

Negative food-related coping strategies & child labor



- 1) General trends on food insecurity and coping mechanisms
- 2) Key findings from LPC-IRC's joint paper on food insecurity & child labor

Background

- Significant increase of food insecurity
 - Increased prices of food items
 - Food insecurity has increased by 20 points (2019 to 2020) to reach nearly half of the SyR
 - Low levels of exclusive breastfeeding (22 to 44% according to sources)
- Increasing child labour as per VASYR 2020 (4%) and other surveys (UNICEF, UNHCR etc)
- Previous studies have showed linkages: in the Bekaa in 2019, 74% of the households of working children living in informal settlements faced severe food insecurity.



Food-based coping strategies

Food-based coping mechanisms have increased:

- 65% of SyR reduce the number of meals eaten per day and the size of the portions

Small children do not get to eat enough:

- Only 51% of the SyR 6 -23 months have an acceptable meal frequency, (sharp decrease compared to 79.8% in 2019)
- 90% of these children have a diet that is not varied enough.
- The most vulnerable have a less nutritious diet -> **increasing risks of micronutrient deficiencies, of acute and chronic malnutrition, higher risk of disease**



LPC-IRC's joint paper on food insecurity & child labor

Objective: better understand the linkage between food insecurity and child labour, and its recent evolution in Lebanon

Method: Literature review, design of a joint questionnaire, rolled out with different communities by ACF and IRC; additional evidence from LPC's CPA data, CAMELEON and NRC's education programmes

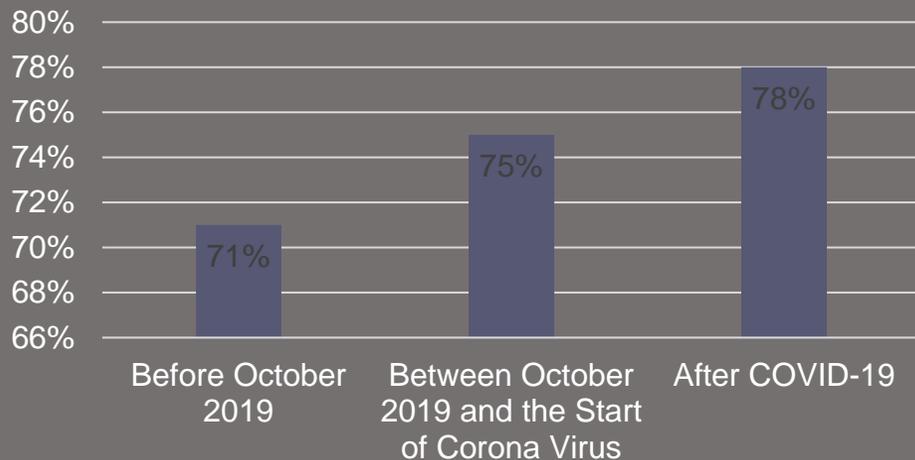
649 individuals were interviewed between July and September 2020 in the Bekaa, Beirut, North and South Lebanon; mostly Syrian refugees but also Lebanese ; included working children.



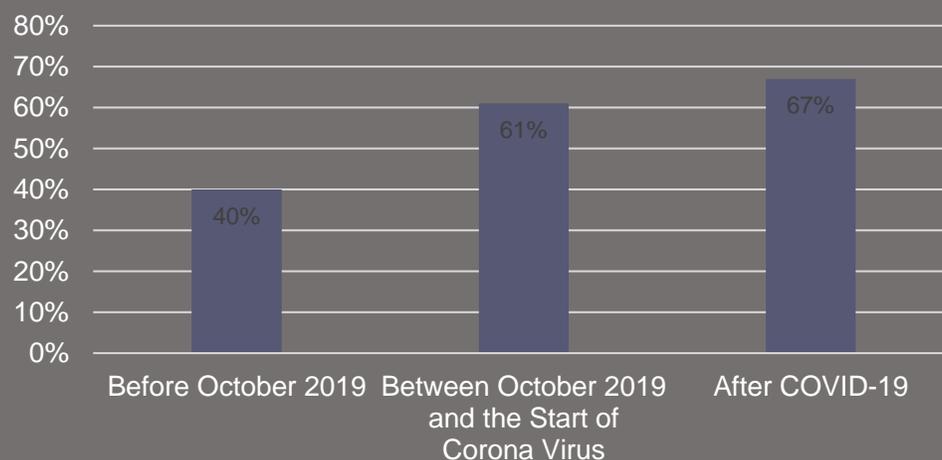
Findings: Effects of the multiple crises on Child Labour

- Lack of reliable figures
- Child labour: around 11 - 12% among SyR (drastic increase from 6%)
- Reporting of Child labour increased among vulnerable HH with working children
- Working children are reporting increasingly becoming the main income earner

Percentage of Working Children



Percentage of Children as Main Income Earners

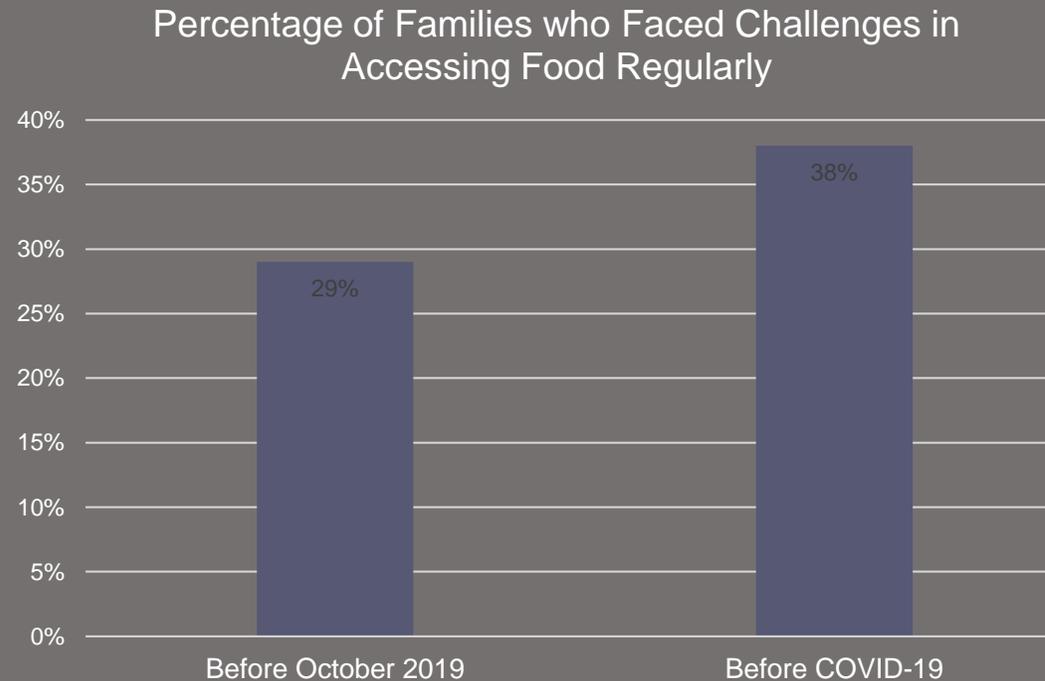


Findings:

- Food is the main expenditure of vulnerable HH.
- The primary use of children's income is for food (66% of the children). Children report that they have to go to work otherwise they believe they cannot eat.
- 7.6% of the respondents to ACF's baseline survey of Lebanese and Syrian households across South Lebanon and the Bekaa, reported **explicitly** that they had to resort to child labour, as a direct result of not having enough food or money to buy food
- Strong correlation between child labour and food insecurity among vulnerable communities living in ITS and surveyed by the LPC:
 - exist simultaneously in over half of the communities consulted.
 - 18% of the food-insecure communities have also reported the worst forms of child labour

Findings:

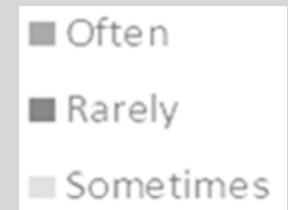
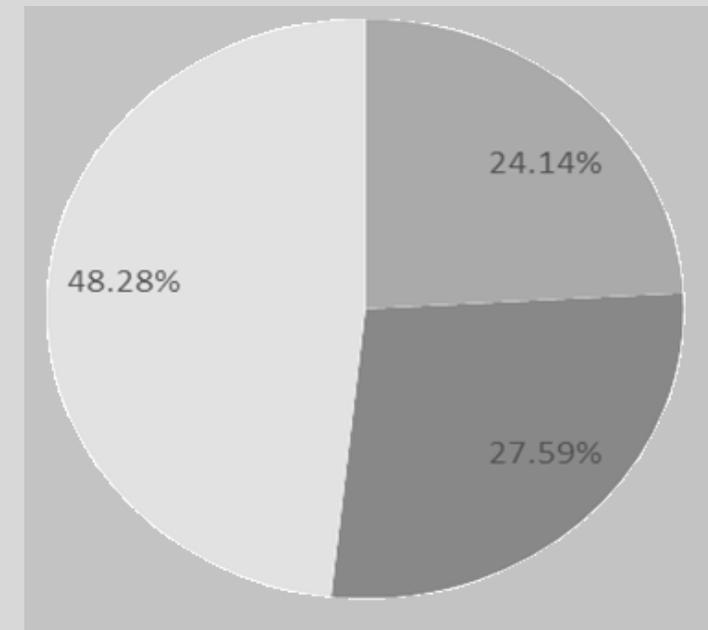
- Failing coping strategy: acute food insecurity persists for working children and their households, especially since October 2019
- Between November 2019 and March 2020, the percentage of families with working children reporting to struggle to access food regularly has increased.



Food-based coping mechanisms of HH with a working child (IRC survey)

- Working children worry a lot about food: 84% of the working children are worried that their household would not have enough food to eat, with 53% of them reporting that they often worry about not having enough food.
- They have to limit the amount, frequency and diversity of the food they eat
- 56% of working children surveyed reported having gone to bed hungry. (often, 24%; sometimes, 48%)
- In 35% of the households, the working child or any HH member had to go a whole day and night without eating anything
- => The limitation of the variety and quantity of foods eaten by children is a causal factor of malnutrition

Children who reported having to go to bed on an empty stomach



Compounded Effects of FI and CL on children

- Physical health and nutrition of working children:
 - Malnutrition: height and weight, risk of stunting, wasting and anemia
 - Disease: early mortality, morbidity, asthma, silicosis, tuberculosis, injuries; 50% of surveyed children had wounds
 - Injuries: Risk of physical hazards up 7.7 times in children working in agriculture
 - Tiredness (24%) body pain (19%), exposure to verbal and physical abuse (13%), and psychological distress (12%) – LPC



Compounded Effects of FI and CL on children

- Education:
 - 80% of all working children and 73.3% of working girls : out of school/learning
 - Brain development affected by food insecurity
 - Curriculum and timing of classes constitute additional barrier for working children to enroll even in non-formal education.
 - Lack of financial means prevents access to school.
MPC facilitated access to school for recipients with school-aged children (CAMEALEON and ODI research - June 2020)



Compounded Effects of FI and CL on children

- Abuse and exploitation
 - Children often work for little or no pay (serfdom and debt bondage)
 - 66% percent of all surveyed working children (76.8% girls) work in psychosocially hazardous conditions (physical abuse (58.3%); verbal abuse (28.0%))
 - Only 2% of surveyed working children linked emotions with a positive feeling.
 - 6 points increase in incidents of child marriage was reported between August and September (10%); a negative coping strategy in 17% of the LPC communities where food insecure working children are present



Recommendations to sectors, inter-sector teams, operational actors and donors

- Addressing child labour through a multi-sectoral approach and integrated programming needs to be mainstreamed into donors and inter-sector priorities, into the programming from various sectors incl. FSL, particularly agriculture programmes, basic assistance sector, protection/child protection and nutrition and NGOs.
- Urgent food security and basic assistance programmes are needed particularly for working children and their families; need for a nutrition component to maximise impact
- Scale up basic assistance programmes to families with a working child, a street-connected child and/or with a child at risk of working, along with scaled up case management programmes aiming to support children engaging in child labour and possibly prevent it.



Recommendations to sectors, inter-sector teams, operational actors and donors

- The approach to Child labor in the UN food agencies' econometric targeting should be re-examined in relation to including children's income in expenditure data considerations to ensure families with working children are not considered as having higher incomes (being less vulnerable). More information is needed on how the income of a working child affects the overall expenditure of the HH and therefore eligibility for assistance.
- NGO's need to propose new programmes which address jointly the emerging food security as well as nutrition needs, with focus on infant and young child feeding.
- More data is needed on nutrition needs, including of working children





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