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Guide for Child Labour in Agriculture Practitioners

Launch event concept note & agenda

Movenpick hotel – Beirut, 6th September, 2017

Background

Almost 60 percent of children labourers aged 5–17 years around the world can be found working in agriculture, including farming, fishing, aquaculture, forestry, and livestock. This amounts to more than 98 million girls and boys worldwide.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 13.4 million, or about 15 percent, of all children in the Arab region are child labourers. The ILO states that the real level of child labour may be much higher than those reported because of the predominance of child labour in the informal sector, which is difficult to measure.

Children, society's most vulnerable members, have been particularly affected. Among the most serious and worrying repercussions in this context, is the growing exploitation of these working children. There is an increase in those who are engaged in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL), such as hazardous work and debt bondage in agriculture and also in other sectors. There is also a trend towards a growing number of children directly and indirectly involved in armed conflict, and violent actions.

In Arab countries such as Lebanon, child labour in agriculture has often occurred within the context of family farming, where participation in some agricultural activities is not traditionally considered "child labour" by employers and families. Most of the time, children's working conditions do not meet national or international labour standards, including standards on working age. Thus, it is important to distinguish between the kind of involvement that is acceptable (being characterized by light duties) and the involvement that according to international definitions, interferes with compulsory schooling and damages the health and personal development of children.

The challenges for monitoring child labour issues are immense especially in the agriculture sector. Regionally, the vast numbers of children engaged in the WFCL in the agricultural sector has been exacerbated since 2011 by the Syrian refugee's crisis in most of the neighboring countries. This trend has especially affected children below the age of 11 as well as those specifically working in the fields in harsh physical conditions. This exploitation is then exacerbated by the absence or weaknesses of the provision of measures taken by governments.



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The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are collaborating within the International Partnership on Child Labour in Agriculture. In Lebanon, the ILO through its Regional Office for the Arab States and the FAO through its Regional Initiative on Small Scale Family Farming (RI-SSFF) have joined efforts since 2015 to support the relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Agriculture in the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat WFCL through conducting studies, developing awareness-raising campaigns, and providing trainings on occupational safety and health in agriculture. As part of this effort, the production of a practical guide on child labour in agriculture (in English and Arabic) has been initiated in response to the lack of informative and educational material relevant to the topic. The contents of the guide “Child Labour in Agriculture in Lebanon: A guide for practitioners” were developed based on the instructional material in the ILO toolkit “Tackling hazardous child labour in agriculture: Guidance on policy and practice” (2006).

The guide will serve as a significant tool for practitioners in Lebanon and beyond. It is also intended for countries in the region who are affected by the issue of child labour in agriculture.

Objective and scope

Agriculture is one of the three most hazardous work sectors alongside mining and construction. In the case of children, agricultural work is comprised of activities and conditions that are considered “hazardous” due to frequency of harmful (or even deadly) consequences of such work. Yet many children enter this field of work at a very young age, sometimes as young as five years old, thus increasing the duration and extent of exposure to the hazards of such work over the course of their lifetime.

A complex combination of factors can exacerbate or push children into child labour, including: 1) a weak legal frameworks and enforcement; 2) the functioning labour markets; 3) the functioning of agricultural production systems; 4) the lack of access to or existence of social protection systems; 4) the inadequate education systems in rural areas and for refugees; and 6) conflicts and migration. Child labour hampers access to viable business and employment opportunities when these children become young adult and is at the same time a symptom of non-sustainable agriculture and a drag on rural development.

The guide has been produced in a very comprehensive and detailed manner to offer the practitioners against child labour in agriculture relevant information and tools. It consists of five chapters in addition to a related CD that includes power points presentations to be used by facilitators and trainers against CL. The outline of the guide is as follows:



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Chapter 1. Child labour in agriculture

This chapter introduces the concept of child labour in agriculture, presenting three criteria with which to determine whether a work activity or task that a child may be engaged in is considered child labour, namely: (1) the age of the child; (2) the nature and conditions of work; and (3) the impact on compulsory schooling. This determination is made with reference to international frameworks, as well as the national legislation on child labour in Lebanon. The characteristics and causes of child labour specific to the agricultural sector are elucidated.

Chapter 2. Hazardous work of children in agriculture

This chapter aims to elaborate on the definition of hazardous work, introduced in Chapter 1. Various aspects of hazardous work will be examined by presenting the broader consequences of hazardous work, explaining the difference between hazards and risks, outlining common occupational hazards in agriculture, describing how children are exposed to these hazards, and introducing and explaining the importance of providing occupational safety and health (OSH) in young (14–17) and adult (18 and above) workers in agriculture.

Chapter 3. Harm in child labour: Vulnerability, exposure, and harmful effects

This chapter focuses on issues that impact the health and well-being of children who work in the agricultural sector. It describes why and in which ways children are more vulnerable than adults to the harmful effects of agricultural hazards. Various modes of exposure to hazards are then presented. Finally, the consequences of exposure – physical and psychosocial, short and long term direct and indirect – are explained.

Chapter 4. Eliminating child labour in agriculture

The first part of this chapter (4.a) provides an explanation of the importance of eliminating child labour in agriculture, and an introduction of the ILO's three basic approaches to child labour elimination: prevention, withdrawal and protection. This is followed by a delineation of the four broad principal areas of action for eliminating child labour through protection measures: (1) enforcing legislation; (2) improving OSH at the farm level; (3) applying policy action to reduce hazardous exposure; and (4) building capacity on OSH and child labour.

The second part of the chapter (4.b) introduces a general framework for improving OSH at the farm level, in which the roles of different stakeholders from policy-makers and ministerial employees to farm managers and agricultural workers are highlighted. Methods and tools for assessing and managing risk



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are provided. The chapter concludes with an overview on the application of personal safety measures for agricultural workers.

Chapter 5. Field exercises

Numerous practical exercises are proposed in this chapter such as the body mapping, a typical training exercise to visualize the harmful effects of typical agricultural tasks, and the risk assessment, a traditional tool to increase health and safety in farm/agricultural settings.

Participants to the launching event

The launching event will be organized jointly by ILO and FAO in Beirut. The participants to the event would be essentially partners and stakeholders in Beirut such as Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Higher Council for Childhood, UNICEF, and the American University of Beirut, Child protection actors, development partners and donors. Participants will be then responsible to roll out the use of the guide within their respective mandates.

Language

English/Arabic

Schedule overview

Launch event of the Guide for Child Labour in Agriculture Practitioners

<i>Time</i>	<i>Session</i>
9:00 - 9:30	Registration
9:30 - 10:00	Welcoming notes Maurice Saade – FAO Representative in Lebanon Alfredo Impiglia – Delivery Manager of the Regional Initiative on Small Scale Family Farming FAO Frank Hagemann – Deputy Regional Director and Director of Decent Work Country ILO ROAS



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10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 10:45	<i>Nazha Chalita</i> – Head of the Unit for Combat Child Labour in Lebanon and Advisor of HE Minister of Labour <i>Setting of the scene : National legal framework of the combat against WFCL in Lebanon</i>
10:45 – 11:00	<i>Hayat Osseyran</i> – Regional Child Labour Consultant, ILO ROAS
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Faten Adada</i> – National Coordinator on Child labour in Agriculture, FAO
11:15 - 12:30	<i>Presentation of the guide by Rana Al Barazi Tabbara</i> - Lecturer, Faculty of Health Sciences, AUB
12:30 – 13:00	<i>Q&A session/Discussion</i>
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break

Meeting venue

Movenpick hotel - Beirut, Lebanon

Contact persons – FAO

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