



## Child labour guidance and tools for labour inspectors in Jordan

***This case study describes how child labour guidance and tools improved child labour law enforcement in Jordan.***

Photo: ILO Jordan

### Background

- In Jordan, government ministries and agencies mandated to address child labour needed practical tools to guide inspections on the application of child labour laws and hazardous work lists. 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.
- In 2012 Jordan upgraded the national hazardous work list and developed a simplified manual for labour inspectors to enable them to identify and address hazardous child labour. In 2016, the International Labour Organization (ILO) supported the government to develop further the manual to include guidance on action to be taken in various scenarios. Like most legal frameworks, Jordan allows certain types of work for children over the minimum working age (16 years old), while prohibiting hazardous work for all children under 18 years old as detailed in a hazardous work list – for instance, carpentry, construction, mechanical work, electrical work and fishing. This comprehensive list includes almost every kind of work situation in the Jordanian economy.
- Upon discovering a child working in one of these environments, labour inspectors were expected to initiate legal sanctions against the establishment. This led to legislation being implemented variably, with some following the list to the letter, while others used their observation and discretion to make exceptions. The list was not an effective tool.
- The revised tool released in 2017 now provides labour inspectors with guidance on how to identify child labour and different possible courses of action to take. It provides more detailed guidance and converts the original list into a manual specifying under each occupation or workplace the hazardous activities for young workers under the age of 18. It takes account of the activities that adolescents over the minimum working age can do legally if adequately trained and protected when carrying out a specific task or job.

Examples include:

- On a construction site, young workers cannot carry excessive loads or operate heavy machinery but they 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; and the below-surface auto repair pit should be covered when not in use. These changes can make a job in such workplaces acceptable and safe for children above the minimum working age.

## Successes

The manual was a valuable tool for labour inspectors in that it:

- helps them to do their job in an efficient manner, and to conform with laws and regulations in a more consistent approach across the labour inspector division;
- helps them to identify truly hazardous work situations for adolescents aged between 16 and 18 years, while allowing adolescents to legally and safely keep jobs in more professions; and
- provides guidance to businesses on complying with the law by taking adequate measures to ensure the health and safety of their young workers.
- Engaging officials and stakeholders in the manual's design has promoted joint ownership.
- Because it is used daily, inspectors are motivated to suggest further improvements and ensure its continued relevance and use.

## Lessons learned

- It is not enough to have policies and legislation in place; it is also important to back them up with tools and mechanisms to implement them.
- Developing effective tools is an important aspect of building labour inspectors' capacity. Tools give them guidance on appropriate action to take in different scenarios, 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 so that they conform to new knowledge.
- The manual provides enough indicators not only to assist all inspectors in their field work, but also to advocate at the national, regional and international levels on the negative aspects of child labour.

## Resources

- Resources can be downloaded from **[the website of the Ministry of Labour in Jordan](#)**

More information and resources are available at:

<https://alliancecpha.org>

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