

A child is silhouetted against a bright background, working in a dark, arched opening. The child is crouching and appears to be handling a large, flat object, possibly a piece of paper or a small tray. The background shows a large, textured wall made of many small, rectangular blocks, possibly bricks or tiles, under a bright sky. The overall scene is dramatic, with high contrast between the dark interior and the bright exterior.

**A RAPID ASSESSMENT
WORST FORMS OF
CHILD LABOUR**

December 2015

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WORST FORMS OF
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REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

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Introduction

Children and Youth are the majority of Iraq's population. The country has been exposed to many challenges and dangers that cast their shadows across society. These challenges pose an imminent danger children's growth and their access to good education, an essential factor for community development. These challenges also have disrupted and become a strong factor in the decline of the national economy.

In many international forums, the Iraqi government has confirmed its commitments to mechanisms approved by international conventions and charters for the protection of children's rights, and has made great efforts to create and establish capable national mechanisms to maintain the rights of children and respect their dignity in line with international standards. Iraq has also sought to create a legal environment that adopts the human rights standards and supports reinforcing and translating them in its policies and programs to create a promising future for childhood in the country.

This assessment, conducted by Iraqi Al-Amal Association in conjunction with the ministry Division for Combating Child Labour, and funded by UNICEF, was implemented in 5 Iraqi governorates (Baghdad, Basra, DhiQar, Najaf, Kirkuk). It contributes to a better understanding of the children who are engaged in work and measures the size of the dangers face to according to criteria and indicators built on scientific foundations. This report can give us a clear insight into the factors and causes that lead families to push their children to engage in work which represents the worst forms of child labour as classified by the convention of child rights and two conventions of the International Labour Organization concerning age determination No. (138) and worst forms of child labour no. (182).

This evaluation can be considered a resource that can be referenced and relied on with data and information through which we can evaluate the size of the problem and the effects left behind on a child and family's life by this phenomena. As well, we can reinforce and develop the evaluation process and generalize it in the form of comprehensive field survey that expands its geographic area to present a more precise insight. The evaluation team will present the results in a workshop with experts, specialists, and academics participating for a serious discussion about the conclusions, the most important challenges and results, and about key elements needed for a strategic work plan by the Iraqi government in conjunction with UNICEF and other organizations to address the worst forms of child labour.

To end these challenges and decrease the impact of the phenomenon, we should work to remedy the dangers, the social and psychological effects left behind them and we must specify our priorities for rehabilitation of children and youth with a focus on treating the root causes, including poverty, social and economic opportunities and limitations. Through this we can better prevent child exploitation and reinforce arrangements to protect them, provide suitable alternatives for them, reintegrate them in the society by good education, skill training, social and economic development in addition to awareness programs. The effectiveness of these measures depends on providing the accessories and their continuity and sustainability on addressing the underlying causes the worst forms of child labour.

We can achieve all that if we succeed in concentrating and depending on national capacity development to build social structure to protect children, achieve economic stability and find opportunities for young people.

In conclusion we present our thanks and appreciation for the good efforts made by the Iraqi Al-Amal Association and Division for Combating Child Labour in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs who cooperated in the evaluating process, our thanks also go to UNICEF for providing financial and technical support to accomplish this work.

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Acknowledgements

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Many individuals contributed to this collaborating report and publication. Very special thanks to Nicholas Grisewood, UNICEF consultant who served as main technical expert providing technical guidance, training, mentoring and final write up throughout the assessment. The assessment was not possible without dedicated engagement of Iraqi Al-Amal Association and especially for Miss Ilham Makki Hammadi who have conducted field survey, data collection and compilation of initial findings of the assessment in a very difficult security environment

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CLU	Child Labour Unit
COSIT	Central Organisation for Statistics
CRC	UN Child Rights Convention
CWC	Child Welfare Commission
HRC	Human Rights Commission
IAA	Iraqi Al-Amal Association
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ILAB	International Labor Affairs Bureau (of USDOL)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
IQD	Iraqi Dinar
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JNA	Joint Needs Assessment
KRG	Kurdistan Region Government
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
KRSO	Kurdistan Region Statistics Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MICSA	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MOPDC	Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation
MOP-KRG	Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Region Government

NDP	National Development Plan
NSPR	National Strategy for Poverty Reduction
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
SIMPOC	Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (ILO)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
USD	US Dollar
USDOL	United States' Department of Labor

Executive Summary

Iraq's turbulent past over the last three decades have had a devastating impact on the country's socio-economic environment and infrastructure deeply affecting the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens. In spite the adoption of new constitution in 2005, parliamentary elections in April 2014 and the formation of a new government in September 2014, insurgency and violence continue to obstruct national development and have created one of the largest population of internally displaced persons in the world: 4 million people as of 15 June 2015. Protection needs are significant, including accommodation, food, health, education, water, etc., and families are quickly depleting their limited financial resources, increasing their vulnerability to additional economic shocks.

Poverty is a daily reality for around a quarter of the population, increasing to over 30 per cent in rural areas. Unemployment is also running high at over 25 per cent according to Central Organisation for Statistics and is higher again still for youth who struggle to find jobs in a shrinking labour market. It is also worrying to note that less than half of employed adults work in jobs that are covered by social security provisions, including pensions. The situation has taken its toll on the education sector, affecting access and quality in equal measure. Once a beacon of development for the MENA region, Iraq now has some of the most worrying education statistics and enrolment rates drop off sharply for children aged 12 to 14, around 48.2 per cent and children aged from 15 – 17 around 28.3 per cent as per ministry of Planning in 2013. It is estimated that one in five Iraqis, aged 10 to 49, cannot read or write.

This extremely challenging backdrop serves to explain the very high levels of vulnerability of a significant proportion of the population and the existence of a highly fertile environment in which exploitation and abuse of all kinds occur, especially against children, the most vulnerable population of all. Child labour is especially prevalent in the most vulnerable families and even more so in times of crisis and instability, pushing children prematurely into the labour market to be able to contribute to family survival during times of urgent need.

Iraq takes the safety and development of its children to heart, evidenced by its ratification of relevant international conventions pertaining to the protection of children, as well as the new constitution, in particular Article 29. In addition, its Labour Law sets the minimum age of employment at 15, prohibits the worst forms of child labour, identifies hazardous occupations to which children between the ages of 15 to 18 should not be exposed and promotes occupational safety and health training and equipment. The Law of Compulsory Education also contributes to a potentially comprehensive enabling legislative environment to tackle child labour, obliging parents or guardians to enrol children in primary school until either the age of 15 or after fully completing the six grades of primary education. Nevertheless, in the context of a very difficult socio-economic and security situation across the country, the needs of vulnerable populations are significant and the capacity of government institutions and other actors to apply and monitor laws and regulations are severely compromised.

While the UNICEF MICS survey of 2011 indicates that around six per cent of children aged 5 to 14 are involved in child labour, it is evident that taking into account hazardous work occupations of those aged 15 to 17 and the continued challenges of poverty, education and employment that the actual figure is likely to be much higher. The Iraqi government, deeply concerned over the growing numbers of working children in Iraq, particularly those involved in the worst forms of child labour, approached UNICEF to discuss further investigation into its causes and consequences, as well as its different forms and their incidence in different governorates. In this context, a rapid assessment of worst forms of child labour in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Najaf, Dhi Qar and Basra was carried out across 2014 to contribute to the evidence base of this phenomenon and initiate a national process of action focusing on its elimination and future prevention.

As can be seen from the chapter outlining the methodology for this assessment, based on the joint ILO-UNICEF guidance, the process was fraught with challenges linked primarily to security issues that worsened considerably in mid-2014. This impacted considerably on sampling population and design as research field teams were forced to operate under difficult and often dangerous circumstances. It is nothing short of a miracle that this rapid assessment has been published at all and is a testament to the courage, commitment and determination of the IAA field and coordinating team. While the small size of the sample population and the number of interviews may be small, these must be taken in context. In addition, this is a rapid assessment of worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation of children one of the most physically, mentally and emotionally damaging of all, which is difficult to conduct even in more secure and stable country environments. Because of these challenges, it was decided that the assessment would focus on a different worst form of child labour in each governorate, selected because of its prevalence and also its specificity to that geographical area. The coverage was as follows:

- Baghdad – children working in bricking factories;
- Kirkuk – commercial sexual exploitation of children;
- Najaf – children working in cemeteries;
- Dhi Qar – child beggars;
- Basra – street vending.

Relating to the high level of IDPs in Iraq, it was interesting to note that most of the working children came from IDP families. The percentage of working boys was significantly higher than working girls, 76 to 24 per cent respectively. This seems to be because of cultural perceptions of boys being responsible for the family either alongside their fathers or in their absence. The assessment portrayed extremely difficult living conditions for children and their families, sharing rooms, run-down houses, lack of running water or sanitation and highly polluted environments for those living in the area of the brick factories. Most households were in debt and this, combined with other problems relating to poverty and insecurity, created situations of conflict and tension within the home that also push children to leave. Poverty and contribution to family income was also the main reason why children were working.

The assessment highlighted the very difficult conditions that children work in no matter what they are doing, characterised by long hours, night work, insufficient access to food and drink, physical, verbal and sexual violence and a wide range of hazards. Indeed, a deeply worrying trend that emerges from the assessment is the frequency of sexual abuse and violence against children in most worst forms of child labour with children as young as 11. In Kirkuk where girls are forced into prostitution, they are often forced at gunpoint to have sex and one reported being raped by five or six men at a time. The places of work for these girls are filthy with floors littered with waste and even human excrement. Unsurprisingly, all children suffered from a range of physical, mental and emotional health problems due to either the work they carry out or the environment in which they work. Among the negative coping mechanisms to which they resort, alcohol and drug abuse figure prominently.

Most of the children in the sample population were not going to school and many had never been to school at all, or had dropped out. Parents either took the decision not to send their children to school, or there were no schools in the area or because the family had moved to the area, they simply did not continue to send their children to schools in the new location. Very few children interviewed stated that they were not interested in education. Most children were suspicious of institutional authority, not least because many had been mistreated at the hands of police officer and some pointed out that employers bought the complicity of the police to avoid any problems with what they were doing.

Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of the children totally rejected the idea of allowing their “own” children to work in the future.

Against this backdrop, the assessment proposes a range of detailed recommendations for government and non-government actors to address this difficult situation, including amendments to the Labour, Social Security and Compulsory Education Laws, ensuring the full activation and monitoring of relevant elements of this legislative framework and the new constitution, as well as implementation of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and National Development Plan. In addition, it would be vital to align the future national child labour response with the future national child protection policy and programme to ensure integration, mainstreaming and coherence.

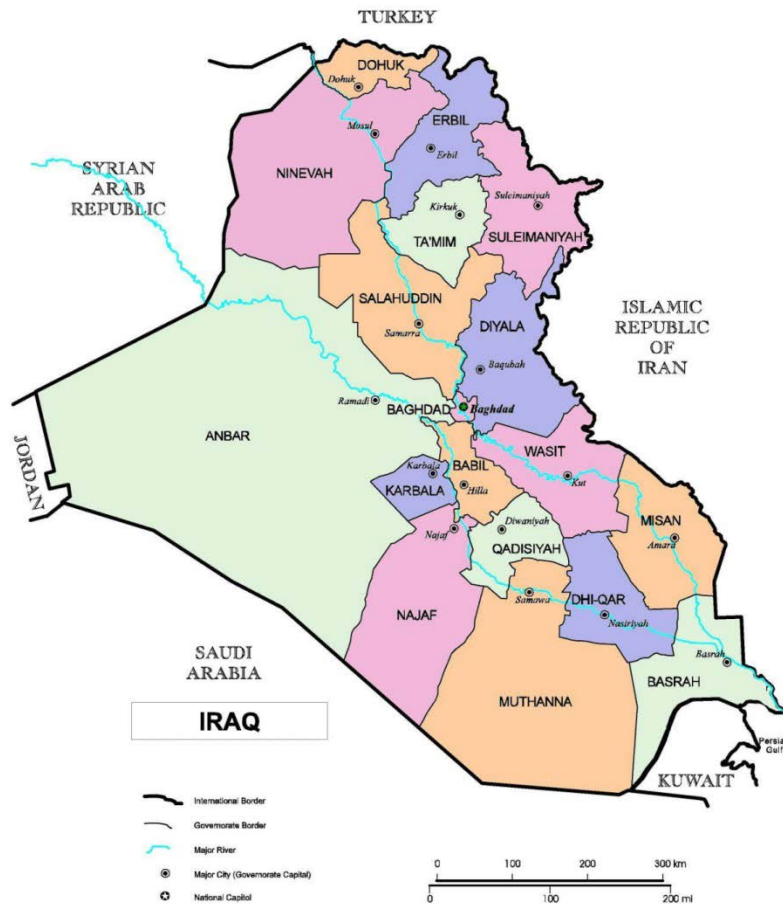
As regards education, it is important to reinforce national efforts to increase girls’ enrolment and completion of all levels of education and improve data collection and analysis on school drop-out and to inform interventions to reduce drop-out, including school return and non-formal education programmes. Based on the assessment outcomes, it would also be important to undertake measures to improve the school environment in terms of physical infrastructure, enhanced teacher training and improved education materials, as well as promote greater integration and involvement of communities and children in schools. In order to address the particular problems of older children, it would be vital to enhance access and quality of technical, vocational education and training.

An effective child labour monitoring system would be critical to facilitate the identification, withdrawal, referral, rehabilitation, protection and prevention of child labour through the development of a coordinated and multi-sector monitoring and referral process, linked to national child protection referral systems and mechanisms. This would require the development of appropriate services and programmes. Clearly, it would also be important to build the capacities of national partners to coordinate and implement the monitoring system and to develop a specific capacity-building programme for education actors. The assessment recommends building the capacity of local, regional and national media on child labour to support wider awareness-raising across the social spectrum.

Any future strategic plan of action would need to be built on detailed information and knowledge and therefore it is recommended that a national child labour survey be conducted in Iraq as soon as possible. The list of recommendations also calls for empowerment of trade unions and civil society organisations to identify and report child labour situations, particularly worst forms, to the appropriate authorities. Finally, the international community should consider vital technical and financial support for a national plan of action to eliminate child labour. Adequate resources will be critical to support this plan to tackle child labour sustainably and the assessment clearly indicates the need for behavioural change that takes time and sustained effort to address.

Experience shows that emergency situations, such as civil conflict, significantly increase the vulnerability of children to exploitation of all kinds, often the worst. The same is true of child labour and children become susceptible to its worst forms. International law is very clear on the action to be taken in these situations: the child should be removed immediately and provided with appropriate protection and support. Among the interventions to be included in a future plan of action should be a programme of withdrawal, rehabilitation and prevention. The challenges in designing and implementing a plan of action to address child labour at national level are significant enough – in a situation of national instability and insecurity, involving widespread internal displacement as in Iraq, the challenges are multiplied. The immediate next steps beyond this rapid assessment will be critical for the future of Iraq’s children.

Chapter 1: Background and Context



The Republic of Iraq, boasting a land area of around 435,052 square kilometres, holds a central position in the Middle East region, bounded in the east by Iran, in the north by Turkey, in the west by Syria and Jordan and in the south by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The country has arid desert land west of the Euphrates river, a broad central valley between the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers, and mountains in the northeast. The two rivers flow through the centre of the country, from north to south, into the Shatt al-Arab near the Arab Gulf and provide significant amounts of fertile land. Iraq is a federal parliamentary republic made up of 19 governorates.

Its estimated population in July 2014 was around 32.6 million and very young in character. Indeed, Iraq is considered one of the most youthful countries in the world. The median age was 21.5 and over 55 per cent of the population was aged below 25 and around 40 per cent was aged 14 or below¹ with an almost equal ratio of females to male, and the youth dependency ratio was estimated to be over 69 per cent.² During the period 2010 to 2015, the average population growth was 2.9 per cent.³ In 2011, it was estimated that two-thirds of the population is located in urban areas and one-third in rural areas. The country was situated at 120th in the 2014 Human Development Index,⁴ placing it in the “medium human development” section.

1 *Iraq Country Profile*, World Statistics Pocketbook, UN Statistics Division, 2015. This figure refers to 2013 population data..

2 *The World Factbook*, Iraq, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), June 2014.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Human Development Report 2014*, Sustaining Human Progress: Reducing Vulnerabilities and Building Resilience, www.hdr.undp.org.

Social research in the national context

Iraq's turbulent past over the last two decades – well-covered in the global media – have had a devastating impact on the country's socio-economic environment and infrastructure, including a significant housing crisis,⁵ an ongoing post-war population boom, high unemployment and large diaspora of internally displaced people and refugees, further exacerbated by the incursion of the group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in 2014 that seized control of large areas of land and cities. Conducting social research activities, particularly on worst forms of child labour, in one of the most challenging national contexts in the world, characterised by a volatile national security situation, is fraught with extreme difficulties and it is a testament to the courage, commitment and determination of the IAA and its research team that this report has been published at all.

Political situation

Following the military coups of the 1950s and 1960s, the ascendancy to power of General Saddam Hussein, ruling from 1979 to 2003, led to an extended period of dictatorship, characterised by brutal human rights violations and conflict. The Iran-Iraq war from 1980 to 1988 ended in stalemate but at the cost of around 500,000 to 1.5 million lives and the use of chemical warfare. The Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait in 1990 led to the first Gulf War which ended in 1991, but resulted in a devastating legacy of economic sanctions imposed by a series of United Nations Security Council resolutions, including on disarmament, agreement to ceasefire, imports of products and commodities and compensation.⁶ The failure of the Iraqi government at that time to meet the terms of these resolutions meant that sanctions remained in place until the second Gulf War in 2003. Insurgency activities against the US-coalition established governing authority began already in the summer of 2003 and have continued ever since. Combined with the impact of sanctions, these have significantly affected the lives of ordinary Iraqi citizens.

Elections for the first National Assembly of Iraq since the end of the war were held at the end of January 2005 and the new parliament was given the specific mandate to draw up a new constitution, approved in October 2005, which led to the establishment of the Iraqi Transitional Government and subsequently general elections in December 2005. As of 2007, a timetable of withdrawal of coalition forces was set in motion for 2011. However, insurgency, violence and political instability continued in 2012 and 2013 and in 2014, ISIL forces seized control of parts of Iraq. Political instability followed the parliamentary elections of April 2014 that eventually saw Mr Haider al-Abadi installed as Prime Minister and a new government formed in September 2014. Parliament also elected Mr Fuad Masum as President in July 2014.

Security situation

With the destruction of political and government infrastructure over an extended period and the impact of economic sanctions, insurgency and violence have overshadowed the Iraqi landscape for many years and continue today. This has contributed to the ongoing erosion of the country's economic and social infrastructure and has also led to the migration and internal displacement of a large number of Iraqis, including as refugees. In June 2014, an incursion of ISIL forces saw large tracts of land being seized, including several major cities, and creating a new population of hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) amid ongoing reports of atrocities. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)⁷ estimated that, as of 15 June 2015, there were over 4 million internally displaced Iraqis. These figures are derived from two periods of displacement:

⁵ In September 2013, the Minister for Housing and Construction stated that Iraq was likely to only complete five per cent of the 2.5 million homes it would need to build by 2016 to stay abreast of demand, Reuters, 16 September 2013.

⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) No. 661, 6 August 1990, imposed a series of international sanctions, including banning imports of products and commodities. UNSC Resolution No. 687, 3 April 1991, established the terms with which Iraq was to comply after the end of the first Gulf War, including repatriations and compensation.

⁷ The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is the leading global source of information and analysis on internal displacement worldwide. Established in 1998, IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

1.1 million protracted IDPs from the sectarian conflict of 2006-2008;

Three million IDPs displaced from January 2014 to May to September 2015, particularly during the period following the ISIL incursion.

Iraq has one of the highest IDP populations in the world, with only countries like Syria and Colombia ahead of it. However, it is quite likely that figures are higher than those reported through the IDMC mechanisms due to the waves of displacement since the 1970s which complicates accurate monitoring of where IDPs are and when or if they have returned home.

According to IDMC monitoring reports, which draws from a broad range of sources, the most affected governorates in Iraq have been in the north and west, including those bordering the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), such as Anbar, Salah Al Din, Diyala, Kirkuk and Ninawa. The pace and scope of displacement has placed the KRI under significant pressure as the numbers of IDPs threaten to overwhelm host communities. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), as of October 2014, the KRI was hosting approximately 48 per cent of all IDPs,⁸ with the remainder spread out through the rest of Iraq and almost 20 per cent in Anbar governorate.⁹ There have also been reports from UN institutions of increasing and secondary displacements to and from southern governorates.

Generally, the security situation has become a growing concern following the events of 2014 and the ensuing military response to the ISIL threat inevitably contributes to the challenges facing Iraqi citizens, increasing the flow of IDPs away from areas of fighting and adding to the protection needs in terms of suitable services for families, such as accommodation, food security, health especially psychosocial support, education for all age groups, energy, water, etc. People have fled their homes and communities with whatever they can carry and the violence has either slowed or completely interrupted and destroyed trade, businesses, transport and basic government services.

According to UNHCR,¹⁰ displaced people in Iraq are finding their limited financial resources quickly depleted by the increasing cost in accommodation and food. While child protection, education and prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence are core funding activities for humanitarian organisations, the impact of the emergency on IDP families and children is devastating, leading to increased vulnerabilities in all areas.

Economic situation

A quarter of a century ago, Iraq was widely regarded as the most developed country in the Middle East with people coming from across the region seeking the best in university education and health care. At that time, Iraq ranked toward the top on virtually every indicator of human well-being, including infant mortality, school enrolment, family food consumption, wage levels and rates of employment. The World Bank classified Iraq as an upper-middle-income country.¹¹ Since then, Iraq has been the only Middle Eastern country whose living standard has not improved. Years of political repression, wars, embargo and instability have undermined social well-being and imposed tragic suffering across the entire social spectrum. Iraq's human development indicators that once ranked at the top have now dropped toward the bottom. In areas such as secondary-school enrolment and child immunisation, Iraq now ranks lower than some of the poorest countries in the world.

⁸ *Response to the IDP Crisis in Iraq*, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XI, December 2014, IOM.

⁹ *Response to the IDP Crisis in Iraq*, Displacement Tracking Matrix, Report III of Round VI, October 2014, IOM; *Heavy toll in Iraq's 'forgotten' Anbar*, IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, 6 October 2014; *Iraq IDP Crisis Situation Report No. 14*, 26 September-3 October 2014, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

¹⁰ *UNHCR Global Appeal 2015 Update – Iraq*, UNHCR, 1 December 2014.

¹¹ Press release for the *Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey*, World Bank, January 2009.

Impact of war and insecurity

Iraq's largely state-run economy has been heavily affected by its turbulent past, leading to heavy financial losses and significant borrowing in the 1980s. It is almost exclusively dependent on oil with the sector providing around 90 per cent of government revenues and almost 80 per cent of foreign exchange earnings in more recent times.¹² From mid-2009 onwards, as global oil prices increased, so did government revenues and as the security situation initially stabilised around the same period, foreign investment also increased to support economic improvements in the energy, construction and transport sectors. However, it proved difficult for the government to translate macroeconomic gains into improvements of standards of living for many Iraqi citizens. Interestingly, while the oil sector is central to Iraq's economy, it creates very few jobs and most working age people seek opportunities either in the private or informal sectors.¹³

Furthermore, Iraq's reliance on the oil sector meant that it has been heavily affected by the significant fall in oil prices in 2014-2015 and the volume of its exports has reduced proportionately. Coming on the heels of a major military campaign against ISIL, this has created serious economic challenges for the government and its budget passed in January 2015 reflected this with a 16 per cent cut that impacted on all ministries. With oil prices continuing to fall, it seems quite possible that the projected deficit could be even greater than foreseen.

War and austerity are exacting a huge cost from the Iraqi economy. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Middle East and North African region has continued to experience weak economic growth since 2010. Launching its Regional Economic Outlook report in October 2014, IMF Middle East Department Director Mr Masood Ahmed stated: "Intensifying security problems, including from the deepening conflicts in Iraq and Syria, pose downside risks to the outlook. The regional economic impact has been limited so far, but an estimated 11 million of displaced persons are already putting pressure on budgets, labour markets, and social cohesion in neighbouring countries. The region needs sustained, stronger and more inclusive growth to markedly reduce unemployment – a critical issue facing nearly all countries in the region."¹⁴

Poverty

In 2007, the United Nation's Country Team (UNCT) in Iraq reported almost seven million Iraqis live in poverty, 23 per cent of the population at that time surviving on less than USD2.2 a day.¹⁵ However, the 2012 household survey revealed that this figure fell by about four percentage points between 2007 to 2012 to 18.9 per cent.¹⁶ Nevertheless, there are extreme variations in poverty levels between governorates and the KRI, for example, in Baghdad there was very little change, while it declined slightly in the KRI. There were also strong differences between urban and rural areas with a figure of 30.7 per cent in rural areas compared to 13.5 per cent in urban settings. Poverty increased sharply in five governorates: Nineveh in the north and Qadisiya, Thi Qar, Missan and Muthana in the south. While the impact of the ISIL incursion in Iraq in 2014 on the incidence of poverty has not yet been fully documented, particularly with the significant increase of IDPs, it seems nevertheless inevitable that the situation will have worsened.

As part of the development of a strategy to address poverty in Iraq, the government first had to establish the poverty line on the basis of the Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey in 2007. This was set at IQD77,000 per month (USD66) and on the basis of this and the household survey, a poverty analysis was able to be completed and the first edition of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction (NSPR) was launched in 2009 with the following main projected outcomes for the affected population:¹⁷

¹² *Iraq's Economy Profile*, The World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency, USA, 2012-2014; *Iraq's Economy Past, Present and Future*, US Foreign Affairs Department, June 2003; *Iraq's Economy: An empty chest*, The Economist, March 2015; *Iraq's economy in tatters amid ISIL war*, Al Jazeera, November 2014; *Iraqi Kurdistan's battle with Baghdad over oil revenues*, BBC, April 2015.

¹³ *Iraq Labour Force*, Iraqi Research Foundation for Analysis and Development (IRFAD).

¹⁴ *Mideast sees fragile recovery amid conflicts and transitions*, IMF Survey Magazine: Countries and Regions, 27 October 2014.

¹⁵ *Iraq Facts and Figures*, UNCT Iraq, 2015.

¹⁶ *Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey, 2012*, COSIT, KRSO, Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, World Bank, yet to be published.

¹⁷ National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, First Edition, Republic of Iraq, High Committee for Poverty Reduction Policies, MOPDC, MOP-KRG, 2009.

higher incomes for the working poor;
improved health;
upgrading of education infrastructure and quality;
better living conditions;
effective social protection;
reduction in levels of inequality between women and men.

The NSPR complements the government's National Development Plan (NDP) for 2010-2014, an ambitious medium-term development strategy, developed with World Bank support.¹⁸ The economic section of the NDP aimed, among others, to:

generate 3 to 4.5 million new jobs;
diversify the economy away from oil and into agriculture, industrial sectors and tourism;
create a stronger role for the private sector, both in terms of investment and job opportunities;
reduce poverty rates by focusing on comprehensive rural development and providing basic services such as education and healthcare, particularly for vulnerable groups such as youth and women.

The strategy also aimed at strengthening the role of local government to bring service delivery and economic development closer to the people. The NDP has recently been revised to establish a forward-looking development programme for Iraq from 2015 to 2019 aiming to build on the key components of the previous plan, including empowerment, equal opportunity and decent work. The revised plan also focuses in on the challenge of the urban-rural divide, building more inclusive development and economic diversification.

Unemployment and labour force participation

Unemployment figures in Iraq vary considerably depending on different information sources. However, an article by BasNews on 4 March 2015 reported a statement by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Mr Mohammed Shayaa al-Sudani that the unemployment rate had exceeded 25 per cent,¹⁹ a significant increase from the rate of 16 per cent reported by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in July 2014 and a further indication of the rapidly deteriorating economy and labour market. In addition, it was reported that unemployment in the KRI had increased from seven per cent at the end of 2013 to 10 per cent by September 2014.²⁰ While these figures are not disaggregated, it was reported in 2009 that youth unemployment had reached 30 per cent – double the national average at that time.²¹

The economy is unable to provide enough jobs for the hundreds of thousands of young Iraqis who enter the job market each year, with only 14.7 per cent of the adult female population participating in the labour force.²² According to the Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey of 2007, labour force participation rises with level of education and only 24.2 per cent of illiterate persons aged 15 or above participate in the labour force, compared with 92.6 per cent participation among those with a higher degree.²³ The same survey found that, at that time, almost 46 per cent of employed adults worked in jobs covered by pensions and social security. Much of the formal employment, over 40 per cent, in Iraq is concentrated in the public sector.

18 Country Partnership Strategy for the Republic of Iraq, 2013-2016, World Bank, November 2012.

19 Unemployment rate passes 25 per cent, BasNews, Iraq Business News, 4 March 2015.

20 Unemployment increases in Kurdistan region, BasNews, Iraq Business News, 12 September 2014.

21 Iraq Labour Force Analysis 2003-2008, Inter-Agency IAU, 2009, United Nations Country Team Iraq, Key Facts & Figures.

22 Iraq Facts and Figures, UNCT Iraq, 2015.

23 Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey, COSIT, KRSO, Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, World Bank, 2007.

Public sector reform

A recent study by the World Bank, ²⁴ calling for urgent reform of the public sector, highlights a number of ongoing challenges for the Iraqi economy, including

;the need for economic diversification

;the continued existence of pervasive corruption and weak accountability mechanisms

;an entrenched rural-urban divide

.the impact of ongoing conflict

The study found that wages and compensation account for around one-third of public spending, with around 40 per cent of this amount going to security through the Ministries of Interior and Defence which also impacts on service provision in key areas, particularly health and housing. With around 40 government ministries, Iraq suffers from “administrative bloat” that adds to the public sector costs. The study also identified major weaknesses in the public distribution system that includes the social safety net and subsidies, finding that there is a lack of meaningful beneficiary targeting of subsidies, that these “are also inefficient in terms of impact for beneficiaries and that the system is subject to “corruption and mismanagement

Some of these concerns are embedded in the outdated procurement law which lays the system open to mismanagement. In addition, there are serious concerns over the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, particularly at governorate and local, and the lack of private sector development. The study also found there to be a severe mismatch between strategic development documents, such as the NDP and the NSPR, and reality on the ground. According to the World Bank, while these documents exist, they are not being effectively implemented

Education and literacy

Although the 2005 constitution guarantees the right to free education for all, with primary education being compulsory, the last two decades of war and conflict have also had a devastating impact on Iraq’s education system, affecting access and quality in equal measure. Once a beacon of development for the MENA region, boasting high enrolment and completion rates, increasing access for girls and strongly improving literacy rates, the two Gulf wars and continued internal security challenges have resulted in a dismantling of education infrastructure and erosion of previously impressive education statistics

In 2003, the United Nations and the World Bank conducted a Joint Needs Assessment (JNA) for Iraq’s reconstruction that concluded that Iraq would have to rehabilitate up to 80 per cent of primary and secondary schools. As well as physical infrastructure, other issues to be addressed included out-dated curricula, obsolete pedagogical skills and lack of policy and departmental management skills within the Ministry of Education.²⁵ At that time, secondary education had the worst enrolment rates in the region and of those students who sat for their graduating exams, less than 38 per cent received a passing grade. In addition, the JNA highlighted the important contribution that the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector could make to Iraq’s economic recovery but this would also require significant investment to improve access and quality.

Education enrolment

As in other sectors, education data in Iraq can vary considerably according to different sources. The most recent statistics of the Central Organisation for Statistics and Information Technology (COSIT) indicate that the net enrolment rate of primary school (6 to 11-years-old) for the 2013-2014 academic year was 96 per cent for boys and 94 per cent for girls, an overall average of 95 per cent. This is a marked improvement against figures from the 2011 MICS which

²⁴ Republic of Iraq, Public Expenditure Review: Toward more efficient spending for better service delivery, World Bank Group, 2014.

²⁵ UNESCO Educational Support Strategy, Republic of Iraq, 2010-2014, UNESCO Iraq Office.

indicated an overall primary school enrolment of 84 per cent.²⁶ While the MICS found there to be little difference between enrolment rates of girls and boys, there were significant differences regionally, particularly between KRI where rates climb above 90 per cent and some southern governorates, such as Misan which falls as low as 65 per cent

The MICS also identified positive correlation between primary enrolment and mother's education and socio-economic status. For children aged 6 whose mothers have at least secondary school education, 89 per cent were attending first grade primary, compared to 72 per cent for children whose mothers have no education. In addition, in more affluent households, the proportion is around 91 per cent, while it is 73 per cent among children living in the poorest households. Generally, the MICS found that primary school attendance increased with age and on average 90 per cent of children of primary school age were attending school. The survival rate of children entering primary school in grade 1 and staying until completion in grade 6, including grade repetition, is high at almost 97 per cent for boys and around 94 per cent for girls

The picture is quite different for intermediate and secondary education and enrolment rates drop off sharply for children aged 12 to 17. According to data from COSIT, rates at this level for the 2013-2014 academic year were 38 per cent for boys and 35 per cent for girls, an overall average of 37 per cent. Alarming low, these figures show a decline in enrolment at this education level since the MICS 2011 survey which revealed that 49 per cent of children of secondary school age were attending secondary school.²⁷ Out of the remaining 51 per cent, 14 per cent, one in seven, were attending primary school when they should have been in secondary and the remaining 38 per cent were not in school at all

Once again, there are significant differences between regions, with much higher enrolment rates recorded in KRI, and between urban and rural areas. In terms of gender disparities, only 45 per cent of girls attend secondary school compared to 52 per cent of boys. Even more than in the case of primary education, there is a clear association between mothers' education and household wealth and secondary school attendance. Only 38 per cent of children with uneducated mothers attend secondary school compared to 73 per cent for children whose mothers' education is secondary or higher. Attendance also increased from 25 per cent in the poorest households to 75 per cent in the more affluent. The large numbers of IDP children in Iraq also affects school enrolment as families face various administrative and logistical challenges in enrolling their children due to lack of relevant documentation to facilitate school transfers or 28. because of weak coordination within the Ministry of Education

In 2011, only four per cent of children aged 36 to 59 months were attending pre-school in Iraq, with significant differences in early childhood education and learning between urban and rural areas and regions.²⁹ The numbers increase slightly in urban areas to five per cent, but drop significantly to one per cent in rural areas, and attendance in pre-school is higher in the area of the KRI. The MICS programme has also developed an Early Childhood Development Index which highlights considerable challenges in the domain of literacy-numeracy in Iraq, showing that on average, among girls and boys, only 18 per cent of children are on track in terms of childhood development in this field. This early indicator points to similar problems of illiteracy among the adult population

Illiteracy

Historically, Iraq has had high literacy rates with a comprehensive literacy campaign in the 1970s and 1980s helping bring down the illiteracy rate to 20 percent in 1987.³⁰ However, since that time, many adult and non-formal education

26 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Iraq, Final Report, 2011, Central Statistics Organisation (CSO), Kurdistan Regional Statistics Office (KRSO), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH). Financial and technical support was provided by UNICEF and the Iraq Trust Fund. MICS is an international household survey programme developed by UNICEF and provides up-to-date information on the situation of women and children and measures key indicators that allow countries to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed commitments. Additional information on the global MICS project may be obtained from www.childinfo.org. In this citation, the figure of 84 per cent measures those children aged 6 who are attending the first grade of primary school.

27 Ibid.

28 UNESCO Educational Support Strategy, Republic of Iraq, 2010-2014, UNESCO Iraq Office.

29 Ibid.

30 Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey, COSIT, KRSO, Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, World Bank, 2007.

programmes have stopped and illiteracy has become widespread. It is estimated that one in five Iraqis, aged 10 to 49, cannot read or write.³¹ There are large disparities in literacy rates across gender, age and urban versus rural areas. The MICS 2011 study focused on women aged 15 to 24 and found that in total across the country 31 per cent of this population was illiterate. This increased to 51 per cent for women in this age group in rural areas. According to the Iraq Household Socio-Economic Survey of 2007, 80.9 per cent of Iraqis over the age of 10 are literate, 88.4 per cent men and 73.6 per cent women. The survey also found that while women and men seem to have almost the same access to primary education, significant differences are remarked as early as intermediate school and particularly at secondary school level, with rural areas being disproportionately affected

Priority support areas for the education sector

In response to the significant challenges afflicting the education sector and in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, a National Literacy Law and Strategy were launched in 2011, along with a national campaign targeting 2.5 million beneficiaries by 2015. In addition, a National Education Strategy was launched in 2012, supported by UNESCO,³² the World Bank and UNICEF. These have been underpinned by consecutive United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) for Iraq for 2011-2014³³ and subsequently 2015-2019³⁴ which were harmonised with national development priorities. The most recent UNDAF aims to address some of the challenges that emerged from the previous version, in particular a stronger strategic focus, fewer and less ambitious targets and stronger leadership and management

:Chapter 2

Enabling Environment to Address Child Labour

The preceding chapter portrays an extremely challenging national socio-economic and political context in Iraq, each of which contributes significantly to a potentially fertile environment in which child labour can take root and thrive

The context of child labour

Child labour is a complex development issue to address as its causes are so disparate, rooted in poverty, lack of access to or poor quality of education, cultural and social norms, tradition and socio-economic and political instability. It involves children being forced, either by circumstance or coercion, to undertake work that damages them psychologically, physically and emotionally and deprives them of their childhood. It is work carried out to the detriment and endangerment of the child, in violation of international law and national legislation. In its worst forms, it includes activities that are mentally, physically or socially dangerous or morally harmful to children. It either deprives them of schooling or requires them to assume the dual burden of schooling and work. Child labour can involve work that enslaves children, separates them from their families, and condemns them and their families to a downward spiral of poverty and deprivation

Some of the major contributing factors include:

Poverty: Child labour is one of the most devastating consequences of persistent poverty. Children commonly contribute

31 Iraq Facts and Figures, UNCT Iraq, 2015.

32 National Education Support Strategy, UNESCO, 2010-2014.

33 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Iraq, 2011-2014.

34 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Iraq, 2015-2019.

around 20 to 25 per cent (one quarter) of family income in poor households. Since the bulk of family income is spent on food, it is clear that the contribution of working children is critical to their families' survival. In Iraq, the most recent estimates indicate that 18.9 per cent of the population, almost 6.5 million people, live below the poverty line and extreme poverty is widespread in rural areas and a number of governorates

Lack of access to or poor quality of education: Basic education in many countries is not always "free" and is not always available to all children. It is often impossible for poor families to cover the hidden costs of education, such as uniforms, school books and materials, transport and food. Consequently, they either do not send their children to school or only send some, with girls usually missing out. Where schools are available, the quality of education can be poor and the content not relevant to the everyday realities of poor children and their families. There is also evidence showing that children born to mothers with limited or no education themselves are at higher risk of not going to school and entering situations of child labour. In Iraq, literacy rates are still far from 100 per cent, especially for young women, and there are major concerns over enrolment rates for intermediate and secondary education. The UNICEF MICS4 results also showed that child labour among children born to uneducated mothers was nine per cent, dropping to five per cent to those with mothers who had completed secondary education

Traditional, social and cultural factors: Sometimes children may be obliged to support their parents' work, for example in the fields, in their jobs and in running the home. In such cases, children take on the burden of responsibility at an early age, unquestioned from generation to generation, reinforcing acceptance of harmful social practices

Specific vulnerabilities: Child labour is especially prevalent in the most vulnerable families – families whose low income allows them little margin to cope with the injury or illness of an adult or the disruption resulting from abandonment or divorce. In addition, the impact of crises, civil conflict, instability or natural disasters leading to large populations being displaced internally or externally – which has been particularly relevant to Iraq for many years – can be a push factor for children into work, providing for themselves, their siblings and families

Demand for child labour: A major reason for hiring children seems to be non-economic in that children may be considered easier to manage because they are less aware of their rights, less troublesome, more compliant, more trustworthy and less likely to absent themselves from work

Impact of child labour

Child labourers miss out on much of the vital period of childhood. Their work becomes an obstacle to their physical, emotional and social development. Because children differ from adults in their physiological and psychological make-up, they are also more susceptible to and more adversely affected than adults by specific work hazards. In addition, because they have not yet matured mentally, they are less aware of the potential risks in the work place. In addition, they are far more vulnerable in the work place than adults because their bodies are not yet fully formed. They experience poor physical health because the work they do exposes them to the risk of injury and illness. These effects can be immediate or have lifelong consequences and the effects of hazardous working conditions on children's health and development can be devastating. The hazards and risks to health may be compounded by poor access to health facilities and education, poor housing and sanitation, poor personal hygiene and a generally inadequate diet

Children are much more vulnerable than adults to physical, emotional and sexual abuse and suffer more devastating psychological damage from living and working in an environment in which they are denigrated, humiliated or oppressed. Child labourers frequently work in environments that are exploitative, dangerous, degrading and isolating and often suffer ill-treatment, abuse and neglect at the hands of their employers. As a consequence, children may find it difficult to form attachments and feelings for others. They may also have problems interacting and cooperating with others and attaining a real sense of identity and belonging. As a result, they may lack confidence and experience feelings of low self-esteem. Child labour, therefore, is a significant obstacle to children's development and future life prospects

35 Iraq Households Socio-Economic Survey II, 2012, CSO-World Bank, yet to be published. The poverty threshold was set at IQD105,500 (around USD92) per month.

Child labour in Iraq

According to the 2011 MICS for Iraq, around six per cent of children aged 5 to 14 are involved in child labour. There are variations based on geographical location and whether in urban or rural settings. The average drops to five per cent for urban settings and increases to 10 per cent in rural areas. The minimum age of employment (in Iraq is 15. Interestingly, the numbers drop considerably to two per cent in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI

The results of the MICS 2011 also showed that child labour among children born to uneducated mothers rises to nine per cent, whereas this drops to five per cent for those born to mothers who have completed secondary education. A high percentage of children, 12 per cent, work in family businesses. Most child labourers, almost 73 per cent on average in Iraq, also go to school

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the MICS report only measures child labour incidence of children aged between 5 to 14 based on a national minimum age of employment of 15. However, with reference to significant statistical analysis by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC),³⁶ it is important to keep in mind that this rate of incidence does not take into account "hazardous work" of juveniles aged 15 to 17 and therefore of legal working age. "Hazardous work" is a worst form of child labour and, according to the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), children in "hazardous work" are of particular concern.³⁷ ILO-IPEC explains that too few policies or programmes are geared to the special needs of children who perform hazardous work, yet there are good reasons why this worst form of child labour requires urgent attention. Current estimates place the number of children in hazardous work at 115 million and an increase of 20 per cent in the incidence of hazardous among children aged 15 to 17 was recorded in the period 2004-2008.³⁸ In addition, there is growing evidence from data from industrialised countries that adolescents suffer high rates of injury at work in comparison with adult workers

In light of the high prevalence of hazardous work among juvenile workers, it can be assumed that the child labour figures for Iraq are higher than indicated in the 2011 MICS report.

Legal framework

International conventions

In the context of child labour elimination and prevention, the international legal framework refers to conventions and other international treaties that seek to protect children from exploitation and abuse and ensure their access to fundamental rights, including education. A key element of the work of the international community, particularly through the UN specialised agencies, is to set out a road map for the protection of and respect for human rights. This road map comprises a wide range of conventions and treaties that, once ratified by a member State, will guide and support the development of relevant national legislation in that country. These international instruments help governments, the social partners and civil society to ensure that an appropriate enabling environment exists to protect and respect human rights.

There are three main instruments that underpin national efforts to prevent and eliminate child labour: the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment (1973) and the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999). Any country wishing to take effective action to combat child labour will need to have ratified these three instruments and to ensure that an adequate national legal framework is in place. Further details of these can be found in annex 1.

36 The Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) is the statistical unit of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), assisting countries in the collection, documentation, processing and analysis of child labour relevant data:

www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/lang--en/index.htm

37 Children in Hazardous Work: What we know, What we need to know, ILO, 2011.

38 Marking progress against child labour, Global estimates and trends 2000-2012, ILO, 2013.

National commitments

Iraq ratified the Child Rights Convention (CRC) in 1994 and ILO Conventions No. 138 in 1985 and No. 182 in 2001. Article 29 of the Iraqi Constitution protects against the exploitation of children and guarantees that the State will take the required steps to protect them. Other constitutional articles provide for the social protection of children, free access to education (primary education is obligatory) and health services and to socio-economic well-being and freedom. The state also commits itself to the eradication of illiteracy. Of particular relevance to this rapid assessment is Article 37 that prohibits forced labour, slavery, trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.

Labour legislation

Iraqi Labour Law and its amendments over the years are quite comprehensive on the issue of child labour, on paper at least. It sets the minimum age of employment at 15. Children aged between 15 and 18 may work if it is considered “suitable” which allows for some level of monitoring of “hazardous work” for children below the age of 18. In addition, this age group may only work a maximum seven hours a day with a rest period of one hour after four consecutive hours of work. Workers between 15 and 18 are also required to undergo a pre-employment medical examination and are entitled to 30 days paid vacation per year.

In addition, employers must maintain a register of names, ages and work activities of employees under 18, post a copy of the labour provisions protecting children in the work place and keep medical fitness certificates of minors on file. However, the law excludes young workers between 15 and 18 who are employed in family enterprises from most of these provisions. An instruction issued in 1987 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs presents a list of “hazardous” occupations in which juvenile workers may not be employed. The list is detailed and focuses on specific types of employment in a number of industrial sectors, including agriculture and the use of pesticides for example.

Employers violating these provisions affecting children and youth may be penalised by fines or imprisonment. In addition, the law prohibits the worst forms of child labour. Promoting, assisting or benefiting from the aforementioned forms of child labour is prohibited. In cases where employers are found to be employing an underage worker, there is an additional provision, after the child has been withdrawn and the employer fined or imprisoned, in which the employer must also ensure that the child receives full payment of wages during the violation period and compensation for any work-related accidents during that time. However, it should be noted that the level of fines is very low and should be increased to offer an effective deterrent to hiring children or putting those above the minimum age of employment into situations of hazardous work.

Other sections within the Labour Law provide for additional measures that protect all workers, including those aged between 15 and 18, for example, in the field of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), ensuring that workers are provided with appropriate safety equipment and training, that risks are addressed and minimised and that first aid equipment is available. Furthermore, work places that violate these provisions can be closed down by labour inspectors. In the case of work-related accidents, the employer carries financial obligations towards workers even if they are not insured. Labour inspection is overseen by labour inspection committees which include key labour market partners: MOLSA labour inspectors and officials, the social partners, medical professionals for issues relating to OSH and worker representatives trained in OSH.

Education and vocational training

The Law of Compulsory Education (1976) also contributes to the national legislative framework to address child labour. The law places an obligation on a child’s parents or guardian to enrol the child in primary school from the age of 6 and to ensure that the child attends school either until the age of 15 or completing primary school (six grades). Failure to meet with these legal obligations could result in fines or even prison sentences.

However, as mentioned below, it will be crucial for the Iraqi government in seeking to address child labour on the basis of a comprehensive legislative framework to align all legislation relevant to the protection and well-being of children to the 2005 Constitution. Key among future changes should be increasing the age of compulsory education to be the same as that of the minimum age of employment. Failure to do so creates a potential situation in which children aged 12, 13 or 14

may have completed compulsory primary education but not yet be of the minimum age required to enter employment. In such circumstances, particularly for poor and marginalised families, it is highly likely that these children will work creating larger populations of child labourers. Policy and legislative coherence and alignment are key in creating a robust platform to tackle child labour.

Vocational training is provided for in the Labour Law and is open to all those aged from 15 to 50. However, entrants should have obtained their primary school certificate or equivalent. Some vocational courses allow exceptions to this rule providing the applicant enrolls in a literacy programme. Vocational training courses are not free and special payment arrangements can be made to accommodate payment modalities.

Law enforcement

The Iraqi government has in place several institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations relevant to addressing child labour.³⁹ The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) coordinates this enforcement through its Child Labour Unit established in 2004 within the Directorate of Labour and Vocational Training. Two to three labour inspectors per governorate are assigned to investigate child labour cases as well as other labour law violations. In 2012, the most recent period for which data is available, MOLSA reported that 88 businesses had been shut down for child labour violations. In addition, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) cooperates closely with MOLSA to enforce criminal laws relevant to the worst forms of child labour.

The CLU initiated efforts to conduct a needs assessment on child labour together with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the MOI, but was unable to complete due to weak capacity. In 2009, an order by the Council of Ministers established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Child Labour to coordinate overall government efforts to address the issue. The committee was chaired by MOLSA and members were drawn from the MOE, MOI, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. The MOI is also responsible for addressing the issue of trafficking in Iraq, yet faces a significant number of security-related priorities to address simultaneously creating significant implementation and follow-up challenges. Furthermore, MOLSA and MOI coordinate the implementation of measures for removing and rehabilitating street children through the Joint Committee on Street Children. The level of activity of these joint government bodies remains limited.

The Child Welfare Commission (CWC) in Iraq is responsible for advice on legislation, policy development and promotion of programmes on child protection. Chaired by MOLSA, the CWC includes representatives of 12 ministries in total: Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, of Planning, of Interior, of Education, of Justice, of Health, of Environment, of Foreign Affairs, of Human Rights, of Youth and Sport, of Women's Affairs and of Culture. It is developing a national child protection policy which aims, as one of its priorities, at addressing child labour. This policy will be vital in establishing an effective national child protection system that should include a referral, rehabilitation and reintegration mechanism for child labourers.

While the national legislative framework seems comprehensive in terms of ensuring protection of children, there would appear to be significant scope to strengthen this enabling environment in line with the 2005 Constitution. In addition, given the relatively important incidence of child labour as identified by the 2011 MICS, combined with the multiple socio-economic, political and security challenges facing Iraq today, it is inevitable that regular application and monitoring of legal provisions is severely compromised and that the actual child labour statistics are higher than previously stated. Only a comprehensive national child labour survey – again difficult in the context of today's realities in Iraq – would provide accurate and reliable data on the extent of the phenomenon. The foundations of a plan of action to address child labour are in place. The challenge is to bring all the elements together in a coherent whole and develop the knowledge base that will inform an effective and efficient programme of action in Iraq.

³⁹ Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 2013, United States Department of Labor's (USDOL) Bureau of International Labour Affairs.

:Chapter 3

Methodology for Rapid Assessment

The Iraqi government has expressed deep concern over the growing numbers in recent years of working children, particularly those in the worst forms of child labour. Having ratified the relevant international instruments, the government is taking action to better understand the scale and scope of this social phenomenon, its causes and consequences in order to formulate effective and lasting interventions to address it. As a result and in collaboration with UNICEF, it was decided to commission a rapid assessment of the worst forms of child labour in five governorates, 2014-2015, by the Iraqi Al-Amal Association (IAA), in coordination with Ministry of Planning (MOP) and MOLSA. It was felt that a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach should underpin efforts to tackle child labour that, in turn, needed to be informed through a more detailed assessment. The methodology of this assessment is presented below and is largely drawn from the joint UNICEF-ILO Manual on Child Labour Rapid Assessment Methodology.⁴⁰

Objectives and scope of work

The main objectives of the rapid assessment were as follows:

To identify the worst forms of child labour, as defined by international conventions, that prevail in Iraq.

To identify the main causes and consequences of the worst forms of child labour on children, families and communities.

To identify appropriate recommendations for interventions to address the phenomenon and to strengthen protection and prevention in future.

To facilitate the development of a strategic plan of action to tackle the worst forms of child labour by the Iraqi government, in collaboration with relevant international organisations, such as UNICEF.

Key criteria underpinning the identification of governorates and worst forms of child labour to be assessed included:

That it should conform to the criteria of ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

That it affects the child's future, especially education, health and morals.

That it is prevalent in the selected geographical area and is considered a social phenomenon that can be observed.

That the research team can access a sample population of working children without compromising the security and safety of themselves, the children and their families.

Assessment methodology

As mentioned, the assessment process was based on the ILO-UNICEF rapid assessment methodology which was developed to better understand the phenomenon and its context, in particular

⁴⁰ Manual on Child Labour Rapid Assessment Methodology, Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC), ILO-UNICEF, 2005

- To find out more about working children themselves;
- To learn more about the work they perform;
- To discover the context in which they do this work;
- To learn more about how and why they came to this work.

Statistically household-based surveys are very useful for producing comprehensive data relating to working children. But they do not provide enough detail regarding the daily lives and problems of working boys and girls or other kinds of qualitative information. It is now widely accepted that a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches best lead to an understanding of child labour; these methodologies complement one another in interpreting a complex reality. This understanding can lead to more successful programme and project formulation or other kinds of intervention. Qualitative methods are especially useful concerning the more “hidden” forms of child labour, especially worst forms, where formal quantitative methods may be difficult to use and where intensive informal investigations may prove more fruitful

The rapid assessment approach has been extensively used to obtain qualitative data on worst forms of child labour around the world and uses the following approaches or mix of approaches

- Prior to fieldwork, the research team collects and analyses existing information on the enabling environment of child labour in the country and the immediate areas of investigation, including legislative and policy frameworks, the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, etc. This is extended to cover the physical and social elements of the geographical area(s) to be investigated. This helps understand the layout of the area where children live and work.
- Observation plays a significant role in qualitative assessments in which field researchers visit areas where children work and document visual information on work activities and places. These visits, combined with the initial situation analysis, also help in identifying key informant groups for later interviews and focus group discussions.
- The methodology also includes household door-to-door survey where this is relevant and possible (which was not the case in Iraq).
- As mentioned above, focus group discussions, involving key informants, children and adults, are an important mechanism for qualitative assessments.

A significant method for obtaining information is through individual interviews and conversations with a range of informants including, for example, working children, parents, employers, teachers, local authorities, community leaders and non-working children.

Assessment population and sampling design

The geographical focus of the assessment was discussed between national, local partners and UNICEF prior to commencing the activity. As mentioned earlier, there has been significant erosion of the socio-economic, cultural and political fabric of Iraqi society over the years, particularly since 2003. This deterioration and increased instability has affected cities and governorates throughout the country and been a key driver of the child labour phenomenon. The issue of internal population displacements has played a considerable role in this development as families have been obliged to move from one governorate to another, impacting on the diverse cultural nature and demographics of Iraq. In addition, it has led to situations of over-population in those areas that have received displaced people, further undermining public service capacity, such as education and health, increasing unemployment and contributing to the emergence and expansion of ghetto and slum areas

Therefore, assessment areas were selected on the basis of ensuring representation across the country and where there is increased incidence of worst forms of child labour and the factors contributing to it. In this context, five governorates were selected: Baghdad, Dhi Qar, Basrah, Kirkuk and Najaf. An analysis of the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of these governorates is included in annex 2. Initially, it was agreed that the study sample should consist of 250 children distributed equally among the five governorates. Distribution would also be made according to the worst forms of child labour and trying to establish a balance of representation of different forms. In addition, there would be family and key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The initial sample population breakdown can be found in the table below.

Initial assessment sample breakdown

Governorate	Child interviews sample	Family interview sample	Key informant interview sample	Focus group discussion sample	Total
Baghdad	50	10	5	2 (male + female)	67
Najaf	50	10	5	2 (male + female)	67
Basra	50	10	5	2 (male + female)	67
Kirkuk	50	10	5	2 (male + female)	67
Dhi Qar	50	10	5	2 (male + female)	67
Total	250	50	25	10	335

IAA reviewed the main worst forms of child labour in each selected governorate and the results are captured in the table below. The reference to “industrial workshops” covers a wide range of activities, including metal smelting, iron works, etc. National partners and UNICEF had hoped to be able to examine the issue of recruitment of children into armed forces and groups, a significant problem in Iraq, but little is known of its scale and scope. The rapid assessment could have provided an opportunity to examine this challenge more closely and provide much needed information to guide the design of effective and lasting interventions. However, in discussions with field teams and based on the realities on the ground, particularly as regards security and safety of research teams and their own families and networks, it became apparent that the dangers of investigating this particular form of child exploitation were too great. It remains a major concern of national and international partners but will require further consideration and discussion to explore ways to investigate the issue without endangering those involved – not only researchers, but also the children themselves and their families and friends.

List of worst forms of child labour identified in each of the selected governorates

Baghdad	Kirkuk	Najaf	Dhi Qar	Basra
Brick factories	Prostitution (commercial sexual exploitation)	Working inside cemeteries	Begging/commercial sexual exploitation	Street vending
Recruitment into armed groups and forces	Begging	Scavenging (waste recycling)	Industrial workshops	Begging
Scavenging (waste recycling)	Industrial workshops	Brick factories	Brick factories	Scavenging (waste recycling)
Commercial sexual exploitation	Street vending	Tailoring	Portering	Industrial workshops
Industrial workshops	Scavenging (waste recycling)	Fuel selling	Ice factories	Fuel selling
Drug dealing	Recruitment into armed groups and forces	Commercial sexual exploitation	Commercial sexual exploitation	Drug dealing
		Selling arms		Alcohol selling

Following these preparatory activities, a first training workshop was organised in Baghdad in March 2014 for the IAA's field and coordinating teams and relevant partners, including MOLSA labour inspectors, the MOP and the Human Rights Commission (HRC), to finalise outstanding sampling, questionnaire and related issues and to prepare for the first phase of implementation.

Capacity-building of IAA field and assessment teams

Baghdad, March 2014

The workshop brought together the IAA field research teams from the five selected governorates as well as the national office in Baghdad, the Child Labour Unit and governorate labour inspectors of MOLSA, the Commission for Human Rights and UNICEF. The programme examined all key components of a rapid assessment in a participatory manner to optimise the learning process, including conducting a pre-situation analysis, developing questionnaires, observation techniques, child interview techniques, focus group discussion management, etc. A key outcome was agreement on the specific worst forms of child labour to be investigated in each governorate as follows:

- Baghdad, children working in brick factories;
- Kirkuk, children in commercial sexual exploitation;
- Najaf, children working in cemeteries;
- Dhi Qar, begging (related to commercial sexual exploitation);
- Basra, street vending.

:The data collection methodology was made up of the following four main components

- Observing in areas where children work: Involving systematic observation of child workers and of various workplaces in the areas being researched, seeking visual information about relevant activities and conditions and taking note of numbers of children, activities, age groups, etc.
- Focus Group Discussions: Focus groups involving adults (parents) and children from the communities concerns with discussions considering values, social attitudes and practices, knowledge about child labour and its worst forms, etc. In the end, this did not prove possible in all areas.
- In-depth discussions with key informants: A full list of key informants can be found in annex 3.
- Individual interviews (random): These were selected from among working children of all ages in selected locations.

In addition, it was agreed that the sample size would be flexible given the challenges in investigating child labour, particularly in the security context. Field research teams would aim to interview as many children, families and key informants as possible within the data collection timeframe. Given the capacity challenges of this type of social research, compounded by the increasing difficult security situation in Iraq, it was agreed that it would be more effective to conduct the data collection in two phases, in the second and third quarters of 2014. However, following the incursion of ISIL in various governorates, the project was suspended until August/September 2014 before data collection activities could recommence.

Situation analysis and challenges

Based on initial observation visits and interviews, the IAA coordinating team was able to conduct a first review of outcomes and carry out its own observation missions to each of the governorates to prepare a comprehensive situation analysis to inform and enhance the final data collection period. This enabled the precise location of data collection to be identified and to have a clearer understanding of the impact of child labour on children, families and communities and to plan for the second phase of data collection.

These observation visits facilitated the identification of key informants in each governorate and interview details of child workers and their families. In addition, each field team examined issues that would affect the timing and location of interviews, particularly with children, and the possibility of conducting interviews with parents. These have been included in annex 4. Additional training was also provided to field researchers through IAA, in particular on interviewing children, focus group discussion management, listening skills and report preparation.

The follow-up to initial capacity-building suffered a series of delays for reasons relating to logistics, communications, coordination and security which affected the completion of the situation analysis and assessment approach for Iraq, the finalisation of the questionnaires for key informants, children and families, more robust progress in interviews and observations, and the development of the assessment database. These inevitably affected planning for the second capacity-building exercise and, as mentioned above, IAA was compelled to suspend all field research activities to ensure the safety and protection of the teams and their families on the ground. In addition, the security crisis affected UN personnel based in Baghdad resulting, among others, in the displacement of the UNICEF expert providing assistance in the database development.

As activities began to get back on track in August and September 2014, plans were made to organise a follow-up training workshop in Beirut, Lebanon, to overcome the security restrictions and to ensure optimum participation. The workshop included the MOLSA labour inspection teams from the five governorates to reinforce links and support between the MOLSA administration and the IAA field research teams to overcome some of the challenges being faced in data collection.

Beirut, Lebanon, September 2014

The main objective of the second workshop was to consolidate the learning experiences of the field research teams and the first phases of data collection on the ground. The aim was to address outstanding concerns and challenges facing research teams on the ground, further reinforcing capacity and thereby enabling a plan of action for the final phase of data collection to be developed. In addition, there were discussions on preparations for the final report. During the workshop, separate meetings of the “Task Force on Child Labour” took place to prepare for the next steps of translating the findings of the assessment into a clear plan of action, including advocacy for policy development. Members included MOLSA, MOP, the HRC, IAA, academia and UNICEF. This was particularly important in the context of preparations of the new national child protection policy.

The workshop provided a unique and important opportunity to field teams, IAA coordinators, governorate labour inspectors, representatives of the HRC and UNICEF to discuss challenges and issues specific to each governorate, share and identify solutions to these. These governorate exchanges provided invaluable additional qualitative information for the rapid assessment and summaries are included as annex 5.

In addition, as part of the final phase of data collection, it was agreed that field teams would also try to incorporate IDP populations in the five governorates as these were growing rapidly due to increased security issues. There had also been some difficulties with questionnaires and interviews largely relating to capacity and workshop discussions focused considerable attention on clarifying this area of research for field teams, as well as finalising the database design and content of the rapid assessment to be published

Chapter 4: Main Rapid Assessment Findings

4.1 General characteristics of interviewed children

As can be seen from table 4.1, among the sample population children, the 15 to 17-year-old age group is the largest. However, during interviews, many of these children stated that they had been working prior to the age of 15.

In Basra, the 12 to 14-year-old age group represents the highest percentage of working children in this location (29 per cent), followed by the 5 to 11-year-old age group (10 per cent). The majority of these children come from families that have been displaced due to the security and economic situation in Iraq.

Table 4.1: Distribution of children by geographical location, age group and gender

Governorate/Type of work	Gender	Number of children by age group			Total
		5-11	12-14	15-17	
Baghdad: Children working in brick factories	Boys	3	6	10	19
	Girls	4	5	7	16
	Subtotal	7	11	17	35
Najaf: Children working in cemeteries	Boys	5	16	20	41
	Girls	0	2	0	2
	Subtotal	5	18	20	43
Basra: Child beggars	Boys	13	22	14	49
	Girls	6	-	1	7
	Subtotal	19	22	15	56
Kirkuk: Children in commercial sexual exploitation	Boys	-	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	17	17
	Subtotal	-	-	17	17
Nasiriya: Child beggars/sexual exploitation	Boys	5	7	5	17
	Girls	3	2	1	6
	Subtotal	8	9	6	23
Total number of children in all governorates	Total boys	28	55	46	129
	Total girls	11	9	25	45
	Total children	39	64	71	174

The percentage of working boys, 76 per cent, is significantly higher than that of working girls, 24 per cent. The reason, according to statements by children during interviews, is that typically boys considered themselves responsible for the family, jointly with the father, and that in the absence of the father, they regarded themselves as the “man of the house”, even if mothers or older sisters were present. Hence, boys may work to provide an additional income for the family, and are considered to be “in charge of” family affairs in situations in which the father may not be able to support the family, such as illness, disability or death.

The highest incidence of boys’ work occurred in Basra and Najaf governorates.⁴¹ In the factories’ area in Baghdad, children of both genders work and there are no cultural hindrances to girls working because most members of the family work and live in these factories.

The highest incidence, 100 per cent, of girls’ work is in Kirkuk. All of them are involved in commercial sexual exploitation. Indeed, as confirmed during interviews, given their high level of vulnerability and limited awareness, girls are the most exploited by this form of work which mostly takes place in secret.

4.2 Household characteristics and living conditions

A key element of the methodology of the rapid assessment was to collect qualitative data on the situation of children working in worst forms of child labour in the five governorates. Part of this process involved meeting and interviewing families to obtain a much more in-depth understanding of background and situation that might give further evidence of the “push and pull” factors for child labour. While considerable numbers of interviews were carried out and rich information collected and represented in the tables and descriptions below, it is not possible to reflect the results of all interviews in this assessment. Therefore, three comprehensive case studies of families of child labourers from Baghdad, Najaf and Nasiriya are included in annex 6.

4.2.1 Families in which children live

Most of the children in the study live with their core family, with the exception of children involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Kirkuk. Most of the girls in these cases live separated from their families, if they still have family, and in .(brothels. (See table 4.2

Table 4.2: Family situation

Living situation	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Children living with their families	94%	93%	98%	12%	91%
Children living with other relatives	3%	2%	-	-	4%
Children not living with their families, but at the workplace	3%	5%	2%	88%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁴¹ In the cemetery setting, many girls do similar work to boys, such as selling rose water and incense. However, girls tend to linger close to the cemetery gates due to the presence of police and security forces which provide some protection for them. For the purpose of the research, this posed an obstacle in conducting interviews with these girls.

As indicated in table 4.3, two-thirds of the children in Kirkuk and one-third of the children in Nasiriya have lost either one or both of their parents

Table 4.3: Presence of parents in the lives of working children

Governorate	Presence of parents in the lives of working children				
	Both parents alive	Deceased father	Deceased mother	Both parents deceased	Total
Baghdad	100%	-	-	-	100%
Basra	96%	4%	-	-	100%
Najaf	95%	5%	-	-	100%
Kirkuk	35%	29%	12%	24%	100%
Nasiriya	70%	13%	9%	8%	100%

4.2.2 Housing

The diversity of children's family situations and workplace characteristics is reflected in the housing arrangements of their respective households. (See table 4.4).

In Baghdad, most of the children interviewed live in the work environment, with many factories providing accommodation for families in return for labour.

In Kirkuk, most girls live in pimps' houses. Nearly one girl out of every four was in prison at the time of the interview, arrested for prostitution charges, while the remaining girls lived in a camp or rented house.

In Najaf, nearly half of the children live on the family property. In Basra, almost 50 per cent of the children live in shacks ("hawasim"),⁴² whereas in Nasiriya, where many children have lost one or both of their parents, one out of six children do not live in their family home but with relatives or other people.

Table 4.4: Housing arrangement of the household in which children live

Governorate	Percentage of children by governorate						Total
	Property	Shack	Rent	Lives with relatives	Lives in the work place	Other	
Baghdad	3%	-	-	-	91%	6%	100%
Najaf	46%	33%	21%	-	-	-	100%
Basra	29%	46%	23%	-	-	2%	100%
Kirkuk	-	-	11.5%	-	65%	23.5%	100%
Nasiriya	23%	27%	32%	14%	-	4%	100%

In all governorates, children share a room with at least one other member of the household. The number of rooms in the house ranged from one to more than four. In Baghdad and Basra, two rooms was the predominant setting. In Najaf and Kirkuk, it was three rooms. Most of these houses include kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and living room used for sleeping, eating and relaxing. The lack of privacy may negatively affect children when there are domestic problems of any kind.

⁴² "Hawasim" are houses built without registration in the estate records. They became widespread in all Iraqi governorates after 2003 because of the dire housing crisis across the country, as well as high rents or housing costs. Most of these houses are of a low standard of construction quality.

Saif, 11-year-old boy begging in Dhi Qar

“Mum and Dad are dead. We don’t have a house. We live with other people. We all live in one room and we all sleep together, boys and girls. Yes, there are always problems. I leave the house when they start. We don’t have a television or air conditioning, only a toilet and bathroom together. I feel uncomfortable and disturbed.”

Migratory background 4.2.3

As can be seen from table 4.5, many children’s families have been affected by migration. Indeed, less than one in three children said that his/her family had previously lived in their current location.⁴³

In Baghdad, most families living in the factories’ area are originally from central and southern parts of Iraq, displaced due to difficult economic and security situations.

Many of the girls interviewed in Kirkuk have either left their families or run away from home. Given their particular situation, it is not clear how they interpreted this question.

Table 4.5: Families having changed their place of residence

Response	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Family has lived previously in this location	3%	28%	31%	82%	13%
Family has moved to the current workplace	82%	3%	45%	6%	87%
No answer	15%	39%	24%	6%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.2.4 Household debt

The economic difficulties confronting children’s families are illustrated by the fact that nearly two-thirds of the children live in households in debt. This situation is a further push factor into child labour. Table 4.6 shows that the figure is highest in Baghdad, where nearly all families of children interviewed have a debt to repay.

Table 4.6: Children whose household is in debt

Response	Percentage of children by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Household is in debt	97%	60%	66%	18%	39%	63%
Household is not in debt	3%	35%	30%	47%	52%	30%
Don’t know/other	-	5%	4%	35%	9%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

43 It should be noted that the number of non-respondents was particularly high for this question.

Access to food at home 4.2.5

The difficulties of the economic situation affecting children's lives are also illustrated, as shown in table 4.7, by the fact that nearly half of them do not have sufficient home at home. The situation is particularly acute in Baghdad and Nasiriya.

Table 4.7: Children's access to food at home

Response	Percentage of children by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Have sufficient food at home	29%	70%	59%	88%	39%	56%
Do not have sufficient food at home	71%	28%	41%	12%	52%	42%
No response	-	2%	-	-	9%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.2.6 General situation at home

To get a complete picture of their life circumstances, children were asked about the comfort of their overall situation at home, in particular whether or not they experienced care and/or problems or even violence in their respective households. As can be seen from table 4.8, half of the children described tensions and problems, and more than one-third reported physical and/or verbal abuse at home.

Some of the children's responses may appear contradictory, but they reflect a common perception which stipulates that being subject to violence is almost considered "normal". Indeed, firmness, severity and even beatings are often regarded as a part of the Iraqi culture "for the good education of the children". For example, in Baghdad, nearly all the children affirmed that their family cared for them, while, at the same time, 17 per cent said that they experience physical violence and 14 per cent verbal violence.

In Kirkuk, 76 per cent of the girls stated that they were comfortable at home. It is likely that they were comparing their current situation with their previous living conditions. In reality, some of the girls had been married early, lived in a house with multiple wives or had lost protection through the death of one or both of their parents. In many cases, their leaving home was a result of the violence and the numerous problems encountered in their previous homes. For example, one of the interviewed girls had suffered a deep wound in her cheeks. When asked about the cause, she answered that her husband had wounded her which had pushed her to take her children and run away from home.

In Nasiriya, problems and tensions abound in the home. Sixty-one per cent of the children said that the family did not care about them, 65 per cent said they were subject to verbal abuse and rebuke and 30 per cent said they beaten. The typical situations that trigger violence against them include: if they do not go out to beg; if they leave work early; or, if they do not collect enough money from begging.

Table 4.8: Children’s situation at home

Responses	Percentage of children by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Does not have any problems and feels comfortable	49%	23%	32%	76%	9%	34%
Family cares for the child at home and during his/her work outside of home	91%	53%	45%	35%	22%	52%
Problems and tensions exist at home which makes the child uncomfortable	46%	53%	55%	24%	61%	50%
Family does not care for the child	3%	21%	11%	47%	65%	23%
Faces verbal abuse and rebuke	14%	35%	16%	65%	65%	32%
Family beats and is violent with the child	17%	46%	41%	65%	30%	38%

A significant number of factors deprive children of feelings of “belonging” and “safety”, and make their presence on the street or at other workplaces, with all the violence they are subject to there, an extension of the problems they suffer at home. These include:

- verbal and physical violence;
- domestic problems;
- the poor economic situation of the family;
- the absence of essential requirements satisfying children’s needs in terms of food, clothes and healthcare;
- the lack of attention to their psychological and emotional needs.

All of these factors are significant drivers of child labour.

4.3 Causes of child labour

4.3.1 Children’s reason for working

Children were asked about the reasons that pushed them to work and these have been outlined in table 4.9. Many agreed that the main reason was to earn an additional income for the family. Moreover, many children work in order to pay off family debt, especially in Baghdad and Najaf.

Nearly half of the children in Kirkuk and Nasiriya stated that they work because they are the only providers for their families.

None of the children said that they regard their current work as a way of learning a profession, and none of them want to stay in their current job. Instead, all of them expressed their wish to find another job because they are uncomfortable and unsatisfied with their lives.

Table 4.9: Reasons for child labour (multiple answers were possible)

Reason	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Supporting the family (child is the only provider)	-	7%	20%	47%	43%
Earning an additional income for the family (child is not the only working person in the family)	100%	70%	68%	-	30%
Paying off the family debt	97%	49%	5%	12%	39%
Buying or building a house	11%	12%	4%	-	4%
Buying a car	9%	9%	4%	-	-
Learning a profession	-	-	-	-	-
Saving money and investing it in a project	-	7%	5%	-	4%
Other	-	-	7%	53%	-

4.3.2 Person making the decision in the household as to whether or not children work

The family is the main institution for child protection and provides shelter and basic growing needs. The concept of parental obedience in Iraqi society affects the lives and situations of the vast majority of children. A child's behaviour that is incompatible with parents' intentions is regarded as potentially depriving him or her of family protection, which could constitute a real threat to the child's life and safety.⁴⁴ Consequently, as indicated in table 4.10, more than half of child labour decisions in the study were taken by parents, especially in Baghdad, Najaf and Nasiriya.

At the same time, Iraqi society places a certain level of responsibility for the family on children at an early age. This may be part of the reason why almost one out of three children responded that s/he had decided to engage in work.

In Kirkuk, more than half of the girls in commercial sexual exploitation stated that they themselves had taken the decision to work in the brothel, either because they regarded it as an escape route from abusive homes, or because they did not possess sufficient skills or level of education which could have helped them in avoiding this profession

Table 4.10: Actor responsible for the decision for the child to work

Actor	Percentage of decision makers by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Parents	80%	64%	34%	6%	57%	51%
Child	11%	25%	32%	53%	26%	27%
Broker	9%	2%	-	6%	4%	3%
Relatives	-	7%	11%	6%	-	6%
Friends	-	2%	12%	29%	13%	9%
No response	-	-	11%	-	-	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

⁴⁴ According to Article 24 of the Law 76 on Juvenile Welfare, a child is considered homeless "... if he [or she] leaves the house of his [or her] guardian or the place where he [or she] was sent without a legitimate excuse". Moreover, according to Article 25, a child is considered delinquent "... if he [or she] carries out work in brothels or gambling or alcohol-drinking places; or if he [or she] meets homeless persons or those with poor conduct or if he [or she] disobeys the authority of his [or her] legal guardian".

4.4 Age at which children started working

As indicated in table 4.11, there are significant variations in terms of the ages at which children start working in Iraq. Nearly half of the children started working between the ages of 8 to 12. However, some children started working even before the age of 8, especially in Baghdad.

Table 4.11: Age at which children started working

Area	group age by Percentage of children						Total
	5	6-7	8-9	10-12	13-17	Other/no response	
Baghdad	23%	17%	20%	20%	11%	9%	100%
Basra	2%	18%	25%	39%	14%	2%	100%
Najaf	2%	23%	25.5%	25.5%	19%	5%	100%
Kirkuk	-	-	-	6%	94%	-	100%
Nasiriya	9%	9%	17%	22%	13%	30%	100%
All sites	7%	17%	22%	27%	19%	8%	100%

4.5. Working conditions

4.5.1 Working hours

Long working hours are exhausting for children and influences their physical, psychological and mental growth. Some of the interviewed children were found working up to 10 or even 12 hours a day.

Table 4.12: Percentage of children working more than 42 hours per week

Governorate	Percentage of children by age group and governorate	
	5-11	12-17
Baghdad	20%	80%
Najaf	12%	81%
Basra	30%	48%
Kirkuk	-	88%
Nasiriya	35%	48%
All sites	21%	67%

Table 4.12 shows that more than two-thirds of the children work 42 hours per week or more. The highest percentages of children reporting such long hours were older children in Kirkuk, Baghdad and Najaf.

Saeed, 14-year-old boy, selling rose water in a cemetery in Najaf

“I start my work at 4 or 7 in the morning and return home at night. I don’t have a specific time for work. Sometimes I work from morning until the evening and I get rest at night. Sometimes, like during the holidays, I stay in the cemetery for three to four days in a row ... No, I don’t feel scared, but I do get tired because I stay overnight, and sometimes go without food. We get busy with visitors to the cemetery, and there is no-one to bring us anything to eat.”

Table 4.13 shows that children in Baghdad and Kirkuk are negatively affected on two counts by their working hours in factories or brothels, as not only do they work for long hours, but they also work at night.

Table 4.13: Children working at night

Governorate	Percentage of children who work at night			
	Work at night for long hours	Work at night for limited hours	Do not work at night	Total
Baghdad	77%	17%	6%	100%
Najaf	-	81%	14%	95%
Basra	2%	36%	62%	100%
Kirkuk	29.5%	29.5%	41%	100%
Nasiriya	-	39%	61%	100%

In Baghdad, three out of four children work at night when most of the work in brick factories is carried out. Typically, children start working at 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning until 9 or 11 o'clock at night without being allowed to take any breaks. They are very tired during the day because of the intensity of the work and the lack of sleep at night.

In Najaf, most children work at night for a limited amount of hours. However, night shifts increase during holidays and Ramadan when children stay in the cemetery for up to two weeks or more. During this time, work is continuous both night and day.

In Kirkuk, one-third of the girls stated that they work continuously from 7 o'clock at night until 5 o'clock the following morning. In Basra and Nasiriya, the nature of begging on the street obviously requires the presence of people and traffic and so most children do not work throughout the night. However, some children stated that they often stay for late night work.

4.5.2 Access to food in the workplace

Children's access to food in the workplace is as tenuous as at home. As can be seen from table 4.14, four out of ten children reported that they do not have enough food at work, with the situation particularly difficult for children working in factories in Baghdad and child beggars in Basra.

Table 4.14: Access to food during working hours

Responses	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Have sufficient food during working hours	29%	79%	34%	94%	65%	54%
Do not have sufficient food during working hours	71%	21%	56%	-	26%	40%
No response	-	-	16%	6%	9%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.5.3 Income

As can be seen from table 3.15, children's income is generally meagre. Nearly half of the children in Baghdad, Najaf and Basra earned less than IQD5,000 (around USD4)⁴⁵ per day, and one-third of the children in these three governorates earn between IQD5,000 and 10,000 (around USD4-8) per day.

In Baghdad, Nasiriya and Basra, most children are not paid directly for their work. What tends to happen is that their parents or another adult take the wage and give the children a daily allowance to buy something to eat or to pay for transportation.

Table 4.15: Children's average daily income

Location	Children's average daily income (in IQD) by percentage of children								Total
	No income	Less than 5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-20,000	20,000-40,000	40,000-50,000	50,000-100,000	No response	
Baghdad	-	40%	37%	9%	3%	-	-	11%	100%
Najaf	-	42%	34%	12%	2%	5%	-	5%	100%
Basra	-	48%	30%	11%	-	-	-	11%	100%
Kirkuk	35%	-	-	6%	6%	12%	6%	35%	100%
Nasiriya	-	18%	4%	4%	-	4%	-	70%	100%
All sites	3%	36%	26%	9%	2%	3%	1%	20%	100%

In Kirkuk, the situation is different from all other governorates. All girls are controlled by pimps who collect the money from clients, with the girls receiving only 10-15 per cent of the fee. One of the girls said that she receives just IQD15,000 (around USD13). The rest of the amount, IQD50,000 (USD43), remains with the pimp. Some girls do not receive any money, only accommodation and food.

4.5.4 Freedom of choice to stop working

When asked if they have the freedom to leave their job, most children said they did not. Children in Baghdad, Najaf and Nasiriya felt particularly constrained as can be seen from table 4.16.

The reasons behind this lack of options are related to poverty and the family's reliance on the child's income. Furthermore, some children mentioned the presence of family members suffering from chronic diseases and requiring treatment, the costs for which could not be provided by adult members of the family.

⁴⁵ The exchange rate for the Iraqi Dinar to the US Dollar is taken at USD1 = IQD1,160 (mid-2015).

Table 4.16: Children’s freedom to leave their work

Response	Percentage of children by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Has the absolute freedom to leave the job	9%	7%	14%	76%	-	15%
Will leave the job if his/her situation improves or if parents order him/her to do so	-	5%	61%	24%	17%	26%
Has no freedom to leave the job	91%	88%	25%	-	83%	59%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In the factories in Baghdad, children are typically recruited following an agreement between the factory owner and the children’s parents, brokered by a mediator (often a teacher). Subsequently, boys and girls start working as soon as they reach the age of 5. The agreement is binding to the parents, and they do not have the choice of not sending their children to work.

Mahmood, 39-year-old father of three girls who work in brick factories in Baghdad

“No-one has ever experienced such torment such as we endure. Work here is the worst work. It’s true that there are workers outside who earn lower wages, but at least they are comfortable. Our wages are higher than the workers who make IQD5,000 (around USD31), but we don’t have rest. Honestly, we don’t have any rest! Torment, dirtiness, cold, and you don’t have a choice but to do what we do.

We have returned to the injustices of the past. Here, the worker doesn’t have any power, but the person who owns the factories, the money, has power over you. You don’t have any choice. I told the factory owner: “My daughters are tired.” But his only reply was: “It’s not your choice to make. They must work because I contracted you.”

We are very tired. We don’t have any other work possibilities other than this one. We don’t have any another craft or trade.”

4.6. Hazards of children’s work

In Iraq, there are virtually no statistics on occupational accidents, injuries and diseases. Nonetheless, global evidence clearly indicates that children are more prone to negative health impacts of work than adults because they are physically and mentally different. Regardless of cultural perceptions or social constructs, the transition to biological adulthood extends past puberty, well into the late teenage years. Consequently, hazardous child labour is considered one of the worst forms of child labour as defined in ILO Convention No.182.

The following list provides some specific biological facts that make children more vulnerable to work-related hazards:

- Children have thinner skin, so toxins are more easily absorbed.
- Children breathe faster and more deeply, so can inhale more airborne pathogens and dust.
- Children dehydrate more easily due to their larger skin surface and because of their faster breathing.
- Children absorb and retain heavy metals, such as lead and mercury, in the brain more easily.

- Children's endocrine system, which plays a key role in growth and development, can be disrupted by chemicals.
- Children's enzyme systems are still developing so are less able to detoxify hazardous substances.
- Children use more energy when growing and so are at higher risk from metabolized toxins.
- Children require more sleep for proper development.
- Children's less-developed thermoregulatory systems make them more sensitive to heat and cold.⁴⁶

The results of this assessment present a disturbing picture regarding the severity of the hazards and health-related problems of child labour in Iraq. Table 4.17 provides an overview of the most common hazards across the five governorates. Tables providing a more comprehensive listing of the hazards by governorate and occupation can be found in annex 7.

Table 4.17: Most common hazards confronting working children (note: multiple responses were possible)

Response	Percentage of children per governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Direct exposure to the sun	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	90%
Exposure to extreme temperatures (cold or hot) or noise	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	90%
Working in a polluted environment	100%	70%	100%	29%	100%	86%
Working for long hours	100%	84%	79%	100%	74%	86%
Getting injured	100%	35%	15%	-	17%	36%
Sexual harassment and/or rape	-	7%	20%	100%	100%	31%
Abuse and beating by adults responsible for the children at work	20%	30%	16%	0%	26%	20%
Traffic accident	-	21%	10%	-	39%	14%
Heavy loads	23%	21%	4%	-	-	11%
Fatal injury	-	-	4%	12%	-	2%
Others	89%	84%	81%	100%	100%	89%

All children reported that they were exposed to unsafe working conditions, as well as to extreme temperatures – apart from children in commercial sexual exploitation in Kirkuk. In Baghdad, Basra and Nasiriya, children explained that they work in a polluted environment.

In Kirkuk and Nasiriya, all children reported that they were subject to sexual abuse and rape. In Basra, one out of five children suffered from sexual harassment, while one out of six had also been beaten by their employers during their working time.

The following sub-sections describe in more detail some of the specific hazardous conditions and worst forms of child labour that were reported by the children.

4.6.1 Exposure to pollution in brick factories in Baghdad

Researchers' observations and information provided by the children working in brick factories in Baghdad confirmed that they are confronted with numerous hazards at their worksite.

⁴⁶ Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do, IPEC, ILO, Geneva, 2011.

The first indicator of pollution was immediately evident to interviewers in approaching the factory area, as it was impossible to see the factory buildings due to the black cloud of smoke and gas emissions. Even inside the factory, vision was impaired as a result of the smoke coming from the combustion process during the production of bricks. The air contains high rates of carbon particles, in addition to carbon monoxide, nitrogen, sulphur and non-burned hydrocarbons. All these pollutants pose a threat to children and may cause respiratory, thoracic and neurological diseases.

Moreover, because of the desert environment in the region, the continuous movement of vehicles on dirt roads emits vast amounts of dust into the air. In addition, the presence of stagnant rainwater mixed with sewage and drainage water adds another pollution source in the factory areas. This water is used for bathing, cleaning and dishwashing and is, therefore, a source of bacteria and health risks.

Furthermore, the nature of work in these factories requires direct exposure to the sun as well as to extreme temperatures, especially those tasks carried out close to the ovens where the bricks are baked. Both boys and girls work for long hours and are susceptible to various types of injuries caused by dealing with heavy loads. The most onerous task is brick packing which is mostly performed by girls.⁴⁷

4.6.2 Work hazards in Najaf cemetery

Children carry out a wide range of activities working in Najaf cemetery, including digging graves two metres deep and 0.5 metres wide. They also dig graves in sandy soil which means the sides can collapse easily. In addition, tombstone works require the use of a “grinder”, a dangerous hand-held tool used to cut marble. Children also sell different products used in rituals for burying the dead in Iraq, such as incense and rose water stored in large and heavy 10 litre bottles which children have to carry.

Salman, 15-year-old boy working in Najaf cemetery

“On Sundays, I am afraid of being alone here, so I close early and leave. The area is not safe and few people move around on Sundays. There are lots of irreverent boys around here. But, my family gets upset with me when I sit at home. They say to me: ‘Salman, where are we going to get money from? We don’t have anyone other than you and God.’”

Girls work in the places where corpses are cleaned for burial and also sell incense and rose water. All these activities expose children working in cemeteries to direct sunlight, extreme temperatures and a polluted environment caused by the large quantities of sand and dirt moved around in these places. Long working hours are also among the many hazards of working in the cemetery, where children might stay and sleep for up to two weeks consecutively, especially during holidays and feasts when people visit their deceased family members.

The cemetery is quite large and has a poor level of security, creating a situation in which children are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. They are also very susceptible to being influenced to use drugs. Those interviewed did not indicate that they themselves had been victims of abuse, but all of them confirmed that they knew other children who had been subjected to incidences of abuse and that they had seen bodies of people killed inside the cemetery.

47 This is the process of packing the bricks outside the factory and putting them on a hand-held load carrier to take them to the store. For this activity, women or girls work in pairs, packing approximately 250 bricks for IQD15,000 (USD12) per week.

Ziad, 15-year-old boy who owns a kiosk in Najaf cemetery

“I don’t have any problems inside the cemetery, only outside. Once I closed the kiosk at noon and, as I was waiting in the street for a bus, a man with a small car [Chirri] asked me where I was going. I told him to Kufa and told me get in and he would give me a lift. I did get in but he took me to the ring road on the city’s outskirts.

When I saw that we were not on the right road for Kufa, I asked him: ‘Ami [Uncle], where are you going?’ He replied: ‘Come home with me, have lunch and some rest, and in the afternoon I will take you to your family.’ And I said: ‘But my family does not know where I am and they will get worried. Don’t take me home, let me out of the car here.’ But he refused to stop, so I opened the car door while it was still moving. Then he stopped, so I got out and ran away.

Another time, I left the cemetery and went to the bus station where I met one of the bus owners, an old man. He asked me to help him open the bus door for him as it did not open properly. Then he asked me to get into the bus and he got in after me, closed the door and all the curtains on the windows. I started shouting, but no-one heard me, so I started hitting the windows. Then people noticed and he let me go.”

4.6.3 Street vending and begging in Basra and Nasiriya

Children in Basra sell paper tissues, CDs, chewing gum and a range of other articles to car owners and pedestrians at intersections and on the main roads. In these settings, they are subject to sunlight and extreme temperatures in summer and winter. Since they spend a long time on the street, they are exposed to pollution from vehicle fumes and also have to work long hours, causing psychological challenges that are aggravated by the violent behaviour of other children.

Tiba, 13year-old girl beggar in Dhi Qar

“I feel afraid when drunk people take me with them. Once, while I was walking in the garden, I was taken by three drunk old men in their car. They gagged me and said horrible things to me. One of them said: ‘Come, I will give you money, come with us.’ This kind of thing happens a lot. I was rude to them because I was scared and I told them no. I was shouting, and then the police came. They tried to escape, but the police chased them and took me from them. Even drivers harass me and ask me to go with them and they offer me money, sometimes as much as IQD25,000 (around USD22).

There is one girl on the street who wears make-up. Her name is Aseel. They always give her their telephone numbers. Once, a guy gave me his number and asked me to give it to her. I told him no, I am not Aseel’s messenger. So he gave me IQD1,000 (USD0.86) to do it. I haven’t seen her doing anything wrong, but she seems ‘playful’ with boys. She is 14-years-old. The other day Sajaad and Abass beat her when she told us that this side of the road was hers, and we shouldn’t come there. I told the police about her, but the policemen know her anyway. They also give her their numbers and harass her. They tell me come with us, like these girls, come enter the house with us. They showed me a pile of money, but I said no. I don’t know what he wants.”

In addition, these children are subjected almost daily to beatings and humiliating comments by passers-by and policemen. Furthermore, since the law prohibits begging, children are frequently arrested, beaten, burned with cigarettes, humiliated and extorted by policemen.

In Nasiriya, many children work begging in the streets, also exposed to the sun, extreme temperatures, a polluted environment and traffic-related accidents. All children reported that they were subject to sexual abuse and exploitation by car owners, passers-by, drug dealers and sometimes even other children. Interviewers observed that these children also lacked personal hygiene.

Mohenned, 11-year-old girl beggar in Dhi Qar

“Yes, once someone abused me. He took me to his house and lied to me. He told me to come to his house and clean it for him and that he would give me IQD30,000 (around USD26). He took me to his house and then started kissing me. He grabbed me, took off my clothes and slept with me. I ran away from him afterwards and never went with anyone else because I am afraid.

One day, at an intersection, a man insulted me, using very rude words and asked me to get in his car with him. I told him: ‘Ami [uncle], you are older than me and say such bad words. We children must not learn such things from you.’”

4.6.4 Commercial sexual exploitation of children in Kirkuk

Commercial sexual exploitation is one of the worst forms of child labour. It is often carried out in secret, behind closed doors, which aggravates the degree of abuse to which children are subjected. This was confirmed by girls involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Kirkuk.

These girls work for long hours, also at night, and are subject to sexual abuse, rape and beating by clients and pimps. They are sometimes threatened with weapons. Pimps push girls to take antibiotics regularly to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. This weakens the girls’ immunity systems, making them more vulnerable to diseases in the future.

Firyal, 16-year-old girl involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Kirkuk

“I started working when I was 14. I work day and night. From 8 o’clock in the morning to 6 in the evening, I work in one of the costumers’ homes. Afterwards, people come and take me back to our house, so I am there from 7 o’clock in the evening to 5 the following morning. There are no beautiful things during my day. I just have sex with many men.

Sometimes I get abused, beaten and insulted, especially when I go to one of the costumers’ houses. When this happens, the customer usually tells me he is alone in the house, and then often he will call his friends who come to his house to sleep with me as well without paying any more money. If I refuse, they threaten to kill me, and they put a gun in my face, so I get raped by four to five men at the same time.

My employers even force me to work when I am sick. Even during my period costumers often have intercourse with me. Sometimes they ask me to do it orally or they take me from behind. When I refuse, they complain to the pimp who gets angry and insults me. He wants me to satisfy customers in whatever way they want. Sometimes I refuse because I can’t do it.”

In addition, the girls’ work environment is polluted, stressful, unhygienic and harmful. In one case, a house used as a brothel is composed of two rooms, one of which is without a window. In this room, there is only a mattress on the floor. The whole house is empty of furniture, except for some chairs where the girls sit waiting for clients. The other house of this particular brothel where interviews were conducted is a place for residence and for work. It was extremely unhygienic, littered with dirt, waste and even human excrement, putting the girls in extreme health risks.

From a psychosocial health perspective, due to extreme feelings of isolation, stress, tension, fear, lack of trust, lack of self-esteem and hopelessness, most girls were found to be introverted and depressed.

4.7. Health-related issues

4.7.1 Types of health problems children face

Children working in all the occupations included in this assessment face numerous health problems as indicated in table 4.18. Many of them suffer from body emaciation, 69 per cent in Baghdad and 65 per cent in Najaf and from eye irritation, 40 per cent in Baghdad and 39 per cent in Nasiriya.

The percentage of children affected by respiratory problems was highest in Baghdad, 54 per cent, due to continuous exposure to factory smoke and which may lead to chronic disease. During interviews with adults from the children's families, it was confirmed that they suffer from thoracic diseases and shortness of breath as a result of their continuous presence in the factories.

Some of the children were not able to provide a clear description of the health problems from which they suffer, while it was obvious that they did suffer from illnesses, such as colds or fever.

The polluted environment in which children work in Baghdad, Basra and Nasiriya gives rise to several health problems among child workers, including eye and skin allergies, as well as respiratory diseases. Children working in Najaf cemetery also suffered from skin diseases, allergies and eye irritation, especially when engraving tombstones.

In Kirkuk, some girls indicated that they started drinking alcohol when working. Indeed, many of the children, especially boys, smoke cigarettes. The consumption of alcohol and cigarettes can have significant negative consequences on children's long-term health. Moreover, many children are at risk of drug addiction because of the early use of these substances.

Table 4.18: Type of reported health problems (note: more than one response was possible)

Type of health problem	Percentage of affected children per governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Body emaciation	69%	65%	%5	-	35%	36%
Wounds by sharp tools	37%	28%	%21	-	17%	23%
Fever or cold	23%	23%	%34	-	13%	23%
Anaemia	45%	51%	%2	-	4%	23%
Eye irritation	40%	19%	%2	-	39%	19%
Joint pains	26%	38%	%2	-	13%	17%
Respiratory problems	54%	7%	%5	-	-	14%
Fractures	17%	5%	%5	-	13%	8%
Headache	6%	5%	%2	6%	-	4%
Others	57%	9%	%4	88%	39%	29%

4.7.2 Treatment received

Table 4.19 shows that child workers who are ill or injured are given insufficient medical attention and care. More than one in three children in Najaf and Nasiriya reported that they do not receive any treatment nor take any medication when they display symptoms of injury or illness. Others indicated that they only receive treatment or take medication when the symptoms are aggravated.

The situation is particularly worrying in Kirkuk where, due to the hidden nature of commercial sexual exploitation, more than three out of four girls never receive any treatment for medical problems.

Table 4.19: Medical histories of child workers

Governorates	Percentage of medically treated children and treatment type				
	Receive treatment and take medicine at first symptoms	Do not receive treatment or only take medication if symptoms are aggravated	Stay untreated	No response	Total
Baghdad	3%	97%	-	-	100%
Basra	27%	41%	4%	28%	100%
Najaf	30%	23%	35%	12%	100%
Kirkuk	6%	-	77%	6%	100%
Nasiriya	31%	26%	39%	4%	100%
All sites	22%	40%	25%	11%	100%

4.8. Education and child labour

4.8.1. Status of schooling

Most children interviewed did not attend school as indicated in table 3.20. Indeed, many have either never attended school, especially in Nasiriya (39 per cent) and Baghdad (37 per cent), or have dropped out.

In Baghdad and Kirkuk, none of the children in the sample went to school. In Baghdad, children working in brick factories highlighted several reasons for not going to school:

- their parents had made this decision;
- displacement of their families from other governorates;
- the absence of schools located close to the factories.

In Kirkuk, the girls' non-attendance of school is linked directly to the hidden nature of their work. Some girls indicated that they dropped out of school because of early marriages arranged by their parents.

By contrast, nearly half of the working children in Najaf and Basra manage to continue their studies. However, their situation is unstable and they are at risk of dropping out if family livelihoods do not improve and the need for them to work persists.

Table 4.20: Child workers in and out of school

Responses	Baghdad		Najaf		Basra		Kirkuk		Nasiriya	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Never enrolled	17%	20%	5%	7%	2%	13%	18%	-	22%	17%
Dropped out	12%	51%	-	44%	3%	36%	82%	-	4%	39%
Still in school	-	-	-	44%	7%	39%	-	-	-	17%
Total	29%	71%	5%	95%	12%	88%	100%	-	26%	74%

4.8.2. Reasons for not attending school

Table 4.21 points out that the main reason for child workers not attending school was economic based on the need for the family to have an extra income. Other common reasons for non-attendance included:

- parental decision against sending girls to school in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Nasiriya;
- migration or displacement in Basra and Kirkuk;
- violence at school in Najaf and Basra.

Nada, 16-year-old child sex worker living in an IDP camp in Kirkuk

“I left school because of my mum’s illness so that I could help her with chores in the household rather than having to get married early. I wish I could find honourable work to support my family. I am the only breadwinner since my father was injured and became disabled. I wish we could go back home and my sisters and brothers could continue their schooling. My dream was to become a doctor – but what happened was so different.”

Very few children stated that they did not have an interest in education.

Table 4.21: Children’s reasons for not attending school

Response	Baghdad		Najaf		Basra		Kirkuk	Nasiriya	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Girls	Boys
Improve the living conditions of the family by earning an extra income	35%	35%	-	16%	-	2%	-	15%	30%
Necessity for the child to work	-	3%	-	28%	-	21%	-	10%	30%
Parents’ decision not to send the child to school	49%	37%	4%	20%	2%	11%	29%	5%	5%
Child subject to violence at school	-	-	-	16%	4%	10%	-	-	5%
Child’s family moved due to security or economic situation	-	6%	-	4%	-	10%	12%	-	-
Absence of nearby schools	11%	-	-	12%	-	2%	-	-	-
Inability of the family to cover the cost of studies	-	-	-	4%	2%	7%	6%	-	-
Failing exams	-	-	-	8%	2%	5%	-	-	-
Lack of interest in education	-	3%	-	-	-	-	12%	5%	-
Other	6%	9%	4%	24%	-	16%	53%	15%	45%

Hayder, 16-year-old undertaker, engraving names on tombstones in Najaf cemetery

“I left school because the teachers were bad. They don’t teach in the right way. There is a boy buried here who died because of a teacher slapping him because he came late to class. He collapsed and hit his head and died because he was beaten by his teacher.

My sisters also complain about their teachers because they often beat the female students or pinch their ears. They don’t have good manners at all in dealing with the girls and the same thing applies to the teachers and principals in my school as well. Some force the female students to clean the classes. They don’t have cleaners so they make the girls work in the school.

I moved my sister to another school because of her teachers. The teacher gave her 12 pages to memorise by heart and write them out ten times. If she didn’t memorize them properly, the teacher would beat her. Another thing is that the teachers bring their children to school instead of taking them to a nursery. They let them sit at the desks of the girl students and tell them to take care of the child. If the child falls then the teachers beat the girls around the head.”

Fundamental skills 4.8.3

Against the backdrop of low participation in education, it is not surprising that many children lack fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. Table 4.22 shows that this deficiency is particularly pronounced in Baghdad and Nasiriya, where two-thirds of the children can either only calculate the amounts that they earn, or cannot read, write or calculate at all.

Table 4.22: Fundamental literacy and numeracy skills

Governorate	Children with fundamental skills in percentages					
	Can read, write and calculate	Basic reading, writing and calculation skills	Can only calculate the amounts that they earn	Cannot read, write or calculate	No response	Total
Baghdad	20%	8.5%	8.5%	57%	6%	100%
Basra	40%	5%	27%	14%	14%	100%
Najaf	39%	12%	21%	28%	-	100%
Kirkuk	59%	12%	6%	23%	-	100%
Nasiriya	22%	13%	26%	39%	-	100%
All sites	35%	10%	19%	31%	5%	100%

4.8.4. Future education intentions

As noted in table 4.23, the majority of out-of-school children would like to continue their education. However, many lamented their inability to return to school for various reasons, such as the absence of any nearby school. Some children indicated that they were too old to enrol in school.

In Kirkuk, more than one-third of the girls in commercial sexual exploitation said that they were willing or even had a strong desire to continue their education. However, they explained that their current living conditions made it impossible for them to think that their situation would improve in the future. Meanwhile, 41 per cent of the same group of respondents in Kirkuk did not have any desire to go back to school. They felt that this phase of their lives was over.

Table 4.23: Children's intention to return to school

Responses related to returning to school	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Strong desire	14%	14%	27%	18%	17%
Willing to	80%	33%	20%	18%	39%
No desire	6%	9%	7%	41%	17%
Other	0%	0%	0%	23%	9%
Total ¹	100%	56%	54%	100%	82%

Key informants' perception of child labour .4.9

In order to get a comprehensive overview of the situation of working children, interviews were conducted with key adult informants, including security forces and police officers in Nasiriya, Basra and Kirkuk; shop owners in Basra; supervisors in Baghdad; and other individuals who come into contact with these children.

All informants felt that the difficult economic situation of children’s families was the main reason for child labour. Some pointed out that the families could not even afford bread to eat sometimes given the fact that they live in absolute poverty. Police officers also reported that some families had requested special measures of protection for their children.

Likewise, the difficult economic situation of families was singled out as the main reason for school dropout. According to informants, the notion of investing in education as an escape route from poverty was not an option for the majority of families. In addition, the poor quality of the educational system was identified as a further for dropout, as well as the absence of effective mechanisms by the Ministry of Education to reduce the phenomenon.

Zaman, 14-year-old girl selling rose water in Najaf cemetery

“My mum doesn’t let me go to school. My sister started working before I did. She works with me now selling roses. She had to leave school when my mum grew old. I started working in her place afterwards, selling roses. My sister and I aren’t even registered in school, only my brother.

I feel sad sometimes, but when my friends ask me, I say that I don’t like school because school makes girls become “irreverent”. Mum won’t even let me accompany my friends when they go to school to collect their results. She tells me there are bad girls in the school, and she thinks I might become like them if I walk with them. She also told me that she wanted to register me in school, but she couldn’t because of her illness.

No one would accept me if I went to school anyway. But, when I stop working in the cemetery next year – and if my mum lets me – I will go and join literacy classes with older women, even if I just learn how to read. I want to read the Koran.”

Table 4.24 provides details of the range of hazards to which child workers were exposed according to key informants. Confirming the children’s statements on this issue, all informants in Baghdad and Najaf said that children worked in a very difficult environment. Verbal and physical abuse was highlighted in Baghdad, Kirkuk, and Nasiriya. Exposure to injuries and diseases were identified as key hazards in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Basra, and exposure to smoking and alcohol in Najaf .and Kirkuk

Table 4.24: Hazards to which children are according to key informants

Responses	Percentage of informants by region				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Difficult working environment	100%	100%	-	-	-
Verbal and physical abuse	100%	-	60%	100%	100%
Injuries and diseases	75%	-	60%	75%	50%
Smoking and alcohol	25%	100%	60%	100%	50%

All key informants in Najaf, Basra and Nasiriya said that police officers intervened to address situations child labour. It should be noted that child labour in these three geographical locations is quite visible. However, in the case of Kirkuk, police intervention appears to be limited. On the one hand, this could be due to the hidden nature of commercial sexual exploitation of children. On the other hand, police officers are themselves alleged to be customers of the brothels. Indeed, it was also alleged that some pimps buy the complicity silence of police officers by allowing them to have sexual intercourse with prostitutes free of charge. As for the labour inspectors, all key informants felt that they did not have any impact in preventing commercial sexual exploitation of children.

In Baghdad, there is no noticeable intervention any authorities, neither police nor labour inspectors, in the brick-making factories. This seems to be because the area is far from the city of Baghdad, and because inspectors are alleged to benefit from bribes.

Farah, 7-year-old girl beggar in Dhi Qar

“Often, boys walk behind me. They say to me: ‘Come with us’. I don’t accept to go with them, so they keep swearing at me, like: ‘Daughter of a bitch, I am going to fuck you’. One day, someone ran after me. I ran, but he caught me and started kissing me, here in the park. Sajad and some other boys also fuck the girls here. They always grab me, but I can get away from them. Then, they play with their private parts.

The drivers also swear at us a lot if we refuse to go with them. Once, a girl named Rusal told me: ‘Let’s go with this driver and then he will pay us’. But I refused. I’m afraid that they would kidnap me or do something bad to me.

There’s an old woman here who always takes a bunch of girls and gives them money. She comes to take the older girls. A girl named Zanoba goes with her often. She says that she gives her money and clothes, and that she takes her to older men. They give her money and sleep with her. Zanoba told us that each girl has one man who gives her money and clothes. No, I won’t go because I’m only a little girl. I don’t work like that, but sometimes Rusal tells me: ‘Let’s go with them, they give lots of money’. But I never go.”

Overall, the answers of informants regarding the intervention by governmental institutions to reduce child labour closely mirrored the responses given by the children themselves.

4.10 Children’s attitudes and perceptions

4.10.1 Awareness of their rights

The majority of children in all governorates said that they had either never heard of the concept of “rights”, or that they had heard of it without knowing what it was about. Children were asked to express their perception of “rights” in their own words. The majority of those able to respond highlighted “the right to education” and “the right to not to have to work at their current age

4.10.2 Perception of their work

According to table 4.25, most of the children labelled their work as “bad”. It was only in Najaf that close to half of the children considered their work as somehow “good”.

Table 4.25: Children’s perception of their work

Response	Percentage of children by governorate					
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya	All sites
Good	14%	42%	25%	6%	13%	24%
Bad	86%	53%	61%	94%	87%	71%
Don’t know	-	5%	14%	-	-	5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In table 4.26, children indicated different reasons for dissatisfaction with their work. Many consider their job to be tiring and very hard. Some would like to leave their current job to become doctors, engineers or police officers. Another common reason for children's dissatisfaction was their desire to return to school.

Several children complained about abuse by the employer. For example, in Najaf, one out of six children complained about abuse despite the fact that the employer of children working in the cemetery is typically not a stranger, but their father or a relative.

Table 4.26: Main reasons why children may dislike their work

Response	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Low wages	-	16%	-	-	13%
The job is very tiring and hard	56%	40%	32%	46%	35%
Wants to go back to school	38%	20%	30%	18%	23%
Abuse by the employer	6%	14%	36%	6%	-
Other	-	10%	2%	30%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In Kirkuk, only one girl complained about the abuse by the employer. However, this is likely to be a significant under-reporting of the problem probably because the girls fear repercussions from their pimp. Most interviews took place in the presence of a third person. The research showed that most of the girls were subject to humiliation and physical and psychological abuse by clients.

4.10.3 Judgement of the legitimacy of their work

Yasmeen, 10-year-old girl working as a donkey carriage driver for brick carts in Baghdad

"I know that my work is not legal because the government does not allow children to work. My Mum and Dad told me that a while ago. Once, some people came from the government to see the children, so the employer asked us to hide and sit in our room until they left. He gave them money and let them go. The government is not concerned about us at all."

Some children, as pointed out in table 4.27, especially in Basra and Najaf, considered their work legitimate ("hallal") rather than disgraceful as it helps in catering for their families' needs. However, most said their work was illegitimate or illegal. Some realised this because they had been pursued and arrested by the police. Nonetheless, children affirmed that they did not fear the police because it was more important that they help their families in generating additional income.

Table 4.27: Children's perception of the legitimacy of their work

Response	Governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Legitimate	3%	30%	32%	-	17%
Illegitimate	86%	47%	57%	35%	74%
Don't know	11%	16%	7%	24%	9%
No answer	-	7%	4%	41%	-
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

4.10.4 Approval of their “own” children working

Among the children who were interviewed, there was an overwhelming majority who totally rejected the idea of allowing their “own” children to work in the future. The highest percentages, as reflected in table 4.29, were recorded in Baghdad and Kirkuk. This can be taken as an indicator of the significant levels of exploitation which children suffer in these areas.

Table 4.29: Children’s approval of their own children working in the future

Response	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
No, I don’t approve	100%	77%	84%	94%	61%
Yes, I approve	-	9%	7%	6%	-
No answer	-	14%	9%	-	39%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The children who did not accept the possibility that their future children would be engaged in child labour added that they would protect them and enrol them in schools. However, some who said that they would approve of their children working said so in a voice of despair. They had little hope for the improvement of their situation.

In Najaf and Nasiriya, many boys said that their acceptance of their children working would depend upon the improvement of their own livelihoods and social welfare.

4.10.5 Attitudes towards the police

As indicated in table 4.30, working children indicated a certain degree of ambivalence towards the police. In turn, this reflects the same ambivalent attitude that police and security personnel display towards situations of child labour and the presence of working children on the streets. Indeed, police either ignore these children or may pursue them and subject them to verbal or even physical violence.

Mohammed, 11-year-old street vendor in Basra

“I would like to go to school, play with my friends and study, but no one will accept me because I am older now. I failed in primary school. No-one bothered to teach me properly. I left school when we left Garna district to move to another area. If a school accepted me now, I would feel embarrassed about going into the early grades with smaller children, but what can I do now? I feel sad that I can’t read.

Sometimes we felt hungry at school, but the teacher wouldn’t let us eat and beat us very badly with a piece of hose. He told us that we couldn’t eat until the break bell rings.

Now, I want to return to school, and I want to get stop working. Our backs are in constant pain. I don’t want anything else, just to go back to school, to read and write and to have someone who can teach me. My brothers are in school now instead of sitting in the street with the police chasing us. They know how to read everything.

Earlier on this morning, the police did chase us and we could not work. We run away from the police. Sometimes a police car comes and arrests us and takes us to prison, but if they catch us a second time they won’t let us go. Sometimes, they beat us with a water hose, and other times they bring us food and lunch and tell us ‘go and work’.”

Over half of the child respondents in Nasiriya reported that they were afraid of the police. This is not surprising given the fact that many of them have been arrested under the Juvenile Welfare Law, under which street children and beggars are generally considered as “homeless”.⁴⁸ It was evident to interviewers that many children working on the streets had been beaten, humiliated, abused or forced to pay bribes. Some of the children in Basra even showed the research team the marks on their bodies caused by hot water scalding and cigarette burns.

Table 4.30: Children’s attitude towards the police and security forces

Response	Percentage of children by governorate				
	Baghdad	Najaf	Basra	Kirkuk	Nasiriya
Children fear the presence of policemen in their area of work	23%	27%	43%	18%	57%
The police arrested the child before	-	-	14%	18%	32%
Children do not fear the presence of policemen in their area of work	37%	16%	25%	6%	3%
Policemen help the child and protect him/her from harm and abuse	-	5%	4%	-	5%
Other	40%	52%	14%	58%	3%

However, a few children did indicate that police officers sometimes help them by protecting them from pedestrians and car drivers, or by resolving disputes and fights that arise between the children themselves.

Chapter 5. Conclusions and recommendations

Summary conclusions

The socio-economic, political and security situation in Iraq over the last number of years combine to create a highly fertile ground for child labour. Poverty, challenges in access to and quality of education and ongoing conflict and violence leading to significant displacement continue to figure as major factors in this context and have led to deep concern within the government about the growing incidence, especially worst forms of child labour. As a first step in taking action to address this phenomenon, this rapid assessment provides invaluable information on the causes and consequences of child labour on working children, their families and communities. It also found that many working children come from families displaced due to security and economic reasons.

Investigating worst forms of child labour in any country is a highly complex, complicated, difficult and often dangerous process. In an unstable and insecure environment such as Iraq, these problems are significantly increased and it is a testimony to the courage, commitment and determination of the implementing partner, IAA, its field teams and coordinators, that this report has been published at all. The realities on the ground impacted on all technical areas of the assessment methodology, particularly the sampling as it proved so difficult to achieve the sample population levels initially set by national partners and UNICEF and capacity to implement assessments of this nature. The very difficult national security level brought about by the incursion of ISIL into Iraqi territory in mid-2014 resulted in a hiatus of field activities that further affected the size of sample populations.

⁴⁸ Article 24 of Law 76 (amended) states that: “The minor or juvenile is considered as homeless ... if he is found begging in public or pretends to be inflicted with injuries or physical defect or uses deceit to gain the sympathy of people for the purposes of begging ...”.

It is important to note that pre-assessment observation visits in each of the five governorates revealed many similarities of worst forms of child labour that exist across Iraq. It was for this reason that it was felt that it would be more useful for field teams to identify the predominant or location-specific form of child labour for investigation to ensure a broader cross-section for the purposes of this report and to guide future policy and programme decision-making. Nevertheless, the assessment has also revealed the critical need of more detailed quantitative analysis in order to better identify, measure and analyse the location and sectors of child labour to facilitate strategic planning of interventions and to provide appropriate guidance and support to government, non-government and international actors.

The high levels of food and economic insecurity, compounded by household debt, poor quality of accommodation, tension in the home and incidence of early marriage, as well as lack of access to schools contribute to the factors “pushing” children into situations of work. In Kirkuk in particular, the girls caught up situations of commercial exploitation have often run away from abusive households. Children are mainly compelled to work to provide an additional source of income to the family or to pay off the debts that have accumulated.

The working conditions themselves across the board of all occupations are very harmful to children, some likely to heavily impact on their future lives as adults. Indeed, many questions arise in terms of the future quality of life as adults of those children working in the brick factories in Baghdad and whose pulmonary tracts and eyes are so badly affected by smoke, dust and fumes. The high levels of sexual exploitation of children working across all worst forms of child labour is also extremely worrying given the intense, traumatic and lasting psychosocial damage arising from this abuse, including driving them to drug and alcohol addiction as a negative coping mechanism.

In considering the hazardous work to which children are exposed in Iraq, it is important to note that “hazardous work” affecting children over the minimum age of employment (15) and below the age of 18 is a worst form of child labour according to national and international law. This means that the incidence of child labour cited in the MICS 4 of six per cent of children aged 5 to 14 does not take into account the significant population of those aged 15 to 18 doing hazardous work. This further reinforces the need for a national child labour survey to provide the critical baseline data to inform a national plan of action to tackle child labour.

Clearly, any intervention programme must place education at the heart of its strategy as most children interviewed did not attend school and many had either never attended school at all or dropped out. Most children indicated that they were interested in education and some had very high aspirations for future professional occupations, often to be able to look after their families even better. A number of children explained that violence was a key factor pushing them out of school, particularly among teachers and principals, as well as discrimination against girls, and it would be important to address this issue through a national campaign as part of national action against child labour.

It is evident that access to decent working opportunities for adults in the labour market is among the critical issues to be addressed going forward in the context of support for internally displaced families to offset their negative coping mechanisms. The majority of IDPs face significant economic challenges on a daily basis and yet seek little more than the opportunity to lead decent and dignified lives, trying to re-establish some sense of normalcy for themselves and their children. Access to decent work is central to achieving these simple goals and provide people with a sense of dignity and fulfilment. Interventions should aim to address this area of support in close collaboration with government, private sector, trade unions, civil society, international organisations, donors and foreign investors. Policy dialogue on employment and livelihoods should be strengthened to discuss the mechanics of labour market-related interventions. These should also reflect the transition of youth into work, particularly those above the minimum age of employment, looking at all elements related to employment, such as vocational education, apprenticeship schemes and entrepreneurship programmes.

Experience shows that emergency situations, such as civil conflict, significantly increase the vulnerability of children to exploitation of all kinds, often the worst. The same is true of child labour and children become susceptible to its worst forms. International law is very clear on the action to be taken in these situations: the child should be removed immediately and provided with appropriate protection and support. Among the interventions to be included in a future plan of action should be a programme of withdrawal, rehabilitation and prevention. The challenges in designing and implementing a plan of action to address child labour at national level are significant enough – in a situation of national instability and insecurity, involving widespread internal displacement, the challenges are multiplied.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on outcomes of the rapid assessment of worst forms of child labour in five governorates in Iraq and are categorised by theme. It is important to note that addressing situations of child labour requires a multi-faceted programme of interventions and these are not an “either-or” selection. To be effective, these interventions should be implemented in an integrated manner and child labour should also be mainstreamed across other relevant policies and programmes, including child protection, employment, poverty reduction, social protection, etc.

5.1: Legislative and policy development and reform

- Ensure the full activation and comprehensive monitoring (labour inspectorate) of the Labour Law, in particular articles 90 to 95.
- Review article 96 which overrules the provisions of the law relating to child labour in cases of family enterprises, with a view to deleting this article or amending it to ensure that proper protections are introduced and can be monitored by labour inspectors.
- Increase the penal sanctions, article 97, for those who violate the provisions relevant to the protection of children/ juveniles, provided for in Chapter 2 of the Labour Law. Sanctions should be brought up to the relative cost of living of today and should be of a magnitude to act as an effective deterrent to the exploitation of children.
- Develop and introduce follow-up and protection mechanisms in line with the amendment of Labour Law to ensure adequate referral and protection of children/juveniles in situations of worst forms of child labour.
- Build the capacity and empower trade unions to identify and report cases of child labour in work sites to MOLSA and other relevant authorities.
- Work with private sector and employers' organisations to raise awareness of articles of the Labour Law relevant to child labour and demand full compliance.
- Introduce amendments of the Social Security Law to ensure coverage of those who work in the private sector and the unemployed to reinforce the capacity of heads of households to avoid relying on the income of their children.
- Ensure the full activation of Article 30 of the Iraqi Constitution on social and health security, establishing a new institution responsible for aiding households affected by the loss of one or both parents, sickness and/or disability.
- Align the future national child labour response with the future national child protection policy and programme to ensure integration, mainstreaming and coherence.
- Ensure comprehensive implementation of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and the National Development Plan, in particular the components on improved incomes for the working poor; upgrading of education infrastructure and quality; improved living conditions; more effective social protection; reduction in levels of inequality between women and men; and the generation of millions of new jobs.
- Work closely with the international community to address the critical issue of national security and work towards the return and reintegration of IDP families.

5.2: Education and vocational education and training

- The Law of Compulsory Education should be amended to extend compulsory education beyond primary to secondary level and at least until the age of 15-years-old to be aligned with the minimum age of employment.

- Reinforce national efforts to increase girls' enrolment and completion of all levels of education, including through national awareness campaigns.
- Consider the introduction of school-based child labour monitoring bodies, involving education and community actors, to strengthen early identification and prevention, including family visits, as well as support education rehabilitation of former working children.
- Develop a comprehensive plan of action plan to support the full implementation of the Law of Compulsory Education through an integrated mechanism involving relevant government and non-government actors. The plan of action should include improved data collection and analysis on school drop-out and to inform interventions to reduce drop-out, including school return and non-formal education programmes (accelerated learning and class bridging).
- Undertake measures to improve the school environment nationally (primary and secondary) in terms of physical infrastructure, enhanced teacher training and improved education materials.
- Promote the creation, reinforcement and engagement of parent-teacher associations and student associations and parliaments to encourage greater community involvement in schools and children's education.
- Develop and implement a national campaign to reduce violence in schools both by the teaching profession and the student body.
- Develop and implement an Early Childhood Learning policy and programme, preparing for its investment and implementation.
- Develop and implement a programme of expansion and rehabilitation of vocational training centres, especially in poor and marginalised regions, involving the private sector to ensure alignment of training with actual and future labour market needs.
- Review access requirements to vocational education and training, in particular for vulnerable and marginalised groups, and develop appropriate support mechanisms to facilitate participation for all.
- Develop and implement national awareness-raising campaigns on vocational education and training, including through primary and secondary schools, to stimulate interest and demand.
- Ensure integrated links between the child labour monitoring system and vocation education and training, in particular to provide rehabilitation and support to those above minimum age of employment but below 18 involved in "hazardous work".

5.3: Capacity-building

- Establish an effective child labour monitoring system, including database, within the Child Labour Unit, MOLSA, to facilitate the identification, withdrawal, referral, rehabilitation, protection and prevention of child labour through the development of a coordinated and multi-sector monitoring and referral process. This process should be coordinated by the Child Labour Task Force and ensure the engagement of relevant government ministries and bodies and non-government actors. The system should be linked to national child protection referral systems and mechanisms to avoid duplication and reinforce streamlining and mainstreaming. The system should prioritise worst forms of child labour to ensure the immediate withdrawal and support for these children and their families.
- The child labour monitoring system will require the development of appropriate services and programmes to ensure that children and their families receive the support and protection they need, including psychosocial and physical health interventions, education (formal and non-formal), vocational training, employment and livelihoods services, social protection and welfare services.

- Carry out a capacity needs assessment of all government and non-government actors, in particular labour inspectors, social workers, school inspectors, police, judges, lawyers, civil society and others, to inform the development and implementation of training programmes and support materials on child labour elimination linked to the child labour monitoring system.
- Support the development of child-friendly services, systems and support in all areas of the judicial and social support systems, including training, tools and child protection safety nets. This should include specially trained police and social services units for children withdrawn from situations of sexual exploitation and trafficking.
- Develop a specific capacity-building programme for school principals, teachers, education assistants and other education workers on child labour monitoring, prevention and referrals. Programmes and materials should support raising awareness of educators on indicators of child labour and drop-out to develop an early warning monitoring system and follow-up.
- Build the capacity of MOLSA social workers to address child protection issues relating to domestic violence, violence against women and children and dispute mediation and resolution.
- Build the capacity of private sector and MOLSA in terms of enhancing OSH inspections, particularly for young workers, and improving OSH equipment, training and awareness generally across all industrial sectors.
- Build the capacity of local, regional and national media on child labour, its worst forms, its elimination and the importance of education and encourage the development and dissemination of awareness-raising reports and programmes to inform the wider public.
- Support the meaningful participation of children and youth in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of programmes to address child labour to ensure that these programmes meet actual needs and expectations.

5.4: Knowledge management

- Plan and conduct a national child labour survey as soon as possible to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the scale and scope of child labour in Iraq, inform the development of a national plan of action to address the issue and identify additional knowledge gaps.
- Institutionalise through ministerial decree and strengthen the role, responsibilities and capacities of the national Child Labour Task Force.

5.5: Trade unions and civil society organisations

Encourage and empower trade unions and civil society organisations to identify and report child labour situations, particularly worst forms, to the appropriate authorities.

- Establish close collaboration between civil society organisations and the Ministry of Education to develop and implement, where relevant, accredited accelerated learning and non-formal education programmes and curricula.
- Build the capacity and empower civil society organisations to deliver training for alternative income-generating projects for poor families and female-headed households, including access to social finance, business services and entrepreneurship training.
- Build the capacity and empower trade unions and civil society organisations to collaborate closely with MOLSA to develop and deliver social programmes to vulnerable populations alongside regular social protection and welfare programmes.
- Build the capacity and empower trade unions and civil society organisations to develop and implement local, regional and national awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns on child labour and child protection.

5.6: Awareness-raising and advocacy

- Mainstream awareness-raising across all efforts of government and non-government actors to address child labour, particularly through national media.
- Develop awareness-raising interventions targeting vulnerable populations and areas where the incidence of child labour is known to be high, working through children, families, community and religious leaders, local authorities, employers, civil society, media, civil society organisations, etc. The content of these programmes should be adapted to different target audiences and their capacities, for example, using radio and television rather than print media for poorly educated communities. A key focus should be on the impact of child labour on children's mental, physical and emotional health.
- Mainstream gender concerns across all interventions addressing child labour to ensure more effective targeting of girls and women, in particular in education, social protection and empowerment interventions.
- Develop a national awareness-raising campaign on addressing sexual exploitation of children in all facets of life and society and mobilise widespread social support to monitor, identify and report cases to the authorities.
- Provide advice, guidance and facilitated access to information and support to indebted families to alleviate immediate financial pressures and assist in developing short- to long-term solutions to address debt.
- Develop awareness-raising on children's rights and violence against children in the home, schools and society to impact behavioural and cultural change.

5.7: International organisations and the donor community

- Support national efforts technically and financially to develop and implement a national plan of action to eliminate child labour and conduct a national survey on child labour, leveraging experience in other countries.
- Support relevant government and non-government actors, for example, MOLSA and civil society organisations, to prepare and publish an annual report on children's rights in Iraq in general and child labour in particular.
- Ensure the integration of child labour elimination into regular activities on developing country programmes, UNDAFs and other strategic priority exercises for technical and financial support.
- Call on donor to ensure adequate resources are made available to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan of action to tackle child labour sustainably. This rapid assessment clearly indicates the need for behavioural change that takes time and sustained effort to address.

Annex 1

UN Conventions Relating to Child Labour

Child Rights Convention

The platform on which to build coherent international and national strategies to address the problem of child labour is that of the protection of children's fundamental human rights. To this end, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was adopted in 1989 and guides member States in the protection of these rights, in helping to meet children's basic needs and in expanding opportunities to enable them to reach their full potential. This instrument outlines the specific rights of all children under the age of 18 and establishes a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards for and obligations towards children. It sets minimum entitlements and freedoms for children that should be respected by all governments.

The rights of children are set out in 54 articles and three Optional Protocols.⁴⁹ Article 32 is designed specifically to address child labour by protecting children "... from economic exploitation and from performing any work that interferes with his or her education or is harmful to his or her mental, spiritual or social development." The Optional Protocols focus on the sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography and the involvement of children in armed conflict and are therefore highly relevant to worst forms of child labour. Nearly 40 per cent of the 54 articles in the CRC relate to rights that either are or could be infringed in cases of child labour.

ILO Child Labour Conventions

Child labour manifests itself in many forms and a critical examination of the situation of working children is necessary to determine what constitutes child labour and its worst forms. The framework of this examination is clearly stated in two ILO Conventions, the Minimum Age Convention 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Within the framework of its child labour Conventions, the ILO recognises three categories of child labour that must be abolished:

- All work done by children under the minimum legal age for that type of work, as defined by national legislation in accordance with international standards.
- Work that endangers the health, safety and morals of a child, either because of the nature of the work or because of the conditions under which it is performed ("hazardous work").
- Unconditional worst forms of child labour, defined as slavery, trafficking, bonded labour, forced recruitment into armed conflict, prostitution, pornography or illegal activities such as the sale and trafficking of drugs.

One of the most effective methods of ensuring that children do not start working too young is to set the age at which children can legally be employed. The ILO's Minimum Age Convention supports national efforts to tackle child labour by focusing on:

- the elimination of child labour;
- the minimum age at which children are allowed to start work;
- any work which jeopardises children's physical, mental or moral health;
- light work.

⁴⁹ Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000); Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000); Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure.

The table below sets out the framework of the Minimum Age Convention.

Minimum age for entry to employment in accordance with the ILO Minimum Age Convention		
General minimum age	Minimum age for "light work"	Minimum age for "hazardous work"
In normal circumstances: 15 years or more (not less than compulsory school age)	13 years	18 years, exceptionally 16 years if protected and under training
Where economic and educational facilities are insufficiently developed: 14 years	12 years	18 years, exceptionally 16 years if protected and under training
"Light work" is defined as work which is not likely to be harmful to the health or development of the child or will not prejudice her/his attendance at school, her/his participation in vocational training or her/his capacity to benefit from such training.		

According to the ILO's Conventions, there are basically four main types of work that children should never do:

- work that violates their fundamental rights as human beings;
- work that is dangerous or threatening, that exhausts their strength, that damages their bodies, minds and spirits and that takes advantage of their young age;
- work that impacts on their natural development physically, mentally and emotionally or robs them of their childhood;
- work that prevents them from going to school and gaining basic skills and knowledge for their personal and social growth and their future.

Following comprehensive research, the ILO concluded that it was necessary to strengthen existing instruments on child labour by focusing the international spotlight on the urgency of action to eliminate, as a priority, the worst forms of child labour. Thus began a period of discussion within the ILO and among and between member States which culminated in 1999 in the unanimous adoption of ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Such has been the support for this issue that the number and speed of ratifications of this Convention have been significant, and the ratification rate of the Minimum Age Convention has also improved.

The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention differs from the Minimum Age Convention in that it offers member States some key elements of policy development in tackling the issue of child labour. It effectively prioritises the national agenda for action as it obliges governments to deal as a matter of urgency with the specific issue of the worst forms of child labour. In terms of these forms of child labour, it clearly states that no child under the age of 18 should be involved and that special attention should be paid to the most vulnerable children and girls.

Annex 2

Socio-economic and cultural characteristics of selected governorates

There has been significant erosion of the socio-economic, cultural and political fabric of Iraqi society over the years, particularly since 2003. This deterioration and increased instability has affected cities and governorates throughout the country and been a key driver of the WFCL phenomenon. The issue of internal population displacements has played a considerable role in this development as families have been obliged from one governorate to another, impacting on the diverse cultural nature and demographics of Iraq. In addition, it has led to situations of over-population in those areas that have received displaced people, further undermining public service capacity, such as education and health, increasing unemployment and contributing to the emergence and expansion of ghetto and slum areas.

Baghdad

The socio-economic situation in Baghdad is characterised by poverty and the spread of slum areas related to violence and displacement. These areas are scattered in the outskirts of the capital, including Tisa'a Nissan, Al-Rasheed Camp in Zafaraniyah, Kamaliya, Bob al-Sham, Husseiniya, Jkok in Kazimiyah, Sefer sector and Tasfirat in Sadr City and the factories in Nahrawan. The main focus of the rapid assessment in Baghdad was on Nahrawan, the location of the brick factories that employ children

These areas are heavily affected by poverty, illiteracy, ill-health, lack of education, unemployment, early marriage and other elements of culture and tradition that impact negatively on children. As a result, children end up in situations of exploitation, including begging and working in factories and workshops located in or near these areas. Most of the residents of these areas are either displaced from other parts of the governorate because of sectarianism or have moved there seeking employment

The area of Nahrawan has many environmental problems, suffering from long years of neglect. The air quality has deteriorated considerably due to the proliferation of solid fuel burning, including brick factories which mainly use black oil for fuel which has a very high sulphur content. Many of these factories are located close to streets and residential neighbourhoods. The reasons and observations contributing to the selection of this area and this particular worst form of child labour include

- The spread of factories in this part of Baghdad is specific and there are known to be a large number of children working in them.
- The area where the factories are located is affected by other social phenomena, such as early marriage.
- Most of the children are forced by their parents to work and many suffer from depression and psychological violence.
- The environment is very contaminated, with large amounts of dust from the surrounding desert and vehicles as there are no paved road and the smoke and fumes from the factories.
- The impact of landfill in the area means that the drinking water is not sterile and the houses where working children live lack the most basic hygiene and sanitation requirements and comforts.
- Most of the children who work there are suffering from pulmonary-related problems and sore eyes.
- This vast area is far from the centre of the capital, adjacent to the border area, and the only people who live there are families that work in the factories. Children have no playing areas. There are a few small shops with basic goods.
- During field visits, the IAA did not observe any children playing. Children and adults appear exhausted from long days of work. In terms of appearances, their clothes are old and worn. They lack the most basic requirements to lead a comfortable life. Initial observations noted fatigue, deprivation and shame on the faces of children.

- The area does not have a health centre and people are obliged to go to a medical assistant about three kilometres distance away. There are no schools or markets in the area, nor a mosque. In effect, the families living in the Nahrawan area are cut off from the outside world.
- Most of the children are illiterate and would like to complete their studies or just learn to read and write.
- The children are not provided with safety tools and equipment for their work and the workplace environment is extremely unhealthy.

Kirkuk

As with other governorates, the socio-economic situation in Kirkuk is affected by unemployment, poverty and deprivation, but perhaps marginally less so. The main areas impacted by socio-economic problems are located in the south, east and west of the city centre and include Aroba, Hussein, Wahid Huzeran, Failaq and Barood Khana. The city is the only one in the rapid assessment that has no slums, but still has a presence of displaced families seeking employment from other governorates, villages and rural areas and even from neighbouring countries

Social phenomena similar to those apparent in other governorates, such as early marriage, occur in Kirkuk. Indeed, early divorce can lead to children forced to earn a living on the streets as prostitutes or beggars. Domestic violence is also an area of concern and there is evidence of children looking for ways to avoid problems at home, including working. Once children are on the street, they become prey to those who would exploit their vulnerabilities

Prostitution activities tend to take two forms in Kirkuk. Firstly, it takes place in apartments located in the neighbourhoods of Al-Hussein, Ras Dumez and Wahid Huziran. Secondly, some houses and apartments are used as offices for booking and coordination, but the sexual transaction takes place somewhere else. These offices/apartments are highly mobile and move frequently to avoid detection by the authorities. The reasons and observations contributing to the selection of this area and the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children include

- It is known that there are many children in Kirkuk who work as prostitutes.
- This phenomenon is one of the worst possible forms of child labour with extreme negative effects on children and is not acceptable to the culture of Iraqi society.
- It is breaking up the traditional family unit in the area which is now becoming characterised by high divorce rates.
- The physical, moral, psychosocial and emotional consequences on children are significant and impacts negatively on the future of the child, family and society. The goal of making money means that people are prepared to do anything and pass this mentality on to their children and it marginalises everything else that is important in life: school, customs, traditions, social and family relationships based on mutual respect, etc.
- Children are susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV-AIDS, and the psychological consequences of these diseases.

Najaf

Najaf governorate suffers from a high unemployment rate, compounding other socio-economic issues affecting families, such as poverty, lack of decent shelter (slums), large family sizes, widespread illiteracy, high crime rates, etc. Many children work in impoverished areas, including Rahma, Askary, Hawly Street, Al-Bahr slums, Hanoon district and areas around the airport

There is also a strong cultural and religious influence in Najaf, with the presence of shrines, including that of Imam Ali. As a result, there are a number of cemeteries and families from all over the country that share these beliefs may seek to bury their deceased in Najaf. One sector where employment can be found, therefore, for adults and children alike, is in the cemeteries. Children work selling religious trinkets and other goods, begging or digging graves, and may stay overnight in slum areas located inside some cemeteries, making them vulnerable to advances by adults

Cemeteries are spread across different locations in the city: the Isti'alamt area, the old cemetery, the new cemetery which is divided into seven areas and the Sadr martyrs' tombs. In addition, there are four washing places for corpses prior to burial. The most important of these is the Bir Ali and Sadr martyrs' area adjacent to the old city cemetery, near the shrine of Imam Ali from the southeast, Bahr Al-Najaf from the west and Najaf Hawali street from the north. The reasons and

:observations contributing to the selection of these areas and this particular worst form of child labour include

- The appearance of this form of child labour has emerged in the last three years and is specific to Najaf due to the number of religious shrines and cemeteries in the area.
- Children are exposed to all weather extremes, cold and wet and direct sun, as they work in open areas with no cover and work for long hours.
- Because of the nature of the environment in the cemeteries, the lack of cover and protection, children are also exposed to attacks, bites and stings from snakes, scorpions, insects and predators.
- Children sometimes have to live in the cemeteries during religious events, visits and holidays.
- The area is located near the ancient city with many dangerous buildings, some of which are hidden, for example, children are at risk of falling into old house basements. During the field visit and an interview with a child worker, the IAA team witnessed the collapse of a basement allocated for burial and went to help workers involved in the accident, including a child. Although the child was not hurt, his father who was working with him was injured.

Dhi Qar

In the same way as Baghdad and Najaf, Dhi Qar governorate is characterised by poverty and slums with a significant crime rate that has increased in recent years. There are several residential areas where dwellings have been built on state land and are inhabited by impoverished families, some of whom are responsible for criminal activities. Their children are often involved in begging activities

The governorate includes a mix of Sunni and Shiite communities, with Shiites being the largest. There is also a community of Sabeen Mandaeans who are renowned for their jewellery activities and enjoy a better standard of living. Some of the families of the child beggars are displaced from villages and rural areas around Dhi Qar, and some are displaced from neighbouring governorates, including Basra and Baghdad, due to the deteriorating security situations there

Often the begging is used as a pretence for solicitation for prostitution. The activities take place in several street intersections, markets and near mosques and religious places. In terms of street intersections, these include: the intersection of Al-Hu (Court Street), the intersection of Raiyat (Thawara neighbourhood) and the intersection of Suq Sheyoukh (separating Shoumoukh from the industrial Iskan area). As regards the commercial market areas, these include: Habboubi Street, Nile Street, Said Radi Street, Haraj market and the old market of Syed Saad. The reasons and observations contributing to the selection of this area and this particular worst form of child labour include

- Many children are known to work in the area as beggars and that the act of begging is used as a cover for solicitation for prostitution.
- Initial interviews revealed that children are exposed to extremely harsh conditions, including beatings and verbal insults, sometimes inflicted between themselves, by people in the community or by drivers of the cars they approach. They are also exposed to all types of weather conditions as there is no cover where they beg and solicit.
- As in Kirkuk, children in this area of work are exposed to extreme physical, moral, psychosocial and emotional health risks.
- Children are easy prey to drug and alcohol dealers as where they work is highly exposed and well known to people in the area. There is a limited police presence in the area and sometimes children are coerced into handing over money to people who threaten to report them to the police otherwise.
- Most of the children working have criminal records. Their initial misdemeanours are usually minor, but they are sent to a juvenile correction centre from which they emerge as more hardened criminals with no education or training. They learn anti-social behaviour from those around them and their peers and purposely do not carry identification cards to facilitate their release if they are picked up by police.
- Children are at risk of accidents involving vehicles as they beg and solicit at busy traffic intersections. In addition, they can be injured by fights, usually involving sharp weapons, either between themselves or with other people.
- Most of the children live in slum areas well-known for prostitution and drug dealing. In other words, these children are constantly exposed to anti-social behaviour and criminal activities.
- These children easily drop out of school, often influenced by the behaviour of their elder siblings and peers. Field teams noted that several children in one family will be begging. Children can earn large amounts from this type of work

ranging from IQD30,000 to 50,000 (around USD27 to 45) per day. Some said they earned up to IQD100,000 (USD90) per day. These sums of money tempt children to leave school and also tempt families to encourage their children to leave school.

- Due to the increased rate of crime in the area, some of these children are being controlled by agents/middlemen, further reinforcing exploitation and placing the children at even greater risk.
- The negative consequences of this worst form of child labour on community and society as a whole are significant. Criminal activity is spreading and affecting more and more communities and undermining the moral fabric of society.
- Children were not observed playing, not even when they took breaks from their work. They tend to rest under cover and out of the sun in areas close to the traffic intersections where they eat and talk to each other.
- The field teams observed that boys and young males in the group harassed the girls and young women doing the same activity. Therefore, even between themselves, gender and other discrimination exists.

Basra

Basra, as an oil-producing area that also boasts a port, used to be considered one of the wealthier governorates of Iraq. However, the impact of years of war, crisis and instability has also affected the fortunes of Basra, particularly in terms of the number of families who have moved there from other governorates. These displaced populations have been forced to abandon their homes, sometimes in other countries, to take up residence in slum areas on state lands in parts of Basra. The slums are widespread, particularly in Hyanah, Lebanon Casino, Qibla, Ahrar, Zubair and Abu Khaseeb. These communities benefit from few if any services and suffer in the winter periods when rains flood the slum areas. Some of these areas were safe havens for kidnapping and smuggling gangs

As well as Shiite, Sunni, Christian and Sabeen communities, Basra also has a large migrant community from African countries. Combined, these communities have created a situation of over-population, increased unemployment and poverty. Children can be found street vending, in factories and workshops and begging.

Children sell goods on most streets intersections. Principal among these are: the municipality intersection in the entrance of Al-Jazair street; Al-Jazair street intersection; the old intersection of Al-Mashraq; the intersection of auto fairs; the new intersection of Al-Mashraq; and the intersections of Al-Jamahouriya and Lebanon Casino. Dhi Qar and Basra have many common elements in the selection of areas where children work as they operate at street intersections. The reasons and observations contributing to the selection of these areas and this particular worst form of child labour include

- This form of child labour is prevalent in Basra as it is an easy area of work for children to fall into and the law is not clear on the issue of street vending which means that there is less or no harassment from the authorities.
- It is not as restrictive as some forms of child labour as there are no physical demands as in factories, construction, etc., and children generally have more flexible arrangements in this area.
- It is a form of child labour that facilitates the work of field research teams as there is easier access to these working children on the street and they are less constrained by time and movement as their peers in other forms.
- Families exert considerable pressure on children to sell goods on the street to offset their economic needs and poor standard of living.
- Most of the working children are from families that have moved to the city from rural areas of Basra or of neighbouring governorates. They live in slums which has a negative effect on the children in terms of exposure to physical violence, recruitment for gangs of beggars, sexual abuse, kidnapping by criminal gangs, etc. The field team noted that the beggars in the streets of Basra are highly organised.
- As well as being exposed and drawn into a culture of violence, the children also suffer from poor education which has negative impacts on the future of the child, the family and society as a whole.
- While this form of child labour may have been seen before on the streets of Basra, the number of children working in this area has escalated over the last two years. The goods being sold on the street are inexpensive and highly accessible, such as tissues, car accessories, CDs and DVDs, and the number of cars on the roads of Basra has also increased significantly, developing the potential market.
- Children were observed playing in between work periods – although only boys. Boys tend to work in the mornings and evenings and therefore play in the afternoon, whereas girls have to go home to do domestic chores as soon as they finish their work on the street.

Annex 3

Lists of Key Informants by Governorate

Baghdad

- Owners of brick factories;
- MOLSA labour inspectors;
- Contractors/entrepreneurs;
- Police;
- Health centre officials near Nahrawan;
- “Mukhtars” (neighbourhood/community leaders) of relevant neighbourhoods and leaders of the area.
- School teachers/principals.

Kirkuk

- Chief of juvenile police;
- Tasfirat Kirkuk, female detectives;
- Senior officials in Azadi police station;
- Mukhtars of Hussein neighbourhood;
- Agent/middleman in Hussein neighbourhood.

Najaf

- Najaf provincial council: Women and Children’s Committee and Human Rights Committee;
- Departments of Labour and Social Affairs, labour inspectors;
- Cemetery reception officials;
- Offices of cemetery burial and people involved in burials (undertakers);
- Police stations located near cemeteries that patrol inside the cemeteries;
- Doctors and nurses who work in health centres close to cemeteries;
- Mukhtars of neighbourhoods adjacent to cemeteries;
- Directorate of Education officials in Najaf;
- Court officials;
- Civil society organisations interested in childhood;
- People of the area adjacent to cemeteries.

Dhi Qar

- Children’s families;
- Traffic police at traffic intersections;
- Community police officers;
- Juvenile Court officials and social workers;
- Judicial investigators;
- Shop owners;
- Employers of industrial workshops and brick factories;
- Mukhtars of affected neighbourhoods;
- Emergency hospital staff;
- Research and previous studies for the samples that are selected.

Basra

- Several committees in the provincial council, namely: Women and Children’s Committee, Education Committee and Human Rights Committee;
- Provincial Human Rights Office;
- Institutions of Ministry of Interior, namely: community police, police station officials, police patrols and traffic police;
- Taxi and bus drivers;
- Civil society institutions;
- Media;
- Community leaders and groups, mukhtars from relevant neighbourhoods, teachers and prominent figures.

Annex 4

Interview Preparations and Programmes

Each field team examined issues that would affect time and place of interviews, particularly with children, and the potential of conducting interviews with parents. They also identified possible problems and difficulties to be addressed.

Basra Team

Based on initial assessments, the Basra team concluded the following in terms of timing of interviews, key questions and related issues:

- The sample population of children is easy to reach. The best times for conducting the interviews are either between 10:00-12:00 a.m., or in the afternoon 2:00-4:00 p.m. while they are at work. Work is divided into two shifts: one in the morning, 9:00 - 12:00 a.m., and in the afternoon, 2:00 - 7:00 p.m.. Break time is one hour between the morning and evening shifts.
- Children ask for money in return for agreeing to conduct interviews. The principle is to refuse such requests, but this could affect the sample size.
- The weather conditions for the interviews were challenging as it was cold and rainy.
- It was almost impossible to conduct interviews where children were working. There was a fear of being seen giving interviews by others or by the traffic police. Therefore, it was decided to arrange interviews in the IAA offices providing children could be persuaded to come. The IAA offices are close to where the children work. However, it proved difficult to persuade children to come to the offices for fear of punishment by the employer.
- Some children gave home addresses to interview their parents, but not all.

Najaf Team

Based on initial assessments, the Najaf team concluded the following in terms of timing of interviews, key questions and related issues:

- The preferred time for interviews in the cemetery is from 6:00-10:00 a.m.. It took children time to warm to the team and to trust them and participate fully in the interview.
- Interviews have to be held inside the cemeteries. There are frequent interferences in interviews by passers-by. This sometimes meant asking the children to move away from where they were working, but it is difficult for them to leave their workplace.
- Interviews are conducted under direct sunlight and sitting on the ground. There is no choice as the children work such long hours.
- There is a possibility to conduct interviews with some parents, but not all.

Kirkuk Team

Based on initial assessments, the Kirkuk team concluded the following in terms of timing of interviews, key questions and related issues:

- The most appropriate time of the interview is from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and in some cases the best time is the evening.
- Interviews were conducted with agents/middlemen in their workplace, but not directly with children in prostitution. There is the possibility to interview some who have been arrested and imprisoned in Tasfirat prison and police detectives. There are some opportunities to interview children in workplaces or outside work or at home through the help of a mediator to facilitate meetings.
- It is extremely difficult to impossible to interview parents of children working in prostitution.

Dhi Qar Team

Based on initial assessments, the Dhi Qar team concluded the following in terms of timing of interviews, key questions and related issues:

- Most interviews were conducted in the IAA Family Support Center. The team was asked to bring the children to the centre by car and to provide them with simple gifts to gain their trust to conduct interviews. Children were also available for interview close to the street intersections where they worked.
- Interviews were conducted during their break time which was easier for all concerned, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. which is a quieter time for traffic as well. Children refuse to conduct interviews outside of these times.
- Meeting parents for interviews depends on where they live. If it is in a safe area, then it is possible to meet them, otherwise it is not. Most of the children live in Al-Zahra neighbourhood, a slum area with significant criminal activity and therefore a security and safety risk for field researchers.

Baghdad Team

Based on initial assessments, the Baghdad team concluded the following in terms of timing of interviews, key questions and related issues:

- The best time to interview children is in the morning after the end of their working time, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., keeping in mind that these children work at night.
- Children are interviewed in or near the brick factories where they work.
- Parents can be interviewed as the families live in the factories where they work.

Annex 5

Summary outcomes of governorate working groups, Beirut, Lebanon, September 2014

During the second capacity-building workshop for IAA field teams and coordinators in Beirut, Lebanon, 19-21 September 2014, participants separated into governorate working groups, researchers and labour inspectors to discuss progress, challenges, problem resolution and timeframe for completion related to the rapid assessment on worst forms of child labour in Iraq. The additional information reported in these working group sessions provides considerable relevant detail to the examination of worst forms of child labour in Iraq and is summarised below for further reference

Kirkuk – Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

- Eight interviews had been conducted by mid-September 2014 with key informants, including police officers, middlemen, customers and children.
- Most of the child informant group are girls and the team had been able to access very few cases.
- Some of the cases involved individuals from KRI.
- Interviews were recorded surreptitiously in writing.
- The team was only able to find one client willing to be interviewed.
- The issue of obtaining security permits, for example, from the MOP and MOI, to show to informants and conduct interviews legitimately was a major challenge through formal channels. Members of the team were able to obtain authorisations through personal contacts and sometimes did not mention the IAA to avoid refusal. For this sector of work, the team needed security permits to be able to move freely and without fear of arrest by the authorities.
- All informants requested money or some form of benefit to agree to interviews. Financial support was required

to offset these requests. The logic was that if the interview was for an hour then money should be offered to compensate for what that person could earn in an hour. The amounts requested varied from IQD30,000 to 50,000 (USD26 to 43) and paying was ultimately the easiest way to obtain interviews. The team explained that financial support was central to their security in the field, or results would likely be affected.

- Houses and apartments where the prostitutes work are protected by the authorities making it very difficult to communicate with children, clients or middlemen. If researchers were to conduct interviews, then they could face arrest or other dangers.
- The team identified three types of brothels: some have certain working schedule/opening times; others are only open at night; and some are open 24 hours a day. It was also found that brothels could not be typified by neighbourhood as some were located in elegant and upmarket areas.
- According to the team's findings, prostitutes were paid a "wage" at the end of every month.
- The fact that project activities were interrupted because of the security situation in Iraq meant that momentum and contacts were lost or undermined and the team had to rebuild relationships almost from scratch. Researching this worst form of child labour requires significant amounts of work and commitment.
- The team emphasised the importance of flexibility within the questionnaire/interview approach, especially with child prostitution. It is vital that researchers can adapt as necessary and according to the informant. The team therefore made every effort to ensure that all questions were covered in interviews, but the interview act itself changed.
- The team had not yet conducted any focus group discussions and considered that this might be very difficult for Kirkuk.
- As mentioned, key information sources were security personnel through personal contacts, and also local community officials, including "mukhtars", and people on the street.

During discussions, it was noted that the police now have a Human Trafficking Unit and this could prove to be an important source of information, exchange and future interaction on the problem of child prostitution. The issue of security permits and authorisations was raised and it was suggested that the MOI should have been included as a national partner in the project

The greatest challenge was in entering brothels to meet children and clients and to request interviews. The Kirkuk team explained that while some middlemen were highly educated and skilled individuals, others were unpleasant, aggressive and violent, further highlighting the need for protection and security. One of the research team in Kirkuk had been threatened with sexual violence by a potential key informant

Dhi Qhar – Child Beggars

- Six interviews had been conducted by mid-September 2014: three children, two key informants and one family interview. Two interviews were inconclusive. The team acknowledged that it had faced extreme difficulties in accessing children due to interference and threats by police and middlemen. The only successful way to get around the middlemen was to pay them off. There were also challenges in accessing children working and living in remote areas.
- The team requested logistical support from MOLSA and MOP to facilitate gaining access to informants.
- The children begging in the street are exposed to weather extremes and verbal and physical abuse particularly by the police and car drivers. Observations also noted that the children were exhausted and malnourished.

Najaf – Children Working in Cemeteries

- The team had conducted 12 interviews by mid-September 2014: eight children, three key informants and one family. The team explained that it had originally anticipated reaching the target of 50 interviews but that this had been adversely affected by the security situation.
- The team had experienced problems with employers who would not let them interview children during working hours.
- Some informants, children and employers, were asking for payment to give the interview.
- The presence of a large IDP population in the area had considerably increased the incidence of child labour.
- The IAA is well connected in the area which has ensured good information sources with other institutions and organisations.
- The team had never received proper security or official authorisation to carry out the assessment in the area.

Labour inspectors participating in the discussions also raised the issue of the need for the Labour Law to be amended in light of the findings of the researchers. This was noted and would form part of the internal discussions that would need to take place within MOLSA once the rapid assessment was completed. Legislative amendments would also be a part of the follow-up responsibilities of the Task Force on Child Labour

Basra – Street Vending

- The team had changed in the course of the first phase. Between the two teams, nine interviews had taken place up the middle of September 2014.
- The team was being supported in its work by a local organisation and was approaching child vendors directly in the street. They would occasionally buy goods off the children to be able to talk to them. Interviews would take around 20 minutes as it was difficult for children to give more time, and the team would give them juice during a small break in the interview.
- Interviews took place on the streets or in the local organisation's premises for children and in work places for key informants. The team was obliged to improvise wherever possible because of the challenges in getting agreement for interviews. Visits were made to children's homes and, in one case parents were invited to the home of one of the team.
- Observation of movements of vendors from one street location to another, their behaviour and appearance was a major part of the team's activities. Through observations and interviews, it was revealed that the children were working long hours, some from 4:00 a.m. to 12 p.m., are subject to physical abuse (beaten), face extreme weather conditions and some of them live on the street as well.
- The team had been issued with a security authorisation letter and enjoyed good cooperation with the police, particularly the traffic police. Police officers would occasionally help those children who lived on the street, finding them shelter, water and food.
- The team was facing difficulties in interviewing children in terms of getting permission from their parents, even after visits to the home and long discussions.
- The children tended to sell goods at crossroads where cars were obliged to stop.

- It had been observed that a number of children were suffering from illness or disease, including skin infections.
- The vendors were highly mobile around the streets, moving from one crossroads to another. This created difficulties for the team which required time to park cars and return to locations only to find the children had moved on.
- In terms of other information sources, the team was receiving constructive support from the social police, the Committee of Women and Children, the Council of Education and the Human Rights Office in the governorate.

During discussions, the team noted that up to 2007 there was a phenomenon of street gangs controlling vendors in Basra. However, this appeared to have changed as there was no evidence of gang control during the team's activities on the street .nor from interviews

Baghdad – Children Working in Brick Factories

- By mid-September 2014, the team had conducted 14 interviews with child workers, one interviewer of a factory owner and three key informant interviews. Four field visits had been carried out.
- In terms of general findings, the team found that the children are either not paid any wages for the work they do, or receive a very small amount of money. In addition, when money is paid, the girls earn half the amount of boys even though they put in the same amount of physical effort. The decision as to how much children might be paid is made by the manager and is highly arbitrary.
- There are no health centres in the community and no first aid kits in the work places.
- Most of the families working in the factories are IDPs. Parents and children are uneducated and often illiterate. The parents take their children out of school in the third grade and then send them to work in the factories. The parents are often indebted and the family income is vital in paying off these debts.
- Life of the families is very simple and the team was able to fully enter into the community, visiting work places and homes. The families live in very primitive settings, surrounded by garbage and human waste – the health hazards were significant. Children are often malnourished and anaemic. There is not enough food or clothing for families.
- The environment where the factories are located and the families live is desert and sand and dust penetrate everywhere. The air is highly polluted as the factories use unprocessed fuel to light the kilns for the bricks.
- The team divided the children into seven group types according to their hours of work. The team would wait for the children outside the brick factories in order to talk to them. They gave sweets and food to the children during the interviews and even found that this helped with adults.
- The team reported that the security situation in this area was very difficult which affected freedom of movement.
- The working hours are built around 1:00 or 3:00 in the morning until midday. Although this might give time to children and families for other activities in the afternoon and evening, they are all exhausted from work in the factories.
- Factory owners did not cooperate with the IAA team and it was hoped that MOLSA might be able to facilitate this cooperation in the next phase of data collection. There were no problems encountered in entering houses of families, but this was not the same for the factories.

In an anecdote, a team member explained that one woman had given birth while working in the factory, helped by the other

women workers. She then took the baby home and came back to work to the next day. This revealed the desperate levels of poverty and need facing these families in the area.

The Baghdad team also gave a slide show of photographs taken during the visits to the area and a video that was made by the children working in the area. The video and photos revealed how successful the team had been in establishing a relationship of trust and confidence with the families and children.

Annex 6

Case studies of families of child labourers

A key element of the methodology of this rapid assessment was to collect qualitative data on the situation of children working in worst forms of child labour in the five governorates. Part of this process involved meeting and interviewing families to obtain a much more in-depth understanding of background and situation that might give further evidence of the “push and pull” factors for child labour. While considerable numbers of interviews were carried out and rich information collected, it is not possible to reflect the results of all interviews in this assessment. Therefore, below are descriptive presentations of the most representative of family interviews from three governorates: Baghdad, Najaf and Nasariya.

For the families in Baghdad and Najaf, it is striking to note the large size of the families and the inevitable impact this has on economic and food security, key drivers of child labour. The families live in incredibly challenging conditions and environments, pretty much from hand to mouth. These stories (all names have been changed to protect the identity of the families) add considerably to the evidence collected through interviews with working children and key informants pointing to the existence of many critical factors that either oblige children and/or their families to take the decision to work. Their options are extremely limited, the alternatives either unavailable or non-existent and the future is bleak in all cases. The enabling environment to tackle child labour in Iraq is also limited in capacity and resources, and the security situation impacts on any efforts that could be made. Clearly, a political solution to the security situation is a critical factor in constructing an effective and sustainable enabling environment to address child labour.

Baghdad (brick factories)

Family members

Father: Ali Mahmoud (date of birth 1974)

First wife: Hasna Abdel Amir (dob 1980)

Second wife: Khalida Abbas (dob 1980)

Children and dependents:

1. Nabila (married, dob 1996)

2. Zaynab (dob 2001)

3. Asia (dob 2002)

4. Hawraa (dob 2002)
5. Hadir (dob 2003)
6. Haidar (dob 2004)
7. Ibrahim (dob 2006)
8. Assaad (dob 2006)
9. Ziad (dob 2011)
10. Sarah (dob 2011)
11. Mariam (dob 2011)
12. Ruwaida (dob 2012)
13. Yasser (dob 2013)
14. Muhannad (dob 2015)
15. Anwar's daughter whose identity card is lost
16. Khalida, the second wife, is pregnant

Family history

The family used to live in Qadisiya region in the rural area of Diwaniya/Shafiya city. Ali, the father, started working at the age of 14 when he was in grade 7, after his father had become a prisoner of war in the Iraqi-Iranian war (1980-1988). Ali's father stayed in prison for 11 years, so Ali's family migrated from the city to a rural area, due to the deteriorating economic situation.

As a child, Ali had worked in construction as a day labourer. He was drafted into the army at the age of 18. However, he took the decision to desert and was immediately placed on an army "wanted" list. To avoid being arrested, he would move from one city to another using a false identity card. It was therefore extremely difficult for him to work and he spent many years without a regular income.

Ali got married for the first time to his cousin in 1995. He married his second wife, another cousin, in 1999. After the regime collapsed in 2003, Ali worked for more than two years in the Nahrawan factories where he unloaded hot bricks. However, because of the extremely physical nature of his job, by the relatively young age of 41, he became incapacitated and could no longer work. At that point, he decided to bring his family to work in the brick factories. He explained this decision by stating that he considered his children as grown-up and that it was time for them to be responsible for the family's living costs.

Ali's family is currently building a house out of concrete blocks on his father's land because he himself does not own any land. The ceiling is made out of wood and the floor is bare brick. He has a debt of around IQD4 million (approximately USD3,360). The income from his wives and children working in the brick factories is also being used to service this debt.

Housing and living conditions

The family lives in absolute poverty, with its meagre income depending entirely on the work of Ali's two wives and two of his daughters, Hawraa who is 13 and Zainab who is 14. The daily income amounts to between IQD10,000 and 15,000 (USD8.4 to 12.6). Ali receives all the money and decides how to spend it on food, fuel, clothes and other items. The family buys three gas bottles and 50kg of flour every week. Big bottles of drinking water cost IQD500 (USD0.42) each.

The house has two rooms of 3 m² each. There are storage facilities for flour and some clothes. Between the two rooms, there is a kitchen which includes a table, a pot, some old black utensils and a one-eyed cooker. The ceiling is made out of a wood-based product called “geneco”, and there are no windows for ventilation.

In each room, there is one lamp linked to an electric cable. The bathroom is very cold and separated from the kitchen only by a curtain. The toilet is very small and made out of concrete block. There are no doors and the curtains are made out of old flour bags or torn pieces of fabric. The water used to shower is salty water from the drainage.

There is only one electric heater due to the high price of fuel. There are no fans for the hot periods of the year. The family has got two gas bottles, one for the cooker and one for the furnace. They have no washing machine so the women wash the family's clothes by hand.

All the children sleep in one room with one wife, and the father sleeps in the other room with the other wife. The floors are made of bricks and partially covered by mats. The family members often sit and sleep on the ground without a mattress. Everything in the house is black due to the factory smoke which penetrates the rooms continuously despite the absence of windows.

Health and environmental conditions

The family suffers from environmental pollution due to the smoke from the factories and dump site which collects waste from Baghdad. Ali's wives look exhausted and show signs of early aging. The children suffer from shortness of breath, coughing, eye irritation and inflammation and other related illnesses. Their faces are dirty as a result of flue, dust and smoke. Their skin is also dirty and rough, and there are scars and wounds on their bodies that stem from sleeping on the brick floor without a mattress, as well as from falling bricks during their work. Insects, mice and rats are continuously present and crawl across the bodies of the sleeping children at night.

The children appear to suffer from malnutrition. Their breakfast is mainly composed of bread and tea, with the occasional addition of tomatoes. One of the two mothers lamented that her children cry sometimes because they feel cold, tired or hungry. At work, the supervisor does not allow the children to eat during working hours and they have reportedly fainted several times.

The family is also very concerned about Muhannad, the new-born baby. He has a chronic disease due to the air pollution and the family is considering leaving the factory area for a certain period of time until the baby has recovered. The father and the wives are aware of the danger of the constant presence of smoke, and one of them said that the baby's disease might turn into cancer. However, she said that they would have to stay because they would have no other source of income if they left the factory to return to Diwaniya.

Education levels

Ali left school when he was in grade 7, after his father was imprisoned. None of Ali's 15 children have ever attended school, mainly because of their impoverished situation and the need to work as in the case of the two adolescent daughters. His wives are illiterate and also never attended school. Ali said that he considered them ignorant compared with his own cultural and educational level, as he at least completed primary level. He acknowledged that the fate of his children would be like that of their mothers, because they would grow up without any education.

Two of the boys, Haidar, 10, and Ibrahim, 8, were proud to tell the interviewer that they knew how to count until 15 or even 30. One of them had even been taught how to write his name by his cousin. The other said that he did not want to go to school because he had heard his cousin saying that pupils were often beaten at school, and he did not want anybody to beat him.

Ali, his wives and the children talked at length about school and education, and expressed their concern and disappointment about depriving children from going to school. They agreed that only if they were able to secure a regular income would they allow the children the chance to go to school. The children said that they wished to send their own children to school in the future, but they also acknowledged that if things remained as they were then they would not be able to do so.

Working arrangements

Ali gave a contradictory viewpoint regarding the work of his wives and adolescent daughters. On the one hand, he said that women's work in the factories under the present conditions was "pure injustice", but on the other, he justified being "obliged" to make them work, even though this was against his tribal values, customs and traditions. He admitted that he felt ashamed about the fact that his wives and daughters work.

Moreover, Ali acknowledged that his children's work was illegal. He made his daughters work because they were older than his sons. If this were not the case, he would have made his sons work rather than his wives and daughters. In order to protect them, Ali accompanies his wives and daughters to and from work, and orders them to return home in case there are strangers in the factories.

Once they have finished their work for the day, the wives and two daughters are then also responsible for the household's well-being. One of the other daughters looks after her younger brothers and sisters while the mothers and older sisters are at work. Boys have no role in the household.

Khalida, the second wife, is working during her last month of pregnancy. Hasna, the mother of the current baby of the family, is working as well. She only stayed home for four days after delivery before going back to work. The two adolescent girls work in brick packing, one of the most physical jobs in the factories.

Ali said he wished he had had sons first instead of daughters because they would have worked instead of their mothers and sisters. In his opinion, sons should be the family's main provider after the father. Therefore, Ali says he is waiting for his sons to grow up to make them work, because, as he pointed out, "... more labour means more income."

Najaf (cemeteries)

Family members

Father:	Adnan Ali (dob 1967)
First wife:	Rajaa Hashem (dob unknown)
Second wife:	Ibtissam Mohammad (dob 1979)

Children⁵⁰ and dependents:

1. Qassem (dob 1995)
2. Walid (dob 1998)
3. Qarrar (dob 1999)
4. Sana'a (dob 1999)
5. Zahraa (dob 2001)
6. Hussein (dob 2001)
7. Fardos (dob 2004)
8. Zeinab (dob 2008)

Each of the father's two wives has eight children, many of whom do not know their real age or give wrong ages. Adnan Ali, the father, said that he did not know how many children he had. When he was asked to count them, he was surprised by how many there were, while being unable to specify the number of boys and girls among them

9. Hamid (dob unknown)
10. Tuqa (dob unknown)
11. Mustapha (dob 2011)
12. Mayssam (dob unknown)
13. Youssef (dob unknown)
14. Saif (dob unknown)
15. Rana (dob 2015)
16. Samar (Qassem's wife, dob 1995)
17. Yasmin (daughter of Qassem and Samar, dob 2012)
18. Mother of Adnan Ali (name and dob unknown)

Family history

The family's place of origin is the rural town of Diwaniya in Afaq. They moved to Najaf 11 years ago. The father's former occupation was cattle grazing and he used to move from one place to another looking for grazing areas. His family owned their animals but did not own any land, so they used to rent feeding grounds from other people. During the period of the embargo, feed prices increased and their economic situation deteriorated. Therefore, they progressively started losing their animals until the entire herd was gone.

Adnan Ali married his first wife, Rajaa, in 1987, according to the principle of "Qassa Baqssa" through which families exchange women for marriage. Women typically have no rights in this kind of arrangement, neither when they get married nor if they are divorced. In 1992, Adnan Ali married his second wife, Ibtissam, who was 13-years-old at that time.

The main reason for relocating to Najaf was the family's poor economic situation and the lack decent living conditions. In Diwaniya, the family's food used to be very plain and they were unable even to afford lentils, one of the cheapest cereals in Iraq. They used to cook "false soup" for the children, made up of water, onions and spices, and they did not eat any fruit.

Today, however, the family's situation is much better and they have enough food to eat.

When they first moved to Najaf, the family lived at a relative's house. Then, someone helped them obtain some concrete blocks so they were able to build a house in an area that is not registered at the land registry. In order to build the house, the family had to borrow money from their relatives and they now owe more than IQD6 million (just over USD5,000).

However, the authorities are now threatening to demolish their house because it was illegally built on government-owned land. Nevertheless, some religious and other influential individuals in the government protect people living in this area and demolition of houses has been postponed.

Housing and living conditions

The family's house is in an area owned by the government and only a wall separates it from the cemetery. It is also situated close to the Najaf garbage landfill making it highly unsuitable for a family residence, and the inhabitants face a number of health-related problems. The streets are not properly paved and the area lacks electricity and water services. Because of this, the residents collected money and bought transformers to supply the area with electricity, as well as pipes for the water supply. However, there are occasional water cuts for up to two or three days at a time.

The house is 200 m² and divided into two parts. Each wife has two rooms, a kitchen and a living room. There is also a big separate room for guests. There is one oil heater for the whole family, as well as a television, two refrigerators (one for each wife) and two used one-eyed cookers. The bathroom and toilets are separate. There is no washing machine in the house, so clothes are washed by hand. There are two air coolers which are insufficient to overcome the heat of the summer.

At every meal, the women gather their own children together and Adnan Ali eats alternately with each group. The children eat their food directly from the floor as there are no trays or dining tables.

Relations within the family

The girls in the family are obliged to get married at an early age. The oldest was married at the age of 13, and the second at the age of 14. The reason for early marriage is to help alleviate the “cost burden” of daughters on the family. Once married, they become the responsibility of their husbands.

Some of the girls used to work with their mothers in the cemetery, selling rosewater or watching over their products and belongings while their mothers and brothers wandered around the cemetery compound to sell things. When they grew up, they were no longer allowed to go out to work, to school or anywhere out of fear of kidnapping or harassment. One of the daughters who used to work with her mother and brother talked about being the victim of harassment, verbal violence and beatings. Her brother confirmed that it was not appropriate or safe for women to go out to work.

Adnan Ali used to beat his first wife when he felt either desperate or frustrated because of their poor economic situation. However, this stopped as he grew older. In turn, the wives beat the children with a water hose if they are disobedient. There are continuous verbal altercations and tensions between the two wives and, as a result, Adnan Ali sometimes has to intervene to resolve disputes.

When any member of the family is sick, they take him or her to the dispensary to be treated. When working children are sick, they stay home until they recover. As soon as they are better, they are sent back to work because the family cannot afford loss of income.

The children reported that they were closer to their father than their mothers, as their father did not beat them. Rajaa, the first wife, admitted that she did not take good care of the children, obliging them to work. She also said that she did not care that they were exposed to harm or illness as this was “the will of fate”. Therefore, the children talk to the father about what happens to them at work and in the street.

At home, the girls look after the house, except for running errands which is the responsibility of boys because daughters are not allowed to leave the home.

Education levels

Adnan Ali dropped out of school before reaching grade 2 due to the distance of the school from his home. He and his wives are illiterate and, currently, no child in the family goes to school. Several of the boys did attend school but then dropped out, whereas none of the girls ever attended. The father described the current state of the education system as poor. He said that with schools running three shifts, he wondered how children could learn anything within the short timeframe available.

The children talked about their love for school and its importance in changing their situation in terms of being able to read, write and overcome their ignorance. One of the boys, whose mother had decided that he had to leave school in spite of his passion and his good performance, started crying when the subject of education was mentioned. The children expressed their intention to send their own future children in school, even if their situation remained unchanged.

Working arrangements

Adnan Ali is currently unemployed and Rajaa and three boys are the family's breadwinners. These boys include Rajaa's son Hussein, 12, who started working at the age of 8 and sells bags inside the markets. The second is one of Ibtissam's sons who works on a vehicle pulled by a motorcycle to transport visitors inside the cemetery. The fee charged to customers is between IQD500 and 1,000 (USD0.42 to 0.84). The third boy works alongside his mother Rajaa who sells rosewater and incense inside the cemetery. She buys incense and candles for IQD3,000 (USD2.5), and sells them for IQD5,000 (USD4.2). The rosewater costs IQD8,000 (USD6.7) to buy wholesale and is sold on to customers for IQD12,000 (around USD10). Work in the cemetery becomes very intense during holidays and religious feasts, and sometimes lasts during the whole night, obliging them to sleep inside the cemetery throughout the holiday period.

Rajaa says her work is exhausting. She is seldom inside the house, leaving at dawn each day and returning at night, sometimes coming home briefly for lunch. She also complained about problems she faces with other women in the cemetery who are her competitors. Her work space is a simple mat on which she puts the items that she sells with nothing to protect her from the weather. Before working at the cemetery, Rajaa used to collect glass bottles at the landfill.

Ibtissam, the second wife, is currently not working because she has a baby girl to look after. Even when she was in her last month of pregnancy, she used to go to the landfill to collect glass bottles and cardboard boxes. Because she can no longer do this, she has taken her son out of school to work in her place. He was in grade 2. The two women are solely responsible for feeding the children and Adnan Ali plays no role in this regard.

Rajaa's eldest son, Qassem, works in construction as a day labourer. He makes between IQD20,000 to 25,000 a day (USD17 to 21.6). He is married and has one daughter and they all live in the family home. Rajaa wants her other children to start work as gravediggers as soon as they can. Once they are able to carry a "mattock", the heavy iron tool used to dig graves, she will send them to work inside the cemetery. Meanwhile, she takes the children's income and divides the money out to cover living expenses. She also gives her husband his pocket money to buy cigarettes and other necessities. Children also receive their own pocket money out of what they earn.

Hazards and health conditions

The family reported hearing about many incidents inside the cemetery, including rape and harassment, and even fatal accidents involving gravediggers. However, nothing usually comes of reporting these incidents to the policy for the cemetery.

The overall appearance of the children indicates significant signs of neglect. Most of them wore dirty and sometimes torn clothes that would not provide protection against the cold. Their hair was dirty and full of dust and their skin was rough and also covered with dust. Physically their bodies were thin and it was clear that they were all suffering from malnutrition.

Nasiriya (begging and commercial sexual exploitation)

Family members

Father: Kazem (dob 1980)

Wife: Mayada (dob 1992)

Children and dependents:

1. Mohamad (dob 2005)
2. Hind (dob 2007)
3. Shahd (dob 2011)
4. Ahmed (dob 2013)

Family history

Mayada married Kazem when she was 12 or 13 in an out-of-court marriage. Initially, they lived in Kazem's family's clay house in Souk Al-Shouyoukh region close to Nassiriya. Kazem used to work in a brick factory in Nahrawan region in Baghdad. However, he fell into a brick oven, severely injuring his back and legs and preventing him from being able to work again. In 2012-2013, the family moved to Nassiriya after tribal conflicts arose among the families living at the brick factories. They now rent a house owned by an uncle for IQD50,000 a year (just over USD43).

After ensuring a marriage contract in court, Mayada received some financial assistance as well as civil registration cards for her children. However, she had to register them by falsifying their ages and making them younger than they really were to avoid routine procedures in court when registering an out-of-court marriage contract. The oldest child, Mohamed, is currently in grade 1 at school, but the 8-year-old daughter Hind could not be enrolled due to being too young according to the registration papers.

When the family settled in Nassiriya, they found out from other families that many children worked street vending and begging on road intersections. Mayada was encouraged to send her children to work along with the neighbours. To being with, Mohamed would go and then Hind followed. They have since become the main breadwinners for the family. Mohamed earns IQD10,000 a day (USD8.64), while Hind makes IQD7,000 a day (USD6).

Housing and living conditions

The family lives in a glass brick house made up of a kitchen and one room where all the family eat and sleep. The house is dirty and smells bad. Bathroom and sewage facilities are basic and the ceiling is a piece of metal supported by tree trunks.

The kitchen includes a refrigerator, oven, television and a satellite dish. Mayada washes the laundry by hand. Although the family has to purchase drinking water every day, electricity is available in the house. However, there are frequent electricity cuts and the family cannot afford to pay the subscription fees to the generator in the area. Because of this, Mayada often has to use candles or flashlights for lighting in the house. She would like to move houses because it is damp in the winter when it rains. On these occasions, she often takes her husband and children to her sister's house.

Mayada takes the children's earnings each day and gives them each IQD1,000 (USD0.84) to cover the costs of their food when they are out. With the remaining money, she buys the ingredients of the family's simple diet, consisting mostly of tomatoes, potatoes and eggplants.

Education levels

Kazem knows how to read and write, while Mayada is illiterate. In spite of her love of education as a child, her parents did not enrol her in school due to their economic problems. Even now, she pointed out that it would be difficult for her to attend literacy classes because she would need money to commute.

Her son Mohamed currently attends school and Mayada seems eager for him to pursue his education. She explained that she would not allow him to drop out of school and that she wanted him to have a "beautiful" future. Mohamed goes to work in the afternoon if he has classes in the morning, and vice-versa.

Hind expressed her wish to attend school and "quit this awful job", insisting she would not allow her own children to work because she would be afraid of the dangers they would face.

Children's situation at work

Mayada spoke extensively of her children's work. Her fear for her children conflicted with her satisfaction with the income they brought in, without which the family's economic situation would be a lot worse. She said she was concerned for her children as they had to work until late, especially her daughter who worked alone. She feared they would be run over by

cars, beaten by other children or adults or kidnapped. Once, her son was badly injured when another child hit him and his leg needed to be stitched.

Mohamed has been arrested several times for begging by the police, but he was always released as soon as he told the police his story and how he was supporting his family. Mayada also said that several people helped her children. She said that someone bought her daughter things and drove her home at 9 o'clock every evening. She described them as "good people who care for my daughter". The neighbours confirmed that a car drove Hind home every evening, often with food. However, they also hinted at rumours that Hind might be engaged in sexual activities for which she could earn up to IQD2,000 (USD1.73).

Mayada did not make any reference to situations of harassment to which her children might be subjected, always stressing that this was a problem for other children. She claimed that her daughter was naïve and innocent about life and its dangers. She also said she had entrusted her daughter once to one of the boys who was in charge of the group of children given his age and his experience on the streets. It transpired subsequently, however, that this boy had abused her daughter, using her to make IQD50,000 a day (USD43.2) while only paying her IQD10,000 (USD8.64).

Hind spoke of her suffering at work, how she was violently abused by other children, how exhausting her work was and how she hated the heat and dust in the summer and the cold and rain in the winter. Sometimes she had to beg for money which was demeaning and people sometimes humiliated her. She described the harassment as continuous. It came from other children, pedestrians and car drivers, some of whom tried to convince her to get into the car with them and offering her money if she would come with them. She said that she could not quit her work and that she felt responsible for her family. She justified her work by pointing out how much her family needed the money to settle their debts and to buy food.

Health conditions

The children receive healthcare treatment at the local dispensary given the relatively low fees that are charged there. Mayada does not allow them to work when they are sick.

Hind's front teeth are long and protruding. Her hair is yellowish and dyed with peroxide. She wears a small veil from which strands of her hair, stiff with dirt, escapes. She is very thin and wears torn, worn-out clothes. The skin on her feet is cracked because she does not wear shoes and her nails are dirty.

The younger children clearly suffer from neglect and poor personal hygiene. Their bodies, hair and clothes are all dirty.

Annex 7

Work hazards facing children by governorate and occupation

Table A7.1: Most common hazards confronting working children in Baghdad (brick factories)

Hazard	Recurrence
Work for long hours	100%
Work in a polluted environment	100%
Getting injured	100%
Direct exposure to the sun	100%
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%
Exposure to extreme temperatures (cold/hot) and noise	100%
Brick collapse	63%
Hunger	51%
Heavy loads	23%
Abuse and beating by people responsible for the children at work	20%
Fractures	17%

Table A7.2: Most common hazards confronting working children in Najaf (cemeteries)

Hazard	Recurrence
Direct exposure to the sun	100%
Exposure to extreme temperatures (cold/hot) and noise	100%
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%
Long working hours	84%
Work in a polluted environment	70%
Night shifts during holidays and feasts	63%
Getting injured	35%
Abuse and beating by people responsible for the children at work	30%
Rape and sexual harassment	26%
Burglary	23%
Fatal injuries	21%
Heavy loads	21%
Traffic accidents	21%
Sexual abuse and rape	7%

Table A7.3: Most common hazards confronting working children in Basra (child beggars)

Hazard	Recurrence
Working in a polluted environment	100%
Direct exposure to the sun	100%
Exposure to extreme temperatures (cold/hot) and noise	100%
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%
Long working hours	79%

Exposure to verbal violence	38%
Beating by other children of passers-by	29%
Getting injured	18%
Traffic accidents	16%
Subject to beating, threats and imprisonment by the police	15%
Subject to harassment	13%
Heavy loads	4%
Fatal injuries	4%
Burns	4%

Table A7.4: Most common hazards confronting working children in Kirkuk

(commercial sexual exploitation)

Hazard	Recurrence
Long working hours	100%
Sexual abuse and rape	100%
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%
(Visiting doctors and taking medicines continuously (antibiotics	59%
Beating and abuse by clients	47%
Subject to verbal violence	41%
Working in a polluted environment	29%
Subject to threats with weapons by clients	18%
Fatal injuries	12%

Table A7.5: Most common hazards confronting working children in Nasiriya

(child beggars/ sexual exploitation)

Hazard	Recurrence
Working in a polluted environment	100%
Direct exposure to the sun	100%
Sexual abuse and rape	100%
Exposure to extreme temperatures (cold/hot) and noise	100%
Exposure to unsafe conditions	100%
Beating, chasing and harassment by the police	91%
Long working hours	74%
Traffic accidents	39%
Abuse and beating by individuals responsible for working children	26%
Limited personal hygiene opportunities	26%
Injuries	17%
Subject to exploitation by clients	9%

NOTE: Percentages in Najaf, Basra and Nasiriya are less than 100%. The remaining children combine school and work.



UNICEF/2016/ Anmar Rfaat- Iraq – Erbil/ A young boy works in a mechanic shop in an industrial area in Erbil in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.



UNICEF/2016/Wathiq Khuzaiie - Iraq – Najaf/ 12 years boy, works in a brick factory in Najaf, Iraq. His job is to carry and transport bricks, from the brick oven to dry them in open filed under the sun.



UNICEF/2016/Wathiq Khuzai - Iraq – Najaf/ 12 years boy, works in a brick factory in Najaf, Iraq. He works from 6 AM until 6 PM. He makes 15,000 Iraqi Dinar (about US \$13) per day.



UNICEF/2016/Wathiq Khuzai - Iraq – Najaf/ 13 years boy, inside brick factory oven in Najaf, Iraq. He said he would like to continue his education, but due to his family's financial situation he is unable to do so.

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