

FACT SHEET: CHILD LABOUR IN LEBANON

Background & Context: Action against child labour in Lebanon dates back to 2000 when the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Government of Lebanon (GoL) signed an agreement to work towards its elimination. The GoL has ratified a number of international Conventions including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) Convention (No. 182) in 2001 and the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No.138) in 2003.

Stemming from articulated strong commitments of the GoL to combat child labour, successive efforts by the Child Labour Unit at the Ministry of Labour (MOL-CLU) and the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) have placed the issue of Child Labour on the national policy agenda. Since 2000 at least three thousand five hundred (3500) children have been withdrawn from the WFCL¹; around six thousand (6000) returned to formal or non-formal education after receiving rehabilitation services, and one thousand two hundred (1200) obtained extracurricular instruction to prevent them from dropping out of school².

The culmination of these efforts has contributed to put in place a National Action Plan (NAP) Against

the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon, with the aim of eliminating the WFCL completely by 2016. The NAP was developed by the ILO-IPEC and the MOL-CLU in coordination with the National Steering Committee Against Child Labour (NSC)³.

Economic Sectors and Geographic Regions:

Child labour is spread across the different economic sectors and regions of Lebanon. The geographical areas where child labour is most common in Lebanon are North and South Lebanon, the suburbs of Greater Beirut and the Bekaa. Relatively high rates of poverty, a major factor and determinant of child labour, are prevalent in some of these areas.

Child labour in Lebanon is predominantly concentrated in informal sectors of the economy such as construction, manufacturing, industrial sites, meat packing, fisheries, domestic work, blacksmithing, agriculture, the service industry, as well as automotive repairs and spray-painting⁴. Furthermore, a considerable number of working street children are exploited and abused by adults and networks that organize their labour⁵.

Age restrictions: Lebanon's legal framework recognizes persons over the age of 18 as adults⁶. The Lebanese Labour Code sets the minimum

working age at 14 in general, and raises it to 16 based on the conditions of Executive Decree No. 8987. Decree No. 8987 also prohibits the employment of any person under 18 in the WFCL. The maximum number of working hours per day for anyone under 18 is six⁷.

Fines and Penalties: Any person found to facilitate child labour, including employers and parents, is liable under the provisions of child labour laws, rather than children themselves⁸. Basic fines and penalties range from a warning in the first instance, to fines between 250,000 and 2,500,000 Lebanese Pounds and/or three to six months imprisonment⁹.

Key Figures in Lebanon:

Total proportion of all children aged 5 to 14 who work: **1.9%**¹⁰

School dropout rates at the intermediary and primary levels, respectively: **10.7%**¹¹, **0.2%**¹²

Upper and extreme poverty rates, respectively: **28.5%**¹³, **7.9%**¹⁴

Poor households and working children in domiciles with six or more children, respectively: **37.7%**¹⁵, **37%**¹⁶

NOTES & REFERENCES

1 Children withdrawn from the worst forms of child labour may still be engaged in other forms of child labour. Any such work is conducted according to acceptable health and safety standards. It also ensures children below and above legal working age receive their inalienable rights such as rest, education and recreation time.

2 Based on International Labour Organization's and Ministry Of Labour's estimates.

3 The National Steering Committee is the main public body responsible for coordinating the actions of all government and non-governmental bodies to eradicate child labour in Lebanon. The National Action Plan Against the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon by 2016 is to be launched in 2013.

4 Action Against Child Labour in Lebanon; A mapping of policy and normative initiatives, ILO (2012). Disaggregated figures detailing the prevalence of different child labour occupations in each region are currently being compiled by the Central Administration for Statistics in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and the ILO.

5 Situational Mapping of Working Street Children in Lebanon, ILO-IPEC (2013).

6 Lebanon's legal framework does not explicitly mention 18 years as the age of majority. The provision is implied in Section 1, Chapter 2 [A1] , Article 21 of the Lebanese Labour Code. Moreover, Articles 215 - 218 of the Duties and Contract Act define the child indirectly by determining the age at which a person is competent to be bound by contractual engagements, namely 18 years. At present a project entitled "Labour Law Amendment Project" is currently being implemented by the Ministry of Labour to bring Lebanon's legal framework in line with international conventions, specifically the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No.138).

7 Lebanese Labour Code, Section 1, Chapter 2, Article 23.

8 Lebanese Labour Code, Section 1, Chapter 2, Article 30.

9 Lebanese Labour Code, Section 5, Chapter 1, Articles 107-109. Repeat offenders are subject to fines that increase by a factor of two over the course of one year from the date of the most recent conviction.

10 Central Administration for Statistics Multiple Cluster Survey (2009).

11 Based on the Social Action Plan Report: Toward Strengthening Social Safety Nets and Access to Basic Social Services; Submitted to Paris III (2007).

12 Multiple Cluster Survey, Central Administration for Statistics (2009). Only includes children who entered the first grade and reached the fifth.

13 National Programme and Policy Framework for Child Labour in Lebanon, GoL (2005).

14 Ibid.

15 Mapping of Living Conditions in Lebanon, United Nations Development Programme &GoL (2007).

16 National Programme and Policy Framework for Child Labour in Lebanon, GoL (2005).