



Multi-sectoral services for children in child labour and their families in Jordan

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This case study describes a multi-sectoral and multi-level approach to addressing child labour in urban and semi-urban areas in Jordan.

Comprehensive services for children in child labour

Terre des hommes (Tdh) developed a one-year multi-sectoral and multi-level programme to address child labour among Syrian and Jordanian children in Zarqa and East Amman, in Jordan. Key components included the following:

1. Child protection case management and referral to specialised services

- Case management services were provided to 513 children in or at risk of child labour, with the primary aim to remove them from (the worst forms of) child labour and to improve their protection. Out of the children supported by the project, 90 per cent were in child labour; of these children about 18 per cent were in hazardous labour (the worst form of child labour).
- The initial step was to identify children already involved in child labour (the worst forms), as well as early detection of children at (high) risk of child labour. Children were identified through internal referrals from other Tdh programming, external referrals from other civil society actors, and through targeted outreach activities conducted by the project.
- Case management services were underpinned by the Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) as well as by strong referral pathways to services provided by other actors.
- After the initial identification, an in-depth needs assessment (“Best Interest Assessment” or BIA) established the level of risk and a holistic care plan was developed by the case manager in consultation with the child and family. The project supported 209 children in a high-risk situation, 277 children in moderate-risk situations and 26 children in low-risk situations.

2. Social support services including psychosocial support, life skills and support group sessions for adults

- A total of 12 **psychosocial support (PSS)** cycles were conducted in small groups by adopting an arts and music approach, formed by gender and age, targeting both Jordanian and Syrian working children. These sessions were designed to build children's resilience and wellbeing through peer-to-peer networking, awareness of their rights, social cohesion, emotional management and development of coping skills.
- **Life skills** were delivered to working adolescents who were at risk of the worst forms of child labour. The programme provided 30 sessions in addition to coaching support to plan and implement community initiatives. It aimed to build essential "soft skills" needed in the workplace consisting of knowledge on the labour law and adolescent workers' rights; and also activities to improve adolescents' self-confidence, interpersonal and communication skills, conflict management, creative thinking, decision-making, and other psychosocial competencies.
- **Entrepreneurship skills** sessions helped adolescents to explore their individual assets, talents and personal interests to support referrals to vocational training. At the end of each cycle, participants organise a civic engagement initiative in the community which builds on the skills learned.
- **Parent support group sessions (SGS)** were targeted at caregivers of working children and those receiving case management support. The parenting sessions included topics such as developing their children's self-esteem; positive coping mechanisms; managing emotions, stress and adverse life experiences; and pathways for accessing social support. Techniques such as role play, self-expression and exploration, relaxation techniques, skills building, art therapy and emotional restructuring were used in these sessions to have the highest impact.

3. Emergency cash assistance for children in high-risk situations

- Cash transfers were provided to the families of working children, to help them meet their basic needs and reduce their children's exposure to hazardous labour and related protection risks. Cash transfers were provided to families who met specific vulnerability criteria scoring derived from the BIA and a family vulnerability assessment.
- The assessment to determine at-risk children in child labour looked at: the type of work and level of risk associated with the tasks/work; number of workdays and hours per week worked; time of the day during which the child worked; school attendance; access to any non-formal education; and the mental and physical health condition of the child and the caregivers. In addition, the assessment looked at the number of family members, the economic situation of the family and the refugee/legal status of the family.
- Cash was only provided to households when the need for economic support was identified in a child's case plan. The cash transfers were provided for a minimum of one month and a maximum of three months, based on the scoring and the recommendation from the case manager. The monthly payment ranged between 70 and 120 Jordanian dinars. The cash was disbursed monthly through secured money transfer service providers closest to them.

4. Community and youth-led protection messaging and awareness-raising among children and caregivers

- Community-based child protection committees (CBCPCs) were formed to undertake initiatives to address child labour at the community level. Through adopting participatory approaches, the project involved children, youth, parents, community members and leaders in mobilising and disseminating messaging on child labour and child rights.

- The CBCPCs worked together with the adolescents who graduated from the Life Skills programme, and with community mobilisers who helped to facilitate the process of planning and organise community-level initiatives. The process included a series of structured meetings where they jointly identified key issues and activities, and developed an action plan for implementation, clarifying roles, responsibilities and timelines.
- Adolescent-led initiatives were centred around key issues identified by the children who participated in the project activities. These initiatives tackled topics of smoking, child abuse, child labour and other child rights violations.
- Specific awareness sessions were provided to family members of working children, intended to increase their information and knowledge about the risks children face in workplaces and the impact these have on their development. The sessions also shared information about different child protection and child development services available for both refugees and hosts.

Successes

- **Case management:** There was successful identification of working children by a dedicated team of case workers who proactively collaborated with key community stakeholders, employers, community-based organisations, volunteers, civil society actors and authorities. This approach enabled the team to identify the most vulnerable children at early stages and to support them with appropriate services throughout the project, while also building awareness of the risk of child labour among these stakeholders.
- **Psychosocial support:** Children who were working and had little or no time and opportunity for recreational activities reported that they appreciated and enjoyed the creative arts-based psychosocial sessions, which allowed them to develop their talents and have fun. Working child-led initiatives were particularly seen as a good practice that improved their planning and communication skills and their self-confidence.
- **Life skills:** Most children and adolescents who attended life skills sessions showed increased confidence, knowledge of their rights and improved self-protection skills. Girls who participated in life skills and psychosocial support stated being more self-aware in terms of the physical and emotional changes they were going through, and that they felt more in control. Boys reported that they now know their rights and were able to better plan for their future. Both boys and girls reported that the activities helped them to better communicate in their places of work, to feel more confident, and gain leadership skills.
- **Support group sessions:** Parents who participated in the sessions reported that these gave them a chance to move out of their homes, learn something new and meet new people. Participating at the project end-line, parents reported that they felt happier and noticed improvements in their relationships with their children. The cash assistance helped them to meet the urgent needs of their children and the household, easing some of the pressure on them and the working child. Parents reported being more aware of their children's rights, child labour legislation, the risks their children are exposed to in their workplaces, the types of services available for working children and their protection, the importance of education, and economic opportunities. Parents also reported positive changes in their own social lives and those of their children.
- **Adolescent-led initiatives** included peer-to-peer communication and outreach messaging, with the use of educational materials, posters and murals, as well as child and adolescent-friendly technology-based solutions. One initiative resulted in the creation of a mobile application called "*haqi w hemayti*" that offered child rights education, led by two young people with support from local youth committee members. This app was presented at the Jordan INGO forum.¹

¹ For more information about the application, watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68EF6Bz48uk&feature=youtu.be>

- **Community awareness initiatives** fostered greater community collaboration, leadership and social cohesion. The project was able to initiate some level of interest and purpose among some community members on child protection issues and child labour. As a result, some children exposed to protection concerns were identified and supported through project interventions.
- **Reduction of harmful work conditions:** Children reported having become more aware of their rights. They now felt able to protect themselves and voice their opinion in making the environment safer for children, which in some instances resulted in reduced working hours, reasonable breaks during working hours, and time to attend education or any other form of vocational training.
- **Cash transfers:** The cash assistance helped to avert the economic push factor for child labour. Parents reported using the cash assistance towards educational costs (such as paying for school transport) and other basic needs in the family (such as covering heating costs in the winter or addressing health concerns and illnesses).

Challenges

- **Case management:** Challenges included delays in accessing the CPIMS due to contract renewal-related matters, which in return created delays with the referral process to other organisations. In addition, there were significant gaps in referral services; 283 cases were referred to other organisations, but only 63 cases received a response.
- **Psychosocial support:** Feedback from children indicated that they wanted PSS activities to be more convenient and closer to their homes or workplaces. Children reported that the distance and travel time to the project locations/centres was significant and took time away from work. Even when transport was provided, children still did not attend regularly, due to the time spent on transport. To address this challenge, the activities were moved from the Social Support Centres (SSC) in Marka to the premises of local community-based organisations (CBOs) that were closer to children's workplaces and homes in Zarqa. The outreach approach adopted by the project enabled some essential services to be delivered at the child's home or working place.
- **Cash transfers:** While the cash transfers were effective, due to the assistance being limited to three months, it was not sufficient to ensure the permanent removal of a child from work. Unsurprisingly, parents noted that they would have appreciated larger envelopes of assistance over a longer period, as in many cases the working child was the only source of income.
- **Parenting and awareness sessions:** A major challenge was the lack of engagement of fathers in the parenting sessions, especially at the initial stages. The project made adjustments in the timing and locations of the sessions to better accommodate men.
- **Project duration:** The length of the project (one year) was insufficient to attain long-term behaviour change and to develop sustainable alternatives for child labour. The implementation was shorter than one year, due to delays in government approvals. Nonetheless, TdH mobilised additional financial support to continue this project and to improve and expand child labour programming in order to attain sustainable results in Jordan.

Lessons learned

- Children were actively engaged in the decision-making, management and implementation of the activities including campaigns, which allowed TdH to better understand the complexities of child labour and to adopt more effective approaches. It is therefore critical to ensure child participation at all stages of the project.

- While the project with its limited timeframe and resources was not able to assist children with permanent solutions for child labour, the multi-activity and multi-layered community-centred approach did have a positive impact on the increase in awareness, attitudes and behaviours related to child labour and its harmful effects. Tdh acknowledges that the situation of child labour in Jordan is complex and requires a well-coordinated, well-resourced, multi-sector and longer-term programming approach. Since the project, Tdh has invested in a comprehensive child labour situational analysis, developed a programming model, and expanded its networking with formal and civic actors on the topic.

Resource

- Terre des Hommes (2019). **What works for working children: Being effective when tackling child labour.**

More information and resources are available at:

<https://alliancecpha.org>

<https://alliancecpha.org/en/child-protection-hub/child-labour-task-force>