

Child Labour Situational Analysis in the Agricultural Sector



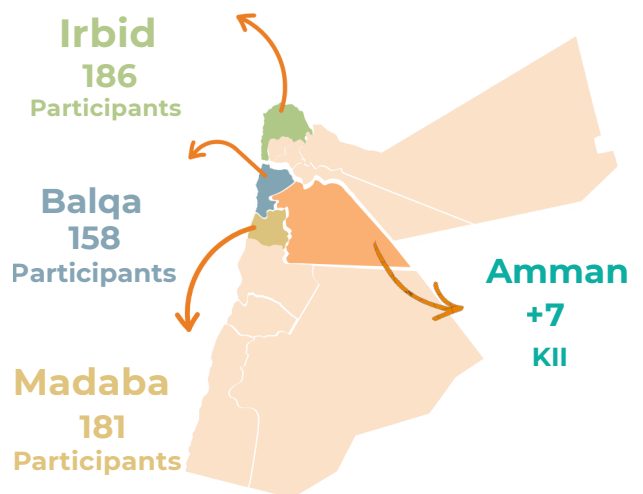
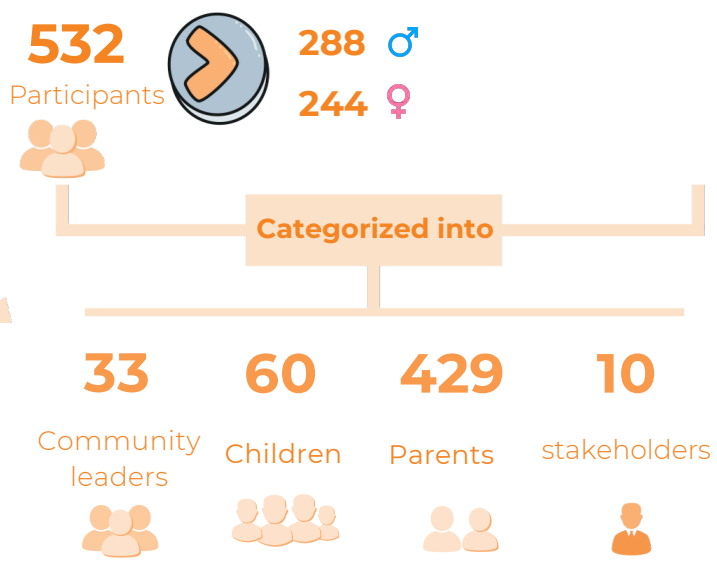
Grow Economy project is a three-year project implemented in four governorates Irbid, Ajloun, Madaba, and Balqa, with the financial support of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD). The project is implemented by Acted, Action Against Hunger (ACF), Terre des hommes (TDH), Phenix Centre for Sustainable Development, ECO Consult, and The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), in coordination with the National Agricultural Research Center (NARC). The project aims to contribute to the economic empowerment of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians working in the agriculture sector by improving working conditions and fostering increased and diversified income sources to strengthen households' resilience to unpredictable shocks and stressors.

The analysis of child labour in the governorates of Irbid, Madaba, and Balqa focuses on agricultural work, as it is considered a high-risk sector for children. It aims to assess the prevalence of child labour, the conditions in which children work, and the extent to which their rights, safety standards, and access to education are understood and applied. The analysis highlights key gaps in legal protection, as well as the social and economic factors driving child labour, and emphasizes the urgent need for policies and interventions that place child protection at the core of their priorities.

The assessment findings constitute a key element in policy formulation by providing essential data and offering in-depth insights into workers' rights systems and legislation, as well as the application of decent work standards.

Methodology

The situational analysis study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys were conducted to assess the scale of child labour, the conditions in which children work, and the associated risks in the governorates of Irbid, Madaba, and Balqa. The study also aimed to identify the underlying causes of this phenomenon, as well as gaps in services and in the enforcement of relevant laws



Note: Relevant stakeholders include international organizations, representatives of local community-based organizations, and government representatives.

Key Findings



1 Unsafe working environments and lack of basic services

Common tasks include harvesting (53%), land cleaning/soil preparation (27%), heavy lifting (12%), and handling pesticides/chemicals (8%).

58% reported the absence of clean and functional toilets, while 40% indicated a lack of shaded rest areas. Personal protective equipment and first aid kits are almost entirely unavailable.

2 Early entry into work, with the majority being adolescents

62% are aged 14–17, 29% are 10–13, and nearly 10% start working as young as 7 years old. Younger children are often unpaid or receive very low wages.

5 Severe impacts and weak institutional response

Children are exposed to physical, psychological, and sexual risks, including heatstroke, insect bites, machinery-related accidents, and pesticide poisoning, as well as anxiety, bullying, and harassment. Syrian children are more likely to drop out of school. Awareness of relevant laws is limited, inspections are weak, and violations are rarely reported—mainly due to fear of losing income or lack of knowledge about reporting mechanisms.

3 Disparities based on nationality and gender

Syrian children tend to start working at an earlier age and work longer hours (5–6 hours per day, 6–7 days per week) for lower wages compared to Jordanian children (typically 2–4 hours per day). Boys are often assigned heavier and more hazardous tasks, such as lifting, operating machinery, and spraying pesticides, while girls are mainly engaged in harvesting, sorting, and domestic work, and are frequently exposed to harassment. The average wage is approximately 1JOD per hour, with a higher likelihood of underpayment or non-payment among Syrian children and younger age groups.

4 Child labour is a widespread and socially accepted practice.

88% of caregivers reported that their children work alongside them, and this is often perceived as “supporting the family” rather than being considered formal labour.

Recommendations



1 Making farms safe for children

Ensure the availability of clean toilets, safe drinking water, shaded rest areas, and first aid kits, provide personal protective equipment, and deliver safety training for both children and farm owners on safe working practices.

4 Raising awareness

Engage community leaders, teachers, health workers, and religious leaders to raise awareness among families about the risks of child labour and children’s rights. Messages should be designed in a way that considers families’ economic realities and helps build trust.

2 Supporting education

Provide cash incentives for education, school kits, and transportation allowances, along with flexible learning options such as remedial classes, evening sessions, and vocational training aligned with local labor market needs.

3 Strengthening enforcement and coordination

Increase unannounced inspection visits; develop a digital work permit system to monitor working conditions; enhance coordination among the Ministries of Labour, Education, and Social Development; and engage civil society organizations in case management.



Every child in the world has the right to a childhood. It's that simple.

Terre des hommes is a leading Swiss organization in the field of child rights. In 2023, we supported 2.1 million children and members of their communities, and trained individuals who, in turn, reached and supported an additional 3 million people. These interventions are funded by individuals and private institutions, while keeping administrative costs to a minimum.

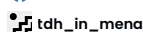
For More information



tdh.jo



Terre des hommes - MENA



tdh_in_mena



www.tdh.org

Terre des hommes

Jordan Tower, Abdul Hameed Shoman Street
Shmeisani, Amman, Jordan