

FAO's contribution to reducing and preventing child labour in agriculture 2007-11

News from the Web

Child labour is work that interferes with compulsory schooling or damages children's health and personal development. Worldwide, 215 million children are child labourers, of whom 115 million are engaged in hazardous work. Approximately 129 million boys and girls between 5-17 years are child labourers in the agricultural sector, which is among the three most dangerous sectors to work at any age, and even more so for children. Hazardous work is among the worst forms of child labour; it is likely to harm the health and safety of children as they may be exposed to toxic pesticides or fertilizers, use dangerous blades and tools, carry heavy loads, work on fishing boats at night or herd livestock in prolonged isolation.

Context of FAO's work on child labour in agriculture

As part of the global movement against child labour, a strong and sustained international effort is underway to reduce child labour in agriculture. FAO has always worked on one of the root causes of child labour, namely poverty, and more explicit work has begun with the launching of the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA) in 2007 in which FAO plays a leading role. The Declaration of Intent signed between the ILO, FAO, IFAD, IFPRI/CGIAR, IFAP and the IUF aims to promote cooperation among the partners, mainstream child labour concerns into activities of agricultural organizations, and promote the improvement of rural livelihoods and alternative income-generating activities as well as opportunities for decent youth employment in agriculture and rural areas. In this context, FAO chaired a technical workshop on Child Labour in Agriculture at The Hague Global Child Labour Conference 2010 and contributed to the Roadmap to Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016. The Roadmap acknowledges that the highest incidence of child labour is in agriculture (60 percent) and calls for intensified cooperation across the United Nations and the multilateral system to address the issue.

FAO recognizes that awareness on child labour concerns should be integrated into existing strategies, programmes, projects and activities of agricultural organizations and bodies to understand how their efforts can contribute to the reduction of child labour in agriculture, especially hazardous child labour. The Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) serves as the focal unit for child labour in FAO, raising awareness within the organization, identifying strategic areas for action and providing technical support to the efforts of other divisions to address child labour concerns in their ongoing work. Such dialogue has led to the organization of joint events, joint publications, and the integration of child labour concerns into programmes, projects, surveys, web tools and other initiatives.

Awareness raising

World day against child labour (WDACL)

Since 2007, FAO Headquarters and the ILO Representation in Rome have organized an annual event on the occasion of the WDACL to serve as a catalyst for the growing worldwide movement against child labour. In 2011, the Rome event "Warning! Children in Hazardous Work" focused specifically on hazardous child labour in agriculture. The event increased awareness, especially among FAO colleagues, on child labour and the hazards and risks children face in undertaking various types of agricultural work, such as in crop production, forestry, livestock



rearing, fisheries and aquaculture. The discussion was focused on how FAO units could better address child labour concerns within their work areas.

FAO participation in global and regional child labour conferences

In June 2009, FAO co-organized a Conference on *Child and Youth Migration in West Africa: Research Progress and Implications for Policy* in Accra that aimed to exchange information on existing research and to identify areas for policy intervention. A year later, in May 2010, FAO and the Partnership members participated in *The Hague Global Child Labour Conference 2010*. This major event, attended by over 400 government, UN and civil society representatives, gave birth to the “*Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour by 2016*”, which acknowledges the predominance of child labour in agriculture and calls for urgent action. In July 2010, FAO participated in a *South Asia Regional Consultation on Child Labour in Agriculture and Allied Activities* in New Delhi, India.

Rotterdam Convention side event on hazardous child labour in agriculture

On the occasion of the Fifth Conference of the Parties to the Rotterdam Convention, a side event on “Vulnerable groups and pesticides exposure: Joining forces to reduce hazardous child labour in agriculture” was jointly



organized by FAO and the ILO in June 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland. The aim was to nourish synergies between the Rotterdam Convention, which promotes shared responsibility among 144 Parties on taking decisions on traded hazardous chemicals in

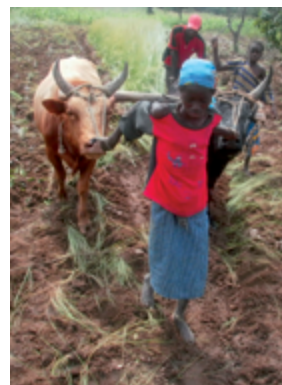
order to protect human health and the environment, and initiatives to reduce hazardous child labour in agriculture. One of the key conclusions of the discussion was that there is an urgent need to strengthen data collection at the field level on the use of pesticides and related poisoning incidents with a particular focus on data related to children. Children and women are often exposed to hazardous pesticides risks. Pesticides registrars should consider this information as an essential tool when deciding on the use of certain hazardous pesticides.

Generating and sharing knowledge

Research and knowledge sharing between labour and agricultural stakeholders is key to identifying priority policy areas and action to reduce child labour.

Policy briefs on child labour and gender

A set of seven policy briefs, including “Breaking the rural poverty cycle: Getting girls and boys out of work and into school”, were jointly produced by FAO/ILO/IFAD and launched in January 2011 in Rome, Italy. These documents build on the outcomes and papers presented at the FAO/ILO/IFAD workshop on Gender and Rural Employment (Rome, Italy, 2009). The child labour brief highlights issues and policy options for preventing and reducing the child labor that boys and girls undertake in agriculture.



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Country studies on child labour in agriculture

The first FAO country study on child labour was carried out in 2007-08 on Child Labour and Children's Economic Activities in Agriculture in Ghana in collaboration with the Humboldt University Berlin and the ILO. The study sheds light on the under-studied sub-sectors of artisanal fisheries and livestock raising and highlights lessons learnt on child labour within the cocoa sector.

Collection on Participatory Approaches

A Newsletter on Participatory approaches and Child Labour in agriculture that summarizes lessons learnt on reducing child labour in agriculture focusing on joint initiatives was produced in 2009.

Capacity development

Building stakeholders' capacity is an essential step in mainstreaming child labour concerns into policies, programmes, projects and activities, and creating an enabling environment for child labour reduction and prevention. While explicit action to reduce child labour has mostly been led by labour stakeholders, agricultural stakeholders such as Ministries of Agriculture, producers' organizations and FAO have a crucial role to play in mainstreaming child labour concerns and ensuring the sustainability of results.

Training course on hazardous child labour in agriculture

FAO participated in and contributed to a training course of the International Training Centre of the ILO on child labour in agriculture “Harvesting a future without child labour: eliminating harmful practices in agriculture” held in May 2011 in Turin, Italy. This training course takes place on an annual basis. It aims to develop participants' capacities and knowledge on child labour in agriculture, including fisheries and aquaculture, forestry and livestock rearing, and on strategies to prevent and reduce child labour in agriculture. FAO contributed a learning module highlighting the

consequences of hazardous work in agriculture for children's health and education, and ultimately for agricultural development and rural food security. FAO also led the discussion with participants from governments, workers' and employers' organizations and international development organizations on policy options for reducing child labour in agriculture through integrated livelihoods approaches.

Capacity development at country level

In 2011, FAO and the ILO supported a series of capacity development workshops in Malawi to raise awareness on child labour in agriculture and strengthen stakeholder coordination. The national workshops targeted directors, managers and senior technical staff primarily from the ministries of agriculture and labour and were followed by a district level workshop. The workshops resulted in national and district level activity plans and the development of a district training package to support the implementation of the Child Labour National Action Plan.

Creating an enabling environment

Mainstreaming child labour concerns into agricultural and rural development policies and programmes

FAO, with funding support from an ILO/EC programme, prepared the publication "[Guidance on how to address rural employment and decent work concerns in FAO country activities](#)". The guide provides key conceptual information, relevant tools and examples of concrete action. Mainly designed for use by FAO Decentralized Offices, the guide is increasingly used by other agricultural stakeholders at country level and has led to policy changes in countries such as Malawi and Tanzania.

The FAO Fisheries Department and ESW, in collaboration with the ILO, have prepared a preliminary version of a "[Guidance Document for Addressing Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture: Policy and Practice](#)" that builds on the recommendations of the [FAO-ILO Workshop on Child Labour in Fisheries and Aquaculture](#), held in Rome in 2010. This document, launched in December 2011, aims to improve understanding of the nature and scope, causes, contributing factors and consequences of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture. Further, it assists governments and development partners to classify child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, mainstream child labour considerations in relevant development and management policies, strategies and plans, and to take practical action.

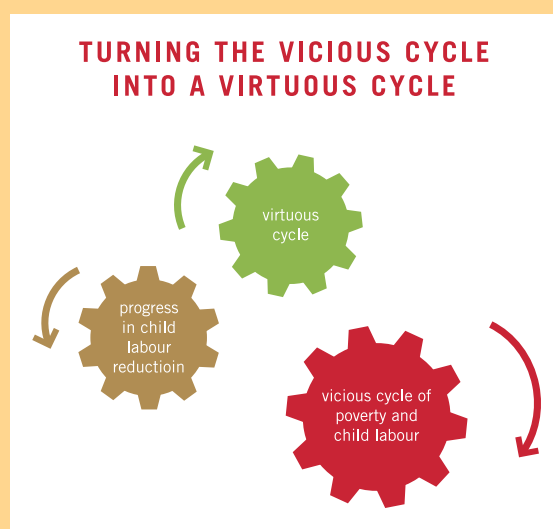
Youth employment and child labour

Child labour reduction and youth employment promotion are policy areas that go hand in hand. Promoting decent employment for rural youth can contribute to preventing child labour in agriculture, while reducing child labour can help ensure that children have the chance to obtain an education and develop the necessary skills for decent youth employment. In addition, for children of legal working age, eliminating the hazards from work can turn a situation of child labour into one of youth employment.

Along these lines, FAO has started to integrate child labour concerns into the [Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools \(JFFLS\)](#). The JFFLS approach aims to provide youth with the agricultural, business and life-skills necessary for decent rural employment – demonstrating to parents and to the community the

Breaking the vicious cycle of child labour and poverty Getting girls and boys out of work and into school

Pervasive poverty in rural areas is one of the main causes of child labour; it is also one of the consequences. Child labour prejudices a child's education and health. By preventing and reducing child labour, the vicious cycle of poverty and child labour can be turned into a virtuous cycle where rural children grow up to be healthy and educated, and therefore more likely to be successful in agricultural business. In order to achieve this transformation, a comprehensive and coordinated policy approach is required: i) reducing rural poverty and improving rural livelihoods and youth employment; ii) improving access to quality education adapted to the needs of rural girls and boys; iii) reducing rural household and workers vulnerability; iv) ratifying and implementing ILO child labour Conventions and reviewing national labour legislation so that it fully applies to agriculture; v) mainstreaming child labour prevention into agricultural and rural policies, programmes and research; and vi) promoting social dialogue and good governance.



value of education and that agriculture can provide decent livelihoods. The JFFLS approach includes good agricultural practices such as Integrated Production and Pest Management (IPPM), which can minimize the use of pesticides and make working in agriculture safer for everyone.

Examples of country interventions

Mali... FAO and the ILO jointly fostered knowledge sharing between labour and agricultural stakeholders and supported the development of a national roadmap to assist the implementation of the National Action Plan to reduce child labour in agriculture. Principal roadmap activities implemented in 2011 included research on child labour in the cotton and rice value chains as well as on viable alternatives (with a particular focus on labour saving technologies and safer agricultural practices) and a national workshop held in December.

Malawi... FAO, the ILO and the IUF organized knowledge-sharing and planning workshops with key stakeholders in 2010. The result was a collaborative national workplan to address child labour in agriculture in the framework of the Child Labour National Action Plan. Some of the actions identified included capacity development of the Ministries of Labour and Agriculture and other agricultural stakeholders,



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the establishment of child labour focal points, involvement of agricultural stakeholders in child labour committees, better integration of the issue of child labour in agriculture in policy and development plans and programmes, data gathering, including in fisheries and livestock, and awareness raising. FAO and the ILO are strategically supporting national stakeholders to implement some of these initiatives, such as capacity development workshops which have been conducted at national and district levels.

Tanzania... FAO has initiated, with financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), a three-year policy-support programme on rural employment and decent work for the promotion

of equitable and sustainable livelihoods in Malawi and Tanzania. This country-level intervention combines several approaches: supporting the development of national capacities and enhancing the enabling environment for mainstreaming decent rural employment policies, strategies and programmes; promoting child labour prevention and reduction; and stimulating rural youth employment while strengthening collaboration and coordination among and with key national stakeholders.

Cambodia... FAO and the ILO are initiating collaboration on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture in Cambodia following a government request for support. A scoping study on child labour is being undertaken as part of the consultation process with community fisheries centers for the *Voluntary Guidelines on Small-Scale Fisheries* being developed by FAO. Training for the Cambodian Fisheries Department on child labour has been conducted in December 2011. A jointly-supported national workshop on child labour in fisheries and aquaculture is currently planned for early 2012.

Other countries... The Partnership and FAO also responded to further country requests to facilitate collaboration between agriculture and labour stakeholders at the national level to prevent and reduce child labour in agriculture.

The way forward

FAO's intention is to substantially increase its work in this area, in collaboration with the ILO. There is an urgent need to increase collaboration in order to scale-up action and provide a holistic approach to sustainably reduce and eventually end child labour in agriculture. The global momentum is building and FAO, together with the ILO, is increasingly playing a leading role.



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