



LEBANON – Child Protection Program Fact Sheet

COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Lebanese crisis which is ongoing since 2019 and impacting all communities across the country, has forced children into dangerous situations. A barrage of devastating crises in Lebanon is fueling a rise in the number of children experiencing abuse, exploitation, and violence. A UNICEF survey conducted in October 2021 revealed that *"12 percent of families questioned said they sent at least one child out to work, up from 9 percent six months previously."*

Child labor is a long-present phenomenon in Lebanon that has been exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis, which the country has not seen in decades. Its severity was also further aggravated by the Syrian refugee crisis, as children comprise a large section of the refugee population in Lebanon¹. While working, children are also frequently exposed to other threats, such as abuse, violence, and sexual exploitation.

Increased number of children are coming into contact with the criminal justice system as a result of the worsening environment, some after participating in violence and protests about the political and economic situation in the country, others as they are victims of or witnesses to violence in the home or community.

MORE ABOUT THE IRC CP PROGRAMS

The IRC child protection program is responding to the above priorities by implementing directly or with local partners the below activities:

CASE MANAGEMENT

IRC adopts a child-centered approach when providing individual case management services to the most at-risk children and their families. While abiding by the principles of Do No Harm, Confidentiality, and equality, IRC's case workers provide individual life-saving case management services. The services include timely and effective identification and referrals at the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces (SHLS) as well as providing services through mobile activities and home visits to high-risk children who are exposed to abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation and who require immediate protection and support. The case workers accompany the child and their families and support them in the submission of their judicial reports and files to the Juvenile Court, after which they follow

up on the process with the actors mandated by the Ministry of Justice and provide them with the support and coaching needed to ensure that each child is protected while in the system. Emergency cash assistance is also provided for the children and their caregivers based on additional vulnerabilities and needs identified.

PARENTING SKILLS

The IRC and local partners in Lebanon are providing parenting skills sessions with a particular focus on the caregivers of vulnerable children and at-risk working children. The sessions aim to equip parents with the necessary knowledge on child development, positive parent-child interaction techniques, stress responses, and management strategies, and non-violent discipline practices. Parenting activities are facilitated using the IRC evidence-based curricula for parents, such as "Families Make a Difference."

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Targeting vulnerable and at-risk children, including working children who show signs of toxic stress and who require more specialized, structured, and targeted support, the IRC Lebanon and its local partners are delivering specialized, focused PSS sessions using the Focused Activities for Children's Emotions (FACE) curriculum for children aged 6-17. These sessions are tailor-made/contextualized for children exposed to harm or at high risk of damage in Lebanon. They aim to empower those children with tools to manage their anger, sadness, and frustrations and help them identify positive coping skills. Focused PSS sessions are crucial for working children who might otherwise not have access to specialized psychosocial support.

AWARENESS RAISING.

IRC and its partners deliver tailored awareness sessions targeting vulnerable and at risk children, including working children, adolescents, and their caregivers, using IRC's awareness raising tools, such as the comic book scenarios, which are specifically tailored for the Lebanon context. The sessions raise awareness on various topics, including topics related to child rights and child protection, parenting tips, safety risks of illegal immigration, the risk of labor on the children, bullying, substance use, and threats associated with participation in protests. Those stories are meant to help

¹ <https://beirut-today.com/2022/03/20/who-will-protect-lebanon-children/>

children, adolescents, and caregivers identify the risks they could be exposed to and guide them to seek safer alternatives and support mechanisms to help them navigate harmful situations.

Recognizing the importance of empowering communities to be agents in their own protection, the IRC is also strengthening the capacity of local community actors, including outreach volunteers and members of the municipal bodies, in addition to key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Social Affairs staff, Internal Security Forces, lawyers, and other key actors, on CP Core Concepts and safe identification and referrals to achieve effective outreach and referrals of children to child protection and other services provided in the community.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE PROGRAM

IRC Child Protection Access to Justice Program is funded by the Embassy of Switzerland to Lebanon and Syria and began in 2019. The program aims to ensure that the rights of children in contact or conflict with the law are enforced and their wellbeing is improved through enhanced access to comprehensive protection and justice services.

The IRC provides the children with case management, and focused psychosocial support, and works with their caregivers to improve positive parenting skills.

In close coordination with key stakeholders such as the Tripoli Bar Association, Tripoli Municipality, Mina Municipality, Order of Nurses, Mayors, and Palestinian committees in North Lebanon, the IRC works to strengthen the national judicial system to ensure the best interest of juveniles when they are in need to access legal and judicial services. This takes place through the identification of capacity gaps and providing those key stakeholders with training, workshops, and resources aimed at strengthening their Child Safeguarding Policies and practices, understanding of Child Labor laws, Early Identification and Safe Referral, Judicial Pathway, treatment, communication and support to the children at risk of or in contact with the law.

Through this program, the IRC raises the awareness of key stakeholders on law 422/2002, which aims to ensure that children are protected and are able to safely access the justice system and advocates for the endorsement of the practices of the law.

INTERAGENCY COACHING PROGRAM

IRC Interagency Coaching program is a national capacity strengthening program funded by UNHCR and began in 2013. The program provides an opportunity for CP case workers, and CP staff, including supervisors/managers from most major international, local, and governmental CP actors such as Save the Children, War Child Holland, TDH Italy and Lausanne, INTERSOS, DRC, Makhzoumi Foundation, Nabad, Himaya, Akkar

Network for Development, Amel, Movement Social, UPEL, Ministry Of Social Affairs, etc.,) to develop their knowledge and skills for the provision of high-quality support to children at risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Through multi-layered approach learning sessions and case management training targeting the outreach volunteers and frontliners, the program aims to improve the ability of CP actors to respond to the needs of children survivors of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation and to refer them to appropriate services.

The Interagency Coaching Program also consists of a long-term investment in the national child protection system in Lebanon and targets governmental entities such as MOSA (Ministry of Social Affairs) and UPEL (the Union for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon) and aims to build the capacities of those entities on case management best practices and equally ensures that CP case management agencies all over Lebanon have a solid case management system, and are using the same tools and a unified approach.

The IRC relies on a learning model as a powerful way of sharing knowledge about public sector reforms through sessions that are designed in a way to allow participants in small group sizes who have a diversity of skills, competencies, and experiences to share knowledge and discuss challenges they face in their everyday work to sustainably grow in their case management and supervisory roles. The IRC Coaching Program builds the capacities of a select pool of coaches on CM. It provides them with technical tools and materials which will allow them to replicate the coaching program internally within their organizations and externally by training and coaching their CP partners and other actors in their areas of operations.



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For more information on IRC's global child protection work and the interventions used in our programs, visit <https://childprotectionpractitioners.org>