



Concept Note for a Thematic Session on

Education and child protection as key components of an effective strategy to address child labour

at the 6th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, Marrakech,
Morocco

Wednesday, February 11, 2026 – 11.15 to 13.00

1. Background

It is widely acknowledged that child labour is determined by a complex set of root causes, which coexist in a specific context. Lack of access to quality education and absence of comprehensive and well-established child protection systems are among the main root causes of child labour, while other prominent root causes include social norms legitimizing child labour, limited awareness of child rights, poverty and lack of social protection, as well as limited decent work opportunities for adults.

Regarding the education sector, insufficient access to school, low school quality, or discriminatory practices in class represent critical 'push factors' for child labour. If households cannot afford the cost of education, schools are not available locally or school quality is so low that time spent in school is not seen as beneficial by children and their households, then the risk of child labour increases. While the risk of child labour is generally higher for out-of-school children, children often combine school and work, so both in-school and out-of-school children are important reference groups for education-related programmes and policies with an objective to address child labour.

Regarding child protection, absence of proper systems to identify, refer and monitor child labour cases also perpetuates child labour. For instance, in settings where social sector workers are not properly trained in child rights violations, or where there is no well-established information management system to register child labour cases, refer them to the appropriate interventions and monitor them over time, then child labour remains often invisible and unaddressed.

Given the above root causes, strengthening the education and child protection systems can significantly contribute to preventing and eliminating child labour. Education-related initiatives that can be effective in preventing or reducing child labour include, for instance, providing scholarships, extending the school day and extending the compulsory schooling period. There is also evidence of teachers having a significant role in raising awareness on child rights and the importance of education, as well as in monitoring attendance and following up on children at risk of dropout.



Linking education and child protection initiatives and thus ensuring they operate in an integrated way can generate important synergies that amplify their positive impact on child labour reduction. Establishing child labour information management systems that are directly linked to the agencies responsible for providing the required social services can similarly contribute to reducing child labour.

While the evidence on the child labour impacts of child protection and education interventions and initiatives is growing, gaps remain in the understanding of why a specific initiative is effective (i.e., what design features and implementation aspects make a programme or initiative more effective in addressing child labour). Lessons learned from design and implementation of different programmes are also not sufficiently shared and communicated across countries and regions.

2. Issues Addressed

After an introduction, the session will reflect on challenges related to education and child protection in selected contexts. It will then showcase prominent examples of how those challenges can be addressed, thus contributing to the prevention and elimination of child labour. The session will prioritise specific interventions, programmes and broader system-level initiatives in education and child protection, which are supported by evidence on their effectiveness and/or operational performance.

The session will describe the mechanisms through which the selected initiatives contribute to addressing those challenges, including aspects of design and implementation. Based on experiences in different countries, the session will provide lessons learned in programme/system design and implementation, that can be applied to similar contexts.

The session will also reflect on how the education and child protection sectors can work in an integrated way to foster synergies, as part of an effective multi-sectoral strategy to addressing child labour.