CHILD LABOUR CASE STUDY

Regional child labour strategy for the Syria crisis

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This case study describes lessons learned from the inter-agency process of developing a regional child labour strategy covering Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, in response to the rising levels of child labour resulting from the war in Syria.

Background

In 2016, UNHCR, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned a stocktaking exercise of regional efforts to address child labour in the context of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in response to the Syria crises. The stocktaking report recommended (i) to develop a regional, multi-sectoral child labour strategy for the 3RP countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey), aligned with the national humanitarian response plans and the national child labour action plans in each country; and (ii) to prioritise preventing and responding to the worst forms of child labour (WFCL), especially hazardous child labour, given the significant scale of child labour across the region.

Regional child labour strategy

In 2017, the regional child labour strategy was developed and launched by UNHCR, UNICEF and the ILO, in close collaboration with partners of the regional No Lost Generation [1] initiative and national governments of the 3RP countries. The strategy covers key prevention and response actions across multiple sectors: education, child protection, and food security and livelihoods, including social protection, cash assistance and employment sectors. The aim of the strategy was to guide the development of national child labour policies and programmes, coordination, advocacy and knowledge management to address child labour, in particular the WFCL.

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1   See: https://www.nolostgeneration.org/

Lessons learned

- The regional strategy provided an opportunity to link national child labour coordination mechanisms with the humanitarian response actors and to enhance inter-agency collaboration on child labour.

- The strategy brought focus to the situation of refugees and promoted increased access to preventive and response services including basic needs, education and employment for refugees.

- Linking the strategy to sectoral response plans helped to secure ownership of the strategy within coordination groups and accountability regarding its main recommendations.

- Strong commitment and level of expertise among No Lost Generation partners supported effective exchange, good working relationships and strong coordination by the lead agencies during the strategy development and implementation planning to address the WFCL.

- The strategy development process did not involve (working) children or private sector partners, and thus excluded their perspectives and roles from the response strategy.

- A key lesson learned was that different organisations use different concepts, definitions and language with regards to child labour and response strategies. It took time to reach agreement between partners on the terminology to use in the strategy, but it was important to reach a common understanding and consensus on the strategic priorities.

Resources

- UNHCR (2017). **Child Labour within the Syrian Refugee Response: A Regional Strategic Framework for Action.**

More information and resources are available at:
https://alliancecpha.org
https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-hub/child-labour-task-force