



Impact of Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance on Child Labour among Syrian refugee children in Bekaa, Lebanon



Research Brief
November 2018

In August 2018, World Vision in Lebanon (WVL) conducted a research among Syrian refugee children to identify the impact of Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) funded by World Food Programme (WFP) and implemented by WVL on the following outcomes: Child Labour (CL), school enrollment, participation in household chores and exposure to protection risks in the workplace. For this purpose 197 Syrian refugee children benefitting from MPCA funded by WFP (intervention group) and 163 Syrian refugee children benefitting from food assistance funded by WFP (control group) were surveyed across 40 areas in Central and West Bekaa.

About World Vision in Lebanon

In Lebanon, World Vision has been implementing long-term development programs since 1975. In the last four decades we have focused on supporting vulnerable communities across the country, and we are continuing to develop and expand this work. Because of our experience in responding to emergencies, dating back to our humanitarian activities during the 1975-1990 civil war, World Vision was able to respond promptly when the Syria crisis began in 2011, forcing hundreds of thousands of people to find refuge in neighboring countries including Lebanon. World Vision remains committed to supporting Lebanese citizens and refugees from armed conflict. To achieve this, we plan to implement programmes, invest in social stability, and intensify our work with local partners in the areas of: water, sanitation and hygiene, food security, basic assistance and livelihood, child protection, notably in the areas of child labour, child abuse, and violence against children, and early childhood care and development.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings WVL proposes the following recommendations and actions:

- The donor and international communities must secure and advocate for long-term funding targeting the array of factors that force children into labour. These factors can be prevented with programmes that look beyond the child and reach parents, caregivers, and community members.
- In line with the National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon, coordinating ministries and local authorities must play an active role in preventing child labour by raising community awareness, carrying out assessments, and issuing memorandums encouraging mayors and governors to release statements for any child exposed to the worst forms of child labour and school drop-outs.
- Child-focused LNGOs and INGOs must consider a comprehensive and holistic programming approach that offers parents of working children livelihood investment and development of skills in sectors where they are allowed to engage in labour, combined with MPCA when necessary.
- LNGOs and INGOs responding to the basic rights of working adolescents must ensure that the latter and their employers receive necessary training and awareness on the worst forms of child labour and develop their skills in order to engage in labour under decent, non-exploitative working conditions.
- LNGOs and INGOs must maintain and enhance basic literacy and basic financial literacy programmes for parents of working children to better understand the importance of education, manage their income and be able to support their children in making choices that affect their future.
- As revealed in this research, LNGOs and INGOs responding to the educational needs of children must prioritize girls' education as a preventive strategy against child labour.

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Introduction

As a result of the Syrian refugee crisis, 76 per cent of displaced Syrians in Lebanon currently live below the poverty line and CL is on the rise among the refugee population as a consequence of using children to help sustain the household's (HH) livelihoods and support its income.

In 2017, UNICEF reported that 180,000 Syrian refugee children in Lebanon have been forced into CL, with refugees as young as 5 years old working long hours and subjected to emotional, verbal and physical abuse by employers.

Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) allows HHs to be flexible in deciding their spending needs. The additional income provided by MPCA may allow households to increase investment in education and reduce the amount of CL.

In Lebanon, food assistance and MPCA is currently provided to the most vulnerable Syrian refugees by multiple, independent agencies (the largest being WFP and UNHCR).

WVL has been a WFP implementing partner since 2013 supporting in all operational cash assistance modalities. Food-assisted WFP households receive an amount of USD 27 per family member while households assisted with MPCA receive USD 175 on top of the basic food assistance.

Methodology

This research is a quasi experimental one-time measurement study among a representative sample of 360 Syrian refugee children from different HHs and ITSs in Central and West Bekaa where WVL is currently implementing WFP MPCA and food assistance.

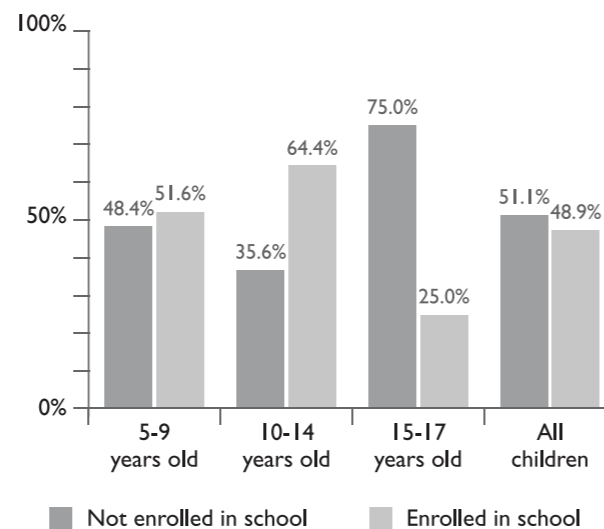
A stratified two-stage cluster sampling design was adopted to identify the sample based on the last Syrian refugee population data from UNHCR and WFP cash assistance data. The sample ensured the representativeness of three children age groups 5-9, 10-14 and 15-17 y.o while taking into consideration 95% Confidence Level and 5% Margin of Error.

Research Findings

1. Education

Sending children to school is not a spending priority among Syrian refugees with only 3.6 % of the HHs considering it as a third priority while food remains the first priority for 73.5% and health and rent respectively the second priority for almost one third. Only half of the Syrian refugee children are enrolled in school. The correlational analysis did not show any association between type of cash assistance and school enrollment. The predictive analysis indicated that risk factors to school enrollment in households benefitting from MPCA are HH located in Central Bekaa district, HH with adolescents (15-17y.o) and HH with mothers of low literacy. At the other hand protective factors are father's employment and mother's education.

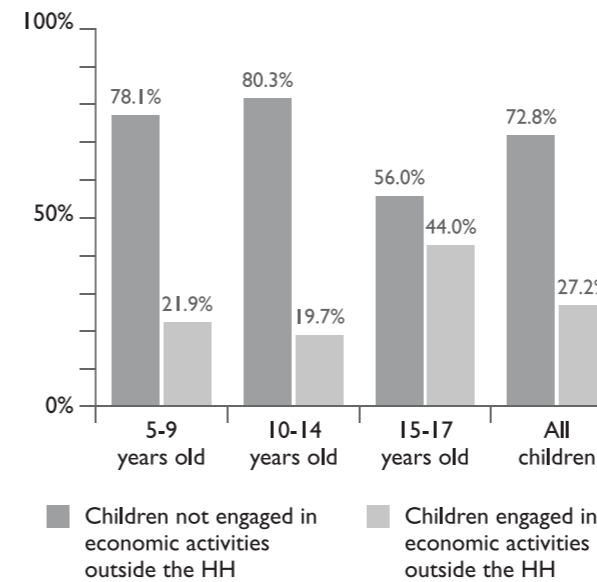
School enrollment in all children age groups



2. Participation in household chores

The majority (90%) of surveyed children assist their parents in household chores including help in domestic work, care for siblings and fetching water and firewood. Syrian refugee children's involvement in chores is not considered as exploitative since it does not exceed 1.8 hours/ day for a 15-17 y.o child and does not prevent them from doing other activities. No significant association was found between type of cash assistance and children's participation in HH chores. The percentage of children assisting their parents in HH chores in both intervention and control groups are almost similar; 90.8 per cent and 89.3 per cent respectively.

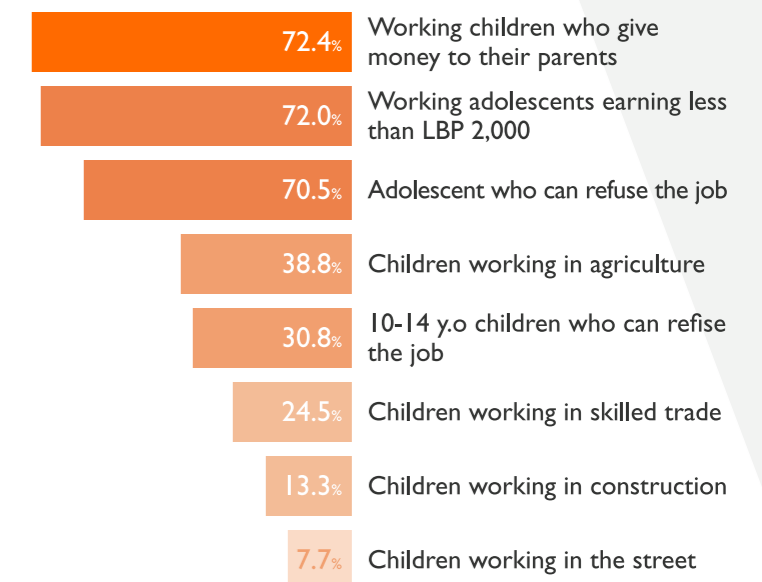
Child Labour in all children age group



3. Child labour

The research findings showed that 27.2 per cent of all surveyed children are engaged in CL. Households receiving MPCA are as likely to engage their children in child labor as those not receiving the additional cash assistance with 27.6 per cent and 26.9 per cent respectively. The predictive analysis indicated that risk factors to CL in households benefitting from MPCA are HH with adolescents (15-17y.o), HH with mothers of low literacy and households with working mothers. None of the demographic and livelihoods factors seem to be protective against CL.

Facts about child labour



4. Protection risks in workplace

More than half of Syrian refugee working children (58.6%) do not feel safe in the workplace. Children belonging to households with cash assistance are more likely to feel safe at work (69.8%) in comparison to children belonging to families only food assisted (44.4%). Father employment is the only protective factor for working children to feel safer in workplace.

