

TOOL



THE ALLIANCE
FOR CHILD PROTECTION
IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Supporting At-Risk Children and Empowering Girls

This tool provides additional guidance on promoting inclusive humanitarian action with and for working children and adolescents who are in or at risk of child labour/WFCL, with specific attention to girls.

CONSULT WITH CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

- Consult directly with children and adolescents, on their needs, priorities and aspirations in the humanitarian crisis context.
- Consult with children, adolescents and their parents/caregivers about the types of services and activities they need or find interesting, and how these can be best delivered.
- Consult separately with (adolescent) girls and female caregivers on gender specific barriers that prevent girls from accessing services.

CONDUCT TARGETED OUTREACH TO AT-RISK CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

- Conduct specific outreach to at-risk groups who live outside regular targeted areas, who are isolated or for other reasons are not able or allowed to attend regular services.
- Conduct targeted outreach to hard-to-reach girls, such as homebound girls, married girls and young mothers.
- Involve trusted peers or female community members in outreach to at-risk girls.

DEVELOP FLEXIBLE TIMING AND LOCATIONS OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN OR AT RISK OF CHILD LABOUR

- Provide assistance and organise activities in locations where working children live and work, or in other places that are accessible and known to children in child labour. Consider for instance:
 - using safe spaces, community or drop-in centres to provide more localised services;
 - using mobile approaches to service delivery;
 - providing transport for children and their families to access services;
 - providing services in or near the places where children work.
- Ensure that services and activities have flexible schedules and timings to make these more accessible to children in child labour, with availability during work breaks, outside regular work hours or on weekend days.
- Consider operational requirements for flexible schedules and timings, including but not limited to spaces to deliver services, transport, and safety and security of staff.

- Identify safe spaces in the community that can be used for confidential conversations with children in child labour/WFCL.

ADAPT CONTENT, ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR

- Ensure that activities are gender and age-responsive and inclusive.
- Adapt activities and services to the needs and life experiences of children in child labour. This is especially so for children in the WFCL who may have considerably different life experiences and may be more mature, have different skills and different needs and interests than their peers.
- When working with groups of children who are (formerly) in WFCL, ensure that these groups are gender and age-appropriate and inclusive, and ensure that the participant-to-facilitator ratio enables facilitators to provide individual attention to participants with special needs.
- Provide tailored support to children with special needs, including children with communication and language impairments, to participate in activities.
- Ensure that programme activities do not add to the domestic workload of children, particularly girls.
- Make the environment safer for girls by promoting appropriate group or class sizes, safe and private latrines, and by ensuring a gender-balanced selection of mentors, facilitators or teachers.
- Establish girl-only safe spaces or dedicated times within existing spaces where adolescent girls can meet, participate in activities and receive services.
- Establish feedback mechanisms that include child- and adolescent-friendly feedback channels that enable working children to privately and confidentially report barriers, risks and safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure interventions are conflict-sensitive and promote social cohesion, to prevent (further) harm to children in or at-risk of child labour, particularly children in situations of (armed) conflict.

DESIGN TAILORED ACTIVITIES FOR ADOLESCENTS IN OR AT RISK OF CHILD LABOUR

- Engage adolescents in the design and implementation of activities.
- Support (working) adolescents to join positive peer networks and to take part in peer-to-peer learning approaches.
- Focus on the leadership roles that adolescents can play in community-level group activities and preventing social isolation, exclusion or stigma against peers.
- Support adolescents, particularly girls, to initiate and lead activities that support their self-esteem and social support networks, which can help to prevent child labour as well as support reintegration and rehabilitation of adolescents who are removed from child labour/WFCL.
- Engage adolescents in awareness activities in the community, including developing key messages, engaging in (online) campaigns or peacebuilding initiatives.

- Support adolescents above the minimum age for work to develop employability skills such as communicating with employers, preparing a CV or preparing for job interviews.
- Address potential barriers to social integration with peers/family or social cohesion in the community which may affect adolescents in child labour/WFCL.
- Support adolescents who receive case management services, to meaningfully participate in case planning and decision-making about the services and support they receive, and in their own recovery from child labour/WFCL.
- Support adolescents who require alternative care, to receive a care arrangement of their choosing, including supervised independent living or group living arrangements, depending on the available safe and feasible opportunities in the local context.

PROVIDE TAILORED SUPPORT TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS

- Promote peer activities, social networks, mentorship and role models for girls.
- Promote socio-emotional learning and other skills through life skills, vocational skills, peer-to-peer education and leadership opportunities.
- Create opportunities for girls to monitor and address their own protection needs, including through local (peer) groups, committees or security patrols, as applicable.
- Create opportunities for girls to be economically empowered, through engaging in livelihoods opportunities, running small businesses, and financial literacy, for example.
- Support girls' health through the provision of SRHR and MHM information and materials and nutrition information and services, as part of broader programmes.
- Create opportunities and space for girls to participate and lead, for example, through project or community committees or bodies, supported by actions aimed at building girls' confidence, public speaking and negotiation skills.
- Increase access to services for married adolescent girls and young mothers to prevent child labour/WFCL by offering flexible timing and locations of service provision and childcare services as needed.

PROVIDE TAILORED INFORMATION TO CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR AND THEIR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Identify information needs and gaps, including misinformation and harmful social norms about child labour.
- Consult with children, families and communities about preferred information channels to access information and share key messages.
- Provide accurate, safe and confidential information on services and how working children can access them.
- Use child-friendly and inclusive methodologies to share information and raise awareness, such as storytelling, role play, games and creative exercises.
- Invite service providers to attend more general, group-based activities and to deliver information in more informal ways.

BUILD TRUST WITH WORKING CHILDREN AND THEIR CAREGIVERS

- Recruit and train staff and volunteers from the same community of working children, who speak the same language, who may have similar experiences to working children or who can act as role models for children in child labour.
- Spend time in places where children work and build a rapport with them, prior to engaging with them to provide services.
- Engage and build trust with parents and caregivers of homebound children, particularly (adolescent) girls, in order to include them in activities or services.
- Involve case workers and their supervisors in planning any engagement with children who are living and working in potentially illicit or dangerous environments.
- Always consider the personal safety of caseworkers and never put staff or associates at risk of harm.
- Show commitment to help families to meet their basic needs with tangible assistance. At the same time, manage expectations and be careful not to overcommit to services that cannot be provided.
- Start small: aim for minimal but consistent contact with working children in activities or services.
- Be patient and reliable: provide regular contact and support.
- Do not collect unnecessary information and be careful when collecting sensitive information.
- Compensate children or their families for the lost income when they attend activities such as education or training, where required. Do so cautiously and in consultation with coordination partners.

ENGAGE WITH GATEKEEPERS

- Involve caregivers and other gatekeepers such as local and religious leaders and designated “champions” in developing strategies to raise awareness, sensitise and shift community attitudes about child labour/WFCL and to promote access to education for all children and adolescents.
- Support local (women’s) organisations who provide services and support to children and adolescents, including services specifically for at-risk girls and survivors of SGBV.
- Train community-based and other frontline staff in working with adolescents by training them on the adolescent developmental stage, age-specific needs and abilities of adolescents, gender-specific risks and barriers faced by adolescent girls, how to meaningfully engage adolescents in all phases of the programme cycle and the potential activities and strategies that are available to support adolescents.

PREVENT AND RESPOND TO SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

- Involve adolescents, particularly girls, in designing strategies to address harmful social and gender norms that increase child labour risks for girls, such as domestic labour and commercial sexual exploitation, and mitigate these risks.

- Conduct risk mitigation of girls' and young women's (economic) empowerment as related to SGBV – for instance, family members or partners use violence to take girls' earnings, or as a punishment for transgressing norms on traditional gender roles and male dominance.
- Support community-level social cohesion activities that promote inclusion, reduce stigma and tackle discrimination against adolescent girls (formerly) in WFCL such as those (formerly) associated with armed forces and armed groups or in commercial sexual exploitation.
- Engage with boys and men as partners and allies in promoting gender equality for adolescent girls, including on access to education, prevention of child labour/WFCL and SGBV.