

# Reducing Child Labour in Agriculture through good agricultural practices: FAO experiences

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## National Conference on Eliminating Child Labour in Agriculture



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## Table of Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. WHY CHILD LABOUR NEEDS TO BE URGENTLY REDUCED.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0 CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4. INTEGRATED PRODUCTION AND PEST MANAGEMENT (IPPM).....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>9. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10. CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>10</b>

**Cover picture:** Organic compost lesson during FAO supported Junior Farmer Field and Life School session to promote youth employment in Malawi

## REDUCING CHILD LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE THROUGH GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Child labour is work that harms, abuses and exploits a child or deprives a child of fully participating in education. It refers to working children below the national minimum employment age, or children under 18 doing hazardous work. Age-appropriate tasks that do not present hazards and do not interfere with a child's schooling and right to leisure are not considered child labour. Such family farm and off-farm activities can help children learn valuable skills, build self-esteem and contribute to household income. Therefore it is important to distinguish between economic activities that do no harm to the child, and child labour.

1.2 This paper presents a brief discussion of why child labour in agriculture needs to be urgently reduced, and then presents an outline of some FAO supported Good Agricultural Practices that can address the underlying causes of child labour, and concludes with recommendations for action by government, civil society, employers associations, worker and producer organisations and communities.

### 2. Why child labour needs to be urgently reduced

2.1 Child labour in agriculture is both a cause and effect of poverty. Insufficient adult labour availability, exacerbated by HIV and migration to towns for work, inadequate agricultural technology and practices, and cultural tradition mean that young children are often used for work. Lack of access to quality schools in rural areas, and cultural perceptions about the relevance of education, are further factors encouraging child labour. Child labour can be found in smallholder farms where children are exposed to inappropriate hazards or risks, such as through exposure to pesticide, or where they have to work long hours, tending livestock for example. Child labour can also be found in large plantations, where children may be obliged to work. The table below sets out the most significant push and pull factors for child labour in agriculture.

Supply factors	Demand factors
Need to supplement household income to meet basic needs	Cheap labour, as children are often unpaid or their wages are lower than that of adults
Limited schools in rural areas, and commute to school considered dangerous for girls	Insufficient labour supply at peak times, particularly in agriculture (e.g. for weeding, harvesting)
Perceived irrelevance of education	Quotas or piecework based on family work units that put pressure on parents/guardians to involve children
Limited access to financial services and children's labour used to repay debts	Low productivity of small farms and rural enterprises operating at very small margins
The need to cope with shocks such as failed harvests, death of livestock or the illness or loss of breadwinners	Requirement on some plantations that children work in order for them to live with their families
Children's participation in agriculture considered a way of life and necessary to pass on skills and knowledge; low awareness of the hazards of agricultural work	Perception that children's fingers are nimble and ideal for some agricultural tasks (flowers and horticulture)
Substitution of adults in domestic chores and labour when parents are working	Children, particularly girls considered to be more docile workers.

#### Box 1 Supply and demand determinants of child labour

2.2 When children work instead of going to school, their chances as an adult of getting a better job or being able to press for their rights as workers are minimal. Much agricultural work can be hazardous, especially when health and safety standards are low, and can cause sickness, injury or even death. Children are particularly at risk as their bodies and minds are still developing, and they are more vulnerable to hazards such as pesticides. The negative health consequences of their work can last into adulthood.

2.3 Progress in reducing child labour in agriculture has been slow where there are high levels of poverty but also due to the nature of the sector. Limited coverage of agriculture and family undertakings in national labour legislations, limited unionization, fragmentation of the labour force, low capacity of labour inspectors to cover remote rural areas, majority of child labourers working as unpaid family labour without formal contracts, continuity between rural household and the workplace, traditions of children participating in agricultural activities

from a young age, low family income and absence of schools make the problem difficult to address. Since 2007 FAO has started to mainstream child labour considerations throughout the organisation, to encourage incorporation of child labour issues in programme design. There has been little monitoring of the impact of different agricultural practices on child labour, making it difficult to identify best practice. Unless a concerted effort is made to address its root causes such as poverty and food insecurity, it will be impossible to achieve the goal of eliminating all worst forms of child labour.

### **3.0 CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE**

3.1 Conservation agriculture (CA) aims to achieve sustainable and profitable agriculture to improve the livelihoods of farmers through the application of the three CA principles: minimal soil disturbance, permanent soil cover and crop rotations. It is a way to combine profitable agricultural production with environmental concerns and sustainability and it has been proven to work in a variety of agro ecological zones and farming systems, although in very dry areas, there are difficulties in establishing permanent soil cover. CA has potential for all sizes of farms, but its adoption is perhaps most urgently required by smallholder farmers, especially those facing acute labour shortages. In Africa, CA has the potential of reversing the current annual 3 per cent decrease in agricultural production due to soil erosion and land degradation

3.2 The zero tillage approach in conservation agriculture, means that once the system is established less labour is required, particularly in soil preparation and at peak times, making it less likely that child labour will be called on, while freeing farmers time for income generating activities. Overall it is estimated that the labour saved between land clearing and harvesting, using CA approaches is around 50%. Detailed information on the role of child labour in specific farming systems within each country/region is required in order to be able to ascertain the potential impact of conservation agriculture on child labour in a particular area.

3.3 As well as reducing the labour requirements, addressing one important demand factor in child labour, CA also improves food security and increases the incomes of farmers, addressing one of the supply factors in child labour. Once year round soil cover is established through CA, weed growth should be significantly reduced, decreasing the need for the use of pesticides that are potentially hazardous to those applying them, and to children working in the fields manually weeding.

#### ***Approaches***

3.4 FAO has been promoting conservation agriculture in Africa since 1998, and is involved in conservation agriculture initiatives in Egypt, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. In Kenya and Tanzania, FAO have worked with government extension services to develop a farmer field school approach to conservation agriculture. The farmer field school approach allows farmers to participate in active learning and test the approaches for themselves, rather than through more traditional agricultural extension. Groups of farmers work together to learn the new techniques involved, facilitated by village and ward level government extension workers who not only facilitate learning of the farmers about CA techniques but on other topics such as livestock management and HIV prevention. It also allows for sensitisation to issues such as child labour, and how these might be addressed. The FFS encourages farmers to participate in decision-making on issues that directly or indirectly affects them.

3.5 Results have been very positive in terms of increased yields, and the ability to produce a crop even in drought conditions. In Tanzania, the FAO CA programme reported average maize yields per hectare increased from 1 tonne to 6 tonnes, without additional agrochemicals. Farmers have also been able to diversify into commercial crops resulting in increased income generation as well as a more balanced nutrition of the farmer's family. Both of these have had a positive impact on food security. Farmers from both countries reported a significant reduction in labour demand at peak ploughing and planting times. Figures from Tanzania demonstrated a significant reduction in time required for planting, particularly the heavy work of soil tillage and deep cultivation is eliminated – time required for planting maize in one acre dropped from 2 days (by hand) to 2 hours when an animal drawn direct planter was

used. In conventional tillage, women and children were the main source of labour for planting, weeding, harvesting and processing. CA implements reduce labour demand, saving time on activities traditionally seen as women oriented. Labour and time saving was a result of a number of techniques during land preparation (using rippers), planting (using direct planters), and weeding (using cover crop). The time saving allows such farmers also to dedicate more time to other, more profitable occupations than growing a crop, such as vegetable gardening, raising livestock, adding value with post harvest processing or seeking off farm employment. In the long term the livelihoods of farmers and rural population are significantly improved, resulting in a reduction and even reversal of the rural-urban migration. Communities also valued the increased interaction with other farmers through involvement in community meetings.

3.6 Child labour involvement has not been specifically monitored, so it is not possible to quantify the direct impact on child labour; however there is evidence showing that schooling has increased. This could be the result both of the decreased demand for labour, and also the increased social capital achieved through the FFS approach. Previous barriers to education had been the need for children to look after livestock, some parents were worried that the school was too far away and some people thought education was not necessary as the children would work on the farm in the future. When these thoughts were shared and discussed in the group many farmers came to the conclusion that when they get old, their children take care of them so it would be a good idea if they are educated so they can earn a better income.

### ***Challenges***

3.8 CA requires a major shift in mindset by farmers; the benefits need to be demonstrated to them, so they are keen to adopt CA approaches. A considerable time investment is required to raise awareness of the benefits, and to convince farmers to try CA. Extension workers and/or farmer field schools will need to identify the right trigger for change in practices. Another limitation in the adoption of CA is the need for specific information on the agro ecological system of a particular area; all areas are different, and knowledge of the appropriate ground cover crops for example, will need to be identified for each area.

3.9 While conservation agriculture is labour saving once established; the initial work involved in preparing land can be considerable. For example, constructing pits, which will last for several seasons, requires substantial labour inputs. In the initial seasons, there may also be an additional weeding burden, although this diminishes with time as ground cover improves. Awareness raising through the farmer field school approach can allow discussion of the extra labour involved, and how it might best be addressed without resorting to child labour. This might involve discussion of credit schemes to allow for hiring labour.

3.10 As conservation agriculture often implies the use of herbicides, at least during the initial stage of adoption, some people worry that adoption of conservation agriculture will increase herbicide use and that in turn will lead to increased contamination of water by herbicides and increased exposure of children working in the fields to harmful chemicals. In fact experience has shown that herbicide use tends to decline over time as the soil cover practices prevent weed emergence. The farmer field school approach can reduce potential hazard through education and awareness raising about the safe handling and application of agrochemicals, and how to minimise children's exposure to them.

3.11 Leaving crop residues on the land is an important component of conservation agriculture. However, this can cause conflicts in communities where livestock traditionally graze crop residue, and local solutions have to be developed, which might involve the development of bylaws to restrict grazing, combined with fodder development programmes. Depending on the solutions adopted, there might be an impact on livestock production practices in terms of the number of animals kept, and how they are kept, with consequent implications for child labour. However, the impact varies from one farming system to another.

#### **4. INTEGRATED PRODUCTION AND PEST MANAGEMENT (IPPM)**

4.1 IPPM contributes to increasing agricultural production in an efficient and sustainable way. It focuses on reducing the use of toxic pesticides and its harmful impacts on the environment and on human health, making work safer, while increasing yields and farmers' incomes. Therefore IPPM has the potential to turn hazardous work into positive youth employment opportunities, giving girls and boys a chance to develop practical and safe skills. It can also contribute to reducing child labour by reducing poverty through increased agricultural productivity and incomes.

4.2 While some children work directly with pesticides, mixing and applying them, other children are indirectly exposed to the hazards of toxic pesticides, for example when working in the fields, weeding or harvesting, or through contaminated water. Such exposure can seriously harm their health and development. Children are more vulnerable than adults because of their smaller size and low body weight, their weight/skin-surface ratio, their need to drink<sup>1</sup> and eat more often than adults<sup>2</sup> and the way they breathe (twice air intake than an adult). Additionally, children's ability to successfully detoxify and excrete toxins is lower than adults' because their organs are still developing. Finally, children have a lower capacity to assess risks and often cannot read warning labels.

4.3 Beyond reducing the use of pesticides, Integrated Pest Management is an ecosystem approach to crop production and protection that combines different management practices to grow healthy crops. IPPM promotes soil improvement and alternatives to chemical pesticides such as the use of beneficial insects, adapted varieties, natural pesticides and cropping practices. Marketing and food safety issues are also part of the training programme.<sup>3</sup>

#### ***Approaches***

4.4. The IPPM Programme in West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal) coordinated by FAO has been implemented through Farmer Field Schools (FFS). FAO has been working with 116 000<sup>4</sup> farmers in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal. The use of FFS as a community driven training approach was strategic in building the capacity of farmers in IPPM and in changing agricultural practices. These programmes were initially developed to improve farming skills and raise smallholder farmers' awareness of alternatives to toxic chemicals through integrated pest management (IPM). Typically, a group of approximately 25 farmers facilitated by a trainer prepares two training plots in their village, one using local conventional farming methods and another plot using best practices appropriate to the crop and location based on IPPM. Throughout the crop cycle, the farmers will observe and compare results from the two plots. Over 2 000 trainers coming from dozens of local government, private sector and civil society organizations have been taught to support farmers in applying sustainable farming methods. In Mali, a survey conducted in 65 villages of cotton farmers who were trained in 2007-08 showed a 94 percent reduction in the use of chemical pesticides and a 400 percent increase in the use of organic material like compost and manure, substances that can reverse the decline in soil fertility. In Burkina Faso, IPPM helped increase yields from between 14 and 70 percent. Almost 16 000 cotton farmers have been trained in the project, and that number should double by the end of 2011.<sup>5</sup>

4.5. Market garden systems in Senegal and Mali represent a particular challenge to finding sustainable solutions to current production practices. Relatively high sensitivity to pests and diseases, and high export market value has resulted in decades of abuse of pesticides. Following FFS training, data from Senegal and Mali show 92% and 94% reduction in the use of synthetic pesticides and in Senegal, large shifts to the use of biological and botanical pesticides, which present fewer hazards to human health. Reducing exposure to hazards, turns potentially

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<sup>1</sup> (A child needs 7 times more water at 6 months of age than an average adult)

<sup>2</sup> (A child from 1 to 5 years-old needs to eat 4 times more in proportion than an adult)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/pests/ipm/en/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/IPM/WA\\_IPPM\\_2011.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/agphome/documents/IPM/WA_IPPM_2011.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/48883/icode/>

dangerous child labour situations into potential youth employment, while increasing harvests, improves food security and increases incomes addressing the root causes of child labour.

### **Challenges**

4.6. For IPPM to be successful and sustainable sufficient time and resources to support the long-term change process of adaptation and adoption by farmers is needed. A high level of commitment by various involved stakeholders is required. To make full use of IPPM as a means to reduce child labour requires effective collaboration between agricultural and labour stakeholder.

## **5. LABOUR SAVING TECHNOLOGIES**

5.1 Labour saving technologies is a very broad field encompassing many tools, technologies and ideas. All of them should or are supposed to reduce the drudgery of farm operations and reduce the number of person-days required to accomplish a specific task /production process. The use of innovative tools and technology to reduce these labour bottlenecks might also reduce the requirement to use child labour at peak labour requirement times. Detailed information is required on individual farming systems, as the nature and timing of labour peaks and the role of child labour differs from one farming system to another, and the potentially beneficial impact of each labour saving technology on child labour will differ correspondingly. Just because labour saving technology reduces the demand for child labour in one particular area of activity, it does not mean that the child will necessarily be educated instead; it is quite possible that their labour will be used in other areas of agricultural activity, unless there is also awareness raising of the benefits of education.

### **Approaches**

5.2 **Tractors.** Tractor offer a potential means of reducing labour inputs in agriculture, however, they are usually beyond the economic reach of poor farmers, who in many cases will have fragmented land holdings, not suitable for such technology. Access to fuel, spares, and maintenance skills present further obstacles for many farmers. However, depending on the local circumstances, there can be scope of working through cooperatives, for example to make tractors available through hire or leasing schemes, such as that promoted by the government of Malawi.

5.3. **Draught animals'** Draught animals also provide potential for reducing labour needs in land preparation, harvesting and transport. However, the costs of buying and keeping animals may be prohibitive for poor farmers, and the possible fragmented nature of their land holdings may not be suitable. There are also issues to do with having the skills necessary for successful animal husbandry and sufficient land or fodder to feed the animals. Before promoting the use of draught animals as a means of reducing child labour in agriculture, careful consideration in consultation with the target community and local livestock experts is required.

5.4 **Use of herbicides** Weeds can cause substantial losses to food production. There are a variety of approaches to control weeds other than manual removal, such as good agronomic practices (crop rotation, use of soil cover, mulching, reduced tillage, IPPM) but in some circumstances herbicides is the most effective method for managing weeds. Used appropriately, in the correct quantities, and applied in a safe way by trained adults, herbicides can potentially reduce the agricultural workload, through the reduced demand for weeding, possibly reducing the demand for child labour. Weed wiping, rather than spraying, is more effective in that the herbicide is put directly in contact with the plant, and smaller quantities are lost onto clothes, thus reducing human exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals. The weed wipe was introduced in FAO field programmes in Zambia. Its performance and handling was appreciated, especially by women.

5.5 **Row planting** Row planting makes weeding and harvesting easier, and is more economical in its use of seed in comparison to broadcasting. It is also possible to use mechanised inter-row weeding and so to save labour and time, reducing the potential demand for child labour. Planting in rows enables inter-cropping or mulching. Most crops are easier to inspect for pests and diseases when grown in rows, potentially increasing yields and

contributing to food security. Row planting requires more accurate farming practices but also enables the use of both seeds and fertilizer more accurately and efficiently.

5.6 **Seeders and Planters** Operators work standing upright with hand jab planters and hand pushed or pulled seeders so they are generally less tiring than planting with a hoe. The equipment improves speed and accuracy of planting, up to four times over planting by traditional methods. It also allows the accurate placement of fertilizer in relation to the seed, potentially reducing the amount and number of times fertilizer has to be applied, and resulting in higher yields, contributing to improved food security. The increased speed of working reduces the overall labour requirement, which might reduce the requirement for child labour. However, as the tools are easy to use, there is also the possibility that children are asked to undertake the work. A participatory approach, through for example Farmer Field Schools, is required to consider the adoption of such technology and ensure it has the desired consequences for child labour.

### **Challenges**

5.7 There are obvious risks associated with the use of herbicides, particularly when used by children or when used by farmers with low education and literacy levels. Training is required to ensure safe and appropriate usage by adults.

5.8 Training is also required for the adoption of row planting and the use of non-traditional tools. The training needs to be gender sensitive to ensure that the right people get trained. Similarly, tools need to be appropriate for those doing the work, requiring gender analysis of the tasks involved to ensure that the tools are suitable for men or women as required. Farmers will need to be convinced of the benefits of investing in new tools and technologies. Private sector suppliers will need to be convinced that there is a market, and therefore to stock the required tools.

## **6. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

6.1 Child labour reduction and youth employment promotion are policy areas that go hand in hand. Promoting decent employment for rural youth can contribute to preventing child labour in agriculture, while reducing child labour can allow children to get an education and develop the necessary skills for decent youth employment. In addition, eliminating the hazards can turn a situation of child labour into one of youth employment

### **Approaches**

6.2 Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools are one of FAO's most innovative and successful initiatives. The goal of the JFFLS is to empower vulnerable youth, and provide them with the livelihood options and gender-sensitive skills needed for long-term food security while reducing their vulnerability to destitution and harmful risk coping strategies. The strength of the JFFLS is its unique learning methodology and curriculum, which combines agricultural, life and entrepreneurship skills in an experiential and participatory learning approach uniquely suited to rural communities and low literacy levels. The prevention and mitigation of child labour has always been an implicit element of the JFFLS approach. Additionally, a new child labour prevention training module contributes a set of practical exercises to raise awareness among JFFLS students and their parents or guardians specifically on child labour and its harmful effects on children. Through activities such as role play, drama, short stories and a daily activities time clock for boys and girls, children and their communities learn about child labour and how it relates to health and safety and education.

6.3 In 2008-2009, JFFLS have been implemented in: Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Gaza & West Bank, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School approach is a winning one as evident from the eight young farmers' cooperatives that have already been formed by ex-alumni in Mozambique. Over 20,000 children and youth have

graduated from the schools in the countries operating the scheme. The JFFLS approach links its graduates to existing farmers associations or cooperatives, or supports them to form their own young farmers' associations or group enterprises. This helps facilitate their transition to gainful employment through access to knowledge, inputs, services, financing and marketing.

## **7. FISHERIES MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Fishing can be one of the most dangerous activities in the world. In the fisheries and aquaculture sector, children engage in a wide variety of activities, both in the actual harvesting and farming of fish – i.e. in capture fishing and aquaculture – and in all associated operations: processing, marketing and other post-harvest activities, as well as in upstream industries such as net-making and boat building. Children in fisheries can find themselves in a variety of circumstances, from helping their parents feed their families to forced servitude, at the worst end of the spectrum are cases of child trafficking. Child labour appears to be particularly widespread in the informal small-and medium-scale sectors.

### ***Approaches***

7.2 Approaches used to address child labour in fisheries vary from policy guidance documents to specific interventions designed at particular practices. The [\*FAO-ILO Good practice guide for addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture: policy and practice\*](#) aims at improving the understanding of the nature and scope, causes and contributing factors, and consequences of child labour in fisheries and aquaculture by providing information and an analysis of current issues. The objective is to contribute to the elimination of child labour in the fisheries and aquaculture sector by assisting governments and development partners to classify child labour in fisheries and aquaculture, to mainstream child labour considerations in relevant development and management policies, strategies and plans, and to take practical action against child labour. The document is directed at government officials and their development partners, employers', workers' and producers' organizations and other stakeholder and socio-professional organizations in the formal and informal sector.

7.3 Using the before mentioned guidance document and following capacity development support from FAO and the ILO, the Cambodian Fisheries Administration has integrated child labour targets into its 10-year strategic planning framework and the Cambodian code of conduct for responsible fisheries. Fishing communities themselves have committed to tackling child labour at the local level as part of the sustainable management of small-scale fisheries.

7.4 In Ghana FAO worked with Ghana's Food Research Institute of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research to develop an improved fish smoking oven, which is easy and safe to use, has a high processing capacity, uses little fuel wood, results in shorter smoking time and produces high-quality smoked fish. This reduced the amount of labour required for collecting wood and also removed health risks associated with inhalation of smoke. The Chorkor oven has since been introduced and used in many other countries, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. It can be adapted for use wherever fish-smoking is part of post-harvest fisheries tradition.

7.5 In Benin, FAO provided technical support to the crab value chain in Benin. In a study on employment in the sector, it was found that much of the crab collection was done by minors. Advisory services from FAO have resulted in child-specific (pilot) interventions in the crab value chain, such as income generating activities in crab production within the formal schools.

## 8. LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

8.1 Children's involvement in the livestock sector ranges from light work helping out with household chores to situations of worst forms of child labour. Working in the livestock sector can take the form of bonded child labour or child trafficking for (forced) herding activities. The most common activity for children (boys and girls) is herding animals, either as employed labourers or as family labour. Depending on the hours worked, and the hazards involved, herding may be acceptable work for children or child labour. Where herding hours prevent children from attending school, or where children are placed at unacceptable risk, measures should be taken to change the situation. There is little data or detailed information on child labour in the livestock sector underlining the need for more field research and (age- and sex-disaggregated) data collection on child labour in the livestock sector (including information on working conditions, employment contracts, causes and consequences of child labour, education dynamics, assessments of hazards involved, best practices for combating child labour in the livestock sector, etc) that can serve as a starting point for more action against child labour. Such research should be carried out with the active involvement of a wide range of livestock sector stakeholders and in particular with pastoralist communities as there are significant socio-cultural issues to do with the role of children and animal husbandry, and community participation in finding solutions is essential.

The upcoming FAO publication [Children's work in the livestock sector: herding and beyond](#) addresses some of the knowledge gaps on child labour in livestock-keeping and provides detailed recommendations for different groups of stakeholders.

## 9. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

9.1 ***Child Labour Sensitive Development Programming*** Child labour issues in agricultural practices will only be effective if all development programming becomes child labour smart. This requires awareness raising among all stakeholders, from different line ministries, to employers, workers, producers and NGOs, as well as development partners, and local communities.

9.2 To ensure that child labour issues are targeted in agricultural programmes, greater information is required, for example by including child labour information in agricultural and labour censuses, so that households with a high prevalence of child labour can be targeted. Knowing that the majority of child labour is in agriculture, including fisheries and forestry is not sufficient. Policy makers and other decision makers need to have disaggregated data to be able to allocate resource and efforts proportionally to where the majority of child labour is taking place. Much of the work on preventing child labour in agriculture has been focused on internationally traded commodities, yet the majority of child labourers work in local value chains. Mainstreaming child labour issues into agricultural programmes involves close cooperation between different line ministries, such as Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries along with Ministries of Labour and Education.

9.3 Natural resource management initiatives must consider the potential impact on child labour, for example, in the design and provision of wells, and multiple user services for water. Improving access and reducing the time necessary for collection of water can have multiple positive effects related to child labour (especially for girls). Girls spend less time collecting water, and have more time to go to school, and women spend less time collecting water and can dedicate their time to economically productive activities that increase household income and decrease pressure on children to work (and/or to other domestic chores, again freeing up girls for school). Improved forest management, which includes gender and labour considerations, such as the access to fuel wood can have an

impact on child labour requirements. Involving women in the design of programmes is important in ensuring that infrastructure programmes meet the needs of women and children.

9.4 Schools can be made more accessible to children, by organising the school calendar appropriately around agricultural activities, so that children can attend more easily. The curriculum can be made more relevant to everyday life, so that families can see the benefit of education. Community awareness of the benefits of education needs to be raised, through dialogue with communities.

9.5 **Women's Economic Empowerment** There's no debate about the importance of women for rural economic growth and poverty reduction. They fill many crucial roles, as farmers, wage labourers and small-scale entrepreneurs, as well as caretakers of children and the elderly. Rural women have the potential to lift their households and communities out of poverty, and evidence shows that when women have increased income, they invest in their children's education. But they are hampered by persistent gender inequities that limit their access to decent work, which they need as a vehicle for economic empowerment, social advancement and political participation. With equal access to productive resources and services, such as land, water and credit, women farmers can produce 20 to 30 percent more food, enough to globally lift 150 million people out of hunger.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

10.1 The major underlying cause of child labour is poverty; therefore poverty reduction in rural areas is essential to prevent child labour and to speed progress in its elimination. Food and nutrition security, income security and social services (e.g. access to education and health care) are vital in preventing child labour and to weathering short and long term crises without turning to children to supply extra labour and income. Risk management and preparedness are also important in developing coping strategies that do not increase child labour or exposure to hazardous practices.

10.2 An integrated approach to poverty reduction and to preventing and reducing child labour in agriculture is needed which should include decent work for parents including improved systems of labour relations, enforcement of child labour legislation, appropriate incentive schemes to encourage families to send children to school, such as school feeding programmes, social safety nets to protect families in times of crisis, and awareness raising of child labour issues. Approaches need to be based on detailed information, and a clear understanding of issues within specific agricultural communities. Different strategies are required in addressing child labour concerns in large plantations and farms, where children are often employees, and in small farms where children are often family help. FAO can provide support both through addressing specific knowledge gaps and normative work, such as that done through the International Partnership on Cooperation for Addressing Child Labour in Agriculture in partnership with ILO, and through instruments such as the Rotterdam Convention on pesticides, and through more specific interventions such as Farmer Field Schools.

10.3 Concerted efforts by a variety of stakeholders are needed to effectively address child labour. This requires the involvement of differing line ministries within governments (including Ministry of Labour, Agriculture, Education), development partners, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), employers' and workers' organizations, producer organizations and other socio-professional organizations, and communities. By applying holistic, participatory, integrated and practical approaches, a better life for millions of children can be created. Ministries of Agriculture and Labour can create an enabling environment by mainstreaming child labour concerns in agricultural and rural development policies and programmes. Promotion of policy coherence and cooperation is needed at all levels between core stakeholders to adequately address the complexity of causes of child labour, bridging ministries of agriculture and labour at national and decentralised levels.

10. More detailed information is required to understand the underlying causes of child labour in specific farming systems; to identify the best strategy for its prevention and elimination. Consideration needs to be given to large farms, family smallholdings, pastoralists, fishing communities, and forestry. Issues relating to discrimination and exclusion of vulnerable groups and communities need to be identified. Effective child labour reduction will require

targeted strategies to effectively address the most vulnerable populations as well as monitoring mechanisms suitable to these contexts and situations. These will especially need to reach the following groups: small scale family farmers (and children that work in marginal farms as contributing family members and casual wage work); migrant agricultural workers; pastoralists/livestock husbandry; and artisanal fisheries. For policies to be effective and coherent, priorities should be given first to those locations and sectors in which child labour is highest and most hazardous.

10.5 Creating awareness among local communities of the negative impacts of child labour is important as a first step in securing community participation and empowerment in the prevention and elimination of child labour. Programmes such as Farmer Field Schools, and JFFLS are an effective means of awareness raising. Communities should be encouraged to establish protection networks, and to monitor instances of child labour.

**Governments should:**

- Include child labour issues in agricultural and labour censuses to provide a clear picture of the areas of greatest concentration, and most hazardous child labour
- Make child labour a cross cutting issue by increasing awareness on child labour in agriculture at all levels of government and promote policy coherence, within and between ministries.
- Define lists of hazardous labour in agriculture in line with the ILO Child Labour conventions
- Promote agricultural development policies with the potential to reduce child labour through Good Agricultural Practices, such as conservation agriculture, IPPM, labour saving technologies, and rural youth employment through approaches such as Junior Farmer Field Schools
- Provide free schooling, with curricula relevant to farming communities, and with school hours adapted to local needs. Introduce school feeding programmes or other incentives to attract children to school

**Development partners should assist governments in implementing the above defined actions, in particular:**

- Mainstream child labour in all agricultural development projects and programmes.
- Promote disaggregated data collection on child labour in agriculture
- Promote training and awareness raising activities on child labour issues in agriculture to governments, civil society organizations and communities.
- Promote Good agricultural practices with the potential to reduce demand for child labour, such as conservation agriculture, IPPM, labour saving technologies, and junior farmer field schools.
- Provide support to carry out risk assessments and the definition of national lists of hazardous work in agriculture (in accordance with the ILO Child Labour conventions).
- Support development of educational facilities and schools in rural communities as well as school feeding programmes and other incentive mechanisms

**Civil society organizations and development partners at the local level should:**

- Support awareness raising and the changing of attitudes, as required, with regard to child labour in agriculture.
- Assist in organizational capacity building at the local level.
- Assess and monitor child labour issues at community level through participatory approaches.

**Employers' and workers' organizations and producer and socio-professional organizations should:**

- Actively collaborate with governments and their development partners to find practical solutions to prevent and abolish child labour in agriculture.
- Work together with governments and other partners to conduct risk assessments and identify hazardous child labour in agriculture (and draw up and periodically revise hazardous work lists).
- Engage in awareness raising campaigns.