



Information and Research Center
At King Hussein Foundation

CHILD LABOR IN THE CITY OF IRBID/ GOVERNORATE OF IRBID JORDAN

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

IRC	Information and Research Center
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
FCPS	Family and Childhood Protection Society
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
ILO	International Labor Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
IPEC	International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor
CRC	Convention on the Right of the Child
NTFC	National Task Force for Children
CLU	Child Labor Unit
SCREAM	Supporting Children's Rights through Education, Arts and Media
MoL	Ministry of Labor
DoS	Department of Statistics
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Child labor in Jordan is currently prevalent in urban areas where children work on the streets and engage in informal activities such as begging, vending of food and consumer goods. Although there is no official number indicating the size of child labor in Jordan, it is estimated that working children constitute more than 0.01% of the total Jordanian labor force¹.

As a result of the increased public's awareness on the phenomenon of child labor in Jordan, several research studies have indicated the prevalence of child labor in Jordan; however, no research study has provided or quoted the figure of working children in Jordan.

Various study results have shown that children often work in dangerous and hazardous conditions where they are exposed to physical and psychological abuse, in addition to exploitation in terms of minimal pay and long working hours. Studies have also indicated that children work for a variety of reasons where living in poverty is at the lead. Although children are not well paid, they still serve as contributors to their families' income.

In consequence, this research study aims to investigate child labor in Irbid to provide a deep understanding of and knowledge about the socio- economic and cultural context of the working children in Irbid. It also aims to propose intervention programs that maximize the effectiveness of the Family and Childhood Protection Society (FCPS), an NGO in Irbid that works on children issues.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The term child labor has various definitions. The International Labor Organization (ILO), defines child labor as "some types of work" done by children under the age of 18. The ILO also states that child labor includes full-time work done by children under 15 years of age that prevents them from going to school (getting an education), or that is dangerous to their health².

¹ The Department of Statistics indicated in its 2004 national study on child labor, that the statistic of "0.01% of working children" is less than the reality since it relies on a sample survey and such surveys constitute marginal errors. Thus the percentage could be estimated to be no more than 0.02%.

² Blood, Sweat and Tears: The Story of Child Labor, website,
http://library.thinkquest.org/03oct/01908/1024/whatisit_childlabor.htm?tqskip1=1

In the issued Child Protection handbook for Parliamentarian, the Inter Parliamentarian Union & UNICEF use the term child labor only in reference to forms of employment or unpaid work that violate the rights of children and should be prohibited³.

UNICEF refers to child labor as all children below 12 years of age working in any economic activities, children aged 12 to 14 years of age engaged in harmful work, and all children engaged in the worst forms of child labor. They also highlight the concept of light work which refers to children who help their parents at home or in the family farm or business, as long as the work is not dangerous and does not interfere with school attendance and other normal childhood activities⁴. Work that does not interfere with education, light work, is permitted from the age of 12 under the ILO Convention 138.

Child work that does not negatively affect children's health and development or interfere with education-as defined by UNICEF- can have positive outcomes on the children.

The International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) defines child labor as "work which is detrimental to the physical, psychological or intellectual well-being of the child⁵.

It is clearly perceived that the former definitions contrast with the Conventions of the Rights of Children (CRC) as they acknowledge the existence of the child labor problem yet do not put forward any solutions.

1.3 GOVERNORATE OF IRBID

Irbid anciently known as Arabella is Jordan's second largest city located about 85 km north of Amman. It is a bustling community with a large university and student community (Yarmouk University).

In 1948, the city was subjected to an influx of refugees from the West Bank that led to a total population of 23,164 in comparison to 6,693 in 1946. In 1991, the city was subjected to another influx of refugees from the Gulf due to the Gulf war that resulted in a total population of 207,361 by 1994⁶. Currently, the population in Irbid is estimated at 272,681 with a family average size of 5.9%⁷.

³ Child protection, A handbook for parliamentarian, P.140, prepared by Inter Parliamentarian Union & UNICEF, 2004

⁴ UNICEF official website, http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_childlabour.html

⁵ ILO, 1995

⁶ Street Children in Irbid, A social study, Hakam Matalga, P.17, 2003-2004

⁷ Department of Statistics (DOS) , 2003

This high inflation in population affected the city's population structure especially since Irbid also suffers from the two crucial national problems: poverty and unemployment. Although there are no national numbers that indicate the poverty size in Jordan, it is still considered a serious problem. However, the poverty line was identified in a comprehensive National Strategy on Poverty, conducted by the Ministry of Social Development in 2002, as JD 313.5/person/Year; 15 to 30 percent of the population falls below that line. The Income Expenses Survey shows that 60% of the poor in Jordan live in five governorates: Amman, Madaba, Irbid, Jerash and Ajloun⁸. In governorate of Irbid governorate, poverty was estimated by the Family Income Expenses Survey in 2002 as 13.8%.

In addition, Jordan's unemployment rate, which is estimated at 13.7%, may be closer to 25% if underemployment is taken into account. In the short term, 8000 new jobs need to be created to tackle the problem of unemployment⁹. Similarly, unemployment in the Governorate of Irbid was estimated at 16.2% by the Poverty and Unemployment Survey in 2003.

As a result of the above-mentioned extreme conditions, different poor neighborhoods in Irbid came to exist such as the Irbid refugee camp, Turkman, Hnene and Bayada. Poverty and unemployment in these neighborhoods place a great strain on the survival of the families. Parents tend to encourage, or in some cases force, their children to work in order to contribute to the family's income.

In this sense, child labor has become a common phenomenon in Irbid. Children are wide spread on the streets. They are engaged in informal labor such as vending of food and various consumer goods and collecting junks. Children are also recognized in the formal work sectors such as car maintenance, carpentry and smithery.

Recognizing this phenomenon, the Jordanian government began setting policies and programs to eliminate child labor. In May 1991, Jordan ratified the International Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) to provide a better life for the children. The CRC outlines 54 human rights' articles that provide protection and respect for every child under 18 years of age and requires the implementation of these rights in the light of the Convention's guiding principles.

In 1995 Queen Noor established the National Task Force for Children (NTFC) to monitor the children's condition and status in accordance with the CRC and

⁸ Tamam El-Ghul, Poverty Alleviation for a Stronger Jordan _A comprehensive National Strategy, 2002, Ministry of Social Development-Amman

⁹ Ibid

the National Plan of Action for Children. In 1997, the first national study on child labor was conducted by NTFC.

The Ministry of Social Development also established a committee to address the problem of child vendors. This government body is empowered to withdraw children from the streets, return them to their families or juvenile centers and provide families with stipends.

In 2000, Queen Rania opened Dar al-Aman, a child protection center designed to shelter children ages 6 to 12 who have suffered from neglect and abuse, including children who have been forced to drop-out of school and work.

In addition, the Government of Jordan became a member of the ILO in 2000. As a result, the Ministry of Labor established the Child Labor Unit (CLU), a special unit to conduct scientific studies on the phenomenon in Jordan and recommend solutions and policies to stamp it out. The CLU has developed a National Policy and Program Framework that provides a strategy for the policy makers to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The MOL has also implemented a policy whereby the adult relatives of any working child withdrawn from work may be offered vocational training. The CLU will also establish a database on this issue and update it regularly in the near future.

In November 2001, the Ministry initialed the first phase of the SCREAM program (Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media). The program aims to provide activities that utilize mass media and advocate sensitization of school children, principles, school-teachers, community leaders, politicians and religious authorities.

A national report on the status of child labor in Jordan was also presented by the Ministry of Labor in July 2002 to show the status of child labor in Jordan during the year 2001. It came as part of the efforts exerted by the Ministry to prevent the spread of child labor in Jordan¹⁰.

The National Council for Family Affairs was established in 2001 to formulate a comprehensive national strategy that guarantees the improvements in the living standards of the Jordanian families.

The Jordanian Women's Federation launched a pilot project in the Baqa refugee camp in 2002 with the aim to reach street children who had abandoned their education by engaging them in educational games and computer-generated activities.

¹⁰ A report on the status of child labor in Jordan, MoD, P.8

In October 2003 and August 2004, the Information and Research Centre (IRC) sponsored a 3-day workshop for regional experts to collaborate on action plans and World Wide Web for children under difficult circumstances.

1.4 INCIDENCE AND NATURE OF CHILD LABOR

Various attempts to investigate child labor in Jordan started in the 1990s. Some studies were conducted on a national level while others targeted main urban areas recognized as the highest in population, such as Amman, Irbid and Zarqa. Other studies were conducted as part of a Master's thesis. Following is a brief summary of the major studies that were conducted on the issue of child labor in Jordan.

In 1997, a study on child labor, conducted by Dr. Janet Abboud aimed to explore the magnitude of child labor in Jordan, to identify the causes, conditions and consequences of child labor and to recommend preventative as well as immediate measures to combat illegal or harmful child labor. The study sites included four selected low-income areas, four selected refugee camps and four selected industrial areas.

The study results indicated that child labor is concentrated in informal sector enterprises and is mostly temporary and seasonal. It also indicated that child labor in Jordan is a product of poverty, perceptions of diminishing social and economic returns from education, and lack of extra curricular activities for children. It concluded that regulation of child labor in Jordan and the removal of children from exploitative and hazardous work conditions seems more realistic than a total ban on child labor in the short term.

In 1998, a Master's thesis entitled 'Child labor in the Jordanian Society' was conducted by Ms. Sawsan Maraqa to identify the characteristics of the working children and the socio-economic conditions of their families and reasons for employing young children.

In terms of the characteristics of working children, the study stated that the percentage of working children increases with age and that most working children are the product of school dropouts, especially in middle school levels. It also highlighted the fact that usually children work in various professions such as carpentry, smithery, and car maintenance.

As for the socio-economic conditions of their families, the average income of a working child's family is 187.76 JD with a child work contribution estimated at 17.3%. The majority of the working children's fathers work in low-level occupations while the mothers are household wives. The average family size is 8.80, coming from normal integrated families with a simple level of education.

In reference to the working conditions, most children work daily for an average of six working hours with a minimal wage estimated at 28% of the adult working wages. The study pointed out that the relationship between the employers and the employed children was accepted, since verbal warnings were the most commonly used means of punishment.

The study also provided the most common reasons of employing young children as indicated by the employers. Most employers agreed that children had the ability to quickly learn the profession or trade and produce more accurate work than that of the adults. Employers also explained that children accept minimal wages, work for long hours, do not contribute to the adult labor disputations and may be easily dismissed.

In 1999, a Participatory Rapid Appraisal Report on 'Child Labor in Irbid' was prepared by Questscope in cooperation with the FCPS and NTFC to identify the situations of working children in Irbid, identify their characteristics and needs and understand their circumstances and motivations to work. The study also aimed at designing programs for those children.

The study concluded that most children working in the industrial Estate and the Central Vegetable Market had dropped out of school; they earned higher daily incomes than children selling goods or working in odd jobs at bus stations, and children at school. It was also reported that children had the ability to organize their time so as to attend school as well as work. In addition, the study indicated that children encounter exploitation in the labor market; they worked an average of 9.5 hours per day earning an average of JD 2 per day for all types of work. More importantly, all types of work that the children were involved in were dangerous in different ways: exposure to traffic conditions, sunstroke, injury by sharp machinery and tools, damage from inhaling harmful substances, and physical abuse.

Some of the interviewed children were not the main income providers for their families but rather depended on their father as the main source of income. Children were not involved in any programs from within an organization but instead spent their time in amusement arcades where they were exposed to negative practices. Children working in places like the vegetable markets (Hisbeh) were strongly influenced by their involvement in gangs which subjected them to sexual abuse and learning bad habits such as sniffing glue.

Upon the results of this study, various projects were proposed by children in which some were implemented. A feasibility study was conducted in 2000 to examine the possibility of implementing these proposals which included establishing a small factory for traditional sweets (Raha), a wholesale vegetable market (Hisbeh) and a cafeteria for the Industrial Estate.

Also in 1999, another anthropological study was conducted in Irbid by Mr. Fahmi Abd Al Aziz as a master's thesis entitled 'Child Labor Phenomenon in the Socio-Economic Context'. The main purpose of the study was to identify the reasons of child labor according to the socio-economic and cultural aspects in Irbid focusing on education, place of residence, family size, population intensity, family income, family disruption and social relationships of the working children's families. The study indicated that both the educational and income level of the parents was low. The study found that the phenomenon of child labor is enhanced by the urgent need of employers for low cost labor. The study also indicated the effect of the lack of responsibility on part of the governmental establishments in combating the child labor phenomenon, especially the social development and labor ministries.

In 2001, a first official report on child labor was issued by the MoL to describe and analyze the information available at the Child Labor Unit (CLU) within the MoL. A nationwide field sample survey was conducted in which 2539 children at their work places were interviewed.

The main findings of this report revealed that the nature of child labor varies greatly in the different governorates in Jordan. It indicated that more than half the number of working children is in the governorate of Amman (575), followed by Zarqa (21%), Irbid (8%) and finally Balqa (4%). Most working children belong to large size families. The report also stated that children work in car maintenance and repair jobs. The reasons behind child labor were highlighted in the report as half the number of working children drop-out of school to help their families make a living while 42% of the working children desire to learn a vocation. Thus, the main factor is the economic status of the families. However, social and educational reasons rank second in significance. Wage levels of working children are extremely low. Nearly 88% of children work in small enterprises that employ five workers or less and almost 54% work for eight hours or less per day. There is no evidence, in the field survey, that working children are exposed to major health problems and thus the report recommends more research on hazardous situations facing working children.

Similarly in 2001, a comparison study between working children and school children in Zarqa, entitled 'Child Labor and its Impact on Child Development and Socialization' was conducted by Ms. Haifa Darweesh. The study aimed to examine the relationships between child labor and child development as well as to investigate the socio-demographic characteristics of the working children and their families compared to a matching sample of school children and their families.

The results of this study showed that the majority of the working children come from large size low-income families, where parents had low educational

level, while families of school children were better off, with higher income and higher levels of education for both parents with slightly better income. The study indicated that children were pushed to work to assist their families financially or due to their low scholastic achievement, as well as due to the growing unfavorable attitude towards education. With regard to working conditions, children work for long hours, with low wages and were susceptible to various kinds of injuries and discomfort.

In 2002, an Anthropological Study entitled 'Poverty and Child Labor in Jordan' was conducted by Dr. Mohamad Tarwne and the Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan. The main concern of the study was to understand the reasons and circumstances leading to the employment of children in the main cities in Jordan, mainly Amman and Irbid. The study findings identified that the working children come from large families exceeding nine persons. All families of the working children live in refugees' camps and neighboring quarters. Work areas in both Amman and Irbid shared similar characteristics; children work in small and medium industrial zones, especially those that deal with car maintenance, in produce markets and in the old downtowns. Low level of educational attainment at the parental level was indicated. In addition, the families obtain low level of income not exceeding 150 JD per month. It was also found that the parents of such working children do not work in the public state institutions, instead they work either in the marginal private sector or in the informal sector.

The study also showed that the families suffered from high rates of unemployment and family disintegration caused by many reasons such as death of one of the parents, polygamy, divorce, addiction to alcohol and absence of the father due to long working hours. Violence among the families, especially between the parents was also indicated. The study also found that child labor as a phenomenon shaped the attitude of the working children such as: high rate of school dropouts, addiction to cigarettes, alcohol and dangerous inhalants such as Benzene and abuse for about 20% of the working children.

Moreover in 2002, a study, conducted by Khaled Suliman, Sawsan Maraqa and Alam Al Fekr, aimed at discovering the ambiguity of the child labor phenomenon and come up with possible solutions to tackle this problem¹¹. The results of this study indicated that children work under hazardous tough conditions that deprive them from their rights preserved in the laws and constitutions, which according to the study need to be revised, updated and supervised for proper implementation.

¹¹ Khaled Suliman and Sawsan Maraqa, Alam Al Fekr, volume 30 January-March

The study also recommended conducting more studies to explore the phenomenon. It further pointed out the need to set and implement raising awareness policies on the risks and hazards of child labor. Networking among the concerned parties and paying more attention to the problem of school drop-outs were also recommended. Moreover, the study recommended investing in the media and the MoE institutions to reinforce the human values and to pay more concern to the family as it is the focal point for the community.

All the studies' results up to year 2002 indicated the dangerous and hazardous working conditions that the working children suffer from. However, the first specialized study on child labor health risks was conducted by Dr. Muntaha Gharaibh and Dr. Shirley Hoeman on April 2003 entitled "Health Hazards and Risks for Abuse among Child Labor in Jordan". The study aimed to shed light on child abuse and its relevance to all health professionals, including nurses since nurses in Jordan have limited knowledge of the concept of child abuse or the skills to assess it. The research findings discussed in detail the occupational hazards, verbal abuse and physical abuse of working children. Boys reported different sources of occupational hazards including breathing chemical fumes and paints, injury from metal parts falling and cutting them, cold feet and hands, eyes burning, and fear from cars or heavy objects falling on them. None of the boys used protective gears such as masks, goggles, hats, or gloves, and no first aid kits were around. Other sources of occupational hazards came from fighting with each other over work; the seriousness of these fights get to a point where the usage of hands and other means of force such as metal instruments, knives and blades are common.

Children were also subject to verbal abuse from the employer and from old boys who supervise the work of young boys. Physical abuse was also reported from the boys, described commonly as being hit with the employers hand on head or shoulders or with a water hose. Around 27 % of the surveyed 42 children working in Irbid admitted to having been sexually harassed by some of the older boys in their workplace¹².

Findings also revealed that children are taught to put the family needs ahead of their own; children in this study sacrifice their childhood and bonding with parents, thinking that this will transform them into adults earlier.

¹² Jordan Times , Tuesday, October 7, 2003

In 2003, a national study on 'Child Labor in Jordan' was prepared by the Department of Statistics (DOS) to highlight the issue in Jordan and obtain information on the size and distribution of child labor. It also aimed to shed light on the work conditions, causes of child labor and the attitudes of the households towards child labor.

The study showed that more than two thirds of the working children are concentrated in the age group 15-17, while the rest are below this age group. This means that a significant proportion of working children were below the illegal age for work (16 years). The survey showed that 44% of the working children spent less than 7 months in labor market, while about 56% spent 7 months or more; the age group (10 years) spent less than one month.

Most of the working children, according to this study, face threats to their health and safety; in agriculture for example, children are exposed to harsh climates, sharp tools, and heavy loads. Others who work on streets face traffic accidents and bad weather conditions, heat or cold. The greatest majority of the working children 83.9% , reported that they work in a workshop or in a similar place. About 5% work in their home, 4% in the fields, while 2.4% work on the streets. The great majority of the working children were receiving supervision from adult workers 91.4%, while 8.6% were lacking any kind of supervision, which exposed them to many risks, injuries and work accidents.

Fifty nine per cent of children reported working long hours, 54.1% reported having a lot of work, and about 49% received low payments. Working children are also exposed during their work to different kinds of abuse and violence; they were the subject of physical and verbal violence from their employers and supervisors.

The study also indicated that working girls as servants away from their homes are frequently victims of physical, mental and sexual abuse, which have devastating consequences on their health.

In 2004, Hakam Matalqah prepared a study on street children in Irbid as part of his master's degree requirement. The study revealed that the working children's age group is between 12-14 years of age; they have low educational levels (5th – 7th grade) due to the early school drop-out; and come from large families with a low economic level. On average, children spend between 9 – 16 hours on the streets daily. Thirty-one percent of the working children experienced sleeping on the streets and the majority were forced by their parents to work.

To conclude, all of the above-mentioned studies show that poverty is a main reason for child labor; children work in poor working conditions where they are abused and exploited. However, although all concerned parties are aware of

the phenomenon of child labor, there still lacks an official number of the problem for Jordan as a whole.

1.5 LAW ENFORCEMENT AND REGULATIONS

In 1996, the child labor code in the Jordanian Labor law was amended to raise the minimum legal working age from 13 to 16 years of age¹³. In February 2003, the government raised the minimum age for employment of children in dangerous and hazardous work from 17 to 18 years of age¹⁴. Minors (7 - 18 years old) must be given a break after four hours of work, are not allowed to work more than six hours per day, and may not work during weekends and holidays or at night¹⁵. Before hiring a minor, a prospective employer must obtain a guardian's written approval, the minor's birth certificate and a health certificate¹⁶. An employer found in violation of these provisions will face a fine ranging from 100 to 500 JD¹⁷. The fine will double with each subsequent infraction.

Education in Jordan is free and compulsory for children ages 6 to 17 years of age¹⁸. In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 100.8 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 93.6 percent¹⁹. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school. Drop-out rates are relatively high as 7231 children dropped out of schools in 1998/1999 in the age group of 6-16 years of age²⁰. The primary reasons for dropping out of school are financial pressures, poverty, disability, poor performance, teaching styles, parental attitudes, and lack of adequate transportation²¹.

¹³ Labor Code, Law No.8 of 1996, section 73

¹⁴ Labor Code, Law No.8 of 1996, section 74

¹⁵ Labor Code of 1996, section 75

¹⁶ Labor Code of 1996, section 76

¹⁷ Labor Code of 1996, section 77

¹⁸ Article 10 of the Education Act No. 3 of 1994

¹⁹ See World Bank, World Development Indicators 2003.

²⁰ Tarawne, Child Labor Phenomenon in the City, p.51

²¹ See ILO-IPEC, National Program in Jordan--project document, 6.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) commissioned the Information and Research Center (IRC) to work closely with the Family and Childhood Protection Society (FCPS)- an NGO which was established in 1992 in Irbid to serve children- to design and develop an interactive program that can best serve the street working children and their families.

The project consisted of two components which were undertaken in two phases:

The first phase focused on research of working children in Irbid.
The second phase focused on the assessment and capacity building for the FCPS.

To this end, a number of specific objectives were developed:

- To provide a comprehensive picture of the characteristics and socio-economic conditions of the street working children and their families in Irbid.
- To propose practical action and intervention program(s) based on needs assessment of the target groups.
- To plan and implement a capacity development program for the staff members of FCPS in areas related to community needs assessment, program design, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment.

The two phases of the study were designed so that the research phase precedes the assessment phase in order to reveal accurate information on the target groups' characteristics and needs, that will serve as a base for the proposed intervention program(s).

Thus, the main objective of this research study is to provide a comprehensive picture on the situation of the working children in Irbid and to generate information that can be used in designing the intervention program.

The research will actively focus on the following:

- Examining the nature and types of activities performed by the working children and their work conditions;
- Uncovering the dangers that the children are exposed to and the problems they encounter in their work;
- Identifying the socio-economic conditions of the families of the working children;
- Investigating the underlying causes for the involvement of the children in street life.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a holistic approach to research children working on regular (working at shops and units) and on irregular bases (working on streets). Accordingly, children's different life conditions were taken into consideration such as: work conditions, school, household, friendship, living environment, community perspective and the relationships with adults and children.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used to conduct this research:

- **Quantitative:** Questionnaires were used to collect data from all organizations which work on child issues, including official organizations such as the Municipality, The Directorate of the Social Development, The Directorate of Labor, and NGOs working in locations or districts that witness child work or labor. Questionnaires were also used in the survey for the working children and their parents.
- **Qualitative:** Both individual interviews and a focus group discussion were conducted to collect in-depth information and explanations for different issues related to child labor. Individual interviews were used with 10 working children, community leaders, employers, officials and NGOs, while focus group discussions were carried out with parents of some working children. Both methods aimed at shedding light on the phenomenon.

3.1 TARGET GROUP

The study targeted different groups related to child labor in Irbid: working children in informal and formal sectors and on regular and irregular bases, employers of the working children, children's parents, officials, community leaders and working NGOs.

3.2 STUDY SAMPLE

The purposive sampling and snowball techniques were used in the study since the size and location of the targeted children was unknown. The distribution of the study sample is presented in the following table:

TABLE NO. (1) THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TYPE AND NUMBER OF THE TARGETED GROUPS ACCORDING TO EACH PHASE

Study phase	Target Group	Number	Total
Mapping	Governmental organizations	13	17
	NGOs	4	
In depth- interviews	Employers	3	22
	Working Children	10	
	Leaders	9	
Survey	Working Children	122	179
	Children's families	57	
Focus Group discussion with Children's parents	Fathers	6	18
	Mothers	12	
Total			235

In terms of geographical location, the study covered various work places and residential areas where working children and their families were interviewed.

TABLE NO. (2) DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE STUDY SAMPLE ACCORDING TO AREAS VISITED

Area visited	Number of families	Number of children
Turkman	23	27
Refugee Camp	20	40
Main Market	0	4
Al-Jama'a Market	5	23
Irbid Industrial City	5	14
Idoun Street	2	2
North Complex	2	12
Total	57	122

Following is a breakdown of these areas:

- **Vegetable Markets:** The study targeted the Central Vegetable Market which is a fruit and vegetable market known in Arabic as Hisbeh, situated in the western part of Irbid, east of the Turkman neighborhood. Another Vegetable Market situated downtown Irbid was also covered through the study.
- **Industrial Estate:** Situated in northern Irbid were light industries such as car mechanics, smithery and carpentry are widespread. Children who work there choose vocations that they wish to practice in the future.

- Northern Bus Station: A three-acre plot of land used as a parking lot. The eastern part contains, restaurants, vegetable shops, hardware shops, home and electrical appliance outlets, automobile mechanic shops and tire repair shops. The western part is occupied by sellers with portable carts and sidewalk vendors selling fruits, vegetables and various foods.
- Irbid Camp: The Governorate of Irbid contains two camps. The Irbid Camp, which lies in the north of Irbid and 90 km away from Amman, was established in 1950 and is inhabited by refugees who came from Palestine in 1948. Originally, residents lived in tents but later family houses of about 7-90 square meters were built. After 1990, residents built additional floors onto their houses to accommodate for the increasing number of residents in the camp.

Organizations serving the camp included: Al-Farouq society, Al-Jaleel Club, the United Cooperative Society, the Islamic Center, the Camp Charity Committee, the Camp Improvement Committee and the Abdullah Center for Quranic Studies. The international relief agency provides health insurance for families and Al-Farouq society provides medical services at low cost.

- Al-Turkman Neighborhood: Al-Turkman neighborhood, located in the western part of Irbid, was officially known as Hai Al-Manara and estimated at 1.5 square km. The residents estimated that the area was 2Km long and 650m wide. Its population was 60000, as indicated in Questscope's PRA Child labor in Irbid, 1999, housing one third of Irbid's population. The neighborhood encounters problems similar to other areas in Irbid such as the lack of either government or private organizations and societies serving the residents and their children and insufficient play areas; it has a two dunum garden without any facilities for children. Rather than being of service to the community, the garden is a problem because youngsters congregate there in the evenings to drink alcohol and sniff glue. In addition, the garden is dirty and located next to the area's largest garbage dump.
- Hnena: An area opposite to the Irbid camp which is considered a normal extension of Irbid's refugee camp due to the influxes of Palestinian refugees in 1976. The houses in this area consist of four floors and are located on hills opposite the camp reaching the Bait-Ras town borders. The roads are narrow, 1/2 meters, and curvy.

3.3 STUDY PHASES

In order to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, the study was divided into the following phases:

- **PHASE I:** Mapping of the working organizations in Irbid;
- **PHASE II:** In- depth interviews;
- **PHASE III:** Survey of working children and their parents;
- **PHASE IV:** Focus group discussion with the parents of the working children.

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION

- I. The study started with desktop research to obtain all types of statistical information, demographic, geographic and socio-economic conditions in Irbid, in addition to the review of available studies and documents on child labor and/or street children.
- II. A visit was made to the FCPS organization in Irbid to form a team of researchers consisting of IRC and FCPS researchers.
- III. A pool of questions were prepared by the IRC research team for the first phase of the study which aimed at mapping the organizations working for children in Irbid. Accordingly, a questionnaire was prepared covering the following:
 - i. Basic information on the organization including year of establishment, aims, target age group, gender and socio-economic characteristics of the target group, areas targeted in their services and reasons.
 - ii. Information on the organization activities and programs and working nature of the organization
 - iii. Problems facing children in Irbid, programs available in Irbid tackling child labor, problems facing the organizations in achieving their aims.
 - iv. Knowledge of child labor that include the definition of child labor and its characteristics from the organizations' perspectives and reasons for child labor.
 - v. Networking among organizations in Irbid and their future perspectives in meeting children's needs in Irbid.
- IV. As a result, a list of the working organizations in Irbid was prepared that excluded all organizations that do not work with children.

Accordingly, a total of 19 governmental and non-governmental organizations were targeted in the mapping phase.

- V. A training session took place for the FCPS team in preparation for the field work and completion of questionnaires; since the majority of the selected participants did not have previous experience in conducting research, interviews, or in data collection.
- VI. Part of the training included piloting the questionnaire with organizations that were not included in the main sample.
- VII. A primary analysis of the information collected from the piloting of organizations on child labor was conducted. Accordingly, a list of questions was formed for the second phase of the study; i.e. the in-depth interviews with children, selected organizations and leaders. Three sets of questions were prepared: one targeted the children, the second targeted the employers and the third targeted the organizations and the community leaders.
- VIII. The main results of the interviews were used in preparing the questions for the survey. Accordingly, a questionnaire of two sections was developed: the first part addressed the children's parents and the second addressed the working children.
- IX. The questionnaire was discussed with FCPS and the formed team. Questions that were not clear were modified and missing questions were added.
- X. Training on administrating the questionnaire was conducted for the team.
- XI. The questionnaire was piloted on children that where not part of the main sample. Accordingly, a final modification of the questionnaire took place.
- XII. The survey was implemented by using the snowball technique. First, the children who benefited from the FCPS were asked to provide the team with names of other working children and their families. Accordingly, a list of 10 families in the Turkman area was prepared and the families were visited by the team. Some children were found at home which facilitated the data collection from both children and their parents at the same time while some parents were found alone. However, this technique was too slow, therefore the team decided to visit the places that children usually work at. Therefore, data was collected from children working in the Industrial Estate, main food

market, Al-Jama'a market and bus stations. The team asked the child permission to ask him questions related to his work and life. When approval was gained, the interview was conducted. The following table shows the number of children who were interviewed and the places where data was collected. Some of the children gave the researchers their home address where the team paid a visit to the family and collected the data upon their approval.

- XIII. An SPSS program was prepared for data entry and analysis.
- XIV. The questionnaires' questions were coded by the IRC team and entered into the computer.
- XV. As for the focus group discussion, the partnering NGO was asked to select 20 parents, 10 fathers and 10 mothers.
- XVI. Separate meetings took place with fathers and mothers of working children where the following issues were discussed with them:
 - i. Session one: Needs for child development, things or areas provided by the family,
 - ii. Session two: Conditions leading to child labor; the family's economic conditions, school conditions, neighborhood, friends and community, steps that were taken by the family before the child entered the market, possible alternatives for child entering the labor market.
 - iii. Session Three: Benefits of child labor for the family. Effects of child labor on his/her mental, physical, social, economic status and personality.
 - iv. Session Four: Problems facing working children at home, work and in their community.
 - v. Session Five: Intervention programs for improving child work and family conditions in order to minimize the number of children entering the labor market. In addition, the contribution of the following organizations in improving child labor and alleviating child labor in Irbid: Municipality, schools, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Social Development, Vocational Training, NGOs, and voluntary groups.

4. STUDY RESULTS

4.1 MAPPING EXERCISE

The mapping exercise was conducted to examine all the governmental and non- governmental institutions in Irbid which work on children issues. The exercise started by identifying all the concerned institutions: seventeen institutions working on issues related to children in general in Irbid (13 governmental institutions, 4 non governmental institutions) were selected.

It was noted that most of the selected institutions have been established between the 1940's-1980's, with the exception of five institutions which were established in the 1990's. The newly established institutions are civil or non governmental institutions in comparison to the older ones.

The institutions' activities are implemented in the Governorate of Irbid in general, and in Irbid in particular. Some institutions limit their activities to specific areas or locations, like Irbid's Refugee Camp and Bayada.

In terms of identifying their vision and target groups, the objectives of each institution varied. However, it was clear that all institutions were concerned with the male and female children with a focus on specific target groups like students, orphans, children with special needs, poor children and children who come from disintegrated families as a result of divorce, separation or polygamy and suffer from diseases, vagrancy and begging. Thus, each institution designs its activities to compliment its objectives.

Consequently, some selected institutions' field of interest is medicine such as UNRWA and the Philanthropic Association for Pectoral Diseases while other institutions offer services related to the vocational field such as the Vocational Training Institution. The Directorate of Social Development offers supervision to fostering institutions that offer services to children with special needs, foundlings, juveniles and orphans. As for the Directorate of Labor, it provides inspection and monitoring services to the private sector to assure proper implementation of the labor law including the codes that do not permit child labor. Furthermore, the Governor of Irbid also provides other types of services such as infrastructure, maintenance for the city and issuing work permits. As a result, the working children are not among the target groups of any of the selected institutions and hence no programs or services are provided for them in Irbid.

The institutions stated that they rarely encounter obstacles in performing their duties on the official level. Yet, other obstacles associated with the implementation of the child labor code by the employers, as declared by the Directorate of Labor, are evident. Furthermore, the Directorate of Education

pointed out the lack of financial support for the vocational training centers and the lack of monitoring which lead children to drop-out of schools and spend their time on the streets. The Directorate of Education also clarified that there are some vulnerable groups among children who need more attention like children who suffer from family problems as a result of losing one of their parents. The Municipality also explained facing challenges in training its staff to better communicate with the community members. As for the Directorate of Social Development, it encounters resistance from the parents who refuse to benefit from its programs due to the low wages offered for them through such programs.

The selected institutions proposed solutions to overcome the former obstacles. For example, the Directorate of Social Development proposed following up on the labor code that prohibits the employment of minors, to ensure proper implementation. The Directorate of Education on the other hand suggested supporting students who attend vocational training with a monthly salary and monitoring the students who regularly drop-out of classes, through the counseling division at the same directorate. The Municipality supported the idea of having income generating projects, as it was once part of such projects, in addition to integration and advocacy projects in cooperation with concerned organizations like the UNICEF. Other institutions suggested networking with partners to overcome obstacles.

The institutions described the situation of children in Irbid in various ways. Some institutions described it using words such as "normal", "good", "so and so". Other institutions associated the situation with the access to schools stating that "The children's situation is good since families are committed to admitting their children to schools". UNRWA stated that "The situation of children here is much better than it is in the neighboring countries".

On the other hand, some institutions described the children's situation in Irbid as, "Very painful, unethical behaviors by students due to bad social conditions". The SOS for example mentioned the need to provide children with playing areas and entertaining locations while the Directorate of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs explained that the children's situation in Irbid is good as entertainment and public parks are available for children.

The institutions summarized the problems that children in Irbid suffer from as the following:

- Poverty;
- Loss of parent/s;
- Large family size (high rate of newborn children);
- Negligence from the child's family;
- Lack of affection from the family side;

- Family violence;
- Lack of monitoring;
- Lack of awareness in childhood importance;
- Lack of awareness regarding proper nutrition and children's psychological needs ;
- Low level of education;
- School drop-out;
- Mistreatment by the school teachers;
- Shortage in public parks, entertainment places, libraries;
- Lack of institutions which provide extra-curricular activities for children;
- Demographic inflation;
- Large chances of vagrancy and begging;
- Large number of child labor;
- Being subjected to car accidents;
- Improper health services due to the lack of equipments and unqualified staff;
- High disease rate among children.

All institutions agreed that child labor is evident in Irbid. Some referred to it as a big problem caused by poverty and highlighted the need for immediate intervention, while others described child labor as seasonal and refused to describe it either as a big problem or as a phenomenon.

Most institutions did not have any programs related to child labor except for Al Farouq Philanthropic Association which has various preventative programs such as the parental awareness programs on how to deal with children and the remedial programs for establishing development funds or income generating projects. Similarly the Irbid Municipality also performs preventative programs on parental awareness and prepared a report on child labor in Irbid. Inspection on the implementation of the labor code takes place through the Directorate of Labor in Irbid. Other services represented in preaching, counseling, school broadcast and school fee acquittals are provided by the Directorate of Education.

The definition of child labor varied from one institution to the other. Some institutions defined child labor in relation to the child's age. Although identified by the labor law, they explained that the age of child labor varies from 13-16 or above 16 years of age. Other institutions associated the definition of child labor to the age, the care he/she obtains from his/her family and the level of his/her physical growth. In addition, some institutions defined child labor depending on the type of labor taking into consideration the payment and the working hours. Other institutions like the Irbid Municipality define child labor in relation to the social conditions of the families "Children come from families that are disintegrated, poor and suffer from orphanage and divorce as in

Turkman Neighborhood. The child reaches grade six not knowing how to write his name, the education is weak". Thus, the educational characteristics for the working children describe their low level of education (primary, illiterate, dropped out of school).

The causes of child labor were also brought up by the institutions; poverty, unemployment, family disintegration, educational failure and ignorance were indicated as the main reasons for child labor. The lack of attention from the parents and the school towards children, in addition to the demographic density, also contribute to the existence of child labor.

As a result, child labor has various negative effects as children get exposed to divergence, insults, physical and psychological abuse, diseases, illiteracy, addictions and bad companionship. As stated by the Municipality of Irbid, "...resulting in an unqualified generation who don't have a culture nor an education or an occupation".

Children are mostly perceived by the institutions as peddlers selling gums, balloons, newspapers or as car washers or porters at the vegetable market (Hisbeh). They spread out at bus stations, markets, refugee camps, vegetable markets, Industrial Estate and on streets at crowded areas. Children work at those places in labors that do not require complicated skills or extensive work experience which make them constitute cheap labor with long working hours for the employers.

As for networking and collaboration among the institutions, most of the selected institutions assured their collaboration with other concerned institutions whether governmental or non governmental, national or international. However, none of the institutions affirmed having any cooperative programs for child labor issues. The main obstacles for not having such cooperation can be attributed to the inconsistency of the institutional objectives for each institution, in reference to child labor, in addition to the lack of funding. Other institutions stated that they do not encounter any obstacles in achieving their objectives. Some institutions advocated networking while others did not.

The selected institutions also stated that the following institutions should be responsible to deal with the child labor problem in Irbid:

- The Ministry of Social Development
- The Ministry of Education
- The Ministry of Labor
- The Directorate of Health
- The Municipality of Irbid
- Al Farouq Philanthropic Association

- Public Security
- Quest Scope
- FCPS

Although the institutions affirmed having a child labor problem in Irbid, their future programs were limited to the following:

- Raising awareness and guidance for both children and families to prevent divergence.
- Offering financial and tactile assistance.
- Raising awareness to prevent school drop-out.
- Directing students to avoid labor.
- Cooperation among the governmental institutions.
- Holding awareness workshops& seminars.
- Establishing hospitals and universities.
- Expanding the services and enhancing the quality.

Thus, the institutions' future plans are restricted to a theoretical framework since the practical one is limited to offering financial support to the children and their families. This reflects the limited capacity of the institutions to combat child labor.

As stated by the institutions, children need different entertainment venues such as parks and playgrounds. Basic materialistic needs, such as money and basic life requirements, and proper education and educational facilities should also be available for the children in Irbid.

The institutions suggested projects, programs and services to combat child labor and were all related to economic factors; as UNRWA reported " As long as poverty exists, it would be difficult to carry out programs".

The programs which were suggested by the institutions included raising the awareness of parents, children and teachers on child labor, allowing the media to play a role, allowing the children to make use of the school facilities, such as playgrounds, during school vacations, and providing extra-curricular activities, medical insurance and family counseling programs for the families.

The institutions also proposed other means to combat child labor by opening libraries, establishing shelters for the homeless, solving the school drop-out problem, providing the primary learning prerequisites through centers specialized in extra-curricular education and offering financial help to the poor families.

As for the projects, the institutions proposed small projects such as employing students during official vacations, providing income generating projects like

sheep raising, offering rehabilitation projects for the families, providing family counseling and offering training and skill development centers.

The institutions also focused on the need to have a system that forbade begging on the street and elsewhere and enhance and activate the juvenile law. They also suggested developing new legislations that allow children ages 12-16 years old to enroll in vocational training centers. In addition, institutions suggested enforcing the laws that forbid families from forcing their children to work.

4.2 INTERVIEWS

□ INTERVIEWS WITH EMPLOYERS

The research team carried out interviews with a group of employers; three workshop owners at the Industrial Estate were selected. The interviewees provided their own perspectives on the issue of child labor from their own experience as well as from their observations of other employers' experiences, who employ children under the age of 16.

It is important to note that the following section will include various quotes from different people, for confidentiality purposes names of these persons have been omitted.

The employers clarified that they do not prefer employing children under the age of 18 because most children in this age group are considered to be weak and unable to perform physically challenging tasks as demanded in such workshops. The employers also added that young children are a responsibility for the employer in case of health problems, involvement in fights, bad behaviors, etc, when the child asks to spend the night at the workshop. Thus, employers prefer employing workers above the age of 18 since they are capable of taking care of themselves and deal with the work environment and its habitual problems. As one employer explained,

Kids cry from any small injuries that they may have during work; They are troublesome and can not hold any responsibility. They also become depraved as they inhale glue, have sexual relations with each other and some employers hire them for this purpose.

Employers classified the working children into four main types:

- I. The child who works in his family's workshop: such a child may start work at the age of ten. Constant monitoring is provided to the child to keep him away from risks encountered on the street. The

employers expressed that there is no problem in this type of labor; it is accepted by both the workshop owners and the community.

- II. The child who works to help his poor family: such a child may learn an occupation by which he can benefit from in his future. This type of labor is considered minor in comparison with other types of child labor in Irbid.
- III. Depraved /street child: deprivation means ,according to the employers, smoking, inhaling volatiles, spending the night outside the house, using insults, having problems with their peers and sexual harassments. Such a child usually fails at school and drops out. As a result, the child gets directed to the streets and finds himself a job to secure his allowance and help reduce the strain on his family. This type of labor spreads out in the Industrial Estate especially in collecting and selling junk/scraps. The weekly income is 3-5 JD which is spent on purchasing cigarettes and volatiles.
- IV. The child who works during summer vacations: some children work during their summer vacation to occupy their leisure time and obtain a personal allowance. Those children mostly work in the collection of junk.

From the conducted interviews, employers gave several causes for child labor: high living cost, school drop-out, family disintegration, large family size, negative family environment, deprivation among children, the need to fulfill their needs and parents' ignorance.

Employers also stated that child labor has no advantages for any of the parties involved, especially for children who are subject to exploitation in terms of earning low wages and being used for different tasks such as cleaning, tea making, buying food, delivering things to the employer's house and washing cars. Furthermore, children encounter both verbal and sexual harassment from their employers and/or their street peers.

Finally, employers stated that Irbid lacks specialized organizations and programs to combat or decrease the phenomenon of child labor. Thus, they suggested dealing with this problem by focusing more attention on schools, offering voluntary jobs to children during their summer vacation in addition to intensifying inspections on workshop owners and enforcing penalties. Such suggestions may be implemented through the state's institutions.

This said, it is important to note that although employers recognize the significance of education on the children's future, most of them perceive labor

as crucial to some children since they contribute to their families' income and learn an occupation for the future.

❑ **INTERVIEWS WITH CHILDREN**

The research team interviewed ten working children between the ages of 14-15. Four of them work on an irregular bases /informal sector and six work on a regular bases /formal sector. Following are the issues that were discussed:

1. Family conditions and relationship
2. Working Conditions
3. Suggested interventions

The children were selected from the list provided by the FCPS, which included names of children who benefit from their programs and activities. The interview covered different areas related to their living conditions, work, health and rights (see Annex no.1)

4.3 AGE GROUP

The ages of children who were interviewed ranged between 14-15 years of age; the age at which they first engaged in work varied between 7, 10, 12 and 14 years of age. One of the children who has been in the market for seven years, started work at the age of 7 and is currently working at a coffee shop, others who work as food venders or food carriers started work at 10 and 12 years of age. In general, most of the children have been in the labor force for a number of years, the minimum was two years and over.

4.4 REASONS FOR JOINING THE MARKET

❑ **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS:**

Most of the children stated that the main reason for joining the labor force is for economic reasons; they joined to support their family and themselves.

I work to have some money for myself and to give some money to my mother to buy our daily needs". "No one bring income to the family except me and God

Some children had dropped out of school and chosen to work, while others study and work either by dropping out of school for a few days to work or by working after school. Children in this category live a conflict between their wishes to continue their schooling and the need to support their families; "If I return to school, there is no one to give me money or to give my family".

However, some children continue to go to school after realizing that the available jobs do not meet their dreams or expectations; "I will continue to go to school until I finish my education I want to become a doctor or a lawyer".

❑ **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT :**

Another conflict that the working children face is between their school and work: "My circumstances push me to work and I feel inside that I should not work and I should continue my studies, but even if I continue my studies I would not find a job"

The main reasons for children's refusal to continue with their schooling is linked with the teachers' attitudes, coping with the school environment, ways of teaching, and corporal punishment. "I do not like the school students are very tough and teachers hit us". "Teachers treat us with arrogance, they do not smile, they call us bad names and use their hands and legs to hit us".

Some teachers use tools to hit the children with as was described by some of the student interviewees, "Teachers hit students with gas ropes, the head teacher also has one", "I do not like school and I hate the name of the school and I hate the teachers who used to always hit us". These practices are perceived to be humiliating for the students in front of their classmates; "The teacher hits me and kicks me out of the class".

Interestingly, from what the children reported during the interview, it was concluded that teachers used different means of corporal punishment to make sure its painful and harmful. For example, some teachers filled the hose with wood chips or water and then freeze it in order to increase its strength. Thus, it is not a surprise that, since teachers subjected their students to so much pain and humiliation, students were happy to drop-out and considered themselves 'free from prison'.

Moreover, the interviews showed that these conditions were faced not only by those who left the school or dropped out but also by those who alternated between school and work; but since the latter chose to continue their education they focused more on the value of learning than on their environment.

❑ **FAMILY CONDITIONS:**

Size of the working children's family's differ in size: some live in a family of four members while others live in a family of ten. Mostly all children came from families with basic education; some parents have a high school degree, others are illiterate and only in one case did the parents hold a university degree.

Four of the children were considered to be the main source of income for their family's, since their respective fathers' were unemployed or deceased. Three of the interviewees stated working in order to make extra money to treat their members who suffer from various chronic diseases. Moreover, it was evident that the children came from conservative families where their mother's participation in the economic sector was not welcomed, "It is impossible for me and my dad to let my mother work". However, such attitudes are accepted as part of the culture since the father/husband is obliged to take the role of the bread winner. In cases where the man of the house is not able to fulfill his role he is subjected to scrutiny and disrespect by his community and family; in other words he loses his power and dignity. Women on the other hand are considered the responsibility of the man of the house- father, brother or husband, and is always taken care of by men.

In reference to the relationship between the family members, the children reported living in a tense environment with continuous wrangling between the parents on economic issues, "my mother always asks my father for money and they fight for that and the whole house becomes tense". Such conditions affect the relationship between the father and his children as six out of ten described their fathers to be nervous and physically abusive, "my father is also nervous and I am afraid to talk to him because he hits me and calls me names". The other four described it to be a good relationship without any further explanation; this response can either imply that the children genuinely have a good relationship with their father or have refrained from further explaining in fear of embarrassing their parents. Most of the children on the other hand described having a warm relationship with their mother. Some of the children have a good relationship with their brothers, others are abused as they are continuously hit by their older brothers.

4.5 WORKING AREAS AND CONDITIONS

The interviews show that children working on a regular bases (regular and formal sector) work in the following areas: car electrician, carpenter, and waiter in a coffee shop, food market. While those who work on an irregular bases (informal) work as: carriers of vegetable and fruits in the food market or on the traffic lights.

Children who work on an irregular bases/informal full time, earn between 6-35 JD weekly, while those who mix work with school earn between 14-18 JD weekly. Those who work on an irregular bases full time earn between 14-35 JD weekly.

As for the number of hours of the working children, the interviews show that children that work in the formal sector/ on a regular bases work long hours, on average between 6-12 hours daily. This indicates that the children are

exploited by their employers, which is an offence against the labor legislation that clearly states a certain number of hours and days of work.

Most of the children show an interest in changing their work place some due to the minimum wages, others due to the bad behavior of their employer or for the abuse received by their colleagues at work "Once my boss threw hot water on my chest and my chest was burnt". As for other ways of abusing children some mentioned that their boss hits them in front of the customers and calls them names; if a child reacts negatively in response, his boss tries to find other ways to get around the situation, for example: "My boss always calls me a dog and I get upset, but he told me that calling me a dog is something good as dogs are loyal". It is obvious that the children are dissatisfied with the situation, and many reflect their dissatisfaction through various means. For example, "I hate him because he hits me", "When he calls me names in front of the customers I feel I want to kill him".

The above examples of abuse are not only limited to the children's employer or their colleagues, but also includes customers as well; "Customers always show me a negative attitude, they talk to me impolitely, call me names and they sometimes hit me on the face. All this happens in front of my boss and he always blames me". Such attitudes and abuse makes the children belittled and humiliated at work, "Work causes the human being humiliation and hurt", "I am humiliated at work ..."

Due to the above-mentioned negative circumstances-whether the bad working conditions, physical abuse or the low wages, the children continuously change their work place without focusing on one job to learn it well and master the skill.

Furthermore, children work in risky conditions in which they are subjected to hazardous and dangerous situation. Some of examples of injuries and accidents are as follows:

- Hurt by a car accident during work,
- Burnt by coffee,
- Broke their fingers when a car door shut on their hand,
- Cut one of the fingers during work,
- Had heavy objects fall on them,
- Suffered from back pain due to carrying heavy objects over 15 kg,
- Suffered from cold or hot weather during winter and summer respectively,
- Suffered from limb pain due to the long hours of standing or walking

In terms of how the children dealt with these situations/conditions, some stated that they developed different habits such as smoking, and volatile addiction with absence of awareness of the negative impact of these materials

on their health, others tried to find comfort in some of their relatives such as cousins by staying with them for a night, while the rest adjusted to the working culture by learning and using foul language. On the other hand, some children developed feelings of fear due to the police and the municipality busts and confiscation of goods from their work place.

Amidst the turbulent life that these working children live in, many remained hopeful and dreamt owing their own business, house, and/or car, becoming a famous football player, going back to school or becoming a general in the army.

5. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

On December 20, 2004 a focus group discussion took place with a sample of the working children's parents. The parents were divided into two main groups according to gender in order to allow the mothers the freedom to express their views.

The purpose of the focus group discussion was to discuss the following key issues:

- Children's developmental needs;
- Factors contributed to child labor , whether related to the family, economic conditions, educational level or the neighborhood environment;
- How and why do families decide to let their children work ;
- Steps taken by the family before making the final decision of sending their child to the labor market
- Proposed alternatives for child labor;
- Impact of labor on children and families;
- Problems encountered by the working children;
- The families' perception of ways to combat the phenomenon (proposed intervention programs).

5.1 CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Both parents agreed that their children should be provided with the following needs:

- Food and beverage
- Clothing
- Education
- Residency
- Psychological relief
- Entertainment facilities/playing time
- Follow up

The mothers showed more concern in providing their children with relief, care and security than the fathers did. They also expressed the need to avoid differentiating between the children. They cared about allowing the child to self-express themselves, allocating allowances and providing a proper space for studying; as one mother said:

We should give them their rights and avoid saying no to them,
I shouldn't hit the child or insult him in front of people so he won't lose his dignity or turn to have a weak character

On the other hand, the fathers mentioned that children should be provided with a role model to guarantee appropriate nurturing. They also stated the need to provide cultural and health care centers for the children.

Both parents explained that they can hardly provide food and clothes for their children, "I sent my kids to the vegetable market to collect the left over after two days of hunger", "We can not afford new clothes from one Eid [Islamic holiday] to the other".

Although the needs mentioned by both parents are similar to each other, the needs mentioned by the mothers indicate a deeper understanding of their children's needs. This can be attributed to the type of relationship mothers have with their children, which is generally close since they are in direct contact with them on a daily basis whereas the fathers are usually out of the house working.

Moreover, due to the families low economic status, access for education can hardly be available for children which leads them to engage in the labor force as a means to obtain a daily allowance or to contribute to their families' income.

Parents also expressed their inability to provide a comfortable and secure atmosphere for their children, in which they are emotionally and psychologically fulfilled, due to cases of polygamy, family fights, and the absence of the father.

5.2 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO CHILD LABOR

Both parents agreed that economic factors are what forces children to work, such as the low family income and the inability to provide their children with a sufficient allowance.

As for factors pertaining to peer pressure, some parents explained that their children are encouraged by their friends and/or neighbors to work and earn an extra income. Other children feel jealous of those who enjoy a better financial status, and thus become motivated to search for a job and make money.

Both parents agreed on some factors related to their children's schools that lead them to run away or drop-out of school. Parents reported that their children usually complained about the ill-treatment of their teachers, who hits them or tries to control them by using strict methods of punishment. Hence, children either escape from school on a daily basis or drop-out completely and hang out with their friends at the vegetable markets and shops;

eventually they found jobs and left the school. As one parent explained, "The teacher kept shouting at the kid until he got tired from going to the school".

In reference to factors attributed to the working child's family, the mothers and fathers were in disagreement. For example, mothers attributed child labor to the absence of the father and his failure to fulfill his children's needs. They also explained that big families and low economic levels lead children to labor because they feel obliged to work and help their families financially. Furthermore, mothers mentioned that it is difficult to get allowances or assistance from the Directorate of the Social Development although other families receive such aid. However, it was believed that families who receive aid usually

get them due to phony reports issued on the family conditions depriving them from the help.

Thus, from the mothers' perspectives, the factors related to the family were mostly expressed from an economic point of view.

On the other hand, the fathers mentioned other factors that lead their children to work, such as the child's desire to learn his father's occupation and follow in his foot-steps or the child's mother forcing him to help in supporting the family financially.

The former factors related to the family indicate that children are usually forced to work due to the difficult and complicated socio-economic family circumstances, which the child also suffers from as he is one of the family members.

5.3 HOW FAMILIES DECIDE TO ALLOW THEIR CHILDREN TO WORK

Both parents agreed on the reasons that encouraged the family to give approval to their child to work:

- Reasons related to the economic status of the family:
families suffer from lack of income and are incapable of providing their children with their needs. As one parent explained,

The child went to school without an allowance, when he got back from school he had decided to get a job and give up school. Afterwards, his father depended on the child's income and gave up his responsibility of spending on his family

- Reasons related to the school:

Child's failure/poor performance in school and/or preference for work over study. Or the lack of parents' awareness to the significance of education for a child. "The child is not good at school, so he preferred to let his young brother study instead of him".

The above mentioned reasons indicates the need to focus on a) the role of the schools and the steps taken to ensure that the children are provided with a safe and friendly environment to study in, b) the efficiency of the educational system in public schools, in Jordan in general and in Irbid in particular, in regards to bringing the children's concern onto the discussion table, and c) the importance of raising the children and parents' awareness that education has a positive impact on the child, his family, and their future.

5.4 STEPS TAKEN BY THE FAMILY BEFORE MAKING THEIR FINAL DECISION

Before making the final decision of sending their child to the labor market, parents attempted to access different resources for assistance and aid. Some families asked for assistance from their relatives while others approached the Directorate of the Social Development. The mothers, however, seemed more determined to find other sources of income by approaching relatives, neighbors, the Directorate of the Social Development, the UNRWA, the school , and the Family and Childhood Protection Society (FCPS), while fathers only approached the Directorate of the Social Development and Health. When these efforts failed, which was generally the case, families felt they had no choice but to send their child to work.

5.5 ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILD LABOR

In reference to coming up with alternatives for child labor, mothers and fathers were once again in disagreement. While mothers proposed the contribution of the Development Directorate or the family relatives, fathers suggested more alternatives focused on providing income generating projects and loans for the families. They also recommended providing children with training programs during their basic-education schooling (aged 6-16).

The idea of encouraging women to work was neither proposed by the mothers or fathers. As a matter of fact, the idea was totally rejected by the fathers since they believe it is more appropriate to send male members of the household, regardless of age, into the labor market as opposed to the females. Usually in conservative societies, women are given the responsibility of taking care of her children and home affairs. This indicates the need to

work with families to address two main issues, a) significance of women's economic contribution and b) child rights. It is important to note that both issues, especially the former, should be addressed in a culturally sensitive manner so as not to offend the society's culture's and custom's.

5.6 IMPACT OF CHILD LABOR ON THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Both parents agreed that the impact of labor on the child is as follows:

- The child's ability to depend on himself;
- Negative impacts on child health (cold, chest allergic reactions, back pains, hernia);
- Inability of child to accommodate to both school and work;

When the parents elaborated on the impact of labor, mothers pointed out that working children also suffer from psychological problems due to their constant feelings of being worried and lost. The fathers added that children may deviate, learn to lie and spend long hours outside their homes. The impacts which the mothers pointed out to reflect their awareness to the psychological effects of labor on their children while fathers are more conscious to the behavioral problems which effect their working children. Hence, the communication between the mothers and their children seems deeper than it is with the fathers.

As for the child labor impact on the family, both parents agreed that their working children are able to generate and contribute to their family's income; a fact that makes a big difference to these low-income households. For example, the mothers explained how the child's income enhances the financial situation of the family and reduces the family's needs to get help from other sources.

Furthermore, the fathers also added that labor helped their child learn a vocation/profession that will help them secure their future. This showed that the fathers are concerned with and interested in their children's future. They also explained how sending their children to the labor market is better than allowing them to associate with the children on the streets and become deviated; they believe it is for the child's interest to work rather than spend time on the streets. This may confirm the fact that there are no entertainment facilities, such as parks and playgrounds, for the children to spend their leisure time in.

5.7 PROBLEMS FACED BY THE WORKING CHILDREN

Both parents explained the various problems that their working children encounter within their family, work and society. However, the mothers mentioned different problems than that of the fathers:

TABLE NO. (3) PROBLEMS FACED BY THE WORKING CHILDREN FROM THE VIEW OF THE PARENTS.

Family problems	Work problems	Social problems
Being conceited towards the other family members (being a snob)	Getting caught/busted by the authorities	Un-acceptance from the community towards the working child's family
Impudence of parents	Theft	Being accused of theft by the community
Coming home late	Being Insulted and yeld at by the employer	Being accused of lying by the community
Sleeping outside the house	Exploitation by employer (long working hours, different tasks)	Being attacked by people from the community
Smoking and volatiles addiction	Work accidents	The need to deal with different types of personalities during work
Lying		Showing violent behaviors towards others

Finally, mothers mentioned that their children are accused of lying when in fact the fathers believe that their children lie. Thus, from the mother's perspective it is an accusation and from the father's it is a reality.

5.8 FAMILIES' SUGGESTIONS TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM (PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAMS)

The mothers proposed intervention programs that are not specific and need more exploration to specify the target group for each proposed idea and how to effectively implement it. On the other hand, the fathers proposed more precise intervention programs classified according to the age group and whether the child should only or work and study at the same time, assuming that children above the age of 12 usually have given up their education

opportunities (8-12 yrs. Study & work, above 12 yrs only work). Fathers also suggested some intervention programs that include the working children's families.

The reason for why the fathers' suggestions were more specific and precise can be attributed to the fact that men usually get exposed to work pressure and problems making them more aware to the kinds of programs that are needed. As for the mothers, they are usually more involved in the house work and family issues and rarely get the chance to work outside their homes.

To this end, both parents agreed on the following intervention programs:

- Supply children with vocational training programs.
- Provide working children with medical insurance.
- Establish projects for the working children and their families (carpentry, smithery, etc.)
- Provide extra-curricular activities for children (summer clubs at schools, trips, camps, etc.)
- Offer small loans with simple or no interest rates for the families.

Parents also suggested the contribution of the following institutions in executing the proposed intervention programs:

- The Ministry of Health
- The Municipality of Irbid
- The Directorate of Social Development
- The Directorate of Labor
- The Rural Areas Development Institution
- The Labor Unions
- The schools
- The Women Loans
- The Philanthropic Association

6. SURVEY RESULTS

The survey included 179 families and children. A total of 122 children were interviewed separately, 54 families were interviewed with their children and 12 families without their children.

This section will introduce the characteristics and attitudes of the families and the working children based on the data collected that served as a vital tool in providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon from the families' and children's perspectives. More specifically, this section will highlight the different factors that lead a child to work at an early age.

□ FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS

6.1 SIZE AND LIVING CONDITIONS

Results show that the majority of families, 56%, have large families ranging between 8-10 members, 19% have families of 6 members, and around 11% have families of 7 members. Families with more than 10 members consisted of 9% of the families in the study sample. In sum, the majority of working children live with a large family.

TABLE NO. (4) SIZE OF THE FAMILY

Number of people living in the household	Frequencies	Percentages
4	1	1.8
5	2	3.5
6	11	19.3
7	6	10.5
8	13	22.8
9	12	21.1
10	7	12.3
11	1	1.8
12	1	1.8
13	0	0
14	2	3.5
17	1	1.8
Total	57	100.00

Most of the families, 79%, live in small houses of 2-3 rooms, 14% live in a house of 4 rooms , and a small percent live in a one room apartment.

TABLE No.(5) DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY SAMPLE ON THE NUMBER OF ROOMS AND FACILITIES IN THE HOUSEHOLD

Number of rooms in the household	Frequencies	Percentages
1	3	5.3
2	20	35.1
3	25	43.9
4	8	14.0
5	1	1.8
Total	57	100.00

Only 44% of the families own their house and 46% live in a rented house

TABLE No. (6) OWNERSHIP OF THE HOUSE

Type of house	Frequencies	Percentages
Own	25	43.9
Rent	26	45.6
Use without payment	6	10.5
Total	57	100.00

A high percentage of the families live off of a low monthly income; around 46% of the families live with an income between 50-150 JD while around 16% live on less than 50 JD per month. This implies that around 62% of the interviewed families are under the poverty line.

Although 14% of the families live with a monthly income between 151 to 200 JD they are still considered to be living under the poverty line as defined by Ministry of Social Development.

TABLE No. (7) MONTHLY INCOME

Monthly income JD	Frequencies	Percentages
Less than 50	9	15.8
50-100	14	24.6
101-150	12	21.1
151-200	8	14.0
201-250	4	7.0
Above 250	4	7.0
Does not know	6	10.5
Total	57	100.00

A portion of the families' income is used for rent; 35% of families pay around 40JD per month from its income for rent, and 31% pay around 60JD for rent.

TABLE NO.(8) MONTHLY RENT

Rent paid in JD	Frequencies	Percentages
Less than 20	1	3.8
20-40	9	34.6
41-60	8	30.8
61-80	7	26.9
81-100	1	3.8
Total	26	100.00

Only 12% of the families receive some kind of aid support, either financial, in kind, or both. The majority of the families, or 72%, does not receive any type of aid.

TABLE NO. (9) NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND TYPE OF AID RECEIVED

Type of Aid	Number of families	Percentages
Financial aid	8	14.0
In Kind aid	3	5.3
Both types of aid	5	8.8
Does not receive aid	41	71.9
Total	57	100.00

The financial aid that the 16 families receive is not the same; results show that around 38% of the families receive between 10-30 JD, 25% receive between 30 to 50 JD and around 19% receive around 70 JD monthly. Only one family receives more than 100 JD monthly.

TABLE NO. (10) AID RECEIVED

Amount of aid received	Frequencies	Percentages
10-30	6	37.5
31-50	4	25.0
51-70	3	18.8
Above 100	1	6.3
No answer	2	12.5
Total	16	100.00

Financial support is provided by three organizations as shown in the following table, two are governmental organizations and one is local. The results in the table show that the local committee support the same number of families as the National Aids Fund; the responsible organization for providing financial aid to the poor families.

TABLE NO. (11) ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE AID TO FAMILIES

Name of the organization	Frequencies	Percentages
Charity Fund	2	12.5
National Aids Fund	7	43.8
Local Committee	7	43.8
Total	16	100.00

To conclude, the results show that families of working children, from the study sample, have large families, live in poor conditions and small houses, where some are rented and others are owned. Although few families receive financial aid, in comparison to the family size and the amount of their monthly income, the total income and financial support are not enough for the families to live with. Thus the above-mentioned poor economic conditions are considered to be one of the main factors affecting child labor.

6.2 LEGAL AND HEALTH CONDITIONS

In most of the families, 96%, the father is alive whereas in 4% of the families, the father is deceased. In the Arab culture, the father or man of the house is considered to be responsible for providing the family with security and financial support. Hence, families in which the father is deceased suffer a bigger burden than others.

TABLE NO.(12) FATHER'S EXISTENCE

Father's existence	Frequencies	Percentages
Alive	55	96.5
Died	2	3.5
Total	57	100.00

Over 78% of the families stated that their father lives with them whereas around 16% of the families stated that their father is not available either because he is in prison, the family does not know where he is, he is traveling, or separated.

TABLE NO. (13) FATHER'S LOCATION

Father's location	Frequencies	Percentages
Living with the family	45	78.9
Traveling	1	1.8
In Prison	2	3.5
Unknown	1	1.8
Separated	5	8.8
No answer	3	5.3
Total	57	100.00

A quarter of the families, 24.6%, have children who are or have been in trouble with the law, i.e. in prison or arrested.

TABLE NO. (14) CHILDREN'S LEGAL STATUS

Children's legal status	Frequencies	Percentages
In Prison	9	15.8
Arrested	5	8.8
Does not have any legal problems	34	59.6
No answer	9	15.8
Total	57	100.00

As for the families' health conditions the results show that families have multiple health problems ranging from chronic diseases to handicaps. Results show that chronic diseases may be found in all the family members with different percentages; 38% of the fathers, 33% of the mothers and 21% of the children. This indicates a serious need for ongoing finances for medical supplies and treatments for the families. The results in the table also show that a third of the parents have chronic diseases (blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, etc) 9% of the fathers and 2% of the mothers have a handicap (physical, mental, deaf and blind) and 12% from the families have children with the same type of handicap. More than half of the mothers and 43% of the children ranked as having good health whereas the fathers ranked low with their health status. There were a few cases of depression amongst the children and one case amongst the mothers.

TABLE NO.(15) HEALTH STATUS OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS

Health status	Fathers		Mothers		Children	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Chronic Diseases	21	38.2	19	33.3	12	21.1
Handicap	5	9.1	1	1.8	7	12.3
Good health	17	30.9	32	56.1	25	43.8
Addiction					1	1.8
Epilepsy					1	1.8
Disc	8	14.5				
Depression			1	1.8	2	3.5
Others	4	7.3	4	7.0	9	15.7
Total	55	100.0	57	100.0	57	100.0

6.3 PARENT'S AGE

This section will report on the parent's age at the time of the interview and at the time of their first marriage.

More than 80% of the families stated that their father's were young ranging between the working age group of 30-55; the highest age bracket, or 27%, of the fathers' belonged to the 41-45 age group. Only 9.1% of the fathers' were above 60 years of age. The results indicate that the majority of the fathers in the families can be economically productive if they are in a good health.

TABLE NO. (16) FATHER'S AGE

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
30-35	4	7.3
36-40	11	20.1
41-45	15	27.3
46-50	7	12.7
51-55	8	14.5
56-59	2	3.6
60-65	3	5.5
Over 70	2	3.6
No answer	3	5.4
Total	55	100.0

Within most of the families 77% of the mothers are under the age of 46. They are also considered to be in the productive age since their age still allows them to bear more children.

TABLE NO. (17) MOTHER'S AGE

Age Group	Frequency	Percentages
25-29	4	7.0
30-35	16	28.1
36-40	13	22.8
41-45	12	21.0
46-50	9	15.8
51-54	2	3.5
Over 55	1	1.8
Total	57	100.0

Results show that high percentages of the mothers married at a young age where around 9% married under the age of 15 and 50% of them married under the age of 20. As for the fathers, more than 50% of them married young between the age of 20-25 and around 13% married between the ages of 15-19. This could be another factor affecting child labor since people who are married young may not be aware of children's needs or the consequences of child labor on their future .

TABLE NO.(18) AGE OF PARENTS WHEN FIRST MARRIED

Age Group	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Under 15	1	1.8	5	8.8
15-19	7	12.7	29	50.8
20-25	29	52.7	16	28.1
26-30	10	18.2	4	7.0
31-35	2	3.6	1	1.8
36-40	2	3.6		
40 and over	1	1.8		
No answer	3	5.5	2	3.5
Total	55	100.0	57	100.0

The highest percentage of fathers have one wife, around 23% have two wives and only one has three wives.

TABLE NO.(19) NUMBER OF WIVES FOR THE FATHER

Number of wives	Frequency	Percentages
One	43	75.4
Two	13	22.8
Three	1	1.8
Total	57	100.0

6.4 PARENT'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The majority of the parents did not finish school as shown in the following table. Around 42% of the fathers and 37% of the mothers have an elementary education while 31% of the fathers and around 25% of the mothers have primary education. Only one mother has a diploma and two fathers have a Bachelor's degree.

TABLE NO. (20) EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF FATHER AND MOTHER

Educational level	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Illiterate	4	7.3	8	14.0
Primary	17	30.9	14	24.6
Elementary	23	41.8	21	36.8
Secondary	7	12.7	11	19.3
Diploma	0	0.0	1	1.8
University	2	3.6		
Know how to read and write	2	3.6	2	3.5
Total	55	100.0	57	100.0

6.5 WORKING MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

In the Arab culture the husband is responsible for providing the family with security and fulfilling their needs. This section will report on the working members of the family in terms who is working and in what profession.

The highest percentage of the families, or 47%, have two of its members working and 23% of the families have three of its members working. This indicates that around 70% of the families rely on 2-3 of its working members.

TABLE NO. (21) NUMBER OF WORKING PEOPLE IN THE FAMILY

Number of workers	Frequencies	Percentages
1	9	15.7
2	27	47.4
3	13	22.8
4	6	10.5
5	0	0.0
6	1	1.8
7	0	0.0
8	1	1.8
Total	57	100.00

The above-mentioned 2-3 members working support around 3-7 persons, who represent 75% of the families in the study sample.

TABLE NO.(22) NUMBER OF DEPENDANTS IN THE FAMILY

Number of dependents	Frequencies	Percentages
2	1	1.8
3	6	10.5
4	2	3.5
5	10	17.5
6	15	26.3
7	10	17.5
8	5	8.8
9	1	1.8
10	0	0.0
11	1	1.8
12	1	1.8
13	0	0.0
14	1	1.8
15	1	1.8
No answer	3	5.3
Total	57	100.00

A small percentage of the families, or 3.5%, rely only on the husband's work, while 35% of the families rely on children's work and 49% of rely on the husband and the male children's work.

TABLE NO.(23) WORKING MEMBERS IN THE FAMILY

Working members	Frequencies	Percentages
Husband	2	3.5
Wife	1	1.8
Male children	20	35.1
Female children	1	1.8
Husband and male children	28	49.1
All family members	5	8.8
Total	57	100.00

As for the working fathers, results show that around 44% work in permanent jobs, 25% work in part time jobs, and 26% are unemployed; only 3% rely on their retirement income. As for the mothers, the majority, 75%, do not work, while 35% work in permanent and in part time jobs.

TABLE NO.(24) WORKING STATUS OF PARENTS

Working status	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Works	24	43.6	9	15.8
Does not work	14	25.5	43	75.4
Retired	3	5.5	0	0.0
Irregular work	14	25.4	5	8.8
Total	55	100.0	57	100.0

Reasons for unemployment were mainly due to the health problems of the fathers. As for the mothers, the highest percentage for unemployment was because of their families' responsibilities, especially child care, while the second reason was related to their husband's attitude towards work as they prohibited their wives to work. Around 19% of the mothers are unable to work due to their health problems.

TABLE No.(25) REASONS FOR NOT WORKING

Reasons	Father		Mother	
	Frequency	Percentages	Frequency	Percentages
Health problems	14	100	8	18.6
Does not like to work			7	16.3
Lack of job opportunities			3	7.0
Taking care of the children			13	30.2
Not allow to work			8	18.6
Does not have skills			1	2.3
Old			1	2.3
No answer			2	4.6
Total	14	100.0	43	100.0

In terms of the types of work that parents and children engage in, results show that most of the father's jobs are in vocational areas such as carpentry, car mechanic, plumbing, etc. Other jobs included builders, drivers, or workers. The majority of these jobs do not require a degree and can be learnt without attending school. Most of the children work in the same field as their fathers except those who work as cart carriers. As for the mothers, the types of jobs they engage in do not need specific qualifications of a degree and are usually low paid jobs.

TABLE NO.(26) DISTRIBUTION OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS ACCORDING TO TYPE OF WORK

Type of work	Fathers		Children		Mothers	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Black smith	1	2.6	4	7.0		
Carpenter	1	2.6				
Car upholstering	1	2.6	2	3.5		
Car Mechanic	2	5.3	4	7.0		
Builder	2	5.3				
Street Vendor	8	21.1	22	38.6	1	7.1
Plaster	1	2.6	2	3.5		
Driver	5	13.2				
Teacher	1	2.6				
Guard	1	2.6				
Trader	3	7.9	7	12.3		
Cart carrier			14	24.6		
Worker	3	7.9	1	1.8		
Car electrician	1	2.6				
Plumber	2	5.3				
Work availability	2	5.3				
Worker in shop			4	7.0		
Work with the father			6	10.5		
Domestic work					5	35.7
Farm work (agriculture)					3	21.4
Manufactory					2	14.3
Office	4	10.5			3	21.4
Total	38	100.0			14	100.0

Moreover, when children work at an early age, their salary is distributed in the manner that is described in the following table. Forty-two per cent of the families stated that the child receives his salary while around 52% stated that the parents receive the child's salary; either by the father or the mother or he does not get paid since he works in the family business.

TABLE NO.(27) AUTHORIZED PERSON TO RECEIVE CHILD'S SALARY

Authorized person	Frequencies	Percentages
Father	8	14.0
Mother	15	26.3
Child himself	24	42.1
Does not have a salary, works with his father	7	12.3
No answer	3	5.3
Total	57	100.00

Most of the salary that the child earns is spent on the families' daily needs and medicine. In cases where the child keeps half or all of his salary, the families did not state what the child does with it or spends it on.

TABLE NO.(28) WAYS OF SPENDING CHILD'S SALARY

Spending items	Frequencies	Percentages
Purchasing family's basic needs	30	52.6
Purchasing medicine	6	10.5
Child keeps half to himself	20	35.1
No payment- works with the father	7	12.3
Total	57	

In reference to the child's rights at work, results show that besides receiving payment, the majority of the children did not practice or receive any other rights. Moreover, families are not aware of their children's rights at work.

TABLE NO.(29) CHILD'S RIGHTS AT WORK

Child's rights	Frequencies	Percentages
Nothing	30	52.6
Type of his work does not provide him with any rights	17	29.8
Does not know	2	3.5
Clothes and food	2	3.5
Total	57	

6.6 FAMILY'S RELATIONSHIPS

Another important factor that has shown to encourage children to work at an early age is linked to the relationship between the family: the father and his children, the mother and her children, and the children between themselves.

The parents described their relationship with their children in different ways that can be categorized as either a) negative b) neutral or c) positive. The relationship of the father with his children was generally described to be

negative. More than half of the fathers, 56%, were bad-tempered with their children and used corporal punishment, 25% neglected their children and showed little or no signs of care, and the remaining 25% were not in contact with their children. Forty-five per cent of the fathers who were categorized as having a neutral relationship with their children provided the children with their needs as a sign of care. Finally, 40% of the fathers who were categorized as having a positive relationship with their children treated their children with compassion and love and listened to their problems; however in only 16% of these families did the father actually follow-up with his children's daily issues. Some 18% of the fathers expressed their love and care by spoiling their children.

TABLE NO. (30) FATHER TO CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP

Type of relationship	Frequency	Percent
Provide them with their needs	25	45.5
Nervous and hits them	31	56.4
Loves them and listens to the problems	22	40
Follows-up daily	9	16.4
Spoils them	10	18.2
Does not care for them	14	25.5
Works all day and does not see them	4	7.3
Does not see them	10	18.2
Total		

As for the mothers, 77% of the families described the relationship between the mother and her children as loving in which daily follow-up was evident; 12% described it as providing the children with their needs. However around 37% of the mothers had a negative relationship with their children which included corporal punishment.

TABLE No.(31) MOTHER TO CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP

Type of relationship	Frequency	Percent
Provide them with their needs	7	12.3
Love them and follow them	44	77.2
Punishment	21	36.8
Total	57	

The relationship between the children is cooperative for 61% of the families and supportive for around 30%. However, in families where the relationship of their children was categorized as being negative, 28% stated that the children fight with one another regularly, 19% called each other names and around 23% have a mixed relationship between fighting and playing with one another.

TABLE No.(32) CHILDREN TO CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP

Type of relationship	Frequency	Percent
Cooperative	35	61.4
Always fighting	16	28.1
Supporting each other	17	29.8
Each lives in his own world	3	5.3
Call each other strange names	11	19.3
Play and fight	13	22.8
Good	6	10.5
Total		

6.7 FAMILY ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHILD EDUCATION AND LABOR

Twenty-five per cent of the families stated that they would encourage their first child to work. The choice of choosing the second, third and fourth child were the same.

TABLE No.(33) CHILD RANK PREFERENCE FOR JOINING THE LABOR FORCE

Child position in the family	Frequency	Percent
First child	14	24.6
Second child	8	14.0
Third child	8	14.0
Fourth child	8	14.0
Fifth child	5	8.8
Sixth child	2	3.5
Youngest	6	10.5
The Middle	2	3.5
Does not matter	4	7.0
Total	57	100.0

The majority of the families, or 72%, gave preference to the male child to enter the labor force.

TABLE No.(34) GENDER PREFERENCE FOR JOINING THE LABOR FORCE

Who is encouraged to join the labor force	Frequency	Percent
Male child	41	71.9
Female child	0	00.0
Both	11	19.3
None	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0

A quarter of the families, 25%, give preference of work to those aged 18 and over; however around the same percentage of families do not mind allowing their children under the age of 16 to work.

TABLE No.(35) AGE PREFERENCE FOR JOINING THE LABOR FORCE

Age preference for joining labor force	Frequency	Percent
Under 14	5	8.8
15 years	9	15.8
16 years	10	17.5
17 years	5	8.8
18 years	14	24.6
19 years	1	1.8
20 years	5	8.8
Over 20	3	5.3
Children should not work	3	5.3
Total	57	100.0

Although families have stated that half of the children took the decision to join the labor force on their own, the decision is mainly made by the parents since children are usually not allowed to make decisions on their own.

TABLE No.(36) AUTHORIZED PERSON TO DECIDE ON CHILD JOINING THE LABOR FORCE

Authorized person	Frequency	Percent
Father	18	31.6
Mother	8	14.0
Child himself	31	54.4
Total	57	100.0

TABLE No.(37) ACTUAL AGE OF CHILD UPON ENTRY TO THE LABOR FORCE

Actual age	Frequency	Percent
Under 11 years	15	26.3
11 years	9	15.8
12 years	5	8.8
13 years	9	15.8
14 years	14	24.6
15 years	5	8.8
Total	57	100.0

Approximately half of the families did not know the legal age for allowing a child to join the labor force; 28% of the families stated that the age was 18 and more than 12% stated different age groups below 17 years of age.

TABLE No.(38) KNOWLEDGE OF LEGAL AGE FOR WORK

Legal age	Frequency	Percent
11 years	1	1.8
15 years	1	1.8
16 years	3	5.3
17 years	2	3.5
18 years	16	28.1
20 years	5	8.8
21 years	1	1.8
Do not know	28	49.1
Total	57	100.0

In reference to the reasons that encourage the child to join the labor force, various factors came into play from the need for financial support for the family to the belief that education is useless for the child. Around 74% of the families' reason for allowing their children to work was for financial support, 61% related to the child's poor performance (failure) in school or hate for the school. Other reasons were related to the child himself such as building the child's personality and confidence, learning a profession at a young age, or protecting the child from bad behavior.

TABLE NO.(39) REASONS FOR ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WORK

Reasons for encouragement	Frequency	Percent
Financial support for the family	42	73.7
Poor performance (failure) in school, Hate the school	35	61.4
Learning the father's profession	7	12.3
Learning a profession at a young age	8	14.0
Supporting himself financially	12	21.0
Protecting child from learning bad habits, behavior, traits, etc	5	8.8
Building the child's self confidence	10	17.5
Total		

6.8 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF WORK ON CHILD'S HEALTH AND PERSONALITY

Families listed many advantages that their children received by working; 54% stated that the child became independent, around 18% stated that he built his self confidence and around 16% stated that the child made many friends.

TABLE NO.(40) ADVANTAGES OF WORK ON THE CHILD

Actual age	Frequency	Percent
Became independent	31	54.4
Has more friends	9	15.8
Built his self confidence	10	17.5
Became social	4	7.0
No changes	3	5.3
Total	57	100.0

As for the disadvantages of the child's work, 28% of the children became nervous and disobedient, 21% became unsociable and learnt the habit of smoking and around 11% stayed out late for long hours.

TABLE NO.(41) DISADVANTAGES OF WORK ON THE CHILD

Actual age	Frequency	Percent
Staying late outside the house	6	10.5
Befriending bad people	4	7.0
Became isolated	12	21.1
Smoking	12	21.1
Became nervous and disobedient	16	28.1
No changes	7	12.3
Total	57	100.0

In terms of the social problems that children face at work the families identified a number of them which include being subjected to physical abuse and insults by the older employees, learning foul language and calling each other names, addiction and socially unacceptable behaviors.

TABLE NO.(42) SOCIAL PROBLEMS THAT CHILDREN FACE AT WORK

Difficulties	Frequency	Percent
Hit by older employees	22	38.6
Using bad names	19	33.3
Stealing	7	12.3
No difficulties	18	31.6
Unacceptable behaviors	6	10.5
Addiction	12	21.1
Bad friends	6	10.5
Total		

Families also listed various health problems that the working child faces during work; 18% multi-physical problems due to malnutrition, 24% physical tiredness, 19% work accidents and 3.5% depression.

TABLE NO.(43) HEALTH PROBLEMS CHILDREN FACE AT WORK

Health problems	Frequency	Percent
Multi health problems and malnutrition	10	17.5
Work accidents	11	19.3
Tiredness	14	24.6
Depression	2	3.5
No problems	31	54.4
Total		

6.9 SUGGESTED PROJECTS (PROPOSED INTERVENTION PROGRAMS)

At the end of the survey, the interviewed families were asked for their suggestions on the kinds of projects and intervention programs that they need to improve their children's working conditions. Thirty-two per cent suggested establishing income generating projects, 19% suggested providing children with vocational training, and 14% suggested creating job opportunities.

TABLE NO.(44) PROJECTS SUGGESTED BY THE FAMILIES

Suggested projects	Frequencies	Percentages
Vocational training	11	19.3
Job opportunities	8	14.0
Health insurance	4	7.0
Financial aid	6	10.5
Income generating projects	18	31.6
Raising awareness programs	3	5.3
Do not know	13	22.8
Total		

The afore-mentioned projects/programs were suggested to address either the children, their families or both. More than half of the families, 54%, suggested that the projects/programs target the families or the child's father while only 22% suggested the targeting of the working children.

TABLE NO.(45) TARGET GROUPS FOR THE SUGGESTED PROJECTS

Target groups	Frequencies	Percentages
Working children	13	22.8
Children's families	28	49.1
Children's father	3	5.3
No answer	13	22.8
Total	57	100.0

In the opinion of the families, the organizations that are responsible for establishing these projects were mainly the governmental organizations; some families suggested local committees at the neighborhood level and a smaller percentage suggested the NGOs and the local municipality.

TABLE NO.(46) ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR ESTABLISHING THE PROJECTS

Responsible organization	Frequencies	Percentages
Governmental	20	35.1
Municipality	1	1.8
NGOs	3	5.3
Local committees	3	5.3
Ministry of Social Development	20	35.1
Do not know	10	17.5
Total	57	100.0

❑ CHILDREN CHARACTERISTICS

In this section the results of the data that was collected from the 122 working children will be presented.

6.10 CHILDREN'S AGES

Results show that the interviewed working children were young with a breakdown of: under 12 years of age (7%), 12 years of age (10%), 13 years of age (22.1%), 14 years of age (37.9%) and 15 years of age (28.7%).

TABLE NO.(47) DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING CHILDREN'S AGES

Child Age	Frequencies	Percentage
10	3	2.5
11	5	4.1
12	12	9.8
13	27	22.1
14	34	27.9
15	35	28.7
16 years	6	4.9
Total	122	100

Some children started work at younger ages. Results show that around 47% started working under the age of 12, 16% at the age of 12 and around 16% at the age of 13 and 14.

TABLE NO.(48) AGE OF CHILD AT FIRST WORK

Age	Frequencies	Percentage
Less than 6	3	2.4
6-8	9	7.4
9	7	5.7
10	23	18.9
11	15	12.3
12	20	16.4
13	19	15.6
14	20	16.4
15	6	4.9
Total	122	100

More than half of the working children are in the basic education classes, as 54% are in grades 7-9 and 34% are in grades 4-6.

TABLE No.(49) CHILD EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Child education	Frequencies	Percentage
Illiterate	4	3.3
1-3	4	3.3
4-6	41	33.6
7-9	66	54.1
10	7	5.7
Total	122	100

Around 34% of the children combine between work and education and 66% of the children only work.

TABLE No.(50) CHILD'S CURRENT SITUATION

Current situation	Frequencies	Percentage
Works only	81	66.4
Work and study	41	33.6
Total	122	100

The majority of children got permission from their families to work; 31% stated they got the approval of their parents (father and mother), 2.5% got the approval of their brothers whereas 66% stated they made the decision by themselves to join the labor force. However, when looking at the ages of the children during their first job, it would be fair to conclude that in reality it was the parents who decided for the children and not the children themselves; the children may have said the opposite as either a way to defend their parents in fear of causing trouble or a way to show their independence and maturity.

TABLE No.(51) AUTHORIZED PERSON TO ALLOW CHILD TO WORK

Decision made by	Frequencies	Percentage
Child's father	26	21.3
Child's mother	12	9.8
Child's brothers	3	2.5
Child himself	81	66.4
Total	122	100

Results of the families' reaction towards their children's work supports the above-mentioned argument (that families decide on their children's work and not the children themselves) as results show that 63% of the families support their children working at a young age; some by encouraging their child to work, others by obliging them to work, and the rest did not show any reaction.

However, 33% of the families initially resisted the idea while only 4% remained unhappy with their children working.

TABLE NO.(52) FAMILY'S REACTION TOWARDS CHILD LABOR

Family's reaction	Frequencies	Percentage
Encouraged child for work	48	39.3
Disagreed then agreed	40	32.8
Obliged child to work	7	5.7
Did not show any reaction	22	18.0
Still do not like the idea	5	4.1
Total	122	100

6.11 CHILDREN WORKING CONDITIONS

Almost 63% of the children stated that their main reason for joining the labor force is purely economical: to support the family's income. Other reasons were related to the poor educational system: 28% failed their classes school and around 26% did not like the school; in total 54% joined the labor force due to educational problems. Moreover, 21% of the children joined the labor force due to their father's health problems or death. Others were forced by their fathers either to work in any profession or to join their profession.

TABLE NO.(53) REASONS FOR STARTING WORK AT A YOUNG AGE

Reasons for child work	Frequencies	Percentage
Family needs financial support	77	63.1
Failure at school	34	27.9
Does not like school	32	26.2
Personal per diem	27	22.1
Father's health problems	18	14.8
Father's death	8	6.6
Forced by the father	13	10.7
Father's business	10	8.2
Teachers' bad treatment	10	8.2
Learning a profession	15	12.3
Running away from home	2	1.6
Joining friends	4	3.2
Total	122	100.0

Children mainly work as vendors or carriers in the vegetable market. Some work in vocational jobs as car electricians or mechanics. Although it is easy for the children to work in these jobs because they do not require certain qualifications or degrees they end up working long hours and earning low wages.

TABLE No.(54) CHILD'S CURRENT JOB

Current work/job	Frequencies	Percentage
Sidewalk vendor/ cigarettes/ eggs and others	49	40.2
Electrician	5	4.1
Car Mechanical	13	10.6
Junk collector	1	0.8
Salesman in a shop	12	9.8
Plaster work	1	0.8
Carpenter	4	3.3
Carrier in Cart	27	22.1
blacksmith	3	2.5
Car furniture	12	9.8
Total		

Children mainly work in the refugee camps market's and the main market.

TABLE No.(55) CHILDREN'S WORKING AREAS

Working areas	Frequencies	Percentage
In the refugee camps	25	20.5
In main market	18	14.8
Industrial City	7	5.7
In the Bus station	10	8.2
No answer		
Total	122	

A high percentage of children, 69%, work all week except for Fridays and 23% work all week including Fridays.

TABLE No.(56) CHILD'S WORKING DAYS

Total working days	Frequencies	Percentage
All the week except Fridays	84	68.9
All the week	28	23.0
Work availability	6	4.9
Summer holidays	2	1.6
3 days in the week	2	1.6
Total	122	100

Results show that children receive low wages. Most of the children get paid daily where 36% receive no more than 2 JD per day and around 12% receive no more than 3 JDs. Results also show that none of the children receive a monthly payment and around 10% of the children do not receive any payment since they work in their family business.

TABLE NO.(57) DISTRIBUTION OF PAYMENT AND AMOUNTS RECEIVED

Amount of payment received	Ways of payment							
	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Irregular	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
One JD	17	13.9	1	0.8			1	0.8
1-2 JD	27	22.1					2	1.8
2-3 JD	15	12.3	2	1.8			2	1.8
3-4 JD	7	5.7						
4-5 JD	1	0.8	5	4.1			2	1.8
5-6 JD			3	2.5				
6-7 JD	2	1.8	2	1.8				
7-8 JD	2	1.8						
8-9 JD	2	1.8	2	1.8				
10-11 JD	1	0.8	8	6.6				
12-13 JD			1	0.8				
13-14 JD			1	0.8				
15-16 JD			2	1.8				
No payment-family business	12	9.8						

Most of the salary that the child receives is spent on the family; 21% of the children take a part of the salary to spend on their food and transportation, 26% keeps a fraction to themselves and gives the remainder to their family, and a low 8% keeps the entire sum of their salary to themselves.

TABLE NO.(58) WAYS SALARY IS SPENT

	Frequencies	Percentage
Give it to mother to pay family needs	70	57.4
Taken by the father	13	10.7
Safe part of it and give part to the family	32	26.2
Buy cigarettes	11	9.0
Keep it for myself	10	8.2
Spend it on transportation and sandwiches	25	20.5

6.12 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF WORK

Most of the children complained of the effect of their work on their health. Around 42% of them suffer from physical tiredness, 7% suffers from physical weakness and 7% suffers from back pain.

TABLE NO.(59) WORK EFFECTS ON CHILD'S HEALTH

	Frequencies	Percentage
Physical tiredness	51	41.8
Physical weakness	8	6.6
Bad treatment by customers	14	11.5
Back pain	8	6.6
No answer	41	33.6
Total	122	100.0

The children also complained from injuries at work which included: falling heavy objects on their bodies, eye problems, broken bones, wounds, etc.

TABLE NO.(60) TYPES OF INJURIES AT WORK

Injuries at work	Frequencies	Percentage
Eye problems	6	4.9
Different wounds	21	17.2
Falling objects on feet	13	10.7
Broken bones	10	8.2
Others (burns, pain in the feet)	7	5.7
Back and feet pain	6	3.3
Accidents	3	4.9
No injuries or accidents	45	36.9
No answer	11	9.0
Total	122	100.0

Furthermore, children face different problems at work. Around 22% of the children stated being hit by their employer and older employees, 25% are subjected to theft of their goods by others, and around 23% are called bad names by others. Around 34% reported that they do not face any problems at work.

TABLE NO.(61) PROBLEMS AT WORK

	Frequencies	Percentage
Hit by older employees	23	18.9
Hit by the employer	4	3.3
Police bust	6	4.9
Called bad names	28	22.9
Bad treatment by customers	14	11.5
Stealing	31	25.4
Called by a Nick name	33	27.4
No problems	41	33.6

In response to the above-mentioned problems faced at work, a quarter of the children try to defend themselves while others either get help from those older than them or do nothing at all.

TABLE NO.(62) WAYS OF DEALING WITH PROBLEMS AT WORK

	Frequencies	Percentage
Defense	31	25.4
Do nothing	20	16.4
Ask for help from employer	10	8.2
Ask for help from the father	16	13.1
Go to the police	7	5.7
Run away	3	3.5

Regardless of the problems that children face at work, they listed a number of benefits for joining the labor force at an early age. Forty-five percent stated that they became independent, 36% felt responsible for their family, 35% gained an income, 31% learned a profession, 28% had more friends and 12% learnt more about their skills and capabilities.

TABLE NO.(63) ADVANTAGES OF WORK

Advantages	Frequency	Percent
Became independent	55	45.1
Gained an income	43	35.2
Feel responsible	44	36.1
Have a profession	38	31.1
Have friends	34	27.9
Know his skills	14	11.5
Total	122	100.0

In terms of disadvantages, children referred to being constantly physically tired, learning bad habits, not having time to play, not getting an education, and being insulted by others.

TABLE NO.(64) DISADVANTAGES OF WORK

Disadvantages	Frequency	Percent
Physical tiredness	43	35.2
No time for playing	30	24.6
Learnt bad habits	29	23.8
Being responsible in younger age	20	16.4
Prevented from education	15	12.3
Insulted verbally and physically	12	9.8

6.13 CHILDREN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WORK AND EDUCATION

The main reasons for children to drop out of school was to support their family financially. As for reasons related to school they were related to the children's poor performance and mistreatment by teachers.

TABLE NO.(65) REASONS FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL

Child's reasons	Frequencies	Percentage
Financially support the family	49	60.5
Poor performance at school	39	48.1
Mistreatment from the teachers and other staff at school	23	28.4

Around 40% of the school drop-outs showed interest in going back to school, even though they face difficulties with their school work and are mistreated by the teachers.

TABLE NO.(66) ATTITUDE TOWARDS EDUCATION

	Frequencies	Percentage
Would like to go back to school	32	39.5
Would not like to go back to school	49	60.5
Total	81	100

The majority of children manage between their education and work.

TABLE NO.(67) THE EFFECT OF WORK ON CHILD'S EDUCATION, FOR THOSE WHO STUDY AND WORK

Work influence/ work and studying	Frequencies	Percentage
Does not interfere with studying	36	87.8
My study badly effect my work	5	12.2
Total	41	100

6.14 FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

As for the children's desired future careers, some want to work in vocational profession, such as car mechanics, electronics, others want to become a doctor or have their own private business.

TABLE No.(68) DESIRED PROFESSION IN THE FUTURE

Profession in the future	Frequencies	Percentage
Electrician/mechanic	30	24.6
Street vendor	3	2.5
Doctor/ engineer	13	10.7
Trader	31	25.4
Driver	3	2.5
Continue my education	8	6.6

Children also suggested a number of interventions to improve their living conditions like vocational training, establishment of shops for them and their families, or provision of financial aid.

TABLE No.(69) SUGGESTED INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE CHILD'S LIVING CONDITIONS

Suggested interventions	Frequencies	Percentage
Return to school after corporeal punishment is prohibited	11	9.0
Job opportunities	9	7.4
Open shops	19	15.6
Give ownership of shops to people	15	12.3
Vocational training	8	6.6
Give houses to poor people	10	8.2
Basic needs	7	5.7
Financial support	48	39.3

7. WORKSHOP RESULTS

The workshop was conducted under the title “Protecting and Improving Working Children’s Conditions in Irbid City: A Shared Responsibility” at the Municipality of Greater Irbid under the patronage of the Mayor of Irbid on February 2nd, 2005. Representatives of interested stakeholders and partner organizations attended and participated in the recommendations of the workshop.

The main aim of the workshop was to encourage stakeholders to suggest interventions to improve children’s living standards.

The participants in the second part of the workshop were divided into 5 groups. Each group was asked to suggest programmes and activities according to the following topics:

- Improving the economic conditions for the children’s families
- Protecting the children from abuse
- Protecting the children from exploitation
- Educational continuation
- Rehabilitating children, their families and employers

The 5 divided groups came up with suggested programmes, activities and roles for the following organizations:

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Labor
- Ministry of Social Development
- Ministry of Health
- Irbid Municipality

The participants came out with the following suggestions:

- **ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**
 - 1.1. Activating the role of social counselors through educating children on issues related to child work.
 - 1.2. Hosting experts to lead seminars on work and vocational education.
 - 1.3. Education on child labor Through Media at Schools.
 - 1.4. Encourage families’ participation in schools’ decisions concerning their children.
 - 1.5. Open schools for training children on vocational skills.
 - 1.6. Educate children on how to use tools.
 - 1.7. Cooperation between schools and civil societies and other organizations.
 - 1.8. Respect children in the classroom.
 - 1.9. Provide students with moral and financial support.

- 1.10. Follow-up with drop-out students from the school counselors.

▪ **ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 1.11. Improve the families' socio-economic standards by supporting them in establishing income-generating projects and in cooperation with civil societies.
- 1.12. Establish centers for family education.
- 1.13. Encourage civil societies to focus on childrens' affairs.
- 1.14. Condition financial aids with children's education continuation.
- 1.15. Conduct a survey to assess the size of child labor in Irbid.
- 1.16. Establish educational centers to provide education for working children.
- 1.17. Prohibit child labor in dangerous jobs.
- 1.18. Activate the role of visual and audio media to educate communities on the working children phenomena.
- 1.19. Conduct seminars and workshops to increase awareness on this phenomena addressing families, children, and organizations.
- 1.20. Activate Municipality and NGOs to establish income-generating projects suiting the age of working children and the types of their work.

▪ **ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR**

- 1.21. Improve families' income through income generating projects with soft loans.
- 1.22. Conduct educational programs on children's characteristics and skills to employers.
- 1.23. Activate legislations related to child labor.
- 1.24. Activate the inspection system at the Ministry on child labor.

▪ **ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF IRBID**

- 1.25. Set a plan to identify areas and houses of poor families.
- 1.26. Form a committee to act as a friendly committee for working children.
- 1.27. Educate children on their rights.
- 1.28. Activate parents' participation on education.
- 1.29. Provide children's families with job opportunities.
- 1.30. Find funding resources.
- 1.31. Act as a coordinator with other organizations to assure children's protection.

▪ **ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

- 1.32. Provide children with health insurance.
- 1.33. Provide health insurance for children's families with chronic diseases.
- 1.34. Provide consultancy for couples before marriage.

- 1.35. Activate the law regarding number of working hours permitted for children's work.

Moreover, all the groups suggested forming a steering committee to work under the umbrella of Irbid's Municipality. The role of the steering committee is to translate the suggested programs and activities into an active plan.

In the closing session, the Mayor suggested a number of actions that the Municipality of Irbid can take to protect the children. The Mayor's suggestions were as follows:

- Providing families with job opportunities.
- Providing children with vocational training at the Municipality with per diems that would protect them from risks and abuse as well as guarantee continuing their education.
- Agree to take the leading role and to coordinate between the stakeholders and to host the steering committee.

TABLE NO.(70) LIST OF ATTENDING ORGANIZATIONS: NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Organization	Number of Attendants
Ministries	23
Higher Council for Youth – Irbid	2
Ministry of Awqaf	2
Ministry of Education	1
Ministry of Education – 2 nd District – Irbid (Education, Technical, and Vocational Sections)	5
Ministry of Education – 3 rd Districts	2
Ministry of Education - Public School Director	1
Ministry of Health- Irbid- (Mother and Child Care Department, Awareness Program)	2
Ministry of Labor – Irbid	2
Ministry of Social Development (MOSD)– Irbid – (ILO project, Social Deffence, Family Protection Unit)	6
Public Institutions	33
Public Security – Family Protection Unit	2
Public Security Department – Narcotics Division- Irbid	2
Vocational Training Center – Northern Region	2
Amman Municipality- Queen Rania Gardens	1
Irbid Municipality	23
Irbid Refugee Camp Services Committee - Irbid	3
Individuals	2
Interested Individuals	1
Irbid Chief (Mukhtar)	1
International Organizations	6
UNRWA	2
Caritas Jordan	1
Questscope – Amman	1
SOS Villages – Irbid	2

Local NGOs	25
Al-Farouq Society for the Orphans- Irbid	1
Al-Hussein Society for the Habilitation and Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped-Irbid	1
Child Rights Society	1
Family and Child Protection Society	9
General Union for Voluntary Societies	1
Jordan River Foundation	1
Jordanian Women Union – Irbid	3
Mohammad Ben Qasem Al-Thaqafi Center for Children	2
National Council for Family Affairs	2
Princess Basma Center – Amman	1
Princess Basma Center – Irbid	1
Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute	1
Rum Society	1
Media	5
Al-Ghad Newspaper	1
Jordan Media Center	1
Jordan Press Agency	1
Jordan Radio	1
Jordan Television	1
Research Institutes	10
Anthropologists' Society	1
Jordan College for Science and Technology	1
University of Science and Technology	2
Yarmouk University	1
Total Attendants	104

8. STUDY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that comprehensive interventions are needed to match the needs of the children and their families. Moreover, the study also showed that the problem of child labor is not well understood by the different stakeholders. Children work in difficult and exploitative working conditions where they are abused at home, in school, at work and in their community. They try to cope with their work and family's demands, yet they are labeled as 'bad citizens'.

Finally, the study recommends the following interventions to safeguard children's rights:

1. Creating awareness programs for all stakeholders in the city of Irbid on child rights and needs
2. Creating awareness programs on the negative effects of child labor on the children's future and their community for the stakeholders
3. Training courses for parents on child raising and upbringing
4. Training courses for employers on children's needs and communication skills
5. Vocational training for parents on certain skills
6. Establishing income-generating projects for children's families in order to improve their living standard and minimize the possibility of more children joining the labor force at a young age in the future
7. Vocational training programs for working children in order to rehabilitate them in certain professions
8. Training courses on child protection
9. A comprehensive program by stakeholders that would be implemented under the umbrella of the Municipality of Irbid addressing issues for the children and their families on: health, education, relationships, and working environment

Recommended training for the Family and Childhood Protection Society (FCPS):

Part of the objectives of the study is to suggest capacity building programme for the FCPS. The study recommended the following training:

1. Research methodologies
2. Communication skills especially in negotiating
3. Presentation skills
4. Project management cycle
5. Conducting feasibility studies
6. Monitoring and Evaluation of the programmes and projects

References:

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Annex No. (1)

Areas discussed with working children in the in-depth interviews

- Information on the family and relationship
- Income resources
- Child relationship with Education
- Working Conditions
- Child relationship with the employer
- Child relationship with colleagues and customers
- Health working Conditions
- Knowledge about child legal working status
- Ways to deal with work pressure
- Knowledge of institutions working for children
- Future perspectives

Annex No (2)
Statements of parents at the focus group discussion

Children developmental Needs	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
▪ Food and drink	▪ Clean food
▪ Education	▪ Clean water
▪ Clothing	▪ School commitment
▪ Health care	▪ Clothing
▪ Entertainment centers	▪ Allowance
▪ Follow up from the family	▪ Limited freedom
▪ Psychological relief	▪ Parents sympathy
▪ Appropriate raw model	▪ Parents care
▪ Home	▪ Security
▪ Good nurturing (Islamic nurturing)	▪ Psychological relief
▪ cultural centers	▪ Parents protection
	▪ Room to study
	▪ Avoid of differentiation among children
	▪ To have a future for the child
	▪ home
	▪ Good fellowship (friends)
	▪ Playing
	▪ To be monitored by the parents

Factors contributed to child labor	
Family factors:	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
▪ low economic income	▪ Child desire to obtain an allowance
▪ Temptation of work and money due to the child work with his father	▪ Difficult economic situation
▪ Child wish to learn his father's occupation	▪ father's give up for his responsibilities
▪ The mother's insist on her child labor to obtain money	▪ Father's in ability t provide the family's needs
	▪ large size of the family
	▪ childe desire to help his family
	▪ child jealousy from other children who enjoy better economic level
	▪ economic independency
	▪ decrease the burden on the father

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To let the child rely on himself
	How do families decide to let their children work ;
Economic factors:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low-income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tough financial conditions that food can hardly be available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To let the child obtain his allowance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Injustice in distributing aids from the Directorate of the Development
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of medical insurance
School factors:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers' hitting (though it's a discipline factor in father's point of view) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Failure in school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty of school curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child hatred for school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty in monitoring children and following them up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inability to fulfill the child school needs as the allowance and books' fee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inappropriate behaviors by teachers (smoking, low level of teaching, lack of tendency to teach children) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers' hitting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School teachers and administration negligence as the frequent absence of teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers attempts to control / dominate students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children fear from school due to teachers hitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School administration dominance and discipline transfer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bad companions 	
Neighborhood factors:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bad companions: peers encourage school absence and drop-out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bad companions: peers encourage to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - obtain an income through labor; - deviated behaviors as smoking, drinking alcohol and theft.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feelings of jealousy from children who enjoy better financial status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feelings of jealousy from children who enjoy better financial status.

Families' decision on child labor (the family decided to let her child work because....)	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
▪ Bad financial conditions.	▪ The father suffers from bad health conditions
▪ Child wish to depend on himself and obtain his allowance	▪ The father does not work
▪ The child' income out of work might be higher than the father's income	▪ Child desire to fulfill his mother's needs
▪ The child was given the choice to choose between school and work	▪ Lack of allowance from the child's point of view
▪ Child failure at school and drop-out	▪ Child failure at school
▪ The child decided to give up school and work	▪ Child hatred for school and his desire for work
▪ The father knows a relative / friend who owns a utility which was easy to find a job for the child	▪ Troubles with school mates
▪ Having a sense of not having a secured job in a governmental institution (restricted to Gaza strip citizens)	

Steps taken by the family between its decision and the child labor:			
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception		
	Mothers asked for the help of different institutions / parties as follows:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requested a help from relatives (brother, sister) to tutor his son Gave his child some time to think Asked for a medical insurance and for help from the Directorate of Development but didn't get any. 	Institution	Type of help	Received/not
	Brother	Financial help	Didn't receive
	Child uncle	Employing the child	Received
	Neighbors	Financial help	Received
	Neighbor (Bakery owner)	Employing the child	Received
	Social Development	Financial help	Didn't receive
	Social Development	Loan	Didn't receive
	Mosque	Financial help	Didn't receive
	UNRWA	Groceries Financial help	Didn't receive
	UNRWA	Financial help	Didn't receive
	School	Canceling the discipline transfer	Didn't receive
	School	Taking the child in school again	Didn't receive
	FCPS	Helping the child	

Alternatives for Child labor:	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having a family loan (for the mother and the child) from the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No alternatives due to the low economic conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small project for the father 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Getting a help from the Directorate of Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women work is not acceptable due to her occupancy with the children and house matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Getting a help from relatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women loan projects for household work 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening vocational training programs through the primary school level to allow the working child learn a craft 	

Labor effects on child and family:	
Effects on child:	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the child's personality and relying only on himself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child relies on himself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Become more sociable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The work suits the child's hobby
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attainment of deviated behaviors (no interest in education, refuse to stay at home) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child's health was affected negatively (cold, chest allergic reactions, back pains, hernia)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irresponsible behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of child's future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deviated thinking especially with the peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child in ability to accommodatschool with work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning to lie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School drop-out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ staying late at night outside the home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complicated psychological effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Being subjected to hitting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of identity and fear for future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health hazards (cold, Adynamia) 	
Effects on family:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generate income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child contribution to family income
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child obtain his own allowance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduces the family's need to community's help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exercise and experience for the child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the economic conditions for the family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduces the deviation opportunities / it's better than 	

spending time on the streets	
▪ Secures the child future / the family doesn't benefit from the child's work	
▪ Work is the child's future especially if he owns a craft	

Problems encounter the working children:	
Problems with the family:	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
Being late to home	▪ Child Snobbery to the other family members
Lying	▪ Impudence of parents
	▪ Sleeping outside home
	▪ Socially unaccepted behaviors (smoking, volatile addiction)
	▪ A few mothers explained that no changes occur to their children.
Problems at work:	
Exploitation by employer (long working hours, different tasks)	▪ Being caught by the authorities
Work accidents	▪ Theft
	▪ Being Insulted and yield at by the employer
Problems with the community:	
The need to deal with different type of personalities through work	▪ Unaccepted perception from the community towards the working child family
Obtaining violent behaviors towards others	▪ Being accused by robbery from the community
	▪ Being accused by lying from the community
	▪ Being attacked by people in the community

The Parents' perception to combat child labor:	
Fathers' Perception	Mothers' Perception
<u>For children who work and study, ages (8-12 yrs.):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening a vocational school like (Hakama vocational center)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offering intensive reinforcement school classes for children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raising the children awareness regarding child labor negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide children with extra-curricula activities (trips, clubs) from the school side to motivate children to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing the child with a stable job that has good salary and security.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide neighborhood activities through clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing the child and his family with a medical insurance.
Provide awareness training programs on child rising.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening factories or projects (biscuits, clothes, sweets, tissues' factories or sewing centers or smithery or carpentry projects)
<u>For children who only work, ages (12 yrs. And above):</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to taking the child back to school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide vocational training programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the way teachers communicate with the children to avoid school drop-out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide small projects for children which suit their capabilities (e.x toy formation project) through the Labor directorate and philanthropic associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow up the child by the family to assure his commitment to the school classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide vocational supervision for the working children through the Labor directorate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening a school canteen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer medical insurance for children ,in general and for the working kids in specific; up to age 18 yrs, through the MoH and the labor unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having summer clubs at the schools with no expenses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer computer training courses by the philanthropic associations to open new work opportunities for children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparing a suitable climate for children and encouraging them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer English language, mathematics and illiteracy elimination courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening Quran (The Islamic Holy Book) memorization centers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize scouts trips for children to educate them about their country and allow them to learn communication in external contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing families with no interest loans to open projects for the kids.
<u>Family projects:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing residencies for the poor families
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> help incapable fathers through the Social Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating the water and electricity supply
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer small loans projects with small interests for people who possess / don't possess occupations or through the Social Development, philanthropic associations and orphans centers 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish productive projects for women (tricot, sewing, yoghurts making) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illiteracy elimination courses for both parents. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide awareness courses on child rising for mothers 	