**Call for action: ending child labour in agriculture with the help of agricultural stakeholders**

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Description automatically generated**Agricultural stakeholders play a decisive role in the elimination of child labour in agriculture. This Call for Action provides an opportunity to **raise your voice** and express your concerns, commitments, and actions towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture, and to highlight the situation and reality of rural communities and the agricultural sector.

SDG 8.7 sets a target to **eliminate all forms of child labour by 2025**, however, this is an incredibly challenging target to achieve, and all stakeholders must upscale action to progress in the elimination of child labour. Given that 71% of all child labour is found in agriculture, it will not be possible to achieve target 8.7 without a breakthrough in the sector. Therefore, agricultural stakeholders are essential to upscale and mobilize action.

Please present **concrete and realistic actions** that you or your organization can or could take to reduce child labour in agriculture and **provide recommendations** to agricultural and other stakeholders.

**Guidance for contributions:**

The summary of the FSN Forum consultation held in 2020 is available online in [Arabic](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644ar/cb0644ar.pdf), [Chinese](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644zh/cb0644zh.pdf), [English](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644en/cb0644en.pdf), [French](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644fr/cb0644fr.pdf), [Russian](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644ru/cb0644ru.pdf) and [Spanish](http://www.fao.org/3/cb0644es/cb0644es.pdf).

**Child labour** is commonly **defined as work that is inappropriate for a child’s age, affects children’s education, or is likely to harm their health, safety or morals. It is work that impairs children’s well-being or hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. When identifying or raising issues related to child labour in agriculture, take into account: i) age, as** not all tasks undertaken by children in agriculture are considered child labour, ii) gender, as girls and boys can engage in different labour activities and face different hazards and challenges, and iii) agricultural sub-sectors, as children are found in farming, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, and forestry.

**We invite you to take the following key themes into account for your contribution to this Call for Action:**

* **Hunger and malnutrition**, as in some circumstances, children work to meet their food needs.
* **Climate change and environmental degradation** can make agricultural work more intensive and income less predictable, increasing the engagement of children to meet labour demand and support vulnerabilities of their families.
* **Agricultural investment programmes**: by integrating child labour prevention and risk mitigation measures in their investment designs, development partners and financial intermediaries, such as development banks and private sector investors, can become game changers in the creation of employment and livelihood opportunities to reduce family dependency on child labour. They can provide opportunities for adolescents and youth for decent rural employment, and reduce rural poverty that creates child labour in agriculture.
* **Family farming** relies on generational renewal as the main precondition of keeping agriculture viable and sustainable. This process implies the transmission of knowledges, skills, and capacities from the older generation, which also contributes to enhancing children’s sense of community belonging. However, low family incomes, household poverty, few livelihood alternatives, and inadequate access to education can lead to assigning children tasks that are age-inappropriate, hazardous and/or interfere with schooling. Exposing girls and boys to child labour not only puts their well-being at risk but also prevents them from acquiring the skills that would allow innovations in the agricultural sector, break the inter-generational cycle of poverty, and bring improvements to the households’ and communities’ livelihoods.
* **Humanitarian contexts** because child labour increases during conflict, food system crises, and when climate and natural disasters unfold.
* **Occupational safety and health (OSH) and pesticide exposure,** as children have special characteristics in terms of physical, cognitive, behavioural and emotional growth that make them more vulnerable to hazardous work and expose them to additional risks (i.e. long working hours, exposure to pesticides, dangerous equipment and tools, or abuse).
* **Decent youth employment (14/15-17):** children belonging to this age cohort are still children (below 18) but within the national working age. Therefore, they can be in situations of child labour or decent youth employment depending on the danger of the tasks that they are carrying out. Hence, by addressing the hazardous nature of agriculture tasks we can turn situations of child labour into situations of decent youth employment.
* **Digital innovation and blockchains**: scaling up traceability, transparency and sustainability along agricultural value chains, they provide a possible way to monitor farmers’ vulnerabilities in agri-food systems and allow for targeted remediation interventions for addressing the drivers of child labour.
* **Multi-sectoral approach:** social protection programmes that support livelihoods of vulnerable households and efforts to increase access to affordable and quality education can prevent child labour in agriculture.

**Proponent** (name/gender/institution)

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| **CARE International in Lebanon** |

**Title of your contribution**

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| **Reduction of Child Labor in Agriculture Sector** |

**Mark your category of agricultural stakeholder/actor**

* Government official (/agricultural-line ministries)
* Employer organization
* Academia/research institution
* Private sector
* Farmer organization / cooperative / producer organization
* Worker’s organization or Union
* Civil society or NGO
* International Organization (UN, IUF, IFPRI, etc.)
* Development Bank

**If none of the above applies, please indicate which category of actor or sector you belong to (for example, labour, education, or social)**

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**Region/Country/Location**

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| **Lebanon** |

**Agricultural sub-sector** (farming, fisheries and aquaculture, livestock, or forestry)

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| **Farming and livestock** |

1. Please provide some **background** context to your contribution and proposal:
   * What is the issue of child labour in agriculture that concerns you? What are the main causes? And consequences? What direct/indirect or intended/unintended impact do you think your work is having on child labour in agriculture?
   * Has COVID-19 had an (in)direct impact on child labour in the agri-food system in your country?
   * If applicable, please describe activities and projects, previously implemented or ongoing, to address child labour in agriculture, as well as their impact/results:

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| The main concerns are health risks, loss of educational rights, the impact of work on the child's mental health, and the risk of sexual abuse. The main causes are the economic situation in Lebanon, and now, with the depreciation of the Lebanese currency and the COVID-19 pandemic, child labor in the agriculture sector has increased by up to 60%.. [[1]](#footnote-1)  Furthermore, children who are in the labor force and food insecure are expected to experience a delay in physiological growth, which may result in chronic malnutrition, acute malnutrition, and anemia. Working children are at a higher risk of injury, with 55 percent suffering from wounds, diseases such as asthma, tuberculosis, and silicosis, mental health, and possibly death. Furthermore, work children are more likely to be subjected to various forms of abuse, such as SEA, violence, early marriage, and unwanted pregnancy. According to an IRC survey of working children, only 2% of them have expressed positive feelings. Due to food insecurity, children drop out of school or, in some cases, do not enroll at all, leaving the family breadwinner to bear the brunt of the burden. [[2]](#footnote-2) |

1. **Please describe the action** you or your organization can or could take to address or increase efforts towards the elimination of child labour in agriculture. If this is not applicable, please explain in the next sections the challenges you or your organization face in addressing child labour in agriculture and present recommendations for agricultural and other stakeholders to upscale action.

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| CARE International works with beneficiaries and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in the agriculture sector, including the farming and livestock sub-sectors. Through the projects that have been and are currently being implemented, CARE ensures that MSMEs owners and beneficiaries/participants selected for the projects are at least 18 years old. As a result, the goal of CARE's selection criteria is to discourage the use of child labor in CARE projects.  For future projects, CARE will consider female beneficiaries/participants who have children and will give them the opportunity to benefit from the project by either providing a safe space for their children or requiring only a few working hours from the participants (for those engaged in projects that provide financial support or income generating activities). In the case of the AFDAL II project's training sessions (agricultural - Livestock project implemented in North and South of Lebanon), Female participants joined the session remotely during the lockdown in early 2021. Based on the MEAL results from the AFDAL II project, female participants who attended the online training sessions remotely, the majority of whom have children, were asked for feedback. According to their feedback, more than 93 percent of the female participants felt more at ease doing the session remotely because they could stay close to their children and family.  CARE International in Lebanon created a documentary depicting the faces of poverty in Lebanon. Chadi Lababidi, a 15-year-old Tripoli resident, is among those featured in the documentary. Chadi currently resides with his parents, siblings, as well as his sister and brother-in-law. He dropped out of school and went to work to support his family, earning 75,000 LBP per week. He gives his mother between 30,000 and 35,000 LBP per week, divides it among his siblings as pocket money, and saves the rest for Sunday breakfast and juice. His father works as a taxi driver, renting the car for 30,000 LBP per day to earn 25,000 to 35,000 LBP, and works so late that there is no money for his mother to prepare lunch. Chadi was forced to sell his mobile phone for 500,000 LBP because his father required the funds. |

1. **Challenges:** What are the main obstacles you, or agricultural stakeholders in general, face in addressing child labour in agriculture? How could these challenges be overcome or addressed (for example, through policy, legislation, capacity building, etc.)?

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| Some of the currently recognized challenges, according to CARE International in Lebanon and other INGOs. One of the challenges is to challenge the people who engage in child labor's traditional beliefs. In rural Lebanon, some families believe that their children are the breadwinners. As a result, CARE's approach to implementing programs in the agriculture sector, particularly without the involvement of children, will create some tension between the implementor and the beneficiaries. More challenges include limiting the application of existing laws in Lebanon that prohibit child labor for children aged 15 to 17 years old, insufficient subsidy and infrastructure to collect data on child labor in the agriculture sector, and a lack of coordination among the various humanitarian and development actors working in the various agricultural sectors. |

1. **Recommendations for agricultural stakeholders:** What recommendations would you give to agricultural stakeholders to address the issue of child labour in agriculture you presented?

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| More coordination efforts are required in the context of child labor. There is no specific action or project implementation in child labor or child protection at CARE. As a result, CARE would assist other organizations already working in this field through referrals, particularly through the Helpline & Accountability department, and collaborations. |

1. **Recommendations for other stakeholders:** What would you recommend to other stakeholders addressing the issue of child labour in agriculture (labour, education, child protection, or social sector stakeholders, including ministries of labour, inspectors, educators, social services practitioners, etc.)?

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| Child labor is a critical issue that should be prioritized by all stakeholders. We are increasingly seeing the prioritization of sectors as a whole, with little regard for the people involved (i.e. at the beneficiary level), their needs, or the impact of the intervention on them and their livelihood. It is suggested that stakeholders prioritize urgent food security and basic assistance for working children and their families. More advocacy on child labor is also suggested by all stakeholders involved. CARE will be willing to participate in advocacy and protection capacity building for organizations where it sees a need. |

1. PowerPoint presentation presented by FAO during the Child Labour training provided on March 31st. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **WORKING CHILDREN IN CRISIS-HIT LEBANON: EXPLORING THE LINKAGES BETWEEN FOOD INSECURITY AND CHILD LABOUR, February 2021,** *This paper was developed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Lebanon Protection Consortium (LPC) - which includes Action Against Hunger (ACF), Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and it is funded by ECHO.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)