TOOL

Measuring Child Labour in Humanitarian Settings

Child labour data can be hard to come by, especially when it comes to the worst forms of child labour. At the same time, this data is essential to inform strategic decision-making and response planning in humanitarian settings. This checklist contains key actions to improve measurement of child labour in humanitarian settings.

KEY ACTIONS TO MEASURE CHILD LABOUR IN HUMANITARIAN SETTINGS

TAKE A GENDER AND AGE-RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO MEASURING CHILD LABOUR

○ In settings where unpaid child labour is (likely to be) prevalent, such as domestic or agricultural work within the family, ensure that data collection does not exclusively focus on economic activity.

○ Include both paid and unpaid forms of domestic labour in child labour data collection efforts.

○ Collect data on how children, particularly girls, spend their time during the week by capturing the total number of hours per week that children work, including the time they spend on household chores, caregiving responsibilities and other forms of domestic work.

○ Consider how focusing data collection on only one type of child labour (e.g. agriculture) may exclude other (worst) forms of child labour, especially in communities with different economic activities.

○ Mitigate risks that gender and age-specific types of child labour remain under-reported during data collection, for example, when work is intimately connected to social and gender norms. For example, the domestic and caregiving roles and responsibilities of adolescent girls are often not seen as "work" and go under-reported.

○ Capture data about both the formal and informal economy. Commonly, groups who are excluded from the formal economy, such as refugee, internally displaced and migrant populations largely work in the informal economy and in unregulated sectors. Excluding the informal economy and unregulated sectors from data collection efforts can lead to the exclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

DESIGN SUITABLE TOOLS AND METHODOLOGIES

○ Use direct observation as a methodology to assess children's places of work and to identify potential hazards and risks that may indicate child labour, including the worst forms.

○ Use individual interviews or child-friendly group activities, such as focus group discussions, body mapping, risk mapping or other methods to capture the direct experiences and the observations of (working) children.

○ Where possible, triangulate child labour data between:

- the secondary data review;

- primary data collection;

- anecdotal evidence including organisational data or media reports on child labour/WFCL.

○ Design measurement efforts so that data can be collected and analysed by sex, age and disability, and around the compulsory age for education and the minimum age of work. Where possible and relevant, disaggregate further by other diversity or risk factors. Note that according to the CPMS, data disaggregation "can indicate those most at risk" and therefore it "must be balanced with safety and protection concern around collecting sensitive data and the data minimisation principle".[1]

○ Select a suitable sampling method that is inclusive of the most vulnerable populations.

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1 CPMS p.86.

SAMPLING METHODS

One methodological aspect that is of great importance to robust analysis of child labour, is sampling. While random sampling is a common methodology, when it comes to child labour this approach may lead to the exclusion of the children and families who are most vulnerable to child labour. Random sampling methods may exclude or overlook marginalised children and families because they are less visible in the community or because they are working to survive, and they simply do not have the time to participate in data collection. Children in the worst forms of child labour in particular may not be reached by standard sampling methods.

To ensure inclusion of the most vulnerable families, non-conventional sampling methods can be considered: for example, respondent-driven sampling (respondents identify other respondents); time location sampling (data collection concentrates on child labour hot-spots); network scale-up sampling (a way to estimate the size of hidden populations, for example, if a respondent knows 300 people, two of whom are children in commercial sexual exploitation, then we could estimate that two out of 300 of the total population are in commercial sexual exploitation); and capture-recapture sampling (a method to estimate the total number of children in child labour within a population).[2]

These are just a few alternative, statistically robust sampling methods that allow researchers to access a representative sample of children involved in child labour including the worst forms of child labour. The data can be generalisable to the target population and can effectively inform programming and advocacy.[3]

2 More information on sampling of hard-to-reach or mobile populations can be found in the following journal articles: Mansourian, H. (2020). "Measuring Separation of Children from their Usual Caregivers in Humanitarian Contexts: The case for a holistic approach to measurement, with implications for practice". Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health Mailman School or Public Health: Columbia University; Pullum, T., Cappa, C., Orlando, J., Dank, M., Gunn, S., Mendenhall, M., and Riordan, K. (2012). "Systems and strategies for identifying and enumerating children outside of family care". Child Abuse and Neglect, 2012-10-01, 36(10): 701-710; Bjørkhaug, I., and Hatløy, A. (2009), "Utilization of respondent-driven sampling among a population of child workers in the diamond-mining sector of Sierra Leone". Global Public Health, 4(1), 96–109, https://doi.org/10.1080/17441690701464207.
3 Pullum, T. et al. (2012). op. cit.

TRAIN DATA COLLECTORS

○ Ensure enumerators and assessors, especially those who do not have prior experience of child labour data collection, understand child labour concepts, including local terms and definitions, and know how to interpret and record responses accurately.

○ Ensure enumerators and assessors are able to accurately calculate the number of hours per week worked.

○ Ensure terms and definitions are explained to and understood by participants during data collection.

OBTAIN COMPLETE AND RELIABLE INFORMATION

○ Where it is required and possible, safe and appropriate to do so, triangulate information provided by adult family members with information given by children and adolescents – information provided by working children directly tends to be more complete and reliable.

○ Ensure that collection efforts that are household-based, such as household surveys, do not exclude the most vulnerable children who may be living on the streets, in institutions, in alternative care, or at their place of work.

○ Where child labour is a sensitive or taboo topic, or when families are not expected to provide reliable information about the work undertaken by children, find ways to mitigate this. For example:

• integrate child labour within broader household questions;

• do not ask specific questions about child labour but rather, regarding every child and adult member of the household, ask what types of (work/economic) activities they do and for how many hours per week.

○ Consider how the timing of data collection can affect reporting on the prevalence and extent of child labour, particularly in rural or agricultural communities where child labour is tied to seasonal events such as harvesting periods or periods of flooding or drought.