



A901308

# Tackling worst forms of child labour in agriculture

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Turin, Italy



International  
Programme  
on the Elimination  
of Child Labour  
(IPEC)



International Training Centre



## Justification

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines child labour through two conventions, the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and combat it through the action of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), putting in place and coordinating technical cooperation projects in the field. Moreover, the aim of eliminating child labour in agriculture is supported, among other international labour standards, by the ILO Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184), which specifies that anyone below the age of 18 should not be involved in dangerous agricultural work.

A special priority is to eliminate as soon as possible what are termed the "worst forms of child labour" (WFCL). The WFCL especially associated with agriculture are:

- Hazardous child labour - largest category WFCL and one of the 3 most dangerous industries
- Trafficking and migration - internal and cross border
- Bonded labour
- Commercial sexual exploitation

Seventy per cent of working children are in agriculture - over 132 million girls and boys aged 5-14 years old. The vast majority of the world's child labourers are not toiling in factories and sweatshops or working as domestics or street vendors in urban areas, they are working on farms and plantations, sowing, cultivating and harvesting crops, spraying pesticides, and tending livestock on rural farms and plantations. These girls and boys play an important role in crop and livestock production, helping supply some of the food and drink we consume, and the fibres and raw materials we use to make other products. Examples include cocoa/chocolate, coffee, tea, sugar, fruits and vegetables, along with other agricultural products like tobacco and cotton.

It must be emphasized that not all work that children undertake in agriculture is bad for them or would qualify as work to be eliminated under the ILO Minimum Age Convention No. 138 or the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182. Age-appropriate tasks that are of lower risk and do not interfere with a child's schooling and leisure time is not at issue here. Indeed, many types of work experience for children can be positive, providing them with practical and social skills for work as adults. Improved self-confidence, self-esteem and work skills are attributes often detected in young people engaged in some aspects of farm work.

Agriculture, however, is one of the three most dangerous sectors in which to work at any age, along with construction and mining. Whether child labourers work on their parents' farms, are hired to work on the farms or plantations of others, or accompany their migrant farm-worker parents, the hazards and levels of risk they face can be worse than those for adult workers. Because children's bodies and minds are still growing and developing, exposure to workplace hazards can be more devastating and long lasting for them, resulting in lifelong disabilities. Therefore the line between what is acceptable work and what is not is easily crossed. This problem is not restricted to developing countries but occurs in industrialized countries as well.

Agriculture is also a sector where many children are effectively denied education which blights their future chances of escaping from the cycle of poverty by finding better jobs or becoming self-employed. The rural sector is often characterised by lack of schools, schools of variable quality, problems of retaining teachers in remote rural areas, lack of accessible education for children, poor/variable rates of rural school attendance, and lower standards of educational performance and achievement. Children may also have to walk long distances to and from school. Even where children are in education, school holidays are often built around the sowing and harvesting seasons.

While great progress has been made in many countries in reducing hazardous child labour in other sectors, a number of factors have made agricultural child labour a particularly difficult one to tackle. These are:

- Large numbers of children involved in all types of undertakings ranging from small- and medium-sized family farms, to large farms, plantations, and agro-industrial complexes. Historically, child labour, either as part of "family teams" or as individual workers, has played a significant part in employment in plantations and commercial agriculture around the world. Girl child labour in agriculture forms a significant part of the workforce. Key gender issues include how girls combine work in agriculture with domestic chores, resulting in reduced educational opportunities for them.
- Children around the world become farm labourers at an early age. Most statistical surveys only cover child workers aged 10 and above. However, many children begin work at an even earlier age. Rural children, in particular girls, tend to begin work young, at 5, 6 or 7 years of age. In some countries, children under 10 are estimated to account for 20 per cent of child labour in rural areas.
- The work that children perform in agriculture is often invisible and unacknowledged because they assist their parents or relatives on the family farm or they undertake piecework or work under a quota system on larger farms or plantations, often as part of migrant worker families.
- Agriculture is historically and traditionally an under-regulated sector in many countries. This means that child labour laws - if they exist - are often less stringent in agricultural industries than in other industries. In some countries, adult and child workers in agriculture are not covered by or are exempt from safety and health laws covering other categories of adult workers. Children, for example, are generally allowed to operate machinery and drive tractors at a younger age in agriculture than in other sectors.
- In rural areas especially, household income is insufficient to meet the needs of families. Children work as cheap labour because their parents are poor and do not earn enough to support the family or to send their children to school. Working children represent a plentiful source of cheap labour.

All of the above factors give agriculture a special status and make agricultural child labour a particularly difficult one to tackle. But it is precisely because of these factors - large numbers, girl child workers, hazardous nature of the work, lack of regulation, invisibility, denial of education and the effects of poverty - that agriculture should be a priority sector for the elimination of child labour. Unless a concerted effort is put in place to reducing agricultural child labour, it will be

impossible to achieve the ILO goal of elimination of all worst forms of child labour by 2016.

For agricultural and rural development to be sustainable, it cannot continue to be based on the exploitation of children in child labour. There is growing consensus that agriculture is a priority sector in which to develop and implement strategies, policies and programmes to combat child labour and to put agricultural and rural development and employment on a sustainable footing. In order to scale up work on eliminating child labour in agriculture, in 2007, the ILO launched a new International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture with five international agricultural organizations:

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF)

IPEC is also mainstreaming the issue into current ILO work on youth employment, and on promoting rural employment as a means of poverty reduction. Within this context, the IPEC Programme and the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) have considered timely to organize a specific training course aiming at tackling the worst forms of child labour in agriculture.



## Learning objectives

At the end of this course participants will be made knowledgeable and sensitized to the topic of worst forms of child labour in agriculture. The training will mix theory and practice. With the knowledge gained through the workshop, participants will learn about concepts and terminology on child labour, its worst forms and its manifestation in the agricultural sector, as well as about the main means and actions to combat it, especially its worst forms, at the national, regional and global levels and they will be able to better address this phenomenon in their everyday work.



## Participants' profile

This course is designed to attract a broad audience of all those who have an interest in deepening and broadening their existing knowledge on child labour in general and hazardous child labour in agriculture in particular.

Target participants include:

- Government representatives such as policy-makers, government officers, programme managers and others,

charged with formulating and implementing policies and programmes against child labour;

- Representatives of workers and employers' organizations charged with policy-making, advising and acting on child labour issues;
- International agricultural organizations
- National agricultural organizations - Ministries of agriculture, agricultural extension advisory service staff, agricultural research staff, agronomists etc;
- OSH specialists;
- Labour inspectors;
- Representatives of NGOs and civil society organizations working in the field of child labour and agriculture; and representatives of agricultural intergovernmental and international agencies and organizations, as well as ILO-IPEC officers and project staff.



## Structure and content of the training

This one-week course takes a broad view in looking at the worst forms of child labour in agriculture with a special emphasis on hazardous child labour. The course will address the following topics:

- Definitions, terminology and overview of child labour and of ILO legal framework on child labour, with a particular focus on worst forms of child labour
- Overview of child labour in agriculture and examples of child labour in the production of selected commodities
- Occupational, safety and health (OSH)
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- How to carry out and implement an OSH risks assessment in agriculture (farm and plantation)
- Hazardous child labour, injuries and ill health in agriculture; why children are at greater risk than adults
- Gender analysis, gender planning and child labour in agriculture
- Legal aspects on child labour; child labour and the law
- Comparison of national and international laws on child labour
- Mainstreaming child labour concerns into national agricultural policies and programmes; the role of national agencies to fight child labour in agriculture
- The role of international agencies and organizations to fight child labour in agriculture, especially through international partnerships: the role of ILO, IPEC, trade unions, employers' organizations and other stakeholders
- International initiatives against child labour, including the World Day Against Child Labour
- Child labour and rural education

During the course these questions will be analyzed through references to domestic and international experience, case scenarios, and institutional and legal structures from different regions of the world. Particular attention will be devoted to efforts made to prevent and stop hazardous child labour in agriculture, as well as to efforts made to address and treat the physical and psychological harm done by child labour in agriculture.



## Methodology

In addition to "classroom" sessions, group activities are foreseen to examine case studies and formulate practical recommendations. The course will seek to draw on the first hand experience of the participants to the maximum extent possible, using this as a basis for country-specific analysis of different types of situations of hazardous child labour in agriculture. The course will make a broad use of documents and materials published by ILO-IPEC on child labour, worst forms of child labour, and on agriculture.

Training will make a broad use of other techniques and media, such as video presentations and video screening. The course will be held in English. At the end of the course participants will be requested to provide an evaluation of course methodology and content.

## Course language

English

## Costs

The total cost of participation in the course is 2,000 **Euros** and includes tuition fees and subsistence costs.

### Tuition fees cover:

- tuition;
- books and training materials;
- course preparation, implementation and evaluation.

### Subsistence costs cover:

- full board and lodging at the Turin Centre's Campus;
- laundry;
- local study visit (if any);
- minor medical care and emergency medical insurance;
- socio-cultural activities.

The price indicated **does not** include travel costs between participants' home and the course venue. The cost of passports, visas to enter Italy, airport taxes, internal travel in the participant's home country and unauthorized stopovers is not reimbursed.

Payment should be made in advance by bank transfer to:

Account No. 560001  
Bank: Intesa-Sanpaolo SPA  
IBAN: IT36 B030 6901 1911 0000 0560 001  
SWIFT: BCITITMM701  
Address: Viale Maestri del Lavoro 10, 10127 Turin - Italy

Note: On the bank transfer form, kindly state your name and the course code (A901308).

## Fellowships

Fellowships are available to qualifying candidates.

The employers' organizations and workers' organizations to be granted a fellowship for this activity will be selected by the Secretaries of the Employers' Group and of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

## Applications

Applications to participate should be sent, by e-mail ([normesturin@itcilo.org](mailto:normesturin@itcilo.org)) or by fax (+39 011 693 6906), to the Manager of the Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Programme.

They should be supported by a curriculum vitae and a nomination letter from the sponsoring/funding institution.

*In line with the ILO's mandate to promote social justice and universally recognized human and labour rights, the Turin Centre encourages applications from women.*

## For further information, please contact:

International Training Centre of the ILO  
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