

**RAPID ASSESSMENT OF THE WORST FORM  
OF CHILD LABOUR IN JORDAN:  
Survey Analysis<sup>1</sup>**

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**Dec. 2006**

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Ms Nehayat Dabdub, National Program Manager, ILO-IPEC for endless support and persistence follow up to bring this study to an end. I would also like to thank Lana Ma'ayeh for her effort in producing this document in its final shape.

The author benefited from constructive comments provided by Mr. Hakki Ozel from the ILO which has contributed in improving the quality of the analysis and ensure consistency in the presentation of the findings.

The fieldwork part of this study was conducted by the labor inspectors at the Occupational Health and Safety Dept. with the assistance of Dr. Amin Waradat Head of the Labour Inspectors Directory and Child Labour Unit at Ministry of Labour, without their help and dedication this study would have not been conducted. Finally I thank my colleague Dr. Faris Braizat for his assistance in selecting the sample and designing the questionnaire. Needless to say that I am the soul responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations in this study

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Country Program preparation activities, a rapid assessment on child labor and the Worst Form of Child Labor (WFCL) was undertaken with a specific interest in the program implications for The International Program on Child Labour/IPEC. This study looked at the WFCL in order to specify the kind of hazards facing children at work and to find out about the general working conditions and working environment that working children are exposed to.

The main objectives of the study are:

- 1) to deepen our understanding of the complex phenomenon of child labor in Jordan;
- 2) to collect qualitative information specifically related to the various kinds of hazards facing children based on working children's specific experiences, insights, and perceptions;
- 3) to distinguish between the various forms of hazards facing children across sectors in order to upgrade the existing list of hazards identified earlier by the Ministry of Labor (MOL);
- 4) to recommend policies aimed at reducing child exposure to hazards;
- 5) and to raise awareness about the worst forms of child labour and the risks that are faced by the working children.

The survey was undertaken in various governorates that cover most of the Kingdom's population to ensure the geographical and sectoral representation. Governorates included selected areas of Amman, Zarqa, Balqa, Irbid, Madaba and Aqaba, where child labor is prominent. A total of 387 children between the ages of 9 and 17 were interviewed. The survey looked at the issue of child labor and social background of the children. Interviews were conducted with working children in their workplaces including street working children.

### *Major Findings*

It emerged that average age of the working children is 15 years, 79.1% of the surveyed children are living with both parents, while 3.4% are living with their father and 6.2% with their mothers. Most of the working children came from a large family of six or more. About 65 percent come from families consist of 6-10, indicating that the larger the family size, *interalia*, the more likely that the children will join the labor market and drop out from schools.

Another feature that was observed is that the eldest child in large families is more likely to join the labor market while this probability diminishes as the rank of the children changes. The younger the child in the family, the less likely that he/she will drop out from school to join the labor market. This might be the case because large and poor families are in desperate need to support their low income by relying primarily on their older children.

It also emerges that most of the working children come from normal families with 83% coming from houses where parents are living together with one wife. Those who came from separated or divorced families represent 5.9 percent and those from a family in which the household is married more than once represent 3.9 percent.

According to our findings the average years of schooling was 7.3 years of education. However the highest percentage of the working children was found to have seven

years of education indicating that they have finished their primary schools. Another 15.8 percent have eight years at school. Those who spend less than five years of schooling represent 14.9 of the sample suggesting that it is more likely to join the labor market after spending few years at schools.

As for mixing work with studying, 28.2 percent reported that they are still visiting schools, while 65.6 percent are no longer studying. It is more likely that those children who still attend schools will drop out of the schools to join the labor market on a full time basis. A rapid assessment survey entitled "Child Labour and Education" carried out under the umbrella of ILO/IPEC and launched in 2003 revealed that there are many children trying to combine school and work, and for these children, the situation is very difficult. Most working children in the basic education school system are at a high risk of dropping out, due to the heavy burden of combining school and work which causes them to fall behind in their studies or because the need for them to contribute to the family income becomes the priority. Attendance is compromised by work demands which prevent regular attendance, resulting in children arriving late or not having the time to study at all and being unable to keep up with school work and eventually drop out to work. Such a group is very vulnerable because the socio-economic conditions in their families are not likely to improve and consequently it would be very difficult to bring them back to the schools\*.

Pertaining to the occupational distribution of the working children, it was found that Carpentry, Blacksmith and Painting constitute about 55% of the surveyed working children. Additionally, street vendors constitute nearly 13.4 percent. The rest of the jobs occupied by the children cover sectors and activities such as construction, bus conductors, barbers, and tailors. This is consistent with earlier estimate conducted by the MOL in 2003.

As far as the working hours are concerned our data show that they appear to be very long. Indeed, they are much longer than officially permitted even for adults. On average, children who are working 8-12 hours per day represent 90 percent of the surveyed children. It was noted also that nearly 60% are working more than 10 hours a day.

In more details, those who work 8 hours represent 2 percent of the sample, while those who work 9 hours constitute 11.4 percent. Notably those who work around 10-12 hours represent 58 percent of the total sample. Given that most of the working children are working six days a week, average working hours per week is estimated at 60-65 working hours, which is higher than the total average in Jordan estimated roughly at 40 hours a week. In a separate question we asked the children about their weekly holiday, and about 78 percent reported that they take Fridays off which is the official holiday in Jordan. Some of the children take other days off depending on the sectors which they are working in and 8 percent reported that they take no holidays.

As far as the income is concerned, it emerges that nearly 40% of the surveyed children receive JDs 60 or less.<sup>2</sup> Out of this group 14% receive JDs 30 a month,

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\* *Child Labour and Education in Jordan. A Rapid assessment ILO/IPEC 2003*

<sup>2</sup> One JDs is equal to 1.4 USD. This can be applied to all figures presented in JDs throughout this study.

which is clearly a very low income. Children receiving a monthly income of somewhere between JDs 60 to 95 representing 15% of the total sample, while the rest receive income higher than the minimum wage with 3.9 % refusing to answer this question.

Overall our findings indicate that 16.4% of our sample receives a monthly income that ranges between JDs 10-50, which suggests that working children are subject to financial exploitation. Another 47.5% earn between JDs 51-95 and about 24 % receive an income between JDs 151-200.

Accordingly when a link between the number of working hours and the income was established, it was found that in total 16.4 percent of working children earn income between JDs 10-50 and those who earn between 51-95 constitutes 47.5 percent of the entire sample. This simply means that 63 percent of children earn less than the approved minimum wage in the country. Indeed we could not establish a positive and significant relationship between the number of working hours and the income.

When we asked the working children if they suffer from chronic illness, the majority said no and only 4.1% of the surveyed children said that they do suffer chronic illness. The reported illnesses include: coughing, shortness of breath, headaches, eye pain, and general body aches. What is not clear in this regard is whether the working children suffer from illness they are not aware of. There are no medical check ups and children's answers are dependent on their own perception regarding chronic illness.

As far as children's nutrition is concerned, it was clear that most of the children are eating their main meal during working hours. About 64% reported that their employer provides meals during the day and in most cases the employer would cover the expenses of that meal. However, meals are mainly sandwiches (59.7 percent) and another 37% reported that they have hot meals.

We asked the children about the working conditions and issues such as whether the work place is fitted with suitable lighting. 64.3% answered yes while nearly 10% reported no as an answer and 25% of the working children did not answer this question by either yes or no. High rejection rates suggest that children are uncertain about the level of lighting that could be suitable. Indeed we observed such ambivalent answers in several places, for example when we asked about loud noise at the workplace 17.6% reported that they do suffer from loud noise while 57.4% reported that they have no problem and 24.8% could not distinguish between loud and normal noise. In the same vein we asked the children if they are exposed to harmful chemicals. Only 5.9% reported that they are exposed to this kind of hazard while 57.1% reported that they are not exposed to such harm and 37% could not answer the question. It is worth mentioning here that the working children simply do not know what kind of chemicals they are exposed to and how this kind of hazard affects their health conditions.

When children were asked to select from a list of hazards, the most common hazard reported was the exposure to heavy shaking and noise. The second important hazard was carrying heavy objects that may injure children's arms and harm their backs.

Nearly 4.9 percent reported that they suffer from symptoms resulting from long standing up which is consistent with our earlier findings regarding the number of working hours. Additionally 4.7% reported that they are exposed to dangerous chemicals.

Aware of the psychological aspect of the working children we asked if the children have been subject to verbal abuse. About 4.7% reported that they have been subjected to verbal abuse while nearly 80% reported that they have not been subject to that, with 15.5% refusing to answer the question. Again, verbal abuse seems to be a relative concept, as during our field visits we witnessed cases where employers or older people call the working children as "donkeys" or by using similar vulgar words. However, when we asked the children if they are subject to verbal abuse their answer was negative, indicating that they have familiarized themselves to the bad words and started to perceive them as normal words. We heard the employer shouting at working children because they have spent a long time during some of the interviews, for example. It was evident that some employers would have used offensive and stronger words had we not been present.

Finally the survey focused on street children. In Jordan street work overwhelmingly concerns boys. The risks that street children face are varied and often serious. These include traffic accidents, breathing of vehicle exhaust fumes, fatigue due to long hours, violence at the hands of adults or street gangs and even drug addiction. Scavenging on the streets or from garbage dumps is one of the new hazardous risks that street children are facing. Children are exposed to all types of dangerous items, such as broken glass, rusty nails and jagged metal scraps, syringes, etc., and they risk serious illness (respiratory, toxic poisoning, skin rashes, scabies) from the unsanitary conditions. It is also not uncommon for children performing the less dangerous forms of work to move into more dangerous (and more profitable) work. It is worth noting that quite recently there have been few cases of children scavenging on the streets or from garbage dumps, and though the number appears to be limited, with the growing economic difficulties this number might be on the rise.

*The research concludes that* the general working conditions for most of the working children are bad. Many of the children are not aware of the magnitude of danger they encounter. For them, being exposed to dangerous chemicals or toxins do not pose a direct threat though a normal observer would regard this as a very serious issue in the long run.

Children seem to work long hours and they are ill-paid. They have no bargaining power and thus they can easily be exploited. Additionally, it emerges that nearly 13% of the working children are working against their will; if this is the case this group should be the first group to attract attention by trying to bring those children back to schools or vocational training centers.

Children at the work place suffer from various hazards such as noise, shaking, heat, and standing for long periods of time. But more importantly they suffer from being exposed to chemicals or other threats which have long terms effect rather than short term.

## **I. Jordanian Economic Context:**

Classified as a "lower middle income country", Jordan is one of the smallest countries of the region with 5.6 million inhabitants in 2004, with around 79% of the population living in urban areas and less than 6% of the rural population is nomadic or semi-nomadic. Approximately 1.7 million registered Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons reside in Jordan, many as citizens. The per capita GDP, as reported by the IMF, was \$2,317 for 2005, and 14.8% of the economically active population was unemployed at the end of 2005.

With scarce natural resources (in particular water), and a small industrial base, the services sector dominates in Jordan (around 70% of GDP). The country is currently exploring ways to expand its limited water supply and use its existing water resources more efficiently, including regional cooperation initiatives. Jordan also depends on external sources for the majority of its energy requirements and has a traditional reliance on exports of phosphates and potash, overseas remittances, and foreign aid.

One of Jordan's main economic weaknesses at the macro level is its reliance on external grants to finance its huge fiscal deficit. The situation has worsened because of the increase of oil prices. Foreign debt service also weighs heavily on government expenditure. Economic management and substantial additional financial assistance helped to maintain confidence in the economy, keep inflation low and continue the build up of official reserves. However, Jordan's economy will continue to be vulnerable to external shocks and regional unrest.

Jordan has made important strides in opening and liberalizing its economy, notably investment and trade legislation, and progressing on a program of privatization. Jordan's investment climate can be considered generally favorable compared with the rest of the region, although both domestic and international investment decisions can be very dependent on regional security issues. Foreign investment levels have increased substantially over the last few years. FDI annual average growth rate in 2003-2004 reached 33%. Yet, EU investment in Jordan remains low and obstacles to further growth remain to be lifted.

Despite the good economic performance, Jordan failed in extending the benefits of economic growth to the poor. And more than 14% of Jordanians are still living below the poverty line. Jordan is one of the better-performing countries of the region in terms of life expectancy at birth (72 years old), adult literacy (91%), access to basic services and education (enrolment has reached, respectively, 91%, 80%, and 31% at primary, secondary and tertiary levels).

Demographically, Jordan has a young and rapidly growing population of about 5.3 million people. Children (age 0-14) represent roughly 42 percent of the population and young adults (age 15-29) about 31 percent. The demographic trends coupled with the moderate growth rate in the economy during most of the 1990s have led to severe pressure on the labor market.

The labor force growth is high (about 4-5 percent annually) and female participation (16 percent) rates are low but growing. Unemployment remains high at two digit rates although it has shown signs of decline over the last few years. Unemployment is in part the result of a population that is primarily young and rapidly increasing, as well as the lack of matching opportunities for new entrants to the labor market.

Regarding the structure of unemployment, secondary education graduates who do not go on to higher education represent the greatest problem since they are not able to find jobs. This group turns to the vocational training centers and follows schemes that do not work in Jordan, as in most other countries with publicly provided vocational training unrelated to market needs. Indeed mismatch in skills constrained job opportunities for this young group. Average unemployment within this group averaged nearly 14 percent over the last five years, which is higher than the national average.

The second highest level of unemployment persists among high Diploma and Bachelor graduates. Women bear the burden of high unemployment at 16.5 percent despite their low participation in the labor market, which was estimated at 11.2 percent at the end of 2003 compared to a participation rate of 63.2 percent for males.<sup>3</sup>

Given the above mentioned economic developments and structure of unemployment it came as no surprise that the country started to face the problem of child labor especially among poor and unemployed families. The difficult economic and social conditions in Jordan coupled with population growth and scarce natural resources arguably are the primary factors behind the continued employment of children in various sectors. A Ministry of Labor report issued in 2001, together with other focused field studies, suggested that over half of the children working were in the 15-17 year age bracket, with those under 14 constituting no more than 10 per cent. Working children are primarily concentrated in the Amman, Zarqa, Balqa and Irbid governorates, and half of the working children had dropped out of school in order to support their families, which were facing difficult economic conditions. An estimated 70 percent of these children were receiving wages far below the approved minimum wage standard which is JD 95 (\$ 133) a month. Working nine hours a day, these children earn less than one dinar (1.4 USD) an hour and face the constant threat of being dismissed if they complain about their working conditions. They often come from households with an average monthly income of JD100 or less.

In a more recent survey conducted by the Department of Statistics (DOS)/ (Multi Purposes Survey 2003), the total number of working children (10-17 years) was estimated at 1.5 percent of the labor force in Jordan that is nearly 18,400. Most of the working children fall between 12-17 years, with the majority being male (78%) and the other 22% being female. According to the survey 78.4% of the working children are concentrated in workshops and other places for casual work. Nearly 2% are working in the streets, while 11.7% work in the field with females dominating this group.

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<sup>3</sup> WB (2002), "Jordan Development Policy Review: Reforming State in a Volatile Region" (Washington DC).

## II. Legal Background on Child Labour in Jordan

There is considerable and growing interest and concern in the country about the scale and nature of the problem of child labour, and there have been significant efforts to combat it. Jordan has ratified a number of Arab and International conventions on children's rights such as the International Children's Rights Convention issued by the United Nations (1989), which expressly affirms the necessity of protecting children against economic exploitation or any other form of work that is harmful or may pose a hindrance for the child's formal educational pursuit or prove to be harmful to his mental, spiritual as well as physical health.

The Labour Law in Jordan that was amended in 1996 increased the minimum working age of children to 16 years old (previously 13 years old); articles that deal with working juveniles are included in: chapter two (Inspection of work), chapter five (Vocational Training Contract), chapter nine (Safety & Occupational Health) & chapter eight (Regulation of Work & Leaves).

Moreover the minimum age for admission to employment that was set to 16 years of age goes in harmony with the educational law amended in 1994 that stipulates compulsory basic education; and is ahead of the minimum age for work set on 15 years by convention '138'.

Also, in accordance with the existing labor code a list of the hazardous form of work that are considered dangerous, tiring, or harmful to the health of juveniles, was adopted in 1997 after consultation with all concerned parties representing Trade and Employers' union, NGOs, in addition to government bodies. It includes 29 activities and types of work that are not allowed for juveniles who are below the age of 18 to be employed in, such as:

- Building & Construction sector (diggers & loaders)
- Transport, Loading & Unloading sectors (winches, forklifts & Lorries)
- Dealing with machines & equipments dealing with gas & oil
- Working at heat stations & stations of pressed gases

The Labor Law No 8 for the year 1996 provides provisions to protect the health of juveniles in terms of prohibiting their employment more than 6 hours/day with one hour rest after 4 hours of successive work & between 8 p.m. - 6 a.m. Nonetheless, it fails to provide regular medical checkups or insurance for them except in the case of occupational accidents for trainees less than 16 years old; as stated in the social security law no. 19 for the year 2001.

The labour law also defined a fine to be imposed on the employer for violating the articles with regard to provisions for the employment of children. However official records suggest that there is a very weak enforcement of the articles which deals with illegal employment of children.

Moreover, Jordan has ratified many other International Labour conventions namely, Convention no. (138) for the year 1973 on the Minimum Age for Work and Convention (182) for the year 1999, on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the immediate measures that should be taken for their elimination. Jordan was among

the first Arab countries to ratify this convention under the Royal Decree on 29/2/2000. This ratification as is the case in all other international conventions binds the government in addition to other concerned bodies, to implement measures to monitor the provisions of the convention and carry out certain programs that aim at the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. The government, in consultation with all concerned organizations, shall determine those activities and jobs which are harmful to the child's health and morality.

Accordingly, Jordan endorsed the bilateral agreement between the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan represented by the Ministry of Labor in 2000. Consequently a special Child Labor Unit was created to follow up on all matters that are related to this subject; through the formulation of a National Steering Committee that represents 38 bodies, most important of which are Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Interior "Family Protection Unit", Ministry of Planning, Jordan River Foundation and UNICEF. Their effort resulted in drawing up a blueprint for a new strategy on the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

These efforts was coupled with education policy which focused in large part on ensuring that all children in Jordan had access to and were enrolled in the school system. This policy focus was a cornerstone of Jordan's strategy, and succeeded in making enrolment ratio in Jordanian schools among the highest in the Middle East for both boys and girls. The ratio of enrolment in the basic stage for the year 2000 was 89.8% (89.5%M, 90.8%F). This goes in harmony with the World Bank report issued in (1999) that states Jordan which is one of the average income countries keeps the highest enrolment rate. Around one third of all Jordanians are currently enrolled in some stage of schooling from pre-school and kindergartens to colleges and universities.

In confirmation of its commitment to providing education for all, Jordan issued a new law for education (Law no. 3 of 1994). According to this law, the kindergarten stage is classified as one of the educational stages in Jordan's educational hierarchy. The law defines this stage, limits it to two preschool years, sets its general and specific objectives, and specifies its age group at 4-5 years. The free compulsory primary education stage is increased to ten years instead of nine.

### **III. Research Methodology**

Since the population of working children is not systematically accounted for in Jordan, the team agreed to select a number of governorates where child labor phenomena is widespread such as Amman, Zarqa, Madaba, Irbid, Balka and Aqaba. Within these governorates the team selected "concentration areas" of child labor such as " industrial cities", farms, and street workers (mobile sale persons).

Concentration areas provide an opportunity for the fieldworkers to spot and approach children at site. Working children at these sites were selected at random since the availability of sampling frames for this type of work is rather meager.

The main findings of this study are based upon a questionnaire that was purposely designed to find out about the WFCL in Jordan. The survey covers 6 governorates (Amman (20.4%), Zarqa (24%), Madaba (14.7%), Balqa (6.5%), Irbid (23%) and Aqaba (9.8%). These governorates represent more than 90 percent of Jordan's population and the survey covers 387 children working in different occupations. The survey was conducted by the OSH inspectors at the Ministry of Labor who had undergone several trainings on this subject. A total of 387 children between the ages of 9 and 17 were interviewed. The survey looked at the issue of child labor and social background of the children. Interviews were conducted with working children in work places or streets between December 2005 and January 2006.

The main objectives of the study are: 1) to deepen our understanding of the complex phenomenon of child labor in Jordan; 2) to collect qualitative information specifically related to the various kind of hazarder facing children based on working children's specific experiences, insights, and perceptions; 3) to distinguish between the various forms of hazards facing children (physical and moral) across sectors in order to upgrade the existing list of hazards identified earlier by the Ministry of Labor (MOL)<sup>4</sup>; and 4) to recommend policies aimed at reducing child exposure to hazards and to raise awareness to the some times unforeseeable risk by the working children.

The study covers two main groups:<sup>5</sup>

- Group 1. Children who works for others on a full time basis (either before or after their classes)
- Group 2. Children who are in school but who are planning to drop out (potential child laborers).

Before selecting the survey sample two focus groups that brought together policy makers, union leaders and experts were held at the MOL in order to discuss the survey and the sampling methodology to explain the main rationale behind it. In order to obtain more information about reasons behind work and other socio-economic characteristics, the survey addresses few questions regarding the social background in order to place the working children in their social context.

Background information on the subject was gathered and studied from published and unpublished papers and researches to form a clear perspective as to the current situation and to acknowledge different organizations working in the field as well as

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<sup>4</sup> As far as hazardous work is concern, the ILO documents, such as the 2002 Global Report (A future without child labor) make a distinction within the WFCL between two categories: namely, 'hazardous work' that has to be determined in each country and the "unconditional WFCL" which are internationally defined regardless of national decisions.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations texts commonly define the notions of childhood and youth by reference to age: those below 18 are children and those between 15 and 24 are the youth. The overlap between these age ranges is symptomatic of the difficulties that arise in trying to draw too sharp a line between when childhood ends and when youth begins. It also reflects the great diversity in the definition of "youth" (and hence "childhood") in different societies depending on which dimension of "youth" takes precedence: demographic (e.g. age), cultural (notions of adulthood), biological (attainment of puberty), social (attainment of maturity or readiness for marriage), or economic (e.g. ability to sustain oneself). For more details see G. Kanyenze et al.: Strategies to combat youth unemployment and marginalization in Anglophone Africa. ILO/SAMAT Discussion Paper No. 14 (Harare, ILO, 2000), p. 2.

avoid research duplication. A close coordination with the Child Labor Unit at the MOL took place.

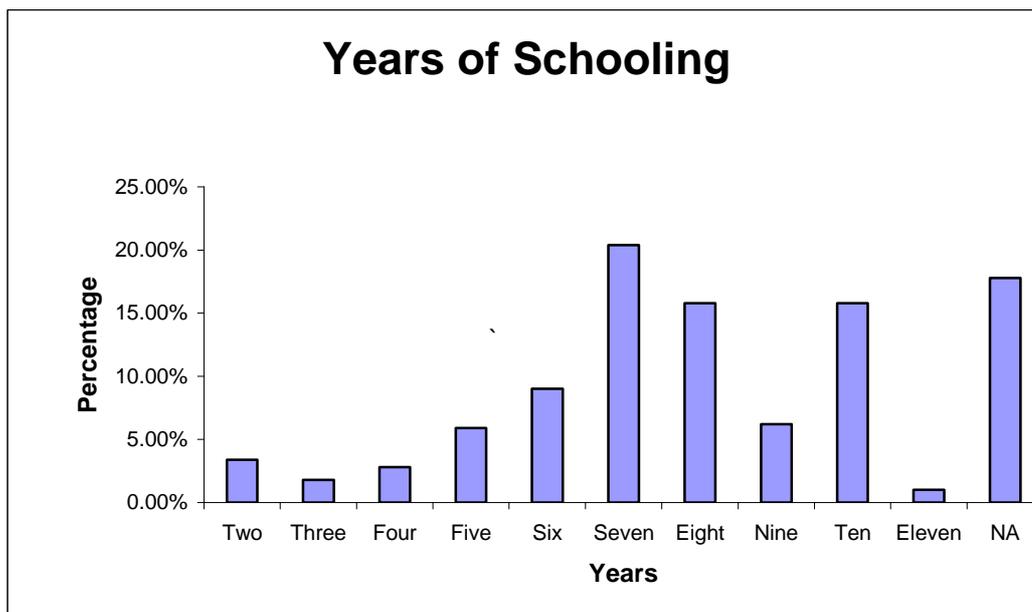
### The Survey Findings:

#### Background Information on the Working Children

The survey covered 387 children who work across various governorates and across sectors. Out of the 387 children more than 80 percent were concentrated in Amman, Zaraqa, Irbid and Madaba. Average age for the working children was 15 years indicating that most of the working children spent few years in schools before dropping out of the schools.

It is well known that working children are not isolated from the their surrounding environment, hence the study will provide some background information before discussing in detail the main thrust of this study concerning working conditions and their related hazards.

Figure 1 Years of Schooling



According to our findings the average years of schooling was (7.3) years of education. However the highest percentage of the working children, as Figure 1 exhibits, was found to have seven years of education indicating that they have finished their primary school. Another 15.8 percent have eight years at school. Those who spend less than five years at school represent 14.9 of the sample suggesting that it is more likely to join the labor market after spending few years at schools.

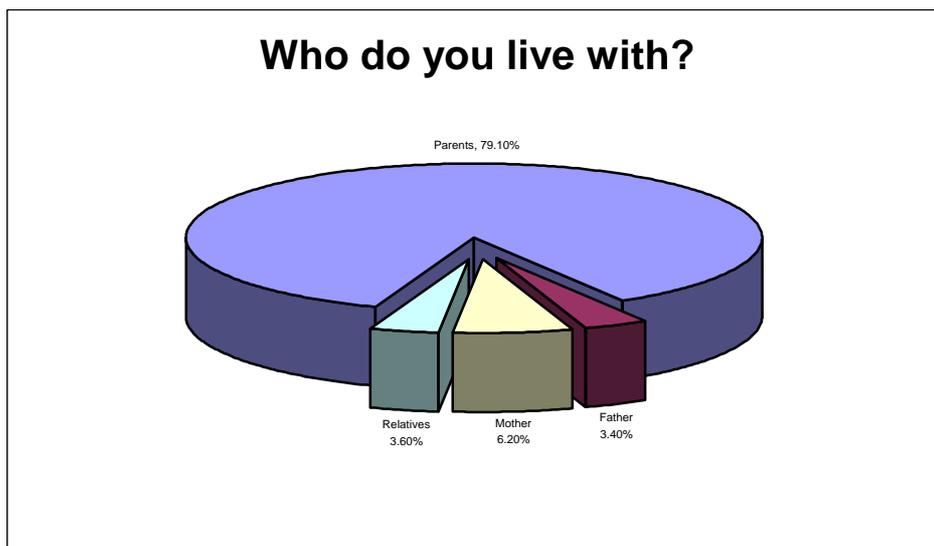
Late participation into the labor market is reflected in the child's ability to read and write with 36.4 percent reported that they can read and write very well while 42 percent say they can read and write but not very well. However, 20 percent reported

that they cannot read and write which is consistent with the nearly 15 percent which start to work at an early stage of their lives. Weak ability to read and write mean that some of the working children need assistance and special programs in order to take them away from the labor market and rehabilitate them and re-integrate them in the school system, a mission that cannot be accomplished without governments' intervention and special programs designed to deal with such a situation. It also indicates that some children, despite spending a few years in schools, do not learn how to read and write.

As for combining work with studying, 28.2 percent reported that they are still attending schools while 65.6 percent are no longer studying. It is more likely that those children who still attend school will drop out to join the labor market on a full time basis given previous experience. Their school's performance would be negatively influenced and it would be very difficult to take them off the street. Such a group is very vulnerable because the socio-economic conditions in their families are not likely to improve and consequently it would be very difficult to bring them back to the schools.

#### IV. Family Status of the Working Children

Figure 2 : Who do you Live with ?



Socially, most of the surveyed children are living with both parents (79.1%), while 3.4% are living with their father and 6.2 with their mothers. Most of the working children came from a large family of six and more. About 65 percent come from families composed of 6-10 members indicating that the larger the family size, *interalia*, the more likely that the children will join the labor market and drop out from schools.

Another observed feature is that the eldest child in large families is more likely to join the labor market while this probability diminishes as the rank of the children changes. The younger the child in the family, the less likely that he/she will drop out from school to join the labor market. This might be the case because large and poor

families are in desperate need to support their income and they rely primarily on their first or older children.

It also emerges that most of the working children come from normal families with 83 percent coming from houses where parents are living together with one wife. Those who came from separated or divorced families represent 5.9 percent and those from a family in which the household is married more than once represents 3.9 percent.

This finding is consistent with the overall figures in Jordan which indicate that the proportion of young adolescents aged 10-14 not living with either parent was less than 3 percent in 2002 and less than 10 percent for those living with only one parent according to the Department of Statistics surveys.

As for the employment status of the fathers, nearly 72 percent reported that their fathers are employed and 13.4 percent reported that their fathers are unemployed. The level of unemployment among the fathers of the working children is similar to the national level of unemployment at about 13 percent. This indicates that the overall economic conditions of the families of working children are similar to the rest of the society in terms of the employment status.

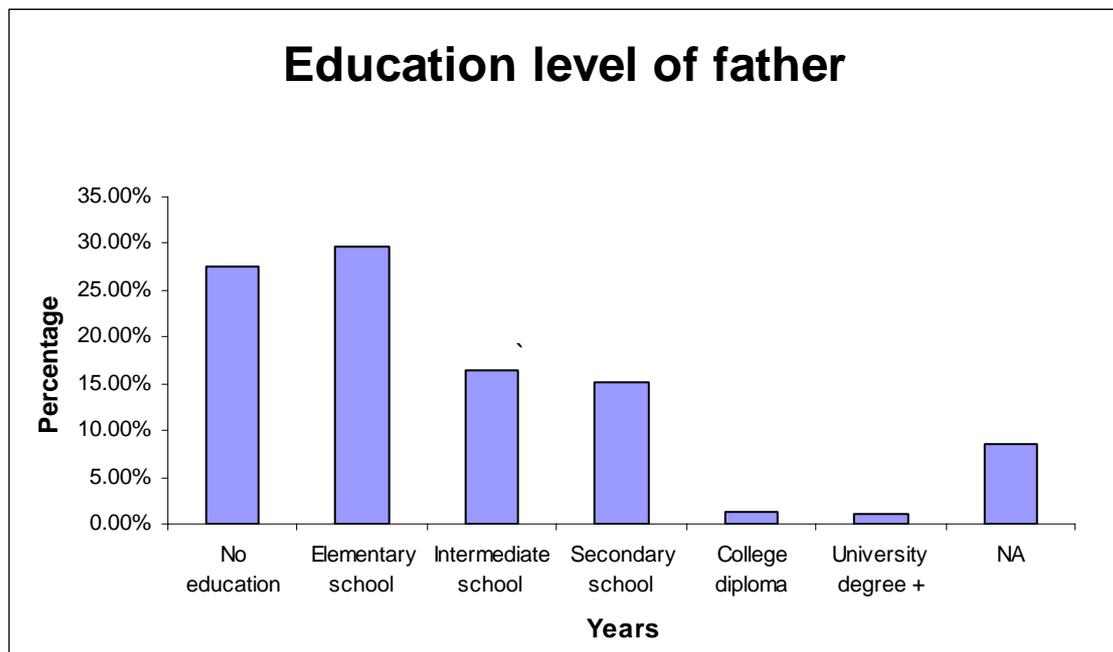
However, being employed does not mean you are living above the poverty line in Jordan, and there are categories of the working poor in Jordan which gain the minimum wage of JD 95 a month. However, given that most of the working children are coming from large families this means that they live below the poverty line which was set at JDs 395 per person back in 2003.<sup>6</sup>

Most of the fathers of the working children have been working in low-paid jobs such as construction workers or drivers. The latter two groups constitute 30 percent in our sample. Other jobs occupied by fathers are low-paid and low-skilled indicating that low income and education level is associated with the child labor phenomenon in Jordan. The above claim proves right when one discovers that 27.6 percent of the children's fathers have no education while 29.7% have elementary education and a similar 16 percent possess an intermediary school, while 15.2% possess secondary school. Fathers with College Diploma or higher degree were very marginal as Figure 3 below demonstrates.

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank (2004), "*Jordan Poverty Assessment*" Vol. 2 Dec. 2004 Washington-DC.).

Figure 3: Education Level of Father



Most of the mothers are not working, and when working most of them are working in unskilled and ill paid jobs. About 21.7 percent of the working children mother's are working as house keepers. The second highest group is working as farmers indicating that their work reflects their needs. Indeed, mothers with no education constitute 41.6 percent of the sample and those with elementary school represent 19%, while those with intermediate school represent 19.4%. These findings go in harmony with the findings of the national survey carried out by the MOL in 2001-2002.

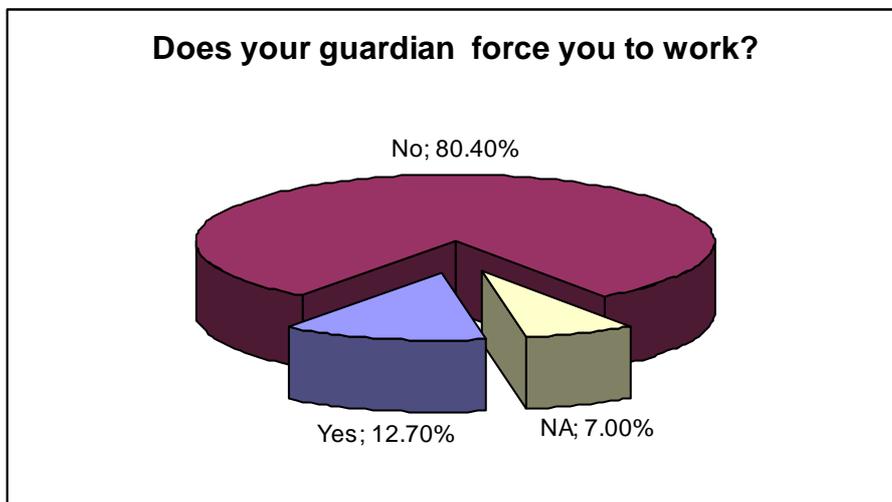
Moving on to another dimension, the study attempted to assess the relationship between the guardian and the working children due to our proposition that this type of the relationship influences the psychology of the working children. If the guardian asks about children it means that there is some level of concern about the welfare and overall working conditions, while not asking at all implies ignorance on the part of guardian, who is the father in most cases given our earlier findings that most of the working children are living with both parents. It emerged that nearly 60 percent of guardians, according to the children, do ask about the work conditions, though very few of them visit the work place or attempt to convince employers to improve the working conditions of their children. On the other hand there is 28.2 percent who reported that their guardians never asked and an important 12.1 percent refused to answer the question on whether their guardians ask about them or not. High refusal rates indicate unwillingness on the children's side to reveal their true relationship with their parents which is clearly far from being healthy.

The study concluded that the same guardians who bothered to ask are the ones who visited their children's work place. And nearly the same applies to those who reported no or refused to answer the question. There is clearly a high degree of

ignorance on the guardians' sides regarding the working conditions. Nearly 45 percent seemed to only be concerned with the income that the children earn to assist his family. One can argue that the neglected group is more likely to suffer and they are susceptible to delinquency or to get involved in illegal business or practices.

Furthermore, the survey asked if the children work on voluntary or involuntary basis, and nearly 12.7 percent reported that they are working against their will as shown in Graph 4; another 7 percent prefer not to answer this question while the rest reported that nobody forces them to work. Though as reported earlier that child trafficking in the conventional sense does not exist in Jordan, however, the fact that 12.7 percent of the working children are forced to work is arguably one the worst forms of child labor; nonetheless, we would argue that this cannot be qualified as child trafficking. Force to work means that children were left with no options but to leave schools and join the labor market probably against their own desires. Attention must be paid to this particular category which could be saved from the labor market if the working children show their willingness and desire to go back to school. Policy makers could distinguish between two groups of the working children along the line of their willingness to work or to leave or even to change their work place or professions. The study has not investigated what the alternatives are of the "forced to work" group, but it seems that they deserve special attention and further research is needed which goes beyond this rapid assessment.

Figure 4: Does Your Guardian force you to work ?



In addition to work during the day a fairly high percentage of the working children are forced to do some extra work at home. Nearly 21.4 percent answered yes to a direct question regarding whether they are working at home or not. 74.9 percent reported that they are not forced to do further work at home.

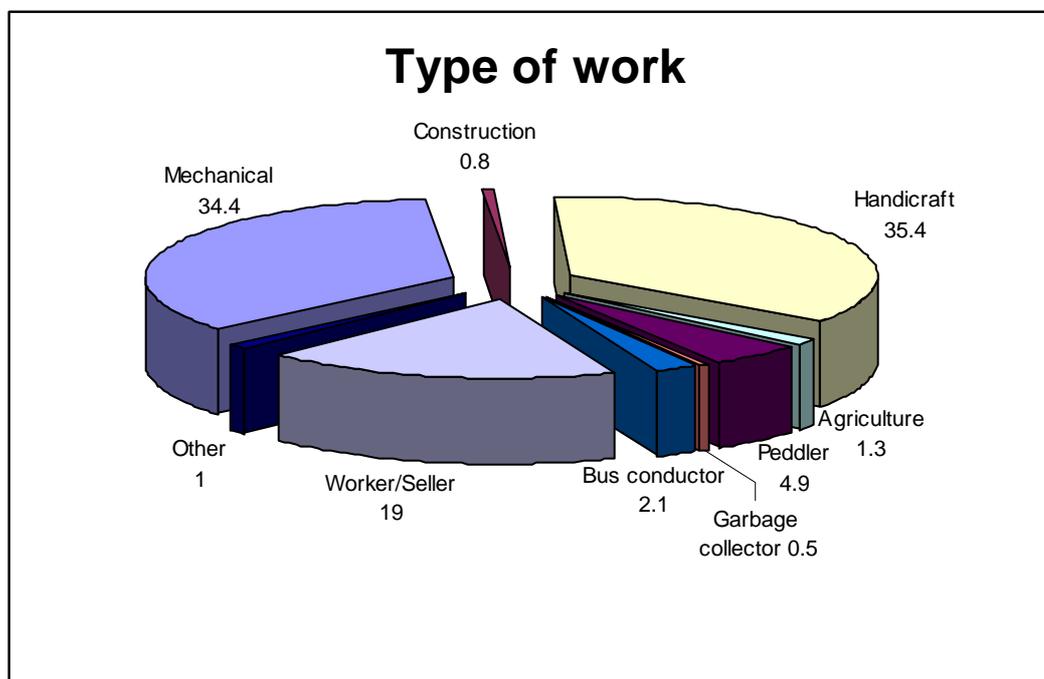
Additionally, a high percentage of working children seem to live in hard conditions at homes. Nearly 15 percent of the surveyed children reported that they have been kicked out of their house more than once; there was also a significantly high rejection rate in answering this question (9.6%).

Generally it seems the working children generally are going through a hard time with their families and their employers. Most of them as emerged from the survey are neglected at homes, or working against their will or forced to work as reflected in Figure 4. For policy makers special programs must be designed to target groups that are willing to leave the labor market. This could be set as a priority since this group is ready to change its status.

## V. Working Conditions

Earlier studies such as the survey carried out by the Ministry of Labour in 2001/2002 showed that 40-50% of children work, and have confirmed that most of the children are working in mechanical and car repair industries. This is followed by activities such as carpentry, blacksmithing and painting. These two groups alone constitute about 55% of the surveyed working children. Additionally, street vendors constitute nearly 13.4 percent. The rest of the jobs occupied by the children cover sectors and activities such as construction, bus conductors, barbers, and tailors. Graph 5 below illustrates the distribution of the working children according to their occupation. The study attempted to classify the occupations of the working children in nine groups in order to facilitate the analysis and the hazards they are facing. Annex 1 covers the details as emerged from the field work.

Figure 5: Type of Work



In this section the study will proceed to discuss the working conditions in general and when data permits the study will investigate the working conditions in particular professions.

As for the working hours data show that they appear to be very long, indeed, much longer than officially permitted. On the average, children who are working 8-12 hours represent 90 percent of the surveyed children. It was noted also that nearly 60% are working more than 10 hours a day. If this, combined with the data that was collected on day breaks and the meal they consume during the day is accurate, then the study can easily predict the level of nutrition and physiological aspects of it. Graph 6 below exhibits the number of working hours for all groups.

In more detail, those who work 8 hours represent 2 percent of the sample while those who work 9 hours constitute 11.4 percent. Notably those who work around 10-12 hours represent 58 percent of the total sample. Given that most of the working children are working six days a week, average working hours per week are estimated at 60-65 working hours, which is higher than the total average in Jordan estimated roughly at 40 hours a week. In a separate question the survey asked the children about their weekly holiday, and about 78 percent reported that they take Fridays off which is the official holiday in Jordan. Some of the children take other days off depending on the sectors which they are working in and 8 percent reported that they take no holidays.

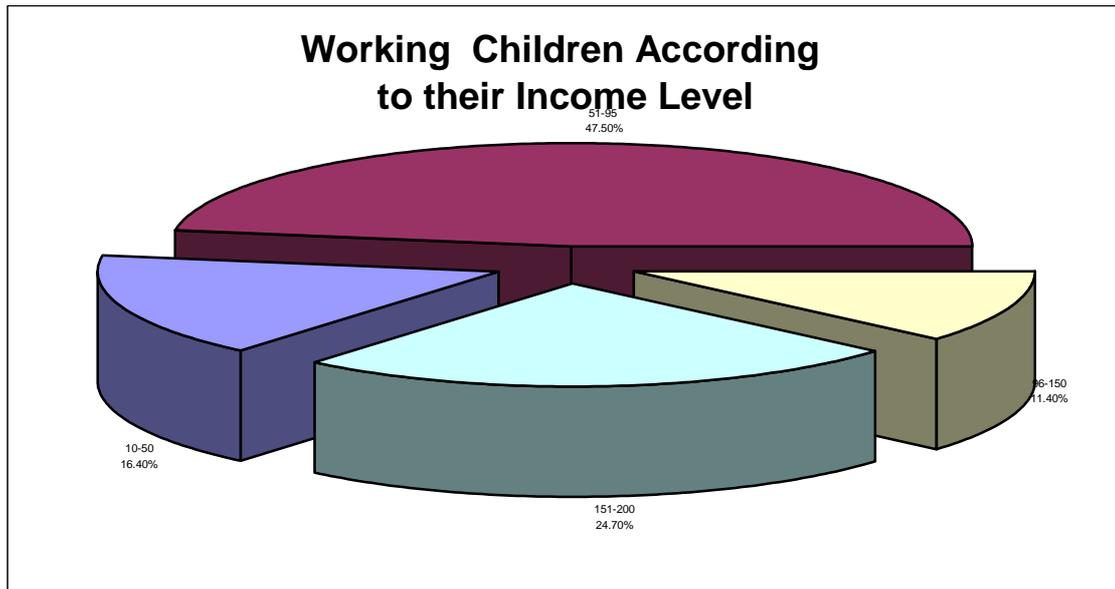
As for the rate of their income, it emerges that nearly 40% of the surveyed children receive JDs 60 or less. Out of this group 14% receive JDs 30 a month, which is clearly a very low income. Children receive a monthly income of somewhere between JDs 60 to 95 representing 15% of the total sample, while the rest receive income higher than the minimum wage with 3.9 % refusing to answer this question,<sup>7</sup> as reflected in *Annex I*.

Overall the findings indicate that 16.4% of the sample receives a monthly income ranges between JDs 10-50 which suggests that working children are subject to financial exploitation. Another 47.5% earn between JDs 51-95 and about 24% receive an income between JDs 151-200. Graph 6 below exhibits various earning levels of the children.

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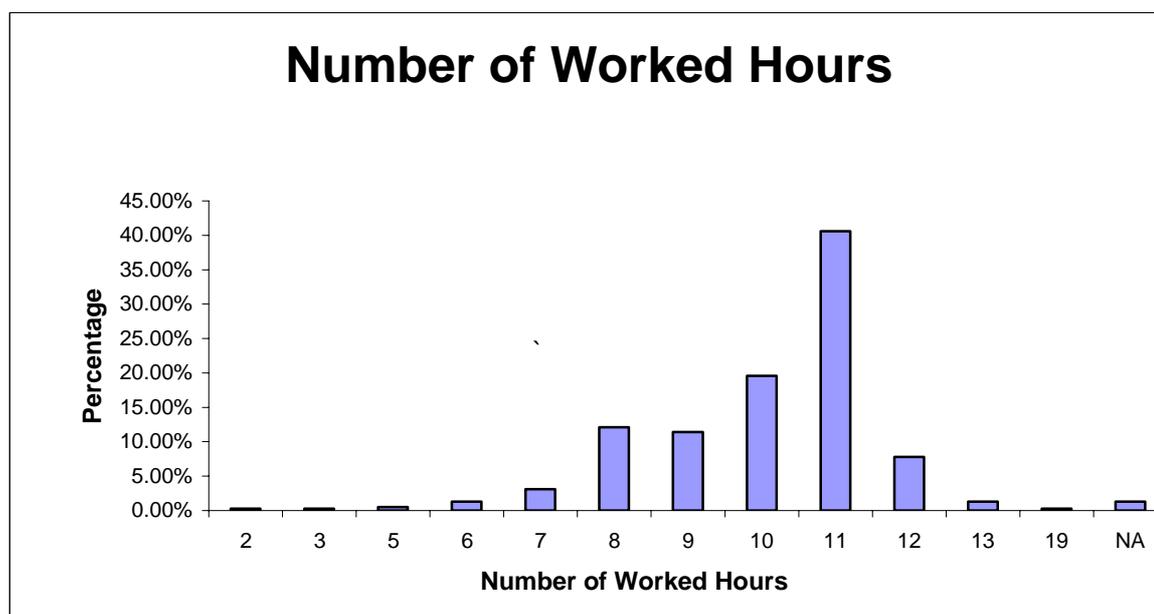
<sup>7</sup> At the time this survey was conducted the minimum wage was JDs 95. This level was raised to a level 110, however our analysis will stick to minimum level that was enforced at the time when the survey was conducted.

Figure 6: Working Children According to their Income Level



If combining the 2 elements together (average payment for children and the number of working hours), one can easily conclude that this is one of the WFCL that the authorities must encounter. Indeed, most of the children (64%) reported that they do have daily breaks during the working day. About 26 percent did not answer this question with 12 percent answering that they do not have any breaks. Most of the children spend their breaks at the workplace. It was observed that breaks are not regular and the breaks could be interrupted. It seems that breaks depend more on the work load that is being taken than as time for rest or relaxation. When there is work to be done children cannot stop working simply because it is the break time. In some professions such as tailors or hairdressers employers may take a daily break and accordingly children can take breaks too. However, children might not have any where to go in order to relax during the day and in most cases they end up having break in the work place.

Figure 7: Number of Worked Hours



\* Number of worked hours as reported by the working children.

Linking income with profession (type of work) is quite revealing, as the labourers handy-boys constitutes the largest group that receives the lowest income, with 35.8% of those who receive income within this category belonging to the handicraft profession, as can be seen from Table 1. Normally children in this type of work as labourers handy-boys and not as skilled labourers, and thus their contribution to the core work is minimal. The other low-paid group are those who work as sellers in a shop or peddlers. About 32% of the total number of the working children who receive JDs 10-50 belongs to this profession. Table 1 exhibits the level of income by profession as emerged from our survey.

Table 1: Income by Profession

Income (in JD)	Profession									Total
	Mechanical	Construction	Handicraft	Agriculture	Peddler	Garbage collector	Bus conductor	Worker / Seller	Other	
10-50	20.8%	1.9%	35.8%	0.0%	7.5%	1.9%	0.0%	32.1%	0.0%	100%
51-95	48.1%	1.3%	38.3%	2.6%	2.6%	0.6%	0.6%	4.5%	1.3%	100%
96-150	40.5%	0.0%	24.3%	0.0%	10.8%	0.0%	10.8%	13.5%	0.0%	100%
151-200	33.8%	0.0%	42.5%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%	3.8%	16.3%	1.3%	100%
<b>Total</b>	39.2%	0.9%	37.3%	1.2%	4.3%	0.6%	2.5%	13.0%	0.9%	100%

In most of the low paid jobs minimum skills are required, and thus children cannot exert pressure to increase their level of income. In other words, since they are dispensable, they have no negotiation power and their compromising ability, if they have any, is very weak.

Reading Table 1 vertically, that is investigating variation in income within the same profession, indicates that there are some significant variations. For example, in the mechanic related jobs nearly 8 percent receive income between JDs 10-50. Those who earn between JDs 51-95 represent 55.2% of the total number within this group. This simply means that nearly 61% of the mechanical workers receive income less than the minimum wage. It is worth remembered that this group constitutes about 40% of the total surveyed children.

The second largest group in our survey is the handicraft and professional work. It was found that 15.7% earn income between JDs 10-50 while 48.7% earns 51-95; this means that nearly 64.4% earn less than the minimum wage as well. The rest of this group earns income above JDs 96. The third significant group is the sellers or cleaners which represents nearly 13% of the total surveyed children. Out of this group 40% earn income between JDs 10-50, another 16.7% earns 51-95, with the rest earning above the minimum wage. It is worth noting that within this group those who belong to the minimum wage group are the highest when compared with the rest of the other professions. There is a weak potential for children to get trained or to progress within these professions. According to our job classification other groups are limited in numbers, for example street vendors who represent 4.3% in our sample also suffer from low pay, with 28.5% making income between JDs 10-50 and a similar percentage earning income between 51-95. However, children in this group reported that their income is cyclical and not stable since other children can join and take a share from their market/income.

Overall there is consistency in the level of income at the sub-category level and the overall picture clearly indicates that working children have been subject to exploitation. In the next section analysis will combine working hours with profession to determine whether some professions vary from the rest in terms of the number of working hours.

*Table 2 : Working Hours By Profession %*

Working Hours	Profession									
	Mechanical	Construction	Handicraft	Agriculture	Vendors	Garbage collector	Bus conductor	Worker / Seller	Other	Total
2-7	9.5%	0.0%	19.0%	0.0%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	100%
8-10	28.1%	0.6%	34.7%	2.4%	4.8%	0.6%	3.6%	23.4%	1.8%	100%
11-13	43.0%	0.3%	39.4%	0.5%	1.6%	0.5%	1.0%	13.0%	0.0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	34.6%	0.8%	36.2%	1.3%	5.0%	0.5%	2.1%	18.6	0.8	100%

Table 2 above at sub-professions' level indicates that very few work less than 8 hours. In mechanical related activities 62% reported that they work between 11-13 hours. Another 35 percent work between 8-10 hours and the rest work between 2-7 hours. The second largest group in our survey is the manual handicraft group, which reflects a similar picture with 55% of working children spending 11-13 hours and another 45 percent working somewhere between 8-10 hours. The third largest group, the sellers in shops and other related jobs, also suffer the same long working days.

Once the working hours are combined with payment one can realize that the level of suffering and abuse the children are subjected to is quite large. Table 3 below indicates three groups of the working hours by profession for all the surveyed children.

Table 3: Number of Working Hours and Income Level

Working Hours	Income Level				Total
	10-50	51-95	96-150	151-200	
2-7	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	100%
8-10	19.5%	33.1%	18.6%	28.8%	100%
11-13	12.9%	58.1%	7.0%	22.0%	100%
<b>Total</b>	16.4%	47.5%	11.4%	24.7%	100%

Overall, when the study links between the number of working hours and the income it finds that in total 16.4 percent of working children earn income between JDs 10-50 and those who earn between 51-95 constitutes 47.5 percent of the entire sample. This simply means that 63 percent of children earn less than the approved minimum wage in the country. Indeed one could not establish a positive and significant relationship between the number of working hours and the income. For example from the group which works more than 8-10 hours, nearly 19.5% receive income between JDs 10-50 and 33.1% receive between JDs 51-95. Similarly, within the group that works 11-13 hours nearly 71% receive less than the minimum wage indicating that a significantly large number of children are subject to exploitation. Working long hours and receiving low income suggests that the overall physical conditions of the children are extremely bad. *Children have no rights to protest such conditions since they are not allowed to work in the first place.*

Earlier studies<sup>8</sup> on the impact of working time on children's health indicate that each additional weekly hour of work adds to the probability of sustaining work-related ill-health or injury.

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<sup>8</sup> L. Guarcello, S. Lyon, and F. Rosati: *The impact of working time on children's health* (Geneva, ILO, 2004).

An IPEC working paper, *the impact of working time on children's health*, examines the relationship between the amount of time children spend working (that is, children's weekly working hours) and their health. Based on that household survey data from three countries, the findings demonstrate that an important causal relationship exists. Thus, the findings provide an empirical rationale for applying maximum working hours as an important criterion for identifying child labor for elimination. The study finds also evidence that identifying an appropriate threshold in hours for permissible work by such children is complicated by the fact that the nature of their work also appears to have an important influence on the health effects of work. Therefore, to attain similar levels of risk, working children in different types of work must log very different numbers of hours.

As for the payments and incentives, a very low percentage reported that income is linked with their performance and another 2.6 percent reported no answer to this question. Whether the payment is regular and the employers are committed to pay the working children is not known; 71 percent reported that payments are regular after each period while 14.5 percent reported that payments are not regular. A relatively high 6.5 percent did not answer the question about commitment.

When asked about their weekly day off, 78.3% reported that they take a day off and it is Friday-- the official holiday. Other working children reported that they do have a day off on other days. More importantly 8% reported that they do not have any day off during the week. This draws attention to this particular group especially that those who work long hours are the same as those who do not have any day off at all. A cross tabulation between the two groups was done and the outcome suggest that long working hours is normally combined with no days off.

Finally, in this section the survey asked the children if they are willing to change their jobs in the future and if so what the preferred job is. What emerged out of the questionnaire is that most of the surveyed children prefer to stay at the same job. Nearly 74.4% said that they prefer to stay in the same field or change into a similar profession related to what they were working in at the time they were surveyed. Notably 2.5 percent reported that they would like to become teachers, with the most popular future job being "drivers". Clearly there is no inspiration regarding the future and most of the children are satisfied with what they do. The other explanation is that they do not know better alternatives, given the fact that most of them come from low-educated families and that their parents, or perhaps their surrounding environment, is not a source of inspiration.

To summarize, it is quite clear that children are subject to exploitation in terms of the long working hours and low paid jobs and they do not enjoy any form of protection from a legal point of view.

- **Health Status of the Working Children**

Another important dimension which is related to the health status of the children was tackled, regarding the height and weight of those children, however these results have not been used since data at a national level is not available to use as a benchmark. Hence, analysis relies on the enumerators' and our own observations which suggest that in general health conditions are not radically different from what

one could observe at the national level. However, the argument is that some of the working children who work long hours do not have proper meals and hence they are more likely to suffer from malnutrition and long term illness that might not be visible at an early stage of their lives. Moreover, there are other health studies that have been conducted in Jordan and made the claim that natural growth of the children might negatively be influenced as a result of their early involvement in the labour force. Such symptoms and adverse ramifications would vary with the kind of profession the children are undertaking. For example Hawamdeh et al. (2001) concludes that the length of time children have been working and low monthly income have a detrimental effect on growth of working boys independent of the effects of low household per capita income and small maternal stature. This finding has relevance to social policy and health care of working children in Jordan that can be addressed and suggest long term policy to deal with such an important issue.<sup>9</sup>

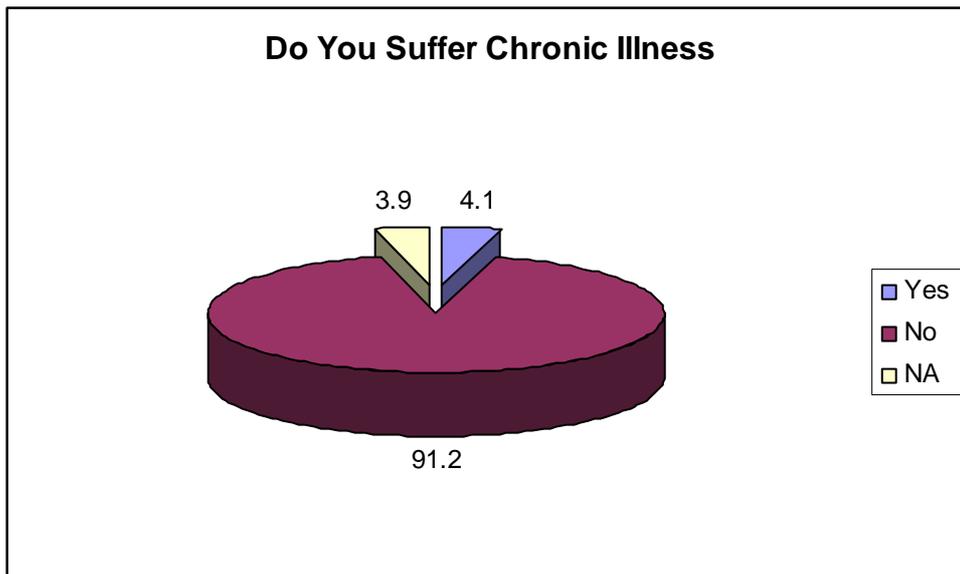
The other related matter that was asked for the children is whether they smoke or not, bearing in mind that smoking is not only a health phenomenon but also reflects a social behavior under the assumption that children in general should not smoke. It emerged that 8 percent of the children are regular smokers. Nearly 20 percent reported that they are smokers but not on a regular basis. Though the study did not ask what they mean by "sometimes", analysis assumes that those irregular smokers are more likely to become regular ones. Another 7 percent did not answer this question due maybe to the repercussions of their answers, especially if they are working for their relatives. There is no doubt that smoking at an early stage, as medical physicians argue, has severe health implications in the long run.

#### *Chronic Illness:*

When working children were asked if they suffer from chronic illness, the majority said no and only 4.1% of the surveyed children said that they do suffer chronic illness. The reported illnesses include: coughing, shortness of breath, headaches, eye pain, and general body aches. What is not clear in this regard is whether the working children suffer from illness they are not aware of. There are no medical checkups and children's' answers are dependent on their own perception regarding chronic illness. As a policy recommendation an occasional medical check up could be useful in order to provide the opinion of a professional expert. Nearly 27% of those who suffer from chronic illness reported that these symptoms increase during work, while 9.1% answered "no" with the majority claiming to be uncertain about the answer.

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<sup>9</sup> Hawamdeh H, Spencer NJ. Work, family socioeconomic status and growth among working boys in Jordan. *Arch Dis Child* 2001;84:311-14



#### *Health Insurance*

When asked if their employer gives them time off, nearly 48% of the children answered positively indicating that they always get days off. Another 8% answered that they have small breaks. What is striking is that nearly 40.8% did not answer this question. It seems that working children were afraid or at least uncomfortable in answering this question correctly. The study argues that if the answer was yes to the question on taking holidays they would have reported such answers. However, it seems that their honest answers would not please their employers and hence opted not to answer by saying “I do not know”. In the following section the analysis observe that most of the questions that expose the relation between employers and the working children are ambiguous and it is associated with a high rate of rejection.

For those who get sick there is no health insurance as most of them are working illegally. But who pays the bill? 30% reported that their employer pays the doctor fees and contributes in buying medicine, though this is up to a certain level noting that it is more likely that the employer himself does not enjoy a health insurance. Another 7.2% reported that sometimes the employer pays the doctor’s fees and nearly 10% reported that their employers never pay the doctor fees. A significant 53% reported no answer, which reinforces our claim that children are not willing to truly describe their relation with their employer.

#### *Child's Nutrition*

As far as the child’s nutrition is concerned, it was clear that most of the children are eating their main meal during working hours. About 64% reported that their employer provides meals during the day and in most cases the employer would cover the expenses of that meal. However, meals are mainly sandwiches (59.7 percent) and another 37% reported that they have hot meals.

As far as the work place is concerned; 39.5% of the working children consider that they are working in a small place, while 49.6% reporting that their work place is not small, with 10.8% providing no answer. Indeed this question also relies on the observations of the labor inspector because the size of the workplace is related to other factors such as cleanness and ventilation. Overall, there seems to be many small work places even from the working children's perspectives. Furthermore when the survey asked the children if they use health and safety equipment only 15.5% answered yes. A majority of 52.5% reported that they do not use safety measures and a high percentage of 32% reported that they simply do not know how to answer the question. Evidently, not only are the children not using the proper safety equipment, but this applies to their employers who rarely use that equipment as well. Nearly 43.9% of the employers reported that they do not use safety measures while 25.6% answered that they use it. However, the fact remains that children are more exposed to the threat due to their limited experience and physical vulnerability to potential hazards.

When the children were asked about the working conditions and addressing issues such as whether the work place is fitted with suitable lighting, 64.3% answered yes while nearly 10% reported no as an answer and 25% of the working children did not answer this question by either yes or no. High rejection rates suggest that children are uncertain about the level of lighting that could be suitable. Indeed such ambivalent answers were observed in several places, for example when the survey asked about loud noise at the workplace 17.6% reported that they do suffer from loud noise while 57.4% reported that they have no problem and 24.8% could not distinguish between loud and normal noise. However, later the study will realize that one of the most common hazards facing the working children is noise with its adverse implications in the long run. In the same vein, the children asked if they are exposed to harmful chemicals. Only 5.9% reported that they are exposed to this kind of hazard while 57.1% reported that they are not exposed to such harm and 37% could not answer the question. It is worth mentioning here that the working children simply do not know what kind of chemicals they are exposed to and how this kind of hazard affects their health conditions.

Overall, the number of incidents at the work place seem to be limited with only 6.7% reporting that they had serious injury that force them to visit the clinics. Another 7.8% suffered minor injury and did not visit the clinic as a result of such injury while the majority (66.1%) reported that they have no injury. Nearly 19% did not provide answers because they have some difficulties but could not properly consider that as work accident or injuries.

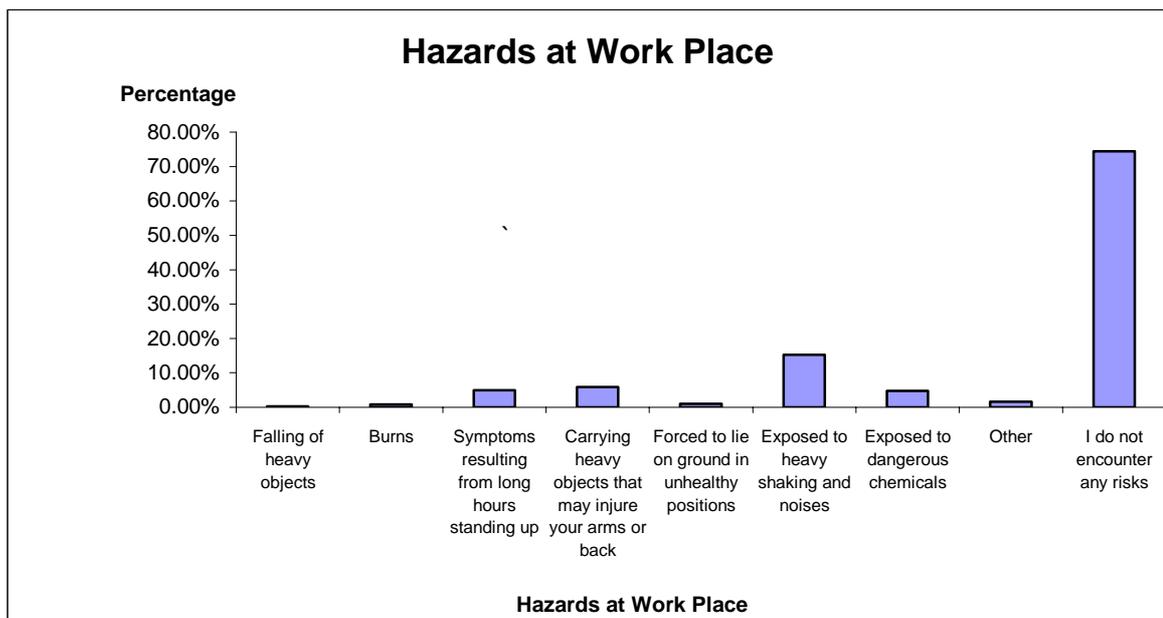
From those who were injured at work, nearly 14% said that they received paid vacation from their employer while another 14% said that they did not receive paid vacation and 5.2% said they have no time off. Though the question addressed the time off as a result of injury most of the surveyed children opted not to answer this question, which again exposes the true relationship with their employers. Nearly 66.9% of the injured working children did not answer this question which again emphasizes the importance of investigating the relationship between the employers and the children in an environment where the working children can easily and fearlessly answer such questions. The study's endeavor was rapid assessment,

through no follow up on such issues was made, which hopefully will be carried out by further studies.

Back to the working conditions, the working children were asked if they suffer from excessive heat at the work place, 19.4% said that they suffer from heat while 70.8% reported that they do not suffer from that and 10% did not provide an answer and said that they do not know. On the other hand, working children seems to suffer from the excessive cold weather more. Nearly 51% of the working children reported that they suffer from cold weather while 44% said that they do not suffer. This came as no surprise given the fact that most of the working children work in open areas or workshops in addition to those working in the streets and therefore they are exposed more to cold weather where they cannot escape or protect themselves, whereas they can take some measures during the hot days to protect themselves. From a policy perspective addressing this issue is extremely important since being exposed to cold weather has several negative side effects.

### Hazards at Work Place

Figure 8: Hazards at Work Place



The surveyed children then were asked to select from a list in addition to an open ended choice what kind of hazards they face at the work place. Indeed before analyzing the answers one should keep in mind that there are two dimensions in analyzing answers reported to this question; the first one is related to the hazards as perceived by the working children and the other one is the observations of the enumerators who conducted the survey. Regarding how the children perceive hazards facing them, most of the children did not report that they encounter hazards from the list that was provided. Indeed, as shown in table 7, nearly 74.4% reported that they have not been exposed to the list of hazards that was provided to them. The study does not claim that the list of hazards is exhaustive, though an attempt was

made to cover as many issues as possible. Additionally, it was left open to the children to list any hazard they are facing and which was not covered in our list. Indeed only 1.6% reported that they are facing hazards that were not covered in our list.

The most common hazard reported was the exposure to heavy shaking and noise. The second important hazard was carrying heavy objects that may injure children's arms and harm their backs. Another 4.9 percent reported that they suffer from symptoms resulting from long standing up which is consistent with our earlier findings regarding the number of working hours. Additionally 4.7% reported that they are exposed to dangerous chemicals.

The other side of the story is how labor inspectors perceive hazards facing the children. After conducting the survey, a meeting organized was with the labor inspectors who have conducted the survey. They noted that working children are not aware of the kind of hazards they are facing or the extent to which this might affect their lives in the long run. For example, those who work in car maintenance are not aware of the dangers they are exposed to. Working children cannot determine whether the surrounding environment is safe or not, and what kind of gas emissions they are exposed to. Moreover, they do not know what it means to work for more than 10 working hours at their ages. We observe in our field visits that those who work in car painting workshops never complain about the paint dust and regarded that as normal, though from a medical point of view it is not.

Labor inspectors observed children carrying heavy objects when they load or unload equipment for the places they work at; when we inquired if they think that this is too heavy for them given their size and age, many of them said no, and to the contrary, some of them considered that as a source of pride. In the few occasions when the employer was absent from the work place for some time, a number of children reported that they have no option but to do the job otherwise they will be fired. This is an option they cannot contemplate in reality because this will not be accepted by their parents or guardians.

Moreover, a small percentage of the children working in the streets reported that working on the highways and streets is dangerous by any means, though they could be physically punished at any time while jumping from one side to another. Additionally, children who push small carriages for a long time did not report that this might affect their backs, which is contrary to what can be observed. Most of the street's children are exposed to bad weather conditions either during the hot summer days or cold winter days. However, that was not reported as a hazardous condition from their own perspective.

Viewing things from a different point of view, the table below demonstrates hazards by profession. There was no significant distinction between various professions in terms of the hazard that children are facing. This is so, the study argue, because there are few adverse symptoms that appear only in the long run, as a result of activities such as inhaling chemicals or symptoms from standing for long periods of time. In this direction agencies working on child labor related issues should arrange for campaigns to raise awareness amongst the working children regarding the long run

negative effects of their work. It is only through raising awareness that some children can be taken away from the labor market or will start considering what kind of work they should do without harming themselves.

*Table 4: Hazards by Profession*

Income (in JD)	Profession								
	Mechanical	Construction	Handicraft	Agriculture	Vendor	Garbage collector	Bus conductor	Worker / Seller	Other
Falling of heavy objects	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Burns	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Symptoms resulting from long hours standing up	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	5.6%	16.7%	0.0%	38.9%	27.8%	0.0%
Carrying heavy objects that may injure your arms or back	26.1%	0.0%	21.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.3%	39.1%	8.7%
Forced to lie on ground in unhealthy positions	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Exposed to heavy shaking and noises	42.1%	0.0%	45.6%	0.0%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	7.0%	1.8%
Exposed to dangerous chemicals	33.3%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	55.6%	0.0%
Other	16.7%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I do not encounter any risks	35.8%	1.2%	38.1%	1.5%	5.0%	0.8%	0.0%	17.3%	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.6%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

*\* This table reads as follows: for example 33.3% of those who suffered from burns belong to the mechanical related jobs with this profession (mechanical) represents 34.6 percent of the total sample.*

There was no significant relationship between being exposed to hazards and payment received by the children. Normally in highly hazardous forms of work there is a premium that must be added to compensate for the risks, but apparently this is not the case when it comes to children who are working for others or the group of children that are self-employed such as children in the streets. Ironically, the Spearman correlation coefficient between hazards and income received was negative and insignificant.

Moving on to another issue related to what could be branded as "soft hazard", the survey asked the children if they have access to cleaning materials such as clean water and soap. About 55.6% reported that there is water and soap at their workplace, while 11% reported that there is only water. About 16.3% reported that there is no water or soap indicating bad sanitary conditions and another 16% did not provide answers to this question. Most of the children-- 57.4%-- reported that they are allowed to use the cleaning materials without discrimination, while 5.7 percent said that they cannot use it, with 33.8 percent did not give an answer.

When asked the children if they have ever been subject to beatings at their work place from older people, 4.7% answered yes, indicating that they might be physically abused at work place. This question was deliberately asked about older

people and not about the employer because it was not sure if surveyor will get fair answers if the question was direct about the employer. As observed by the numerators one can claim that employers are not willing to protect their working children unless they are amongst their close relatives. Despite the fact that the question was indirect, 17.1% did not answer this question, probably because it would not sound good and might reflect a bad image on the children in their own eyes. Working children seem to prefer keeping answers to this question for them. This might have some psychological dimensions that may merit further investigation.

Aware of the psychological aspect of the working children the survey asked if the children have been subject to verbal abuse. About 4.7% reported that they have been subjected to verbal abuse while nearly 80% reported that they have not been subject to that, with 15.5% refusing to answer the question. Again, verbal abuse seems to be a relative concept, as during the data collection process it was observed that some of employers or older people call the working children as "donkeys" or use similar bad words; however, when the children were asked if they are subjected to verbal abuse their answer was negative, indicating that they have familiarized themselves to the bad words and started to perceive them as normal words. In addition it was also observed, the employer shouting at working children because they have spent a long time during some of the interviews, for example. It was evident that some employers would use much more offensive and bad words had we not been present. Again, given the level of education and morals prevailing in some work places it was difficult to set a definition of the term 'verbal abuse', which in our own view, was commonly used.

Discrimination against working children might take various forms, for example cleaning work would be left to them, as 23.8% reported that they clean the work place alone while another 54% reported that they do so with others, with children doing most of the work alone.

- **Working -Street Children:**

Children working in the streets of big cities represent one of the largest and the most visible groups of child laborers that exist in many countries around the world. They peddle goods, prepare and sell food, polish shoes, sweep streets, beg, work as porters or couriers, clean car windshields at busy intersections and scavenge recyclables or other resalable items from garbage cans or dumpsites. The circumstances of the work and the risks involved in many cases make these activities one of the worst forms of child labour that must be eliminated in accordance with the ILO Convention No. 182 on the worst forms of child labour.

These children, often referred to as "street children", in some countries may be involved in prostitution, drug dealing or other illegal activities. This does not seem to be the case in Jordan to a large extent. The work that street children perform can vary significantly from country to country, as can the circumstances that lead the children to it. Sometimes street children live with their families; sometimes they live in the streets. They may work as part of a family or another informal enterprise or network, or they may be self-employed. Street work in some countries is associated

with socially excluded ethnic groups and large family size. Children living at home generally work to support their families or earn pocket money, while those who live on the street work to survive. While the latter are by far in the minority, they are the ones most vulnerable to falling into the most dangerous forms of street work. The wide diversity of occupations street children perform and their high mobility makes assisting them a considerable challenge.

In Jordan Street Work overwhelmingly concerns boys who work during the day but they do not sleep in the streets but rather in their own houses. The risks that street children face are varied and often serious. These include car accidents, breathing of vehicle exhaust fumes, fatigue due to long hours, and verbal and physical abuses by some adults or street gangs. Scavenging on the streets or from garbage dumps is one of the new hazardous risks that street children are facing. Children are exposed to all types of dangerous items, such as broken glass, rusty nails and jagged metal scraps, syringes, etc., and they risk serious illness (respiratory, toxic poisoning, skin rashes, and scabies) from the unsanitary conditions. Quite recently there have been few cases for children scavenging on the streets or from garbage dumps in Jordan. Though the number is limited, this phenomenon is more likely to grow if the overall economic conditions do not improve.

What emerged from the survey is that children vendors in the streets are selling newspapers, food, and gum or they are pulling trolleys. The survey asked street children if they are exposed to direct sunlight during the work. About 24% reported that they are exposed for a long time while 65% reported that they are exposed for short time.<sup>10</sup> When children were asked if they fear or worried about being run-over by a car 21.1% reported that yes they fear while the majority of 65.5% answered no with 13% unsure. Working in street does not mean that children are self-employed, only 58% reported that they are working for themselves that is there is an employer or someone in the shadow for the other 42%. About 18.4% reported that they are working for others and 23% did not answer the question. Also working in streets does not mean freedom, 23.7% reported they are some times forced to change their work place in the streets. A high percentage of 42.1 reported that they are not forced to change their work place. It was also reported that some of the children are subject to financial abuse. Nearly 7.9% answered yes to the question: does any one take money from you to secure you a workplace in the streets while 53% reported that nobody takes money in order to secure the workplace. Another 40% said they are unsure how to answer this question. This is so because financial abuse is not regular and it depends on the circumstances that the working children are facing. Clearly children in the street do not enjoy any protection except what they get from their families and thus they are subject to danger, abuse and exploitation. The study argue that before reaching the ultimate objective of eradicating the child labor, some of the pertinent problem that street children suffer from must be addressed and hopefully some action can be taken to offer this group some protection.

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<sup>10</sup> Short time was defined as if they spend most of their working day exposed to the sun or not. This was part of the training of the enumerators who conducted the survey.

## VIII. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations:

The study can safely argue that the general working conditions for most of the working children are bad. Many of the children are not aware of the magnitude of danger they encounter. For them, being exposed to dangerous chemicals or toxins does not pose a direct threat on their health, though a normal observer would regard this as a very serious issue in the long run.

There is a strong negative relationship between poverty level and education. The higher the educational level the lower the probability that an individual will fall in the poverty trap. This is a well substantiated claim in the case of Jordan according to the WB (2002)<sup>11</sup>; given this fact, it came as no surprise that most of the working children in our survey possess a low level of education which means that the working children phenomenon is linked with the income level and the fact that poverty is an inter-generation phenomenon that is likely to be transmitted if no policy intervention is pursued.

Children seem to work long hours and they are ill-paid. They have no bargaining power and thus they can easily be exploited. Additionally, it emerges that nearly 13% of the working children are working against their will. If this is the case this group should be the first group to attract attention by trying to bring those children back to schools or proper vocational training centers.

Children at the work place suffer from various hazards such as noise, shaking, heat, and standing for long periods of time. But more importantly they suffer from being exposed to chemicals or other threats which have long terms rather than short term implications.

There was no significant difference between various professions in terms of the threat and hazard levels that the children are facing. Hazards vary with the type of profession, so different health and protective measures should be tackled. The most common physical hazards that emerge from this survey are:

- Falling of heavy objects
- Burns
- Symptoms resulting from long hours standing up
- Carrying heavy objects that may injure your arms or back
- Forced to lie on ground in unhealthy positions
- Exposed to heavy shaking and noises
- Exposed to dangerous chemicals
- Threat of being knocked out on streets

1

Most of the children do not use any safety equipment nor do they receive any training on how to use it. They sometimes suffer from a filthy environment and they might be discriminated against at the work place. This is coupled with physiological hazards such as the verbal abuse and sometimes the physical abuse which is devastating for children.

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<sup>11</sup> World Bank (2004), "Jordan Poverty Assessment" Vol. 2 Dec. 2004 Washington-DC.

Street children are exposed to some of the hazards listed above in addition to work in a vulnerable environment with high potential of getting involved in drugs and illegal trade especially that a number of working children do have someone behind them who forces them to change their work place and nature.

With regards to policy recommendations, in general working children must be classified into groups. Hazards facing children in each group must be identified and accordingly measures should be taken. For example, it emerges out of this study and earlier surveys that mechanical related and handicraft industries represent the largest two groups amongst the working children. These two groups should be the first to begin with in terms of raising awareness and to set standards concerning the occupation environment.

A top priority would be to effectively limit the number of working hours and to ensure that minimum wage applies.

Another group that deserves urgent attention is the street working children, given the well established fact that those working children may potentially be diverted to conduct illegal business. This is not only an informal sector, it is also not regulated at all and a lot of illegal type of work might face those children especially when combined with minimum/ no observation from agencies or other governmental officials. Concerns traditionally have been focused on working conditions at work place.

Another new type of work was observed within the context of this survey, that is garbage collector, this is relatively new so a policy to combat this new form of child labor must be adopted before it expands.

Overall, the study argue that not all working children can be brought back to schools, hence a special program to educate and train those children in order to equip them with some skills is important.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### THE NATIONAL MODULE FOR WORKING CHILDREN

Department of labour location			Researcher's name	
Name of institution / company			Date of visit	
Address of institution / company				
Street				
Area				
Governorate				

### BASIC INFORMATION

Serial	Question	Alternative answers	Coding	Observation
1	Name of the working child			
2	Date of birth			
3	Gender			
4	Address of working child			
5	Street			
	Area			
	Governorate			
	Telephone			
6	Years of schooling			
7	Currently studying?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA (no answer)		
8	Have you heard of the Ministry of Labour?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA		
9	Have you heard of the Child Labour Unit at the Ministry of Labour?	Yes No NA		

## FAMILY INFORMATION

- |    |   |   |             |
|----|---|---|-------------|
| 10 | Number of family members .....  |   | Observation |
| 11 | Birth Order in the Family .....   |   |             |
| 12 | Number of brothers .....  |   |             |
| 13 | Number of sisters .....   |   |             |
| 14 | Social status of household head   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. married (one wife)</li> <li>2. married polygamous</li> <li>3. divorced</li> <li>4. separated</li> <li>5. deceased father</li> <li>6. deceased mother</li> <li>7. Other specify .....</li> </ol> |             |
| 15 | Employment Status of the father/ <u>guardian</u> ?                          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. employed</li> <li>2. unemployed</li> <li>3. disable</li> <li>4. <u>working</u> abroad</li> <li>5. other specify</li> </ol>  |             |
| 16 | What is his professionfather/ <u>guardian</u> ? .....                       |   | Pre-coding  |
| 17 | Education level   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no education</li> <li>2. elementary school</li> <li>3. intermediate school</li> <li>4. secondary school</li> <li>5. college</li> <li>6. university degree +</li> <li>7. other</li> </ol>        |             |
| 18 | Are any of your brothers or sisters who are less than 16 years old working? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes ..... How many .....</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>  |             |
| 19 | House type  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rented..... monthly rent</li> </ol> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">..... (JD)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Owned</li> </ol>   |             |
| 20 | What is the net household income (except yours) .....                       |   |             |
| 21 | Does the family receive any financial assistance or support?                | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> <li>3. Donor.. ..... how much</li> </ol>  |             |
| 22 | Does your guardian/father care about your work conditions?                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> <li>3. NA</li> </ol>  | Observation |
| 23 | Has he/she ever visited your work place?                                    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yes</li> <li>2. No</li> </ol>   |             |

- 24 Does he/she speak to you about problems facing you in the work place? 3. NA  
Yes  
No  
NA
- 25 Does he/she force you to work? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 26 Does your father/guardian relate in anyway to your employer? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. others.....
- 27 If yes, is he/she? 1. Relative  
2. Friend of the family  
3. Close to the place where you live  
4. Other .....
- 28 Are you forced to do any work at home after finishing your work? Yes  
No  
NA
- 29 Have you ever been punished to sleep outside your house? 1. Yes..... WHY  
2. No  
3. NA  
.....

### INFORMATION ABOUT WORK

- 30 Type of work? ..... **Pre code** observation
- 31 Date of employment .....
- 32 Number of Working Hours .....
- 33 Do you have break during the working day? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 34 If yes, How many hours? .....
- 35 Where do you spend it? 1. Inside the work place  
2. Outside the work place
- 36 What is your monthly payment? .....
- 37 What is your day-off 1. ....  
2. no day-off
- 38 Do you contribute to the family (household) income 1. Yes... how much a month  
.....  
2. No
- 39 Do you have any means of transport to and from work? 1. Yes (  
2. No .... How do you go?  
- Walking  
- Bicycle Riding

- Others (Specify)
3. NA
- 40 Is transportation to your work place provided by your employer? 1. Yes... skip Q 40  
2. No ....  
3. NA
- 41 How do you go to work? 1. Car  
2. Public Transportation  
3. Other specify .....
- 42 What are your working hours? To...from .....
- 43 What is your favorite Job in the future? The current one ....  
Other specify .....
- 44 Have you previously worked? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 45 If yes, list job and period Job>.....  
Period >.....
- 46 Why did you leave your previous work? 1. Were you laid of your work  
2. Are you getting high income from the current job?  
3. Has your family intervened in your job transfer/ change?  
4. Desire to change to change the profession  
5. Other please specify .....
- 47 How long you stayed in your previous work? Specify .....
- 48 Have you received any on-the-job-training? .....

### HEALTH DATA

- 49 How tall are you? ..... Observation
- 50 What is your weight? .....
- 51 Do you have any chronic illnesses? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 52 If yes, What are they? 1. Coughing  
2. Caesurae of breath  
3. Headache  
4. Scratching  
5. Eye pain  
6. Body pain  
7. Other pains specify .....
- 53 Do these symptoms increase during work? Yes  
No  
NA
- 54 When you get sick, does the employer give you time off? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 55 Does your employer pay 1. Yes

	doctors' fees?	2. No 3. Others 4. NA
56	Does your employer pay for your medicine?	Yes No NA
57	When was the last time you have visited the doctor?	During last week During last month more than a month ago other Specify .....
58	Why did you visit the doctor?	Illness Accident Routine visit Other specify .....
59	Does your employer provide any meals during work?	1. Yes: a. three meals b. two meals c. one meal 2. none
60	Do you pay for it?	1. Yes.... How much 2. No 3. NA
61	What is your main meal during work?	1. Sandwich 2. Hot meal 3. Other specify .....
62	Do you work in a place with good ventilation?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
63	Do you work in a small place? (This question depends more on the surveyors observation)	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
64	Do you use health and safety gear/equipment?	Yes No NA
65	Does your employer use health and safety gear/equipment or tools?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
66	Do other workers use safety equipment during work?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
67	Do you work in a place with suitable lighting?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
68	Do you work in a place with loud noise?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA
69	Have you ever been injured at work?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA

- 70 Do you suffer from excessive heat or temperature at the work place? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 71 Do you suffer from cold temperature at the work place? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 72 Do you encounter any of the following health hazards? 1. Falling of heavy objects  
2. Burning  
3. Symptoms of unhealthy standing for long hours  
4. forced to lie on ground in unhealthy positions  
5. Bending in difficult circumstances  
6. are you exposed to dangerous chemicals  
7. Other specify .....
- 73 Is there cleaning materials in your work place (water soap) 1. Yes, there is water and soap  
2. Yes, water only  
3. Nothing
- 74 Are you allowed to use the cleaning materials as the others? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 75 Have you ever been subject to beating at your work place from older people? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 76 Have you ever been subject to verbal humiliation from others in your work place? 1. Yes  
2. No  
3. NA
- 77 Do you clean the work place? 1. Alone  
2. With others  
3. Don't clean  
4. NA
- 78 Do you feel the employer discriminates against you and favour older co-workers? 1. Yes he does  
2. No  
3. NA

**THIS SECTION FOCUSES ON STREET CHILDREN  
WORKING WITHOUT DIRECT EMPLOYER**

- 79 For how many hours a day are you exposed to direct sunshine during work? 1. Specify ..... Surveyors  
2. Not exposed Observation  
3. NA
- 80 For how many hours a day specify Surveyor

	are you exposed to cold weather?	Not exposed NA	Observation
81	Are you worried about being run-over by a car during work?	Yes No NA	
82	Do you work for your self or for others?	1. for myself 2. for others 3. NA	
83	Does anyone force you to change your work place in the street?	Yes No NA	Observation
84	Does anyone take money from you to secure you a work place in the street?	Yes No NA	
85	Do you pay this amount under threat?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	
86	Does your family support you if you need protection in the work place?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	

**OTHER INFORMATION**

87	Reasons behind Dropping out of school?	1. To help the family financially 2. low academic achievements 3. Desire to learn profession 4. Pressure from the family 5. Others .....	Observation
88	Do you want to go back to school?	1. Yes in case: a. The financial situation of the family improved b. Evening study becomes available c. Employment with suitable hours that allow work and study d. positive environment at school 2. No	
89	Have you ever faced problems that took you to court of justice?	1. Yes 2. No 3. NA	