

DECREASING CHILD LABOUR THROUGH PROMOTING DECENT RURAL EMPLOYMENT



WORKING FOR rural and agricultural workers, including child labourers

WORKING TO mainstream decent rural employment into national policy frameworks

WORKING WITH Governments of Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania, and ILO

WORKING THANKS TO Sweden



Promoting “decent rural employment”, as the name implies, is about more than just creating opportunities for employment. It is about upgrading the quality of existing jobs or creating new ones that empower rural people and lead to decent levels of income and a secure and healthy working environment.

A three-year FAO programme, implemented in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and launched in Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania in 2011, is working at the policy level to raise governments’ awareness that providing decent rural employment will pay back in extremely important ways. As people improve their livelihoods and have more secure futures, they will also contribute to improved food security and poverty reduction, and be more able and willing to manage natural resources in a more sustainable manner. These ideas have resonated with policy-makers. In its first two years, FAO provided technical support to 36 national policies, strategies and programmes, on issues ranging from Malawi’s

In Malawi, some 37 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 are involved in labour. Most of them work in agriculture, in areas such as crop production, fisheries and livestock. Much of this work is hazardous and presents both health and safety risks for the children, who often work long hours for little or no pay. In addition to their health, labour also affects the children’s futures because it interferes with their right to receive an education. Many child labourers do not go to school or, if they do, the strenuous work makes them too tired to learn the skills they need to improve their lives. While Malawi does have policies on child labour, these deal more with industrial labour and commercial agriculture and do not adequately address child labour in subsistence agriculture and the informal economy. An FAO programme promoting “decent rural employment” in Malawi and its northern neighbour, the United Republic of Tanzania, helped raise awareness of the impact of child labour on rural development. As a result of this and related work undertaken by FAO with partners, Malawi has developed and endorsed a rich Framework for Action to prevent and reduce child labour in agriculture.

child labour to its National Youth Employment Creation Programme, and from the United Republic of

Tanzania’s National Agriculture Policy to its Fisheries Sector Development Programme.



*In its first two years, the FAO programme supported **36 national policies, strategies and programmes** in Malawi and Tanzania.*

MOST OF WORLD'S POOR LIVE AND WORK IN RURAL AREAS

The statistics from the rural areas of developing countries underscore the importance of focusing on decent rural employment in any effort to alleviate poverty and improve food security. Consider that rural areas of developing countries are home to 75 percent of the world's poor, that more than half of them are aged 25 and below, that 86 percent of rural people rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, that less than 20 percent of them have access to social protection and, in the majority of cases, that they work in an informal economy.

Governments often fail to recognize that 60 percent of all child labour is in agriculture, mostly unpaid family labour, which is not well-covered by child-labour laws. Regulations to protect workers often focus on industry and factory workers, leaving agricultural workers with less protection. The FAO focus on decent rural employment has raised policy-makers' awareness of the impact of child labour on a nation's future and the importance of providing solutions for small-scale producers, trapped in a cycle of poverty and child labour. The cycle begins when poor families put their children to work instead of sending

them to school. The children remain unskilled, unable to find jobs, run productive farms or start their own businesses. Less able to provide as adults, they put their own children to work to meet household needs, and the cycle of poverty continues.

FAO USES INTEGRATED COUNTRY APPROACH

FAO uses an Integrated Country Approach (ICA) to promote decent rural employment, meaning it brings together government ministries such as agriculture and labour, but also includes farmers' federations and unions. The goal is to have all of these stakeholders recognize the importance of – and work together to create an enabling environment for providing – decent rural employment. Through this, FAO promotes investment in children as the future pillars of the national labour force.

Recognizing the multifaceted aspects of decent rural employment, FAO pulled together diverse specialists from across the Organization to address the specific needs of stakeholders and partners. Known now as the FAO Decent Rural Employment Team (DRET), experts in areas such as gender, labour rights, child labour and youth employment provide technical advice to Malawi and

the United Republic of Tanzania for incorporation into their policy frameworks.

With support of DRET and in collaboration with the FAO Fisheries Department, Malawi has designed a new National Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2013-2018) that recognizes social development and decent work as essential to ensuring sustainable livelihoods in the fisheries sector. It also calls for a reduction in the number of child labourers engaged in hazardous work. The team provided technical support to the government in creating a corresponding implementation plan. In Malawi, the team's work with the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture led to the endorsement of a rich Framework for Action, which marked a significant breakthrough in having the highest level of political support for broad steps to prevent and reduce child labour in agriculture.

Governments often fail to recognize that 60% of child labour is in agriculture, mostly unpaid family labour.