



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

FAO GUIDANCE NOTE

# CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE IN PROTRACTED CRISES, FRAGILE AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

PILOT VERSION



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# ACRONYMS

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>AAP</b>       | Accountability to Affected Populations                                   |
| <b>AIDS</b>      | Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome                                       |
| <b>CALP</b>      | Cash Learning Partnership  |
| <b>CPWG</b>      | Child Protection Working Group   |
| <b>ERW</b>       | Explosive remnants of war  |
| <b>FAO</b>       | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations                  |
| <b>FSN&amp;A</b> | Food Security, Nutrition & Agriculture                                   |
| <b>HIV</b>       | Human Immunodeficiency Virus   |
| <b>IASC</b>      | Inter-Agency Standing Committee  |
| <b>ILO</b>       | International Labour Organization  |
| <b>IPEC</b>      | International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour               |
| <b>IPPCCLA</b>   | International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture |
| <b>JFFLS</b>     | Junior Farmer Field and Life School                                      |
| <b>MIRA</b>      | Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment                            |
| <b>NEAT</b>      | Not in education, employment or training                                 |
| <b>NGO</b>       | Non-governmental organization  |
| <b>PSEA</b>      | Protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse                     |
| <b>SAFE</b>      | Safe Access to Fuel and Energy   |
| <b>UN</b>        | United Nations   |
| <b>UNICEF</b>    | United Nations Children's Fund   |
| <b>UNISDR</b>    | International Strategy for Disaster Reduction                            |
| <b>UXO</b>       | Unexploded ordnance  |
| <b>WFCL</b>      | Worst forms of child labour  |
| <b>WFP</b>       | World Food Programme   |



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# INTRODUCTION

## SCOPE OF THE GUIDANCE NOTE

This note provides technical and operational guidance to stakeholders of the agriculture, food security and nutrition sector intervening in *protracted crises, fragile and humanitarian contexts* to ensure that children are not engaged in activities that could negatively affect their health, development or education, and are not employed in hazardous working conditions. It presents the basis to understand that agriculture, food security and nutrition programming in the aftermath of a crisis have potentially both positive and negative effects on children. It also provides recommendations and concrete examples to address situations of child labour in agriculture in these contexts.

This is a pilot version to be tested in the field.





## KEY MESSAGES

Food security, agriculture and child labour are closely linked. There are an estimated 168 million child labourers worldwide, 98 million (i.e. nearly 60 percent) of whom work in agriculture. The majority work as unpaid family members, often starting at an early age.<sup>1</sup>

About 70 million (59 percent) of all children in hazardous work aged 5–17 are in agriculture. Agriculture can involve many hazards, such as exposure to pesticides, dangerous machinery, heavy loads, long hours and hostile environments, where children are more at risk than adults.

As of today, one in four children worldwide (nearly 535 million) grow up in areas affected by conflict or natural hazards.<sup>2</sup> In these contexts, children pay a high price when a family's capacity to provide adequate food, education and protection for children is compromised.

Some 100 million children and young people are affected by disaster each year and 230 million live in areas affected by armed conflict. Conflict and disaster can push children into child labour and its worst forms. Existing child labour tends to be intensified and new risks are created. Around the world, millions of children, on the move and in countries affected by humanitarian crises, are trapped in exploitative and dangerous work.<sup>3</sup>

The agriculture sector holds great potential before, during and after crises, to save lives and contribute to livelihoods, support rural households, provide decent employment and alternatives to child labour and its worst forms.

Agriculture, food security and nutrition programming is an essential component of the response to children's needs and can contribute to addressing child labour.

Striving to address child labour through agriculture, food security and nutrition programming is key. Leaving no one behind, investing in humanity, and changing people's lives from delivering aid to ending need will not happen without addressing child labour in protracted crises and in fragile and humanitarian contexts.

<sup>1</sup> ILO, *Accelerating action against child labour*, 2010; and ILO *Child labour in agriculture*, ILO Website, available from <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm> accessed on 21.4.2017

<sup>2</sup> Although evidence of the physical impact of agricultural work on children particularly in developing countries is inadequate, evidence from industrialised countries and growing evidence from other regions shows that children and adolescents suffer high rates of injury and death working in agriculture in comparison with adult workers. ILO IPEC, 2011, *Children in hazardous work: What we know What we need to do*. Available from: [http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS\\_156475/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_156475/lang--en/index.htm) accessed on 21.4.2017.

<sup>3</sup> Global Child Protection Working Group, 2012, *Responding to the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Emergencies. A Review*. Available from: <http://cpwg.net/resources/review-responding-worst-forms-child-labour-emergencies/>. Accessed on 21.4.2017



# KEY CONCEPTS

All over the world, boys and girls start helping around the home, looking after animals, and picking fruit and vegetables at an early age. Many of these activities - for short periods and in safe conditions - can be encouraged, because they are beneficial to a child's personal and social development. They can help them acquire a sense of responsibility and learn new skills and knowledge that will benefit them later in life. **This is not child labour.**

## CHILDREN IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



**Whether various kinds of work and tasks can be called child labour depends on a child's age, the type and hours of work performed, and the conditions under which it is performed.**

- Children who are over the age of 13 years (in developing countries this can be 12) can do **light work** as long as it does not threaten their health and safety or hinder their education or training. National governments are supposed to determine locally what is acceptable light work, although few countries have.
- Children who are over the age of 15 years (in developing countries this can be 14) can **work** as long as it does not threaten their health and safety or hinder their education or training.
- Children under the age of 18 years are not allowed to do dangerous work or work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions which could result in illness, injury or death. This is known as **hazardous work**.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In some circumstances, national law may allow a lower age of 16 years for some forms of hazardous work under strict conditions that appropriate prior training is given and the safety and health of the young workers are fully protected.



**Decent work** as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

**Child labour** is work for which a child is too young for the type of work as defined by national legislation and international standards and/or that is likely to harm their physical and mental development, deprives them of schooling and the opportunity to learn, requires them to leave school early, or obliges them to combine education with long and heavy work.<sup>5</sup> The concept also encompasses the worst forms of child labour.

**The worst forms of child labour** (WFCL) refer to the most harmful types of activity for children and are prohibited for those under the age of 18 years. This consist of all forms of slavery or similar practices, including the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including the recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use of children for prostitution or pornography; the use of children in illicit activities such as the production and trafficking of drugs; and hazardous work.

**Hazardous work** is one of the worst forms of child labour, and is commonly found in agriculture. Nearly 60 percent of all children in hazardous work, are engaged in farming, livestock, forestry, fishing and aquaculture.<sup>6</sup>

Hazardous work harms the health and safety of children, as they may be exposed to toxic chemicals and pesticides, use dangerous tools or machinery, carry heavy loads, work on fishing boats at night or herd livestock in prolonged isolation and dangerous environments.

Hazardous work is regularly identified during humanitarian crises. It is often the predominant form of work for children and particularly affects older children above the legal working age but below the age of 18.

<sup>5</sup> ILO Convention 138, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0:NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C138](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0:NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C138)

<sup>6</sup> ILO [http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm#P2\\_481](http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm#P2_481) (aged 5–17)



# WHY ACT ON CHILD LABOUR IN CRISES



**When a crisis strikes, a child's life is likely to be negatively affected. This includes their role within the household and the community.**

When disasters or conflicts strike, agricultural livelihoods can be destroyed, productive assets can be lost and safe food or water may no longer be available.<sup>7</sup> In this situation:

- Children separated from their families may need to work to survive.
- Families may resort to negative coping strategies and pull off children from school and put them into work.
- Attending school may no longer be possible due to unsafe conditions, restricted access, impeded mobility or because of the destruction of infrastructure.
- Harvest failure increases the chances that children will be needed to support household income and production.
- Children may be forced into more harmful situations, such as joining armed groups.

The tasks children were performing or the sub-sectors of agriculture they were engaged in prior to the conflict may become more dangerous as:

- Children tending crops in areas affected by armed conflict may be exposed to new risks such as unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war (ERW);
- Typhoons and hurricanes may have uprooted trees and plantations, and children may have to pull trees and heavy loads long distances to clear land for replanting.
- Children may be required to work in new and unfamiliar surroundings that have changed or are further away from home, placing them at greater risk of harm.

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<sup>7</sup> This is especially true when child and social protection systems are not in place or deficient.



## IN PRE-CRISIS SITUATIONS, CHILD LABOUR CAN BE CAUSED BY:

- Poverty, unemployment and underemployment
- Inadequate or lack of social protection systems
- Inadequate protection of workers' rights
- Limited access and barriers to education
- Labour intensive agricultural work
- Poor access to extension services and knowledge
- Functioning of value chains, the rural and the global economy  
e.g. high quotas for export crops displacing food production or relegating food production activities to children
- Insufficient supply of adult labour
- Inadequate legislative frameworks and enforcement, including exemptions for agriculture
- Seasonal nature of agricultural work with peaks in labour demand
- Lack of political will and leadership to respond
- Traditions and cultural perceptions: e.g. sometimes education is not perceived as an important investment and, for some agricultural stakeholders, there is a resistance to acknowledge work-related risks and the extent of such risks for a child.



## SHOCKS AND CRISES TYPICALLY INCREASE VULNERABILITY TO CHILD LABOUR DUE TO:

Loss of family income, home and physical safety.

Sudden changes in family composition (because of the death, departure or illness/injury of adult family members), which places additional and heavy responsibilities on children in rural households.

Family separation, leaving children alone or having to care for siblings, and family reunification with a lack of support (e.g. a child traveling alone to reunite with family or family members taking in more children than they can provide for).

Damaged or appropriated educational facilities, limited capacity of government to support education, children's involvement in immediate recovery activities (clearing roads, debris, searching for belongings), and focus on younger children's education, hindering access to education for many children in rural households.

Changing migration patterns from rural to urban areas in search of paid work, placing children at greater risk during migration or when left in rural communities while parents leave in search of work or food, or are otherwise occupied with recovery.

Emergencies, pushing children already in child labour into more harmful work further afield from the protection of home.

Focus on young children and immediate nutritional survival in the response to crisis, often at the expense of interventions to allow older children to remain in school and not be subjected to WFCL.

## FACTORS RELATED TO CULTURE AND TRADITION THAT CAN INFLUENCE THE EXTENT AND TYPES OF CHILD LABOUR

### Education

A declining value in education, leading to children's withdrawal or abandonment from school or low attendance, and the expectation that children manage work and learning can lead to a greater circumstance of child labour.

### Approach to risk and hazard in agriculture

In some cultures, children are considered adults, with adult responsibilities such as providing for their families, before they reach the age of 18. There may also be the perception that children need to work or they will become lazy or involved in drugs or illicit activities. Work is also seen as a means to develop a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility. While at the same time, caregivers and communities may have limited understanding of the new risks and dangers induced by the crisis. This that can lead to an increase in hazardous work as children are involved in increasingly higher-risk activities, including within relief, reconstruction and infrastructure related interventions in agriculture, without full understanding of the dangers.

### Gender specific considerations

**Girls:** In crises, early marriage might become more prevalent and the burden of combined agricultural work and domestic chores can increase.

**Boys:** A greater responsibility for paid employment can lead to an increase in hazardous work and migration in search of work, putting children at increased risk of exploitation.



**The prevalence of child labour in agriculture violates the principles of decent work and undermines efforts to reach sustainable food security, improve nutrition and end hunger.** It perpetuates the intergenerational transmission of poverty and hinders recovery. Children who leave school or do not return to school during and after a crisis are denied the possibility to improve their future and are more likely to remain poor.

YOU ARE PART  
OF THE SOLUTION

**Agriculture, food security and nutrition programming can be an important part of the solution.** Well-timed identification and support to vulnerable populations affected by crises can act to prevent child labour and build back better and safer rural livelihoods. Rebuilding sustainable rural livelihoods that do not rely on child labour is essential in strengthening the resilience of families to shocks and stressors, maintaining children's education and adequately protecting them from harmful work.

CAUTION  
DO NO HARM

**Yet, humanitarian food security and agriculture programmes can entail risks and increase the severity and extent of child labour.** There are ways to prevent these risks. This guidance note presents essential considerations related to children and their engagement in agriculture. It provides the key questions and actions at each stage of the programme cycle that can be used to prevent child labour.

Risks to consider for agriculture, food security and nutrition programming:

- Programmes might act as a pull factor for children to start working: a programme that generates a high demand for workers may affect the way families allocate time among family members.
  - Availability of valid workers might be insufficient → demand is met by children.
  - The household sees this as an opportunity for work and a secure income and uses children to look after their traditional activity (eg family farming) → children are withdrawn from or not attending school and are working instead.
  - Parents are engaged in programmes activities and have less time available for domestic and care work → children (particularly girls) take up this burden at the expense of education.
- Programmes might exacerbate existing vulnerabilities or barriers to decent work for rural youth who are of legal working age, for example if the selection criteria for the activities are not youth inclusive and automatically exclude the participation of youth below 18.
- Programmes might provide insufficient information on how they will positively support households' livelihoods. If households think they will not be targeted by the programme or that support will not reach them fast enough, they may engage children in work or have them migrate to look for work.



## DO NO HARM

*Avoid exposing people to harm or exacerbating potentially harmful situations as a result of your actions (Protection Principle 1 of the Sphere Standards).* [WEB](#)


While there is potential to address child labour in humanitarian action, experience shows that humanitarian agriculture and food security programmes can impact how children use their time and can inadvertently increase or worsen levels of child labour. Intervention in protracted crises, fragile and humanitarian contexts, should not exacerbate levels of child labour, and children should not be engaged in child labour or its worst forms because of response activities.

*Ensure that every effort is undertaken to minimize the potential adverse effects of interventions and, where possible, contribute to the overall protection of all segments of the affected population.*

This can be done by assessing the needs, concerns and capacities of all; ensuring non-discriminatory access to assistance; and addressing the rights of those affected by conflicts and natural disasters. Participation and inclusiveness are a means to ensure that the needs of women, girls, men and boys are identified and met in humanitarian action, to minimize the risk of exclusion, and to enhance the accuracy, effectiveness and durability of interventions.

Special consideration should be given to vulnerable groups, especially women and children, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation.<sup>7</sup>

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

- Be vigilant of discrimination that is often at the origin of child labour, and of the discrimination that children suffer during or because of the work they do.
- Help address inequality through humanitarian action. Gender-based discrimination is often linked with other forms of discrimination around ethnicity, race, age, socio-economic conditions and disability. All these factors increase vulnerability to child labour and the risks faced by working children.
- Ensure support and services reach **at-risk groups in rural areas who are vulnerable to child labour**  in agriculture, especially older girls and boys, excluded minority groups and families with disability. Include family members of child labourers in discussions in order to identify those at risk.

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Thanks to this note, you can help eliminate child labour in agriculture and promote decent work for caregivers and children over the legal working age.
- Children should be able to participate in age-appropriate ways in agricultural response and recovery programmes. Programmes must take measures to ensure their health and safety is protected.
- Capitalize on opportunities to ensure that humanitarian programmes strengthen decent working conditions. Programmes should secure safe and decent work for caregivers, which can benefit children and support their withdrawal from harmful work. Where possible, be part of the referral pathway for children in child labour.

## PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION




- Work with others (government agencies, civil society, UN agencies) and across sectors to tackle child labour in agriculture.
- Integrated food security and livelihoods programmes lead to better outcomes for children. Build partnerships based on strengths, and determine clear roles, responsibilities and pathways between partners.

<sup>8</sup> FAO Environmental and social management Guidelines <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4413e.pdf>





# MAIN TYPES OF AGRICULTURAL CRISIS AND TYPICAL INDUCED FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR

|   |   | CHARACTERISTICS   |
|---|---|---|
| <p><b>FOOD CHAIN CRISES</b></p> <p>such as related to transboundary animal diseases, plant pests and diseases and food safety</p> |   | <p>Can be rapid or slow onset, disrupting livelihoods, causing food insecurity and impacting incomes and markets.</p>   |
| <p><b>PROTRACTED CRISES AND CONFLICT</b></p>  |  | <p>Substantial internal displacement and refugee movements, enduring and severe food crises, breakdown of livelihoods, closure of schools, insufficient capacity to respond to crises, recurrent natural disasters and/or conflict, military recruitment, sexual exploitation, hazardous working conditions, trafficking and criminality.</p>   |
| <p><b>NATURAL DISASTERS</b></p> <p>floods, drought, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.</p>   |  | <p>Both rapid onset and slow onset crises. There is significant loss of life, food and productive assets, and the destruction and disruption of rural infrastructure and services leading to economic stagnation and unemployment. Extreme and sudden climate events may compel people to migrate. Population movements prompted by climate change include a mix of forced and socio-economic migration. With slow-onset crises such as drought, people move as their livelihood options shrink in a process that may not be substantively different from socio-economic migration.</p> |



## IMPACT ON CHILD LABOUR

Food chain crises can impact child labour in a variety of ways, including:

- Increased chemical control to eradicate plant pests and diseases exposes children working in agriculture to increased risks from toxic pesticides;
- Outbreaks of animal diseases that can transmit to humans (such as Avian influenza and Rift Valley fever) expose children working in livestock production and processing to increased health threats;
- The treatment of animals for disease and the associated herding and movements that children might carry out as part of efforts to eradicate disease increase their vulnerability to physical harm and exposure to chemical hazards;
- Loss of harvest and livestock are likely to push children into child labour.

Protracted crises and conflict place children at extreme risk. Fragile economic existences, widespread damage, extensive violence, prolonged humanitarian responses, and significant protection and security risks all contribute to children's vulnerability. Armed groups often recruit children who are already in worst forms of child labour; conflict-induced displacement into temporary shelters can increase children's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labour including debt bondage and trafficking; Physical hazards such as firearms, landmines, UXO/ERW, and the debris of conflict can make children's work in agriculture more dangerous; Children are often used to negotiate barriers, where the movement of people and goods during conflict is restricted, placing them in greater physical and emotional danger; Access to the formal labour market is often restricted for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, putting pressure on children to work. Situations of encampment with restricted mobility and limited access to basic services and natural resources may increase unregulated and informal work for children, as they support household food security and income; The need to seek alternative sources of food and water for their livestock due to conflict over resources can increase pastoralist children's exposure to violence; Children sent from camps to collect water and fuel are also at risk of violence and abuse.

The change in prevalence and forms of child labour after natural disasters is not always consistent between contexts. Yet, the loss of home, physical safety and displacement into temporary shelters can increase children's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labour including debt bondage and trafficking; the whole or part of the agricultural industries can be destroyed. Where families already depend on children's income, unemployment can place them at increased risk of unsafe migration and trafficking in search of work; Massive reconstruction efforts that follow natural disasters can create additional types of child labour and pull children into inappropriate reconstruction, extraction or processing activities; rapid growth in sectors that support large-scale responses, such as the provision of goods and services and transportation, provide an easy entry point into child labour.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Integrating child labour concerns in agriculture, food security and nutrition programming in protracted crises, fragile and humanitarian contexts

**3a**

#### SITUATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Accurate and timely needs assessments provide the foundation and justification for interventions to support recovery and future resilience of populations in emergency situations.

FAO has adopted a five-phase assessment approach to align with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Framework, as well as to identify specific tools to be used in each phase.

Needs assessment also provides a suitable opportunity to gather information and analyse child labour issues that affect agricultural households in emergencies.

Child labour should be integrated into any pre-assessment training and briefings. The phases of needs assessment and key tasks to integrate child labour are as follows:

- understand whether child labour would be a problem if an emergency were to affect agricultural communities;
- identify any immediate indications that child labour is a considerable concern in agricultural communities following an emergency;
- understand how the situation has changed and continues to change;
- collect data to identify the impact of economic shock on families and their livelihood.



### PREPAREDNESS PHASE 0



**Understand whether child labour would be a problem if an emergency were to affect agricultural communities.** Review secondary data to identify any significant pre-existing forms and/or baseline data on child labour and its worst forms in agriculture and food production (e.g. from rapid assessments that can provide information on children below minimum age who are found in employment; children who have reached the minimum age but work at night or their working day starts before 6.00 am; children who are involved in tasks requiring the use of sharp tools without protective equipment such as garlic peeling). e.g. Refer to any available National Action Plan or roadmap to eradicate child labour, policies, legislation and ongoing efforts to prevent child labour in-country.

### FIRST 2 WEEKS PHASE 1 & 2



**Identify any immediate indications that child labour is a considerable concern in agricultural communities following an emergency.** Review the results of Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessments (MIRA) to identify child labour and worst forms of child labour indicators or related issues (e.g. potential indicators or proxies would be any registered decrease in school attendance, an increase in chemical poisoning cases registered at poison control centres (where they exist), an increase in the number of households that have contracted a debt they do not have means to repay). Where possible, take advantage of limited questions in multi-sector assessments to identify if child labour or withdrawing children from school is used by families to supplement rural or agriculture related income or cope with the crisis.

### WEEKS 4 TO 8 PHASE 3



**Understand how the situation has changed and continues to change.** Include child labour in agriculture in household and community level assessments to identify whether children are engaged in harmful work in agriculture and rural areas as a consequence of the emergency, paying particular attention to hazardous tasks and forms of work and children engaged in inappropriate ways in humanitarian response activities. Conduct labour market and supply chain analyses that include consideration of children's roles. Disaggregate assessment information by age (adults and children below and above the minimum age for work), gender and other vulnerability factors such as child-headed households, disability etc.

### 6 TO 12 MONTHS PHASE 4

**Collect data to identify the impact of economic shock on families and their livelihood coping mechanisms and child labour through more in-depth household and community level assessment, including surveys, focus group discussions and key informant interviews.**

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IN PHASE 3 AND 4

depending on (1) the time and resources available, (2) the child labour situation in the country, and (3) the type of crisis:

#### Income related – who are the breadwinners and who do they involve in work activities?

- Who brings cash, food and other goods into the household and how are they sourced (legally or on the black market, through stable or unstable employment, close to home or far away)?
- How do separated and unaccompanied minors support themselves?
- How do restrictions on agriculture or adult labour impact child labour? (e.g. requirement of work-permits for refugees, or areas of land or sea which are now prohibited)?
- Have coping strategies changed? How? Do they impact children?

#### Boys and girls before and after the crisis

- Did boys and girls work in agriculture (including livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) before the crisis? How this has changed?
- Are boys and girls used to collect water and fuel? How have time requirements and dangers changed since the onset of the crisis?
- How has spending on girls and boys changed, e.g. for education?
- What economic opportunities exist for girls and boys over the minimum working age that contribute to personal development and food security for their families?

#### Crisis impact & agriculture, food security and nutrition interventions – linkages with child labour

- Are there indications that humanitarian action is contributing to increasing the extent or severity of child labour? (e.g. through the creation of incentives for children to work, exclusion of working-age adolescents, inadequate provision of services, disruption of local markets and livelihoods etc.)?
- How are children used in the supply chain? Are humanitarian organisations using agricultural or rural goods or services where child labour is clearly being used (e.g. crop and egg production and sale, food processing, sale of pesticides, wood processing, charcoal and brick production)?



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Is the child labour in agriculture pre-existing, or is it induced by the crisis in the area of intervention?
- In both cases, your situation and needs assessment should reflect these concerns accordingly in the different stages of the assessment exercise.

3b

## PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

## MINIMUM RESPONSE

Depending on the context, you can integrate child labour-sensitive activities in the design and implementation of food security and agricultural programmes in protracted crises, fragile and humanitarian settings in several ways.

- Design resilience and response programmes that provide safe work opportunities for caregivers and children of working age, whose families are vulnerable to child labour. Humanitarian assistance must not lower working conditions for adults and workers above the minimum age for employment during emergencies.
- Work with others: You are likely to be a food security cluster member. Consult with members of the Education and Protection Clusters or working groups. Consider consulting with Nutrition cluster and cash based consortium or working group. Integrate and combine strategies with other partners and sectors [See Section IV on Principles of Engagement: Partnership and Coordination];
- Avoid exposing children to further harm because of your programme design and implementation [See Section IV on Principles of Engagement: Do no harm]:
  - Consult women, men, boys and girls across vulnerable groups, including the families of child labourers, and child protection groups, to design interventions that develop sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable rural families.
  - Ensure all staff are familiarized and trained in their responsibilities and accountability to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse through humanitarian programmes. Ensure safeguarding policies and measures are in place.
  - Provide timely and concrete information on interventions to intended beneficiaries, including how and where to register, in a language and format that reaches even the most vulnerable.
  - Coordinate among actors to identify labour requirements for intended projects, and determine how labour gaps will be filled.
  - Develop safeguards and monitoring to support decent work and prevent child labour in resilience and response programmes.

**Typical safeguards to monitor and support decent work and prevent child labour through agriculture, food security and nutrition programming**

- Screen participants for age during registration.
- Monitor participants' age and age related to tasks during activities.
- Develop clear standards for children who are engaged in cash- or food-for-work programmes or other food security and agriculture interventions.
- Identify appropriate and safe tasks vs hazardous and heavy tasks for children above 14/15 years.
- Seek support to have workplace safety guidelines in farm and other agricultural or fisheries related settings.

You can seek support from and coordinate with members of the Education and Protection clusters.



**Country example:** In Lebanon, FAO promotes child labour-sensitive activities within the Food Security Cluster, which is co-led with WFP, and collaborates with other key coordination mechanisms including the child protection and livelihoods sectors. FAO participates in the interagency child labour task force, chaired by the Ministry of Labour, to target child labour in the refugee population. This includes provision of training for NGOs to disseminate information on the harmful impacts of pesticides on children, and initial discussions about how to strengthen case management and referral pathways for children identified as being in hazardous work.

## ZOOMING IN ON COORDINATION



- Identify opportunities for coordination and partnerships, particularly between the Food Security Cluster and the Protection and Education Clusters, which aim for similar outcomes for vulnerable households. Cash-based interventions and consortium as well as Nutrition cluster may also be strategic counterparts.
- Seek briefings and training from other actors on child labour, covering the context, locally prevalent forms, local legislation and safe ways to involve older children in humanitarian activities.
- With others (particularly local child protection and education coordination structures), develop and share clear referral pathways to support vulnerable children who are identified.
- Participate in cross-sector coordination groups such as task forces on child labour.
- Encourage partners in ministries of agriculture to engage in child labour issues and participate in coordination.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of different sectors and actors.
- Include existing child labour coordination mechanisms in humanitarian coordination, such as the local child labour task forces, National Action Plan Coordination groups and the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA).

## PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Consider complementary interventions, such as educational support, supplementary income, vocational and life skills training or referral to other agencies or coordination mechanisms for older children, women and the ultra-poor and vulnerable, who may have compounding protection concerns and lack the capacity to manage or access food security and agricultural programmes.
- Advocate mobilizing funds to analyse and respond to child labour in agriculture in greater depth.

## EXPANDED ACTION TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOUR



## Working with partners

When working with partners to design and implement food security and agricultural programmes:

- Include child labour in trainings where possible and focus on ensuring a common understanding of the core concepts (e.g. age-appropriate work for children above and below the minimum legal age; child labour and hazardous work; how to analyse potentially negative impacts of programmes on children; age-verification techniques; referral pathways to child protection and other services).
- Sign codes of conduct and safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent child labour and sexual exploitation and abuse. They are a core part of partnership agreements and include the prohibition of child labour in local supply chains, commitments to protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (PSEA) under Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), and complaints mechanisms.
- Clearly outline in agreements and contracts expectations in relation to child labour (e.g. how children above the legal working age should be safely included in programmes; making children aware of their programme entitlements free from exploitation; and monitoring responsibilities).
- Ensure child labour is considered during supervisory visits and spot checks (see Monitoring and Evaluation).

- Be part of an inter-agency and inter-sector effort to address child labour:
  - Work to develop joint strategies and proposals to address child labour in agriculture, and design and deliver integrated programmes.
  - Work with child protection, social protection, education, health and livelihoods colleagues to identify, report and support individual children and their families.
  - Liaise with the Protection Cluster and any child labour task force to contribute information on child survivors who have been exposed to the worst forms of child labour in agriculture to the referral pathways.
  - Liaise with the Protection Cluster and any child labour task force to participate in the development of guidelines and procedures, and/or receive training from relevant actors to address child labour in agriculture.
- As a Food Security Cluster member, and in partnership with other key actors, advocate for child labour to be included in cluster wide assessments, response strategies and plans, and relevant humanitarian funding mechanisms where appropriate.
- Broadly raise awareness and engage with families and agricultural actors, underlining the incidence of child labour and its impact on agriculture.
- Identify and acknowledge cultural sensitivities surrounding child labour to initiate dialogue that will create behavioural change.
- Work to improve the safety of children engaged in agriculture. Provide technical expertise and raise awareness on risk reduction strategies and safe agricultural practices for children, including how to prevent children's exposure to pesticides.

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**IN NIGER**, FAO worked with the National Chambers of Agriculture Network to develop a **practical guide on hazardous child labour for small-scale producers**. [WEB](#)

The guide identifies tasks typically performed by children in each agricultural sub-sector and provides suggestions for reducing harm. It was developed through a participatory approach with producers' organizations. The guide contains information on the types of hazards children are exposed to, the degrees of risk, possible solutions to reduce harm and address risk, and the resources required to do so. It covers the following hazards and tasks: irrigation wells, sharp tools, carrying heavy loads, rice cultivation, fetching wood and water, and tending livestock.

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- Promote Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) programmes to reduce the risks to girls (and boys) when collecting fuel. Mainstream awareness raising on child labour into SAFE projects.
- Support government counterparts (where they exist) to eradicate child labour in agriculture, including to train government workers and raise awareness.
- Work with agriculture sector oversight bodies, workers' unions and producers' organizations to highlight the dangers and legalities of child labour in agriculture, including hazardous work, and raise awareness of child labour.
- Engage national or multinational agricultural companies in areas affected by emergencies in dialogue, awareness raising and monitoring of child labour in agriculture.

For children who are above the minimum working age and below the age of 18, access to safe and decent work is crucial and can help alleviate financial difficulties experienced by families who are displaced and/or recovering from a crisis. To strengthen efforts to provide decent work for rural youth who can legally work:

EXPANDED ACTION  
TO SUPPORT  
DECENT WORK FOR  
CHILDREN OF LEGAL  
WORKING AGE

- Reserve a percentage of places in recovery and rehabilitation programmes for young people of working-age, according to local law and international standards.
- For activities targeting older children, consider that boys and girls are likely to require different provisions to participate safely and equitably.

**IN UGANDA**, FAO and its partners have implemented **Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools** [WEB](#) to address the immediate needs of vulnerable children living in rural communities affected by conflict. The project targeted boys and girls aged 12 to 18, from households who were displaced, directly or indirectly affected by HIV/AIDS, with severely disabled parents, in-and out-of-school and other children in distress. Planned around the local agricultural calendar, the programme enabled children to develop agricultural, entrepreneurship and social skills through classroom-based studies and practical sessions in the field, which were complemented by life-skills sessions, local theatre, art, dance and music.

JFFLS increased school enrolment, performance and attendance of vulnerable children in primary schools, and also helped to improve the diet of children who usually could not grow or buy vegetables. It also helped participating children become role models and develop self-confidence, knowledge and skills to take greater control of their lives.





- Use the Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach to support vulnerable rural youth to access agricultural, business and life skills training.
- Ensure that programmes working with children and adolescents do not require them to travel long distances to participate, as this might expose them to risks of violence or abuse, or prevent their parents from letting them participate.
- Do not incentivize in-school adolescents to work.
- Engage girls and boys to help identify appropriate forms of work and training, and suitable/flexible times for their participation in programmes – including determining a suitable balance of work, education and leisure time for children involved in programmes.
- Ensure safety mechanisms are integrated into programmes targeting children, including: dialogue with girls and boys to identify risks and mitigation measures (e.g. safe places to keep and save cash; safe routes to and from activity locations, especially for girls; how to identify and respond to UXO, ERW and landmines etc.).
- Clearly communicate with participating children so that they have realistic expectations of participation in the programme.
- Ensure that staff engaging directly with children have gone through appropriate screening and are also trained in working with children and child participation.
- Support the reconstruction and recovery of vocational and skills training centres that provide agricultural and livelihoods courses to rural children and youth.
- Support the development of training materials and capacity-building to strengthen safe agricultural employment, entrepreneurship and training programmes for adolescents.

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Is your programme, or are some of its activities, supporting livelihoods through the creation of work?
- Is your programme, or are some of its activities, providing training for farmers or producers?
- If yes, you should make sure these activities prioritize families more vulnerable to child labour and include opportunities for youth of legal working age.
- You should also ensure that the additional opportunities that the programme is providing are not leading children out of school and into child labour, for example through careful planning of training times, discussion with the parents and/or community awareness campaigns. Otherwise, there is a risk that families might make the choice to withdraw children from school to attend trainings offered by the programme or to help with income opportunities created by the programme.



3c

## TARGETING & BENEFICIARY SELECTION

Targeting is an essential component of programming. Careful targeting can benefit child labourers and their families through their inclusion in programmes that improve household productivity and income and decrease the need for child labour. In contrast, poor targeting can lead to stigma, discrimination and violence, and can increase demand for child labour.

- Use existing context and assessment data of the child labour situation to inform the most suitable methodology of beneficiary selection, for instance whether universal, community-led or self-selecting targeting are suitable to reach the objectives of the programme.
  - Include households at risk of child labour through targeting that does not identify vulnerability or inadvertently cause negative impacts.
  - Carefully consider the role of gender. Do not automatically assume women's spending decisions improve outcomes for children. Evidence is mixed on the impact of this approach, as there are additional pressures on women and targeting them may make them more vulnerable in some situations.
- 
- Prioritize assistance for high-risk communities as a preventive and response measure.
  - Where possible, create flexible and ongoing pathways for targeting and inclusion in programmes, so that households identified through other sector programmes, such as child protection or education, can be referred for support.

MINIMUM RESPONSE

EXPANDED ACTION  
TO ADDRESS  
CHILD LABOUR

### →🔗 Groups that are more vulnerable to child labour include:

- Excluded groups (ethnic minorities, households with disabled or HIV positive members)
- Single-headed households, elderly-headed households or child-headed households)
- Households with children not in education, employment or training (NEAT)
- Households with children who are already working, whether paid or unpaid (managing school and work, working part time, or in the worst forms of child labour)
- Households involved in illicit work
- Households caring for unaccompanied and separated children
- Low-income and ultra-poor households
- Displaced, unaccompanied and separated minors



EXPANDED ACTION  
TO SUPPORT  
DECENT WORK FOR  
CHILDREN OF LEGAL  
WORKING AGE

- Directly involve young people in identifying and locating their peers to engage in food security and agricultural programmes.
- Take steps to ensure that targeting does not create stigma or additional safety concerns for children (e.g. by including vulnerability on public documents or identity cards).
- Where possible, include older children with disabilities who are less likely to access education and who have fewer economic opportunities than adults.
- Take special measures to involve girls: negotiate with parents and caregivers to encourage girls' participation; engage caregivers, girls and boys to identify safe ways for girls to access programmes; and advocate for change to practices restricting girls' participation.
- Do not prevent participation in food security and agricultural programmes because of missing documentation (e.g. birth registration documents); age-verification techniques to determine a child's age can include simple life history questionnaires documenting significant life events.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- Are you targeting families vulnerable to child labour?
- Are you taking age and gender into account in your targeting?

3d

MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION OF YOUR  
PROGRAMME

Monitoring and evaluation are key to ensure the success of the programme. Specifically, monitoring the impact of programmes on children and their role in the household is essential. Whether implementing activities to address child labour in agriculture, or preventing the exposure of people to harm due to inadvertent impacts of humanitarian programming, monitoring is critical to ensure implementation of the programmes 'do no harm' principle (Please refer to Section VI on Principles of Engagement).

**IN LEBANON**, FAO will use the '**Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture**' [WEB](#) in a land reclamation project that will engage Syrian workers in farming. A baseline will be conducted, and monitoring will take place to ensure children are not engaged in harmful work.



- Monitor programmes regularly to ensure that any risks faced by children as a result of the emergency or response are identified and mitigated at an early stage.
- Align indicators with locally determined priorities and needs.
- Determine the number of children engaged in harmful work using the following key indicators:
  - Number of boys and girls aged 5–14 and 15–17 who work.
  - Number of hours boys and girls aged 5–14 and 15–17 have worked in the past week.
  - Type of work (sector and task) done by boys and girls aged 5–14 and 15–17.
- Involve working children and their caregivers in monitoring and evaluation. In areas with pre-existing child labour, it is essential that they participate in order to ensure representation of working children's issues. Where specific action is taken to address child labour following an emergency, it is vital to ensure that children involved in different types and sectors of work are included.

#### MINIMUM RESPONSE

- Include indicators to monitor the implementation of programme activities related to child labour (e.g. inclusion of child labour in trainings, use of age verification techniques and understanding of child labour by programme staff and partners, number of producers and communities reached by awareness raising activities on child labour in agriculture, number of youth under 18 included in programme activities etc.)
- Include impact-level indicators appropriate for your specific context and programme beneficiaries, for example:
  - Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 engaged in child labour, by sex and age (SDG 8.7 Indicator 8.7.1).
  - Percent change in primary/secondary school enrolment/attendance (or average number of missed days of school) – after/during an emergency or since the intervention was implemented.
  - Percent change in primary/secondary school completion rates for girls and boys.
  - Average number of hours boys and girls spend working outside the home.
  - Percent of children removed from hazardous child labour enrolled in formal or informal education.
  - Number of policies/instruments/systems that governments draft and implement that address child labour.

#### EXPANDED ACTION TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE



- Among children who have worked, percent that have been hurt or made ill at work or percent that have been hospitalized or permanently prevented from working.
- Number and/or percent of children who report working for pay (in cash or in kind), working for the family or working without pay.
- Number of unaccompanied and separated minors (as a proxy indicator for vulnerability).
- Percent of children who have access to food security and agricultural support.
- Percent of children accessing food security and agricultural programmes at the same time as working.
- Percent of children who are referred to child protection systems or programmes.
- Number of employers who have improved knowledge or understanding of the concepts of child rights and child protection issues, including gender issues.

EXPANDED ACTION  
TO SUPPORT  
DECENT WORK FOR  
CHILDREN OF LEGAL  
WORKING AGE

- Include indicators to monitor the implementation of programme activities to support decent work for children of legal working age (e.g. consultation of children and youth in programme design and during implementation, number of boys and girls under 18 included in programme activities, number of producers and agriculture-related businesses trained in safe working conditions for youth, etc.)
- Include impact-level indicators appropriate for your specific context and programme beneficiaries, for example:
  - Number and/or percent of children removed from harmful work and supported – either to attend a training opportunity or to be placed in non-hazardous age-appropriate agricultural work.
  - Number of children over 14/15 years of age that the programme is reaching.
  - Number of those children retained in the programme and percent of which are girls and boys from vulnerable groups.
  - Number and profiles of children who drop out of the programme.
  - Retention rates for children simultaneously participating in food security and agricultural programmes or training and working.
  - Retention rates for pregnant girls, young mothers and disabled children in programmes.



- If one of the findings show that child labour has been induced by your programme, you can still do something about it. If child labour is found at the monitoring stage, this note should help you to implement adjustments. If child labour is found at the final evaluation stage, explore how additional activities or adjustments can still be implemented. Otherwise, the situation should be referred to the country office and partners.
- If findings show that child labour was not addressed by your programme and remains an issue, there is still room for improvement. Make note that child labour may hamper the sustainability of your good results! Consider if child labour concerns can be included from the design stage in a any subsequent programme in the area.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS





# RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- 
- ESSENTIAL READING**
- FAO. 2015. *Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture: Measuring the impacts of agricultural and food security programmes on child labour in family-based agriculture.*
- Global Education Cluster & Child Protection Working Group (CPWG). 2014. *Economic strengthening for child protection & education in emergencies – Compendium of evidence & guidance.*
- CPWG Child Labour Task Force. 2016. *Inter-agency toolkit: Supporting the protection needs of child labourers in emergencies.* (Draft for field testing)
- CPWG. 2012. *Minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action.* (Minimum Standard 12 Child Labour; Minimum Standard 19 Economic Recovery and Child Protection; Minimum Standard 26 Distribution)
- 
- EXPANDED READING**
- CPWG Child Labour Task Force. 2012. *Responding to the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Emergencies.*
- FAO. 2016. *End Child Labour in Agriculture*, E-learning course. (available at <http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/CL>).
- FAO Child Labour in agriculture. (available at: <http://www.fao.org/childlabouragriculture/en/>).
- ILO-IPEC. (available at: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/areas/Agriculture/lang--en/index.htm>).
- ILO-IPEC. 2014. *Compendium of good practices on addressing child labour in agriculture.*
- ILO-IPEC. 2006. *Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice.*
- FAO/ILO-IPEC. 2013. *Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture*, available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i3318e/i3318e.pdf>
- FAO. 2013. *Children's work in the livestock sector*, Summary available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/i2971e/i2971e.pdf>. Full report available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/017/i3098e/i3098e.pdf>.
- CaLP (Cash Learning Partnership). A significant and growing number of resources on children, child protection and cash transfer programming (available at <http://www.cashlearning.org/cash-and-protection/protection>).



# CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE IN PROTRACTED CRISES, FRAGILE AND HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS



## Key considerations

### Why this note?

In many rural communities, children play an essential role in household food security.

Each year conflict and disaster push children into work that is unsuitable for their age, is likely to harm their physical and mental development and deprives them of the opportunity to learn.

An important consideration is that humanitarian food security and agriculture responses present great opportunities to address child labour in agriculture. But they may also pose risks that could exacerbate the prevalence and severity of child labour.

**Remember, child labour and hunger are related.**

**Child labour will not automatically disappear with the end of the crisis. Therefore, it is important that any [humanitarian] response is a timely part of a long-term solution!**

### What for?

The purpose of the guidance note is to inform the reader on the correlation between crises and child labour, to help the reader “do no harm” and to address, where possible, existing forms of child labour in agriculture or those induced by the crises.

The guidance note is structured to help ask the right questions at each stage of the programme cycle and to keep in mind essential considerations related to children and their engagement in agriculture. If your programmes have unintentionally led to child labour, the guidance note will help you identify and remediate the relative situations.

|   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| <b>Do no harm</b>                                 | <b>≡</b> | <b>Create no more child labour</b>   |
| Address existing child labour situations          | <b>≡</b> | Prevent and reduce situations of children performing tasks that hamper their health and deprive them of school |
| Address child labour situations induced by crises | <b>≡</b> | Compare changes in child labour prior to crisis and respond where possible                                     |

### AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF YOUR INTERVENTION:

- When there are child labour in agriculture situations – whether pre-existing or induced by the crisis – in the area of your programme intervention, your situation and needs assessment should reflect these concerns in the different stages of the assessment exercise.
- If work opportunities are created, you should make sure these activities prioritize the provision of work to families who are more vulnerable to child labour.
- Programmes should also attempt to provide safe employment and training opportunities for youth when possible.
- Additional opportunities provided by the programme (employment/training) should not force children out of school and into child labour. Keep in mind that families might make a choice and withdraw children from school to attend trainings offered by the programme or to take advantage of additional employment opportunities created by the programme.
- If monitoring shows that child labour has been induced by your programme, there is always something you can do about it.
- If the findings show that child labour was not addressed by your programme and is still an issue, there is room for improvement. Make note that child labour may hamper the sustainability of your good results!

Consider if child labour concerns can be included from the design stage in a subsequent phase/programme.

**If your programme did help to address child labour, we want to hear about your experience!  
Please contact [End-child-labour@fao.org](mailto:End-child-labour@fao.org).**





## **One in four children grow up in areas affected by conflict or natural hazards.**

Each year, these conditions push children into agricultural work that is unsuitable for their age in order to provide for themselves and their families. Around the world, millions of children are trapped in exploitative and dangerous work that affects their physical and mental development and deprives them of the opportunity to learn.



Agriculture, food security and nutrition programmes are critical to increase the resilience of rural communities to threats and crises.



They contribute to leaving no one behind and addressing situations



of child labour in agriculture in protracted crises, humanitarian and fragile contexts. On the other hand, unintended outcomes from interventions may potentially exacerbate the prevalence and severity of child labour.

This note provides technical and operational guidance to the agriculture, food security and nutrition programme implementers and formulators. Its aim is to enhance the sustainability and the impact of these programmes through the provisions of recommendations and concrete examples presented in a simple and straightforward manner. Its structure guides the user to ask the right questions at each stage of the programme cycle.

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