

Policy Responses to  
Working Street Children in Lebanon

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## **Abstract**

This report recommends policy responses to address the issue of Working Street Children (WSC) in Lebanon in a manner that is evidence-based and sustainable over the long-term. Accordingly, this report's recommendations aim to form the basis of a wider policy response to address child labour and its developmental consequences in Lebanese society. The report finds that Lebanon suffers from a dearth of policies and capacity to address WSC and child labour at the legal, institutional and policy levels. Accordingly, this report recommends the Lebanese government implement a series of structural reforms to bolster the effectiveness of a conditional cash transfer programme and a conditional microfinance programme according to a means-tested nationality-based eligibility scheme for households that subsist below the poverty line. In line with the ethical clearance granted to the author by The University of Edinburgh, this report did not collect primary evidence from WSC.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Children are the future of any society; and policy interventions that deal with the most vulnerable segments of the child population hold particular weight. Developing countries where child labour and working street children are rife, such as Lebanon, have a particular responsibility and interest in policy responses to ensure future generations develop in a manner that serves society as a whole.

The phenomenon of WSC is one of the most complex in the field of child labour and its consequences are both diverse and detrimental. While the concept of child labour and WSC is by no means new to Lebanon, the influx of refugee children fleeing Syria since 2011 and the effects of the crisis on Lebanon mean that the need and urgency to implement effective and long-term solutions to stem child labour and WSC have seldom been greater.

This report uses a model to inform interventions that influence the decision-making process of households to engage in child labour and send their children to work in the streets. Throughout this report, international evidence is used to propose policy recommendations to decrease the incidence of WSC and child labour, while also increasing the accumulation of human capital for the wider benefit of Lebanese society. Accordingly, the proposals in this report seek to provide a holistic and effective intervention framework comprised of structural and programmatic recommendations.

The structural recommendations in this report lay the foundation to support its programmatic recommendations. Founded on a set of legislative actions aimed at creating the legal basis to address WSC and child labour, structural recommendations encompass interventions at the executive level, targeted education reforms and capacity building at key institutions.

Programmatic recommendations target WSC and their families to generate long-term sustainable influence on household decisions to engage in child labour and send children to work in the streets. These recommendations hinge on the implementation of a conditional cash transfer scheme, which is calibrated to apply to households prone to child labour in the Lebanese socioeconomic and political context. In addition, a conditional microfinance programme is proposed to provide a long-term solution for poor households.

In light of Lebanon's historical inability to implement comprehensive child labour policy reforms, this report offers a bare minimum standard as an alternative to its recommendation set. While this report accepts Lebanon's reality, it in no way endorses adherence to a minimum standard. Instead, this report deems it incumbent upon Lebanese government and society to implement the recommendations herein to eliminate WSC and all the worst forms of child labour (WFCL).

# INTRODUCTION

## *Definitional issues*

At first glance, child labour may appear to be a straightforward concept: when children employ their time in an economic activity instead of education or other forms of human capital accumulation which individuals in a society invest in to maximize their productivity, output and income. Yet, deeper research reveals child labour to be a multifaceted and complicated issue, meaning appropriate policy responses need to take definitional considerations into account.

The concept of childhood is still subject to much debate and is broadly based on a confluence of factors ranging from the cultural and normative, to the legal and conceptual<sup>1</sup>. Child labour as a policy concept is informed by international conventions, mainly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on minimum age and the WFCL, as well as the UNESCO World Declaration on Education for All<sup>2</sup>; yet it is far from a concrete notion.

In fact, the terms 'child work' and 'child labour' are often used interchangeably while they do not describe the same concept. Child labour is widely understood as child work that is harmful to a child's mental, physical or developmental potential<sup>3</sup>. In fact, child work that does not harm children is generally seen as positive<sup>4</sup>.

Child labour definitions becomes even more complex when considering interventions to combat child labour in applied research, where there are wide disparities in age, type of economic activity, duration of work and school attendance, among other factors<sup>5</sup>. As such, devising policy options to tackle a phenomenon that has no single definition or statistical measure<sup>6</sup> requires researchers and policy makers to clearly define what interventions are attempting to accomplish.

This lack of a clear definitional or statistical framework to inform policy also gives rise to problems of measurement and response. For instance, attempting to define child labour based on age or the outright prohibition of child work have both been criticised for lacking evidence to justify age as the basis of policy response, such as in contexts where child work actually makes it possible for children to attend school<sup>7</sup> or where it prevents poverty<sup>8</sup>. Some studies suggest that the complete elimination of child labour in developing countries could increase poverty levels by 10% to 20%<sup>9</sup>.

Given the definitional and policy-making challenges of addressing child labour, it is essential to frame the concept of WSC clearly in order to inform this report's policy recommendations. The concept of WSC is neither clear nor concise, but is an evolutionary process that defines the characteristics of children and their relationship with street life and economic activity<sup>10</sup>.

The concepts of 'street children' and WSC evolved out of a characterization by UNICEF, which encompasses children 'for whom the street... has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood'<sup>11</sup>. This definition has developed

into further stratification of street children as being ‘of’ or ‘on’ the street—the former meaning children who live on the street and have no or very little contact with their families, while the latter describes children who work on the streets and return to their families after a days work<sup>12</sup>.

Such categorization has been subject to much debate and is seen as inadequate to encompass the complete profile of street children and their interaction with the street<sup>13</sup>. Others discourses dealing with street children and WSC definitions concentrate on the interplay between two schools of thought that revolve around:

1. social constructionism, which views children to be ‘out of place’ in society<sup>14</sup>; and
2. children’s agency, which views children as social actors with varying lives and experiences<sup>15</sup>.

Further conceptualisation of street children for the purposes of policy formulation by UNICEF and others describe a child working on the street as a ‘street-family child’<sup>16</sup> with the aim of facilitating interventions at the household level.

While this ambiguity obviously complicates policy formulation in that targeted populations are not discrete, there are standards that help inform responses. Under international conventions there is wide acceptance of the WFCL, which are easily defined by the nature or the circumstances in which they are carried out, and their ability to harm the health, safety or morals of children<sup>17</sup>. Various countries, including Lebanon, use this definition to inform action plans to eliminate child labour<sup>18,19</sup>. Reasons why WSC’s labour is classified as WFCL vary, but stem from WSC’s proven vulnerability to wider issues that afflict society, including security concerns around WSC’s exposure to child militancy, HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation and drug trafficking<sup>20,21</sup>.

Accordingly, child work in the streets is classified as one of the WFCL and thus substantially removes much of the need to integrate socio-cultural, normative, situational or age-based considerations into policy responses to eliminate it<sup>22,23</sup>.

### ***Causes of child labour***

There is a significant body of historical evidence that indicates a casual link between the degree of poverty, lack of education and child labour<sup>24</sup>. Yet, there are a number of other factors that cause child labour to persist. These vary according to context but include comparatively large families, access and quality of education<sup>25</sup>, the enforceability of compulsory education<sup>26</sup>, as well as access to basic services such as water, healthcare and electricity<sup>27, 28</sup>. Notably, child labour is closely linked to household income poverty and not specifically to the poverty of the child in isolation<sup>29</sup>. Recent literature also provides evidence to support the link between child labour and inequality in developing countries, irrespective of GDP per capita levels<sup>30</sup>.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The complexities surrounding definitions of child labour, WSC and appropriate policy responses, necessitate an intervention framework and a set of desired outcomes to inform an appropriate literature review and recommendation set. This approach was also necessary due to the lack of a wide body of literature on child labour interventions, specifically in the Middle East and Lebanon<sup>31</sup>.

Literature on WSC is even more scant due to the complexity of defining WSC; and this is especially true with regards to evidence of policy interventions and economics<sup>32</sup>. Literature on WSC is almost non-existent in Lebanon apart from the works referenced in this report. Because of the lack of evidence-based policy, assessment of interventions, qualitative traits, or quantitative data on WSC in Lebanon, this report's recommendations are informed by personal correspondence with practitioners working with WSC in the country.

Accordingly, international evidence was considered uniformly regardless of location and context. While acknowledgement of geographical circumstances and their effects on WSC and child labour is relevant, street children share many similar traits such as poverty, family contexts, weak child protection and discrimination<sup>33</sup>.

This report also uses a well-known model in child labour studies developed by Cigno and Rosati in "The Economics of Child Labour"<sup>34</sup> as the logical basis for its intervention framework and recommendation set. The model is concerned with the supply of child labour which considers the host of decisions households make surrounding resource allocation, fertility decisions, as well as the opportunity cost of education to build human capital in children. Additionally, Cigno and Rosati integrate the volume of assets and access to credit into the decision-making process.

The interplay of Cigno and Rosati's factors forms the basis of this paper's intervention framework and, accordingly, informs its policy recommendations which seek to both reduce the incidence and duration of child labour as well as increase human capital accumulation. This report adopts this method because human capital accumulation has wider benefits for society such as long-term economic growth and higher life expectancy, especially when associated with education<sup>35</sup>. Some calculations even estimate that the economic benefits of putting child labourers into education outstrip the costs by a factor of 12.5 in the Middle East and North Africa<sup>36</sup>.

This methodology also forms the basis of this paper's literature review, which considers academic works as well as developmental literature from organizations working in the field of child labour. Moreover, key informant interviews were also conducted with stakeholders identified during the compilation of this report.

To further inform this report's policy recommendations, evidence was weighted according to its significance. Evidence of interventions that showed statistical significance in reducing child labour and/or increasing human capital accumulation was prioritized over that which showed a causal connection with a reduction in child labour and increases in human capital accumulation. Finally,



theoretical concepts concerning child labour and human capital accumulation were considered.

## LEBANESE CONTEXT

### *Recent history*

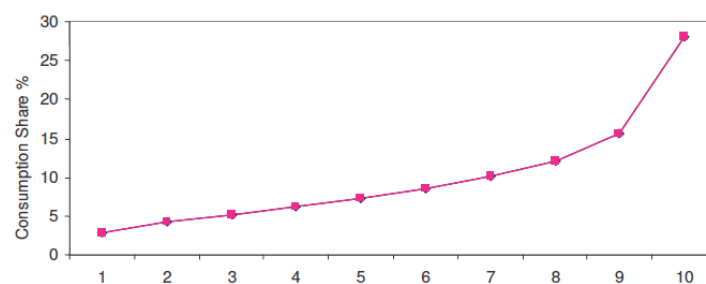
Lebanon's particular socio-political history defines its population's profile and, in turn, conditions relevant to child labour and WSC. The country is home to a native population of some 4.2 million people<sup>37</sup>. In addition, Lebanon hosts a large number of refugees from Syria and Palestine, which are projected to number around 1.3 million, and up to 280,000 by the end of 2013, respectively<sup>38, 39</sup>.

Over the past 40 years the country's economy has been subject to a number of detrimental circumstances including the 1975-1990 civil war, fractious politics and on-going civil unrest. The civil war was followed by a period of reconstruction financed by sovereign debt and overwhelmingly funded by local banks with interest rates that reached over 25%<sup>40</sup>. Accordingly, the government has run deficits as large as 20% since 2005 and the debt to GDP ratio in 2013 stands at around 140% and rising<sup>41</sup>. To the detriment of middle- and low-income groups, social spending has been drastically cut since the end of the civil war<sup>42</sup> and is decreasing as a percentage of GDP<sup>43</sup>.

### *Poverty*

A lack of pro-poor public policy has produced deep inequalities and low capacity to address issues such as WSC and child labour through social spending. Using the headcount ratio method, around 28.5% of native Lebanese live under the upper-income poverty line of around \$4 per day, while around 7% live in extreme poverty<sup>44</sup>. The profile of the poor does not suggest any type of uniformity or clustering around the upper or lower poverty lines; yet, the poverty gap index—which measures the average income of the poor against the poverty line—is around 8%, higher than many of its regional counterparts but relatively midrange in terms of global averages<sup>45</sup>.

**Figure 1: Consumption Shares by Deciles in Lebanon**



**Source: Heba Laithy, Khalid Abu-Ismaïl, Kamal Hamdan (2008), Poverty Growth and Income Distribution in Lebanon Country Studies, International Poverty Centre, United Nations Development Programme.**

Lebanon does not have the statistical capacity to generate a Gini coefficient, but consumption data points to wide inequalities: the lowest income quintile of the

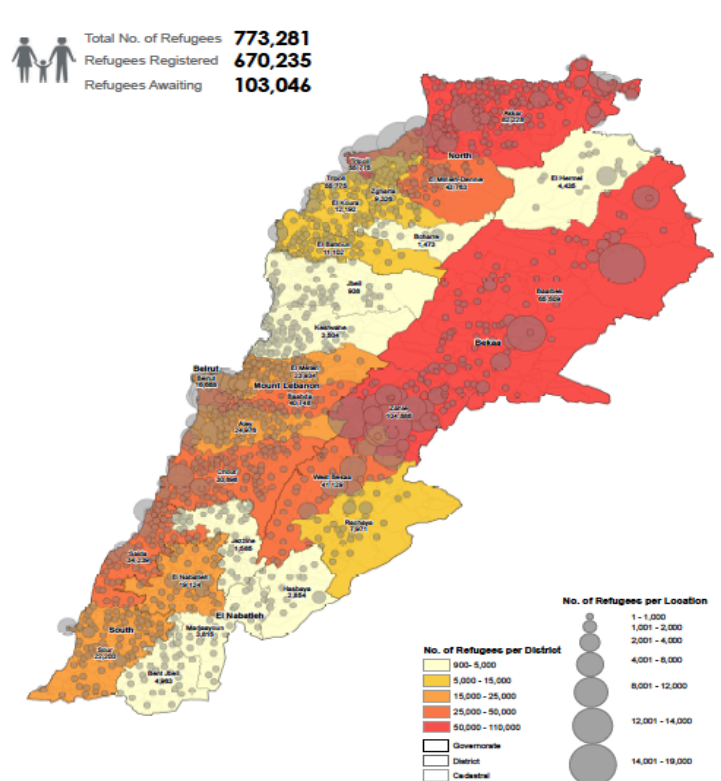
population accounts for 7% of all consumption while the top quintile accounts for over 43% (see Figure 1). Estimates related to cost of pulling households out of poverty in 2008 are \$12 per annum for extreme poverty and \$116 for overall poverty<sup>46</sup>. Taking into account that inflation rose 28.9% from 2008 until September 2013<sup>47</sup>, those figures would equate to \$15.4 and \$149.5 per annum, respectively.

## Refugees

Lebanon is home to a proportionately large number of refugees fleeing historical and ongoing conflicts. At present there are an estimated 280,000 Palestinian refugees in various camps throughout the country<sup>48</sup>. By the end of 2013, an estimated 1.3 million Syrian refugees will have crossed the border into Lebanon<sup>49</sup>. According to the United Nations, as of the end of September 2013 some 770,000 were registered with the United Nations. Syrian refugees subsist in various living situations on household incomes just under \$USD 250<sup>50</sup> and 6.5 members<sup>51</sup>, on average.

Border areas have the highest density of refugees (see Figure 2). Lebanon does not offer official support to refugees, nor has it permitted the establishment of formal refugee camps<sup>52</sup>. Many Syrian families have lost their homes and productive assets; both children and adults will work for around half the wages of their Lebanese counterparts<sup>53</sup>.

Figure 2: Geographical distribution of Syrian refugees



Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, September 30, 2013.

Upon entry into Lebanon, Syrians can own property and work without having to obtain work permits for six months, but are not entitled to welfare services without official work permits. For an annual fee of \$USD 200, registered refugees

can live and work in Lebanon indefinitely<sup>54</sup>. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are not legally permitted to own property or work in a number of occupations, many of which are syndicated, restricted to Lebanese, or pay higher wages than other lines of work<sup>55</sup>. Palestinians receive the bulk of their social services from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and have access to restricted national welfare services that exclude health insurance and family support<sup>56</sup>.

The recent influx of refugees from Syria has taken its toll on Lebanese society and its economy. Aside from the regular bombing of border areas, rising political tensions and violence associated with the war in Syria, Syrian refugees are affecting low-income Lebanese residents by increasing the competition for jobs and pushing down average wages<sup>57</sup>. In addition, the labour market segments most impacted by the crisis are women, children, youth and unskilled workers<sup>58</sup>. Overall, a baseline scenario of the effects of the Syrian conflict on Lebanon calculates that 170,000 more Lebanese will fall below the poverty line and GDP will fall by 2.9% if the refugee crisis continues until 2015<sup>59</sup>.

As of September 2013, there were an estimated 225,000 registered Syrian refugee children of school age in Lebanon, with around 55,000 enrolled in either Lebanese public schools or those run by humanitarian agencies<sup>60</sup>. Other estimates by the United Nations in September 2013 estimate the number of refugee children at 400,000 with only a quarter enrolled in Lebanese public schools<sup>61</sup>. The cost to accommodate just 40,000 children during the 2012 school year was \$53 million<sup>62</sup>. The number of refugees expected to enrol in 2013 is estimated at 90,000, and between 140,000 and 170,000 in 2014<sup>63</sup>.

### ***Social services for children and the poor***

In general, social services for children are haphazard, fragmented and no comprehensive child protection system exists<sup>64</sup>. That said, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) spends some 60% of its budget for care for 23,000 children at a rate of around USD\$1,000 per child per year<sup>65</sup>. Social services are provided to children through civil society organizations contracted by the MOSA or via a network of 280 Social Development Centres (SDCs), which constitute the main local-level service point for the MOSA. SDCs are long-established institutions spread across Lebanon with staff from, and premises located within, their communities. SDCs also have links with NGOs and influential leaders<sup>66</sup>.

The Centres have several responsibilities and functions, which include:

1. conducting studies on welfare and local communities to prioritise their needs and create local action plans;
2. proposing, implementing and supervising social development in their communities;
3. establishing social committees to meet local development demands;
4. providing social services with a focus on disadvantaged peoples; and
5. providing assistance and relief work in emergencies<sup>67</sup>.

In 2009, SDCs provided 309,200 individuals with health services and 61,600 individuals with other social services, including 7,000 individuals with training sessions and 16,500 individuals with educational services<sup>68</sup>. In 2010, the MOSA

committed itself to restructuring SDCs in the country with a focus on reorganising resources to match social services with the specific needs of various communities<sup>69</sup>.

In 2011, the government rolled out its first means-tested targeted financial assistance programme for poor households with a \$USD30 million loan and a capacity building support programme from the World Bank<sup>70</sup>. The National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) now targets 160,700 people and is to run until the year 2018<sup>71</sup>. The NPTP uses proxy-means testing and indexing based on 62 indicators to assess poor households through a social worker visit<sup>72</sup>. The Programme’s assistance package provides full health coverage in both public and private hospitals to all members of the household, medication for chronic diseases, free registration and books in public schools, and a discount on monthly electricity bills<sup>73</sup>.

A total of 98 SDCs receive and process household applications, of which there have already been 62,000. At the time of this report, 18,801 had been deemed eligible<sup>74</sup>. The World Bank is also building the capacity of SDCs to manage the programme and handle more eligible applicants<sup>75</sup>.

Syrian refugees receive a number of different forms of assistance from international and local aid agencies such as food coupons, mobile health services, and cash transfers (see Figure 3). UNRWA delivers the majority of social services provided to Palestinian refugees, along with at least 46 Arab organizations and 20 foreign NGOs<sup>76</sup>. Palestinians are also provided cash transfers for special hardship cases assessed through proxy means testing<sup>77</sup>.

**Figure 3: Organizations providing services to Syrian refugees in Lebanon**



Source: Syria Refugee Response – Lebanon, Inter Agency Sector Activities- What and Where, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

## ***Education and health***

The quality of public education in Lebanon is low in comparison to private education and overall educational attainment amongst some regional counterparts<sup>78</sup>. Excluding refugees, public enrolment rates are decreasing rapidly because of the gap in quality between private and public education, teachers' low level of qualifications, gaps between staff specialisation and student needs, out-dated laws and curricula, discrepancies in physical premises, as well as low and inefficient resource allocation<sup>79</sup>. The public school system contains around 337,000 non-refugee students<sup>80</sup> while capacity is estimated at 350,00<sup>81</sup>.

Preliminary studies show that while there is adequate physical capacity at many schools in areas where Syrian refugees are concentrated, there is a lack of equipment to accommodate additional students<sup>82</sup>. There are also differences between schools in different areas and within districts themselves<sup>83</sup>.

Public school in Lebanon is free but parents must pay registration fees as well as auxiliary costs. The annual cost per student in public schools ranges from \$1,286 at the elementary level to \$2,046 at the secondary level<sup>84</sup>. School dropout rates are 10.7% and 0.2% at the intermediary and secondary levels, respectively. However, these figures only represent children who entered the first grade and reached the fifth<sup>85</sup>; the actual figure is likely higher.

Hospitals and healthcare were seen to provide a medium level of quality compared to global averages<sup>86</sup> but have come under increasing strain since the refugee crisis<sup>87</sup>.

## **CHILD LABOUR IN LEBANON**

There are no reliable figures on the incidence of child labour or working street children in Lebanon due to the absence of a national child labour survey and a low statistical base<sup>88</sup>. The information available is out-dated, especially in light of the current refugee crisis.

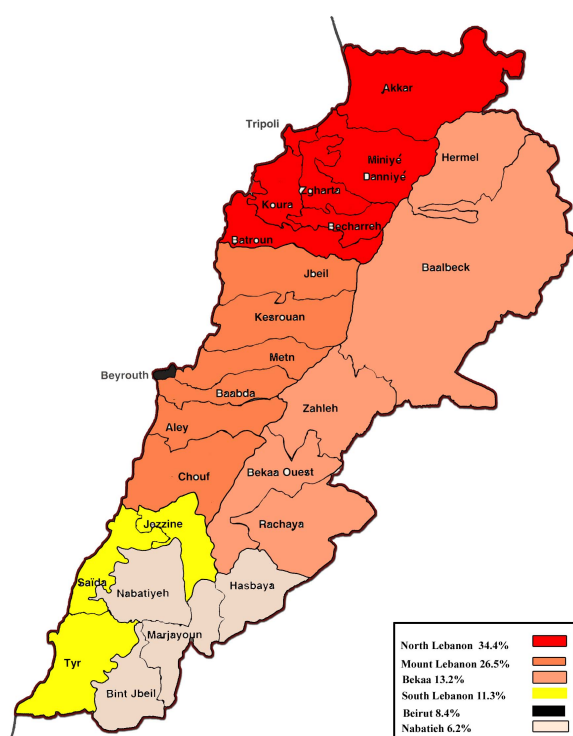
Nevertheless, official figures from 2009 estimate that 1.9% of all children aged five to 14 work; no figures are available for children above 14<sup>89</sup>. Most child work is seen to take place informally and in the agricultural sector, which employs more child labourers than any other<sup>90</sup>. Assessing WSC is, by nature, complex due to the informal and fluid nature of their work. However, some estimate they currently constitute around 5% to 7% of all working children, up from around 2% before the refugee crisis<sup>91</sup>. Various estimates of child labour among Syrian refugees consider that around 75% to 80% of children work to support their households<sup>92, 93</sup>. Lebanon has planned a national child labour survey for 2013 to provide a qualitative and quantitative framework and inform policy decisions<sup>94</sup>, but at the time of this report it had yet to materialize.

Most child labour interventions to date have taken place at the grassroots level<sup>95</sup>. Official child labour policy is comprised of some national legislation, several national strategy papers, and little practical application<sup>96</sup>. In 2005, Lebanon issued a national policy framework paper based on a series of focus groups in the

hopes of eventually formulating a national strategy to combat child labour<sup>97</sup>. In November 2013, the country launched its National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Lebanon by 2016 (NAP), which encompasses street children<sup>98</sup>.

Preliminary evidence shows that child labourers in Lebanon come from the poorest and predominately rural areas such as the North and the Bekaa region (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Concentration of child labour by region based on focus group interviews**



Source: Consultation and Research Institute (2002). *Child Labour in Lebanon, Present Situation and General Recommendations for a Future National Policy*, International Labour Organization.

### **Legal framework**

Lebanon does not specifically recognize an age of majority, the age at which a person assumes the rights and responsibilities of an adult according to law<sup>99</sup>. The Law of Duties and Contracts defines a child indirectly by setting 18 as the age when a person can be legally bound by contractual agreements<sup>100</sup>. Lebanon also sets an absolute prohibition on work before the age of 14<sup>101</sup>. Theoretical standards pertaining to a minimum of 13 hours rest between shifts, and annual leave of 21 days after one year of employment exist<sup>102</sup>, but their enforcement is lax.

Executive Decree 8987 issued by the Minister of Labour in 2012 classifies and prohibits minors under 18 from occupations that are considered to be among the WFCL, including work on the street<sup>103</sup>. The decree also lays out age restrictions

for work that is deemed harmful to minors under 16, and further conditions for those over 16 working in potentially harmful circumstances and occupations<sup>104</sup>.

The Penal Code classifies begging, which many WSC engage in, as well as working or living in the streets as a crime<sup>105</sup>. However, the Minors Protection Law considers children that beg or are vagrant as children ‘at risk’, therefore theoretically decriminalising their work and mandating their protection. Yet, in practice many WSC are classified as being in conflict with the law and charged under the Penal Code (see Figure 5).

The Code also penalizes parents who send their children to work in the streets when they are financially capable of supporting them. This implies that those who are ‘unable’ to support their children are permitted to send them to work in the streets<sup>106</sup>.

**Figure 5: Misdemeanours and offences of children**

<b>Misdemeanour/Status offense</b>	
<b>Begging</b>	69
<b>Prostitution</b>	9
<b>Collecting rubbish</b>	5
<b>Street vending</b>	96

Source: Status offenses (2010), Ministry of Justice.

Once children have been identified as being at risk, a judge specialized in juvenile justice decides whether the case is urgent. Depending on the decision of the judge the children are:

1. removed from their living situations and held in a correctional centre where they receive education or professional training;
2. a timeframe is set for an intervention and children remain in their households under supervision by a social worker or other official; or
3. the judge may also impose specific corrective measures such as obligatory schooling<sup>107</sup>.

Lebanese labour law criminalises those who are involved in facilitating child labour. Basic fines range from \$166 to \$1,666 and/or three to six months imprisonment<sup>108</sup>. If children are considered victims of trafficking, Anti-Trafficking Law Number 164 passed in August 2011 comes into force. Forced labour and sex trafficking are punished by 5 to 15 years imprisonment<sup>109</sup>. Other forms of human trafficking are usually prosecuted under personal injury articles of the Penal Code.

As of mid-2012, there was not one conviction for forced labour or sex trafficking due to various issues such as administrative indifference and inefficiency, a lack of coordination between government bodies, delays in court, as well as a lack of anti-trafficking capacity among the police and judiciary<sup>110</sup>. Moreover, in order for the Internal Security Forces (ISF) to act against WSC or its organisation they must, in theory, receive a formal complaint, an eyewitness account, or a directive from the General Prosecutor of Lebanon<sup>111</sup>. However, the ISF has taken previous actions to remove WSC from the streets without these requirements<sup>112</sup>.

Lebanon also has a law that makes primary schooling compulsory for all children in the country. However, laws in Lebanon only become practically applicable once relevant ministries organizing their application issue executive implementation decrees. The decrees for compulsory primary schooling have yet to be issued<sup>113</sup>.

### ***Governmental and non-governmental institutions***

Several bodies of government are responsible for regulating and prohibiting child labour and child work. The Ministry of Labour (MOL) and its Child Labour Unit are responsible for labour standards, raising awareness of child labour in society, coordination between government bodies, and setting standards for work in the formal sector<sup>114, 115</sup>. However, the Labour Inspectorate neither has jurisdiction over the informal sector, nor domestic and agricultural work<sup>116</sup>. A new draft labour code awaiting approval by parliament extends coverage of the inspectorate to the entire informal sector<sup>117</sup>.

The MOSA and its Higher Council for Childhood are responsible for child protection and poverty alleviation<sup>118</sup>. The MOSA also contracts NGOs and maintains a network of SDCs around the country that provide services to children<sup>119</sup>. The Ministry of Interior is in charge of applying laws and withdrawing children from the streets. The ministry contains a Unit to Combat Child Labour under the Internal Security Forces (ISF), but the Unit has been non-operational since 2005 due to a lack of funding and political will<sup>120, 121</sup>.

Finally, there is a National Committee to Combat Child Labour (NCCL) in charge of coordination between ministries, civil society, NGOs, and international agencies. The NCCL is comprised of ministerial representatives, civil society and international organisations who vote on decisions, which then must be implemented through executive decrees issued by individual ministers<sup>122</sup>.

### ***Working street children***

Even if there is a lack of reliable literature on WSC in Lebanon, there are characteristics that inform policy-making considerations. Importantly, WSC are predominately perceived to be 'on' the street and a significant number of them are perceived to be non-Lebanese<sup>123</sup>. There are no comprehensive qualitative assessments of WSC's lives to inform policy in Lebanon<sup>124</sup>. However, simple social observation shows that many of these children work in hazardous environments in urban centres, areas with high volumes of people or automotive traffic, selling consumer goods, engaging in manual labour such as shoe shining or window cleaning, or simply begging on the streets. Notably, most working street children are not seen to attend school and have much schoolwork to make up, especially as they grow older<sup>125</sup>.

The majority of WSC's labour is organized by criminal organizations<sup>126, 127</sup>. These organizations typically transport children openly from rural areas to urban centres on a daily basis in order for the children to work in city streets<sup>128</sup>. Some estimates deem that at least 60% of WSC's work is organized in this fashion<sup>129</sup>. These organizations are seen to enjoy some political protection, but it is



regarded as weak: protection is not a result of politicians' financial gain, but rather in order to maintain political support in some communities<sup>130</sup>.

The nationality of WSC is a major issue informing policy because of Lebanon's relationship with Syria. Typically, WSC from different countries are repatriated but, as many WSC in Lebanon come from Syria, suggestions to repatriate Syrians were previously rejected by Lebanese authorities for reasons related to previous Syrian hegemony over Lebanon<sup>131</sup>. Current repatriation would necessitate the forced return of refugees as well as contravene international law<sup>132</sup>.

At present there is only one centre outside Beirut dedicated to absorbing and rehabilitating WSC through institutionalisation<sup>133</sup>. In addition to being unable to absorb the increasing number of WSC, the centre operates in a legal grey area whereby parents, many of whom send their children to work in the first place, are allowed to remove their children from the centre<sup>134</sup>.

The proportion of non-Lebanese WSC is seen to fluctuate with economic circumstances and regional conflicts such as the wars in Iraq and Syria. In 2004, 90% of WSC were seen to be non-Lebanese<sup>135</sup>. Currently, that proportion is estimated to be lower, as many more Lebanese children have since become WSC<sup>136</sup>.

Authorities have attempted a repressive approach whereby children are removed from the streets and institutionalized. However, this policy was recanted after authorities realized there was no rehabilitation process and the number of children being held was physically unsustainable<sup>137</sup>.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to have the greatest effect on reducing child poverty and labour, a combination of development policy that supports the poorest, coupled with specific policies to support the wellbeing of children and their families is required<sup>138</sup>. Thus, to combat child labour and increase human capital accumulation, recommendations are split into two key sets: structural recommendations and programmatic recommendations.

Holistic strategies are seen to be more effective in reducing child labour and WSC than isolated efforts to provide social welfare or universal education as stand-alone efforts<sup>139</sup>. Accordingly, structural recommendations are intended to create an enabling framework to allow the programmatic recommendations to function more efficiently and to support a broader response to child labour in Lebanon.

This report's methodological model uses international evidence to inform its programmatic recommendations, which are based on interventions targeting WSC and their households. This approach aims to produce long-term sustainable influences on household decisions to engage in child labour and send children to work in the streets.

## ***Structural recommendations***

### ***Dedicated WSC law***

Legislative reform is recognised as one of the most essential elements required to combat child labour<sup>140</sup>. As such, several specific legal reforms are recommended to enhance the legal framework to adequately address WSC and child labour in Lebanon.

In order to provide a solid legal foundation for WSC interventions, it is recommended that a dedicated WSC law be enacted<sup>141</sup>. The law should define WSC in Lebanon according to a qualitative assessment and support this report's programmatic recommendations in several aspects.

The first aspect the law will need to cover will be to extend the mandate of SDCs to act as drop-in centres for WSC, which have proven an effective mechanism internationally<sup>142</sup>. This will replace the present method of institutionalisation, which should become a last resort<sup>143</sup>. SDCs will need to act as the first point of contact for children or their household members to sign up to child labour assistance programmes (see programmatic recommendations). Centres will require the authority to absorb WSC and classify them as 'children under protection,' allowing children to leave if they choose to, but not before their basic details, as well as aspects of their household information relevant to identifying trends in WSC households, are recorded.

This process will facilitate the building of a central database to collect quantitative and qualitative data on WSC and child labourers to be managed by the Central Administration for Statistics (CAS) and connected to the SDCs for data input. It is also recommended that confidential access to the database be granted to certain persons within the NCCL who represent the MOSA and the MOL and are legally bound to keep information safe. Non-MOSA staff should not be able to view names, especially those of vulnerable refugees coming from Syria. Non-specific information compiled should become publicly available in the NCCL's obligatory annual report<sup>144</sup>.

Accordingly, it is recommended that SDCs conduct respondent-driven sampling of WSC and their households based on using access to SDC services as an incentive model for being interviewed<sup>145</sup>. In addition, SDCs should facilitate, capture and recapture data collection models to track WSCs in their areas and around the country<sup>146</sup>. Essential survey elements are:

1. whether children can be classified as 'on' or 'of' the street;
2. how child work is organized; and
3. whether children have been victims of forced labour or human trafficking, especially with regard to female children who are more susceptible to prostitution<sup>147</sup>.

Articles that specifically identify WSC under the age of 18 to be 'at risk' and clearly classified them as victims entitled to protection will also need to be

incorporated into the dedicated WSC law<sup>148</sup>. Furthermore, the law should clearly abrogate parents' right to send their children to work in the streets if they are 'in need'. Such action removes any ambiguity as to the legality of WSC and, according to our methodology, increases the opportunity cost of sending children to work instead of accumulating human capital.

Essentially, the dedicated WSC law will also need to facilitate harsher punishments for criminal organizations that oversee WSC's employment and allow the ISF to take action without prior instruction from the General Prosecutor<sup>149</sup>. Organizing WSC's work should also be classified as trafficking of persons under the Anti-trafficking Law and be subject to the same penalties, in addition to existing laws on child labour.

### ***Complimentary legislation***

For a dedicated WSC law to be effective and continually applied, a series of other laws and amendments are required. The ambiguity around the age of majority needs to be amended with a law that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of Lebanese adults and children at age 18. This will allow our educational recommendations (see targeted education interventions) to apply until children finish schooling<sup>150</sup>, as well as produce the best academic results and protect child rights throughout.

Since most children are not employed in the formal sector where the labour inspectorate currently exercises authority<sup>151</sup>, it is recommended that the labour code be amended to allow labour inspectors access to the informal sector. The logic of this measure with regard to WSC is two-fold: WSC are themselves employed in the informal sector and may receive many of the goods they sell from informal businesses, and WSC may find themselves drawn to the informal sector if criminal organizations that organize their work are prosecuted. Already, there is an existing mechanism for labour inspectors to be supported by members of the ISF<sup>152</sup>, and this should continue to be the case under informal labour inspections after both entities have been trained in the specificities of informal inspections<sup>153</sup>.

The ISF itself should also be given the legal mandate to respond to WSC appropriately. Firstly, the ISF will need to have the mandate to go after criminal organizations that organize WSC work without prior eyewitness accounts or complaints filed to the General Prosecutor. Moreover, they should have the ability to withdraw WSC from the streets and refer them to the closest SDC for assessment, social services and possible integration into anti-child labour programmes (see programmatic recommendations). In addition, withdrawal of WSC should also be mandated to the municipal police who already have some authority to combat begging in the streets<sup>154</sup>.

It is also recommended that the national budget law contain a budget line item to address child labour in general, and WSC specifically. This should prove politically viable as there is evidence to show that savings from expenditure in the criminal justice system are made over the longer term in developing countries when child labour decreases<sup>155</sup>. Family-targeting solutions are also cheaper per capita than institutional methods in developing nations<sup>156</sup>.

What's more, the level of expenditure per pupil is seen to have a negative causal relationship with the incidence of child labour<sup>157</sup>. While the budget has not been passed since 2005, a dedicated budget line represents a symbolic official commitment and gives impetus to pass a treasury advance, which permits extra-budgetary spending by cabinet.

Family-based violence plays an important role in bringing children to the street<sup>158</sup>, and there is a high incidence of child labour when war and domestic violence have affected children<sup>159</sup>. Indeed, in Lebanon violence against child labourers has been observed in the home as well as at school and in workplaces<sup>160</sup>. Thus, it is essential that the draft law that protects women and children currently awaiting review by parliament is passed immediately, and duly implemented by the Lebanese authorities. New laws that generally penalize child abuse in the form of physical violence also need to be put in place to protect children outside the home.

In order to facilitate the implementation of reforms, decisions concerning child labour interventions needs to be centralised, streamlined and take into account the different roles of government bodies, as well as the particularities of Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system. As such, the existing NCCL should not only become the main body where decisions are made, but where implementation measures are also decided. To achieve this, it is recommended that the NCCL follow its existing voting procedures, but that decisions become binding without the process of individual ministers issuing executive decrees in their relevant areas, something which diminishes the likelihood that policies are effectively implemented in Lebanon<sup>161</sup>. While this may cause some political issues related to the removal of authority from individual ministers, there is political capital to build upon with regards to WFCL and WSC in the form of the NAP<sup>162</sup>.

### ***Executive decrees***

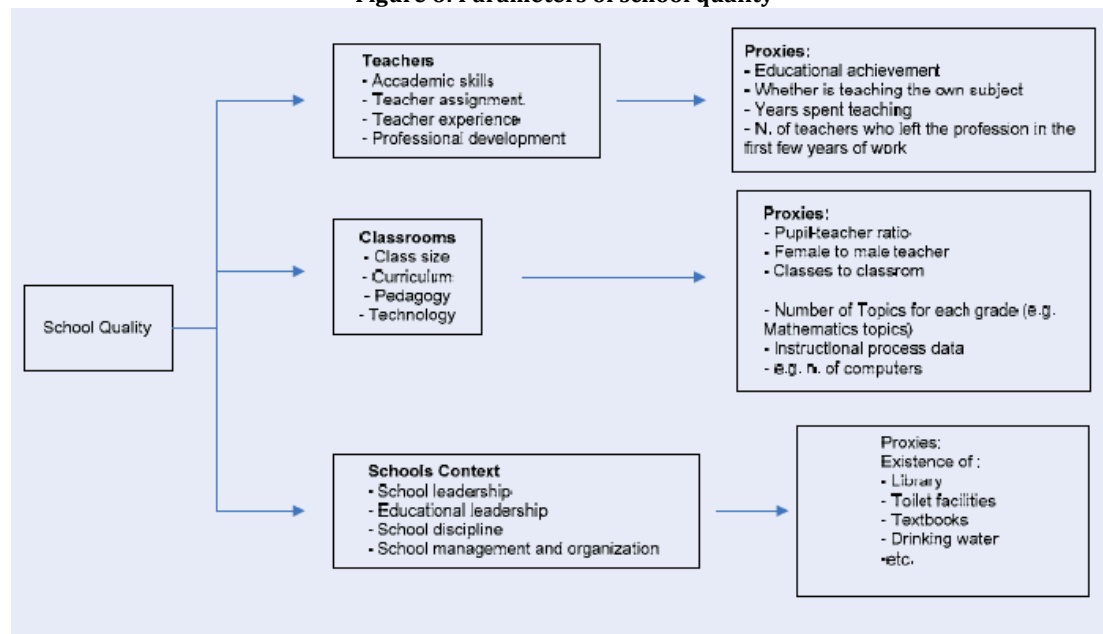
Several executive reforms will need to be put in place in order to realise legislative change on the ground, especially given Lebanon's system of laws and implementation decrees<sup>163</sup>. Several decrees related to education are essential. As a matter of priority, the executive decrees regulating primary compulsory education must be issued with stark penalties for non-compliance. The latter is essential because compulsory schooling is contingent on enforceability and coordination; weak enforcement can even have adverse effects on household decisions to send children to work<sup>164</sup>.

In addition to the mandate to withdraw children from the streets and refer them to SDCs, municipalities need to take an active role in addressing WSC and child labour. To facilitate this, implementation decrees should be issued to allow municipalities to exercise their existing right to regulate street-vending in accordance with present and recommended child labour laws and reforms.

## Targeted education interventions

According to various parameters covering teachers, classrooms and school context (see Figure 6), cross-country evidence has already established that the quality of education has a direct effect on household decisions to use child labour to bolster income<sup>165</sup>.

Figure 6: Parameters of school quality

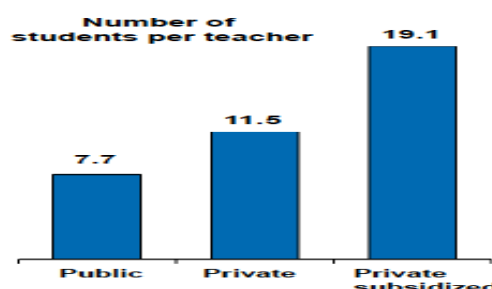


Source: Guarcello L., Rosati F. C. (2007). "Does school quality matter for working children?" *Understanding Children's Work*.

In Lebanon, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) already has the mandate to facilitate informal, flexible-hours and extra-hours teaching, which is seen as effective methods to decrease child labour and WSC<sup>166</sup>. This is especially the case with flexible-hours schooling, which can facilitate both work and study among WSC and child labourers instead of precluding them<sup>167</sup>.

Additionally, executive decrees should be issued to institutionalize these practices for children engaged in street work or child labour, allowing them to be delivered at SDCs as well as in public schools. Given that Lebanon's student-to-teacher-ratio (see Figure 7) is well within in international norms<sup>168</sup>, there is little need to recruit more teachers, even if all Syrian children present in Lebanon at the start of the 2013 academic year were to enrol in public education.

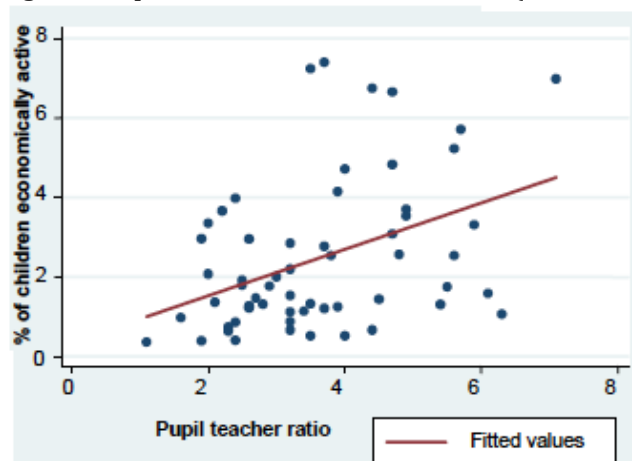
Figure 7: Student-to-teacher ratios in Lebanon



Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education, (2010), *Quality Education for Growth, National Education Strategy Framework*.

According to students' requirements, existing teachers need to be trained to deliver informal and flexible-hours teaching to Lebanese and non-Lebanese students alike. Recruitment should only begin at around 25-30 students per teacher considering pupil-teacher ratios' positive and causal correlation to child labour (see Figure 8). Given that SDC's will be the main point of contact for WSCs, they will need to be given the mandate to deliver formal, informal, flexible-hours and afterschool teaching in coordination with the MEHE, particularly with regard to the situation of Syrian refugee children and their differing curricula.

**Figure 8: Pupil teacher ratios and child labour (factor of 10)**



Source: UNESCO (2004), *Education for All: The Quality Imperative*, EFA Global Monitoring Report

There are several other areas of school quality that also need to be a focus of targeted education sector reforms. Firstly, there is ample evidence that the presence of a female teacher is related to lower numbers of child labourers and school dropouts, as well as improved academic performance<sup>169</sup>. School libraries are also related to lower child labour<sup>170</sup>. Hence, priority should be placed on the deployment of qualified female teachers and the establishment of libraries accessible to WSC and child workers in intervention areas where there is the high incidence of child labour. WSC attending educational programmes should have access to a library that is either established in schools or in SDCs depending on feasibility assessments. Favouring female teachers over males is not a serious concern given the already low level of gender equality in Lebanon<sup>171</sup>.

### ***Capacity building***

There are certain target areas across Lebanese public administration where capacity building will prove essential to addressing the issue of WSC and child labour. The first of these are SDCs, which, along with the range of services they are mandated to provide, must also be given the capacity to:

1. manage connectivity and information sharing with the CAS, MOSA, MOL, NCCL, ISF and the Ministry of Finance;
2. conduct surveys and data collection relevant to WSC and child labour;
3. deliver formal, informal, flexible and extra-hours education;

4. build and manage infrastructure and resources necessary to establish libraries;
5. document NPTP progress on WSC and child labour in their areas;
6. educate WSC and child labourers on rights and abuse; and
7. build the human and technical accounting capacity to manage a conditional cash transfer programme alongside existing infrastructure of the NPTP (see programmatic recommendations).

The capacity of the ISF will also have to be built through the ISF's Unit to Combat Labour on the Streets, which needs to be re-established with a mandate that encompasses previously mentioned legislative and executive recommendations. The Unit should contain a number of dedicated staff in each governorate of Lebanon and be trained in children's rights and protection. Moreover, the Unit will need to prioritise action against criminal organizations that facilitate WSC work. To do so, the Unit should be provided with the financial and administrative capacity to crack down on these organisations in geographical locations where WSC live or work.

### ***Programmatic Recommendations***

With structural reforms in place or in process, this report recommends a series of programmatic interventions based on international evidence to reduce the incidence of child labour and increase human capital accumulation. Most evidence of the impact of policy interventions on WSC is either scant or preliminary<sup>172</sup>. Thus, strategies to reduce child labour in general have been chosen to inform this report's programmatic recommendations, rather than insufficient evidence from interventions that specifically target WSC. With this in mind, international evidence is incorporated into the local context to use existing infrastructure and programmes that support the implementation of programmatic recommendations. Accordingly, this report employs significant evidence from targeted policies aimed at reducing the vulnerability of households to poverty and, subsequently, child labour<sup>173</sup>.

### ***Conditional cash transfers***

The basis of this report's programmatic recommendations is to influence its model through a conditional cash transfer (CCT) scheme whose main conditionality is full-time schooling with afterschool education. The scheme accounts for the political and socioeconomic context in Lebanon in order to have the greatest effect on reducing child labour and WSC, as well as increasing human capital accumulation.

Cash transfer solutions have been proven to reduce child labour more than any other type of targeted intervention<sup>174</sup>. CCT programmes where education is the main conditionality is the one policy instrument that is seen to have proven effects on reducing child labour *and* increases in educational enrolment. However, the impact of CCT programmes is not uniform and depends on contextual structural interventions that lessen incentives of households to allocate children's time and money related to child labour<sup>175</sup>.

CCT programmes were first launched in Latin America in the 1990s and have

since been adopted by more than 20 countries, with at least another 20 showing interest in order to reduce household poverty and child labour as well as realise other educational, health and general welfare outcomes<sup>176</sup>. Examples of CCT's successes in reducing child labour have been seen in places as diverse as Bangladesh and Brazil, resulting in pronounced reductions where there is a high concentration of child work<sup>177</sup>, as is the case with Syrian refugees in Lebanon. At the extreme, CCTs have been shown to decrease national child labour by around 10%<sup>178</sup> and can virtually eliminate school-drop outs caused by economic shocks<sup>179</sup>.

The amount of CCT provided to families will need to depend on their level of poverty ascertained by proxy means-testing. The size of any type of cash transfer programme does not necessarily have a direct effect on child labour and educational attainment, but CCT programmes are more effective in poorer households than wealthier ones in general<sup>180</sup>. Thus, through SDCs administration CCTs should be integrated with the NPTP and its proxy-means testing eligibility scheme. The CCT programme should also be provided to the poorest households first in order to lift them out of poverty.

Given that proxy means-testing is more applicable to poorer households and CCTs in places such as Lebanon where information systems are weak and informal markets are large<sup>181</sup>, this strategy fits well with this report's recommendations in the short-to-medium term. However, as the programme progresses, a more rigorous verified or unverified means-testing regime needs to be adopted, depending on cost constraints and feasibility<sup>182</sup>. Critically, the CCT programme needs to be able to accommodate for economic shocks to household income, as sudden disturbances to income flows in poor households are seen as one of the key reasons that families choose to send their offspring into child labour<sup>183</sup>. The CCT programme will also target women, specifically mothers, because they invest more in children when targeted by CCT programmes<sup>184</sup>.

### ***Conditional microfinance programme***

A cash transfer programme on its own will not constitute a longer-term solution to WSC or child labour. It may even breed a certain level of dependency on government assistance. In order to develop a more sustainable solution and provide a possible avenue for asset accumulation and access to credit according to this paper's methodology, this report proposes a conditional microfinance programme (CMP) that complements its CCT programme.

Households will have the option to benefit from the CMP only after showing commitment to CCT education conditionality for at least one academic year, and will lose access to the CCT and CMP programme immediately if their children fail to regularly attend either school and afterschool sessions. The same principle applies if the child is found in any form of work that can be classified as child labour according to ILO standards. Accordingly, households who agree to the CMP programme will also have to comply with spot checks and interviews by social workers or labour inspectors.

Under certain conditions microfinance can be effective in bringing households out of poverty, but generally has rigorously proven results in providing social safety nets and consumption smoothing<sup>185</sup>, both of which are essential to



avoiding child labour under this report’s methodology. The same logic applies to microfinance and child labour. Indeed, when poor households use microfinance to invest in productive assets, it can actually increase child labour because families decide to put the children to work in the new family business<sup>186</sup>. However, since the CCT and CMP programmes are conditioned on afterschool attendance and child labour spot checks, the possibility of putting children to work for much of the day is greatly reduced.

Existing Microfinance Institutions are recommended to manage the CMP programme in coordination with SDCs to minimize setup and operation costs. It is recommended that a Village Savings and Loans (VSL) microfinance model be implemented for the poorest applicants, and more traditional schemes for applicants who are not extremely poor. VSL schemes are seen to be one of the most effective microfinance models for the extreme poor<sup>187, 188</sup>. VSL schemes are also suited to the Lebanese context because of the tribal sectarian nature of communities as well as the concentration of child labourers domiciles in rural areas where traditional banks find operations labour intensive and costly to manage<sup>189</sup>.

All applicants will have to agree to mandatory saving schemes in order to accumulate assets that act as a buffer against economic shocks and facilitate consumption smoothing<sup>190</sup>. It is also recommended that the CMP be packaged as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), given that several banks have showed interest in contributing to WSC projects through CSR<sup>191</sup>.

### ***Political considerations and funding***

Considering the politics of Lebanese demographics is essential when deciding how to fund and distribute cash assistance to the poor. This report’s recommended CCT and CMP programmes will follow a specific eligibility matrix for microcredit, access to different forms of education and funding sources (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9: CCT and CMP Eligibility and Funding Matrix by Nationality**

<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Microcredit</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Lebanese	SDC, Public	Full	Government, International Donors, Banks
Syrian	SDC, Public, Humanitarian	None	International Donors
Palestinian	SDC, UNRWA	Partial	International Donors, Banks

While is politically viable and attractive for government to fund poverty-related interventions for Lebanese citizens, the same cannot be said about refugees given the past, existing and increasing tensions associated with the presence of (now mainly Syrian) refugees coming into the country<sup>192, 193</sup>. For the same

reason, Syrian WSC households should not have access to CMP at this time as, in the current social and political climate, it is not feasible to provide this demographic with long-term sustainable solutions<sup>194</sup>.

Syrian refugee WSC will continue to have access to public schools but will not be directly funded by the government. However, the government and international donors should continue to fund improvements to the education system to accommodate more Syrians, as well as apply this report's targeted educational reform recommendations. Syrian refugees should also be offered cash-for-work programmes through international agencies so as to reduce tensions in host communities and diminish threats to the availability and wages of low-income 'Lebanese' jobs<sup>195</sup>.

Syrian refugees should also have ongoing expanded access to informal and humanitarian efforts to provide schooling<sup>196</sup>. Areas where international aid efforts are being exerted to educate Syrian refugee activities should be merged with the CCT programme, especially within SDCs which all WSC will have access to.

As far as Palestinian refugee WSC are concerned, they should continue to have access to UNRWA schools and partial microcredit for households according to Lebanese labour law restrictions on forms of acceptable labour and property ownership for Palestinians.

Banks should also be keen to fund resident Lebanese and Palestinians as they have higher traceability than non-resident Syrians. Since international donors have differing agendas, their contributions should be welcome to any nationality segment or as part of a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF) to finance child labour interventions. MDTFs have proved effective in avoiding aid fluctuation and fragmentation; they also allow countries to allocate resources according to national priorities and problem areas instead of donor-driven ones<sup>197</sup>. However, MDTFs require considerable administrative capacity and should only be considered after a feasibility study into management costs<sup>198</sup>.

### ***A minimum standard***

The recommendations of this paper are far-reaching and based on an ideal set of interventions. However, Lebanon has a long history of fractious politics and unapplied policies, as is evinced by the various national plans and previous initiatives that have not resulted in a substantial decrease in WSC or child labour. Accordingly, while our recommendations stand, there is a need to provide an absolute minimum standard that should be implemented if structural and programmatic recommendations are not implemented in full.

The bare minimum this report recommends is that the CCT programme forms a key component of the joint World Bank and MOSA's NPTP to affect household decisions. This could be made possible under existing frameworks and agreements between Lebanon and the World Bank and would not require any further consensus building or decision-making at the government level. In addition, the structural recommendations to re-establish the Unit to Combat Child Labour of the ISF and the punitive laws proposed should also constitute an

element of this report's minimum alternative recommendation, as the issue of reigning in criminal organizations that employ WSC is crucial.

## **ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES**

Several alternatives to this report's programmatic and structural recommendations were considered and discounted because they either do not impact this report's model as much as its recommendations, or they pose prohibitive cost and capacity restrictions.

Unconditional cash and non-cash transfers to WSC's households were considered options, as were conditional and unconditional in-kind transfers. It was generally viewed that cash transfers had the tendency to decrease child labour and poverty in general<sup>199</sup>, but that conditional cash transfers were up to two times as effective as their unconditional counterparts in reducing drop outs<sup>200</sup>. In-kind transfers were viewed as less effective because they did not prove to impact child work<sup>201</sup> or were inconclusive in their results<sup>202</sup>. Unemployment benefits, which are in essence unconditional cash transfers, were also discarded because of prohibitive cost and capacity restrictions, as these would have to be built from scratch.

Public works employment schemes were also discarded as a policy option. While the schemes were seen to improve school participation and decrease the incidence of child work, they also had a substitutive effect on child labour in and outside the household when adults went into employment<sup>203</sup>. In the Lebanese context, such programmes would have to be extensive to satisfy the sectarian quota system in public employment and reverse the almost total freeze on hiring civil servants, something which was deemed politically implausible. Public works employment and unemployment benefit schemes were also deemed to constitute prohibitive cost and capacity restrictions.

Alternative interventions that did not address WSC household circumstances were discarded because of insufficient evidence to support their application in the context of child labour and this report's model.

## **CONCLUSION**

Interventions that reduce child labour and increase human capital accumulation are more effective when they target reductions in the supply side of child labour through general overall improvements in health, education and access to basic services. Such interventions also increase the impact of targeted and specific structure programmatic interventions on child labour, especially in the case of CCT programmes<sup>204</sup>. Moreover, because evidence on how to adjust programme modalities in order to achieve the greatest reductions in child labour is not uniform across different contexts<sup>205</sup>, such interventions are essential to seeing the best results possible.

Specifically, the National Education Sector Strategy (2010) and the National Social Development Strategy (2011) are the most relevant policy framework interventions to reduce WSC and child labour as well as increase human capital.

However, other essential elements such as access to basic services need to be realized through, for instance, implementing key strategies such as the Policy Paper for the Electricity Sector (2010), and the National Water Sector Strategy (2011).

Child Labour and WSC are just two interconnected outcomes of underdevelopment. But neither Lebanon, nor any other developing nation can wait until full development in order to eliminate child labour—the latter can occur before the former. Thus, the government, and society at large, have a vested interest in preventing Lebanon’s children from taking to the streets or, eventually, to the country’s battlefields and its brothels.

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