

Guidance on hazardous child labour in agricultural production in Niger

Photo: Plan International

This case study describes how agricultural actors in Niger collaborated to address hazardous child labour in agriculture.

Background

In 2016, the National Network of Chambers of Agriculture in Niger, with the support of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), developed a practical guidance note for small-scale agricultural producers. The majority of these farms are family businesses which often involve all family members, including children. These children are regularly involved in hazardous tasks. The guide was developed to provide agricultural producers with more practical advice and guidance to apply mitigating measures to prevent hazardous child labour and thus comply with the labour laws and regulations.

Guidance for agricultural actors

The development of the guidance was initiated by actors from the agricultural sector and developed through a participatory approach across three regions in Niger. The process brought together producers, (extension) consular offices of regional chambers of agriculture, NGOs and private sector actors, local government administration and institutions for agricultural services, education, health, work and social protection. The purpose of the collaboration was to promote agriculture and defend the interests of rural producers while aiming to address major constraints to development in the agricultural sector which affect the health, development, wellbeing and education of children.

The guidance centred around nine tasks typically performed by children across four agricultural subsectors (i.e. crops, livestock, hydraulics and environment). The nine tasks were: using fertilisers, pesticides and seeds; using irrigation wells; handling sharp tools; carrying heavy loads; using children in rice cultivation; using children to fetch water; tending livestock; fetching wood; and using children for labour-intensive work. For each task, the guidance provided concrete steps to prevent and remedy hazardous working conditions.

Information on the nature and types of child labour included:

- the types of hazards which children are exposed to in agriculture;
- the degrees of risk and how the risk is harmful to children's development;
- the geographical area where the practice is widespread.

Key steps to prevent and remedy hazardous child labour included:

- proposed alternative solutions to reduce harm and address child labour risks, including the resources and tools required to do so;
- an illustration of each task by a photo or an image which presents the bad practice to avoid and the good practice to adopt.

Resources

- ◇ FAO (2016). **Guide sur le travail des enfants dans l'agriculture.**
- ◇ FAO (2013). **Protégeons nos enfants des pesticides ! Guide visual d'animation.**