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► Child labour monitoring systems in the MENA region: Good practices, challenges and recommendations for a child labour monitoring system in Egypt

A desk review



Egypt



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► Acronyms and abbreviations

CLCC	child labour coordinating committee
CLDB	child labour database
CLMS	child labour monitoring system
CPC	child protection committee
GCACL	Governorate Committees Against Child Labour (Lebanon)
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MIS	management information system
NFCL	National Framework to Eradicate Child Labour (Jordan)
NGO	non-governmental organization
PAC	provincial action committee
SDC	social development centre
SHCEK	Sosyal Hizmetler Ve Çocuk Esirgeme Kuruma (Social Service and Child Protection Agency) (Turkey)
TBP	time-bound programme

1. Introduction and background





1.1 What is the ILO's child labour monitoring system?

The International Labour Organization was one of the first international organizations to specialize in the issue of child labour and specifically the idea of establishing child labour monitoring systems (CLMS) in the workplace through its unique International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). In the 1990s CLMS were mainly focused on the identification of children working in selected industries and manufacturing sectors, for example in Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Pakistan, the CLMS was specifically established in 1995 to stop child labour in the football-making sector whilst in Bangladesh it was established to identify and withdraw children from working in the garment industry. As it was sector-specific, monitoring took place through identified local professionals as well as focal points from the selected industries. The main aim then was to withdraw children from a specific sector of work and find alternatives and means of social protection for them.

With time, the idea of the CLMS evolved to become a broader concept: identification, withdrawal and referral of children and their families to appropriate services using an area-based approach rather than a sector-based one. The CLMS began to reach children beyond the scope of the ILO-IPEC projects and started to include both children at risk and children engaged in especially the worst forms of child labour in those selected areas/regions. The regions were also selected based on the prevalence of children in hazardous forms and sectors of child labour, for example in agriculture, on the streets and in small industries, as opposed to only in cotton-growing or hazelnut fields. This does not mean that these forms of specific CLMS do not still exist, but it is now highly preferred to go slightly beyond to help children within a district or area.

In light of the above evolution of the CLMS a multi-sectoral approach has developed, ensuring that all government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in addition to other relevant national and local institutions such as cooperatives and the private sector, play a crucial role. They work collectively in a coordinated manner to complete a cycle of prevention in addition to a cycle of withdrawal, rehabilitation and monitoring to ensure non-return to the same or other exploitative jobs. Moreover, this evolution and process aims at the institutionalization of the monitoring of child labour, as well as means of prevention and combating it within the natural operations of government and non-governmental institutions. This is in contrast to child labour monitoring being limited to a certain project, its personnel, a specific industry in an identified location only, and within the time frame of an ILO-funded project.

CLMS, which started as a small-scale monitoring system at the workplace only, has extended with time to be the main child labour databank in some countries or areas, and in larger industries within others. However, this did not happen without many challenges and obstacles faced.

1.2 The child labour monitoring system framework

According to previous experiences, an effective and sustainable monitoring of child labour occurs, wherever it takes place, in the context of an institutionalized structure. The CLMS framework is the association and networking of partners (and sometimes official agreements among them) that operates and maintains the child labour monitoring process. Although child labour monitoring takes place at the local level, it should be part of a larger inspection and enforcement policy to be sustainable and make real impact.

The CLMS framework should therefore include government structures such as the inspectorates (labour, health/safety, and at school), and take direction from a multi-sector national policy body. In principle, the CLMS process should always be part of the local government system and operate under its supervision and authority. It should also connect existing social planning and monitoring mechanisms of local government, wherever they occur. Ideally, the framework should be nationwide and based on a set of agreements about the information to be collected, its sharing, and the means of managing the whole CLMS process.

This would imply the use of common monitoring tools and a common database or repository of information. CLMS activities at the local level should feed into a coordinated information management mechanism at the national level. This may often require some revisions in existing information management systems and/or developing of new ones.

Last but not least, developing and agreeing to a CLMS framework requires political will, adequate national resources, and a vision on mainstreaming child labour monitoring into existing systems of governance. Having said this, it is important to look at good CLMS practices in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and their successes and challenges, and use their lessons learned to establish new CLMS or revise existing ones.

2. Good practices and their challenges





As mentioned earlier, although the CLMS has an overall general framework, in each country it takes a different form depending on that country's relevant policies, legislation, institutional mandates and respective human resources and financial capabilities. Several examples will be reflected on below regarding CLMS established in three countries in the MENA region. Their similarities, differences, uniqueness and challenges will be reviewed too in order to assess what could be suitable for the Egyptian situation.

2.1 Lebanon

2.1.1 What was there to build on?

One of the first IPEC CLMS systems in the Arab States was established in Lebanon in 2002. Research into relevant Lebanese policies and institutions at the time found that the major monitoring or compliance mechanism available for child labour was labour inspection through the labour inspectorate department at the Ministry of Labour. However, whilst investigating further into the Lebanese system, the following was found:

- The Lebanese police had the main mandate to identify, refer and monitor street- based children. Here they could be supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs, but the mandate to withdraw children from the streets was that of the police under the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities.
- Also under the same Ministry, as its name designates, is the responsibility to implement the mandate of local municipalities as well as local municipal police. Within this mandate, local municipal councils had two major relevant roles to play: (i) to ensure that no child under 18 years old was outside of school during school hours and to support their re-enrolment including financially; and (ii) that all schools within their respective vicinities had the appropriate infrastructure to teach the necessary number of students, and under appropriate learning and child protection conditions. Many schools had very poor conditions which strongly encouraged early dropout, especially of girls.
- Moreover, it was also found that there were no national or local official coordination mechanisms in place, whether for child labour or child protection in general, at least ones that could be generalized across all regions and also which could unite relevant monitoring and referral institutions and bodies. On the other hand, when investigating further into the mandates of the Governors, who are also under the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities in Lebanon, they were found to be the highest political head within each governorate which could mobilize, unite efforts and services, and give the necessary orders to identify, monitor, withdraw and rehabilitate children in the worst forms of child labour.
- Taking a further in-depth look at district levels, there were some NGOs/Ministry of Social Affairs forums that provided services for marginalized families and children. An example was in a relatively large suburb of Beirut called Burj Hammoud-Sin el-Fil, a very marginalized area containing camps for Armenian and some Palestinian refugees in addition to Lebanese host communities. All forms of child labour were found there, but especially in the garment and footwear industries.
- In the governorate of Nabatieh, a child labour referral centre was set up by ILO-IPEC in coordination with the local Ministry of Education, and it was coordinating with major NGOs and social development centres (SDCs) of the Ministry of Social Affairs in that area.

In accordance with the facts described above, and assessing the roles that could be played by identified partners and the benefits that could be provided to the CLMS (at least in some areas), whilst at the same time looking at the gaps in general and in certain areas specifically, an appropriate CLMS model was developed, as described in the next section..



2.1.2 CLMS model established based on national and district level realities

Based on the above findings and further institutional mapping, the CLMS in Lebanon was set up as follows, in terms of framework, training and operations.

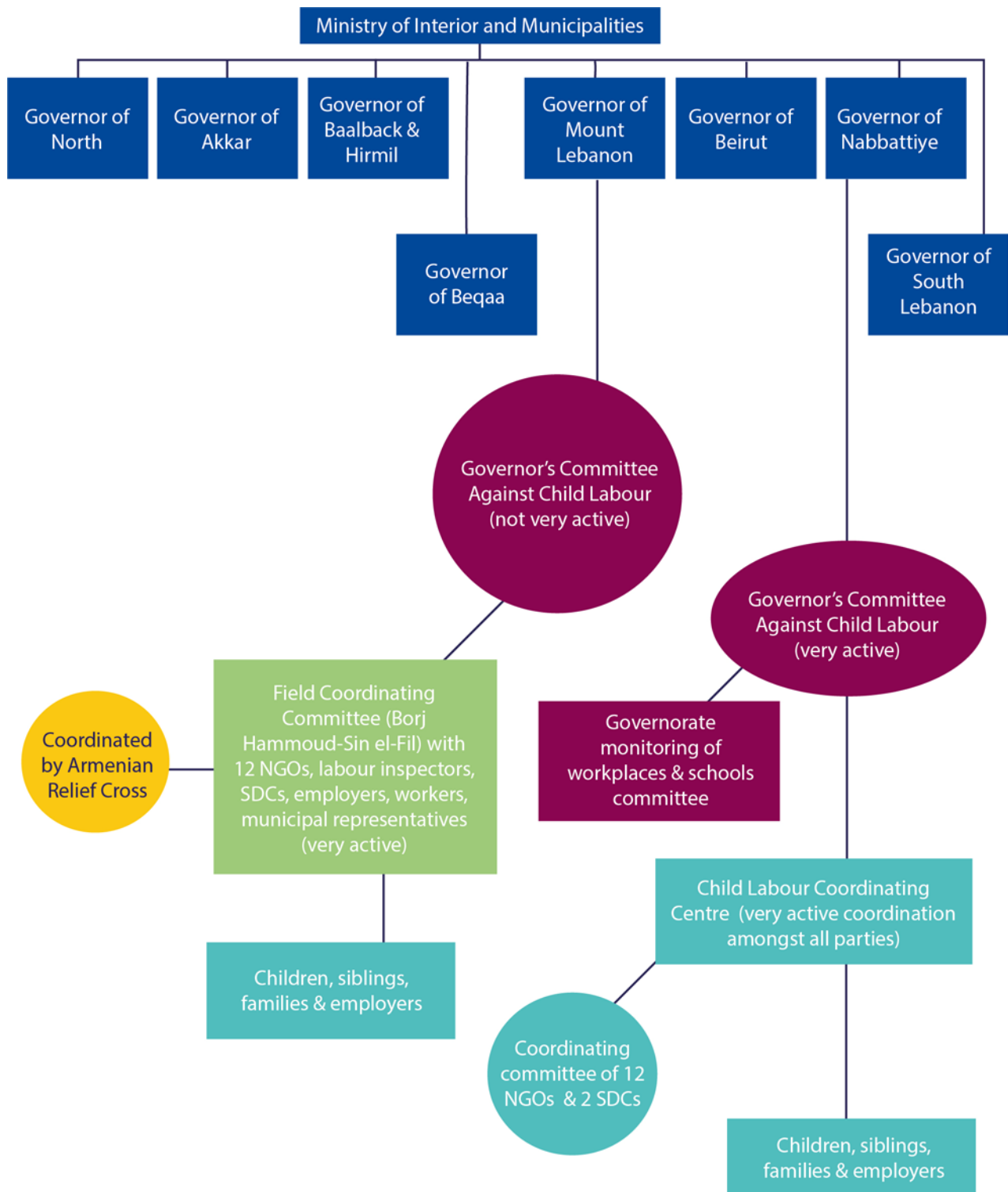
Framework

- Establishment of six Governorate Committees Against Child Labour (GCACL) through the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities and specifically an order from its Minister. The order requested that the following take place: (i) the establishment of the six GCACLs all headed by the respective Governors; and (ii) the members of each committee to be representatives of main relevant institutions such as the Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs, Interior, Education and Health; Municipal Councils of respective cities of designated governorates; and relevant NGOs.
- In light of the child labour centre already established in Nabbattiye (which became a main services and referral centre in that region), another child labour centre was established in the governorate of North Lebanon, based in its main city and specifically in a highly industrial area. This had a similar function to that of Nabbattiye's child labour centre (identification, withdrawal, rehabilitation and referral to other needed services).
- In the city of Beirut there was no one specific child labour centre; it was then seen as unnecessary in light of the forum of existing NGOs and relevant ministries' services. This forum and network of services were then formalized by the IPEC and CLMS project to become a formal district-level entity and coordinating committee at the field level: Borj Hammoud-Sin el-Fil Child Labour Coordinating Committee (CLCC), which still exists today. However, it was also agreed that one of the member institutions would act as the main coordinating agency for all the prevalent institutions and services, as the child labour centres in Nabbattiye and Tripoli were doing.
- In light of the above, further ground-level child labour coordinating committees were established officially to include NGOs and government institutions that could provide services at the field level, as in Borj Hammoud, Sin El-Fil and the Nabbaa area.
- Following this, in Nabbattiye and in Beirut local CLCCs developed what they called the "shingen visa" a unified questionnaire used by all agencies for identification, referral and management of child labour cases through a unified database system. This worked very well; each institution which identified a child labourer entered the case in a system that was open to all in order to ensure transparency of provision of services by all, and that provided information on how and where the case ended. When the child received the shingen visa to enter other services, the file would then be closed by the institution that had entered the data in the first place.

The framework is shown in figure 1.



► Figure 1. Lebanon: Child labour monitoring framework at national, governorate and district levels



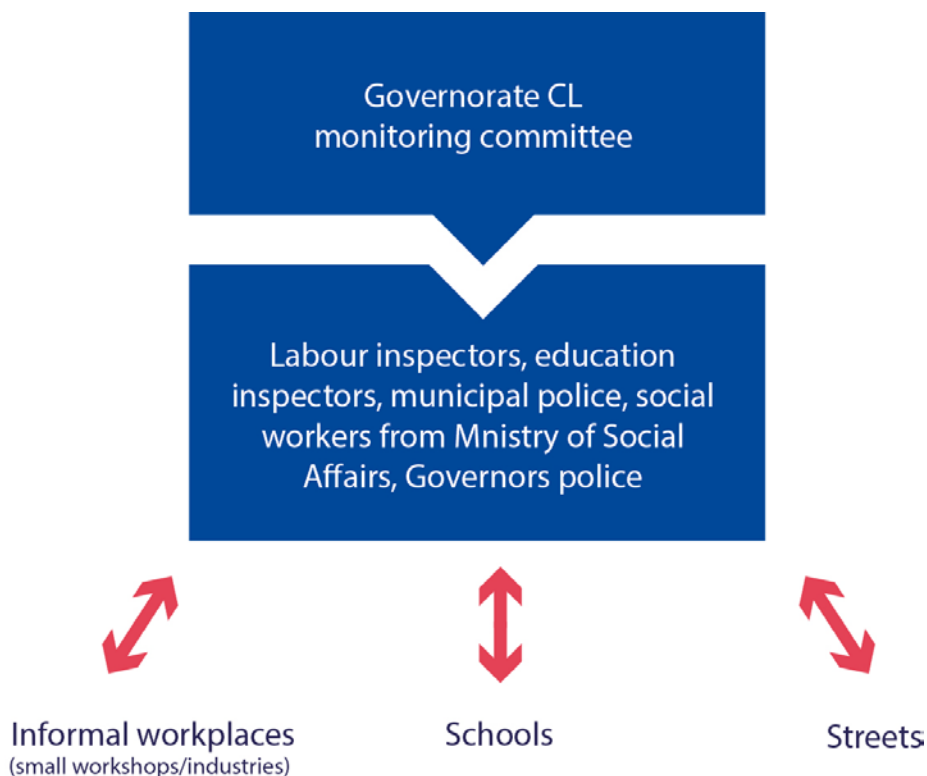


Capacity building and operations

After the development and establishment of all the required policies, orders and institutional structures (for example official governorate as well as local child labour coordinating committees, GCACL and CLCC), specific capacity-building efforts took place, starting with the following:

- Orientation of all the Governors on the issue of child labour and the role of the GCACL. This was carried out under the patronage of the Minister of Interior and Municipalities to ensure a strong and clear political will for the issue at respective governorates.
- At governorate levels, three committees were activated by the respective Governors and oriented towards different aspects of child labour through the Ministry of Interior and the ILO-IPEC team where IPEC child labour projects were established (Nabbattiye, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon).
- The Governors of Mount Lebanon and North Lebanon went further, developing governorate child labour monitoring action plans at the governorate levels in coordination with ILO-IPEC.
- The local child labour coordinating committees of Nabbattiye, North Lebanon and Mount Lebanon were capacitated to attend to child labour at different levels: monitoring, withdrawal, and rehabilitation through a coordination plan that was developed amongst them.
- The governorate committee of Nabbattiye went further to develop a sub-committee of the Governors' committee, with the role of monitoring child labour in workplaces and schools to learn about at risk, early school dropouts and those found in hazardous conditions (figure 2).

► Figure 2. Lebanon: Monitoring child labour in workplaces, schools and streets



Note: Monitors from the different institutions were given a tag to wear carrying the title “Governorate Child Labour Monitor”.

- Training of monitors within this committee was carried out in a unified monitoring system which included identification of children in the places stated above, assessment of their individual situations, and consequent action to stop employers using children under 14 years old, to identify numbers and locations of school dropouts, to try to re-enrol some in school, and to refer potential dropouts and other young child labourers to a child labour centre. The latter would share cases with local NGOs and SDCs which would then support and provide rehabilitation services as needed to ensure that the children did not return to the worst forms of child labour.



2.1.3 Lessons learned in Lebanon

Enabling environment and successes

- Governors and mayors have a lot of authority within their respective governorates, cities and towns. The Governor represents the President in his governorate and therefore provides the political umbrella for any needed policy or action on child labour, especially with respective ministry directorates as well as other institutions such as employers' and workers' organizations, let alone municipalities of the governorate.
- The mandate of municipal councils makes it their responsibility to prevent early school dropout and to return other children through both direct support as well as ensuring appropriate infrastructure. This was used and activated within the framework of the governorate as well as local/town-level action plans.
- Non-governmental and civil society organizations are strong, numerous and deeply rooted in Lebanese society; they are very dynamic and efficient in providing services, covering more than adequately the gaps in those services provided by government organizations.
- This dynamism of the civil society actors provided room for various forms of implementation of the CLMS in the respective governorates. Even where the Governors' committees were not active, local NGOs were very organized and coordinated well amongst each other as well as with the necessary government institutions to prevent, monitor and rehabilitate children withdrawn from the worst forms of child labour.
- A digital data system was established at low cost by the forum in Borj Hammoud-Sin el-fil-Nabbaa for an internal referral system.

Challenges

- General national political volatility (political assassinations, among others) disabled some of the Governors' committees, especially in places where there were no IPEC projects. However, where there was strong personal political will in specific areas, such as Nabbatiye and North Lebanon, the committees remained stronger.
- Although a very efficient and low-cost digital referral system was established at a local field level between coordinating NGOs, it did not spread to other regions or at central national level. This was due to changes within relevant ministries (of ministers and/or advisors and some staff) which carried with it different political priorities), as well as changes in ILO management where child labour was also not prioritized.

Lessons learned

- Political will and sustainability are essential when establishing the CLMS.
- There is a need to seek existing structures and their related mandates/authorities that can play the role of the political umbrella for the CLMS, such as the Governors and mayors in Lebanon.
- There is a need to seek and assess mandates of the main relevant institutions first, to see their potential direct roles in CLMS, such as municipal councils and relevant ministries.
- There is a need to be innovative and creative, based on existing institutions and authorities: (i) in creating monitoring teams such as the governorate monitoring team; and (ii) in using local resources and the services of organizations such as NGOs to the extent possible.



2.2 Jordan and its digitalized child labour monitoring system

In 2016, under the National Framework to Eradicate Child Labour, Jordan's Ministry of Labour started the development of a national digitalized CLMS framework and referral pathway. Its main national partners in addition to the Ministry of Labour were the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education. The former dealt with socio-economic and family situations of identified children and also the identification of those on the streets or exploited in illicit activities. The Ministry of Education identified and followed up on those who had been absent from school for some time or had totally dropped out.

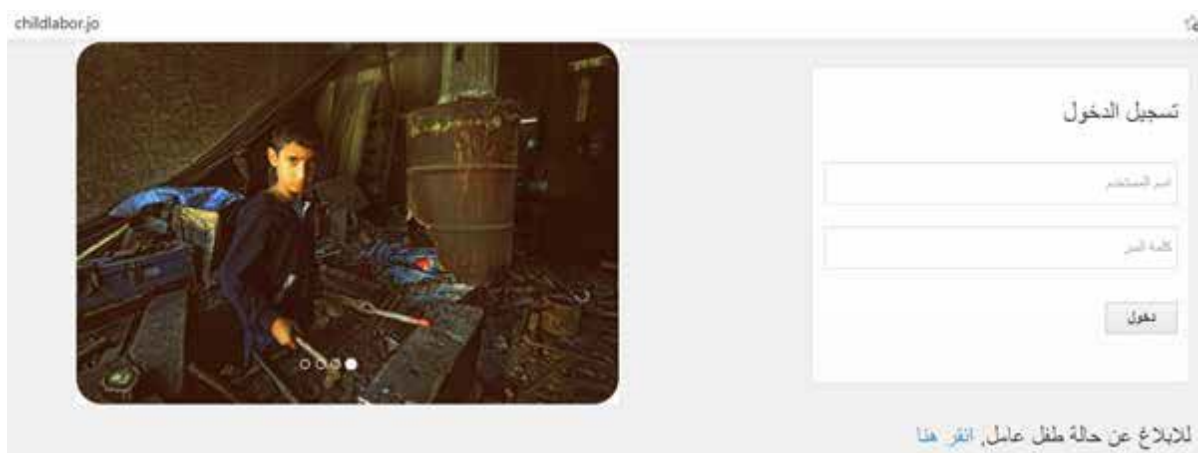
The same ministries were also partners of the established CLMS at the respective governorate levels: Amman, Irbid, Mafrak, Aqaba, Karak and Zarqa. The system was piloted in all six governorates and was revised several times to address bugs, gaps and challenges.

This system enables relevant ministries to enter information on identified children into the digitalized system, refer them to appropriate services and see where and how each case is dealt with and ends. Identified children can include: (i) children who are registered in a school but absent for a long time; (ii) school dropouts; and (iii) street-based children and children engaged in hazardous working conditions or illicit work. This is quite an extensive range of children at risk and exploited, but it differentiates them from those children who are referred to wider child protection networks and juvenile delinquent systems, a much broader issue with a wide spectrum of children and, moreover, requiring a completely different route – the legal system and the courts. The CLMS protects working children from entering this highly complicated juvenile system and ensures that they are identified and followed up as child labourers only, with a few exceptions of those forced into illicit activities.

2.2.1 How does the digitalized CLMS operate?

The website for this e-CLMS was especially developed for the purpose by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour (<http://childlabor.jo/app/login.aspx>) with the technical and financial support of the ILO. As seen in figure 3, each authorized user from the Ministry of Labour has a username and password to enable them to enter the system and include information on any child.

► Figure 3. Jordan: Main page of the Ministry of Labour's e-CLMS



Soon after, two other webpages of the e-CLMS were established, one for the Ministry of Social Development and another for the Ministry of Education, through which they can enter new children, follow up on existing cases and ensure an appropriate end result.¹

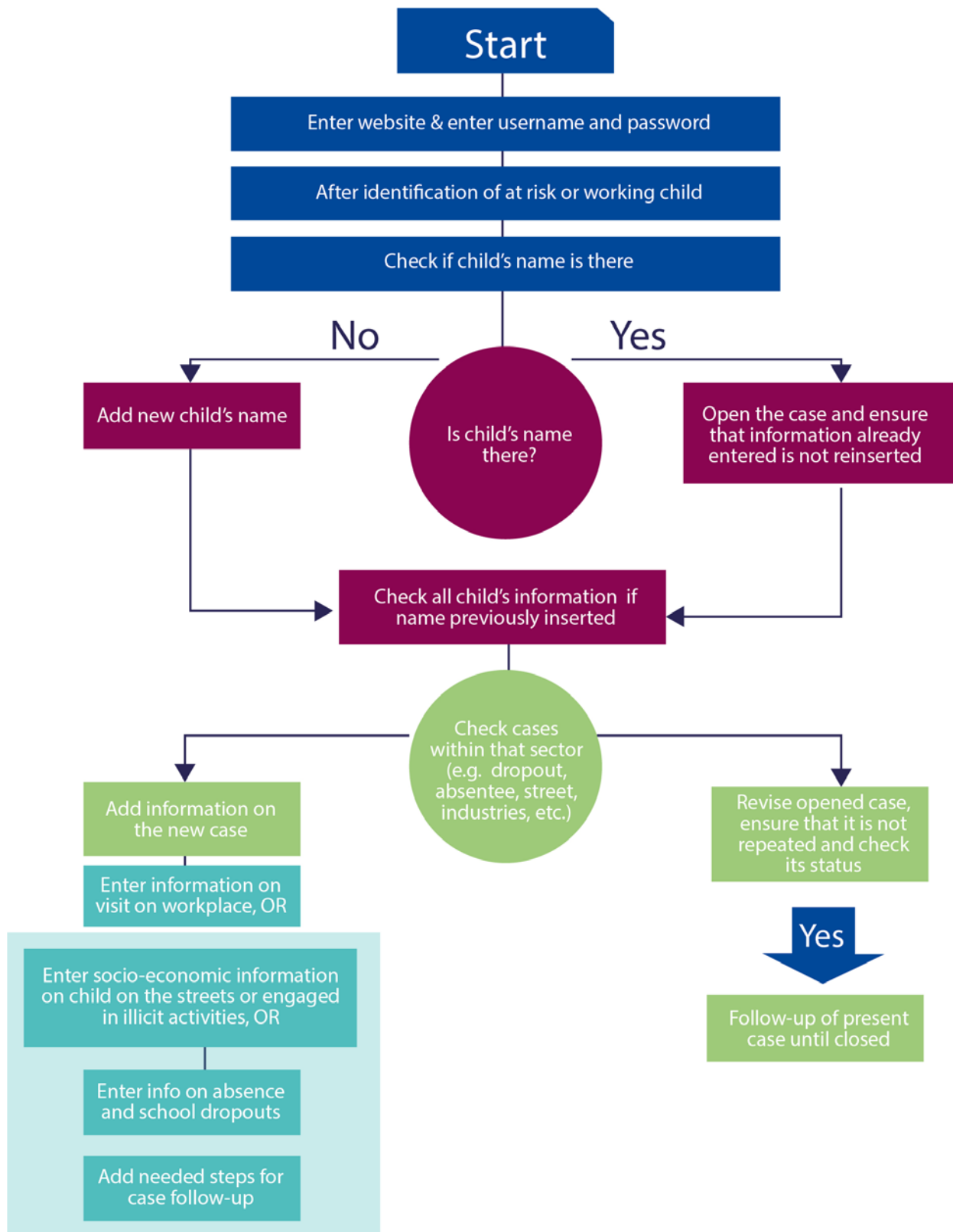
Once the webpage opens and the official representatives of the ministries are able to sign in through their pre-assigned username and password in order to ensure confidentiality of data, another page opens to reflect on what kind of information needs to be inserted or known (see figure 4). For example, the page shows seven categories which can be opened by the user: Home page, Child, Cases, Inspector's report (report number, administrative and legal measures to be taken and status of report), Ministry of Labour report on working conditions, Ministry of Social Development reports, Ministry of Education reports. Each respective ministry can go in and insert new cases and see the status of the cases that they have identified and entered, including where the cases were referred, what kind of service/s they received and where they ended.

¹ The e-CLMS was established based on a request that came from the three main ministries as a reflection to the National Framework to Eradicate Child Labour adopted by the Government of Jordan in 2011.



Only the Ministry of Labour has access to all identified and referred cases. The other ministries can follow up only on cases they have entered.

► **Figure 4. Jordan: Information requested by the e-CLMS**





As described, the system was originally established for the three main relevant ministries and has undergone much further development over the past few years through the technical and financial inputs of the Ministry of Labour. At present, there are plans to add further ministries to the system in addition to the main relevant NGOs present in respective governorates, as well as employers' and workers' organizations.

2.2.2 Lessons learned in Jordan

Enabling environment and successes

- The Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Development as well as the Prime Ministry has a long history of adopting child labour policies and legislation and making changes where needed in Jordan. Accordingly, the national juvenile justice law has been developed recently to be differentiated from any form of child labour other than actual engagement in illicit activities (see box 1).²

Box 1. Jordan: Juvenile Law No. 32

The new Juvenile Law expands the areas of responsibility of the Ministry of Social Development in terms of addressing child labour at different levels. Under the previous law, the Ministry was responsible only for dealing with begging involving both adults and juveniles. The new law now refers to all forms of child labour under its "protection list" and will effectively institutionalize the NFCL to ensure a more systematic and systemic approach.

Source: Information from Nihayat Dabdoub.

- There is a relatively good governmental ownership of child labour and prevention of school dropout programmes, initially supported by ILO-IPEC.
- The Ministry of Labour, together with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social Development have specifically shown good ownership of the established CLMS, improving aspects as necessary to address their use of it; this is especially the case for the Ministry of Labour, the umbrella institution.
- The relevant ministries are still improving the system to start including other ministries such as the Ministry of Interior, as well as local relevant NGOs and employers' and workers' organizations.

Challenges

- Acquiring a child labour database (CLDB) and information system software which needed to be operated centrally as well as at governorate levels, and to include direct connections to another two relevant ministries, was very challenging technically and operationally.
- Sustaining hardware, network and internet connectivity was an issue in and of itself, as the network was slow in many instances and most PCs were too old for such an advanced information system.
- Maintaining knowledge transfer was an issue; initially staff were trained by the ILO programme but when new staff came in there was resistance by older staff to training them.
- Staff at the relevant ministries have to consider this extra work (from their perspective) within such a complicated system as part of their normal work and cycle, with no extra compensation, which can be frustrating for some
- The main challenge now is to develop the system further to include other relevant and much-needed institutions and to ensure appropriate follow-up and resolution of cases.
- Ensuring appropriate referral and attendance to individual children's needs amongst the several institutions involved tends to be one of the most difficult issues, and needs to be resolved politically and technically.
- This means developing the system further to become child-centric rather than institution-centric, meaning that all stakeholders can go in to follow up on a child's case from different perspectives. This has already begun: the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Education now have IT managers who can provide technical assistance, passwords and upgrades. The difference is that the system is hosted on the Ministry of Labour server. There exists a plan to move hosting to the national IT centre.

² To be endorsed by Parliament; delayed due to COVID-19 and the inability of Parliament to meet as needed.



Lessons learned

- A well-established, child-centric national and governorate-based child labour database is a must in the 21st century. Identification, referral and monitoring of child labour, as well as absentees from school or early school dropouts cannot remain traditionally paper-based and rather disorganized through stagnant traditional systems and administrations.
- A well-designed, simplified digital child labour database with proper training for users is much needed in most MENA countries.
- Relevant ministries have to ensure that up-to-date computers, strong internet systems and continuous training on the operations are present at both the nationwide and governorate levels of the CLMS. This system is an immense asset to a country to facilitate efficient monitoring and follow-up of the much-needed services provided to children at high risk of exploitation or who are already engaged in hazardous working conditions or illicit work.

2.3 Turkey and its institutionalized and fully fledged child labour monitoring system

Turkey has one of the most developed child labour monitoring systems in the region. It was initially developed in the late 1990s and has continued developing and improving to date. It originally started with the labour inspectors being the principal players in monitoring of children in industrial workplaces. Soon after, various institutions at the national and local levels were equipped to act as focal points in the development and subsequent implementation of a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated and multi-disciplinary CLMS.

During the process of developing the CLMS in Turkey, schools have played an essential role and this remains so to date, of course in addition to others such as local NGOs and employers' and workers' organizations who assisted at all levels of the monitoring process and provide ongoing support.

2.3.1 Uniqueness of Turkey's CLMS and its development

Building on already existing information and institutions

A strategic step towards the development of the CLMS in Turkey rested on utilizing existing information from relevant government and non-governmental institutions, rather than creating new systems.³

The Local Directorates of Primary Education provided data on the number of working children in the school system, dropout rates, academic achievement rates, and the educational status of younger siblings of working children. The Local Directorate of Non-Formal Education and Vocational Training provided information on the students attending their Apprenticeship Training Centres as well as on their younger siblings who were at risk of becoming child labourers. The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK)⁴ made relevant information available from its records concerning working children. The national and municipal police provided information on children working in the streets, which they had in their records, and *mukhtars* (heads of local government) provided information on families of working children through their neighbourhood records. The idea was to link all these extensive sets of information, from various sources, together and to cross-check it.

Setting up the CLMS involved the use of joint teams to monitor the work situations of children in both the formal and informal sectors and in both rural and urban areas. The system was designed so as to ensure that child labourers were identified, hazards in the workplace prioritized, and employers advised on how to eliminate these hazards. At-risk children were removed from the workplace and provided with suitable alternatives, and the rehabilitated children were monitored. In addition to increasing the capacity of partners, ILO and other relevant child labour projects provided ongoing support in the form of establishing a data management system for all available information, training, technical guidelines and materials.

³ Information in this section is from Sule Caglar, ILO expert (ret.) on child labour in Turkey, with responsibility for Arab States at the ILO.

⁴ SHCEK is the oldest agency in Turkey dealing with issues concerning children. It acts as the coordinating agency to monitor the enforcement of the CRC in Turkey.



Within the framework of the ILO time-bound programme (TBP)⁵ and other child labour programmes, the Child Labour Unit of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs was enhanced to create a special database (management information system – MIS) for child labour monitoring at the national level. This involved a web-based information system to be implemented and managed by the Child Labour Unit and the relevant provincial offices. The availability of such an information system was crucial to monitoring trends in child labour.

Because child labour monitoring was based on existing national mechanisms, with national ownership involving national institutions officially mandated to ensure the education, protection and welfare of children, the CLMS in Turkey was sustainable after the IPEC programme was phased out.

The school-based monitoring system

A very good practice and one to take into consideration when establishing or developing a CLMS is to mobilize the education system, and especially schooling of children at an early age. This is the place where early school dropouts can be captured or, just as important, where it can be ensured that others at high risk of dropping out don't do so and end up in hazardous work. Turkey provides a good model for this in the MENA region (see box 2).

Box 2. Turkey: Mobilizing schools to take ownership of child labour problems and solutions: A school-based CLMS

Within the framework of the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour project in Turkey, a school-based child labour monitoring system was developed in seven selected provinces. Schools were used as a starting place for collecting information on those children who were withdrawn from work and placed in schools, children who combined school and work, and children who were at risk of dropping out of school to work. Within this model, schools were active participants, indeed the driving force, in the monitoring process. The project started from the premise that teachers are among the most knowledgeable about the whereabouts of children and their family conditions, and can therefore play a valuable role in the monitoring and follow-up process.

As a result, teachers, school principals and guidance counsellors were fully trained and motivated to assist the project to monitor child labour. Child labour monitoring forms were distributed to schools, and the information that was collected with regard to enrolment, retention, academic success and school completion rates was presented at various intervals by the project staff. The sharing of information pertaining to work and schooling allowed the project to take appropriate action. This information from schools was also compared with the data gathered from households, and in some cases from the workplace, and provided valuable insights, helping to target appropriate responses.

Based on the information collected, the project adopted the following measures: (i) if the children who were withdrawn from work and placed in schools were failing or not attending, psychological and educational counselling was offered to ensure their academic success; (ii) when children were identified as combining school and work, every effort was made to withdraw them from work and help them to become full-time students; and (iii) when the groups most at risk (full-time students but most likely to drop out to work) were identified, preventative measures were taken to ensure that they would not leave school to go to work.

The final number of pilot schools included in the CLMS system was 155 in seven provinces and there were 34 pilot schools for the child labour information system. As a result of this effective mechanism, 1,300 children were identified through the CLMS. Given that 4,891 children were identified in total, this means that one-third of the children who were identified came from the CLMS. This clearly indicates the willingness of schools, and more precisely of the principals and teachers, to take on an active role in combating child labour.

⁵ The TBP approach is one of the means put in place by IPEC to assist countries in fulfilling their obligations under the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). "TBP programmes are designed as a comprehensive framework that governments can use to chart a course of action with well-defined targets. They comprise a set of integrated and coordinated policies and interventions with clear goals, specific targets and a defined time frame, aimed at preventing and eliminating a country's worst forms of child labour". See <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/Action/Programmes/lang--en/index.htm>.



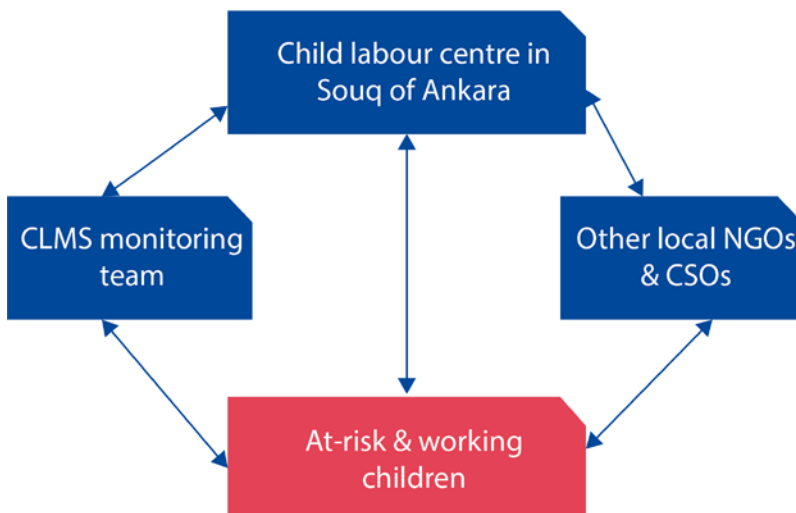
2.3.2 Lessons learned in Turkey

The CLMS in Turkey, as one of the most established and developed child labour monitoring systems in the MENA region, demonstrates a well-structured and institutionalized system for combating child labour in general, and especially in its monitoring. However, CLMS remain extremely challenging in all countries in the region, with a lot to learn from other countries. Even Turkey had and still has its challenges in addition to its successes.

Enabling environment and successes

- The CLMS has undergone continuous development since its establishment in the late 1990s/early 2000s.
- There has been long-term political commitment⁶ and determination from the Government and its main relevant ministries to combat child labour.
- The CLMS is deeply entrenched and institutionalized within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Turkey and its Child Labour Unit which has been highly capacitated for almost 20 years.
- The Ministry of Education plays an essential role in prevention through the detailed monitoring of children at risk and those who have dropped out of school. They also follow up closely with children's families too.
- Employers' organizations as well as local municipalities have established distinguished and quite efficient and relevant child labour projects in Turkey. For example, employers in Izmir established the idea of nucleus schools, which were educational support classes within the industrial areas so that they are easily accessible to children working in those areas. They are also linked to the Ministry of Education to ensure formal and useful certification.
- In another example relevant to the CLMS, the Municipal Council of Ankara, along with local employers' organizations, supported an extensive child labour centre in a large garage area amidst the traditional downtown market of Ankara; it was initiated in early 2000 and operates to date (see figure 5). This centre acts as the main hub and means for coordination for operations of the CLMS in that area of Ankara.
- According to Turkish child labour experts, having such a centre providing services needed by children but also including other institutions has played a pivotal role in the CLMS, and it is suggested to institutionalize local CLMS in such centres if possible.

► /Figure 5. Turkey: Child labour centre directly supported by the Municipality of Ankara



- The establishment of provincial action committees (PACs), has proved to be a highly successful strategy, due to their high-profile cross-cutting mechanisms and direct links to the Governors' offices giving them authority at the highest political level (see box 3). The local coordinating committees against child labour in Lebanon were actually established in light of the Turkish experience at the time and then evolved into their own contextual format.

⁶ In many countries, political commitment depends on the priorities of relevant ministers, but this has not been the case in Turkey.



Box 3. Turkey: Effective networking and coalition building with local and district authorities: Provincial action committees against child labour

The main aim in forming provincial action committees (PACs) was to create a supportive institutional and policy environment by encouraging the local authorities to move toward a collaborative approach and support the implementation of IPEC direct action programmes. To establish PACs, it was necessary to identify and mobilize key government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in relevant sectors, employers' and workers' organizations, and universities. In addition, each of the Governors officially appointed representatives of these institutions to the committee. Regular monthly committee meetings under the chairmanship of the Governor were then held during which the PACs were informed on implementation, evolving issues, and the needs of the IPEC projects. To date, more than 25 PACs have been established throughout the country.

Challenges

- In spite of the well-established CLMS in Turkey, the main challenge is ensuring quick and efficient referrals, especially within the education system.
- Coordination at local levels has ups and downs and can differ from one area to another. The presence of the local child labour centres has played an integral role in coordination at the local level.
- As the system has become so developed and institutionalized, it requires a lot of commitment and effort to keep it going; however, the reward is immense for both children and the Government – the prevention of early school dropout and the limitation of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour.

Lessons learned

- It is best to seek out already existing institutions and mechanisms that can be of support to the CLMS, rather than creating new ones
- It is critical to systemize CLMS efforts, as ad hoc efforts would be a waste of human and financial resources. Every effort should be made to systematically collect and analyse child labour data and to standardize information gathering, research and monitoring methodologies.
- It is also important to update the child labour database and disseminate all data in a timely fashion, otherwise the data lag behind and can't be dealt with effectively and efficiently. Experience has shown that the institutionalization and strengthening of the development and maintenance of an integrated CLMS is also a contributing factor to efforts being sustained.
- One very successful strategic entry point to the CLMS in Turkey also involved school-based child labour monitoring mechanisms. The schools can and must be an area for monitoring child labour; and teachers/psychosocial support staff can be an important source of support in terms of information generation and monitoring.
- Labour inspectors played a crucial role in the design, development and implementation of the CLMS in Turkey, and their dedication, ownership, social mobilization skills and hard work, together with technical training, contributed to the success of the CLMS.
- Last but not least, a key lesson to take from Turkey is to develop a CLMS framework and operational mechanism that involves working at different levels in an interlinked manner.

3. Recommendations for the establishment of a child labour monitoring system in Egypt





Egypt has a long history of working on the issue of child labour through different partners and at different levels – national, international and local. Most child labour programmes have included direct prevention and rehabilitation projects but not monitoring mechanisms – at least, not well established and systematic ones or even in any specific sector. Therefore, as Egypt is moving into the development of a national and selected governorate-level monitoring system, especially in agricultural and cotton-growing areas, lessons learned from other experiences need to be taken into serious consideration. These lessons provide a basis for the recommendations below for the establishment of Egypt's national child labour monitoring system.

3.1 Recommendations

- **1. Political commitment.** Although there is political commitment in Egypt through the National Action Plan against Child Labour, the CLMS to be established needs to be discussed again thoroughly with relevant government officials to ensure a “trickle-down effect” to the action level on the ground. This needs to be discussed with the Ministry of Manpower first, the National Steering Committee second, and relevant governorate officials third.
- **2. Mapping all relevant existing institutions and their potential roles.** First of all, relevant government institutions need to be well mapped and assessed as to their mandates, actual operations and how they can be of support to the CLMS at national as well as governorate levels. These include but are not limited to the following: the Ministries of Manpower, Education, Social Solidarity, and Agriculture and Interior.

Employers' and workers' organizations' potential roles should be assessed, also at national as well as selected governorate levels. At the latter levels, those related to agriculture and more specifically cotton need to be looked at in depth. International NGOs attending to child labour need also to be screened to determine if they have any previous experience, action or potential future role within the new system.

Local NGOs and any other relevant local committees should be screened and assessed for potentials of monitoring and/or providing services. Here local municipal councils and “Umdas”⁷ need to be talked to too, and their potential mandate or even cultural role assessed as to how they can be of support.
- **3. Governorate and local child protection committees.** The mandates, operations and capabilities of governorate and local child protection committees (CPCs) in Egypt need to be carefully assessed as to their capabilities in attending to child labour, especially now that they are officially established.
- **4. Child labour centres.** Egypt has a unique institutional capacity: its child labour centres found within the organogram of the Ministry of Social Solidarity. In other countries reviewed earlier, especially in Lebanon and Turkey, child labour centres were key in the successful coordination of all relevant stakeholders in the CLMS at the field levels. This needs to be taken into account in Egypt.
- **5. National and local information gathering and database.** From the onset of the planning for the CLMS in Egypt, available and relevant information systems must be carefully mapped, their quality, operations and capabilities assessed and their potential for contributing to an interrelated CLMS determined. This should be done carefully in order to plan a sustainable, long-term and useful information generation system. This will help in continuously determining the scope and trends of child labour, and especially in selected sectors in the country, but also for monitoring and supporting at-risk and working children, especially those found in the worst forms of child labour.
- **6. The establishment of a digitalized database on child labour.** Whilst looking at the above, a unified or interlinked digitalized data entry and referral mechanism needs to be kept in mind, similar to that in Jordan but with additional partners. However, it could start with as few partners as the Jordanian database.
- **7. Ministry of Agriculture, cotton-related institutions and cooperatives.** Since Egypt has a long-standing history of producing, selling and exporting a varied range of agricultural products including cotton, directly related monitoring or at least information generation systems or mechanisms need to be sought and assessed as to how they could benefit a CLMS, especially in selected sectors and regions.
- **8. Area-based approach.** Although the project focuses mainly on agriculture and particularly on cotton, area-based approaches are now preferred, especially when planning for a national CLMS. However, this does not mean that the project cannot place emphasis on certain smaller cotton areas and its related supply chain, especially where the worst forms of child labour exist.

⁷ Head of a small region in a village or head of a village if it is small. They are usually very culturally influential in villages and in most cases are senior in age, know all the inhabitants of the village well, and are highly engaged in their issues and everyday problems.



- **9. Coordination, coordination, coordination and information sharing.** Coordination will be key to the CLMS in Egypt, whether within the relevant institutions or with others. This will need to be a key message and a critical point to start from. Without the will to coordinate and share relevant information, efforts will remain in a stalemate.



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