



**International Labour Organization
International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)**

Investigating the Worst Forms of Child Labour No. 17

**Lebanon:
Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations:
A Rapid Assessment**

**By
Consultation and Research Institute**

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Preface

Unacceptable forms of exploitation of children at work exist and persist, but they are particularly difficult to research due to their hidden, sometimes illegal or even criminal nature. Slavery, debt bondage, trafficking, sexual exploitation, the use of children in the drug trade and in armed conflict, as well as hazardous work are all defined as Worst Forms of Child Labour. Promoting the Convention (No. 182) concerning the Prohibition and immediate action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999, is a high priority for the International Labour Organization (ILO). Recommendation (No. 190, Paragraph 5) accompanying the Convention states that “detailed information and statistical data on the nature and extent of child labour should be compiled and kept up to date to serve as a basis for determining priorities for national action for the abolition of child labour, in particular for the prohibition and elimination of its worst forms, as a matter of urgency.” Although there is a body of knowledge, data, and documentation on child labour, there are also still considerable gaps in understanding the variety of forms and conditions in which children work. This is especially true of the worst forms of child labour, which by their very nature are often hidden from public view and scrutiny.

Against this background the ILO, through IPEC/SIMPOC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour) has carried out 38 rapid assessments of the worst forms of child labour in 19 countries and one border area. The investigations have been made using a new rapid assessment methodology on child labour, elaborated jointly by the ILO and UNICEF¹. The programme was funded by the United States Department of Labor.

The investigations on the worst forms of child labour have explored very sensitive areas including illegal, criminal or immoral activities. The forms of child labour and research locations were carefully chosen by IPEC staff in consultation with IPEC partners. The rapid assessment investigations focused on the following categories of worst forms of child labour: children in bondage; child domestic workers; child soldiers; child trafficking; drug trafficking; hazardous work in commercial agriculture, fishing, garbage dumps, mining and the urban environment; sexual exploitation; and working street children.

To the partners and IPEC colleagues who contributed, through their individual and collective efforts, to the realisation of this report I should like to express our gratitude. The responsibility for opinions expressed in this publication rests solely with the authors and does not imply endorsement by the ILO.

I am sure that the wealth of information contained in this series of reports on the situation of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour around the world will contribute to a deeper understanding and allow us to more clearly focus on the challenges that lie ahead. Most importantly, we hope that the studies will guide policy makers, community leaders, and practitioners to tackle the problem on the ground.



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¹ Investigating Child Labour: Guidelines for Rapid Assessment - A Field Manual, January 2000, a draft to be finalized further to field tests, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/guides/index.htm>

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Executive Summary

Background and methodology of the study

This study, commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO), was carried out by the Consultation and Research Institute in Lebanon. It was implemented over a period of two months (July to September 2000). The goal of the study was to assess the working conditions of child labour in tobacco cultivation in Lebanon, as well as the socio-economic conditions of working children and their households in this field of occupation.

The study begins with an introductory chapter that defines its scope and methodology, followed by an outline of the background of tobacco cultivation in the country and child labour in Lebanon. The socio-economic conditions of children and families working in tobacco cultivation in South Lebanon are presented in the third chapter of the study. The study's final section is comprised of general conclusions.

The study adopted two complementary research tools in order to obtain the needed information. In addition to the review of available documentation related to the subject of the study, the rapid assessment methodology was applied in five key-location villages in South Lebanon, distributed over four districts. The selection of villages took into consideration their geographic distribution and the importance of tobacco cultivation within the villages. As part of the study, 128 working children in tobacco cultivation were interviewed.

Tobacco cultivation in Lebanon

Tobacco is one of the major cultivated crops in Lebanon, with the total number of tobacco farmers estimated at 24,000. Tobacco crops cover a total area of 91,000 dunums and a total production of around 11,000 kg. Tobacco cultivation is mostly concentrated in South Lebanon. The Tobacco Administration, or the "Regie" as it is also known, is a semi-autonomous government agency that was formed in 1935 in response to the French mandate to regulate tobacco plantations in Lebanon and control the import of tobacco into the country. The size of tobacco cultivation, both in terms of production and cultivated area, has increased drastically during the past three decades. The government heavily subsidizes tobacco cultivation at an annual cost of over US\$73.3 million of which 47 percent is a direct subsidy (1997).

Child labour in Lebanon

The total resident population of Lebanon is estimated at 4,005,000 (CAS-1997) with population concentration in Beirut and Beirut Suburbs (32.5 percent). The age structure of the Lebanese population is young with around 39 percent of the population below the age of 19 years.

The total labour force is estimated at 1,362,000 persons, representing 34 percent of the total population (1997), of which 31.1 percent are actually working and 2.9 percent are seeking

jobs. The highest activity rate is observed for the 25-44 year age group. Regional variations in economic activity are recorded and unemployment is estimated to vary between 8.1 percent and 8.9 percent.

Official figures indicate that the percentage of working children and youth aged 10-14 years and 15-19 years is equivalent to 2.8 percent and 21.6 percent, respectively. It is noted that the activity rate for working children and youth has generally declined over the past two decades. On the other hand, national reports estimate the number of working children in tobacco to amount to 25,000 children with an average of three children per family.

Child labour is observed to be most prominent in more remote and poorer regions of the country. It is officially recorded to be higher in the Bekaa, North and South Lebanon than it is in Beirut.

The majority of working children in official registries are males and a high percentage of working children have an early entry into the labour market. Due to this early entry into the labour market, working children have a low educational status. The majority of officially recorded children aged 10-14 years are paid permanent workers in metal works, handicrafts and artisan establishments. Most working children are paid very low salaries, all of them earning rates below the minimum wage rate declared by the Government.

The most widely cited cause of child labour is poverty as low income families tend to make use of all members of the family for income generation. The majority of Lebanese children work as a result of economic need which stems from poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Child labour in tobacco cultivation

Most of the working children in tobacco cultivation are 12-15 years old, followed by children aged 9-12 years. They are almost all unpaid family labour, entering into the labour market at a very early age, for some as young as age three.

The majority of these children are enrolled in school, 94 percent of whom are either at the elementary or intermediate levels. The highest school dropout rate begins after completion of the elementary stage. More than half of the children working in tobacco cultivation indicate that their work in tobacco cultivation has a negative effect on their educational achievements due to absenteeism.

More than sixty percent of working children in tobacco cultivation feel that their work has deprived them of their leisure time since they have no spare time for playing with friends or for recreational activities.

Most village residents in South Lebanon have access to basic primary health services and basic schooling facilities. Most villages, however, lack access to basic infrastructure in terms of potable water networks and sewer networks. Basic agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation water and agricultural machinery are also lacking in most communities.

Most of the work of children in tobacco cultivation is carried out during the spring and summer seasons. The majority of the work the children perform is in needle binding of tobacco leaves, harvesting and seedling transplant. For children below five years of age work

is limited to leaf drying. When children are five to 10 years of age, they work in seedling transplant and leaf drying, and those ages 10-15 years become actively involved in tobacco drying, harvesting, and planting (seedling transplant, irrigation, weeding). Young people aged 15-20 years participate in all tasks related to tobacco cultivation.

Daily working hours in tobacco cultivation are long, with most children working an average of between nine and thirteen hours per day during the tobacco production season

The premises where children work are small, dirty, and full of dust. Furthermore, working in the fields results in children being forced to tolerate intense sunlight and high temperatures, which frequently cause headaches for most children. Children usually walk from their houses to the fields, with distances taking between 15-30 minutes. The tools used in executing various tasks related to tobacco cultivation are unsuitable for children. They usually consist of non-motorized hand tools which contain unguarded dangerous parts. Emergency kits are rarely available in work place despite the fact that children working in tobacco cultivation are faced with risks and dangers. Children do not wear gloves, nor do they have special working clothes. Most of the working children report that they do not eat during their working hours.

Abuse in the forms of isolation, illegal trafficking, and sexual harassment are not witnessed among these working children. Some children, however, express that their parents are sometimes violent, beating them if they do not learn the needed skills. Verbal abuse is also used.

There are several constraints that bother children in their work in tobacco cultivation, including the need to wake up early in the morning during the harvest season, having to work long hours, being bored during leaf drying and their lack of time for recreational activities. Most of the working children do not like working in tobacco cultivation as the work is “tiring, boring and hard.”

General socio-economic conditions of households

The tobacco farming family is very large, with an average family size of around 7 members, and with a high percentage of young people aged 11-19 years.

The educational status of parents of working children in tobacco cultivation is low, and most families earn a yearly income ranging between LBP110-20 million for an average family of 7 members. This low income earned by the family, and the high number of family members illustrates that the phenomenon of child labour is correlated with poverty.

Tobacco cultivation is characterized by fragmented small land plots. The maximum allowable “quota” is equivalent to four dunums² per farmer.

¹ 1 US\$ is equivalent to LBP 1500 (August 2001 exchange rates)

² One dunum is equivalent to 1000 square meters

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration³:

- A special accelerated skills training program for children working in tobacco cultivation is recommended. Such training should also include awareness raising on risks and dangers associated with working in tobacco cultivation. This training can be conducted through the Community Development Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and can thus be sustained through the regular program of the Ministry.
- As a high number of working children feel that their work in tobacco cultivation is boring and tiring, it is recommended to improve the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation (ex. transportation means, protection from heat and equipment, resting places, emergency kits, etc.).
- All working places should be equipped with first aid health kits for injuries. As well, parents should have some notion of how to handle dangers and injuries related to tobacco cultivation.
- It is recommended that younger children have special protection measures as they are more vulnerable to injuries.
- Awareness raising sessions should be conducted for parents of working children to educate them on the needs, dangers, and risks associated with their children's work in tobacco cultivation, including the need for leisure and study time. These sessions can also target changing the perceptions of parents towards tobacco cultivation, and can also be carried out in the Community Development Centers.
- Children in general, and those working in tobacco cultivation in specific, have expressed their need for recreational activities. Finding such community-based facilities and equipping them to serve as recreational centers in villages should be established to assist in decreasing the social isolation of children. Such facilities can also be used as forums for conducting awareness projects.
- Programs for raising awareness on child labour and the rights of the child are recommended. These programs should target the communities at large, and parents of working children in specific. Schools can be used to facilitate such programs.
- The Regie Administration, being ultimately involved in tobacco cultivation, should be also involved in improving the working conditions of children. For example, the company should be encouraged to provide transportation means or emergency medical tools that would improve working conditions in tobacco cultivation, as well as improve the image of the Company.

³ As per the national legislation in Lebanon, the minimum age for employment is 14 years. Therefore, the recommendations that focus on improving working conditions apply to working children 14 and older.

- It is also recommended that the Syndicate of Tobacco farmers be involved in programs directed towards improving the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation. The Syndicate is active and is in direct contact with farmers, and can be used as a lobby group to support projects for raising awareness and/or improving working conditions.
- Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations could be mobilized to take part in improving the working conditions of children in tobacco. For example, many NGOs are involved in the provision of primary health care services in communities and they can be mobilized to assist in the provision of such services to children working in tobacco cultivation. Likewise, NGOs can be used for conducting awareness raising campaigns on safety issues, child labour, and children rights.
- Similar to point (g) above, municipalities can play an important role in providing services that would improve the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation.
- The economic dependency of families on tobacco cultivation should be changed. As such, the government should try to promote other cash crops for cultivation in the region, and should sustain their marketing.

Chapter 1

Content, scope and methodology

1.1 Background and scope of the study

This study of the International Labour Organization (ILO) was carried out by the Consultation and Research Institute in Lebanon over a period of two months (July to September 2000). The goal of the study, as specified by the ILO, was to assess the working conditions of child labour in tobacco cultivation in Lebanon. The study also aims at assessing the socio-economic conditions and the households of working children in this type of occupation. It is envisaged that the results of the study will assist policy makers to issue decisions to improve the working conditions of these children.

The obligations of the research team were defined by the contract, to include inter-alia:

- Background review, including background information on tobacco cultivation in Lebanon, and available information on child labour in the country;
- Conducting a Rapid Assessment (RA) covering five villages in South Lebanon to collect baseline data on working children, including location, work activities, socio-economic conditions, education level, and wages, if any;
- Obtaining a notion of the working conditions of children in tobacco, especially in relation to risks and dangers, abuse, and working hours;
- Interviewing a sample of working children to look at the opinion of children regarding their working conditions.

1.2 Methodology

This study begins with an introductory chapter that defines its scope and the methodology that was used to conduct it. As child labour is context and sector specific, the second chapter provides a background review of tobacco cultivation in the country and child labour in Lebanon. The third chapter outlines the findings of the rapid appraisal related to child labour in tobacco, as well as the socio-economic conditions of children and families working in tobacco cultivation in South Lebanon. This chapter also outlines the conditions of child labour in tobacco cultivation and assesses the opinion of a number of children in this regard. Information in this chapter is exclusively derived from the analysis of the results obtained from the rapid assessment. The study concludes with a final section on general conclusions and recommendations.

1.2.1 Research and data collection tools

The study adopted two complementary research tools in order to obtain the needed information. In addition to the review of available documentation related to the subject of the study, the research team conducted a rapid assessment study in five villages in South Lebanon.

Rapid Assessment is a research methodology that is intended to provide relevant information by means of discussions, interviews, and direct observation without employing scientific sampling, however seeking a compromise between statistical precision and impressionistic data gathering. The findings of this assessment usually pave the way for more intensive investigations in the subject matter in question.

This type of assessment was used in the context of the study to generate information on child labour in tobacco cultivation within selected locations. It assisted in deriving an initial estimate of the incidence of child labour in tobacco cultivation and a preliminary understanding of the social and economic conditions of working children and their households. In addition, the study identified the working conditions of children within this type of occupation and informed the research as to the characteristics of working children and their families. The assessment also revealed the attitude of working children towards this type of occupation.

Within the context of the assessment, three major tools of the rapid assessment were used: semi-structured questionnaires for interviewing working children, direct observation to gain an idea of the conditions of work, and interviews with community members, leaders, and key informants. Observations were used as a means of identifying the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation. Researchers were instructed to observe children in work settings for a duration lasting at least one hour, repeated at different times of the day. Together with observation, direct interviewing formed a second tool used in the context of this rapid assessment: a checklist was used to interview community members and key informants within the communities. Finally, 128 working children⁴ were interviewed using a simple short questionnaire specifically to obtain information on the attitudes of children towards their work in tobacco cultivation (see annex 2 for checklists and semi-structured questionnaire).

The steps undertaken in conducting the rapid assessment included the following:

- Preparation, including selecting the research teams and preparation of the checklists;
- Collecting background information and selecting key locations;
- Conducting the research, which included observing working children, interviewing children, and conducting interviews with key informants.

The study also included the data review and analysis through the tabulation of observations and analysis of findings.

To close this section, it should be noted that the rapid assessment methodology has some limitations. One of the limitations is the fact that its findings cannot necessarily be generalized to other populations of working children in the country since it uses a small scale reality. The rapid assessment methodology is more qualitative than quantitative which means that its applicability is limited.

⁴ In accordance with the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (no. 182), and for the purposes of this study, children are defined as all people below 18 years of age.

1.2.2 Key locations

The rapid assessment study comprised five key locations/villages in South Lebanon distributed among four districts as follows:

- Zawtar el-Charkiyeh, Nabatiyeh Caza
- Deir Kifa, Tyre Caza
- Touline, Marjeyoun Caza
- Rmeish, Bint-Jbeil Caza
- Aitaroun, Bint-Jbeil Caza

The selection of villages took into consideration their geographic distribution and the importance of tobacco cultivation within each village. Zawtar el-Charkiyeh and Touline are located on the former border between the free area and the former occupied zone, whereas Rmeish and Aitaroun are among the biggest villages in tobacco production with a high number of tobacco farmers. Table 1.1 illustrates tobacco cultivation in the selected villages.

Table 1.1 Tobacco cultivation in the selected villages (1999 figures)

Village	Caza	Registered population estimate (PRA)	Resident population estimate (PRA)	Tobacco cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Production in 1998 (kg)	Total income from tobacco (million LBP)
Zawtar el-Charkiyeh	Nabatiyeh		2000	685	166	81,000	851
Deir Kifa	Tyre	4000	1500	205	60	210,000	261
Touline	Marjeyoun	3500	2500	1521	390	220,000	2000
Rmeish	Bint-Jbeil	12000	6000	3290	780	385,000	3800
Aitaroun	Bint-Jbeil	20000	5000	3304	853	350,000	4000

1.2.3 Working children questionnaires

Within the context of the study 128 working children in tobacco cultivation were interviewed. The children were randomly selected from the key locations within the villages where the rapid assessment was carried out. Following are the characteristics of the sample interviewees:

- 48.4 percent of the interviewed children are from Bint-Jbeil Caza, 25 percent from Marjeyoun, 17.2 percent from Nabatiyeh, and 9.4 percent from Tyre.
- 25 percent of the interviewed children are residents in the village of Touline, 25 percent from Rmeish, 23.4 percent from Aitaroun, 17.2 from Zawtar el-Charkiyeh, and 9.4 percent from Deir Kifa.
- 49.2 percent of interviewees are males whereas 50.8 percent are females.

Chapter 2

Background

2.1 Tobacco cultivation in Lebanon

Tobacco is considered one of the major cultivated crops in Lebanon, coming fourth to the production of citrus, banana, and olive trees in terms of cultivated area. It is estimated that tobacco plantations started in Lebanon as early as the 16th century.

Tobacco is an industrial crop and is technically a member of the Solanaceae family and Tvicotina species that contains 70 species, two of which are industrially important (Nicotina Rustical and Nicotina Tabacum). Tobacco leaves are used for cigarettes, pipes and “narjileh” (water pipes). Tobacco seeds are planted in seedling beds, after which they are transplanted to fields. Tobacco species need sunlight (3-5 months), and the quality of tobacco depends on soil type and climate. Tobacco leaves are processed in factories; it is known that the first factory was constructed in Hammana (Mount Lebanon), followed by another in Antelias (Kesserwan).

The Tobacco Administration, or the “Regie” as it is known, is a semi-autonomous government agency that was formed in 1935 with the mandate to regulate tobacco plantations in Lebanon and control import of tobacco into the country. Since then, the size of tobacco cultivation, both in terms of production and cultivated area, has increased drastically in the country (for example the number of tobacco farmers increased from 7460 farmers in 1936 to 32450 in 1964). Similarly, the number of villages with tobacco cultivation quotas almost doubled between 1936 and 1964, increasing from 476 villages in 1936 to 781 in 1964⁵.

Tobacco cultivation in Lebanon covers more than 10,350 hectares, employs approximately 29,800 farmers, and produces 11,000 tons per year⁶. The economic circuit connected to tobacco cultivation includes 10,000 merchants who sell tobacco products, 1500 employees in the Tobacco Administration and more than 1000 seasonal tobacco workers⁷. It should be noted that tobacco cultivation declined during the second half of the 1980s due to the military conflict and the associated population displacement from South Lebanon (the average tobacco output of Lebanon did not exceed 750,000 kg in the 1980s compared to 9,250,000 in 1975)⁸.

On a regional basis, tobacco cultivation has declined over the past decades in the Mount Lebanon region to become more concentrated in South Lebanon, North Lebanon and the Bekaa which witnessed an increase in tobacco cultivation between 1992-1997 (refer to Table 2.1). The increase in tobacco cultivation is partly due to the problems facing agricultural production in the country in general, and more specifically due to the marketing problems faced by the production of other agricultural crops. In comparison to other crops, tobacco is considered a “secure selling” crop as the marketing of the produce is secured by the Lebanese government. It is noted that tobacco cultivation in southern Lebanon continued during the years of occupation, representing a social safety net and a secure source of income for the families who stayed in the region. Currently, farmers are not allowed to cultivate more than

⁵ Tobacco Administration in Lebanon- unpublished information

⁶ UNDP and HRC: Regional Socio-economic Development Programme for South Lebanon, 1999

⁷ Tobacco Administration in Lebanon- unpublished information

⁸ *ibid.*

four dunums as per the license provided by the government. Within South Lebanon, cultivation is primarily concentrated in the central region, especially in the Caza of Bint Jbeil, towards Marjeyoun and the higher parts of Tyre district.

Table 2.1 Tobacco cultivation in Lebanon (selected years)⁹

	Number of farmers			Cultivated area (dunums)			Production (thousand kg)		
	1992	1993	1997	1992	1993	1997	1992	1993	1997
South Lebanon	3,482	5,653	13,293	10,820	20,000	57,280	1,300	1,968	5,805
North Lebanon	525	1,186	4,809	4,175	3,950	14,458	460	545	1,655
Bekaa	67	543	6003	226	1,128	17,486	17	117	1,757

The government heavily subsidizes tobacco cultivation: over US\$73.3 million was paid by the Tobacco Administration for a purchase of 11,000 tons. Forty-seven percent of this, or US\$34.3 million, were a direct subsidy (1997)¹⁰. The annual cost of this support on the state budget reaches around US\$20 million for South Lebanon alone. The grant amount varies between regions: 25 percent in the Bekaa against 70 percent in South Lebanon.

The net yield of tobacco per hectare planted amounts to US\$6,800. With an average surface area per tobacco farmer equivalent to 0.377 hectare, the net yearly income per tobacco exploitation is US\$3,200. Depending on the region, tobacco income constitutes 25 percent to 85 percent of a family's income. It is noteworthy that the cultivation of one hectare of tobacco requires 610 work days¹¹.

2.2 Child labour in Lebanon

2.2.1 The Lebanese population

The total resident population of Lebanon is estimated at 4,005,000 (1997) with population concentrations in Beirut and Beirut Suburbs (32.5 percent)¹². Mount Lebanon encompasses around 37.6 percent of the population, followed by North Lebanon (20.1 percent) and the Bekaa (13.6 percent). Although the average family size in Lebanon is 4.8, Lebanon still has a high percentage of large families (11 percent of families have more than eight members)¹³.

Although the Lebanese population is progressively aging due to lower fertility rates, its age structure is youthful: 38.9 percent are below the age of 19 years, 51.2 percent are aged 20-59 years, and 9.9 percent are older than 60 years. Urban areas, with low fertility rates and smaller families, are observed to have a lower percentage of youth; the percentage of youth (<19 years) in Beirut is 31.7 percent compared to 41.4 percent and 42.9 percent in the Bekaa and South Lebanon, respectively (refer to Table 2.2).

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ UNDP and HRC: *Regional Socio-economic Development Programme for South Lebanon*, 1999

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Central Administration of Statistics: *Living Conditions in 1997*, 1997

¹³ *ibid.*

Table 2.2 Age structure of the Lebanese resident population (1997)¹⁴

District	Age Group (years)			Total
	0-19	20-59	Older than 60	
Beirut	31.7	55.5	12.8	100
Beirut suburbs	37.2	53.8	9	100
Mount Lebanon (excl. Beirut suburbs)	32.5	56	11.8	100
North Lebanon	45.4	45.6	9	100
South Lebanon	42.9	48.1	9	100
Nabatiyeh	38.8	48.9	12.3	100
Bekaa	41.4	49.4	9.2	100
Lebanon	38.9	51.2	9.9	100

The total labour force is estimated at 1,362,000 persons, representing 34 percent of the total population (1997), of which 31.1 percent are actually working and 2.9 percent are job seekers.

Overall, the highest activity rate is observed for the 25-44 year age group. The female activity rate is lower than the male activity rate and is estimated at 21.7 percent of the total labour force.

The percentage of the labour force to total population varies between regions, from 30 percent in Nabatiyeh to around 40 percent in Beirut. Unemployment is estimated to vary between 8.1 percent and 8.9 percent, and is higher for males (9 percent) than for females (7.2 percent)¹⁵.

2.2.2 Child labour

The nature of child labour in Lebanon varies depending on the type of work, nature of duties, age, and rewards. Official figures indicate that the activity rate for children aged 10-14 years is equivalent to 2.8 percent (5 percent for males and 0.4 percent for females). Similarly, the activity rates for youth 15-19 years of age are estimated at 21.6 percent, and are lower for females (5.8 percent) compared to males (36.6 percent)¹⁶.

It is noted that the activity rate for working children (10-14 years) has generally declined over the past two decades, when it was estimated at 6.6 percent and 6.0 percent for males and females in 1970, respectively¹⁷. Similarly, youth activity rates have declined from their pre-war level, where activity rates for females and males aged 15-19 years were estimated at 15.8 percent and 38 percent, respectively, in 1970.¹⁸

National reports estimate the number of working children in tobacco (ages 7 – 14 years) to amount to 25 thousand children. These children work seasonally as needed in the cultivation

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Central Directorate of Statistics: *Active Population in Lebanon, Sample Survey, 1972*

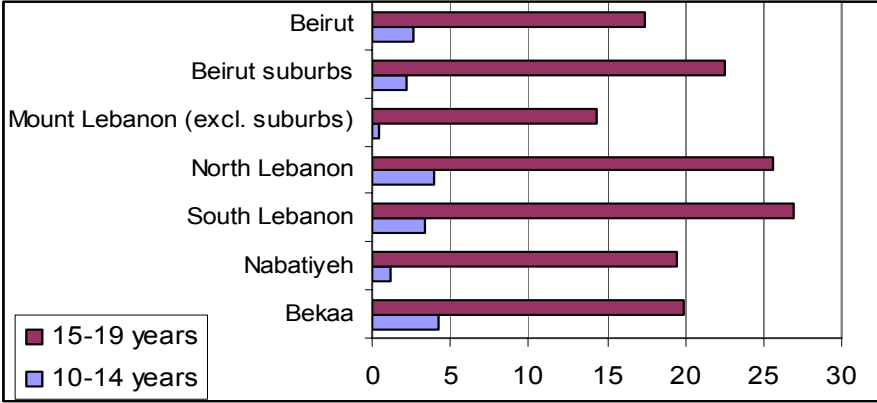
¹⁸ *ibid.*

and processing of tobacco. It is also estimated that 90 percent of these children are family workers, whereas only 10 percent are paid labourers¹⁹.

Official figures on child labour underestimate the actual size of the phenomenon, especially because working children are usually active in the informal parallel sector within non-declared enterprises. Hence, as is the case in most countries, national figures fail to capture other areas of child labour such as unpaid domestic work at home, seasonal employment, and non-paid labour in agriculture. In Lebanon, it is estimated that the majority of working children are seasonal workers in agriculture, and are thus not recorded in official statistics.

Child labour is observed to be more prominent in remote, poorer regions of the country, and is officially recorded to be higher in the Bekaa, North and South Lebanon compared to Beirut. The case is similar for working youth (refer to Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Economic activity for youth and children per district (1997)²⁰



Other official statistics indicate that the Mohafazat of North Lebanon encompasses more than 50 percent of working children aged 10-14 years, followed by Mount Lebanon (17 percent), Bekaa (11 percent), South Lebanon (9 percent) and Beirut (8 percent). The Cazas of Tripoli, Minyeh and Akkar alone encompass 97 percent of working children in North Lebanon, whereas Beirut Southern Suburbs encompass the highest percentage of working children in the Mohafazat of Mount Lebanon. The same applies for the Cazas of Zahle and Baalbeck in the Bekaa, where Baalbeck alone has 55 percent of working children in the Bekaa. Similarly, the Cazas of Tyre and Sidon have 100 percent of working children in South Lebanon²¹.

The majority of working children in official registries are male (88 percent of working children aged 10-14 years and 86 percent of those aged 15-19 years). The highest percentages of female working children are noted in Akkar and Beirut Eastern Suburbs²².

A study conducted by UNICEF on working children (1995) indicated that 43 percent of working children record an early entry into the labour market (10-13 years), whereas 21 percent begin work before they are 10 years of age²³.

¹⁹ Ministry of Social Affairs: *Situation of Children in Lebanon 1993-1998*, 1998
²⁰ Central Administration of Statistics: *Living Conditions in 1997*, 1997
²¹ The Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA: *Housing and Population Database*, 1997
²² *ibid.*
²³ UNICEF: *Preliminary Study on the State of Working Children in Lebanon*, 1995

The majority of working children have low school enrolment rates, dropping out of school as a result of failure in their studies. Consequently, as a result of dropping out of school, children begin work. 37.5% of working children are illiterate or have not finished their elementary education²⁴, compared to national illiteracy levels of 1.6 percent and 2.4 percent for the 10-14 year age group and 15-19 year age group, respectively²⁵.

The majority of children ages 10-14 years are paid workers (82.3 percent), whereas 6.6 percent are unpaid and 6.8 percent are unpaid family labour²⁶. The same statistics source indicates that a high number of children work in metal works (33 percent) and handicrafts and artisanat (21 percent).

Table 2.3 Distribution of working children (10-14 years) by main occupation (1996)²⁷

Occupation	Total number	Percent of total
Personal assistants	273	5%
Sales	521	9%
Skilled agricultural workers	145	2%
Construction workers	543	9%
Workers in metal works and repair	1951	33%
Workers in handicrafts/ artisan	1255	21%
Workers in operating fixed machinery	260	4%
Unskilled service workers	217	4%
Unskilled agricultural workers	491	8%
Others	281	5%
Total	5937	100%

Official figures indicate that most working children are employed in the industrial sector (46 percent) followed by commerce, repairs, and maintenance (31 percent). Eleven percent of working children are reported to be employed in the agriculture sector, and 5 percent work in construction²⁸. The selection of these sectors is most probably linked to the availability of employment for children in these sectors, rather than intended selection of sectors.

The majority of children ages 10-14 years have permanent employment (79 percent), where 14.5 percent work intermittently and 6.4 percent work on a seasonal basis. It is noted that a higher percentage of children working seasonally is found in Akkar, Baalbeck, Tyre, and Tripoli. Similar percentages are observed for youth aged 14-17 years (of whom 81 percent are permanent workers, 13 percent are intermittent workers and 6 percent are seasonal workers)²⁹.

The majority of working children are paid very low salaries, all of them earning rates below the minimum wage rate declared by the Government. An unpublished study of 59 working children conducted in Beirut Northern Suburbs in 1996 revealed that 65 percent of children

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ Central Administration of Statistics: *Living Conditions in 1997*, 1997

²⁶ Haifa Hamdan: *Child Labour in Lebanon*, 1997

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*

get less than half the minimum wage rate³⁰. The same study indicated that 90 percent of working children worked more than ten hours per day, and are not registered by employers in the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), therefore they are not covered by health or medical insurance, nor are they entitled to indemnities.

Finally, the most widely accepted cause of child labour is poverty. The majority of Lebanese children work as a result of economic need (50 percent), whereas 33 percent work to acquire a job and 14 percent work because they failed in school³¹. Furthermore, most working children come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. It is noted that 66 percent of fathers of working children aged 10-14 years are either illiterate or barely know how to read and write. This is especially true in Akkar, Tripoli, Zahle, and Hermel. Similarly, 73 percent of parents of children seeking employment aged 10-14 years are either illiterate or barely literate³².

³⁰ Haifa Hamdan: Child Labour in Lebanon, 1996

³¹ Haifa Hamdan: Child Labour in Lebanon, 1996

³² The Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA: Housing and Population Database, 1997

Chapter 3

Findings: child labour in tobacco cultivation

3.1 General characteristics

3.1.1 *Number and location of working children*

An accurate estimate of the number of working children in tobacco cultivation is difficult to arrive at using the research tools employed in this study. However, an estimate can be arrived at using the number of tobacco farmers in South Lebanon, estimating the average number of family members multiplied by the percentage of children and youth 5-19 years of age.

The total number of tobacco farmers in South Lebanon amounts to 13,293 (1999 figures)³³. South Lebanon has an average number of five members per family³⁴. Given that tobacco is a family business, and since 33.7 percent of the population in South Lebanon is aged 5-19 years³⁵, it can be estimated that South Lebanon alone encompasses around 22,400 working youth and children in tobacco cultivation, of which 7400 are 5-9 years old, 7400 are 10-14 years old and 7600 are 15-19 years old.

The concentration of working children in tobacco is witnessed in villages with a concentration of tobacco farmers. Table 3.1 provides a listing of villages with a concentration of more than 100 tobacco farmers (refer to attached map in Annex 3). Given that tobacco is a family farming business, it can be safely assumed that villages with high numbers of tobacco farmers have a high concentration of working children and youth in this type of plantation.

³³ Unofficial data from the Tobacco Administration

³⁴ Central Administration of Statistics: Living Conditions in 1997, 1997

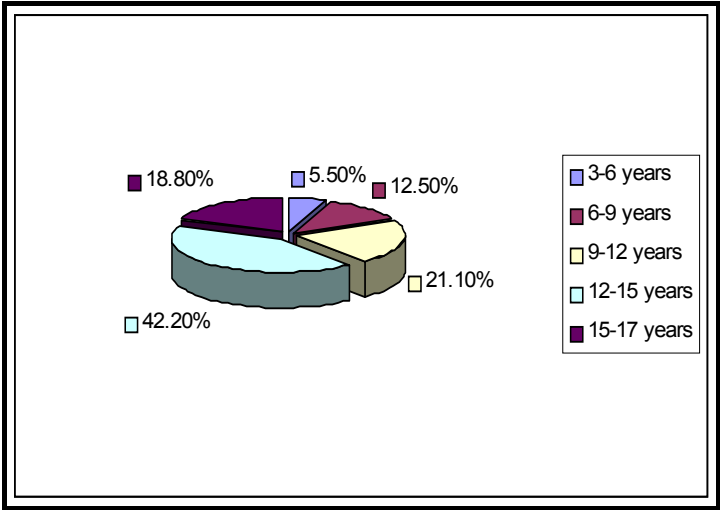
³⁵ *ibid.*

Table 3.1 Villages in South Lebanon with a concentration of working children in tobacco cultivation

100-200 farmers	200-300 farmers	More than 300 farmers	Caza
Majdel Zoun	Zibqine	Siddiquine	Tyre
Ma'raka	Srifa	Yater	
Al-Dhaira			
Yarin			
Sha'itiyeh			
Shehabiyeh			
Mjadel			
Borj Shemali			
Jbal el-Botom			
Deir Ames			
Deir Qanoun-Ras Ain			
Brai'keh		Qsaibeh	Nabatiyeh
Jibsheet		Adsheet	
Zawtar Charkiyeh			
Zawtar Gharbiyeh			
Abba			
Kfartibneet	Blida	Aitaroun	Marjeyoun
Maroun	Houla	Mais el-Jabal	
Souaneh		Touline	
Kabrikha			
Majdel-Silm			
Debel		Rmeish	Bint-Jbeil
Ramia		Aita Shaab	
Haddatha			
Froun			
Arzi			Saida

3.2 Socio-economic characteristics of working children

Figure 3.1 Age distribution of working children in tobacco cultivation



Source: RA field work 2000

Age distribution: The assessment carried out in the context of this study revealed that most of the working children in tobacco cultivation are 12-15 years old, followed by those who are 9-12 years of age (refer to Figure 3.1).

Wages and entry into the labour market: The study revealed that most of the children are unpaid family workers, entering the labour market at a very early age, for some at as young as three years old. Around 42 percent of interviewed children began their work when they were 6-9 years old, and 34 percent of the children were even younger (3-6 years). Children who began working in tobacco cultivation when they were older than 12 years of age were in the minority.

Educational characteristics: As is the case for Lebanese children aged 6-9 years, the majority of interviewed children are enrolled in school, and only 7 percent are out of school. The educational characteristics of working children are illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Educational status of interviewed children

% children enrolled in school	93%
% children out of school	7%
% children enrolled in elementary level	44%
% children enrolled in intermediate level	50%
% children enrolled in secondary level	5%
% children enrolled in pre-elementary level	1%

Source: RA field work 2000

The highest school dropout rate begins after completion of the elementary years. It is noted that parents residing in the former occupied zone used to send their children out of the region when they reached their teens as they were afraid of the security status in the area.

Around 57 percent of the children indicate that their work in tobacco cultivation has a negative effect on their educational attainment. This is primarily due to the fact that many children have to be absent from school to perform work related to tobacco farming. This absence has hindered their educational progress and achievements and decreased their possibilities of success.

More than sixty percent of working children in tobacco cultivation feel that their work has deprived them of their leisure time since they have no spare time for playing with friends or for recreational activities.

3.1.3 Access to basic social services

Judging from the village rapid assessments carried out in relation to this study, it is noted that most village residents have access to basic health services, whether through the availability of dispensaries, health centres, or mobile clinics. The problem, in general, lies in the limited access to hospital care and curative health services. Children in most villages have access to basic schooling since the majority of villages have elementary schools. However, intermediate and secondary schools are not easily accessible within villages, and youth wishing to continue their education need to search for educational opportunities outside their own villages. This usually decreases chances for educational attainment as the related costs are high compared to rural households' incomes.

Most villages lack access to basic infrastructure in terms of potable water networks and sewer networks. Basic agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation water and agricultural machinery are also lacking in most communities.

3.1.4 Nature of work

One of the major characteristics of tobacco cultivation is that it is a family business: all members of the family are in one way or the other responsible for one or more tasks associated with tobacco cultivation. Children's work in tobacco cultivation is, in many ways, different from child labour in other sectors of the economy where children are employed for "wages." Almost all children working in tobacco cultivation are unpaid family aid (the assessment affirmed that the majority of working children work with their parents, without any type of monetary reward).

Most of the work of children in tobacco is done during the summer (50 percent) and spring (33 percent) seasons. The majority of the work of the children is in needle binding of tobacco leaves, harvesting and seedling transplant. In this regard, child labour in tobacco cultivation is divided into four phases based on age groups: less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16-20 years.

Children below 5 years of age work in tobacco cultivation mostly to imitate the work of elder brothers and sisters. The work of children in this age group is limited to putting the leaves of the tobacco in threads for drying using special steelheads. It is observed that no gender

variation can be recorded in the work of children in this age group where children of both sexes do this type of activity.

As children get older, specific duties are entrusted to them. Children in the 5-10 year age group work in seedling transplant and leaf drying. Seedling transplant usually occurs in April and May of each year, where all members of the family work to complete this task to the extent that schools in villages with a high number of tobacco farmers close during the transplant season. It is noteworthy that schools have tried to negotiate the dates of official holidays with the Ministry of National Education in order to accommodate children's absences during periods of tobacco seedling transplants and harvesting. Parents begin to train their 5-10 year old children to acquire skills related to tobacco cultivation. It is habitual for parents to provide incentives to encourage children to acquire the needed skills. In terms of actual seedling transplant, children in this age group are responsible for covering the roots of the tobacco seedlings with soil. Their role in drying tobacco leaves becomes more important: a child is expected to complete around 30 steelheads per day (40 cm long and 3mm wide), the equivalent to 4-kg dry tobacco. This activity involves threading tobacco leaves into a steel head (similar to a long, thick needle) and can hurt and injure the children's fingers, as well as allow microbes to enter their skin. It is particularly dangerous when the steel is rusted. Gender variations in this type of work are insignificant. Drying begins in June-July, the first months of the summer vacation, which results in restraining the time that children have to enjoy entertainment after finishing schooling.

Children in the 10-15 year age group are actively involved in tobacco cultivation. A child is expected to carry out the drying of an amount varying between 30 steelheads (or five threads) - 90 steelheads (or 15 threads) per day. It is noteworthy that each steelhead takes 175 medium sized leaves or 300 small sized leaves. Also, children in this age group are expected to become actively involved in harvesting, especially girls. They have to wake up very early (at 5.00 a.m.) to work for 2.5 hours prior to going to school. Evidently, this has an impact on school attainment, as teachers in the villages indicate that children lose their concentration due to the lack of adequate sleep. In addition to harvesting, children in this age group are expected to assist in planting (seedling transplant, irrigation, weeding). It is noted that girls are specifically responsible for preparing the seedlings and weeding, in addition to their assistance in drying.

During their teenage years when children are 15-20 years old their work in tobacco cultivation increases to encompass all duties, from planting and transplanting seedlings, irrigating plants, weeding, harvesting, drying, and packaging. It is noted that teenage male youth work in tobacco cultivation less than females, as many of them leave school and search for income earning opportunities.

Table 3.3 summarizes the nature of children's work in youth cultivation.

Table 3.3 Nature of children's work per age group and gender

Nature of work	Age group	Gender differential
Seedling plant and transplant	10-15 years 16-20 years	Primarily females when males try to get wage employment
Cultivation in the field	10-15 years 16-20 years	No gender differentials observed
Harvesting	10-15 years 16-20 years	Primarily females when males try to get wage employment
Leaves in steelheads	Less than 5 years (4 heads) 6-10 years (40-50 heads) 11-15 years (75-100 heads) More than 16 years	No gender differentials observed except for older ages
Drying	10-15 years older than 16 years	No gender differentials observed except for older ages
Packaging	Older than 15 years	Primarily females

Source: RA field work 2000

What reinforces the familial nature of tobacco cultivation is that 85 percent of the children indicate that their motive for work is helping parents, whereas only 12 percent indicate that they work to earn an income.

3.2 Conditions of work

3.2.1 Working hours

Daily working hours in tobacco cultivation are long, with most children working an average of six hours each day (47 percent). Others (30.5 percent) work four hours on a daily basis during the tobacco production season. Furthermore, one third of the children indicate that they work between 88-152 days or almost 3-5 months per year in tobacco cultivation, and 30 percent of the children work between 152-226 days per year. This is summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Approximate working hours per nature of work and age group (taking 4 dunums area as a unit)

Age group	Approx. number of hours per type of work					
	Seedling	Planting	Harvesting	Leaves in steelheads	Drying	Packaging
5-10 years		15-20	30	75	10	50
10-15 years	50	50-60	40	75	10	50
Older than 15 years	60	100-120	75	100	30	75

Source: RA field work 2000

3.2.2 Wages

Most of the children working in tobacco cultivation are family aids and are not wage earners.

3.2.3 Work environment

The premises where children work are small, dirty, and full of dust. During the months of drying (May-June), children sit on the floor in front of their houses in small narrow spaces with all members of the family. They are seated in narrow spaces with tobacco leaves in the centre. Alternatively, when working in the fields, children must tolerate intense sunlight and high temperatures, which often cause headaches for most of the children.

Children usually walk from their houses to the fields, this distance taking between 15-30 minutes to travel. Children reported that they are usually afraid of insects and snakes during their walks through the fields.

The tools used in executing various tasks related to tobacco cultivation are unsuitable and usually non-motorized hand tools, and contains unguarded dangerous equipment.

It is noted that emergency kits are rarely available in work places. When a child is hurt alcohol and plasters are applied, but medical advice is not sought. Furthermore, no first aid kits are available at the work locations.

Children working in tobacco cultivation are faced with risks and dangers. The field assessment carried out in the context of the study indicated that almost 25 percent of working children have been hurt at least once during their work in tobacco cultivation. The most prominent type of injury is simple cuts. Children do not wear gloves, neither do they have special working clothes. The nature of these risks differ slightly with different age groups as follows:

- Children younger than 5 years of age face the danger of simple cuts while putting the leaves of the tobacco in threads for drying using special steelheads;
- Children aged 5-10 years face the danger of getting fever due to long exposure to the sun during seedling transplant, as well as other risks related to working with unsafe equipment, especially cuts as a result of using the steelheads;
- Being actively involved in tobacco cultivation, children aged 10-15 years face similar dangers as those in the 5-10 year age group. However, in addition to these dangers they have the tendency to be very tired as a result of waking up early for harvesting. They also risk exposure to poisonous insects in the field.

Most of the working children eat during their working hours, although 17 percent indicated that they do not access food during work. Morning meals are prepared by a female member of the family prior to beginning the leaf drying work. In the fields parents bring gallons of potable water for drinking purposes.

Abuse in the sense of isolation, illegal trafficking, and sexual harassment is not witnessed among working children. Some children express that their parents are sometimes violent, beating them if they do not learn the needed skills. Verbal abuse is also used.

There are several constraints that bother children in their work in tobacco cultivation. The most prominent of these include the need to wake up early in the morning during the harvest season, having to work long hours, being bored during leaf drying and the inability to have time for recreational activities. Furthermore, children feel very tired after working for long hours in tobacco cultivation (see to Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 What bothers children working in tobacco cultivation

What bothers you most in your work in tobacco cultivation?	Frequency of response	Percent of total
Waking up early	27	14%
Being tired during work	57	30%
Long working hours	24	13%
Being bored and not able to have any entertainment	20	11%
Dirt and insects	19	10%
Quarreling with others	5	3%
Lack of freedom	5	3%
Bad smell	4	2%
Sound and motor sounds	3	2%
Sunshine during harvest	3	2%
Everything	10	5%
Nothing	6	3%
Others	4	2%
	187 ³⁶	100%

Source: RA field work 2000

3.3 Attitudes towards work

The interviews carried out with working children revealed that 45 percent of children do not like working in tobacco cultivation as the “work is tiring, boring and hard”. A further 22 percent of the children do not like working in tobacco cultivation for different reasons (see Table 3.6)

³⁶ Multiple answers to questions permitted.

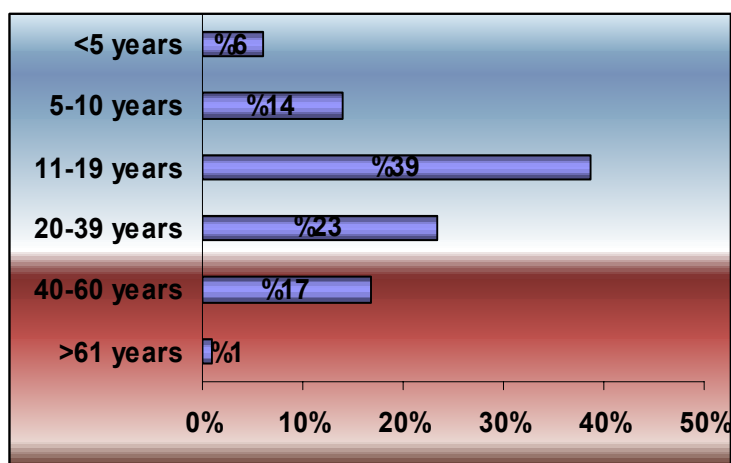
Table 3.6 Attitudes of children working in tobacco cultivation

Attitude towards tobacco cultivation (Quoted from children’s interviews)	Frequency of response	% of responses
It is tiring but it is the only income source	22	16
The work is tiring, boring and hard	66	45
I do not like tobacco cultivation- I hate this work	34	22
I like the work	16	11
Others	8	6
Total responses	146 ³⁷	100

3.4 Socio-economic characteristics of families

In the context of the study, and for the purpose of cross-checking the data received from the rapid assessment relating to households, a survey on the socio-economic characteristics of 131 tobacco families from the different villages was conducted. This survey served the purpose of outlining the socio-economic background of families of working children in tobacco cultivation. The following section outlines the findings of the study, and illustrates that these families are bigger in size, with a more youthful age structure. Families of tobacco plantation have lower educational status and lower income levels.

Figure 3.2 Distribution of families per age group



Source: RA field work 2000

The average family size of tobacco farming households is around 7.1 members.

As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the information gathered indicates that the majority of the residents are youth aged 11-19 years (39 percent), in addition to 14 percent aged 5-10 years.

³⁷ Multiple answers to questions permitted.

The educational status of parents of working children in tobacco cultivation is low. Approximately 23 percent of fathers and 40 percent of mothers are either illiterate or barely literate. On the other hand, only 12 percent and 11 percent of fathers and mothers, respectively, have attained secondary education.

Table 3.7 Educational status of parents of working children

Educational status	Father	Mother
illiterate	14%	38%
read & write	9%	2%
elementary	41%	33%
intermediate	23%	15%
secondary	12%	11%
university	2%	1%
total	100%	100%

Source: RA field work 2000

As seen from the rapid assessment, most families earn a yearly income ranging between LBP10-20 million for an average family of 7 members.

3.5 General village situations

All selected villages still employ traditional tools for cultivation, in addition to machinery for plough purposes only. Tobacco cultivation in these villages is characterized by fragmented small land plots, with a maximum allowable “quota” equivalent to four dunums per farmer.

It is noted that the villages of Deir Kifa, Rmeish and Aitaroun are all characterized by a high percentage of internal migration with a considerable number of household members migrating to urban areas of the country. Touline is characterized by the presence of skilled labour in tobacco cultivation, with its farmers being employed by other villages as daily paid employees for tobacco cultivation.

As illustrated in Table 3.8 below, selected villages have a relatively large family size amounting to 6-7 members per family. In most villages the percent of children and youth is high, with the exception of Aitaroun that is characterized by high internal and external migration.

Table 3.8 Selected characteristics of key locations

Village	Total number of families	Average number of family members	Total number of residents	Age distribution			Total number of students
				< 20 years	20-60 years	> 60 years	
Zawtar el-Charkiyeh	285	6-7	2000	54%	41%	5%	350
Deir Kifa	220	6-7	1500	45%	50%	5%	150
Touline	400	6-7	3500	45%	50%	5%	350
Rmeish	900	5-6	6000	40%	55%	5%	1300
Aitaroun	2500	6-7	3,500	25%	60%	15%	250

Source: RA field work 2000

As is the case in most villages in South Lebanon, the majority of these villages have access to basic education through the existence of an elementary school in the village. Most have access to basic health services, and three are able to access water through an artesian well.

Table 3.9 Availability of basic services in key locations

Village	School	Health facilities	Potable water	Elec-tricity	Tele-comm.
Zawtar el-Charkiyeh	No	None	Artesian well	Yes	No
Deir Kifa	yes	Health center	Artesian well	Yes	No
Touline	yes	Health center	Artesian well	Yes	No
Rmeish	yes	Two health centers	None	Yes	Yes
Aitaroun	yes	Health center	None	Yes	No

Source: RA field work 2000

Most families in the different villages earn less than LBP20 million per year for an average family of 6-7 members. In some villages, more than 40 percent of families earn less than LBP10 million per years for a family of 6-7 members.

Table 3.10 Average income distribution per income category

Village	Average income distribution (% families)		
	<10 million LBP	10-20 million LBP	> 20 million LBP
Zawtar el-Charkiyeh	10	70	20
Deir Kifa	35	35	30
Touline	40	40	15
Rmeish	40	30	30
Aitaroun	10	70	20

Source: RA field work 2000

Chapter 4

Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be clearly observed:

- Most of the working children in tobacco cultivation are 12-15 years old and are unpaid family labour, entering the labour market at a very early age. Most of these children are enrolled in school during the elementary level years. Following this stage, the highest school dropout rate begins.
- In general, Lebanese working children belong to large, poor families with low levels of attainment in formal education. The majority of them are either illiterate or have dropped out of school before the completion of the elementary level. The majority of children enter the labour market at an early age.
- More than half of the children working in tobacco feel that their work has a negative effect both on their educational attainment and leisure time.
- Most village residents have access to basic health services, whether through the availability of dispensaries, health centres, or mobile clinics. The problem, in general, lies in the limited access to hospital care and curative health services. Children in most villages have access to basic schooling
- Children's work in tobacco cultivation is, in many ways, different from child labour in other sectors of the economy where children are employed for wages. Almost all children working in tobacco cultivation are unpaid family aid.
- Most of the work of children in tobacco is done during the summer and spring seasons for an average workday of between four to six hours. The majority of the work is in needle binding of tobacco leaves, harvesting and seedling transplant. The tasks are divided into four phases based on age groups: less than 5 years, 5-10 years, 11-15 years, and 16-20 years.
- The premises where children work are small, dirty, and full of dust. Children usually walk from their houses to the fields, with distances taking between 15-30 minutes. The tools used in executing various tasks related to tobacco cultivation are unsuitable; usually non-motorized hand tools that contain unguarded dangerous equipment. Emergency kits are rarely available in work places. Children face several risks and dangers, including cuts, sun-burns, and stress due to early wake-up and long work hours. Almost half of the children do not like their work as it is "tiring, boring and hard."
- Working children belong to large families with low socio-economic standards.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration³⁸:

- A special accelerated skills training program for children working in tobacco cultivation is recommended. Such training should also include awareness raising on risks and dangers associated with working in tobacco cultivation. This training can be conducted through the Community Development Centers of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and can thus be sustained through the regular program of the Ministry.
- As a high number of working children feel that their work in tobacco cultivation is boring and tiring, it is recommended to improve the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation (ex. transportation means, protection from heat and equipment, resting places, emergency kits, etc.).
- All working places should be equipped with first aid health kits for injuries. As well, parents should have some notion of how to handle dangers and injuries related to tobacco cultivation.
- It is recommended that younger children have special protection measures as they are more vulnerable to injuries.
- Awareness raising sessions should be conducted for parents of working children to educate them on the needs, dangers, and risks associated with their children's work in tobacco cultivation, including the need for leisure and study time. These sessions can also target changing the perceptions of parents towards tobacco cultivation, and can also be carried out in the Community Development Centers.
- Children in general, and those working in tobacco cultivation in specific, have expressed their need for recreational activities. Finding such community-based facilities and equipping them to serve as recreational centers in villages should be established to assist in decreasing the social isolation of children. Such facilities can also be used as forums for conducting awareness projects.
- Programs for raising awareness on child labour and the rights of the child are recommended. These programs should target the communities at large, and parents of working children in specific. Schools can be used to facilitate such programs.
- The Regie Administration, being ultimately involved in tobacco cultivation, should be also involved in improving the working conditions of children. For example, the company should be encouraged to provide transportation means or emergency medical tools that would improve working conditions in tobacco cultivation, as well as improve the image of the Company.

³⁸ As per the national legislation in Lebanon, the minimum age for employment is 14 years. Therefore, the recommendations that focus on improving working conditions apply to working children 14 and older.

- It is also recommended that the Syndicate of Tobacco farmers be involved in programs directed towards improving the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation. The Syndicate is active and is in direct contact with farmers, and can be used as a lobby group to support projects for raising awareness and/or improving working conditions.
- Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations could be mobilized to take part in improving the working conditions of children in tobacco. For example, many NGOs are involved in the provision of primary health care services in communities and they can be mobilized to assist in the provision of such services to children working in tobacco cultivation. Likewise, NGOs can be used for conducting awareness raising campaigns on safety issues, child labour, and children rights.
- Similar to point (g) above, municipalities can play an important role in providing services that would improve the working conditions of children in tobacco cultivation.
- The economic dependency of families on tobacco cultivation should be changed. As such, the government should try to promote other cash crops for cultivation in the region, and should sustain their marketing.

Annex 1

Rapid Assessment Village Reports

Please note: In all villages interviews were conducted with key informants including the head of municipality or Mukhtar, the school director and instructor, residents and farmers, as well as tobacco farmers and working children.

I. Zawtar el-Charkiyeh

Geographic location and history

The village is located in the Caza of Nabatiyeh, with an altitude of 340-475 m, and a distance of 82km from Beirut, 39km from Sidon, and 9km from the Caza capital, through the coastal road leading to Zahrani, then Nabatiyeh. The origin of the name of the village is Zawtra, and it was known as the “wine village” due to the large number of grapevines.

Zawtar el-Charkiyeh and Zawtar el-Gharbiyeh used to constitute one village, after which the latter became a separate village. Residents indicate that it is one of the oldest villages in South Lebanon due to the presence of historic sites, including Phoenician cemeteries and caves, as well as Latin and Roman caves and very old oil pressers.

The village is bordered by the Litani river from the south, Zawtar el-Charkiyeh from the east, Mayfadoun from the north, and Ka'kaiyat el-Jisr from the west.

The village is divided into four main neighborhoods: al-Marj, al-Jarran, al-Baidar, and Dahr el-Nakad. The total area of the village is 4500 dunums, one-third of which is owned by the Maronite Patriarchy.

Resident population

The total number of residents is estimated at 2000, with the following age distribution: 5% above 60 years, 54% below 20 years and 41% aged 20-60 years. The average size of the family is 6-7 members. The percent of community members who have migrated to Beirut does not exceed 10% of the residents. Hence, there are almost no seasonal variations in the number of residents in the village.

More than 70% of families have a yearly income between LBP 10-20 million, and 20% earn LBP20-30 million, whereas 10% earn less than LBP10 million per year.

Housing units

The number of housing units in the village is estimated at 300 houses. Of these four are totally destroyed, whereas the majority need rehabilitation and renovation as a result of the political conflict in the area.

Working population

Families depend on agriculture as the primary source of income. Around half of these families depend on tobacco cultivation, whereas the rest have green houses (total number equivalent to 90 greenhouses in the village). The village also cultivates grain crops for auto-consumption.

All family members can be considered workers. Women mainly work in tobacco cultivation, and many youth are skilled labourers.

Basic services

Sewer systems do not exist in the village, rather residents depend on sanitary pits. The road network inside the village is narrow and needs rehabilitation. The telecommunication network was established in the village in 1968, but has been non-operational since 1975. The electrical network was established in 1964. The water network is damaged due to bombardment during the political conflict in the area, and the village currently uses an artesian well to satisfy its need for potable water.

Basic social services

In 1959 a school was built, with assistance from residents. The school was recently renovated by the Council for the South. However, the school has not been operating since 1995 due to its proximity to the former occupied zone and the continued bombardment of the village. Most of the children are enrolled outside the village. The total number of residents with university degrees does not amount to more than 30, 10 of whom are females.

The village does not have a health center, and the nearest health center is in Nabatiyeh.

The municipality of Zawtar was established in 1970. There is one youth club that is currently non-operational.

Economic enterprises

In addition to agricultural cultivation enterprises, there exist around 20 small enterprises.

Tobacco cultivation

The total arable land is estimated at 2000 dunums, half of which can be cultivated using machinery, whereas the rest is not accessible. Most of the cultivated land in the village is not irrigated (only 100 dunums are irrigated).

Around 285 families (almost 50% of the households in the village) depend on tobacco cultivation. The total area of land cultivated with tobacco amounts to 685 dunums, with a total production of 81000 kg and a total income of LBP851 million (1998). The number of farmers cultivating tobacco increased from 124 farmers in 1975 to 289 in 1999. The majority of tobacco farmers own 3-4 dunums; the distribution is shown in the following table.

Cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Percent farmers (%)
1	54	18
1-2	31	11
2-3	23	8
3-4	106	37
4-10	67	23
>10	8	3
	289	100

There are around 400 children working in tobacco in the village. A number of families in Zawtar el-Charkiyeh would like to plant tobacco but are not able to acquire a quota from the State. Farmers within the village face a lot of constraints, especially the need for land reclamation, the need for improved varieties and irrigation, as well as the need to access financial resources.

II. Touline

Geographic location and history

The village is located in the Mohafazat of Nabatiyeh, Marjeyoun Caza, at an altitude of 500m, and a distance of 125km from Beirut, 63km from Marjeyoun, the Caza capital, and 30 km from Bint Jbeil. The origin of the name of the village is Toulan, an Iraqi village near Basra.

The village is bordered by Majdel Silm and Sowaneh from the south, Qabriha from the east, Qantra-Ghandouriyeh from the north, and Qalaouyie from the west.

The village is divided into seven main neighborhoods: al-Madrassa, Al-Roueis, Al-Moloul, Al-Tamriyeh, al-Baidara, al-Shakayer and Marj el-Asafir. The total area of the village is around 4000 dunums.

Resident population

The total population of the village is estimated at 3500 (of which 2500 are residents) divided among 450 households. Touline has the following age distribution: 5% above 60 years, 45% below 20 years, 23% between 20-40 years and 27% aged 40-60 years. The average size of the family is 6-7 members.

The percent of community members who have migrated to Beirut amounts to around 20% (around 750), whereas some families recently migrated to Paraguay and some 175 members are living in the Gulf. Due to immigration, seasonal variations in the number of residents are observed with a higher number of returnees during the summer season.

The number of female residents is higher than males reaching 60%, and the average number of family members amounts to 6-7 members.

More than 40% of families have a yearly income between LBP 12-20 million, and 15% earn LBP20-30 million, whereas 40% earn less than LBP12 million per year.

Housing units

Touline has around 450 housing units, of which 20 are totally destroyed and 150 need renovation. Most houses are old with the exception of 20 housing units.

Working population

Families depend on agriculture as the primary source of income. More than 95% of families are tobacco farmers. Green house production declined due to the need for irrigation, high production costs, and difficulties in marketing. In addition to cultivation enterprises, the village has animal herds (around 90 cows, 400 goats and sheep, and 100 beehives). The village has 12 fully equipped tractors.

Basic services

Touline has no sewer system, and residents depend on sanitary pits. The village used to depend on a spring for its water needs, in addition to transporting water from the Hojeir spring. Water needs are currently satisfied from an artesian well (two days per week) and water from Jamal Amel Water Authority (three days per week) for a yearly membership of LBP 80 thousand. The electrical network is established in the village. No telecommunication network exists. The road network is narrow and needs renovation.

Basic social services

In 1963 a one-room public school was introduced into the village. In the 1970s the residents built a five-room school, to which UNICEF and the Council for the South added 15 rooms between the years 1978-1988. The total number of students amounts to 259 with classes taught up to the third intermediate level. In addition, there are around 150 students studying outside the school in neighboring villages. It is noted that the schools close during the tobacco season as more than 90% of the students have to absent themselves to help their parents in tobacco cultivation. The school has 14 instructors. The total number of residents with university degrees does not amount to more than 22, 10 of whom are females.

The village has a health center established in 1985 that needs renovation.

There exists in the village a community social center that is administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and that teaches women handicraft skills. Touline has no municipality.

The residents have an agreement with a tractor owner to collect solid waste and dump it outside the village for a monthly membership fee of LBP 5000 per household.

Economic enterprises

Touline has four small enterprises for aluminum and marble, 12 tractors for agricultural usage, and 14 small shops.

Tobacco cultivation

The total arable land is estimated at 2500 dunums, with one family owning 40% of the land, and the rest being small ownership.

None of Touline agricultural lands are irrigated. All of the fields are non-irrigated.

Touline used to have a considerable supply of grain, vegetables, and olive tree produce. However, this cultivation declined with the increase in tobacco cultivation. Around 98% of the resident families in the village depend on tobacco cultivation, with an area varying between 4-10 dunums. Moreover, some farmers use 500 dunums of neighboring villages for tobacco cultivation. The total number of tobacco farmers is currently estimated at 390 farmers, cultivating a total area of 1521 dunums, producing 220 thousand kg with a total production sale exceeding LBP2000 million.

The number of farmers cultivating tobacco increased from 292 farmers in 1975 to 390 in 1999. The majority of tobacco farmers own 3-4 dunums, with the following distribution:

Cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Percent farmers (%)
1	16	4
1-2	30	8
2-3	7	2
3-4	306	78
4-10	31	8
>10	0	
	390	100

The major constraints facing the farmers include the need for land reclamation and agricultural roads.

III. Aitaroun

Geographic location and history

Aitaroun is located in the Caza of Bint-Jbeil, at an altitude of 650m and a distance of 125km from Beirut, and 4km from the Caza capital. The origin of the name of the village is Itruma, which means the beautiful smell. Some people believe that the name is derived from "Aitharoun."

The village is bordered by Palestine and Maroun el-Ras from the south, Palestine from the east, Blida and Ainata from the north, and Bint Jbeil from the west.

Political conflict in the village ended in 2000.

Resident population

The total population is estimated at 20000, and it is considered one of the biggest villages in the neighborhood. The actual number of residents is estimated at 5000, with around 200 returnees after the end of the recent political conflict. The remaining population is distributed between immigrants (2000 in Australia, 1000 in Germany, 300 in Sweden, and some others in different countries), in addition to around 4000 internal migrants living in Beirut and a considerable number living in Tyre and other villages.

Aitaroun has the following age distribution: 15% above 60 years, 25% below 20 years, 20% aged 21-30 years and 40% aged 31-59 years. The average size of the family is 6-7 members. A considerable percent of male youth migrated amidst the political conflict and have not yet returned to the village.

Housing units

The number of housing units in the village is estimated at 1300, most of which are old, and some are still made of mud.

Working population

Families depend on agriculture as the primary source of income. Around 95% of agricultural cultivation in the village is taken up by tobacco, with some fruit trees, vegetables, and grain crops for auto-consumption. Considerable income used to enter into the village during the occupation, estimated monthly at \$200,000 due to the work of a number of its males in the Southern Lebanese Army and some in Israel.

Basic services

The village does not have a telecommunication network. The internal road network is narrow and needs rehabilitation. The electrical network was established in 1964. The residents have an agreement with a tractor owner to collect solid waste and dump it outside the village for a monthly membership fee of LBP 5000 per household. During the occupation, the village relied on Israel for potable water at a cost of LBP 2500 per cubic meter per day. Currently the villages have to buy water.

Basic social services

There are five schools in Aitaroun: two public and three private. Public schools, elementary and intermediate, encompass 250 students, with a higher percentage of girls especially for the intermediate level. The total number of students in the private schools amount to 570 distributed among one elementary school and two intermediate schools. The total number of instructors is 115, of whom 47 teach in the village whereas others teach in surrounding villages. More than 80 doctors and 85 engineers come from Aitaroun. The recent political conflict resulted in internal displacement out of the village: in 1969 the resident population in the village amounted to 6500 with a total number of 1329 students, whereas currently, the number of residents does not exceed 3500 and the number of students is 250.

The village has one health center that is operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The municipal council in the village was established in 1961 but has disintegrated since then. Currently, there is a local community committee that leads the work in the village.

Economic enterprises

There exists in Aitaroun a number of small industries employing less than three workers – who are usually members of the same family - in addition to around 50 small stores.

Tobacco cultivation

Most of the cultivated land in the village is not irrigated. Around 853 families depend on tobacco cultivation. The total area of land cultivated with tobacco amounts to 3305 dunums, with a production of 350,000 kg for a total of LBP4000 million. The majority of tobacco farmers own 4-5 dunums, with the following distribution:

Cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Percent farmers (%)
1-2	39	4
2-3	23	4
3-4	40	5
4-10	703	82
>10	48	5

Farmers face a lot of constraints including the need for irrigation, and agricultural infrastructure.

IV. Rmeish

Geographic location and history

Rmeish is located in the Caza of Bint-Jbeil, at an altitude of 600m and a distance of 130km from Beirut, and 10km from the Caza capital. The origin of the name of the village is Ramshaya, which means the “evening” or “hill.” There are some historic sites in the village including two cemeteries. The road to Rmeish goes through Tyre, Naquora, Alma-Shaab, or through Bint-Jbeil.

The village is bordered by Palestine from the south, Yaroun from the east, Ain Ebel from the north, and Aita-Shaab from the west.

The total area of the village is 20,000 dunums distributed as follows: Rmeish farms 4750 dunums, border areas 7250 dunums, habitual areas 2000 dunums, and agricultural land 6000 dunums.

The political conflict in the village ended in 2000.

Resident population

The total population of the village is estimated at 12000, of whom 50% live in Rmeish whereas the rest are either internal migrants to Beirut or external migrants to the Gulf countries and Australia.

Aitaroun has the following age distribution: 5% above 60 years, 40% below 20 years, 40% aged 21-40 years and 15% aged 41-60 years.

Most of the families earn a yearly income less than LBP10 million (40%), whereas 30% earn LBP 10-20 million, and 20% earn LBP20-30 million, while 10% earn more than LBP30 million per year.

Housing units

The number of housing units in the village is estimated at 800, most of which are in acceptable condition. Most of the housing units were constructed in the past two decades during the occupation.

Working population

Families depend on agriculture as the primary source of income. Around 95% of agricultural cultivation in the village is taken up by tobacco, with some fruit trees, vegetables, and grain crops for auto-consumption. Considerable income used to enter into the village during the occupation, estimated monthly at \$500,000 due to the work of a number of its males in the Southern Lebanese Army and some in Israel. Now the village has a lot of employees in the public sector.

Basic services

The village has a telecommunication network. The internal road network is acceptable, and there exists electricity. During the occupation, the village relied on Israel for potable water with a cost of LBP 2500 per cubic meter per day.

Basic social services

As residents of Rmeish consider that education is important, there are five schools: three public and two private. The public schools include elementary, intermediate and secondary classes. The total number of students is 1300 (500 of whom attend at the intermediate level and 100 of whom attend at the secondary level). The total number of instructors is 120. More than 50 doctors and 40 engineers come from Rmeish.

The village has two health centers, one operated by the Lebanese Red Cross, whereas the other is run by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The municipal council in the village was established in 1961 and is still working. There exist a number of youth social clubs and one agricultural cooperative.

Economic enterprises

In Rmeish there are a number of small industries, in addition to around 100 small stores. In addition, there are more than 28 stores for Rmeish residents in Naquora that used to sell Israeli produce in the market.

There are more than 500 employees in Rmeish. Considerable income used to enter into the village during the occupation, estimated monthly at \$500,000 due to the work of a number of its males in the Southern Lebanese Army and some in Israel.

Tobacco cultivation

The total arable land is estimated at 10,000 dunums. In addition to tobacco, there exists some cultivation of grain crops and olives for auto consumption. In addition two community pools are used for rainwater and irrigation purposes. Farmers in Rmeish use machinery. The village has two poultry farms and more than 500 beehives.

Around 780 families cultivate tobacco. The total area of land cultivated with tobacco amounts to 3290 dunums, with a production of totaling LBP3800 million. The majority of tobacco farmers own 3-4 dunums, with the following distribution:

Cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Percent farmers (%)
1-2	109	15
2-3	35	4
3-4	517	66
4-10	91	12
>10	29	3

V. Deir-Kifa

Geographic location and history

The village is located in the Caza of Tyre at a distance of 90km from Beirut, and 22km from the Caza capital, through the coastal road leading to Srifa or through Abbasiye. The origin of the name dates back to the crusaders when prince Kev built a monastery in the village.

The village is bordered by Shehabiye and Kfardounine from the south, Qalaouyie from the east, Srifa and Toueri from the north, and Selaa from the west.

The village is divided into three main neighborhoods: al-Shamsieh, al-Qalaa, and the old quarters. The total area of the village is 8000 dunums, of which 1200 dunums are owned by the Christian Patriarchy.

Resident population

The total population is estimated at 4000, of whom 1500 are residents and the rest are internal migrants to Beirut (1500) and external migrants to Australia, Germany and the United States. The number of residents increases during the summer season.

The age distribution in the village is as follows: 5% above 60 years, 45% below 20 years and 50% aged 20-60 years. The average size of the family is 5-6 members.

More than 35% of families have a monthly income less than LBP1 million, and 35% earn LBP1-2 million, whereas 30% earn between LBP2-3 million per month.

Housing units

The average number of housing units is estimated at 380. Most are fine, with no trace of destroyed units. Only 20% of households need rehabilitation.

Working population

More than 40% of the families in Deir Kifa depend on agriculture as the primary source of income. Some 60 families depend on tobacco cultivation, whereas the rest cultivate grain crops and vegetables for auto-consumption, in addition to olive trees. As is the case in most villages in the area, unemployment has increased since the recent political conflict ended.

Basic services

The village has no sewer networks. The road network is acceptable. Water is derived from Wadi Jilo, in addition to the existence of an artesian well.

Basic social services

A public school was built in 1948, which currently houses 110 students. The school premises are in urgent need of renovation. There exists in the village one secondary school constructed by UNIFIL and the Council for the South. There are 40-50 students who study outside the village. The total number of residents with university degrees does not amount to more than 20.

The village has a health center currently operated by a local committee and the ministry of Social Affairs.

The village does not have a municipality. There is one youth club that is currently operational.

Economic enterprises

In addition to agricultural cultivation enterprises, there exist several small enterprises in the village.

Tobacco cultivation

The total arable land is estimated at 3500 dunums, cultivated with olive trees (400 dunums), vegetables and grain crops for auto consumption, and tobacco. Most of the cultivated land in the village is not irrigated.

Around 60 families depend on tobacco cultivation. The total area of land cultivated with tobacco amounts to 205 dunums, with a total production of 210000 kg. The number of farmers cultivating tobacco increased from 124 farmers in 1975 to 289 in 1999. The majority of tobacco farmers own 3-4 dunums, with the following distribution:

Cultivated area (dunums)	Number of farmers	Percent farmers (%)
<2	10	17
2-3	13	22
3-4	36	60
4-10	1	1
>10		

The number of tobacco farmers declined in Deir Kifa over the past years, from 77 in 1975 to 60 in 1999.

Annex 2

Checklists and questionnaire

I. Community checklist

Geographic location and history

Resident population

Summer and winter variations

Number of returnees

Population changes

Population migration, including destinations

Population mobility

Distribution of residents per age groups (<20 years, 20-39 years, 40-59 years, >60 years), average family size and average number of workers per family

Average family income (<10 million LBP, 10-30 million LBP, 30-40 million LBP, >40 million LBP)

Housing units

Estimate number

Conditions (percentage of housing units which need rehabilitation)

Working population

Percent workers from residents

Distribution of workers per gender and age group

Main economic activities

Unemployment

Basic services

Water, sewer systems, electricity, telecommunication, roads, basic agricultural infrastructure

Basic social services

Schools (public – private, number of students)

Health centers (number, types of services)

Social and youth clubs

Public administration premises

Economic enterprises

Number and type of enterprises

Workers

Tobacco cultivation

Arable land

Irrigated land

Area of land cultivated with tobacco

Distribution of tobacco plots per area

Number of tobacco farmers

Income from tobacco cultivation

Production

Distribution of tobacco farmers per gender

Number of children working in tobacco cultivation

General constraints facing tobacco farmers

Other cultivated crops

Key informants interviewed

II. Observation checklist

General description of working place

Internal work-places

Area

Cleanliness

General conditions (sound, smell, ventilation, lighting, temperature)

Availability of drinking water

Availability of food during work

Availability of toilets

Availability of first aid kits

External work-places

Distances (between house and work places)

Road conditions

Means of transportation

Time needed

Children

Number

Age groups

Gender distribution

Conditions of clothing (suitability for working conditions/ hats, shoes, etc.)

General atmosphere

Description of work

Time work starts

Duration, including availability of leave and absences

Tools and equipment used, including associated danger

Supervision

Skills

Dangers

Abuse

III. Questionnaire: children interviews

Number: _____

Address:

Mohafazat:	Caza:
City or village:	Telephone:

Information on child

1. Age: _____

2. Gender:

Male

Female

Information on family

3. Number of family members (residents): _____

Family members	Relationship	Age	Educational Status*	Economic Activity**

* illiterate, read and write, elementary, intermediate, secondary, technical degree, university graduate

** employed (type of work), unemployed, retired, others

4. Number of workers: _____

5. Average family income (LBP): _____

Educational status of child

6. Are you in school?

Yes

No

If yes,

	Enrolled in school				Not enrolled in school			
Highest educational status	elementary	intermediate	secondary	technical	elementary	intermediate	secondary	technical
class								

Information relating to work

7. When did you start work (age): _____

8. Who do you work with:

Parents

Others

9. Reasons for work:

For entertainment

To help parents

To earn money

Other

10. Number of working daily hours (per season):

(if seasonal indicate season)

11. At what hour do you start work: _____

At what hour do you finish work: _____

12. Number of annual days: _____

13. Income from work (LBP): _____ (day/month/season/year)

14. Nature of work:

15. Were you ever hurt while working in tobacco cultivation?

Yes

No

16. How many times were you hurt? _____

17. What was the nature of the last injury (cuts, poisoning, etc.)?

18. Did your work have an effect on your studies?

Yes

No

If yes, how:

19. Did your work have an effect on your leisure time?

Yes

No

If yes, how:

20. Do you currently work in tobacco cultivation?

Yes

No

If yes, in what kinds of work:

21. Do you eat during working hours?

Yes

No

22. Can you be absent from work?

Yes

No

23. What bothers you in your work?

24. What is your opinion/ attitude towards your work?
