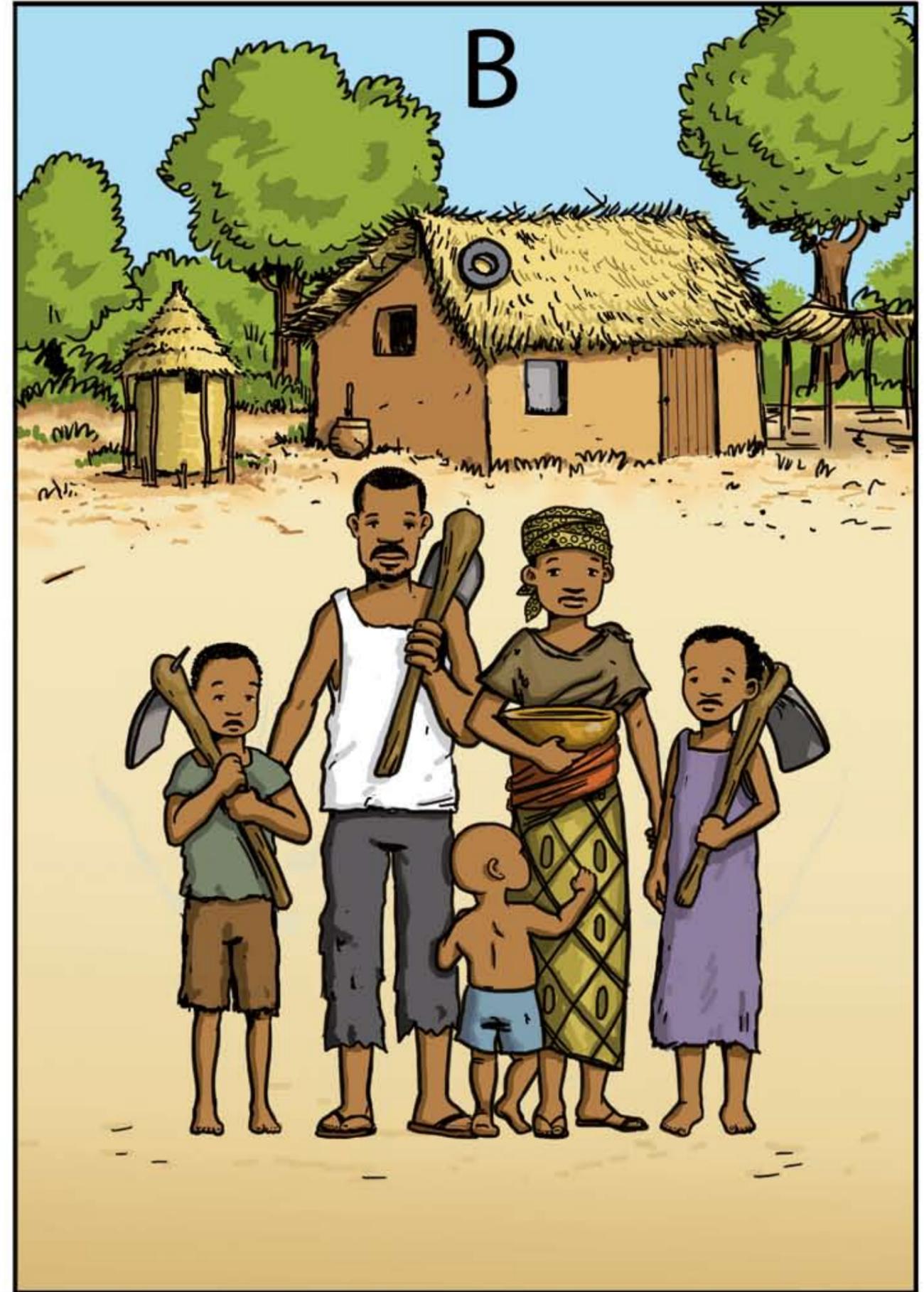
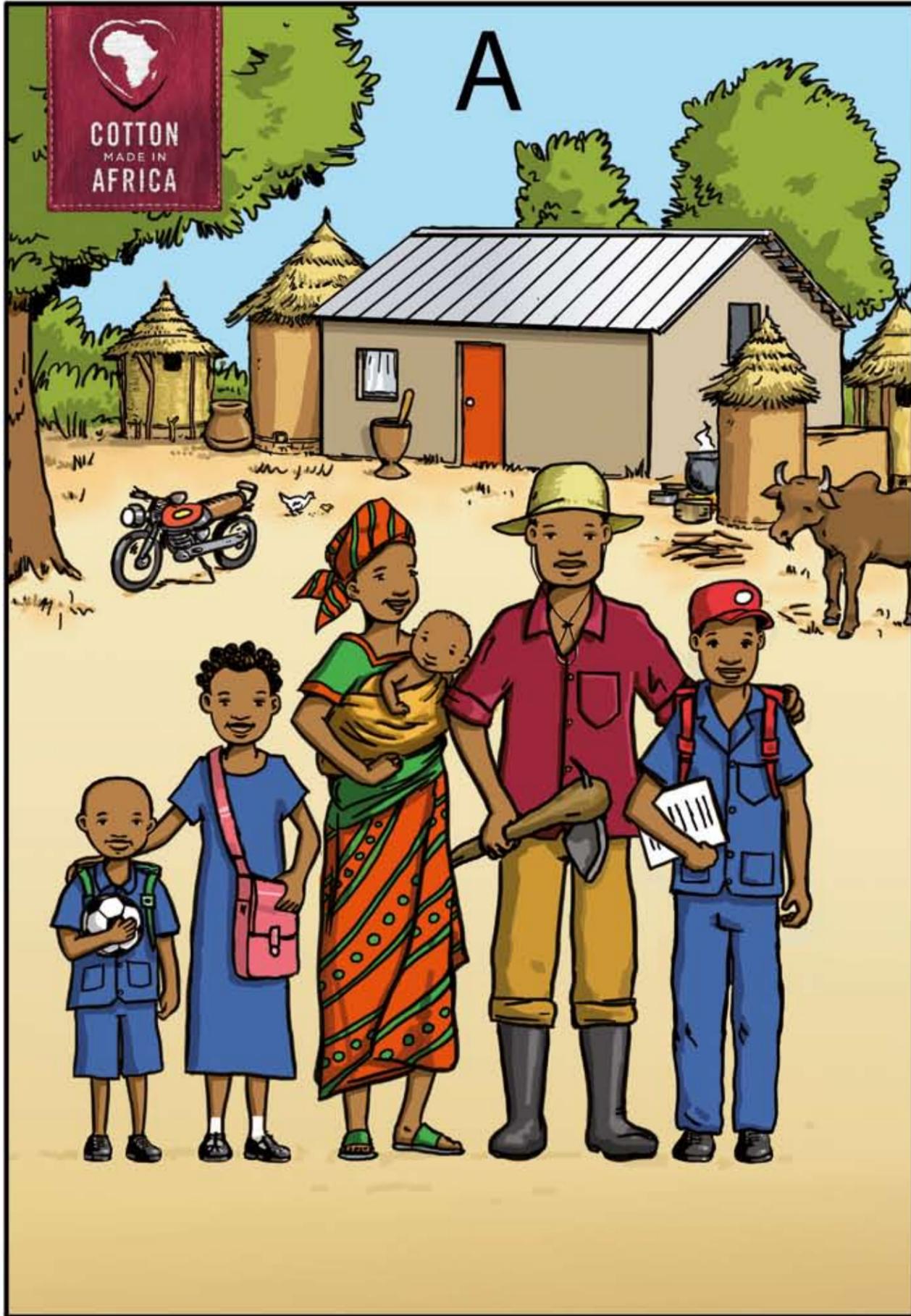
The story shown in the pictures revolves around two cotton farmer families.

Please name the characters based on the common names used in your country/area to create a familiar atmosphere. Please fill out the table below so it can serve you as a reference and also fill out the child's name on the empty lines in the following text:

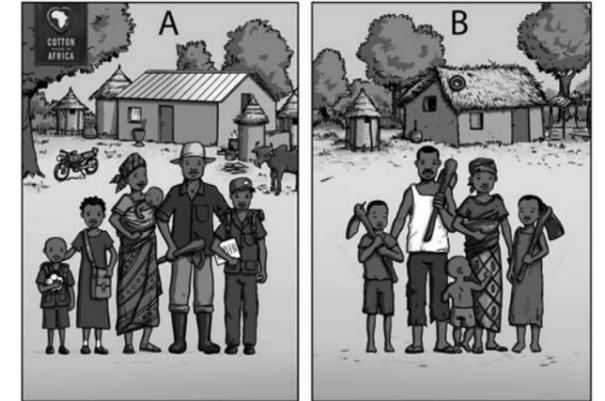
FAMILY (on the left)	
Father	<i>Masanja</i>
Mother	<i>Janet</i>
Older son (15)	
Daughter (13)	

FAMILY (on the right)	
Father	<i>Shija</i>
Mother	<i>Mariam</i>
Older daughter (14)	
Older son (10)	

Suggestions or modification by farmers and trainers are welcome for the improvement of this picture block.



Picture 1



Q. What do you see on picture A?

A. We see the family of Masanja and Janet. Their house is in good condition with a corrugated roof. They have oxen which facilitate their work, and they are dressed in good new clothes. They have 5 children: the eldest son (age 20, works and lives in the city), an older son _____ (age 15), the daughter _____ (age 13), another boy (age 6) and a baby. The three children seen are dressed in school uniforms.

Q. What do you see on picture B?

A. We see the family of Shija and Mariam. Their house is very modest with a straw roof, they do not have oxen, and they wear old clothes. They have 4 children: the eldest son (age 20, he is unemployed and lives in the city), an older daughter _____ (age 14), a younger brother _____ and a baby brother. The two children with hoes do not attend school, but are going to work in the fields instead.

Message: Both families started equally. But through training, education, accounting, and good farming practices the family of Masanja on picture A has been able to improve their standard of living. Shija uses farming methods that continue to use children to work in the fields with no time for schooling. Under CmiA and under national law, parents should send all their children to school.



Picture 2



Q. What do you see on the LEFT side of the picture?

A. Masanja's children are waving to their father as they go to school.

Q. Why is it good to send the children to school?

A. Going to school, children will learn to read, write and count. This opens many ways for them. Also, children can help their parents to read documentation and to get a better understanding of agronomy. Calculation and reading skills can be used to better manage the farm. Children can also help their parents to read letters, contracts and keep records of drugs and pesticides.

Q. What do you see on the RIGHT side of the picture?

A. Shija and Mariam are going with their two children to work in the farms fields.

Q. What are some of the problems of taking the children to the fields instead of sending them to school?

A. It hinders children from learning how to read and write and it also affects the family's farming practices. This is usually so because no family member is able to read manuals on agriculture and calculations made during the marketing season.

Message: *Going to school will give the children the perspective of a better future.*

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Picture 3

Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. It is morning. The children are going to school as their father Masanja tills the soil. Their mother, Janet, helps spread the heaps of compost that were brought in bags.



Q. What are the parents doing with the compost?

A. To increase the fertility of the field, Masanja has distributed compost onto the soil to mix with the earth during tillage. Using compost is a very good and cheap way to fertilize the soil. He spends less money making compost than if he had to buy fertilizer, because biomass is available for free.

Q. Why are the children not tilling and working the field like their parents?

A. Because it is long hard work to be done by adults only. Their place is in school with the other children.



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Picture 4

Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. The cotton has been planted and growing but now needs thinning. The whole family is participating in thinning the cotton plants.



Q. Can the children help with this task?

A. Thinning is not a dangerous task. If children help during their holidays, after school or on the weekend, this is something where they can participate and help their parents.

Older children can also help by keeping the farm animals away from the field.

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Picture 5



Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. Masanja is preparing the slurry for the insecticide treatment on the field. He wears his protective equipment: overalls, boots, a hat, goggles, gloves and a mask to not inhale the spray. If he doesn't have an overall, long trousers and a shirt with long sleeves can also give minimum protection.

Q. Why does he wear protective clothes?

A. Pesticides, especially concentrated, are very hazardous to health. Only adults should handle them with special care.

Q. What is Masanja doing with the empty pesticide containers?

A. He has already cut one empty bottle and will bury it immediately to prevent children from finding and using them to play or drink with. You cannot reuse empty bottles of insecticides.

Q. Are children allowed to help with this task?

A. No, they are not. Pesticides are especially hazardous to children and young persons because they are still growing. Jumanne, who is not yet 18 years old, brings water, but he strictly does not have the right to approach. Masanja orders him to leave the field. Application of pesticides is also strictly prohibited for breastfeeding and pregnant women.

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Picture 6



Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. Masanja has finished spraying and left the field. He has buried the empty pesticide containers in a pit. He is putting his spraying equipment in a well-ventilated shed which is fenced, with a padlocked solid door located away from the family farm.

Q. Why is he not storing pesticides inside his home?

A. Insecticide products are very toxic. They and everything that has been in touch with pesticides, like protective clothing, should always be stored in a secure location that children cannot access. Masanja must wash himself completely as well as all the items he has used for spraying.

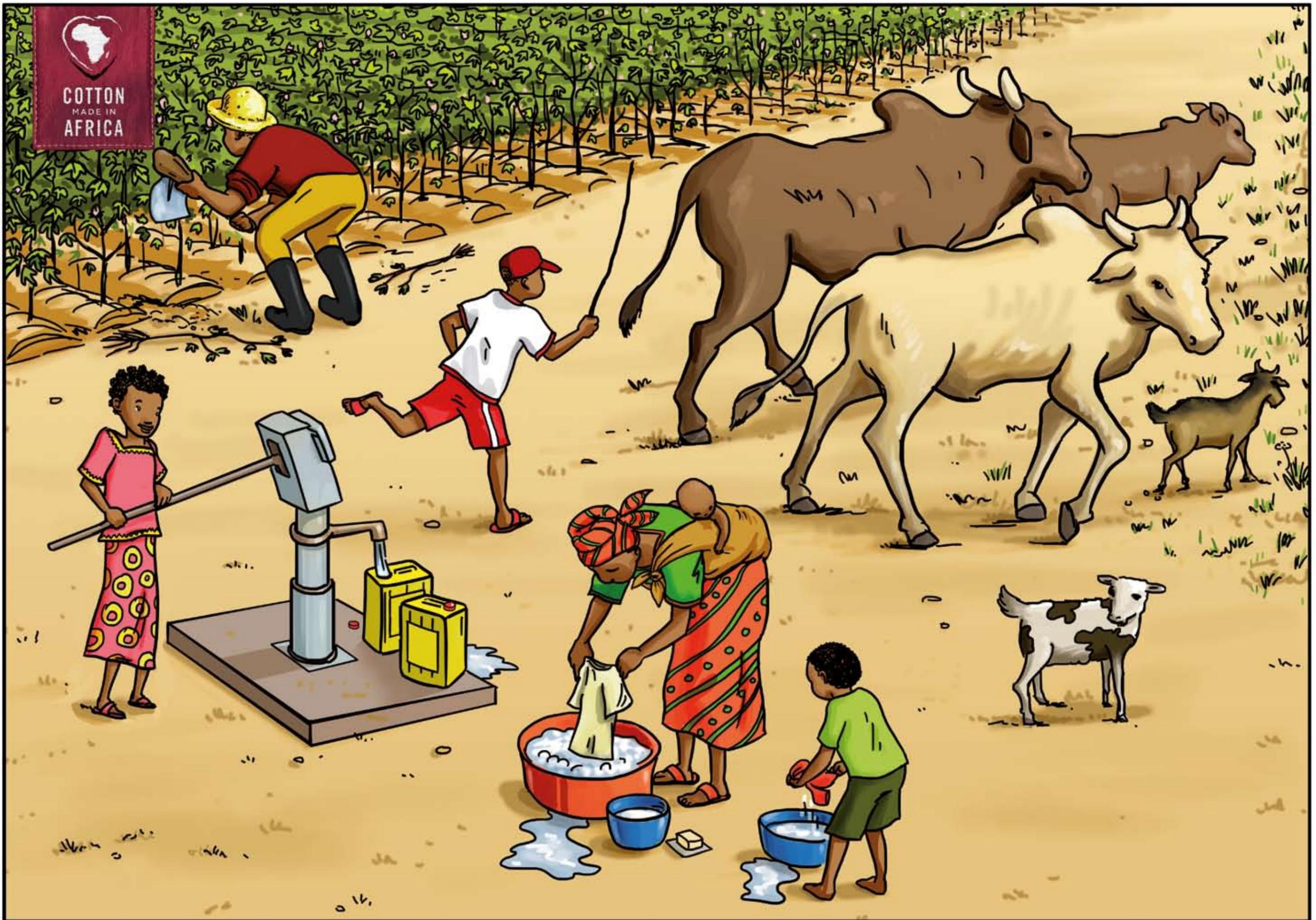
Q. What are the other family members doing?

A. Janet and her children have remained at home, away from the treatment in the fields. Janet is preparing the meal helped by her daughter _____ . Her son _____ feeds the chickens while the little brother plays football. Children can help the family with many different tasks: taking care of the poultry, collecting eggs, helping prepare meals, taking care of the garden, washing clothes, etc.

Message: Pesticide products and everything connected to their application are very harmful and absolutely need to be stored away from children's reach. If a shed like the one in the picture cannot be built, pesticides should at least be safely locked away.



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Picture 7

Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. The image shows some of the tasks that children can do to help their parents outside the house. For example, outside school time, they can bring animals to graze, keeping them out and away from insecticide treated fields, fetch water and firewood, harvest fruit (mango, groundnuts etc.) and help sell products from the farm at the market.



Q. Does the fight against child labor mean that children will become lazy and are not allowed to help their parents?

A. No. Children can add to the family income without doing tasks that endanger their health and development. But it is important that they have the possibility to go to school.

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Picture 8

Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. This is the cotton season. Masanja and Janet are reaping cotton.



Q. Are the children helping their parents?

A. In his spare time from school, _____ (boy's name) helps, but at his own pace. In the shade _____ (girl's name) and the little brother help sort cotton and eliminate plastic wastes, leaves and pebbles. Cotton harvested by hand is cleaner than machine harvested. It is possible to improve the quality by removing impurities. Triage is a work that children can do.

Message: Cotton harvesting is a task that older children can participate in during holidays, on the weekend or after school.



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Picture 9



Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. We see Masanja's cotton field on the left, and on the right Shija's. Masanja's harvest is a lot better than Shija's, although Shija's children have spent much time working with him.

Q. If Masanja's children have been busy in school and not been working in the fields, how could Masanja have such a good harvest?

A. Masanja has reaped a good harvest because he has improved the soil by adding compost and because he has used insecticide spraying on the crops only when necessary. This way, he has also saved a lot of money. His children have not been lazy or lost their time in school! In fact, they have learned many things that were also helpful to their parents. For example, they could read information concerning treatments or instructions from the field officers.

Q. What has gone wrong on Shija's field?

A. Shija has not used techniques to improve soil fertility. He spent much money on buying pesticides, but he didn't apply them only when really needed. Therefore, caterpillars and other pests have ravaged the crop, and his harvest was poor.

As Shija cannot read or write, it was difficult for him to follow the trainings given, and his children could not help him either. Shija's family has not had the chance to make progress.

Message: *Children who go to school do not become lazy. Instead, they provide a better growing performance and ultimately, more profit for the whole family.*



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Picture 10

Q. What is Masanja doing?

A. He is selling his crop of cotton to the cotton company while the men load the heavy jute bales onto the truck. Masanja has also come to the market to assist.



Q. What are the children doing?

A. They have come along with their father to observe, make calculations and read contracts, while the younger one stayed to play.

Q. Can the children also carry cotton bales?

A. No. It is strictly forbidden for children to carry heavy loads, as this can be harmful to their formation and health.

***Message:** Cotton marketing is an important moment for all farmers and for the whole family. A good cotton harvest and reasonably used inputs mean good incomes for a whole year.*



Picture 11

Q. What are Masanja and his family doing?

A. Masanja and his family are relaxing, looking at the year's cotton production accounts. Their neighbor Shija stops by to ask if Sala, Masanja's daughter, can read an important document for him, as he cannot read.

At school, children acquire knowledge to which parents sometimes have no access. They can also read the contracts, labels, notices, expiration dates and production slips.

Q. What can children become who go to school?

A. With the knowledge transmitted to them at school, children can help their families improve their living conditions. Children can also develop their talents and, if they work hard at school, become teachers, midwives, engineers, accountants or agronomists.





Picture 12

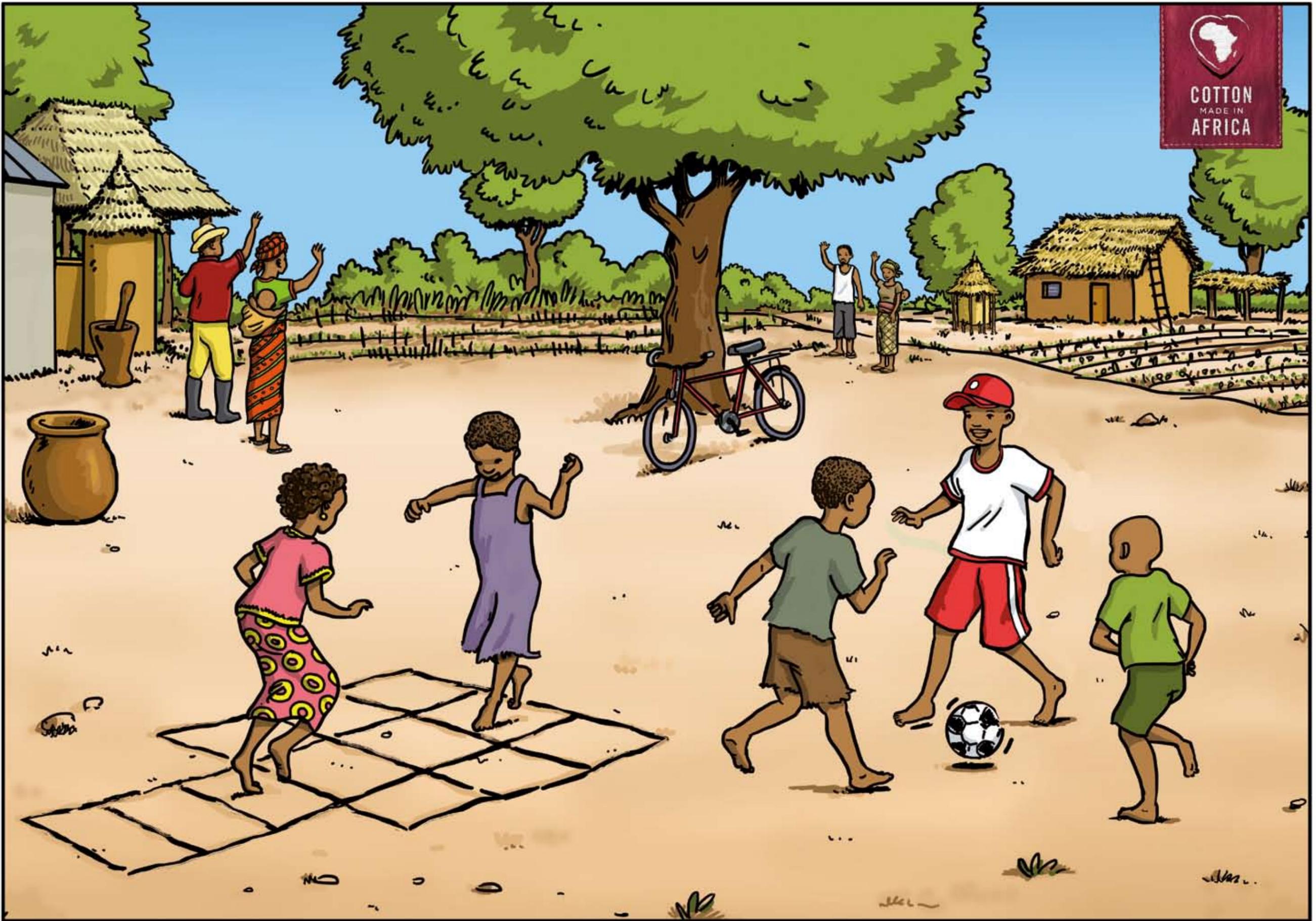
Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. It's the beginning of the school year. Masanja's children are happy with the arrival of Shija's children at their school.



Q. What has made Shija change his mind and send his two older children to school?

A. Shija has observed Masanja and his family throughout the year. He has understood that education provides better opportunities for children and the entire family: health, wellness, higher crop yields and more income. Shija has decided to invest in the best way by sending his children to school also.



Picture 13

Q. What do you see in the picture?

A. It's the weekend and school is out. Masanja's and Shija's children are playing and relaxing together.

Q. Why is it important for children to do so?

A. Children have the right to play. Playing is also absolutely necessary to their health and proper development.



Aid by Trade Foundation

The Aid by Trade Foundation was created in 2005 by Dr. Michael Otto, an entrepreneur from Hamburg, Germany as an independent organization from the Otto Group. Its goal is to provide aid by trade for people to help themselves, thereby preserving vital natural resources and securing the livelihoods of future generations. The Aid by Trade Foundation is the umbrella organization of Cotton made in Africa and realizes its goals through this initiative.

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