Emerging Good Practices in the Elimination of Child Labour in the Middle East and North Africa

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Contents

Abbreviations

AUB	American University of Beirut
BF	Banati Foundation
CL	Child labour
CAFAAG	Children associated with armed forces and armed groups
CBO	Community-based organisation
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLDB	Child labour database
CLDW	Child labour in domestic work
CLMS	Child labour monitoring system
CSC	Community Service Centre
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
HVS	Hope Village Society
IDP	Internally displaced persons
INDH	National Initiative for the Support of Human Development
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOL	Ministry of Labour
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
NAP	National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs
NFCCL	National Framework to Combat Child Labour
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OSMM	Organisation of Moroccan Scouts of Mehemmedia
SCREAM	Supporting Child Rights through Education, Arts and the Media
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USDOL	United States Department of Labour
WDACL	World Day against Child Labour
WFCL	Worst Forms of Child Labour
WFP	World Food Programme

Glossary

Child: According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child a child means a human being below the age of 18 years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Child labour: Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and which is harmful to their physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and/or which interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to combine school attendance with excessively long hours and heavy work.

Child work: Not all work done by children should be classified as child labour and targeted for elimination. Participation in work that does not affect the health and personal development of a child, or interfere with their schooling, is generally regarded as being something positive. This includes activities such as helping parents around the home, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays (see: What is child labour).

Hazardous child labour or hazardous work: Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. Guidance for governments on some hazardous work activities that should be prohibited is given by Article 3 of ILO Recommendation No. 190.

Worst forms of child labour: All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, pornography or for pornographic performances; the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, particularly the production or trafficking of drugs; and work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (see Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182).

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Executive summary

Between 2000 and 2010, efforts against child labour in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) made relatively good progress. Since then, some countries have continued to make inroads, while others have faced additional challenges, particularly states affected by social conflict, war, natural disasters and, recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. These conflicts, disasters and humanitarian crises are usually accompanied by economic crises, placing additional constraints on government agencies and other bodies to respond effectively to deeply rooted social problems, such as child labour.

Nevertheless, this document surveys good practices that actors across the region, including governments, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international agencies and the private sector, have implemented to tackle child labour. It was developed as part of the Measurement, Awareness-Raising and Policy Engagement (MAP16)[1] project covering 16 countries globally, including Jordan and Morocco within the MENA region. This piece of research explores good practices for child labour elimination as well as challenges faced by key child labour programmes in Morocco and Jordan as well as in other MENA countries. The aim is to provide knowledge and support for other existing or planned programmes.

The report was informed by (a) a consultation process to map good practices;[2] (b) a regional webinar, including presentations of national programmes;[3] (c) interviews with participants from a wide variety of organisations; and (d) close coordination on a selection of good practices. The paper examines programmes and strategies tackling child labour from several different angles, including prevention, withdrawal of children from hazardous situations, and rehabilitation as well as a follow-up process.[4] The reflections in this report also include the voices of other child labour actors[5] within the Arab States. Those did not necessarily have presentations, but had actively participated in online workshops and provide feedback.

The programmes were selected on the basis that they: (1) dealt with historically challenging forms of child labour, including children engaged in street-based, domestic, and agricultural work, or armed conflict, or in labour caused by conflict; (2) coordinated multi-layered efforts by government agencies, national nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), international organisations and the private sector; (3) provided humanitarian aid and services in the immediate aftermath of conflict; or (4) provided safeguards ensuring these efforts were sustainable and replicable by other partners or neighbouring countries.

[1] Implemented by the ILO and funded by USDOL.

[2] Between the first and last weeks of November 2020. Please see Appendix III.

[3] December 14, 2020. Please see Appendix IV.

[4] Hazardous child labour is work that, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. Guidance for governments on hazardous work activities that should be prohibited is cited in Article 3 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190).

[5] Nearly 150 participants from governmental and non-governmental organizations from MENA region.

The document identifies awareness-raising tools, particularly applicable to COVID-19 response, as well as follow-up recommendations for stakeholders. Government agencies, NGOs, international organisations, and workers' and employers' organisations should:

(1) Continue to conduct webinars on child labour;

(2) Organise in-depth regional webinars on issues including street-based child labour, institutionalisation of child labour, child labour in domestic and agricultural work, and children affected by armed conflict;

(3) Continue consultation with countries seeking support on child labour elimination (e.g., Algeria, Libya, Sudan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory), and provide them with advice and need-based training;

(4) Conduct webinars tailored to individual countries;

(5) Organise regional webinars for policymakers and international organisations to ensure that experiences are exchanged and coordination is synergistic;

(6) Conduct national and regional webinars for employers and NGOs working on child labour elimination within specific sectors;

(7) Provide web-based advisory services for planned projects, and projects affected by COVID-19;

(8) Mobilise resources to facilitate knowledge sharing of good practices and lessons learned.

Last, but not least, all emerging practices developed amid the COVID-19 crisis should be assessed regionally in terms of opportunities, and challenges. Assessment of challenges should lead the way to new modes and approaches to elimination and prevention of child labour regionally. These could include accessible and quality education,[6] effective social protection floors for all, and occupational safety and health (including hygiene practices), as well as new areas of consumption, employment and other economic opportunities.[7]

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[6] Examples: (i) Education during COVID-19 and beyond (policy brief) United Nations, (ii) 4 ways COVID-19 could change how we educate future generations, World Economic Forum (WEF).

[7] Examples: (i) COVID-19 impact on child labour and forced labour: The response of the IPEC+ Flagship Programme, the ILO, (ii) A new normal: UN lays out roadmap to lift economies and save jobs after COVID-19, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), (iii) 4 ways COVID-19 could change how we educate future generations, World Economic Forum (WEF).

1. Background

Regional context: Middle East and North Africa

Immense political and socio-economic turmoil in the MENA region over the past few decades have resulted in considerable forced migration, with the region now hosting more than half of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).[8] Lebanon, Jordan and, to a certain extent, Egypt[9] and Tunisia[10] have absorbed millions of refugees. Conflict in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen has led to multitudes of displaced families. Relative to their population size, Jordan and Lebanon have taken the brunt of refugee influx from Syria. Still, governments and aid agencies have been overburdened as refugees also fled from Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, and Sudan.[11]

Most of the countries observed in this report have either been directly or indirectly impacted by one or more of these protracted crises. Behind the scenes of obvious economic tumult, families have sometimes resorted to engaging their children in child labour simply in order to survive. The report also examines these impacts on children.

Child labour amid crises and humanitarian settings

According to the ILO report, Global Estimates of Child Labour,[12] the Arab region has one of the highest rates of child employment,[13] with several observable tendencies. Child employment rates are generally higher in rural than in urban areas. It increases with age, with higher employment rates in the 15-17 age group than the 5-14 age group. Boys are found to be more highly involved in child labour than girls.[14] These estimates, however, might fail to capture hidden forms of child labour among girls, such as domestic work and unpaid household services. Moreover, the line between legitimate employment and work outside the legal guidelines for children can be quickly crossed, as very hazardous forms of child labour are prevalent among children begging, labouring in informal industries, and engaged (or trafficked) in commercial sex work and other illicit activities.

The main characteristics of child employment in the Arab region can be summarised as follows:

- Unpaid family work is most common among children aged 5 to 14 years old, girls, and in rural areas, while paid non-family work is more common among children aged 15 to 17, among boys, and in urban areas.
- Boys aged 15-17 years tend to work longer hours than girls and younger children. On the other hand, working children attending school tend to work less than those who do not go to school.
- Children in urban areas tend to work longer hours than rural children. Agricultural work is highly labour-intensive, and seasonal.[15]

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[8] These countries are home to the highest proportion of refugees in the world, World Economic Forum (WEF).

[9] Refugees in Egypt include over 5 million people from East Asia and Africa. The number of refugees has increased particularly after civil wars and political disturbances in these areas in the past ten years. Refugees in Egypt come from Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Palestine. See: How Egypt makes millions of refugees feel at home, Egypt Today.

[10] Mainly from Libya. See: The impact of Libyan middle-class refugees in Tunisia, the Brookings Institution.

[11] https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/29/refugees-and-displacement-in-middle-east-pub-68479

[12] Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016, the ILO.

[13] Child employment is a broader term that comprises child labour and permitted forms of employment, involving children of legal working age. The ILO Convention No. 138 (1973) sets the minimum age for children to work generally at 15 years of age. It specifies 18 years as the minimum age for assignment to hazardous work, as described in ILO Convention No. 182 (1999).

[14] Child Labour in the Arab Region: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis, League of Arab States, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Arab Labour Organization and Arab Council for Childhood and Development.

[15] Child Labour in the Arab Region: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis, League of Arab States, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Arab Labour Organization and Arab Council for Childhood and Development.

1.2.1 Children affected by or used in armed conflicts

In addition to being impacted by poverty, children in many countries have often been the primary victims of armed conflict and subsequent population displacement in the region. Child labour is on the rise among refugees and IDPs, as well as in host communities. In Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria, refugee and displaced children can be found working in a number of activities, with a notable rise in street work, bonded labour, early marriage, and commercial sexual exploitation. Child labour among refugees and IDPs is typically a financial coping mechanism for families who face extreme poverty and food insecurity, or where adults are unemployed. Compared to local children, refugee and displaced children work for longer hours and lower pay, and their need for basic survival is exploited.

Affected by the inherent insecurities related to displacement – extreme poverty, health risks and interruption of education – refugee and displaced children are often forced into activities associated with armed conflict. Such activities include smuggling goods across borders or between conflict zones, waste oil collection, performing funerary work such as collecting body parts for burial,[16] household work, and fetching water or collecting food from fields and landfills, which are even more dangerous in conflict situations. The UN Secretary General has reported another major trend in the past decade: the use of children from both local and refugee populations by armed groups. Boys have often been used in conflicts in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, but there is an emerging tendency to recruit more girls below the age of 15.[17]

These children's access to education and participation can help reduce hours of work, but only if alternative income sources are provided, such as cash transfers or employment for older siblings and adults in the same family.

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[16] As seen in Iraq. Child Labour in the Arab Region: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis, League of Arab States, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Arab Labour Organization and Arab Council for Childhood and Development.

[17] Ibid from United Nations, General Assembly/Security Council, Report of the Secretary General on children and armed conflict, A/836/70–S/20 (360/2016 April 2016). And United Nations, General Assembly, Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, A/2 (276/72 August 2017).

1.2.2 The additional burden of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased threats to public health, the economy, education and social cohesion. All forms of child labour have worsened in the region, not only as a result of conflict, but also due to the absence of adequate social protection, and the prevalence of a large informal sector with very poor law enforcement and a lack of universal access to education.

Already dire, especially for children, the economic antecedents of child labour have been exacerbated by the global pandemic, which hit the Arab region hard. The strained economies could not cope with the high demand for medical intervention and hospitalisation, and failed to provide adequate educational alternatives under emergency protocols and lockdown.

Children, particularly girls, have been burdened by increased domestic chores and caring responsibilities as populations remained at home.[18] Vulnerable children – those from marginalised minority groups, single or child-headed households, conflict- or disaster-hit areas, or migrant, displaced or refugee children – have been placed at even greater risk under COVID-19.

In some cases, the pandemic has made families and children vulnerable to unscrupulous lenders, who have imposed exorbitant conditions, including subjecting displaced and/or trafficked children to debt bondage.[19] Though many countries imposed strict confinement measures and movement control, children's adherence to these was often subjected to less scrutiny compared to adults. Individuals and groups exploited this factor to engage children in the illicit trade of goods, commodities and drugs in certain places. Commercial sexual exploitation has increased in households and online.[20]

In the early stages of COVID-19 outbreak, many children were pressed into labour on the false belief that they could not contract the virus. Later, as economic conditions worsened for many families, still more children were pushed into work, largely in remote areas, informal settlements or refugee camps, where enforcement of quarantine measures as well as child protection and labour laws often have been poor, or even absent.

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[18] How will COVID-19 affect girls and young women? Plan International development and humanitarian organisation.
[19] Modern Day Slavery Speeds up under Cover of COVID-19. Gospel for Asia (GFA) international mission organisation.
[20] Pandemic lockdowns fuelling rise of sexual extortion crimes in Lebanon. Arab News.

2. Country and regional responses

Prior to the aforementioned crises, countries in the region had made significant strides in the fight against child labour through policy and legislative reform and direct field-level interventions. However, as political and security priorities superseded almost all other considerations, many of these efforts had come to a standstill by the time COVID-19 emerged.

Nevertheless, examples of good practice remain; some countries have continued to develop innovative and relatively effective responses. This chapter reviews some of these responses and assesses their progress and achievements.

2.1 Jordan

Efforts to combat child labour commenced in Jordan in 2000, with the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) that was emerging in the region at the time. They started first within the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and its Child Labour Unit, and then extended nationwide, through concerted activities with the tripartite partners (government, employer, and worker representatives) and other stakeholders. In 2011, Jordan endorsed the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCCL), which was developed by the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) through a consultative process, including all relevant ministries and NGOs, in addition to workers' and employers' organisations. The framework was supported by the Prime Ministry to ensure collaboration of all stakeholders. The placement of child labour high on the Prime Ministry's agenda was significant and unique for an Arab state as, at the time, the term child labour was not well known and projects to address the problem were rare.

The NFCCL was a key policy tool to strengthen the management of identified child labour cases through the collection of data on children's working conditions, and socio-economic and educational circumstances as well as electronic storage of data. Moreover, the framework provided a comprehensive approach to child labour; the need for which was growing due to the Syrian refugee crisis that increased the number of child workers.

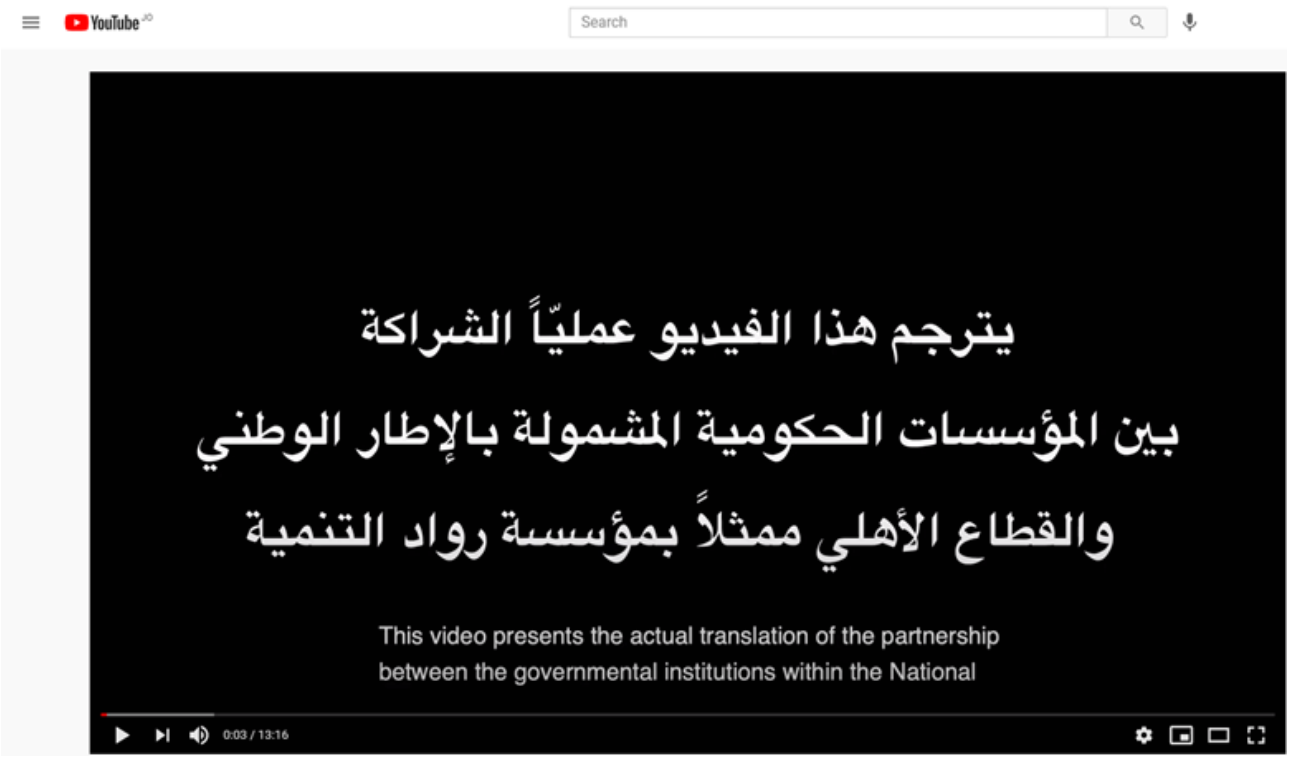
The initiative, a component of the Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) of the ILO that is funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL),[21] also engaged other ministries, such as the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), in the development of a child labour database -- the first in the MENA region.[22] Under this framework, community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs, were trained and empowered to identify Jordanian and Syrian refugee child workers, efficiently assess child labour cases, connect to needed governmental services and provide services through community centres. In some cases, these CBOs and NGOs were also supported or initiated by private sector entities, such as the Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya non-profit community development organisation, which has a comprehensive and interrelated approach to child labour.[23] With support from consecutive ILO projects, Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya offers a set of good practices for other NGOs to emulate in Jordan and across the region.

[21] The databased included a 2016 National Child Labour Survey.

[22] Child labour monitoring (CLM), the ILO.

[23] Ruwwad: Supporting youth and communities.

Figure 1: Explainer video on Jordan's National Framework to Combat Child Labour



2.1.1 Digital child labour database

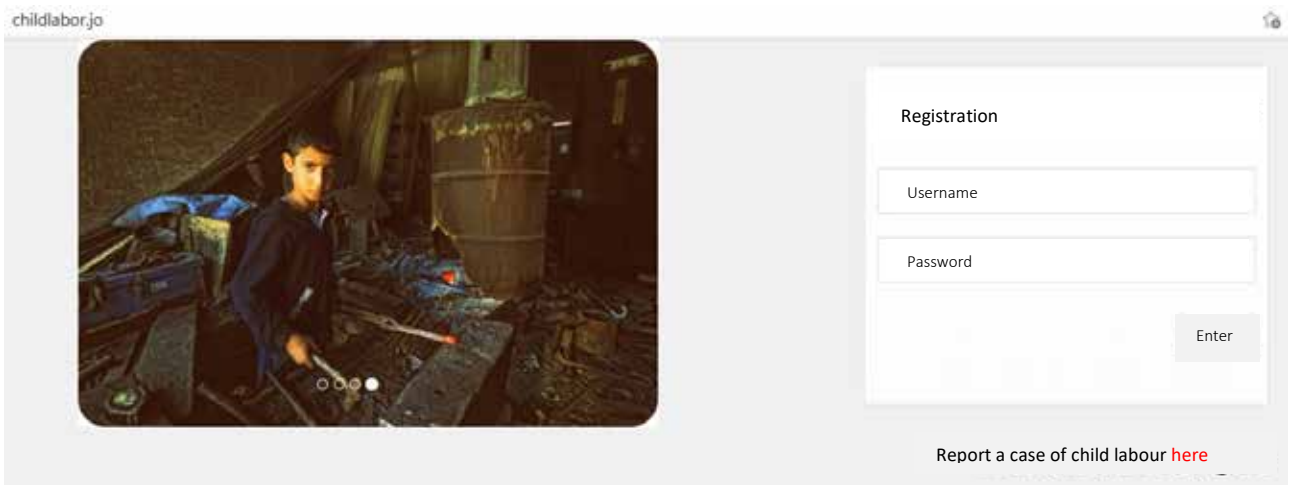
With support from the ILO under the NFCCL, the MoL initiated the development of a digital child labour database (CLDB) as part of a child labour monitoring system (CLMS) framework and referral pathway. The main national partners were the MoSD, MoE and Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya. The MoL dealt with socio-economic and family situations of identified children as well as the identification of street-based children and/or children exploited in illicit activities. The MoE identified and followed up on truant children and children who had completely dropped out of school. Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya played an important field-level role, coordinating efforts exerted by these organisations, vocational training centres, private sector enterprises, and employers of children. It also organised intensive work with the children and their families. The MoL, MoE and MoSD were also partners in the CLDB at governorate level in Amman, Aqaba, Irbid, Karak, Mafraq and Zarqa. The system was piloted in all 12 governorates, and was improved through several iterations to address system bugs, gaps and other challenges.

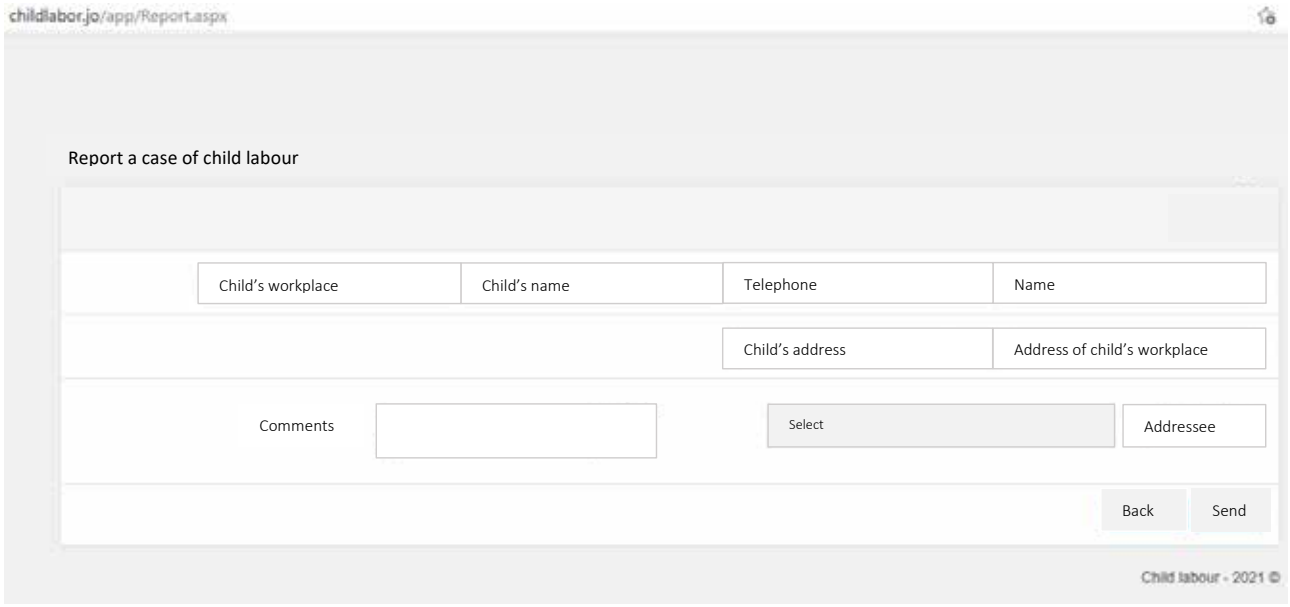
The CLDB enables the ministries to document and include information on identified children in the system, refer the data to appropriate services, and track case management. The database collects information about (1) children registered in school but absent for a long time; (2) school dropouts; (3) street-based children; (4) children engaged in hazardous working conditions; and (5) child workers under 16 years of age. The CLDB identifies child labourers as uniquely at risk and exploited -- separate from children dealt with by other child protection systems, and the juvenile justice system, which handles a different spectrum of children with needs for other types of interventions and legal solutions. The CLDB protects child workers from criminalisation as juvenile delinquents, whose cases are subsequently referred to the highly complicated juvenile justice system.

a) How does the CLDB operate?

The MoL has developed a CLDB website, with technical and financial support from the ILO.[24] Authorised users can access the system and review information on identified child workers.

Figure 2: The MoSD and MoE built two additional CLDB websites with information on identified child workers. Authorised users can follow up on existing cases and measures to address these cases, in coordination with Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya at field level.[25]

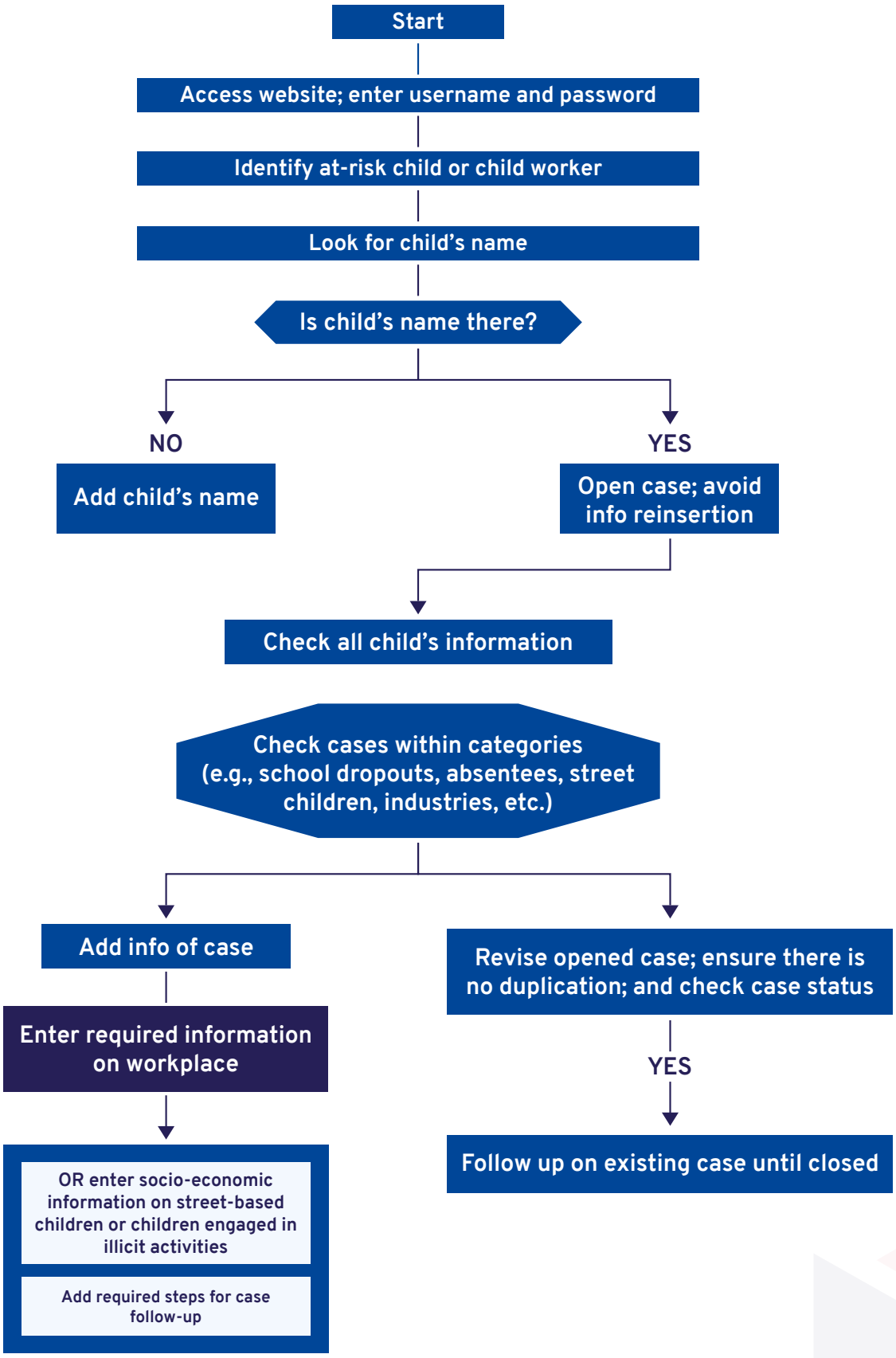




[24] USDOL-supported project, "Moving Towards a Child labour Free Jordan", initiated in 2011.

[25] The MoL, MoSD and MoE made requests to build the CLDB as part of NFCCL, adopted by the Government of Jordan in 2011.

Figure 3: CLDB website workflow



This database is fully owned and maintained by the MoL, which has invested human and financial resources to its continued improvement over the past two years.[26]

[26] With financial and technical support from the USDOL through the Moving Towards a Child Labour Free Jordan (2011) project and the MAP16 Global Project (2017).

Box 1. Child labour database in Jordan

- CLDB is led by the ministry responsible for labour law enforcement and is therefore able to deal with employers and the demand side of child labour.
- Most small industries and worksites, in which most child labour occurs, have been formalised in Jordan and therefore are subject to inspection.[27]
- MoL efforts are not solely focused on penalising employers as the ministry wants to ensure that children and their families have access to social and educational alternatives.
- CLDB reinforces data sharing and information transparency among primary and coordinating ministries as well as local NGOs, supporting field-level follow-ups on identified cases of child labour.
- The system now has a mobile application facilitating the work of government inspectors as well as observers from NGOs for case registration and follow-up.
- The system is being modified to give access to juvenile police[28] enabling them to deal with street-based children as victims rather than offenders[29] . This will help limit the improper referral of child workers to the system of courts, particularly if these children have not committed major offenses.[30]

Follow-up action is needed to ensure that (1) effective and well-trained teams of NGOs continue to play a central role in the CLDB, which forms part of a broader CLMS at governorate and field levels; (2) cases of street-based children are referred to the system by Ministry of Interior (MoI) police, alongside the MoSD; and (3) proper training is provided in selected governorates for relevant employers' organisations on the CLDB and CLMS.[31]

2.1.2 Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya: A model for identification, withdrawal, rehabilitation and reintegration of children

Operating in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine, the coordinating and organisational role of Ruwwad Al-Tanmeya ensures that government and other services are available and accessible.[32] A field-based organisation, Ruwwad is positioned to identify children either directly or via the CLDB, and assess the needs of each case before it is referred to the appropriate service provider. This model leverages strong links to a network of private sector entities.[33]

[27] This formalisation helps the CLDB cover additional employers and sectors, where child labour occurs.

[28] Through a proposed law endorsement mechanism, which was delayed due to COVID-19.

[29] In some cases, and in MENA countries, child beggars or street-based children are perceived and treated as offenders, particularly when these children are employed by adults. This becomes organised street work and sometimes children can be lured into illicit activities.

[30] Major offenses can vary from country to country, but certainly include, for example, acts causing death to a person.

[31] In practice, the CLM involves identification, referral, and protection of child labourers as well as prevention producers through the development of a coordinated multi-sector monitoring and referral process covering all children in a certain geographical area. See: Child labour monitoring (ILO).

[32] Ruwwad: Supporting youth and communities.

[33] World Day Against Child Labour, the MoL.

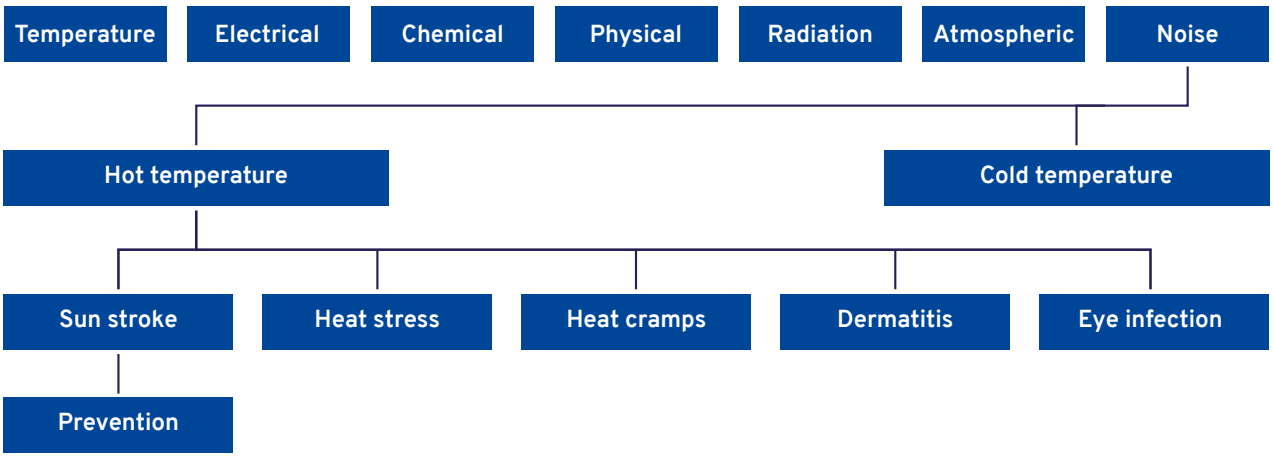
2.1.3 Development of Arabic-language child labour tools

Jordan has accumulation of institutional knowledge in child labour, developing good tools within relevant ministries and other governmental organisations. Comprehensive, field-tested and originally developed in the Arabic language, these tools could be useful for other MENA countries.

Occupational safety and health and child labour

A manual was specifically developed in 2018 to address child labour safety and health risks. The manual details physical, chemical, radiation, electrical, temperature, atmospheric pressure, and noise hazards (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Seven types of occupational safety and health hazards



The diagram shows an example of common types of hazards. The manual, however, elaborates on each type of hazard, potential health impacts, and means of prevention. It specifies the types of street-based work, in which children are typically engaged, and the disproportionate health effects of these types of work on children.
The comprehensive manual addresses occupational safety and health (OSH) impacts of the most prevalent forms of child labour in the region. It could be updated to include information on COVID-19 prevention and remerging diseases (e.g., cholera), using infographics/illustrations.

b) Guide to rehabilitation and reintegration of child workers

Jordan developed a second tool for practitioners, especially social workers, providing instruction and guidance on how best to deal with child labour within different social segments (i.e., family and community), working environments and institutions (government, CBOs/NGOs) and academia. Moreover, this guide orients practitioners to the different ways of approaching intervention and what can be done to prevent, withdraw, rehabilitate and re-integrate at risk and working children. This, for example, includes guidance on how to mobilise a coordinated response among practitioners to monitor child labour, raise awareness on the associated risks and hazards and limit the demand and supply side of child labour.

This guide helps practitioners look at child labour in a relatively comprehensive manner, rather than dealing with it as solely a child protection issue, a legal offence, a problem in education or even an economic issue. It reflects on the multi-faceted nature, causes and consequences of child labour and the different means of approaching the problem. Developed in Arabic, the guide could be adapted and used by other MENA countries.

c) Training manual on prevention of school dropout and child labour

Developed in 2007 and updated in 2016, this manual defines child labour within the context of education and the educational system. It explains potential reasons for dropping out of school, and related consequences, as well as potential means for prevention of early dropout, and the cycle of poverty and child labour. The updated version of the manual provides detailed steps and training means for school counsellors, teachers and school administrators. It offers advice on how to determine, carry out and follow up on every step within the educational cycle, specifically for at-risk children. Moreover, the manual integrated the ILO Supporting Child Rights through Education, Arts and the Media (SCREAM) programme within the manual as well as within the normal educational curriculum. This means extensive spread of knowledge about child labour to students, school staff and the surrounding community through artistic performances, exhibitions and competitions.

[34] Supported by USDOL in 2016.

Box 2. Training manual on prevention of school dropout and child labour

- Developed by a MoE team, the step-by-step training manual includes a variety of tools to train school personnel; the activities and exercises can be carried out during training sessions to maximise knowledge retention.
- The team is knowledgeable in factors disrupting the educational cycle of marginalised children.
- The manual covers problems faced by children outside school, (i) assessing educational opportunities for children within and beyond school environment as well as children's educational capabilities and limitations on an individual basis; and (ii) identifying potential means to retain children in the educational system through the provision of necessary services on a case-by-case base, and the dropout cycle, with potential related consequences at each stage of the cycle.
- It is a comprehensive training guide to the educational cycle, noting where school dropout is likely to occur and how to prevent it.
- The ILO SCREAM modules are an integral part of the guide and not an addition.
- This tool could be adapted for use in other MENA countries, relevant to their policies and legislation, while content and method of training apply.

2.2 Lebanon

Since 2005, Lebanon has taken a multi-sectoral approach to child labour, as represented by a National Steering Committee Against Child Labour, which tried to combat the worst forms of child labour through the 2012 development of the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016. The plan, which emphasised street-based child labour, and in child labour in agriculture and small industries, was launched by the Lebanese president in 2013.

In the past decade, Lebanon has experienced a volatile political and economic environment and has absorbed the highest proportion of Syrian refugee influx in comparison to the resident population in the world; Syria's refugees exceed a third of Lebanon's population.[35]

In response, the National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (NAP) was followed up by consecutive legislative and policy changes to accommodate to the emergent refugee crisis and its impact on the host community.

Other responses included an updated list of hazardous work, the implementation of surveys, and the development of guides, specialised training and interventions. These are described below.

2.2.1 Updated list of hazardous work in Decree No. 8987 of 2012

The MoL, along with employers' and workers' organisations and other national stakeholders, updated the list of hazardous and prohibited forms of work to cover emerging forms of child labour and activities with physical, psychological or moral hazard for children, including those which impede their education. Examples of recently recognised forms of child labour include the use of children in political protest and armed conflict. In addition, a number of hazardous agricultural activities were prohibited for minors. This update represented a major breakthrough in strengthening legislation in Lebanon, as agriculture had been routinely ignored in terms of inspection and regulation[36].

[35] These countries are home to the highest proportion of refugees in the world, the World Economic Forum (WEF)

[36] This applies to child labour in agriculture in many MENA countries.

Figure 5: Bilingual (English and Arabic) guide to Decree No. 8987

Figure 6: The guide describes articles of Decree No. 8987

Minors under the age of 18 shall not be employed in *TOTALLY PROHIBITED WORKS AND ACTIVITIES* which, by their nature harm the health, safety or morals of children, limit their education and constitute one of the worst forms of child labour included in Annex No. (1) hereto attached.

Clarification of Article 1

This article states that it is absolutely and unquestionably forbidden to employ children below the age of 18 years in certain types of jobs and work-related activities which are referred to as **"TOTALLY PROHIBITED WORKS AND ACTIVITIES"**, listed in Annex No. (1) of Article 1 (see Annex No. (1), page X). This is because of the harmful nature of these types of jobs and activities, making them among the worst forms of child labour. According to the nature of harm that can result from these jobs and activities, they are classified under 4 categories of hazard (potential for harm):

1. Activities involving physical hazards
2. Activities involving psychological hazards
3. Activities involving moral hazards
4. Activities limiting pursuit of education

Clarification of Annex No. (1)

Annex No. (1) is an attachment to Article 1, and is presented in this section with examples. It is a list of the **"TOTALLY PROHIBITED WORKS AND ACTIVITIES"**, which are considered among the worst forms of child labour . It is unquestionably forbidden to employ children below the age of 18 years in all these types of jobs and work-related activities. As stated above, these are grouped into 4 categories of hazard.

Note that these activities also include psychological hazards.

Handling weapons

- Activities in open or underground mines, caves, and quarries.

Working in or near quarries

- Activities that require the use of personal protective equipment to prevent immediate and direct danger.

These dangers include:

- Danger to the eyes or vision, such as welding and glassblowing.

Welding requires special protection for the eyes

Figure 7: The guide describes hazards in different sectors and reasons for prohibition

Box 3. Creating a user-friendly guide to hazardous and prohibited forms of child labour

- Lists of hazardous work types are usually specified in national laws or special decrees drafted in traditional and difficult-to-read/understand forms.
- People need to visually comprehend these hazards, their possible effects and the reason they are prohibited, especially as main users are not occupational safety and health specialists.
- Better understanding of these hazards can lead to better protection or elimination policies.
- Dissemination of the decree through a colourful and visual tool to governmental and non-governmental institutions increases chances for implementation, compared to a traditional document that usually is not well read or comprehended.
- The introduction of agriculture and armed conflicts in hazardous work in 2012 is of significance.

2.2.2 Lebanese General Security memorandum prohibiting child labour in agriculture for children aged under 16 years

Because of the increase in trafficking and the use of shawishes (contractors working as intermediaries)[37] to enter children into bonded labour,[38] especially in agriculture, labour inspectors have had insufficient capacity to deal with the problem. Consequently, following close coordination between the MoL and the MoI, the use of children under the age of 16 years for agricultural work was prohibited in a memorandum issued in 2016 by Lebanese General Security.[39]

Following Decree 8987 and the 2016 memorandum, the farmers' union played a prominent role in preventing big landowners and large farming contractors from using children under 16 years, while local NGOs, such as the BEYOND Association, played an important role in raising awareness of the issue among at risk and working children, their parents and communities. Awareness-raising activities took place at child labour centres, established within the Syrian informal tented settlements and amid vast agricultural areas where children worked relentlessly. Special community awareness-raising tools using ILO's SCREAM programme, especially the module on "Child Labour in Agriculture", in addition to a package of socio-economic and educational services were provided through NGOs and local networks (with other relevant governmental bodies).

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[37] Mostly Syrians who guard camps and have long-time networks in Lebanon (Habib RR, Ziadee M, Abi Younes E, et al. Displacement, deprivation and hard work among Syrian refugee children in Lebanon, BMJ Global Health 2019; 4: e001122).

[38] According to ILO Convention No. 182 (1999), bonded labour is a state in which a child's services are paid for in advance by the family and the child works tirelessly to repay this debt. Serfdom is where a child works for minimum wage or nothing in return for his employer's provision of land on which to shelter his/her family.

[39] The BEYOND Association had child labour centres within the agricultural fields in Beqaa, and would witness shawishes and had been trying to negotiate with them to stop their recruitment of children.

Figure 8: Raising awareness about child labour in agriculture at the BEYOND Association

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2.2.3 Studies on Syrian refugee child labour in Beqaa Valley agriculture

As child labour in agriculture was increasingly seen to be exploitative, the Lebanese government, represented by the MoL and its child labour unit, requested a detailed survey on the issue in the Beqaa Valley, where the problem was known to be widespread. The Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut conducted the survey in 2018, with the support of ILO, UNICEF and FAO.[40] This survey was comprehensive[41], in terms of the scope of the quantitative sample (12,708 refugees in 1,902 informal tented settlements), as well as the quality of the outcome. Complementing the 2015 Child Labour Survey in Lebanon,[42] the 2018 survey provided robust evidence for future programmes within the sector, and elsewhere in the region.

Figure 9: Cover of "Survey on Child Labour in the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees

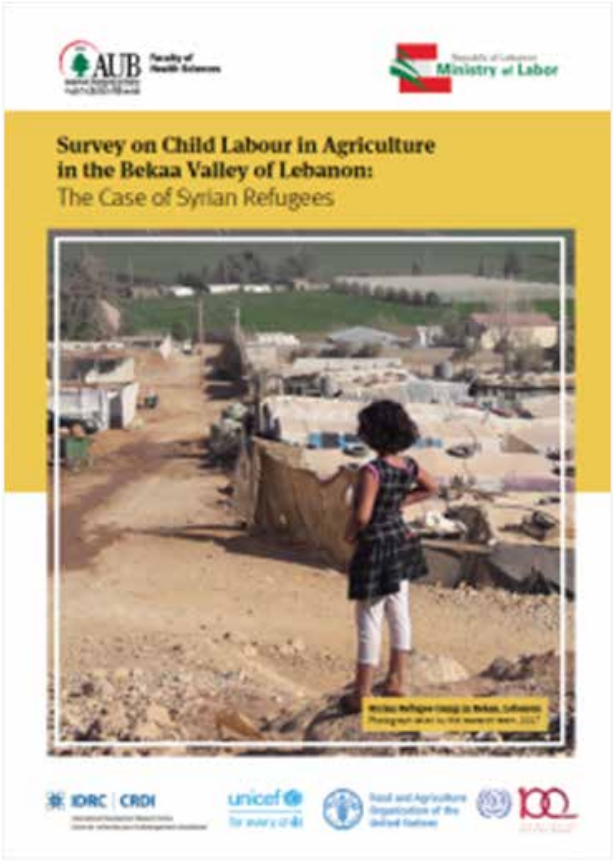


Figure 10: Cover of "Child Labour in Agriculture: The Demand Side"

The surveys followed the observation that policymakers were powerless to address child labour in absence of further evidence-based research on the demand side. Research is key to understanding the rationale behind farmers' and contractors' hiring of children as well as their employment arrangements.

These studies would help combat the exploitation of children in agricultural work, if their outcomes are addressed in a coordinated manner (among relevant ministries as well as landowners, farmers and agricultural unions). This of course would not be possible without providing direct support for child workers and their families (see 2.2.4 Intensive field training on the effects of child labour in agriculture).

[40] Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees.

[41] Child labour in agriculture and amongst refugees in informal tented settlements

[42] Child Labour Survey in Lebanon - 2015. Financially supported by USDOL.

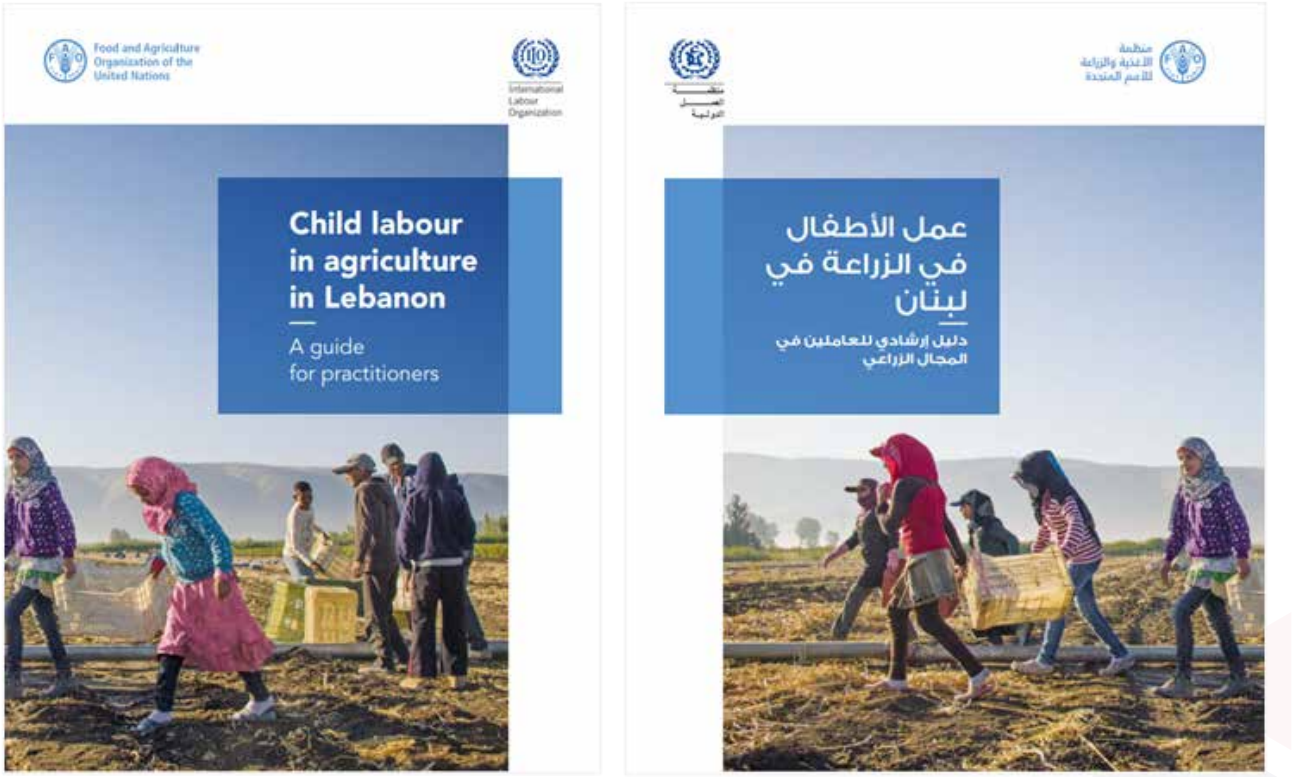
2.2.4 Intensive field training on the effects of child labour in agriculture

Training for all partners and stakeholders initially took place at a training site of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences of the American University of Beirut in the Beqaa Valley. Participants observed the direct impacts of engaging children in agricultural labour, including: (1) effects of pesticides and other chemicals; (2) the potentially fatal risks to children handling different types of machinery; (3) environmental factors, such as extreme temperature; and (4) occupational safety and health conditions. This became a regional training shared with Jordan, which was also developing projects addressing the use of child labour in agriculture.

2.2.5 Guide for practitioners in child labour in agriculture[43]

This training course, guided by the Turin International Course on Child Labour in Agriculture, eventually became a regional course following the development of a bilingual guide (Arabic and English)[44] for practitioners. The guide emphasised (i) legislative and policy measures; (ii) preventative farm management to reduce the risk of physical, chemical, environmental and mechanical hazards; (iii) health effects of agricultural occupational hazards on boys and girls; and (iv) more detailed hazards within different forms of agricultural work in which children are engaged. Local agricultural engineers, farm managers, lawyers, agricultural extension workers, farmers' union members, health specialists and local specialised NGOs were integral the development of the guide.

Figure 11: The bilingual (English and Arabic) guide for practitioners could be used by multiple stakeholders, including government inspectors, social workers, agricultural unions, and employers.



[43] Child labour in agriculture in Lebanon: A guide for practitioners, FAO, ILO.

[44] UN agencies ILO and FAO launch first Arabic-language guide for practitioners attending to child labour in agriculture, ILO.