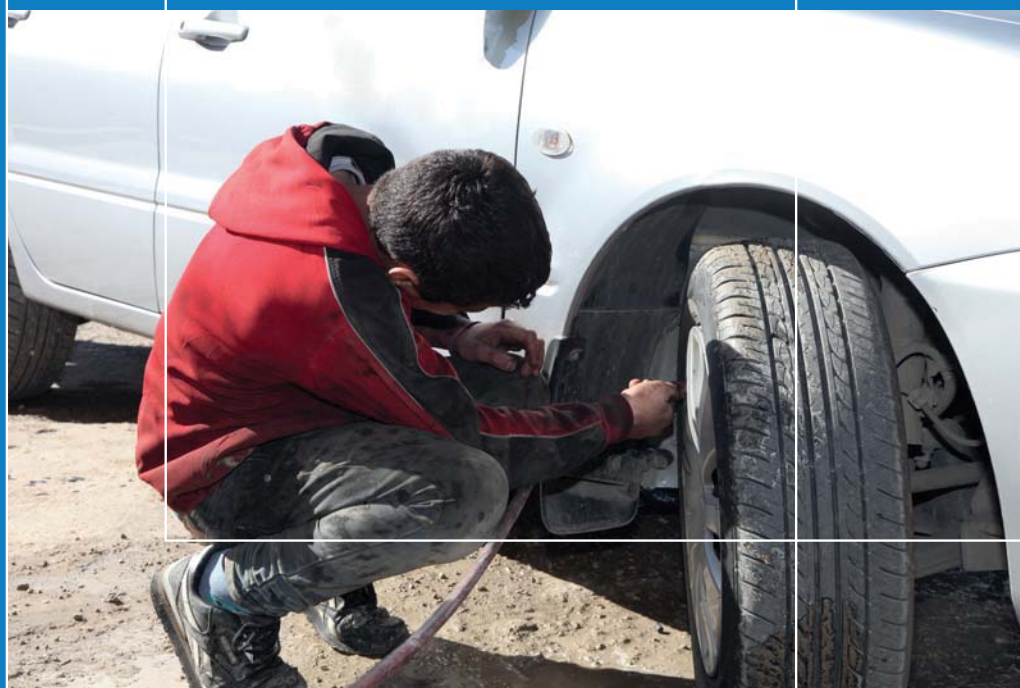




International
Labour
Organization

“Moving Towards A Child Labour Free Jordan” A Collection of Emerging Good Practices



Moving towards a child
labour free Jordan:
A collection of emerging
good practices

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Acronyms

CECLE	Combatting Exploitation of Child Labour through Education
CHF	Global Communications (formerly Cooperative Housing Foundation)
CL	Child Labour
CLM	Child Labour Monitoring
CLMS	Child Labour Monitoring System
CLU	Child Labour Unit (Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Development)
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of Children
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DBMR	Direct Beneficiaries Monitoring and Reporting
DOS	Department of Statistics (Jordan)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EJABI	Euro-Jordanian Business Institute (Jordan Chamber of Industry)
FAFO	Norwegian Institute for Research
GAM	Greater Amman Municipality
GFJTU	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions
HCL	Hazardous Child Labour
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
WDACL	World Day Against Child Labour
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IYF	International Youth Foundation
JCC	Jordan Chamber of Commerce
JCI	Jordan Chamber of Industry
JOHUD	Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
MOE	Ministry of Education (Jordan)
MOH	Ministry of Health (Jordan)
MOJ	Ministry of Justice (Jordan)
MOL	Ministry of Labour (Jordan)
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development (Jordan)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCFA	National Council for Family Affairs
NCLS	National Child Labour Survey (Jordan)
NCCL	National Committee on Child Labour
NFCL	National Framework to Combat Child Labour

NSC	National Steering Committee
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PDTRA	Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority
RAS	Rapid Assessment Survey
ROAS	ILO Regional Office for Arab States
RRP	UN Inter-Agency Syria Regional Response Plan
SCI	Save the Children International
SSC	Social Support Centre
TCCL	Technical Committee on Child Labour (replaced by the NCCL)
TOT	Training of Trainers
TPR	Technical Progress Report
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

A. Introduction and Methodology

Good practices developed under one project to combat child labour can inform the design and implementation of similar initiatives in other contexts. These good practices from ILO-related projects aim to document what worked well in creating conditions to prevent or eliminate child labour in Jordan. The examples range from developing a national strategy to combat child labour, documenting the prevalence of child labour, and facilitating communication between government ministries, to devising innovative approaches to address unique situations. Features of each good practice may be transferable to other national and regional contexts.

Over a two-week period in November and December 2015, a consultant hired by the ILO interviewed 30 people from the government, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector, as well as 15 children who were either current or former child labourers. These interviews sought to identify and document good practices that are relevant, effective, ethical, innovative, sustainable, efficient, and eligible for replication. Following the ILO guidelines, the good practices described in this report are:

"... something that actually has been tried and shown to work, i.e. as distinct from what may be a potentially good idea but has not actually been tested. It could, however, represent work in progress, representing preliminary or intermediate findings. While there should be some evidence that the practice is indeed effective, definitive "proof" ordinarily is not essential. The overriding criteria should be the potential usefulness of a good practice to others in stimulating new ideas or providing guidance on how one can be more effective in some aspect related to child labour."¹

From the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour point of view, good practices can represent a programme activity at any level, from broad policy-level initiatives to grassroots interventions at field level. It need not represent an overall project or programme. A key aspect is that a good practice is something that actually has been tried and shown to work, as opposed to what may be a potentially good idea but has not actually been tested in practice. It may also represent work in progress.

The following set of criteria was used in identifying and documenting the good practices included in this publication:

- innovative or creative;
- documented as effective and/or have impact;
- replicable;
- sustainable;
- relevant to direct or indirect action against child labour;
- responsive and ethical;
- efficient in the use of resources (human, financial or material) in their implementation.

It is also important to highlight that virtually all interviewees noted that, while progress has been made, much still needs to be done to fully implement the documented good practices. The influx of over one million Syrian refugees (adding to Jordan's 2008 population of 6 million) has greatly strained public institutions, disrupted the labour market, and resulted in an increase rather than a decrease in the number of child labourers.

¹ ILO-IPEC: Time-Bound Programme Manual for Action Planning (Geneva, ILO, 2013), p. 1. Available at: www.ilo.org/ipsec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_3020/lang--en/index.htm

BACKGROUND

Eliminating child labour is a global priority for the ILO. The specific target (8.7) of the new Sustainable Development Goal No.8 on decent work and economic growth calls for immediate measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. This marks the determination of the international community to address a devastating phenomenon which affects millions of children around the world.

Countries with enabling environments to tackle child labour and with what might be considered as “manageable” numbers of child labourers, can be role models for others, developing and implementing national strategies that can reduce and ultimately eliminate child labour. One such country is Jordan, where the most recent estimates indicate a figure of just under 30,000 child labourers², or 1.6 per cent of the total child population aged between 5 and 17. Most of these children were above the age of 15, involved in situations of hazardous work.

However, like many other countries, Jordan has heavily felt the impact of the global economic crisis and its lack of natural resources and significant shortage of water have hampered economic recovery. Jordan also has a high unemployment rate, standing at 12 per cent in the second quarter of 2014³, which is much higher for youth aged 16 to 24, almost 48 per cent of whom are unemployed. In addition, labour market participation of women stood at around 13 per cent in 2013 compared to over 60 per cent for men. The cost of living has also been severely affected by the removal of fuel and energy subsidies and the reduction in subsidies for bread, part of the staple diet in Jordan particularly for poor families. Given the above and linked to anecdotal evidence of increasing numbers of school drop-outs, it is more than likely that the 2007 child labour estimates are no longer accurate and that the numbers may well have increased.

In spite of ongoing challenges, efforts to tackle child labour in Jordan continue, reinforced by a relatively strong enabling environment built on comprehensive policy, legislative and institutional frameworks. It was in the context of supporting the implementation of policy and legislation and reinforcing institutional capacity that the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) launched a new project, “Moving Towards a Child Labour Free Jordan”, in October 2011 with the support of the US Department of Labor (USDOL). The aim of the project was to significantly reduce child labour in Jordan within a relatively short period of time – the project was due to close at the end of 2014 – and to be one of the countries to have achieved the target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

However the situation changed significantly in 2012 when the Syria crisis escalated and a large number of refugees started entering Jordan. While the Jordanian government welcomed these refugees, heavy restrictions were put in place on their ability to access the labour market resulting in large scale unemployment among them. Refugees were heavily dependent on humanitarian assistance which was not always regular or adequate. In this context, child labour among Syrian refugee populations rose sharply, impacting also on the situation of child labour among non-refugee populations and soon grew into one of the biggest child protection challenges in Jordan.

² ILO-IPEC and Department of Statistics of Jordan: Working Children in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Results of the 2007 Child Labour Survey (Geneva, ILO, 2009). Available at: www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_12013/lang-en/index.htm.

Responding to this situation, the USDOL-funded ILO project was further extended until 31st March 2016. While the project continued to have a strong policy-level focus, supporting development, reform, implementation and capacity-building, additional activities included a National Child Labour Survey, and a pilot initiative linking child labour to youth employment. In this context, its learning outcomes are strategically important to other similarly structured projects around the world both in terms of informing future project design and development and in terms of contributing to the knowledge base on the elimination of child labour. In terms of strengthening the knowledge base, the documentation of good practices provides a critical information resource that ultimately benefits a much wider audience, including national and international stakeholders and experts in the fields of child labour elimination and child protection as well as in related areas, such as poverty alleviation, social protection, labour inspection, education development and children's rights.

B. Good Practices to Combat Child Labour (Jordan Cases)

Good Practice No. 1 – Rolling out the National Framework to Combat Child Labour at the Governorate Level

Jordan rolled out the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL) on a pilot basis from 2013, starting with five governorates. To support the implementation of the Framework, a Technical Working Group was set up at the central level and coordination mechanisms were established at governorate level. A web-based child labour database was created and over 200 officials from three ministries (Labour, Social Development and Education) were trained on the NFCL.



Officials of the ministries of Labour, Social Development and Education plan and work together on combatting child labour

Why is this a good practice?

The NCLF sets out the national child labour policy and action plan. Without a specific effort to roll out the NCLF to the governorates, and hence to the communities where child labour is found, it would have remained a policy document on paper. As a result of these efforts, Jordan translated its policy into concerted action, with the responsible ministries acting in a coherent manner to tackle child labour.

Is this good practice sustainable?

Rolling out a national framework requires a considerable investment in time by multiple parties but modest direct financial support. Following the initial investment, the implementation of the framework is sustained by its official legal status and the institutional arrangements to fund its activities.

Jordan has ratified the four Conventions that are most relevant to child labour: In 1970, it signed the Arab Convention Number One (governing minimum ages for types of work); in 1991, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; in 1997, the ILO Convention No. 138 (on minimum age for admission to employment and work); and in 2000, the ILO Convention No. 182 (on the worst forms of child labour). In 1999, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) formally created a Child Labour Unit (CLU) at its ministry. Jordan's Department of Statistics conducted a child labour survey in 2007. In 2011, Jordan amended the list of hazardous work for youth. Jordan has also integrated child labour issues into relevant legislation, policies and strategies. Article 73 of the Jordanian Labour Law prohibits the employment of children under 16, which is also the upper age limit for compulsory education. In addition, the country has benefited from a series of child labour projects supported by the USDOL that have contributed significantly to strengthening national capacity.

In 2010, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) began a process to develop the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL), which culminated in 2011 with a document endorsed by the Prime Minister. The Framework brought together three important ministries: Labour, Social Development and Education, to tackle child labour in a coherent manner. However, with the exception of some initial orientation workshops, the NFCL remained dormant until the ILO decided to support its implementation by rolling it out in five governorates on a pilot basis.

Key Steps and Achievements

Recognizing that child labour challenges were not being met, Jordan's National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) determined in 2009 that it was imperative to bring together the various activities and agreements under a national framework. As a result, and following collective efforts involving various stakeholders including the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), Questscope, CHF International, and the Combating Exploitive Child Labour through Education (CECLE) project, the National Framework to Combat Child Labour was drafted and eventually endorsed by the Prime Minister in August 2011. The Framework assigned roles to the Ministries of Labour (MOL), Education (MOE) and Social Development (MOSD), and called for specific actions to achieve its objectives. The official ratification by the Prime Minister created the mandate for all ministries – but particularly MOL, MOE, and MOSD – to collaborate in its execution.



Ministry of Social Development officials discussing the implementation of the National Framework

From the time of its endorsement to March 2013, a number of orientation sessions were conducted to create awareness on the NFCL among key stakeholders. Nevertheless, the NFCL remained largely dormant due to the lack of resources and technical knowledge within the three key ministries to kick-start its implementation.

Realising the potential of the NFCL to become an effective tool and a platform to combat child labour in Jordan, through a USDOL funded project, the ILO supported Jordan in a pilot initiative to implement the NFCL by rolling it out in five governorates.

BACKGROUND

To spearhead the implementation of the NFCL, a Technical Working Committee was formed in Amman comprising the child labour focal points of MOL, MOSD and MOE. The Committee initially met biweekly

To spearhead the implementation of the NFCL, a Technical Working Committee was formed in Amman comprising the child labour focal points of MOL, MOSD and MOE. The Committee initially met biweekly and then on a monthly basis. The ILO employed a full time consultant to support the implementation of the NFCL at all levels. Officials and inspectors in MOL, MOSD, and MOE were provided with extensive training on child labour. The ILO also supported the design of an electronic child labour monitoring system for officials to register child labour cases, with data being shared electronically with sister institutions.

Benefitting from the experience and lessons learnt from the pilot initiative in the five governorates, in 2015, implementation of the NFCL was kick-started in the remaining six governorates. The three key ministries remain committed to implementing the NFCL and strengthening it as the launching pad for action to combat child labour in Jordan.

While full NFCL implementation remains a long-term goal, the National Framework has brought together the different stakeholders, new initiatives have been designed, and key support provided to combat child labour in Jordan.

Lessons Learned

- Going beyond the ratification of Conventions, a national framework is very important to support action to combat child labour in a country. A national framework not only gives an official mandate to relevant ministries and organisations to act on the issue but it also serves as a common platform for the coordination of efforts and division of roles and responsibilities.
- A national framework can only be effective if it is implemented on the ground. Policy frameworks need to be translated into action, and to kick start the process, both the government and the international community need to make investments, particularly during the initial stages. Capacity building and the development of infrastructure is an important component of that investment.
- Having a Technical Working Committee and the support of an ILO consultant was crucial to the successful roll out and implementation of the NFCL on the ground.
- The NFCL roll out could have been more effective if it had been coupled with an annual work plan to set specific targets for all actors collectively as well as for each actor individually, with clear milestones and indicators.

Good Practice No. 2 – Including Child Labour in National Labour Force Surveys

Each calendar quarter, Jordan's Department of Statistics (DOS) conducts a labour force "Employment and Unemployment" survey every year covering persons aged 15 years and above from a nationwide sample of 13,360 households in all governorates. For each local region (governorate), the survey collects information on gender, education, employment status, sector of employment, job category and wage level. In 2014, with the support of the ILO, the DOS included a module on child labour in the survey. The results of these questions were analysed separately to get specific information on child labour.

Why is this a good practice?

Regular and reliable information and data on child labour are essential to establish the elimination of child labour as a national priority and to inform policies to combat it. Normally this information is obtained through National Child Labour Surveys which are conducted on a regular basis. Including child labour questions in the more frequently conducted national surveys can, in the interim, provide an indication of the prevalence and trends of the phenomenon.

Is this good practice sustainable?

Full-scale surveys focusing strictly on child labour are expensive, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Most middle-income countries cannot incur such a level of expenditure alone, and require external support, the availability of which is unpredictable. Integrating child labour related questions into the government's periodic labour force survey means that data can be collected on a regular basis, with the only additional costs being for the analysis of the child labour specific data.

Background

The ILO and DOS first began discussing the importance of including child labour in Jordan's periodic labour force surveys in 2005. In 2007, a major child labour survey was carried out, costing \$450,000 and covering 15,000 households with children between 5 and 17 years of age. The survey included questions on nationality, and economic and social questions related to child labour. In addition to the financial support provided to carry out the survey, the ILO supported the design of the methodology and the questionnaire, and the ensuing analysis of the results. The survey found that 33,000 children were in situations of child labour (about 2.5 per cent of primary school aged children) in Jordan. The findings contributed to Jordan adopting the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL), the country's multi-sector plan. The NFCL received additional ILO support for mitigating, reducing and eventually aiming to eliminate child labour.

Academic and government researchers accessed the raw data to conduct studies related to the family, the child, and the workplace. Since 2007, 33,000 is the most frequently mentioned child labour estimate for Jordan. This figure is cited with the proviso that after the international economic crisis which began in 2008 and the influx of refugees from the Syrian conflict, the situation has greatly changed. Child labourers no longer number only 33,000. In its February 2014 quarterly survey, the DOS included a one-page questionnaire on child labour, with inconclusive findings.

Key Steps and Achievements

After initial discussions with DOS an agreement was reached on incorporating the child labour module/questionnaire in the 2014 first quarter Employment and Unemployment Survey. The ILO hired the Institute for Applied International Studies, Norway, to provide technical support to the DOS. The survey was conducted, and the data tables pertaining to child labour were electronically separated for analysis. The Norwegian Institute for Research (FAFO) analysed the information and prepared a report on child labour in coordination with the DOS. It is to be noted that the Employment and Unemployment Survey covers persons aged 15 years and above, so only a small, albeit significant, segment of the child population is covered, whereas a national child labour survey would cover children aged 5 to 18 years, providing much more comprehensive data on the problem.

In 2015, a top priority for the DOS is to understand how the presence of 1.5 million refugees (in a country with a 2008 population size of 6 million) has impacted the labour market.

The comprehensive 2016 survey will measure the size of the labour force; employment by sector, location, formal and informal economy; workers' education and skills; wage and salary levels; employment and unemployment rates – as well as the workers' national origin. The DOS, however, has postponed its decision on adding child labour to the quarterly labour force surveys until the major study is completed.

Parallel to the 2016 DOS survey, the ILO has awarded a contract to the University of Jordan to carry out a survey focusing strictly on child labour.

By the end of 2016, Jordan expects to have results both of the overall labour market survey and the child labour survey.



In June 2015 Jordan launched the National Child Labour Survey

Lessons Learned

- Even when it is challenging to conduct national child labour surveys frequently, there are opportunities within the country to increase and update its knowledge on child labour through incorporating child labour questions into other national surveys. The quarterly Employment and Unemployment Survey is such a good opportunity.
- The incorporation of child labour questions in other national surveys can be a cost efficient method since the overhead costs are covered by the principal survey. Additional costs are only incurred for the separate analysis of data.
- A challenge in using other surveys as vehicles to collect data on child labour is that the scope and amount of information obtained through them are limited to the scope of the survey in question. In this case, the data was limited to children aged between 15 and 18, thus providing a limited picture of the child labour situation.

Good Practice No. 3 – Developing Effective Tools for Child Labour Inspections

Ministries and agencies mandated to address child labour need practical tools to guide inspectors on the application of child labour laws and the Hazardous Work List. In 2013, Jordan developed a simplified manual for labour inspectors to enable them to identify and address hazardous child labour. In 2015, the ILO supported Jordan in further developing the manual, including guidance on action to be taken in various scenarios.

Why is this a good practice?

The manual provides those working in the field of labour inspection with guidance on how to identify a child labour situation and different possible courses of action to take. It is up to individual labour inspectors to decide on the best course of action as per the specific situation. The manual helps labour inspectors to do their job in an efficient manner, in conformity with laws and regulations, and ensures a more consistent approach to addressing the problem within the labour inspector division.

Is this good practice sustainable?

After the initial costs of developing the manual, the costs involved to ensure that it is periodically updated are relatively modest. Engaging officials and stakeholders in the manual's design promotes joint ownership. If the manual is of practical use to labour inspectors in their day-to-day work, they will be motivated to suggest further improvements and ensure its continued relevance and use.

Background

Child labour inspections present challenges other than simply determining if an under-aged child is working. Authorities are often faced with complicated and sensitive situations in determining how to apply the law. To effectively manage such situations, inspectors need to be provided with proper training and have the right tools at their disposal. When officials apply the steps called for in law, it is important that the procedures for implementation are appropriate to the situation. Often, however, the tools available on how to apply the law are inadequate. They may be overly simplistic or excessively severe, leaving the official uncertain about how to act. The manuals for implementation may be of little assistance in guiding the officials on applying the law to specific situations.



A labour inspector discussing with an employer

Jordanian law and international standards allow youth aged 16 years and above to engage in some work activities. Jordanian legislation at the same time prohibits work environments in which adolescents under 18 years old are exposed to danger. The Ministry of Labour (MOL) developed a list of hazardous occupations to conform to the law and to guide labour inspectors.³ The six-page document listed the occupations and work places that are out-of-bounds for youth, such as carpentry, construction, mechanical work, electrical work, fishing, waste recycling, using sharp tools, working in confined spaces or in the open sun, in hospitals, in hotels, in bakeries, in dry cleaners, working on stairs or inclines, or any work in which the worker may be reprimanded. The list covers virtually every kind of work situation in the Jordanian economy. Upon discovering juveniles working in these environments, the inspector was expected to initiate legal sanctions against the establishment. Some labour inspectors followed the guidelines to the letter, irrespective of the youth's actual job in these workplaces, while other inspectors took account of exceptions based on their own observations and discretion. In practice, the list of hazardous occupations was not an effective tool for assisting inspectors in their functions. Manuals need to include indicators to define hazardous work and guide inspectors on a practical response.

Key Steps and Achievements

The ILO initiated a project to provide more detailed guidance to labour inspectors, converting the original list into a manual specifying, for each occupation or workplace, hazardous activities for young workers under the age of 18. The aim was also to take into account cases in which young workers of legal working age could be adequately trained and protected in carrying out a specific function. On a construction site, for example, a young worker cannot carry excessive loads or operate heavy machinery, but can lay bricks. In a carpentry shop, a young worker can be trained to wear a facemask, earplugs, and a respiratory device to protect their eyes, ears, and lungs. In an auto mechanic shop, a young worker cannot do welding or work under the car but can be assigned to tasks such as replacing interior seats and car washing. The below-surface auto repair pit should be covered when not in use. These changes can make a job in such occupations and workplaces an acceptable and safe form of work for children above the legally defined minimum age for employment.

Engaging all the relevant parties in the design of the manual was crucial in ensuring its subsequent adoption. Ministry officials agreed with a bottom-up rather than top-down approach. The Ministry shared the ILO's draft manual with businesses, the trade union federation (GFJIW), and labour inspectors themselves for suggestions. After several rounds of comments, a 30-page draft manual providing safety guidelines for youth in potentially dangerous work environments was produced.

Once in the hands of labour inspectors who have been trained on its use, the manual promises to be a valuable tool to help them identify truly hazardous work situations for adolescents between 16 and 18 years of age. It will allow youth to legally keep jobs in more professions. It provides guidance to businesses on complying with the law by taking adequate measures to ensure the health and safety of their young workers.

Lessons Learned

- It is not enough to have policies and legislations in place; it is also important to back them up with tools and mechanisms to implement them
- Developing effective tools for inspectors is an important aspect of building their capacity. Tools give the inspectors guidance on what kind of appropriate action can be taken in the various scenarios they come across, in addition to giving them the confidence to address hazardous work.
- Manuals and guidelines have to be periodically updated so that they remain relevant to changing contexts and situations, and conform to new knowledge.

³ Ministry of Labour (Jordan), "Decision on Dangerous, Strenuous or Health-Hazardous Forms of Labour for Juveniles for the Year 2011," Amendment of the provisions of Article 74 Act N. 8 of 1996.

Good Practice No. 4 – Responding to Emerging Crises and Fragile Situations

The USDOL funded ILO project was designed in 2010 and implementation began in 2011, before the unfolding of the Syria crisis. When the conflict in Syria intensified and hundreds of thousands of refugees started flowing into the country from 2012 onwards, a UN-led humanitarian response was launched to address the emergency. Even though the ILO's project was exclusively focused on policy and systems development, the ILO, in consultation with USDOL, responded to the situation and incorporated activities focused on the crisis. By doing this, the project was able to make a much needed contribution to the humanitarian response and remained relevant to the evolving context.

Why is this a good practice?

As a crisis affects a country and a fragile situation emerges, the priorities of the country, the needs of the beneficiaries as well as the focus of the international actors change. This was the case in Jordan. It was soon evident that child labour was one of the most critical child protection issues within the Syrian refugee communities and its impact quickly spread to host communities as well. The project was able to adapt to respond to the evolving situation on the ground, ensuring its relevance to the changing country context.

The ILO's engagement at both upstream and downstream levels has proven very useful in: i) strategically positioning the ILO within the Jordan Response Platform as a lead agency on issues related to employment, livelihoods and social protection - including on child labour; ii) improving the ILO's visibility vis-à-vis the Government, UN agencies, and donors and identifying concrete funding opportunities; iii) reinforcing a relationship of trust with the Government both at central and local levels; and iv) identifying a few pilot interventions that can help to create employment for adults and consequently reduce the incidence of child labour among Syrian refugees and host communities.

Is this good practice sustainable?

The generation of knowledge, creation of specific coordination mechanisms and provision of technical support to humanitarian actors can be easily incorporated into other existing projects. Provided that good consultation takes place prior to establishing such mechanisms, they can therefore be sustained at minimal cost as long as a need for humanitarian action exists.

The ILO is currently seeking funding to drastically scale up these interventions to make it more sustainable in order to: 1) make a significant contribution to mitigate the adverse impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on the child labour situation and the livelihoods of vulnerable people in the most affected governorates, namely Mafraq and Irbid in Northern Jordan; 2) to build on the on-going work of the ILO in the governorates, where existing structures and partnerships will be used to massively scale-up the response to reach significant numbers of beneficiaries; and 3) to create immediate job opportunities for adults among vulnerable groups as well as medium-term economic and employment opportunities.

Background

The USDOL funded project “Moving Towards a Child Labour Free Jordan” was conceptualised in 2010 and implementation began in 2011. The focus of the project was to create an enabling environment to eliminate child labour in Jordan through supporting the implementation of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour, building the capacity of the relevant government ministries, expanding the body of knowledge and understanding on child labour and linking child labour to youth employment. The ILO, together with the Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Development selected five governorates to pilot the implementation of the NFCL and was on track to achieve its objectives when the Syria crisis unfolded.

The Syria crisis started unfolding in Syria in 2011. As it quickly intensified, its impact was soon felt in neighbouring countries, including Jordan. Jordan started receiving Syrian refugees in 2012. According to UNHCR estimates, there are 630,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan and it is estimated that approximately 85 per cent of these refugees are living in host communities (as opposed to refugee camps).

According to a study published in 2015 by the ILO and FAFO on the situation and changes in the Jordanian labour market in relation to the large influx of Syrian refugees to the country, Syrian children living in host communities are substantially more engaged in economic activities than Jordanian children. Only 1.6 per cent of Jordanian boys in the age group of 9-15 years are economically active⁴, while more than 8 per cent of Syrian boys in the same age group are economically active. In the age group of 15-18 years, about 37 per cent of Syrian boys are economically active, compared to about 17 per cent of Jordanian boys. Child employment among Jordanian boys in the age group of 9-15 years is less than 1 per cent, while the corresponding figure for Syrian boys is 3 per cent. Almost 14 per cent of Syrian boys in the age group of 15-18 years are employed, compared to 8 per cent of Jordanian boys in the same age group.

With limited financial means and work opportunities, refugee families struggle to make ends meet. In response to the family’s lack of income and rising debt it is well documented that young people increasingly engage in work, in particular young men. Studies in Jordan found that 50 per cent of refugee children and youth are estimated to be working in the informal sector, largely in agriculture, as well as begging and street peddling.

Refugee children and youth are working in low-skilled, menial jobs that are poorly paid and have the potential to be exploitative. Little protection is afforded to adolescents who are working, save for informal community protection systems. More work needs to be done to enhance youth training and employment, to improve protection systems and expand accredited on-the-job training.

Key Steps and Achievements

Realising that child labour was quickly becoming one of the biggest child protection challenges among the Syrian refugee communities in Jordan, the ILO joined the humanitarian community in order to ensure that the protection response focused on the issue appropriately and adequately.

⁴ Includes those working and actively seeking work.

In 2013, the ILO launched a series of initiatives in partnership with local stakeholders to support both refugees and host community residents and integrated child labour programming in them. The initiatives were also fully aligned with the Jordan Response Plan (JRP), and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). The ILO worked closely with the Jordanian government, ILO social partners, donors, UN agencies, and non-governmental organizations to coordinate social protection, livelihood and employment interventions in communities hosting Syrian refugees. Child Labour was included as a key theme in the Social Protection Sector work plan. In order to expand the knowledge base on child labour among Syrian refugees, child labour related questions were included in the joint ILO – FAFO study on the impact of Syrian refugees on the labour market. As the National Child Labour Survey was launched in June 2015, it successfully advocated for the inclusion of Syrian refugees in the survey. As a result it was decided that the survey will cover all children in Jordan regardless of their nationality. In 2016, the ILO established the Child Labour Thematic Group attached to the Child Protection Sub-Working Group, in an attempt to standardise the humanitarian response on child labour. The ILO also supported the restructuring of the child labour database in order to allow for non-government and humanitarian actors to participate in the referral mechanism.

Lessons Learned

- In times of crisis and in fragile situations, a flexible approach is needed to address emerging problems. Rigidly sticking to pre-crisis plans may make projects ineffective and irrelevant to new contexts. Such refocusing does not mean disregarding past achievements, but rather building on these and linking them to the present context.
- The following basic lessons have been learned through the ILO initiatives mentioned above: first, it is important to rapidly assess the situation and the needs of the affected communities; secondly, as well as analysing what is needed, it is vitally important to be able to respond quickly with concrete actions that have a real impact on the population affected by the crisis and to gain credibility; and thirdly, it is essential to work with and through local stakeholders to empower them to be better equipped and resilient, should the crisis last over a prolonged period of time.
- The ILO should invest more in research about the link between the right of Syrian refugees to work and child labour. Preventing Syrian refugees from working has a direct adverse effect on child labour.

Good Practice No. 5 – Creating a Centralised Database on Child Labour

A centralized database was created to facilitate information sharing between the three key ministries involved in the implementation of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL). With the support of the ILO, the system was developed and field based officers from the Ministries of Labour, Social Development and Education were given on-the-ground responsibilities to register child labour cases and share information. This significantly reduced the amount of time and resources spent on meetings and paperwork, and created a centralized database accessible from anywhere at any time

Why is this a good practice?

In the absence of such a centralized database, public officials either do not register child labour cases as part of their responsibilities, or register cases either on paper or by inputting the data in their agency's database, which is not linked to databases of other ministries. The existence of a centralized electronic database allows for all child labour cases to be registered on a single database, expanding the number of cases eligible for remediation and facilitating collaboration to address overall child labour issues.

Is this good practice sustainable?

Creating a new database is a costly exercise which, if not funded by the national government, requires external support. Once launched and operational, the maintenance costs are relatively modest. As long as the officials using the database believe that it enhances their work effectiveness, they will insist on its continued use as a key component of their efforts to tackle child labour.

Background

An effective system to combat child labour requires collaboration among public agencies to identify cases, share information, and act to correct irregularities. In many countries, the responsible public entities include the ministries of labour, education, social development, interior (police), municipalities, and the judiciary. In countries where eradicating child labour ranks high among national priorities, the ministries of commerce and industry, the prime minister and/or the office of the presidency form part of the institutional network, along with the agencies for public communication. Each of these entities requires information on public sector actions to identify and act on cases of child labour.

Typically, public ministries are self-contained. They have mandates that address one component of child labour, such as compliance with labour law (ministry of labour), and do not communicate or collaborate extensively with sister institutions. This 'silo effect' results in agencies often working at cross purposes and failing to combine their efforts to address overall child labour issues in a coordinated and effective way.

One means of encouraging information sharing is through the creation of an online database that field officers can use to enter information on the child labour cases that they discover. Labour inspectors, social workers, school counsellors, municipal officials, and the police would use a standard computer-based format to enter information on the individual child worker, on an unhealthy or hazardous working environment for youth, or an unstable family situation affecting the wellbeing of a child. The field officer entering the data would indicate the public agency responsible for taking on the case. If not his or her own agency, for example the ministry of labour, the officer would refer the case to the ministry of education or the ministry of social development.

A data system of this nature allows for the real-time compilation of different types of child labour cases, informs the designated ministries of additional cases relating to their jurisdiction, and allows the respective ministries to more effectively manage their workloads. Implementation requires a standard format for data entry, an efficient means of posting the data, collaboration between those responsible for data entry, and willingness of ministries to access the system and use the information to carry out their responsibilities.

Although Jordan had taken important steps towards addressing child labour, public agencies worked in isolation without direct knowledge of what other ministries were doing. Labour inspectors sanctioned the employers of child labour, but did not interview the children to learn about their school attendance or family situation. School staff learned that pupils' brothers were in the labour force, but were only concerned if they were not attending school. Social workers provided services to families of working children, learning that young children were working rather than attending school. Each official limited his or her concern to their own agency's mandate, and did not share information that would be relevant to their sister institutions. The ILO, with the agreement of the three ministries, contracted Seagull Technology to develop a comprehensive data sharing and data compilation system.

Key Steps and Achievements

In 2011, the ILO received the go-ahead from the three ministries (Labour, Education, and Social Development)



The Ministry of Labour's database administrator training Officials at governorate level on how to use the electronic Platform

to create the database. A local Information Technology company, Seagull Technology, was awarded the contract and began developing the system. Over a two-year period, the contractor worked with ministry personnel and national partners to develop the questionnaire, structure the database to organize the information, and provide for the electronic transmission of the data from the field officer to the central database. Each ministry used its own template to record its own requirements and then had access to an automated referral mechanism to route the child labour case to other ministries. The system allowed officers to use their office computer, a tablet or their mobile phones to transmit the data. The general impression was that the system developed was of high quality.

The ILO contractor conducted training sessions for nearly two hundred field officers from the three ministries on the NFCL and how to use the system. In its first year, approximately 600 children in working situations, against a target of 5000, were registered in the system.

Field officers comfortable with computer technology and motivated to reduce child labour took full advantage of the system to document cases, share information, and take the appropriate action based on the ministry's mandate. Information was also accessible to the child labour Focal Points in the different ministries, who could review a particular case and monitor progress. Nonetheless, some challenges were encountered. Some officers resisted the new technology, commenting that, with already heavy workloads and being poorly remunerated, it was an extra duty not included in their formal job description. Some ministries had deficient computer facilities meaning that download time was slow and up to four field officers needed to enter data on a single computer at the same time.

In 2015, ILO reviewed the functions and use of the database as well as emerging needs as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees, and initiated a process to further develop the database.

Lessons Learned

- In a middle income country like Jordan, an electronic database accessible through intranet can significantly bridge the physical and bureaucratic gap between officials of different ministries who have to work together in addressing child labour cases. The initial investment entails some costs and may require external resources, but once the system is established it can be maintained at a relatively low expense.
- The transition process from paper based documentation to electronic documentation has to be done gradually. An overnight shift from one system to the other can on the one hand generate resistance, particularly from officers who are not familiar with the use of computers and electronic devices, and on the other hand can slow down the progress of some activities that require direct interaction between officials.
- Sponsors of centralised databases need to receive firm prior commitment from the ministries that utilising the database will be part of the implementing officers' job functions. Without this obligation, a risk exists that the system will not be fully utilised.

Good Practice No. 6 – Linking Child Labour to Youth Employment

The ILO and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) developed a successful model of linking child labour and youth employment through upgrading informal apprenticeships and implementing a programme targeting 120 youth between the ages of 16 and 24. Through a scientifically developed training curriculum, 120 situations of child labour and/or potentially exploitative situations were converted into apprenticeships where the youth engaged in a learning process leading to better career and employment opportunities.

Why is this a good practice?

Apprenticeships greatly increase the probability that a young worker will develop the necessary skills and gain experience to pursue a career in a specific field of employment. After the apprenticeship, the employer has a low-risk means of employing a worker with practical knowledge of how to do the job. Compared to the cohort of unemployed youth, the employability of apprentices is much higher. This is demonstrated by the fact that over fifty percent of the participants secured employment by the time they graduated. Successful apprenticeship programmes reduce the number of unproductive youth, help fill technical gaps in industries or services, and contribute to the national economy.

Is this good practice sustainable?

Apprenticeship programmes require infrastructure and resources. An apprenticeship programme sponsored by a single employer is sustainable if the company is convinced that apprenticeships are an integral part of its staff recruitment and personnel plan. A general programme aimed at promoting company apprenticeships, however, is relatively costly, and requires one or more sponsors. If the programme does not generate its own momentum, the external support eventually disappears making the programme unsustainable. If, on the other hand, the companies involved over time recognize the value of offering apprenticeships, and carry forward the programme at their own expense, the good practice becomes fully sustainable. Sustainability is reinforced by the long-term value of the knowledge gained by the young workers for the rest of their careers.

Background

Apprenticeships are job opportunities that allow those above the legal minimum age for employment of 16 years to gain practical skills in a profession, while giving an employer time to assess their potential to remain as a permanent employee. The young person enters the company with basic education and sometimes with basic technical knowledge. Over several months, the apprentice receives training and guidance that upgrades his or her skills. Mentorships enhance the programme's effectiveness by linking the intern with an experienced adult. The employer typically pays the apprentice a lower salary or no salary but commits to training the apprentice so that he or she gains the practical skills needed to become a fully productive worker. At the end of the fixed term apprenticeship, the apprentice is either hired by the company or seeks another position with better prospects for being hired due to the skills and knowledge gained during the apprenticeship.

In 1999, the International Youth Foundation (IYF) began a programme called Passport to Success. Aimed at school dropouts and disadvantaged youth, it provided three to four days of orientation on how to obtain a job. Passport to Success has been implemented in over eighty countries worldwide.

In 2014, the ILO in Jordan and the IYF conducted a pilot programme to upgrade informal apprenticeships in the auto repair industry. Learning from this experience, the two organisations partnered to implement a broader programme with the aim of converting situations of child labour into situations of learning and development. Several new elements were added, including a focus on working children aged between 16 and 18 years.

Key Steps and Achievements

Building on its previous experience of upgrading informal apprenticeships, the ILO partnered with the IYF, an NGO with significant experience in conducting training for youth, to develop a new, innovative programme with the aim of addressing child labour by linking it to youth employment. The plan involved setting goals for enrolment, engaging with the employers, assuring safe work conditions, providing career counselling, and placing the participants in apprenticeships. The IYF initially reached out to 380 youth and offered the programme to 200, 160 of whom subsequently enrolled. Convincing employers to accept apprentices required considerable persuasion over a two-month period, but it was successful. The 81 companies that joined the programme represented many different industries and sectors, including food processing, textiles, printing, mechanics, air conditioning maintenance, carpentry, retail and beauty care. The enterprises were located throughout the country (Irbid, Ma'an, Zarqa, Madaba, Tafilah), and not just in the poor district of East Amman. Hospitality enterprises agreed to the programme but insisted on a longer training period of six months, covered under a separate programme. For each sector, a curriculum was developed using the DACUM⁵ process and involving experts, practitioners and employers. The complete programme included one month's theoretical training and four to six months on the job training.



Youth are provided technical training in their work places

In addition to the successful graduation of 160 participants, there are many other development goals that have been achieved through the program, which include the training of a national group of mentors in sectors that have been targeted by the program, developing training manuals based on identifying competency profiles for each profession using DACUM methodology, reaching out to employers and increasing their awareness of the importance of apprenticeship and its impact in improving the productivity of participants as reflected positively on the sector, in addition to building the capacity of local Civil Society Organisations in working with youth.



Apprentices receiving On-job training in a local Chocolate factory in Koura

⁵Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) is a process that incorporates the use of a focus group in a facilitated storyboarding process to capture the major duties and related tasks included in an occupation, as well as, the necessary knowledge, skills, and traits.

In addition the programme reduces the likelihood of youth delinquency while empowering them and encourages their involvement in productive social activity in their respective communities. From an overall perspective it can be considered a relatively low investment for the transformation of youth from a situation of child labour and exploitative employment to a situation of apprenticeship, learning, participation and lay the foundation for them to build a long term career.

Lessons Learned

- Upgrading informal apprenticeships is an effective way of tackling child labour, particularly in situations where the child is of legal working age but is engaged in hazardous child labour. This can be done by ensuring the child is not engaged in any dangerous tasks and by converting the work place into a safe and healthy learning environment through training and increasing the awareness of not only the child but also the employer and the co-workers about workplace hazards and risks.
- The apprenticeship programme can be significantly strengthened by involving a mentor. The mentor is usually a qualified trainer, who visits the work site on a regular basis, develops a training plan for the apprentice together with the employer and the youth in a participatory manner, monitors and provides advice on the progress of the training.
- Traditional child labour programmes in Jordan have mainly provided life skills and vocational training to children in an ad hoc manner. Bringing in advanced methods and tools such as market analysis, development of occupational standards, the use of DACUM processes etc. significantly increased the quality of the programme, increased its relevance to the local context and strengthened the motivation and commitment of the participants and employers.

Good Practice No. 7 – Broadening the Core Coalition against Child Labour

In 2014, ILO started to work with the Greater Municipality of Amman (GAM) to maximise their potential as a municipal authority to address child labour in the Capital Governorate. The Greater Amman area hosts more than half of the country's entire population. It has 279 municipal inspectors who have access to almost all business establishments, market places, industries and informal work locations and can make a significant contribution to tackling child labour. The ILO conducted a Training of Trainers for 20 senior municipal health inspectors in 2015 who in turn trained their peers, thereby making GAM a key player in monitoring child labour in the city.

Why is this a good practice?

Child labour cannot be tackled by one or a few institutions alone. It needs collaborative efforts and partnerships, especially with non-traditional actors. Collaboration with agents of change strengthens the overall child labour campaign in ways that are relevant, effective, and often more efficient than conventional approaches.

Is this good practice sustainable?

To the degree that the coalition is consistently broadened including new actors with relevant mandates and high energy, the mission's life span will extend well into the future and the mission itself will be more sustainable. Visiting business premises, market places and industries and inspecting them is within the mandate of municipal health inspectors. It only takes a minor extra effort and modest resources for training in order to include child labour monitoring as part of the responsibilities of relevant actors. What is expected from the municipal inspectors is not to become child labour experts but to use their position and presence to monitor child labour, raise awareness and provide advice, and refer cases to the mandated officials from the Ministries of Labour and Social Development.

Background

Child labour is pervasive in most countries of the world. Its moral and humanitarian dimensions and negative economic impact affect all sectors of society. Acting alone, a single public institution or national organization can do little to make headway. To effectively combat child labour, a society needs to engage as many relevant actors as possible in a broad coalition. The actors that usually drive the effort are government ministries, a handful of national and international NGOs and a few UN agencies, including the ILO.



The first batch of GAM master trainers receive their certificates

Those that are sometimes left aside include labour unions, business associations, religious organizations, artistic and sports figures, small non-profits, the media and local government authorities. When these actors are not approached, sensitised and engaged in efforts to tackle child labour, the assets they might lend to the effort are absent. The greater the participation of non-traditional actors in combatting child labour the more effective the overall efforts will be. In this regard, local authorities such as municipalities have a particular advantage due to their wide presence and extensive mandate, and can play a very effective role in combatting the phenomenon.

The National Steering Committee (NSC), whose secretary is the CLU of the MOL, is responsible for implementing Jordan's National Framework to Combat Child Labour (NFCL). It consists of more than sixteen members representing government, private sector entities, NGOs, and two international organizations as observers. The NSC subcommittee, the NCCL, meets monthly with the participation of the Federation of Jordanian Industrial Trade Unions and the Jordanian Chamber of Commerce. Aside from the central government, the largest other public agency with the greatest reach to tackle child labour is the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM). GAM has been a member of the NSC since 2010 but has not traditionally played an active role, apart from participating in annual events and meetings.

Key Steps and Achievements

The GAM's Social Programmes Department (SPD) was aware that poverty in the city had a negative effect on children's lives, and was a main factor resulting in a high incidence of child labour. Under dynamic and committed leadership, the SPD endeavoured to maximize the impact of the agency's modest budget and twenty staff to address child labour.

In early 2014, the SPD and the ILO started discussing a partnership to address child labour in the city. The SPD observed that child labour was prevalent in the municipal markets, where children worked long hours, carried heavy loads, cleaned up trash, and did not go to school. While the Ministry of Labour had only 120 inspectors for the whole country, GAM had 279 inspectors for the city alone. The GAM inspectors' authority was limited to assuring that companies had up-to-date licenses and abided by health regulations. The SPD recognised the potential of tackling the issue of child labour broadening inspectors' responsibilities

The ILO and SPD organised a training of trainers (TOT) programme on child labour, beginning with 20 health inspectors. The training was held for four days with financial and logistic support from the ILO. These trainers then conducted training in three different locations in the city in order to transfer their new knowledge and skills to their peers, training all 279 inspectors within a period of three months. Exposure to the issue opened the inspectors' eyes and they became committed to the cause. The inspectors then began taking note of incidences of child labour in markets – which previously the inspectors simply ignored. With these new advocates against child labour, the SPD's next task is to advocate that the city council link the renewal of a company's operating license to eliminating child labour in the establishment, and making monitoring child labour part of the inspectors' job description.

Lessons Learned

- Involving non-traditional partners and actors in combatting child labour can significantly increase the impact and effectiveness of the programme as they bring new perspectives, skills and additional advantages with them. It falls upon the primary actors to constantly look for and reach out to non-traditional actors and broaden the coalition to combat child labour.
- The role and potential of municipal inspectors in combatting child labour is often neglected. Given their wide presence throughout the country and their mandate that allows them to inspect almost any and every workplace in their area of jurisdiction, they are ideally placed to contribute to the elimination of child labour.

Good Practice No. 8 – Mobilizing Children to Lobby against Child Labour

The Social Programmes Department of the Greater Amman Municipality provided support to the Children's Municipal Council, empowering children to become committed advocates on child labour issues. With the ILO's support, 83 Child Municipal Councillors were trained and they have now become among the most vocal and effective advocates on the issue.

Why is this a good practice?

A children's movement can be very effective. When supported by their schools, children can represent thousands of young advocates fighting against child labour and for children's rights. Equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to take action in their community, it can foster a sense of active citizenship from a young age. The experience often increases their empathy and generates a sense of social consciousness that they will carry with them into adulthood.

Is this good practice sustainable?

An adult or an established organization needs to provide continuity and guidance to the children's movement, to seize the potential of new generations of children to join the campaign. This essential support need not be expensive, particularly when the school views the activity as part of the pupils' education. When the movement continuously attracts other children, membership becomes self-perpetuating. Its low operational cost, wide impact, and self-generating recruitment are conditions that make this good practice sustainable.

Background

It is important to reach out to wide range of actors who can potentially influence public policy and to mobilise a broad coalition against child labour.

A group that potentially could be advocates for combating child labour are the working children's contemporaries who are in a more secure environment and who are attending school. Young, idealistic, and impressionable, when exposed to child labour, these young persons can become motivated to act. They often can be more effective in changing public opinion and politician's attitudes than conventional advocacy organizations. Bringing children from stable environments into face-to-face encounters with working children is an additional way to fight child labour.



Team leaders of the Children's Municipal Council presenting the results of the child labour assessment to Municipal Councillors

The former see the difficult circumstances that working children are faced with on a daily basis, and compare the working children's plight with their own more comfortable situations. The contrast can be powerful. Aware of the child labour issue, they discuss their feelings with their own parents, who may begin to think about child labour for the first time. Given the appropriate guidance and support, the children can bring the issue before policy makers. Media coverage can increase visibility, influence public opinion, and make tackling child labour a higher priority in local or national agendas.

The SPD sponsors the Children's Municipal Council, which is made up of pupils from 483 primary schools (7th to 9th grades, 12 to 15 years old), each of which elects one representative. The Council adopts positions on issues affecting students including hazards near schools, the behaviour of abusive teachers, and the lack of playgrounds, and presents them to officials for action. SPD concluded that the Children's Council could be an effective ally in the fight against child labour.

Key Steps and Achievements

The ILO and GAM entered into a partnership in order to support the Children's Municipal Council to incorporate child labour as one of its priorities. The initiative started with the children carrying out a Rapid Assessment on child labour. After developing a questionnaire, teams of children conducted child labour surveys in areas near their schools. They discovered onerous labour conditions in mechanic shops and market stalls. While many of the working children would have preferred to be in school, family poverty, broken homes, or discrimination at school led many of them to become child workers. Peer pressure from their friends who ridiculed formal education tended to erode their will to study. The surveys also discovered a transition of some children from working for their families to working to purchase drugs. The surveys also documented working children's testimonies of abuse and violence. As well as interviewing the child workers, the Council youngsters also approached the employers in the work establishments. They found that when they told employers that they were from the municipality, the employers refused to acknowledge child labour. When they said it was for a study they were conducting, the employers were more willing to provide information about their workers.

The findings of the assessment were presented to a wide audience including municipal councillors and officials. The Children's Municipal Council also planned awareness raising initiatives based on the findings of the assessment. These included conducting awareness raising sessions using puppet shows in schools in areas where the incidence of child labour is very high. They next plan to reach Jordan's parliamentarians and other municipal councils through their advocacy efforts.

Lessons Learned

- Children have proven to be powerful, committed and highly influential advocates for combatting child labour. Their presence and involvement is less threatening to employers. Children can access the families of working children with relatively less cultural barriers, and working children themselves are more open to listening to their peers. Engaging and empowering children can be a highly effective way to raise awareness and mobilise action against child labour.
- When working with children, it is important to always keep in mind what is in the best interests of the child. Their involvement in such programmes should not, for example, be at the cost of their studies but rather complement their education in becoming responsible citizens.
- While the importance of awareness raising in the context of combatting child labour is well known, new methods and approaches need to continually be explored. A lot can be gained by being open to and supporting new and innovative ideas coming from various actors who may not be 'expert' specialised organisations or traditional actors.

Good Practice No. 9 – Developing an Action Plan to Tackle Child Labour in Petra

In Petra, tackling child labour can be linked to other issues, such as the protection of the cultural heritage and animal welfare. Given the unique situation ILO joined the forces to develop, under the Petra Development and Tourism Regional Authority (PDTRA), an awareness campaign which aims to address child labour as well as to improve the animal welfare and the heritage protection and supported the development of an Action Plan that was presented to the PDTRA for adoption and implementation.

Why is this a good practice?

Action against child labour is more effective when there is a collective effort to tackle the problem. It is important to look out for opportunities, identify common ground and join forces with other actors whenever such opportunities arise, even when the mandates and focus of the different actors may vary. The Care For Petra campaign represents a comprehensive approach to combating child labour in Petra. It initiated a dynamism which led to the development of a plan for implementing and rolling out the National Framework to Combat Child Labour in Petra. On the other hand, recognizing that visitors are a key factor in the child labour issue, the campaign invites them to play a significant role by avoiding contributing to this harmful phenomenon.

Is this good practice sustainable?

As a result of the dynamism created by the Care For Petra campaign and the collective efforts of different stakeholders, a long term strategy is under development in Petra and combating child labour will be integrated in the mandates of PDTRA. The rolling out of the National Framework to Combat Child Labour in Petra, the establishment of a Special Task Force by the National Steering Committee on Child Labour and continuous efforts by the Campaign in spreading its message through the national and international tourism sector have all added up to a consorted strategic and long term effort to address the issue.

Background

Petra, home of the Nabataean people from about 300 BC, is Jordan's most visited tourist attraction. The Nabataeans left a unique heritage, particularly monumental tombs sculpted right into the cliffs. In the 1960s, when the Jordanian Government chose to excavate the site and promote the site for tourism, the local dwellers of the Petra caves were relocated to a new village nearby. However, the community kept a strong and constant link with the site, which provided for them a unique source of revenue. They continued to use their children for selling products and providing animal services to tourists. The children found themselves dragged into work from their early years. Over the years, child labour has become part of the realities of Petra without recognition to the impact and the gravity of this phenomenon.



Elimination of Child Labour is one of the three pillars of the Care for Petra campaign- Oct 2014

Petra represents a unique case in child labour, due to the fact that this phenomenon is rooted in the lifestyle of the local community. Due to the relatively high income that a child is able to earn, the child became a key player in the community's economy, which has made the fight against child labour especially challenging in Petra. Moreover, child labour impacts negatively on the protection of monuments and on the welfare of the working animals. The regular presence of numerous children on the site threatens the heritage, while animals are more exposed to rough handling when they are led by children. The Care For Petra campaign, officially launched in October 2014 equally addresses the three core issues of animal welfare, heritage protection and child labour.

Key Steps and Achievements

In 2012, while the Care for Petra campaign was under elaboration, ILO and UNICEF supported a workshop in which PDTRA called all the campaign stakeholders and representatives of the local community in order to discuss the issue of child labour. At this workshop a working group was created to focus on child labour and ILO was designated as the leader of the working group. The outcome of this working group was the development of a draft plan for the elimination of child labour. After consultation with partners, the draft was further refined in 2013 and then in 2014, and then presented to the PDTRA for adoption. Simultaneously ILO became a partner, and contributed to the Care for Petra Campaign which continued its awareness activities.

The Care For Petra campaign was officially launched in October 2014. Since then, it has made continuous efforts to spread the message on child labour through the tourism sector and the Jordanian society, in order to reach out to visitors to the Petra site. A website was developed to give complete information to the public including on how to avoid contributing to child labour during their visits. The Campaign renewed its efforts to draw the attention of national level actors to the issue by making a presentation to the National Steering Committee on Child Labour in September 2015. As a result of a decision taken at the meeting in January 2016, the National Steering Committee gathered in Petra and set up the basis for a new cooperation with the national and international institutions through the formation of a Special Task Force headed by the Ministry of Labour.

With the involvement of volunteers from inside and outside of the community in Petra, a package of leisure and educational activities was developed in the local community. This package includes recreational activities, awareness activities on animal welfare, computer skills and art, and this constitutes a preliminary step for extensive programs of training and capacity building in the community.

As a result of these efforts, education which was not considered as a priority by working children's parents came to be largely recognized as a priority inside the local community as they felt that school attendance and good education were essential for the future of their children. The local military unit extended their support to the administration of the school which resulted in regular school attendance.



Petra Campaign Launch Oct 2014

Lessons Learned

- While promoting national systems and mechanisms, it is important to be aware of unique situations that require unique solutions and make use of emerging opportunities at the right time. It is well known that child labour is interlinked with other socio economic issues such as poverty, illiteracy and marginalization. But in some situations, as in that of Petra, there can be links with other very specific and unconventional factors, as the historical background and the way of life of the community and, paradoxically, the fructuous income children can bring to household. Had there not been a special focus and a special approach to address it child labour in Petra could have remained unaddressed for a long time.
- Most awareness campaigns focus on children and their parents. However the Petra case shows the importance of raising awareness among the public especially where the children are in direct contact with customers. Most people may not realise that buying from children largely contributes to perpetuate the harmful phenomenon and on the contrary, consider as a good opportunity the fact that children can help their families. As long as customers are ready to buy from children, child labour will not be eradicated.
- Addressing child labour thus requires equally unconventional partnerships between actors who may have very different mandates. Such partnerships can be quite effective in developing focused and unique approaches to addressing the problem.
- The example of Petra and the challenges faced in addressing child labour there highlight the difficulties in addressing the phenomenon in communities depending on tourism. Prompt attention should be paid to tourist areas where child labour emerges as a new phenomenon in order to eradicate it and prevent it from settling in.

For more information, contact:

International Labour Organization
Regional Office for the Arab States
Aresco Center, Justinien Street, Kantari
P.O.Box 11-4088 Riad El Solh 1107-2150
Beirut – Lebanon
Tel: +961-1-752400
Fax: +961-1-752405
Email: beirut@ilo.org
Website: www.ilo.org/arabstates
Follow ILO in Arab States on Twitter: [@iloarabstates](https://twitter.com/iloarabstates)