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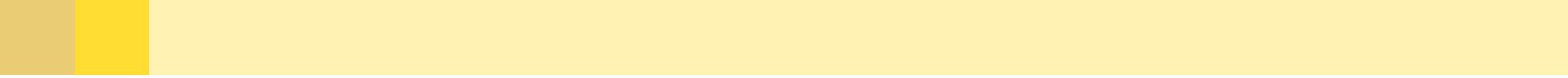


**THE ALLIANCE**  
FOR CHILD PROTECTION  
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# Reducing **child labour** **in agriculture** in humanitarian contexts

BACKGROUND PAPER





# Reducing child labour in agriculture in humanitarian contexts

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FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
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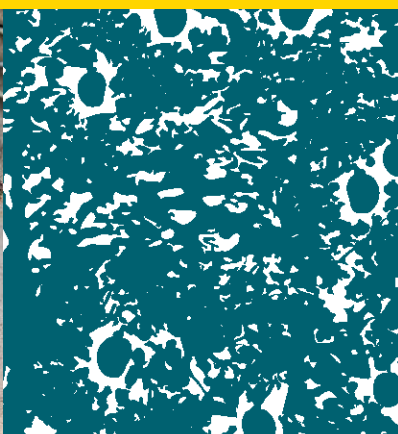
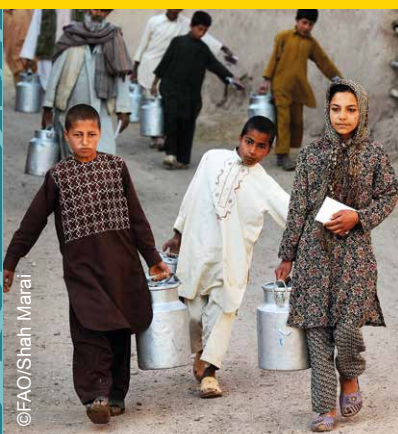
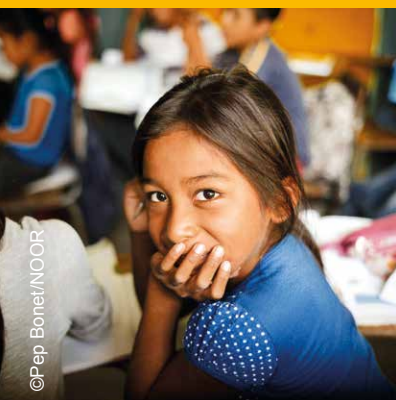
For the first time in a decade, **child labour is on the increase**, severely threatening the realization of the SDGs.

Of the estimated 160 million child labourers in the world in 2020, **70 percent are engaged in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture**, most in family operations, and there will be no elimination of child labour if small-scale farmers and fishers are not mobilized and supported.

Agricultural work is often an entry point into child labour, and **children working in agriculture are generally very young**. Agriculture accounts for 76.6 percent of all child labour in the age group 5-11 years and for 75.8 percent in the age group 12-14 years.

Young people between 15 and 17 years of age are particularly vulnerable to hazardous work though they may legally join the work force in non-hazardous work. **This age cohort may be out of school, have significant humanitarian needs**, and require skills, including on safety at work, to support their transition into adulthood. Safe livelihoods opportunities may provide suitable alternatives when education is not feasible or return to school is unlikely.

For younger children below the age of 14 to 15 years, ensuring that alternatives to child labour are in place for the children and their families is essential. This includes first and foremost **ensuring that all children, including children in remote rural areas and children on the move, have access to free, good quality compulsory education**.



Humanitarian contexts can involve a food chain crisis, violent conflict, protracted crisis, or natural disaster. In these contexts, families are displaced, livelihoods are lost, and access to schooling, social protection, and family support networks is disrupted - all of which heighten the risk of child labour in agriculture. **Building resilience of rural communities to such economic and agricultural shocks can mitigate the risks** and prevent child labour in agriculture.

There are many entry points to **address child labour in agriculture through humanitarian agricultural and food security programmes**, which can save lives of children, their families, and communities, whilst also contributing to the development of sustainable food and agriculture value chains without child labour.

Child labour in agriculture in humanitarian contexts is a multi-layered problem that requires action from a diverse range of stakeholders; **coordination is key to monitor, understand and address the specific drivers** of child labour in these contexts.





In 2020, **155 million** people in **55 countries/regions** were in crisis or worse – an increase of about **20 million** people from 2019.

Of those people in crisis or worse, **66 percent** (**103.2 million**) were in **ten countries/regions**:

Democratic Republic of the Congo (**21.8 million**), Yemen (**13.5 million**), Afghanistan (**13.2 million**), Syrian Arab Republic (**12.4 million**), the Sudan (**9.6 million**), northern Nigeria (**9.2 million**), Ethiopia (**8.6 million**), South Sudan (**6.5 million**), Zimbabwe (**4.3 million**) and Haiti (**4.1 million**)

(Food Security Information Network, 2021)







## 1. What is at stake?

Children around the world are negatively affected by worsening education opportunities and the socioeconomic impacts of measures to stop the transmission of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (United Nations, 2020). The pandemic may have pushed an additional 83 to 132 million people into hunger, and

where there is hunger, there is also an increased likelihood of child labour (FAO *et al.*, 2021). In fact, the latest global estimates on child labour suggest that a further 8.9 million children will be in child labour globally by the end of 2022 because of rising poverty and hunger driven by the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO and UNICEF, 2021).




In 2020, 155 million people in 55 countries/regions were in crisis or worse<sup>1</sup> – an increase of about 20 million people from 2019 (Food Security Information Network, 2021). Of those people in crisis or worse, 66 percent (103.2 million) were in ten countries/regions: Democratic Republic of the Congo (21.8 million), Yemen (13.5 million), Afghanistan (13.2 million), Syrian Arab Republic (12.4 million), the Sudan (9.6 million), northern Nigeria (9.2 million), Ethiopia (8.6 million), South Sudan (6.5 million), Zimbabwe (4.3 million) and Haiti (4.1 million) (Food Security Information Network, 2021). The impacts on agriculture and food systems of these often-compounding shocks and crises drive millions of people to lose their livelihoods and result in a lack of sufficient and nutritious food. In fact, the main drivers for acute food insecurity were conflict (99 million people), economic shocks influenced by COVID-19 containment measures (44 million people) and extreme weather events (16 million people).

<sup>1</sup> According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) and the Cadre Harmonisé (CH), populations in crisis (IPC/CH phase 3), emergency (IPC/CH phase 4) or catastrophe (IPC/CH phase 5) are those in need of urgent action (Food Security Information Network, 2021).





A young child with dark skin and short hair is smiling broadly at the camera. They are sitting in a light-colored wooden chair with decorative carvings. The child is wearing a yellow t-shirt and a colorful patterned scarf. The background shows a dry, dusty outdoor area with some greenery and trees in the distance. Another person is partially visible behind the child, also sitting in the chair.

The pandemic may have pushed an additional 83 to 132 million people into hunger, and where there is hunger, there is also an increased likelihood of child labour.

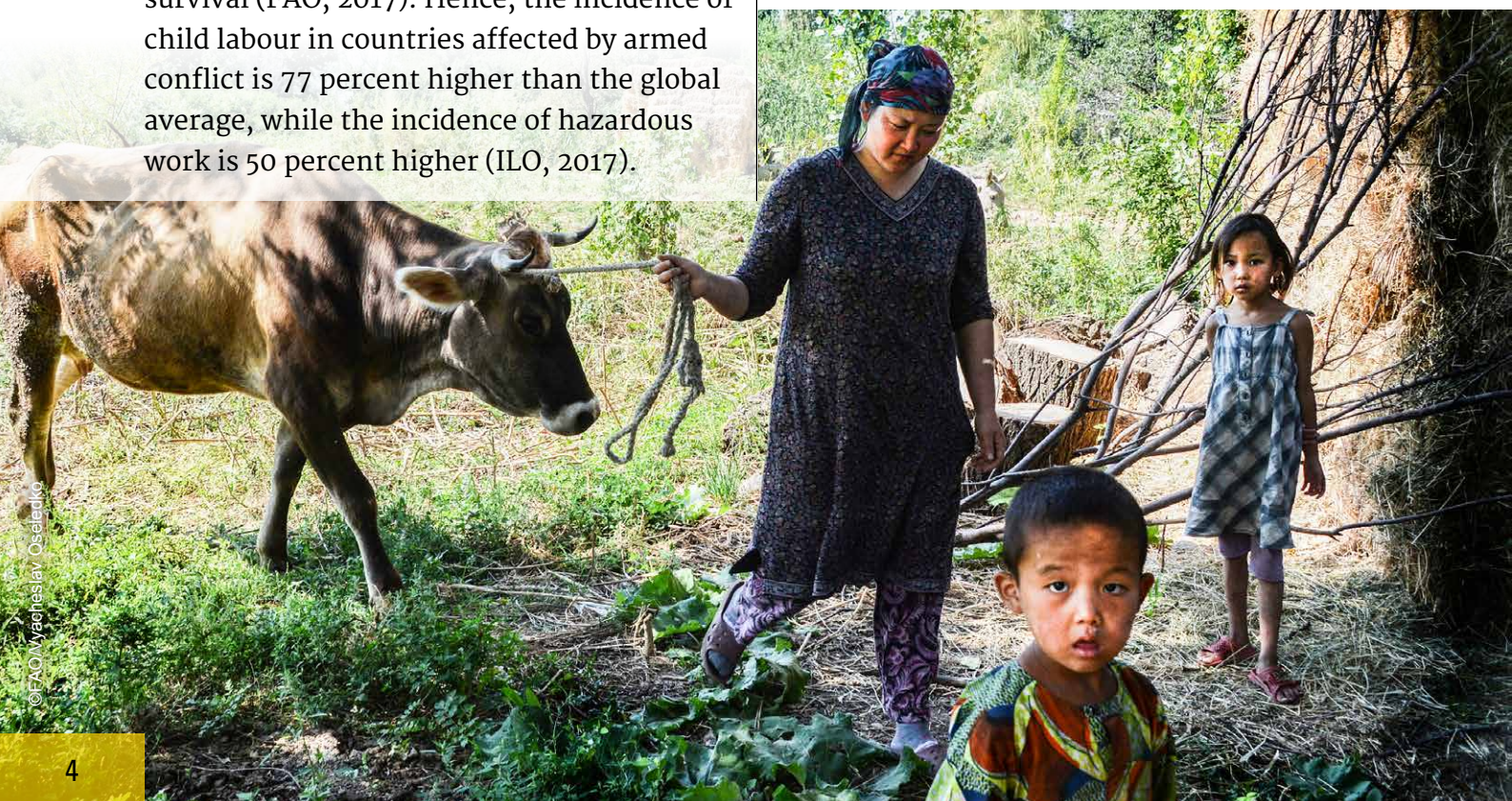
(FAO *et al.*, 2021)



## 2. The challenges and consequences of conflict, fragility and disaster

Worldwide, one in every four children lives in a country struck by conflict, fragility and/or disaster (UNICEF, 2017). In these contexts, families displace and livelihoods, schooling, social protection, family support networks and the rule of law are disrupted, all of which heighten the risk of child labour (ILO and UNICEF, 2021). Homes are destroyed, agricultural livelihoods and assets are lost, safe food and clean water are put at risk, exposure to diseases and chemicals increase, and access to education is often interrupted. Rural and agricultural communities bear a heavy burden of these crises, with children pushed into labour for survival (FAO, 2017). Hence, the incidence of child labour in countries affected by armed conflict is 77 percent higher than the global average, while the incidence of hazardous work is 50 percent higher (ILO, 2017).

Conflict, fragility and disaster may also exacerbate existing gender disparities. For example, women may be more at risk of violence when they go out to work, while children may be less visible going to work in their place. Likewise, the gender dimensions of child labour may be more pronounced in humanitarian contexts, as girls may be at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, child marriage and school dropout. At the same time, adolescent boys in particular may be more vulnerable to hazardous work in certain humanitarian contexts (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020).





## 2.1. Main forms of crises and typical induced forms of child labour<sup>2</sup>

### 2.1.1. Food chain crises

Food chain crises can be rapid or slow onset, disrupting livelihoods, causing food insecurity and impacting incomes and markets (see, for example, the desert locust invasion referred to in section 3.2.1). They can impact child labour in a variety of ways, including the following:

- ▶ Increased use of chemicals to control and/or eradicate plant pests and diseases exposes children working in agriculture to increased risks from toxic pesticides.
- ▶ Exposure to hazardous forms of child labour may be higher because children are on their own or because caregivers are less observant or are under economic distress.
- ▶ Outbreaks of animal diseases can be transmitted to humans (such as Rift Valley fever and avian influenza) and increase health threats of children working in livestock production and processing.
- ▶ Children may be involved in the treatment of animals for disease and the associated herding movements, as part of efforts to eradicate disease, which increases their vulnerability to physical harm and exposure to chemical hazards.

- ▶ Food chain crises affecting livelihoods in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries and aquaculture are likely to push children into child labour, as children are needed to support household income and production.

### 2.1.2. Protracted crises and conflict

Protracted crises and conflict can lead to substantial internal displacement movement of populations across international borders, during which refugees may endure severe food crises, the breakdown of livelihoods, the closure of schools, recruitment into armed groups, sexual exploitation, hazardous working conditions, trafficking and criminality.

Children face extreme risks in these situations. Children's vulnerability increases in fragile economic existences, widespread destruction, extensive violence, prolonged humanitarian responses, and significant protection and security risks.

Children's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labour, including debt bondage and trafficking, increases when displaced due to conflict into temporary shelters. Armed groups often recruit boys and girls who are already in the worst forms of child labour. Moreover, physical hazards such as firearms, landmines and the debris of conflict, including unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war, can make children's work in agriculture more dangerous.

Where the movement of people and goods during conflict is restricted, children are often used to negotiate barriers and face greater physical and emotional danger.

Furthermore, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons often have restricted access to the formal labour

<sup>2</sup> The information in this section is based on FAO, 2017.

market, which puts pressure on children to work. As children need to support household food security and income, unregulated and informal work for children can increase in situations of encampment with restricted mobility and limited access to quality education, health services and natural resources.

Conflict over resources can push children and families to seek alternative sources of food and water for their livestock, which can increase pastoralist children's exposure to violence. Girls and boys sent from camps to collect water and fuel are also at risk of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.

### 2.1.3. Disasters

Disasters are the result of the impact of hazards (of rapid and/or slow onset, and of natural and/or human-caused origin) on the existing vulnerabilities of a system. Disasters can lead to economic stagnation and unemployment, as they create significant loss of life, food and productive assets, and the destruction and disruption of rural infrastructure, markets and services. Schools may be destroyed and education options reduced. Extreme climate events may compel people to migrate. Population movements prompted by disasters linked with the impact of climate change include a mix of forced socioeconomic migration. With slow-onset crises such as drought, livelihood options shrink and people move, which is a process that may not be substantively different from socioeconomic migration.

The impact of disasters in the prevalence and forms of child labour is not always

consistent between contexts. Yet, children's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labour, including debt bondage and trafficking, can increase due to the loss of a home, schooling and physical safety, as well as displacement into temporary shelters.

Disasters can destroy agriculture food systems and related components, from production to consumption. Consequently, where families already depend on children's income, unemployment can place them at increased risk of unsafe migration and trafficking in search of work.

Massive reconstruction efforts following a disaster can create additional types of child labour and pull children into inappropriate reconstruction, extraction or processing activities. Rapid growth in sectors that support large-scale responses, such as the provision of goods and services and transportation, provide an easy entry point into child labour (FAO, 2017).

## 2.2. Impact of COVID-19 on child labour in agriculture

While crises continue to displace people, disrupt livelihoods and damage economies, the COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures have exacerbated pre-existing drivers of fragility, widened inequalities and exposed the structural vulnerabilities of local and global food systems. The most economically vulnerable households have been affected particularly hard (Food Security Information Network, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic together with child labour offers substantial cause for concern. Already in 2019, 582 million



children lived in poverty, and in 2020, the pandemic increased the number of children in income-poor households by an estimated 142 million (UNICEF, 2020).

Growing anecdotal evidence sheds light on how the COVID-19 crisis is affecting children (ILO and UNICEF, 2021). Instability and economic vulnerability of households caused by the pandemic is reportedly contributing to increases in child labour (Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2021). For example, Human Rights Watch collected testimonies from children in Ghana, Nepal and Uganda who have been newly pushed into child labour or who endure more difficult work circumstances. Some children said that their families no longer had sufficient food and that they were working to get enough to eat. Other indicated that their work was frequently long and arduous – one-third of the respondents in each country had to work for at least ten hours a day, and some 16 hours. Moreover, since the closure of schools, those already working before the crisis said they were working more hours (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

These general findings apply also to children working in agriculture. For example, an assessment of 263 communities in Côte d'Ivoire found a significant increase in child labour in cocoa businesses from July to September 2020 compared to the same period 12 months earlier (International Cocoa Initiative, 2020). In Egypt, children are reportedly being sent to work in cotton cultivation and other agricultural work as a result of the pandemic (ILO, 2020). It is also likely that families who have lost jobs elsewhere return to subsistence farming to survive, which may further increase child labour in agriculture due to COVID-19, at least in the short term (ILO and UNICEF, 2021).









# 3. Opportunities for action against child labour in agriculture in humanitarian contexts

## 3.1. Humanitarian approach to addressing child labour

The global community is committed to eliminating all forms of child labour, as expressed in Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7. The approaches used to pursue this goal can differ in humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts. Development programmes focus on strengthening child labour policy and legislation, law enforcement and long-term strategies to reduce poverty, as well as on increasing decent work opportunities. In humanitarian settings, the type of emergency and the scale, severity and urgency of the humanitarian needs inform the strategic priorities and actions (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020). Humanitarian action is focused on life- and livelihood-saving actions that address the immediate impact of the crisis or disaster, while also addressing the root causes of the risks and vulnerabilities in recovery interventions, in line with the humanitarian–development–peace nexus.

A humanitarian approach to addressing child labour focuses primarily on:

- ▶ preventing child labour by addressing the risk factors that relate to, or are made worse by, the humanitarian crisis, and by strengthening protective factors; and
- ▶ responding to the most prevalent and worst forms of child labour, especially those forms that may relate to, or have been made worse by, the humanitarian crisis, as well as child labour among younger children (below the age of 11 years).

This approach is reflected in Standard 12 of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action:

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**“all children are protected from child labour, especially the worst forms of child labour, which may relate to or be made worse by the humanitarian crisis”**

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*(The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019).*

## 3.2. Integrating child labour prevention into agriculture, food security and nutrition programming

In fragile and emergency settings, child labour in agriculture is often addressed by experts from social, labour and protection sectors. Yet integrating child labour prevention into agriculture, food security and nutrition programming is an important part of the solution. Child labour should be integrated into the following areas of programming in particular:

- ▶ needs assessment and targeting
- ▶ coordination and collaboration
- ▶ programme design and implementation
- ▶ programme monitoring and evaluation.

### 3.2.1. Needs assessment and targeting

Accurate and timely assessments provide the foundation and justification to support interventions in humanitarian contexts. Context and vulnerability assessments, which are undertaken to provide an understanding of the risks, will offer the insights that are needed to programme child labour prevention measures, while (post-disaster) needs assessments, which are carried out to provide an understanding of the impact of a hazardous event, as well as the response and recovery needs, will support the humanitarian response with a focus on child labour concerns.

Both types of assessments also provide suitable opportunities to gather information and analyse child labour issues that affect agricultural households in emergencies; however, these assessments are not often done automatically. Moreover, child labour concerns should be integrated into any pre-assessment trainings and briefings.

Key tasks to integrate child labour concerns into assessments are as follows (FAO, 2017):

- ▶ understanding whether child labour would be a problem if an emergency were to affect agricultural communities;
- ▶ identifying any immediate indications that child labour would be a considerable concern in agricultural communities following an emergency;
- ▶ understanding how the situation has changed and continues to change;
- ▶ collecting data to identify the impact of economic shocks on families and their livelihoods.

Targeting is an essential component of programming. Careful targeting can include children in child labour and their families in programmes that improve household productivity and income and decrease the need for child labour.

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**In contrast, poor targeting can lead to stigma, discrimination and violence, and can increase demand for child labour**

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(FAO, 2017).



Hence, existing context and assessment data on the child labour situation should be used to inform the beneficiary selection – for instance, whether universal, community-led or self-selecting targeting is suitable to reach the objectives of the programme. Assistance to high-risk communities should be prioritized as

a child labour preventive and response measure. Moreover, flexible and ongoing pathways for targeting and inclusion in programmes should be created so that households identified through other sector programmes, such as child protection or education, can be referred for support (FAO, 2017).

### Box 1: locust control in the Greater Horn of Africa

A serious and widespread desert locust upsurge has been threatening, since the beginning of 2020, crops and pastures across Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, with the potential to cause deterioration in the food security situation and threatening the livelihoods of 20 million people.

This crisis poses serious child protection risks, such as the exposure to hazardous forms of child labour. With the high number of children involved in agricultural work (farming and pastoralism) in the region, as children are on their own or because caregivers are not as observant as in normal times or are under economic distress, children are at a higher risk of exposure to pesticides (FAO, 2021). Attending school may no longer be possible due to restricted access and limited mobility within the area and unsafe conditions. In addition, harvest failure increases the chances that children will be needed to support household income and production (FAO, 2017).

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other stakeholders in the region are striving to address the situation by adopting multisectoral approaches that reflect the interconnected needs of children and emphasize the collective responsibility of all humanitarian actors to protect children and their families. To this end, some of the key actions are:

- ▶ Adapt existing child protection assessment and monitoring tools, methodologies and indicators for the joint identification, analysis and monitoring of, and response to, targeted areas for desert locust control.
- ▶ Coordinate with desert locust control operation actors, partners, line ministries and community members to include child labour and child protection concerns in the preparedness, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of response plan interventions. Indicators on vulnerable children by gender, age, disability and other relevant diversity factors, should be disaggregated.
- ▶ Gather data and information on child labour issues and integrate them into different stages of assessment before any trainings, briefings or other interventions take place. Profile and identify families with high levels of vulnerability that may resort to child labour. Target and integrate child labour-sensitive activities in the design and implementation of desert locust response plans.
- ▶ Raise awareness and engage with families and agricultural actors, underlining the incidence of child labour and its impact on agriculture.

Source: (FAO, 2021)

### 3.2.2. Coordination and collaboration

The complex nature of child labour requires strong coordination and collaboration between a wide range of development and humanitarian actors, across all levels of society and across multiple sectors, to provide the services needed for the prevention of child labour and the withdrawal of children from child labour (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020).

Hence, coordination among stakeholder agencies and across sectors to tackle child labour in agriculture should be promoted, which can take different forms. For example, as the Food Security Cluster and the Protection and Education Clusters may aim for similar outcomes for vulnerable households, opportunities for coordination and partnerships may arise between these Clusters. The Basic Needs and Nutrition Clusters may also be strategic counterparts. At the local level, the participation of agricultural stakeholders in child labour monitoring systems and other referral pathways should be supported.





Agricultural stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations working towards food security, ministries of agriculture or environment, agricultural cooperatives and private organizations, play an important role in the prevention and reduction of child labour in agriculture, along with ministries of education, labour and social protection.

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**Agricultural stakeholders have the capacity to strengthen agricultural and food productivity, create livelihood opportunities and change labour conditions – all of which can reduce child labour in agriculture.**

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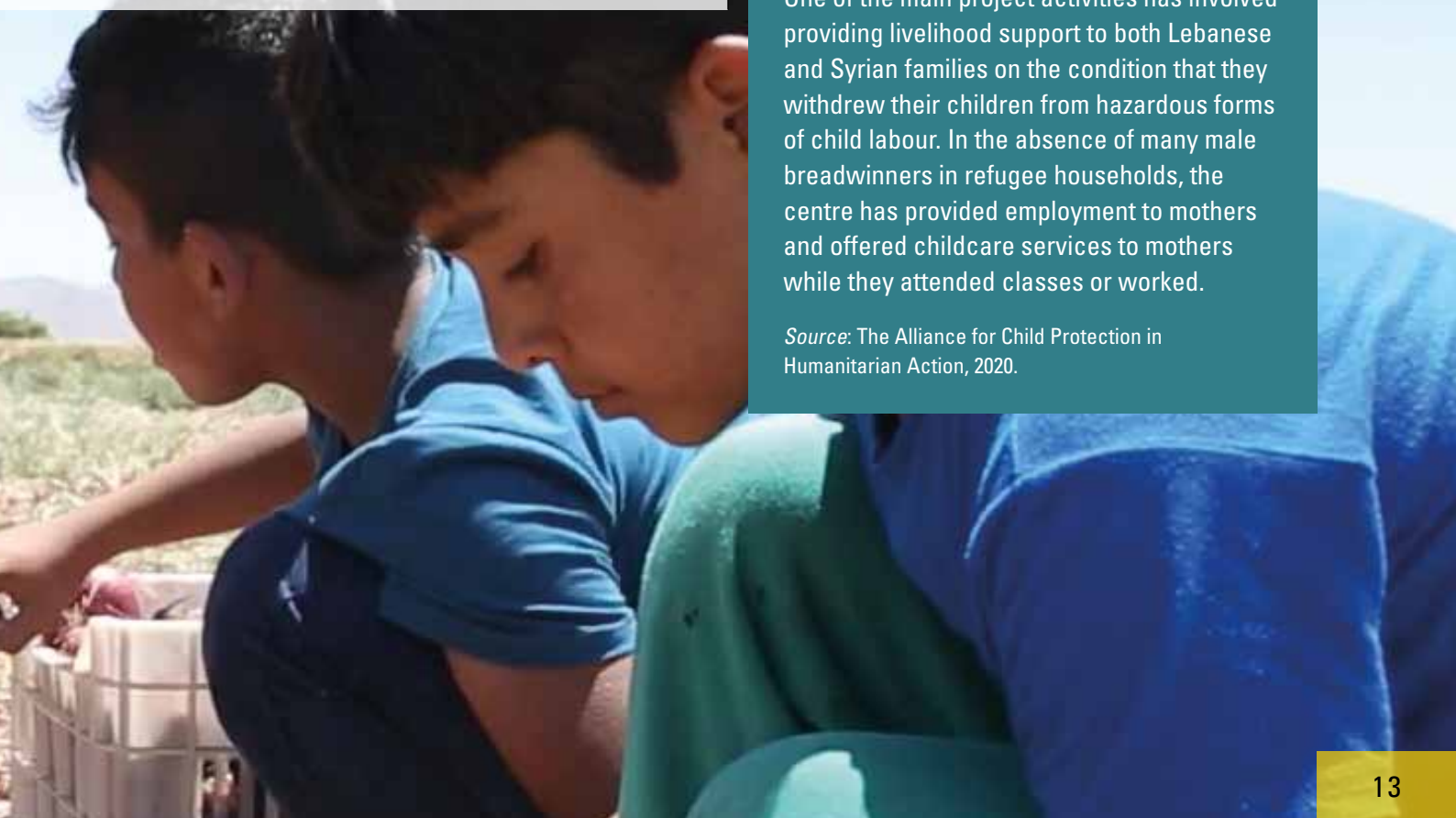
### **Box 2: creating livelihood opportunities in response to child labour in agriculture in Lebanon**

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In Lebanon, child labour in agriculture is highly prevalent, involving both Lebanese children and Syrian refugee children, who often live and work in informal tented settlements on vast agricultural lands. Syrian refugee children in particular are found in exploitative, abusive and hazardous forms of child labour, including bonded or forced labour. The Beyond Association, a national non-governmental organization, has developed and implemented a comprehensive package of coordinated services for children in agricultural child labour.

Following consultation with parents or caregivers and children, a service package was developed to prevent, withdraw and rehabilitate children from the worst forms of child labour in agriculture and related supply chains in Lebanon. The Beyond Association established a child labour centre through which these services have been provided. One of the main project activities has involved providing livelihood support to both Lebanese and Syrian families on the condition that they withdrew their children from hazardous forms of child labour. In the absence of many male breadwinners in refugee households, the centre has provided employment to mothers and offered childcare services to mothers while they attended classes or worked.

*Source:* The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020.



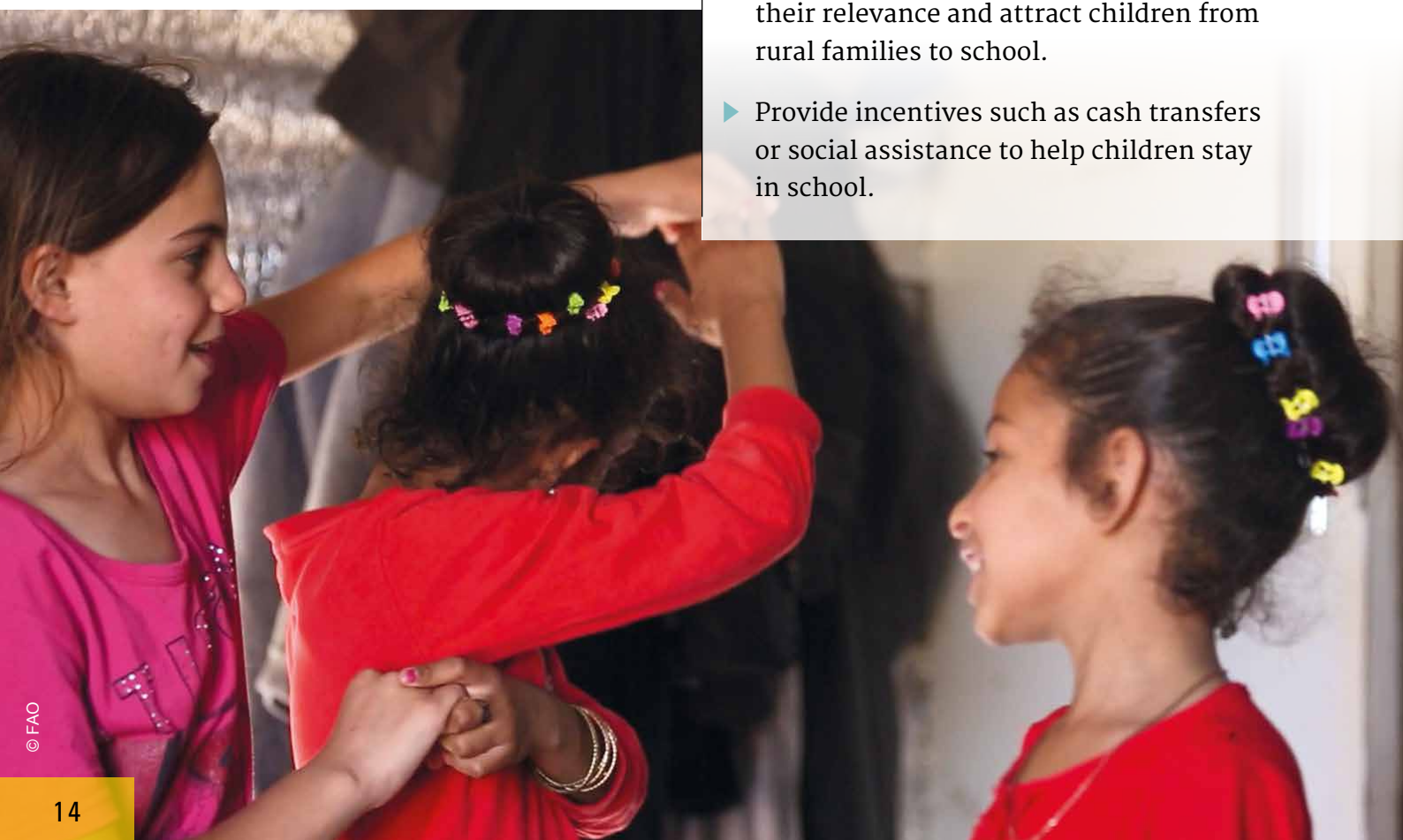
### 3.2.3. Programme design and implementation

Resilience and response programmes should be designed in ways that provide safe work opportunities for caregivers and children of working age whose families are vulnerable to child labour. Humanitarian assistance during emergencies must not result in poorer working conditions for adults and young people of working age (FAO, 2017). In general, the principle of “do no harm” must be observed, which implies that the programme must not inadvertently encourage or provide incentives for child labour.

Whenever possible, programme design and implementation should be integrated into a multisectoral approach in order to connect children in child labour and their families with multisectoral services and respond to their holistic needs.

Actions taken through agricultural and food security programmes may include:

- ▶ Raise awareness on child labour among producers and communities.
- ▶ Build the capacity of extension agents or facilitation teams on child labour.
- ▶ Reduce hazards for children of legal working age and aim to transform hazardous work among those children into decent work, which can help to alleviate the financial difficulties experienced by families who are displaced and/or recovering from a crisis.
- ▶ Increase agricultural livelihood opportunities to prevent child labour by providing, for example, livestock, capacity-building and skills training, and technology.
- ▶ Include nutrition and agriculture in school curricula or projects to enhance their relevance and attract children from rural families to school.
- ▶ Provide incentives such as cash transfers or social assistance to help children stay in school.







Humanitarian assistance during emergencies **must not result in poorer working** conditions for adults and young people of working age.

(FAO,2017)



### Box 3: school gardens in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the number of food-insecure people is high; access to food is a daily struggle for a significant part of the population, creating a push factor for child labour. War Child UK has set up three sustainable school farms that will build key agricultural skills, provide locally grown meals to primary school children returning after the lockdowns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and create a much-needed revenue stream. These activities are achieved by securing land and training children and adults in the community on advanced agricultural skills and providing meals to children who may otherwise look for work to feed themselves.

Emerging lessons learned from the project include the following:

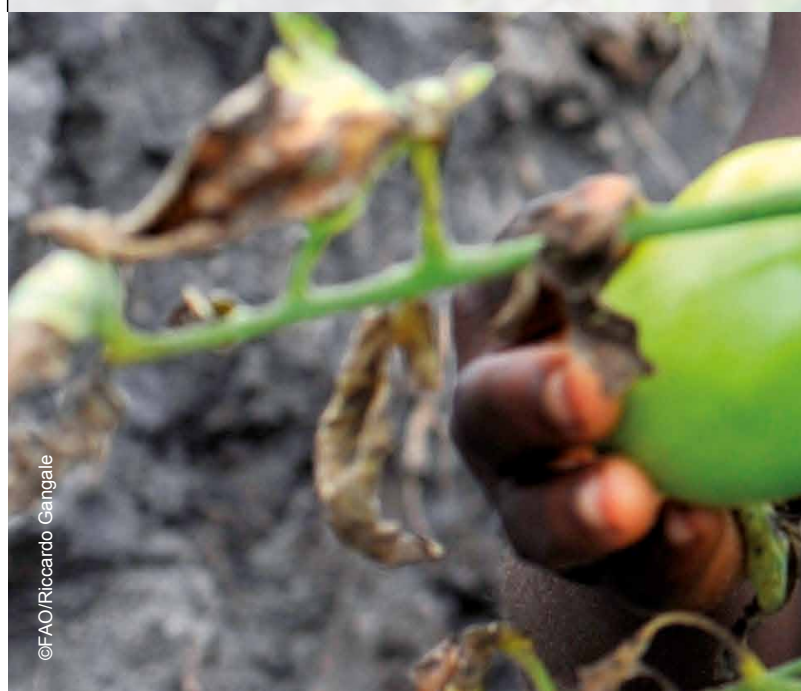
- ▶ It is important to motivate parents to become involved in the cultivation of the gardens. To keep costs low, this can be done by providing more regular trainings or one-off agricultural tools as incentives.
- ▶ It is important to provide a sufficient and flexible budget for seeds, fertilizers and storage space and to ensure the security of the fields from theft and damage.
- ▶ Before or after attending school, children should be given the opportunity to get involved in light work in the garden so that they can learn skills from their parents. Children's involvement should be monitored so that their capacity to attend school and their overall well-being are ensured.

Source: CPC Learning Network and PACE Consortium, 2021.

### 3.2.4. Programme monitoring and evaluation

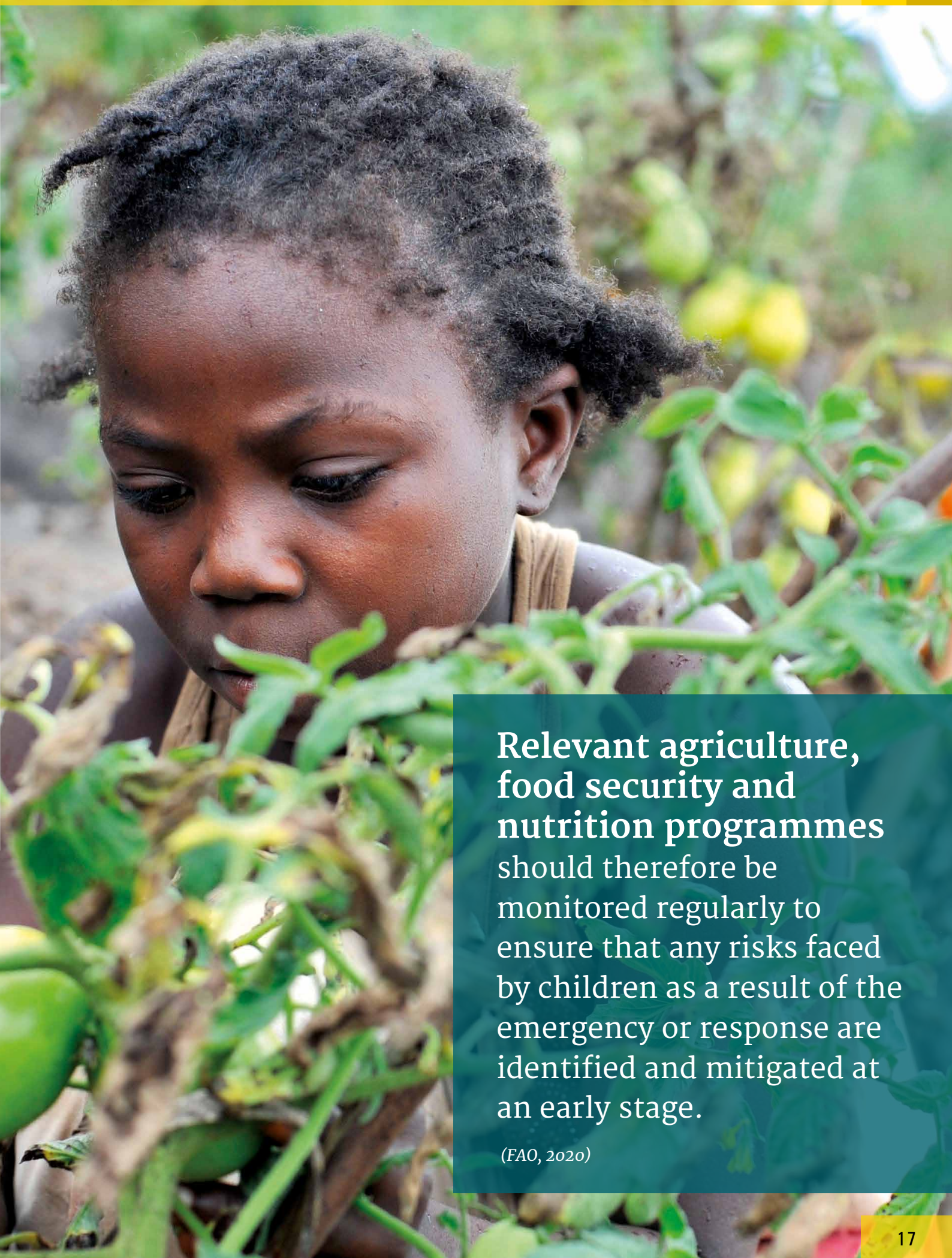
Monitoring and evaluation are key to ensuring the success of a programme. Specifically, monitoring the impact of programmes on children and their role in the household is essential. Monitoring is critical to ensuring the implementation of a programme's "do no harm" principle, whether activities are implemented to address child labour in agriculture or to prevent the exposure of people to harm due to inadvertent impacts of humanitarian programming.

Relevant agriculture, food security and nutrition programmes should therefore be monitored regularly to ensure that any risks faced by children as a result of the emergency or response are identified and mitigated at an early stage (FAO, 2020). This includes involving working children and their caregivers in monitoring and evaluation. In areas with pre-existing child labour, it is essential that they participate in order to ensure that the issues of working children are taken into consideration (FAO, 2017).



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**Relevant agriculture, food security and nutrition programmes** should therefore be monitored regularly to ensure that any risks faced by children as a result of the emergency or response are identified and mitigated at an early stage.

(FAO, 2020)



## 4. Recommendations

- ▶ Moving forward, the following three areas are among those that merit particular attention:
- ▶ **integrating the prevention** of child labour into agricultural and food security programmes;
- ▶ **improving coordination** between development and humanitarian actors and increasing the engagement of agricultural stakeholders; and
- ▶ **addressing child labour** in the context of climate change and environmental degradation.



## 4.1 Integrating the prevention of child labour into agricultural and food security programmes

Child labour prevention should be integrated into agriculture, food security and nutrition programming, particularly in humanitarian situations. Well-timed interventions for crisis-affected populations can help to prevent, mitigate or even eliminate child labour in agriculture, while strengthening livelihoods and building sustainable and secure food systems (FAO and WFP, 2021).

The interventions could include the following actions:

- ▶ Integrate child labour prevention into food security and nutrition emergency preparedness and response, monitoring and evaluation to assess the positive and unintended negative impacts of programming.
- ▶ Build the capacities of communities, governments, employers and other key stakeholders, providing practical guidance on age-appropriate and safe agricultural work for children.
- ▶ Integrate child labour prevention into key institutional processes (such as evaluations, monitoring, risk assessments or audits).
- ▶ Support livelihood interventions for decent rural work, including through community projects to restore livelihoods, produce more food, and cope with future shocks and stresses. Integrate gender-responsive, labour-saving technology and practices. Support households and agricultural systems to build resilience and cope with shocks and stresses.
- ▶ Create decent work and safe income-generating activities for adolescents of legal working age, especially in the case of households where adolescents are the sole breadwinners in humanitarian contexts.
- ▶ Ensure safeguards are in place in all programmes to prevent child labour, such as mitigation strategies, codes of conduct, the prevention of exploitation and abuse, and the “do no harm” principle.
- ▶ Strengthen social cohesion and protection in agricultural areas for those directly and indirectly affected.
- ▶ Support access to education and school attendance through school feeding programmes to prevent child labour.

## 4.2. Improving coordination between development and humanitarian actors and increasing the engagement of agricultural stakeholders

The complex nature of child labour in agriculture in emergencies requires strong coordination and collaboration between a wide range of development and humanitarian actors, across all levels of society and across multiple sectors, to provide the services needed for the prevention of child labour and the withdrawal of children from child labour (see Section 3.2.2) (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020). In many countries, the actors working to eliminate child labour prior to a crisis can differ from the range of humanitarian actors responding to a crisis. When an emergency strikes, a coordinated response to child labour can be complicated by unclear mandates between humanitarian and development actors and between various sectors. The absence of non-humanitarian actors in the response often undermines existing efforts to combat child labour (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020).

Coordination relating to child labour in agriculture should therefore aim to bring agricultural and multisectoral actors together, draw from existing expertise, prevent the duplication of efforts and harmonize approaches to promote best practices and accountability for the affected children and families. Key actions for setting up effective coordination mechanisms include identifying the government authorities and national bodies responsible for addressing child labour in agriculture and deciding upon a suitable coordination structure for addressing child labour in a crisis situation (The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2020).

Globally, there is a need to generate more examples of good practices and lessons learned in relation to coordinating the humanitarian response, including with regard to child labour in agriculture in particular.



### 4.3. Addressing child labour in the context of climate change and environmental degradation

Climate change threatens global food security and the ability of countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. It affects in particular rural populations in the poorest countries that rely on natural resources and are subject to changing rainfall patterns, water scarcity, unpredictable weather events and sudden climate-related disasters, among others (FAO, 2020). Children are more greatly impacted by the dangers of climate change: their developing bodies and minds offer major vulnerability to vector-borne disease, sudden changes in temperature and other health consequences induced by extreme weather events (UNICEF, 2015). Children are typically involved in fetching water and collecting wood, tasks seriously complicated by water scarcity, climate change and environmental degradation. In the same vein, environmental degradation leads to droughts, floods, failing crops and soil erosion, resulting in higher food prices, food insecurity, strained natural resources, economic vulnerabilities and potential migration. Moreover, climate- and environment-related disasters have disproportionate impacts on children and young people, especially in rural and marginalized communities (FAO, 2020).

The impacts of climate change exacerbate one of the root causes of child labour: poverty. This causes children to start working, to work in unsafe conditions or undertake illicit activities contributing to further environmental damage, or to migrate for work. Climate-induced migration has been identified as a key factor in stopping children from attending school. Yet, children are also the youth of tomorrow. Reducing risks and vulnerabilities for children increases their chance of becoming young people with the skills and abilities to deal with climate change (FAO, 2020).

More research needs to be done on the link between the degradation of environmental conditions and child labour, as well as the appropriate interventions to prevent a further increase in child labour stemming from environmental degradation.

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# ACTING TOGETHER TO END **CHILD LABOUR** IN **AGRICULTURE**



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Rome, Italy

