

RSPO

Roundtable on
Sustainable Palm Oil



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GUIDANCE ON CHILD RIGHTS FOR PALM OIL PRODUCERS

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FOREWORD

In the palm oil sector, sustainable certification standards have played a key role in enhancing various initiatives to support and protect children, but more efforts are needed to ensure they are not being deprived of their rights. Research has shown that children in global supply chains can be affected in many ways, including child labour and other forms of exploitation; limited access to quality and affordable education; nutritious food; healthcare; and the absence of healthy living environments, including adequate water, sanitation, and hygiene.

With the COVID-19 outbreak and its far-reaching impacts, there is concern that these issues could increase. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that children's rights are well-integrated into its practices and systems that not only address long-standing concerns in the palm oil sector, but also those that may arise as a consequence of the pandemic.

In order to strengthen child rights protection and improve compliance with RSPO certification standards, RSPO, with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has commissioned the development of four guidance documents for the following key palm oil stakeholders - palm oil producers, auditors and certification bodies, smallholders and group managers, and downstream supply chain actors.¹

These guidance documents are aimed at addressing long-standing risks, such as child labour and forced labour, and additional pressures on pre-existing challenges during the pandemic, such as limited maternity protection, low breastfeeding rates, lack of childcare provisions, and poor maternal health and nutrition, especially in the plantation setting, which might further undermine the health and development of children.

With these guidance documents, RSPO aims to enhance knowledge and capacity building amongst members and stakeholders, and to foster engagement and collaboration with workers and surrounding communities to mitigate the potential negative impacts on children in palm oil. Together with UNICEF, our hope is that children will grow up in a positive environment that allows them to reach their full potential.

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¹ All guidance documents were developed by the Center for Child Rights and Corporate Social Responsibility (CCR CSR) and Proforest.

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1. INTRODUCTION: CHILD RIGHTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PALM OIL PRODUCTION

1.1 What are the rights of the child?

All children are entitled to special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before and after birth. Children have the right to survive, to develop, to be heard and be involved, to have equal opportunities as well as to grow in a protective and supportive environment (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC))

The UNCRC defines a child as being “every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. Children and young people have the same general human rights as adults but also enjoy specific rights that recognise their special needs due to their physical and mental immaturity. The UNCRC outlines basic entitlements and freedoms that apply to all children without discrimination. All children have the right to survive and develop, to be protected from violence, abuse, and exploitation, to have their views respected and to have actions concerning them be taken in their best interests.

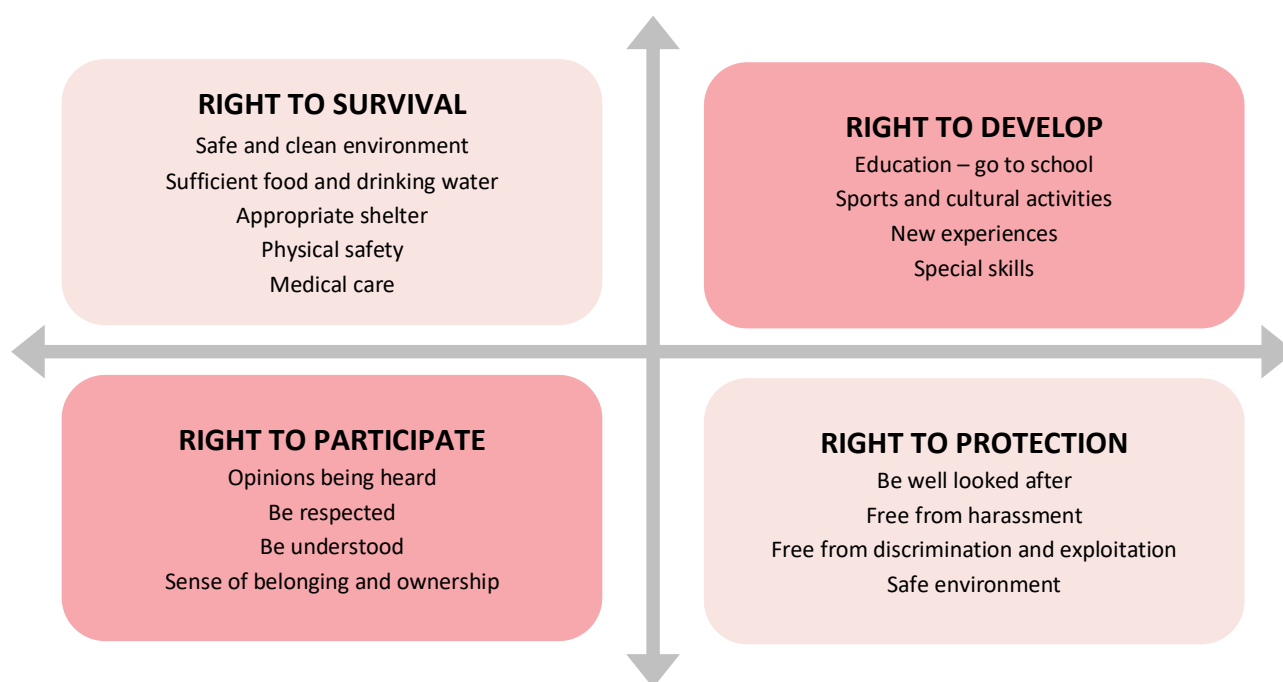


FIGURE 1: THE UNIVERSAL RIGHTS OF CHILDREN AS DESCRIBED IN THE UNCRC

1.2 How the palm oil sector impacts children

In the agricultural sector, including palm oil, many children remain insufficiently protected and are unable to enjoy their rights fully. Through extensive desktop research on reports by different government and non-

governmental agencies, a research brief² was finalised at the end of 2019 that gathered information on the impact of palm oil operations on children’s rights and relevant root causes. The palm oil industry affects children in many ways, including their access to quality and affordable education, nutritious food and healthy living environment, migrant children’s access to education, healthcare, justice, and other key social services, among other things.

Despite efforts being invested by different actors over the years, child rights risks in the palm oil landscape remain worrisome, especially given that most of the efforts taken appear sporadic and the success rates seem to differ according to different variables, such as the scale of operation, location, company culture, level of commitment, level of technical support provided (e.g. clear guidance on how a company can address the issues surrounding child rights risks in their business), etc.

A report on “Palm Oil and Children in Indonesia” published by UNICEF in 2016 identified seven impact areas in which the activities of the palm oil sector affect the rights of children, namely child protection, child labour, education, maternity protection and breastfeeding, childcare, health and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).³ Although the study was conducted in Indonesia, we see that these seven impact areas can be applied to the industry globally.



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² The [research brief](#) takes into account the top five palm oil producing countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Colombia and Nigeria when drawing the key indicators, looking at the legislative framework, and understanding the situation and condition of palm oil workers and their children (RSPO, 2020).

³ The report was based on a qualitative research on the palm oil sector and children in Indonesia. The stakeholders consulted included plantation executives, managers, trade unions, healthcare workers, teachers, childcare providers, children and their families, civil society organisations, community members, international buyers, government ministries, national human rights institutions, inter-governmental bodies, and multi-stakeholder bodies. However, as the UNICEF impact study was based on the situation in Indonesia, it may not capture issues that could be more prevalent in other countries.

1.3 Who is this guidance for and how it should be used?

The child rights guidance documents were developed for four different stakeholder groups: palm oil producers, auditors and certification bodies, smallholders and group managers, and downstream supply chain actors. These guidance documents aim to provide information, examples and practical recommendations to the different stakeholders and practitioners to strengthen child rights in their own operations. **They do not add additional criteria or present new compliance requirements or processes beyond the existing RSPO certification requirements. Instead, they emphasise the current elements within the requirements that when properly implemented, can address and strengthen child rights in palm oil production.** The guidance serves to highlight these elements and make the linkages to child rights more visible to users of the RSPO certification standards.

In particular, this Guidance on Child Rights for Palm Oil Producers is developed to guide and support producers to strengthen child rights protection and improve compliance with the RSPO Principles and Criteria for the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil (P&C) 2018 that relate to children's rights. The structure of the guidance is based on the seven impact areas identified in a 2016 UNICEF study on palm oil and children in Indonesia. The intention is to provide tailored support and act as an entry point for interventions that seek to minimise the potential negative consequences and improve the livelihoods of children and the communities in which they live. We hope that the guidance documents can provide useful references and serve as a basis for training and capacity building by all the different stakeholders working in the palm oil sector to create a positive impact on children.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles are strongly recommended in applying these guidelines when working with and for children to ensure that the intended positive outcomes are achieved.

TABLE 1: GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS GUIDANCE

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Prioritise the best interest of the child	In all actions impacting children, the best interest of children should be the guiding principle. This means that during any decision-making process, the child's protection, preservation of well-being and right to live and grow in an environment that is favourable to his/her mental and physical development, is prioritised.
Do no harm	Always adopt a "do-no-harm" approach that is rooted in the best interest of the child. That means, all actions taken should consider the broader context and whether they may negatively impact children socially, financially, or environmentally. If there is any reason to believe that certain actions or programmes make children worse off than before, the action should not be taken.
Aim for sustainability	<p>The steps described in this guidance aim to create a long-lasting system to protect children and their families from risks and challenges in the palm oil setting, rather than a quick-fix solution. As such, it is important that adequate resources are committed and allocated to sustainably implement the required systemic changes.</p> <p>An important element of sustainability is embedding the required steps and processes in producers' core business practices and management systems. As such, it is crucial to seek ways to systematically integrate all steps when implementing this guidance.</p>
Aim for stronger protection of rights	It is important to always comply with national, provincial, and local laws and regulations related to labour rights and child rights protection. Where legal protection at the national or local level is absent or weak, it is strongly recommended to refer to international and/or industry best practice guidelines, standards or principles such as the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the ILO core conventions to identify appropriate measures for strengthening protection.
Promote non-discrimination and equality	<p>No group should be discriminated against or excluded from certain benefits or services based on their status, gender, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, or social origin. This means that no group of workers (young workers, contract workers, temporary workers, migrant workers, etc.) can be excluded from enjoying basic rights solely based on their status in the company and be entitled for equal pay for equal work.</p> <p>Positive actions should be taken to correct and prevent all types of discrimination at the workplace and promote equality among all workers. Additional protective or supportive measures can be adopted in response to the needs of certain particularly vulnerable groups, such as young workers⁴, women workers, migrant workers, etc. Such differentiated policies and measures aiming at improving equality should not be considered as discriminatory.</p>

⁴ RSPO uses young persons and young workers interchangeably throughout its documents. Based on the RSPO P&C Annexe 1 and in line with ILO C138, a young person/young worker is defined as someone whose age is above 15, or above the minimum age of employment, but under the age of 18. These workers are considered 'children' even where they may legally perform certain jobs.

Respect the right to information and participation	<p>For individuals to make sound decisions about what is best for their health, well-being, and their future and to have realistic expectations of any service provider, they must be given all available information about their options, and then be allowed to voice their opinion on any changes that will affect them directly. This is also true for children who should be given a voice whenever company activities directly impact them.</p>
Obtain informed consent	<p>During any action, children and their families are often required to give their consent to certain proposals. “Full and informed consent” should not be taken lightly. See some guidelines below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All assistance provided by anyone should proceed on the basis of the full and informed consent by the children and their parent/guardian. ● Explain each and every relevant action, policy, and procedure in a way the children and their parent/guardian can understand and before the children and their parent/guardian are asked to consent to it or not. ● Throughout certain stages of the process, it will be necessary for the children and their parent/guardian to provide such consent in writing. ● If the service provider cannot communicate with the children and their parent/guardian in a language they can understand, every possible effort must be made to get the assistance of an interpreter for oral and written communication.
Confidentiality and right to privacy	<p>Any data and information obtained from and related to the children and their families should not be disclosed without their prior knowledge and informed consent. When handling information and communication related to children, always consider the children and their families’ right to confidentiality and privacy.</p>
Base prioritisation and measures on the actual needs of the workforce	<p>To decide where to start making improvements, first thoroughly assess the situation and the needs of workers. For example, migrant parent workers who live with their children have very different needs from those who have left their closest families behind, and workers who live on the plantation may need different support systems than those who commute from home on a daily basis.</p>

3. CHILD PROTECTION

3.1 Challenges

According to the UN, child protection is the protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect. In the context of palm oil production, challenges exist in the area of child protection due to the often hazardous surroundings, limited infrastructure, and involvement of children in the production process (UNICEF, 2018). Child protection is particularly challenging for the thousands of children of migrant workers who are denied access to education and health services. Children without birth registration or a legal identity are also particularly vulnerable (UNICEF, 2016).

CHALLENGES

Various child abuse risks in agricultural settings that may hinder children from enjoying their rights.
Lack of legal identity i.e. birth certificates, amongst migrant children, which leads to limited or no access to education and healthcare and increases the likelihood of child labour.
Children are vulnerable to abuse in agricultural settings.

Based on desk research and information gathered by Solidar Suisse (2019), there are an estimated 840,000 undocumented Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia. Of these, 50,000-200,000 are children who help their parents with work. While long distances between the estates and civil registration offices and the high transport costs make it challenging for some workers to process the birth certificates of their children (RSPO, 2018), other factors hindering application of birth certificates include low awareness on the importance of birth registration, high illiteracy rate and administrative barriers as the parents may be undocumented themselves (Earthworm, 2019).

In agricultural settings that are similar to the palm oil sector, it is not uncommon for children to experience abuse (mainly physical and/or emotional), domestic violence and neglect (Save the Children, 2018a). The perpetrators are usually parents or teachers in school (Save the Children, 2018a). Children in plantations are also vulnerable to sexual exploitation, as was observed in North Sumatera⁵.

3.2 Steps to Implement Child Protection

The RSPO standards require palm oil producers to create a healthy working and living environment. Given that children are often the most vulnerable and are most easily exposed to abuse and violence, ensuring their protection is a crucial element in providing a safe environment for employees and their families. The key steps to create this safe space for children are described below.

- **Prioritise child protection: develop or strengthen the child safeguarding policy**

Companies must guarantee that child protection is a key priority; it is vital for the day-to-day operation of all policies and programmes targeting children. Developing a child safeguarding policy is one way to do that. A child safeguarding policy⁶ should not only refer to safeguarding against abuses by employees and partners, but it should also ensure that children's rights are protected throughout the business value chain, including:

⁵ Raised during an interview with *Pusat Kajian dan Perlindungan Anak* (PKPA), a child-focused NGO based in Medan that implemented a project funded by ICCO Cooperation on Children's Rights and Business Principles (CRBP) in Oil Palm Plantation.

⁶ For more details on child safeguarding policy, please refer to UNICEF's Child Safeguarding Toolkit for Business.

- Protecting children from maltreatment, particularly from all forms of abuse including physical, sexual psychological abuse, and neglect
- Protecting children who are harmed or at-risk to be harmed
- Ensuring children can receive a safe and supportive care to support their growth, health, and overall development

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: CHILD PROTECTION POLICY IN TEA ESTATES IN SRI LANKA

Save the Children in partnership with Kelani Valley Plantations and Talawakelle Tea Estates, launched a “Child Protection Policy” in 2018, specifically tailored to the needs of children living on Sri Lanka’s tea estates. The Child Protection Policy is a voluntary undertaking through which participating tea companies commit to ensuring that all children living in their estates are protected from all forms of harm, violence, abuse, and exploitation. It establishes a set of principles, standards and implementation mechanisms through which tea companies, their management and staff take active measures to help ensure the safety and protection of the children on their estates.

Key outputs from this programme include:

Child Protection Focal Point: The focal point is the first line of contact to report cases of violence against children in the estates and represents the company in local multi-stakeholder forums and other meetings/discussions related to child protection.

Clear reporting and referral mechanism: Staff at all levels are obligated to report cases of violence against children, through a clear and well-established reporting and referral mechanism. The cases categorised based on levels of harm and there are clear reporting lines for complaints directed towards the various levels of management.

Special child protection in childcare facilities: Special measures are in place in creches/child development centres in the estates, e.g. at least one child caregiver is present in the creche/child development centre at all times and all caregivers are trained to address the safety and protection of children.

Participation of children: Capacity building of child leaders through child rights and child protection training, leadership skills development, confidence building and creative expression are incorporated as key activities in the programme to enable children’s participation, especially as representatives of their respective children’s clubs at village child development committees. Facilitation of child-led advocacy at the children’s clubs formed at each pilot estate and linking them to government mechanisms and officials have also promoted the participation of children in core areas of the programme.

Multi-stakeholder collaboration: Participating estates coordinate with Save the Children and government partners such as the National Child Protection Authority to develop the capacity of Child Protection Focal Points.

Source: Save the Children, 2018b

● Strengthen policy to prevent sexual harassment

RSPO P&C requires ‘A policy to prevent sexual and other forms of harassment and violence is implemented and communicated to all levels of the workforce’. If such a policy is in place, it can be updated to better provide guidance on conduct-related issues, specifically for safeguarding children, e.g. by including domestic violence issues into the policy and making any form of abuse amongst the workforce or on the production site an act that can require the follow-up of gender committees and management. When developing such a policy, companies need to consider the country-specific regulations that are relevant to the prevention and remediation of sexual harassment and/or exploitation of children in the context of their

business operations, so that interventions aimed at workers and suppliers are aligned to national policies and legislation.



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- **Facilitate access to birth registration**

Lacking birth certification can have an immense negative impact on a child’s access to protection services throughout his/her life. Companies can help by directly facilitating the processing of birth certificates for the children of workers and staff, or at a minimum, raise awareness on the importance of birth registration, provide information on accessing birth certificates, and/or support paid leave and transportation allowances for families to receive a birth certificate.

- **Integrate parenting and health classes in agribusiness training for smallholders**

Economic strengthening and parenting classes are two strategies that have been shown to reduce child maltreatment (WHO, 2018). Combining positive parenting sessions with classes training smallholders in good agricultural/business practices could reduce income insecurity, reduce child maltreatment, and improve understanding of the importance of birth registration to children’s welfare. Prior to implementing this programme, it is important to consider the working schedule and tasks of the smallholders. Smallholders are unlikely to participate, especially if the time taken interferes with their work and results in income loss.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: INTEGRATING PARENTING TRAINING IN AGRIBUSINESS TRAINING

ICS Africa delivered a 12-session parenting programme in tandem with training on how to improve crop yields for farming families in rural Tanzania. Parenting sessions included learning positive discipline techniques, communication skills, and child protection. The combined programme reduced physical child abuse more than the parenting sessions alone, and much more than the agribusiness-only programme.

Source: Siddons, 2018

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO CHILD PROTECTION

- 4.1 The unit of certification respects human rights, which includes respecting the rights of Human Rights Defenders (*Indicator 4.1.1 (C) and 4.1.2*). **Relevance:** The respect of human rights also extends to the rights of children.
- 4.2 There is a mutually agreed and documented system for dealing with complaints and grievances, which is implemented and accepted by all affected parties (*Indicator 4.2.1 (C), 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4*). **Relevance:** Grievance process and other feedback mechanisms should be able to also handle cases on child rights violations and are accessible to workers and other stakeholders including child rights organisations, while respecting the anonymity of the complainant and victim as well as safeguarding them from retaliation.
- 6.4 Children are not employed or exploited (*Indicator 6.4.1 and 6.4.4*). **Relevance:** This requires that a policy that protects children and prohibits child labour is in place and included in service agreements and supplier contracts. Child safeguarding and protection measures such as child labour prevention and remediation procedures, age verification procedure as part of recruitment, protective restriction for young workers', etc. are also implemented.
- 6.5 There is no harassment or abuse in the workplace, and reproductive rights are protected (*Indicator 6.5.1 (C), 6.5.2 (C), and 6.5.4*). **Relevance:** The policy to prevent sexual and all other forms of harassment and violence, should also include that against children is implemented and communicated to all workers. The grievance mechanism should be also able to handle cases on child rights violations and accessible to workers and other stakeholders including child rights organisations, while respecting the anonymity of the complainant and victim as well as safeguarding them from retaliation.
- 6.6 No forms of forced or trafficked labour are used (*Indicator 6.6.1 (C) and 6.6.2 (C)*). **Relevance:** Children are also protected from any means of exploitation and forced labour. The required special protective policy and procedures should also cover temporary or migrant young workers (when they are employed).

4. CHILD LABOUR AND YOUNG WORKERS

4.1 Challenges

Child labour is work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (ILO, 2002a). Although complete data is not available, existing research suggests that the involvement of children in plantation work appears to be fairly widespread. Some reports estimate that up to 200,000 children may be working in Sabah palm oil plantations (Solidar Suisse, 2019). Child labour has been reported in the palm oil industry in Ecuador, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Sierra Leone (U.S. Department of Labor 2018, U.S. Department of State, 2019).

Among all children, those without birth certificates and/or those who are migrants are particularly vulnerable and are more likely to get involved in child labour and other forms of exploitation. The absence of on-site childcare, the lack of opportunities for youth who dropped out of school early and the limited pay and the immense pressure for parents to reach daily targets are all factors that contribute to the occurrence of child labour on palm oil plantations (Amnesty International, 2016; Kiezebrink, 2017; Earthworm, 2018).

Tackling these immense challenges with a solely compliance-driven approach cannot fully address the challenges and needs of children and where companies rely on rigid “zero tolerance for anyone under 18” rules, they often contribute to driving children of working age into informal settings, where they are more likely to work in hazardous conditions without access to any form of protections. (DIHR and TFT, 2018). It is therefore important to also work with local authorities and strengthen government efforts to address the root causes of child labour.

4.2 Steps to Implement Child Labour Prevention and Remediation

The RSPO standard clearly prohibits any form of child labour and stipulates the necessity to ensure that young workers are not exposed to any hazardous work⁷. The key steps on child labour prevention and remediation as well as protection of young workers are described below.

4.2.1 Child labour prevention and protection of young workers

⁷ ILO defines “hazardous work by children” as “work which is likely to jeopardise children’s physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals should not be done by anyone under the age of 18”. ILO’s Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190) gives some indication as to what work should be prohibited: 1) Work that exposes children to physical, emotional or sexual abuse; work underground, underwater, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; 2) Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or that involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; 3) Work in an unhealthy environment, which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; 4) Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work that does not allow for the possibility of returning home each day.

CHALLENGES

Multiple factors contribute to the occurrence of child labour, including poverty, poor access to quality education, discrimination, cultural norms, and lack of development opportunities.

Children of migrants are most vulnerable to child labour and exploitation.

The thin line between ‘child workers’ and ‘child assisting parents’ may lead to child labour situations.

Lack of practical guidelines for companies to address child labour and support young workers.

Companies’ rigid approach towards child labour fails to address the drivers and root causes.

- **Understand the clear definition of child labour and young workers**

ILO defines “child labour”⁸ as work that “deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development”. This term applies to:

- All children under the age of 18 involved in the “worst forms of child labour” (as per ILO Convention No. 182);
- All children under the age of 12 taking part in economic activity; and
- All 12 to 14-year-olds engaged in more than light work.

Children who are of legal working age but below 18 years old are considered ‘young workers’ and may participate in non-hazardous work that is performed under adult supervision, and that does not negatively impact the child’s health, safety, personal development and education. Giving children who are no longer in school and need to earn income an opportunity to work in decent work conditions contributes to the healthy development of individuals and societies (ILO, 2015).

The minimum age of work varies in different countries. Appendix 1 provides information on the defined age limits in key production countries.



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI108435/Asselin

- **Assess and monitor risks of child labour**

It is important to understand when and where there is risk of child labour in a company’s operations. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

⁸ This is also the definition adopted in the 2018 RSPO P&C.

- Large groups of workers live with their children in housing provided inside the plantation or in villages close to the plantation
- Workers have difficulty meeting their daily quotas and therefore have an incentive to get children involved to meet the quota
- Times when pressure on farmers increase, e.g. difficult harvesting circumstances, insufficient harvest, etc. that make it harder for farmers to reach their quotas or their average level of income.
- The palm oil plantation is surrounded by communities that:
 - o have limited access to education due to weak legal protection, live in poverty, have poor educational infrastructure, or lack of awareness on the importance of education
 - o have a high rate of school dropouts
- The workforce includes migrant workers who are undocumented themselves or have undocumented children
- Low wages that prevent workers from being able to cover their families' basic needs
- Single headed households or households with only one breadwinner

Situations such as the above might increase the risk of children getting involved in work on plantations and the needs of the different groups of workers, their children and the surrounding communities need to be taken into account⁹. Implementing a continuous monitoring mechanism such as conducting periodic spot checks, assigning field supervisors (e.g. foreman) or other suitable personnel to oversee the work sites regularly, can minimise the possibility of non-authorized persons being present at work sites (e.g. children) and also alert companies to take appropriate immediate actions when child labour cases are found.

- **Undertake preventive mechanisms**

Once the specific circumstances of the company's production in relation to child labour risks are understood, different preventative mechanisms to prevent and mitigate child labour issues, and to support and protect young workers in their supply chain can be determined. Some options are provided below:

a. Provide decent salary for working parents

Insufficient wages represent a key contributing factor to child labour, as it will drive the families to depend on children's additional income. The RSPO standard requires companies to pay a decent living wage (DLW) to all workers, even those on a piece rate/quota wage system. Based on the guidance¹⁰ provided by RSPO, elements to be considered in the calculation of a decent standard of living should include food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transport, clothing and other essential needs.

b. Provide access to quality childcare and education

Many studies have shown that limited access to childcare and education may increase the prevalence of child labour, and conversely, proper access to childcare and education facilities/programmes may prevent and mitigate child labour risks (ILO, 2007; ILO, 2009; ILO, 2013; Earthworm, 2019). For the steps to facilitate access to childcare and education, please refer to Chapter 5 on education and Chapter 7 on childcare.

c. Implement a process for age verification as part of recruitment

Companies usually do not intentionally recruit underage children, but child labour cases are still found on their production sites due to weak age verification mechanisms during worker recruitment phases.

⁹ For more information on child labour assessment, please refer to ILO's child labour guidance tool for business (2015).

¹⁰ Please refer to the RSPO Guidance on Implementing DLW for further information.

There are two ways known to verify children's ages: check their personal documents and interview them using targeted questions.

At least one of the following documents needs to be presented as proof of age:

- Birth certificate
- Where relevant, family card¹¹
- School certificate
- National identification card
- Passport

If there are doubts about the authenticity of an applicant's age from the documents, company staff responsible for recruitment should ask questions about the applicant's background such as education, family members, etc. to assess whether the applicant is being honest about his/her age. Refer to Appendix 2 for sample questions and interview techniques to crosscheck the facts during an interview.



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d. Enable better protection and management of young workers

● Identify non-hazardous position for young workers

As mentioned above, children above the minimum age for work are allowed to take on non-hazardous positions. Offering decent work opportunities to youth of working age can be extremely beneficial for the individuals, communities, and the company. Some guidance is provided below on what kind of work can be

¹¹ Not every country may have a Family Card. In Indonesia, Family Card (*Kartu Keluarga*) is relevant as a document to prove someone's age because this document covers residency, records relationships, and family members, and also age. Every family in Indonesia is required to own this document. In other countries, a Family Card may have different names, such as House Registration (*Tabien Baan*) in Thailand or Family Book (*Familienbuch*) in Germany.

made accessible for young workers in the production site¹². Appendix 3 provides additional information on how companies can protect young workers from hazardous positions by identifying the hazardous work tasks and necessary protection measures.

TABLE 2: IDENTIFYING HAZARDOUS AND NON-HAZARDOUS POSITIONS FOR YOUNG WORKERS

ASPECTS	HAZARDOUS	NON-HAZARDOUS
Types of work/tasks	Potential hazards may occur not only in the main work positions in palm oil production, e.g. harvesting, spraying, pruning, but also at simple/supporting work positions such as maintenance, repair, cleaning, or helpers, etc.	Jobs are considered as light work, which means simple, limited tasks performed under adequate adult supervision, as long as they do not threaten the child's health and safety or harm the moral of the child.
The physical work environment, equipment, materials, products, etc. that are used.	Jobs may contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical hazards, e.g. extreme temperature, noise and vibration intensity that exceeds acceptable exposure limits, tasks performed at a height of more than the allowable limits, near garbage/waste areas, etc. - Chemical hazards, e.g. toxic, explosive, corrosive, or flammable substances, pesticides etc. <p>Potential hazards can also occur from utilising equipment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Machines, e.g. cutting machine, harvesting machine - Engines, e.g. hoisting and loading engines, such as forklifts, loaders, etc. - Heavy-duty equipment, e.g. tractors, - Installations, e.g. fire-extinguisher installations, electrical installations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jobs that do not require the use of sharp tools or heavy-duty machinery/equipment - Jobs that do not require the use of hazardous chemicals - Jobs that are not carried out under extreme environmental conditions - Jobs that do not require young workers to carry excessive loads¹³
How and when the tasks are undertaken	The hazards may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Night shifts (depending on the national law in defining night shifts) - Frequent overtime - Not using personal protective equipment (PPE) - Inadequate training for the level of experience needed to carry out the work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young workers are provided the necessary training to carry out the work and to use PPE - Job done during daytime and within the regular working hours as defined by the national law (usually up to 40 hours per week and 8 hours per day) - Job is carried out under adult supervision
Injury and incident records	Workers being hit by falling fruit branches, skin abrasion due to contact with oil palm fruit and thorns, musculoskeletal injuries from heavy lifting, snake and insect bites, etc.	Jobs with minimum incidents of work-related injuries or disease, and when there is an incident the company has a clear procedure to deal with and remedy the problem.

¹² Always refer to ILO C138 on Minimum Age and ILO C182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour and also relevant national laws that regulate the types of work considered hazardous for children.

¹³ Please refer to the relevant regulations if available. For instance, in Indonesia, girls are only allowed to carry up to 10kgs and boys up to 12kgs (Ministerial Decree of the Republic of Indonesia no. KEP/235/MEN/2013).

Foreseeable unusual conditions such as hazard control during an emergency situation	The potential hazard may revolve around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health: medical injuries that require first response or follow-up care, etc. - Safety: fire, hazardous materials spill, etc. - Infrastructure: power outage, flooding, etc. 	The company/plantation has a clear Emergency Response Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-emergency planning, e.g. evacuation and sheltering maps, hazardous material chemical inventory - Training, drills, and exercise, e.g. first aid training, health and safety training, periodic equipment testing, evacuation drill - Guidelines on hazards, e.g. power outage/utility failures, medical emergencies, fire extinguisher use
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● **Provide young workers with job skills and soft skills training**

In order to help young workers develop multiple skill sets, they have to be given the opportunity to learn, such as:

- Job skills training: Specific training on skills needed to carry out the non-hazardous work. When the young workers turn 18 years old and can start doing tasks other than non-hazardous ones, companies should provide the necessary job skill training.
- Soft skills training ranging from literacy training (e.g. reading skill, basic math, writing and skills that are relevant to young workers’ work, finance literacy, and digital literacy), gender-based violence (e.g. introduction to gender, gender equality, and understanding and preventing gender-based violence at work and in the community), health (e.g. reproductive health and risks, what and how to maintain personal hygiene, and balanced diets), and career development (e.g. understand young workers’ value, strength and weaknesses, teach them how to set goals and sharpen interpersonal skills, i.e. leadership, teamwork, problem-solving).

e. Provide parenting training to inform parents about children’s needs

Stable and nurturing relationships between parents and children are essential in preventing child labour and assuring that all children can reach their full potential. When parents are not aware of children’s needs and might not be aware of the dangers and negative impact they are exposed to, they might become a contributing factor that prevents solutions to child rights issues. Parents may themselves have not been to school and worked from a very young age, thus see this as part of tradition and preparation for community life (ILO, 2002b). Parents play a key role in the education and welfare of their children and children absorb the attitudes and behaviour of their parents (ILO, 2002a). Therefore, changing the attitudes and behaviour of parents through parenting training, may contribute significantly to the protection and well-being of children.

Approaches to be used for effective delivery:

- Involve expert organisations in the area to offer parenting training that is adapted to the situation of the parents and their education level.
- Always adopt a respectful and non-judgmental approach with parents and guardians.
- Sensitise parents and guardians on the needs of their children at different ages and with it, the importance of education, play and sleep.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for topics that can be included as part of parenting training.

f. Initiate or participate in multi-stakeholder initiatives

Child labour prevention often requires companies and other key players such as regulators (local authorities), civil society organisations and expert stakeholders to work together and to continuously take proactive steps. Some initiatives that can be considered by companies are – but not limited to – a joint forum or multi-stakeholder initiative between private sector actors (e.g. investors, companies, trade associations), civil society organisations and state agencies at the local and national levels, to work jointly to tackle child labour risk in palm oil, raise awareness and engage with suppliers (including smallholders). Such initiatives can include the clarification of non-hazardous work for young workers according to the national regulations as well as efforts to strengthen government measures in addressing child labour by working together with the local authorities.

4.2.2 Child labour remediation

Child labour remediation refers to corrective measures taken when child labour is identified to ensure the safety and well-being of the children concerned and to prevent similar situations from reoccurring (ILO, 2020b). The remediation can be in the form of support and actions that ensures the safety, health, education and development of children who have been subjected to child labour and consequently dismissed (SA8000:2014). Remedial actions can include removing the child from the worksite, medical checks to assess the physical and mental health of the child, assistance to return the child to school, etc. (2018 RSPO P&C). The table below outlines the key stages in the remediation process.

TABLE 3: OVERVIEW OF CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION (Impact, 2008)

<p>Stage 1: Immediate actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remove the child from work ● Ensure the child is in a safe place ● Obtain contact details of the child and parents/guardian ● Clarify the identity and true age of the child ● Consult with the child and his/her family to understand their wishes and needs ● Arrange payment of a stipend to the child (this should be equivalent to the amount the child was earning whilst employed, or at least the local minimum wage, whichever is higher) 	<p>Stage 2: Designing a remediation programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment of a remediation team (may include trade unions, local NGOs, government agencies, health professionals or local experts) ● A thorough investigation into the specific circumstances of the child ● Identification of an appropriate school or learning facility for the child ● Identification of appropriate accommodation facility ● Consultation with the child and parents/guardian on the remediation programme and obtaining signed agreements ● Allocation of resources to fund the remediation ● Establishment of a monitoring mechanism
<p>Stage Three: Ongoing support and monitoring</p> <p>Ongoing support and monitoring of the progress of the remediation programme is necessary to ensure that the child continues to benefit until he or she reaches working age. The findings from periodic monitoring are important as it enables responsible parties to adjust the programme according to the child’s changing needs. Monitoring can be conducted by 3rd party organisations such as local NGOs, trade unions or other experts. It should not be carried out by the company that employed the child.</p>	
<p>Funding the Remediation Programme</p> <p>To ensure a successful remediation programme, it is vital to ensure that all stages are adequately funded. The responsibility for funding a regular stipend, school fees and expenses, as well as repatriation costs (if applicable) falls mainly on the employer. In some cases, other actors in the supply chain (e.g. buyers) may contribute to the cost of remediation. It is important to understand the total cost implications of the programme from the beginning so that the funds can be secured and entrusted to a third party to make the scheduled payments.</p>	

Engaging third-party organisation(s)

Third-party organisations such as social enterprises and other non-government organisations can be engaged to support the protection and promotion of child rights within the palm oil supply chain, especially when companies themselves lack the expertise and capacity to do so. For instance, they can carry out child labour verification, engage with the child and his/her parents/caretakers to discuss remediation options, recommend, plan and/or implement child labour remediation measures, conduct on-going monitoring, as well as provide and facilitate child rights training for company staff. Where feasible, companies may also partner with relevant state agencies to work jointly on child labour remediation measures.

Undertaking a multi-level remediation approach

The incidence of child labour may represent a bigger issue at the household or community levels; in such a case, a multilevel remediation strategy should be considered. The table below describes the three levels for intervention that can be carried out either on its own or in combination as part of the overall remediation programme.

TABLE 4: MULTI-LEVEL REMEDIATION

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL	HOUSEHOLD LEVEL	COMMUNITY LEVEL
<p>For younger children (below the minimum working age):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tuition fees for the child to complete compulsory education - Transportation and boarding allowance - Stipend - Fee for services provided by third-party expert/organisation(s), including identification of remediation plan, regular monitoring and home visit/school visits, communications, and reporting, etc. <p>The remediation programme should be personalised and may or may not conclude when the child reaches the minimum working age.</p> <p>For young workers involved in hazardous work, in addition to the above recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion with the child's parents/guardians on assigning young workers to undertake non-hazardous work with adult supervision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support parents, especially mothers, to set up income generating activities to diversify household income and compensate for the loss of the child's income. <p>This level of intervention is applicable when the cause of child labour is correlated to the socio-economic status of the child's family.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase children's access to schooling - Implement youth development and young worker inclusion programmes to create job opportunities and vocational/entrepreneurship skills training for young workers - Collaborate with third-party organisation(s) to organise child-friendly community programmes such as children's clubs, especially after school or during school holidays, to mitigate the risk of children working or accompanying parents to worksites during holidays. <p>This level of intervention is applicable when groups of children are susceptible to child labour because of constraints of resources and opportunities in their community.</p>

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO CHILD LABOUR AND YOUNG WORKERS

- 2.2 All contractors providing operational services and supplying labour, and Fresh Fruit Bunch (FFB) suppliers, comply with legal requirements. *(Indicator 2.2.3)* **Relevance:** Contract clauses also include the prohibition of child labour and the protection of young workers.
- 3.5 A system for managing human resources is in place. *(Indicator 3.5.1 and 3.5.2)* **Relevance:** Recruitment procedures and records that are put in place should ensure that underaged children are not hired.
- 3.6 An occupational health and safety (H&S) plan is documented, effectively communicated, and implemented. *(Indicator 3.6.1 (C) and 3.6.2 (C))* **Relevance:** If young workers are employed, the H&S risk assessment should also assess tasks suitable for young workers and H&S plans are in place to protect young workers.
- 3.7 All staff, workers, scheme smallholders, outgrowers and contract workers are appropriately trained. *(Indicator 3.7.1 (C))* **Relevance:** Training may include child labour prevention and remediation training, and young worker management training for relevant staff. If young workers are employed, the onboarding training should be appropriate to their age, and include specific skills training for young workers.
- 4.1 The unit of certification respects human rights, which includes respecting the rights of Human Rights Defenders. *(Indicator 4.1.1 (C) and 4.1.2)* **Relevance:** The respect of human rights also extends to the rights of children.
- 4.2 There is a mutually agreed and documented system for dealing with complaints and grievances, which is implemented and accepted by all affected parties. *(Indicator 4.2.1 (C), 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4)* **Relevance:** Grievance process and other feedback mechanisms should also be designed and communicated in a way that makes them easily understood and accessible to young workers to raise issues pertaining to their welfare and rights, while respecting their anonymity and safeguarding them from retaliation.
- 5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains *(Indicator 5.2.2 and 5.2.5)*. **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements, can create awareness on the importance of education and preventing child labour in farms.
- 6.1 Any form of discrimination is prohibited. *(Indicator 6.1.1 (C), 6.1.3, and 6.1.6)* **Relevance:** Young workers are not discriminated against and treated equally in terms of employment conditions such as wages and access to benefits.
- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient to provide decent living wages. *(Indicator 6.2.1 (C), 6.2.2 (C), 6.2.3 (C), 6.2.6, and 6.2.7)* **Relevance:** The rights of young workers are also respected and their employment conditions are in accordance with national legal requirements, indicated in their work contracts and clearly explained to them.
- 6.4 Children are not employed or exploited *(Indicator 6.4.1, 6.4.2 (C), 6.4.3 (C), and 6.4.4)*. **Relevance:** This requires that a policy that protects children and prohibits child labour is in place and included in service agreements and supplier contracts. Child safeguarding and protection measures such as child labour prevention and remediation procedures, age verification procedure as part of recruitment, protective restriction for young workers, etc. are also implemented.
- 6.5 There is no harassment or abuse in the workplace, and reproductive rights are protected *(Indicator 6.5.4)*. **Relevance:** The grievance process and other feedback mechanisms are also designed and communicated in a way that makes them easily understood and accessible to young workers to raise issues pertaining to their welfare and rights, while respecting their anonymity and safeguarding them from retaliation.

- 6.6 No forms of forced or trafficked labour are used (*Indicator 6.6.1 (C) and 6.6.2 (C)*). **Relevance:** Children are also protected from any means of exploitation and forced labour. The required special protective policy and procedures should also cover temporary or migrant young workers (when they are employed).
- 6.7 The unit of certification ensures that the working environment under its control is safe and without undue risk to health. (*Indicator 6.7.1 (C), 6.7.2, 6.7.3 (C), 6.7.4, and 6.7.5*). **Relevance:** The working environment does not pose health and safety risks to young workers (if employed). Concerns of child labour, young worker protection are discussed, and any issues raised about child protection are also recorded.
- 7.2 Pesticides are used in ways that do not endanger the health of workers, families, communities, or the environment. (*Indicator 7.2.11 (C)*) **Relevance:** Young workers are not allowed to work with pesticides.

5. EDUCATION

5.1 Challenges

Access to quality education (at all levels) is often constrained by a number of geographical, administrative, social and financial factors.

In rural areas, infrastructure is generally poor, and people often have less income. Schools in rural areas, due to their remote location, modest pay, and other limitations, are usually not attractive to qualified teachers. All these factors can prevent children from receiving quality education¹⁴. For instance, only 60% of children living in rural Indonesia are enrolled in primary school (USAID-PRESTASI, 2013). After completing primary or junior high education, rural children are also more likely to find higher education no longer easily accessible and/or affordable.

CHALLENGES

Poor access to quality education in rural areas. Cultural norms that may limit opportunities for certain groups in the community. Children of migrant workers face more restricted access to education.



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

Cultural norms held by parents, especially the head of households, and lack of awareness of social inclusion could limit education opportunities for certain groups in the community¹⁵, such as girls, children with disabilities, and children of new workers and/or migrant workers.

¹⁴ A stakeholder in Honduras also opined that the poor quality of education in rural areas is discouraging for both parents and children and many parents prefer to send their children to work at an early age to help contribute to the family's income instead.

¹⁵ A study by Ngadi (2016) in Indonesia found that the percentage of children's school enrolment increased in line with the improvement of the heads of household's education level. The enrolment of children whose heads of household are highly

Migration presents an additional challenge for education. Children of new workers who were in the process of transferring schools are more likely to drop out (RSPO, 2018). Moreover, schooling could be disrupted for children of seasonal migrants, and even if children have access to education at their destination estate, it can be difficult to re-enter the formal education system upon their return. In Malaysia, there is a large number of migrant children, including children of migrant workers, undocumented and stateless children, lagging behind in education due to their immigration status. The Government of Indonesia estimates that there are at least 60,000 Indonesian children living around plantation areas across Sabah, where some may be living in poverty with little or no access to education (Earthworm, 2018).

5.2 Steps to Provide and Promote Access to Education

The RSPO standard requires palm oil producers to positively contribute to community development. Allowing all children of workers to access education is a crucial step in supporting their well-being and creating a sustainable future. Some key steps that can be taken to do so are described below:

- **Take a needs-based approach**

Companies seeking to support their children of workers' access to education have a broad range of options available. Table 5 describes some of the options available.

TABLE 5: OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Options	Practical considerations	Description
Provide on-site education facilities for workers' children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The plantation is in a remote area with limited access to schools. - There are no schooling facilities in the nearby communities or the schools are unable to accommodate all the workers' children. - Priority is given to building onsite schools to accommodate children up to the compulsory education age (usually up to 14 or 15 years old, depending on national laws). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many RSPO member companies have made considerable investments to build and operate schools for their workers' children (in some cases, these schools are also open to children from neighbouring communities)¹⁶.
Engagement with other employers in the vicinity to improve public provision of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is more than one company operating in the same area. - One company does not have the resources to accommodate all levels of schooling on their own. - Clear shared goals between companies to facilitate cost-sharing, monitoring, decision-making, and problem-solving. - Priority is given to building schools for compulsory education age (usually up to 14 or 15 years old, based on the respective national laws). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Companies operating in the same landscape can share resources and collaborate on jointly supporting the local public-school system to the benefit of their workers' children and the surrounding communities. - This type of support is not tied to parents' employment status, as parents who are no longer working for the companies are still able to send their children to the public schools.

educated (secondary school and above) was 99.5 per cent. It was higher than the children whose heads of household are from elementary education, which was 88.3 per cent.

¹⁶ Some stakeholders have indicated that companies are made to play the role of government in providing basic services such as education and medical facilities in rural and remote areas where the presence of state agencies are minimal.

<p>Public-private partnership to support public school system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are existing public schools near the company's premises that can be accessed by the workers' children. - Existing public schools are not optimised or not well resourced – e.g. low number of students, lack of trained teachers, inadequate facilities or equipment. - The company has the opportunity to contribute to improving the quality of the schooling facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to public schools can be provided by the company in the following ways - Funding repairs and maintenance activities, purchasing of schooling equipment - Teacher training programmes - Stipends for teachers to encourage retention - Benefits children from the wider community who also attend the public school(s). - Children of parents who are no longer working for the company can still access these schools and benefit from the improved education quality.
<p>Education subsidies for workers' children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are schools (public or private) nearby that can accommodate the workers' children. - The schools can provide quality education up to the compulsory schooling age. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to workers can be provided in the following ways: - paying/subsidising school fees - providing free/subsidised transport (e.g. school buses) to school - Paying/subsidising cost of uniforms, schoolbooks, and stationery at the beginning of the academic year - Subsidies and support provided can also count into the prevailing wages of workers as it reduces their burden to pay for their children's educational needs with their take home salary.
<p>Vocational training for vulnerable children and youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no access to higher secondary or tertiary education or access cannot be provided in the short-term. - The company has the resources to offer non-formal education or vocational training programmes on its own or in partnership with local NGOs or local training centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-formal education, such as vocational training, can improve the skills and knowledge of vulnerable youth (out-of-school and/or out-of-work). - Mitigates the risk of out-of-school youth from engaging in child labour or becoming involved in vice-related activities. - Can be part of a positive contribution to local community development. - Important consideration for companies with policies that prohibit the hiring of children below the age of 18 (even if legally permitted to work) as it provides alternative development opportunities.

<p>Alternative education for migrant children¹⁷</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children of migrant workers are unable to access any formal education systems. - Initiated when no other solutions are available to provide education opportunities for children of migrant workers. - Company is able to partner with local NGOs to provide alternative education facilities for these children and to improve the quality of such education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitating children’s access to the formal schooling system should always be the primary choice. However, there are situations where children are unable to access the formal education system due to their migrant status. - Alternative education should aim to provide primary and secondary education (based on either the local syllabus/curriculum or that of the children’s home country – depending on suitability and feasibility).
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Photo: © UNICEF/UN0247792/Noorani

The boxes below are a few examples of good practices by companies in promoting and providing workers’ children with access to education.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

An Indonesian palm oil company started a ‘mechanical school’ in one of its operations to provide vocational skills training to workers’ children who do not want to further their studies in the formal school system. It is a 3-year programme and upon completion, the children would be above 18 years old. This enables the children to receive skills training to improve their employment prospects and career progression as young adults. Training in the ‘mechanical school’ is provided for free and upon completion they can choose to be hired by the company or to look for employment elsewhere.

Source: Pusat Kajian dan Perlindungan Anak (PKPA), interview, 11 December 2019

¹⁷ Please also see Earthworm’s 2019 publication on “Services for Vulnerable Children in Sabah: What businesses and employees need to know” for additional information on providing alternative education for migrant children in Sabah.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Alternative education is not a part of the formal national education system in Malaysia, but they all share similar aims such as – but not limited to – providing free or very low-cost schooling options to the vulnerable children of migrants, minimise travel time to rural schools by having an on-site facility, equip children with basic education programmes, vocational knowledge and life skills, and prevent the possibility of child labour and other forms of child exploitation. In Sabah, many NGOs, Indonesian Consulate and plantation companies across the state are involved and running alternative education programmes e.g. a total of 209 Community Learning Centres (CLC) by the Indonesian Consulate in Sabah in cooperation with around 40 plantation companies are providing alternative primary and junior secondary level of education to over 12,000 children, and a total of 142 Alternative Learning Centre (ALC) by Humana Child Aid Society Sabah and plantation companies are providing alternative pre-school and primary level of education to over 14,000 children.

Source: Earthworm, 2019

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: PROVISION OF GOOD QUALITY ON-SITE EDUCATION TO WORKERS' CHILDREN

Bumitama Agri Ltd., a producer with plantations in Indonesia, provides facilities for their workers' children at all ages, right up to senior high school. The syllabus provided is the same as those in government schools to enable the children to continue their schooling in the government system when they leave. The company is also committed to ensuring a high quality of education and benchmark themselves against the Indonesian government school accreditation system. Training is also given to the teachers to make sure they are always up to date on the latest teaching methods and changes in the education syllabus.

Similar to government schools, extra-curricular activities are provided to enable children to learn music, sports, etc. The company collects data on the number of workers' children they have in their operation as well as their ages, in order to plan and construct the necessary schooling facilities.

Source: Bumitama, interview, 2 December 2019

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: COMBINING EDUCATION WITH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The “Coconut House” (*Rumah Kepompong*) is a community project by Socfindo for children of both employees and non-employees (communities) around their plantations. Extra-curricular activities held in the house specifically for children include reading sessions, art and drama courses, foreign language courses and computer courses.

To help increase their income-generating skills, programmes are held for parents as well such as sewing, craft and cooking for mothers and fish farming and hydroponic cultivation skills for fathers. Due to the increase in activities, the coconut house has expanded to two houses and now includes a special display room to showcase handicrafts made by the mothers.

Source: Socfindo, 2018

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: ENCOURAGING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SPORTS

Some companies in Latin America have been investing in education-sports programmes (mainly soccer), sometimes in coordination with the government for children and adolescents in the area where they operate. Grupo Palmas in Peru operates a sports programme called ‘Champions’ which focuses on children from 1st to 5th grade in schools located at communities around their operation areas. The main components of the programme include training of physical education teachers, provision of sporting equipment, after-school activities for children, and the creation of an inter-school league. The need for such a programme arose after a social assessment identified that there was a significant population of teenagers in the area of influence of the company, who are exposed to risks such as the use of alcohol and drugs, and dysfunctional families.

Source: Grupo Palma, interview, 2020

No matter what education option or activity that companies choose, make sure to consider the following aspects:

- **Education support covers all children**

All workers’ children should be included in the programme and no child should be left out. It would be helpful to maintain an updated record of the children of workers (number of children and their age profile) and the children in the surrounding communities (if designing an education programme that also benefits local communities). Aside from being useful in the planning and design of the education programme, the information will also support the company in assessing and prioritising interventions to address the other child rights issues, such as child labour risk, access to quality childcare and maternity protection.

Special attention needs to be paid to children from vulnerable groups such as undocumented children, children of migrant workers, casual and subcontracted workers, single-headed households, families with sick and/or disabled parents, and landless families where both parents must work long hours to provide for the household and the opportunity for income diversification is limited.

- **Provide quality education**

Aside from providing access, companies should also consider the quality of education that is being provided. When a company establishes and operates a school for workers’ children, the curriculum used in the school should at least meet national standards. The facility should provide a positive study environment and be maintained regularly. Teachers are the foundation of a good education and companies should

ensure that the teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications. A company may also support and retain teachers by sponsoring relevant training or upskilling programmes for teachers.

- **Make education programmes affordable and accessible for workers**

If it is not feasible to provide on-site school facilities for workers, companies can still support workers by making school fees more affordable such as offering full or partial subsidies. Stipends can be provided to workers in need or subsidies paid directly to schools/education providers with a specific arrangement to accept children of workers from the company.

Consider the following questions when assessing accessibility of company's education programmes/interventions for workers:

- Is the school on-site, close to the company premises or a considerable distance away?
- Do workers need to go through lengthy procedures to apply for school or other education programmes for their children, such as company-provided education subsidies, non-formal and/or alternative education?
- Is a shuttle bus or other easier/cheaper/safer transportation provided?
- Where can a worker find information about education options provided by the company?

- **Ensure child protection in any education project**

In the case of childcare, it is of utmost importance to ensure that children are protected from harm and all education projects and facilities have strong child protection mechanisms in place. Please refer to Chapter 3 for more details.

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO EDUCATION

- 4.3 The unit of certification contributes to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities (*Indicator 4.3.1*). **Relevance:** The contribution to community development (based on consultation with local communities) may include supporting/providing access to education.
- 5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains (*Indicator 5.2.2 and 5.2.5*). **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements, can create awareness on the importance of education and preventing child labour in farms.
- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient to ensure decent living wages (DLW) (*Indicator 6.2.4 (C) and 6.2.6*). **Relevance:** Access to educational amenities is provided to workers' children (to national standards or higher). Payment of DLW helps to enable working parents to afford schooling for their children and is an important factor in mitigating child labour.

6. MATERNITY PROTECTION AND BREASTFEEDING

6.1 Challenges

Throughout the world, women face barriers when entering and re-entering the workforce after spending time away to give birth and breastfeed their babies (ASEAN, 2013). As a range of research has shown, a lack of strong maternity protection does not only affect the women and their babies negatively, it can also lead to negative consequences for the company including higher worker turnover rates, an increase in workers taking sick days and generally lower productivity (Mensah, 2011a and b; ILO, 2012; ILO, 2014).

CHALLENGES

Under-exercised maternity rights and exclusion of whole groups from maternity protection.
Inflexible maternity leave.
Exposure to hazardous work during period of pregnancy or breastfeeding.
High turn-over rates as a result of mothers being unable to return to work after giving birth.
Inability to breastfeed for the recommended minimum term of 6 months.

In the palm oil sector, the challenges for women are particularly stark in the context of labour migration, informal and agriculture work. Access to maternity protection is often determined by employment and immigration status, often excluding whole groups of women from accessing any formal protection (UNICEF 2016). Evidence from Malaysia shows that the women most at risk are undocumented migrant women, who do not make use of hospitals and other medical services out of concerns about their undocumented status (Pocock, 2018).

In addition, due to often limited maternity leave periods, women are often forced to stop breastfeeding before their babies turn six months old¹⁸. Cultural challenges (RSPO, 2018) and the lack of adequate break times and facilities (UNICEF, 2016) make it extremely difficult for women to continue breastfeeding while at work. This lack of protection and consideration of women's postnatal needs deters many women from returning to the workplace and contributes to high worker turnover.

The lack of protection for pregnant or breastfeeding women means that they often continue doing hazardous work such as pesticide spraying, heavy lifting etc. As mentioned, all of these circumstances also affect business as they are often coupled with increased healthcare costs, sick days and absenteeism.

6.2 Steps to Implement Strong Maternity Protection

The RSPO criteria require strong health and safety protection as well as fair and non-discriminatory practices for pregnant or breastfeeding women. When setting up stronger maternity protection in line with the RSPO standard and basic child rights guidelines, it is recommended to consider the following elements:

- **Ensure that all workers have access to maternity protection**

The programme should consider all workers employed in the company's mill and plantations. This includes permanent and casual workers, whether directly recruited or subcontracted¹⁹. While migrant workers may

¹⁸ It is recommended that mothers exclusively breastfeed infants in their first six months to achieve optimal growth, development and health (WHO, 2011).

¹⁹ Special attention should be paid to subcontracted working mothers, as they lack access to social protection services and are often under pressure to meet daily quotas to get a better income. Therefore, it is vital for palm oil producers to strengthen the monitoring of labour contractors to verify compliance with local legal requirements on workers' rights. In addition, companies

not be part of national insurance schemes that cover such provisions as maternity costs, it is good practice to ensure that all workers have equal access to maternity protection and leave, no matter their status. While some employers may perceive this as an additional cost, a universal application will generally increase worker satisfaction, and contribute to the prevention of worker conflict and unrest (ASEAN, 2013).

- **Ensure strong maternity protection**

At a minimum, the company complies with local and national laws concerning maternity protection. Workers' right to maternity leave should be fully respected and faithfully implemented. For instance, pregnant workers must not be dismissed or demoted, and new mothers should be able to take full maternity leave and receive full (or a percentage as provided by law) salary; new mothers should be able to exercise their right to return to work at the equivalent position after their maternity leave and their opportunity for promotion should not be negatively affected. In some countries, maternity protection may be very limited or even non-existent for migrant workers. In such instances where legal protection at the domestic level is missing or insufficient, the company is advised to refer to international or industry best practices and guidelines.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: MATERNITY BENEFIT BEYOND NATIONAL LEGISLATION AT AGROPALMA, BRAZIL

Agropalma is a vertically integrated palm oil producer of premium palm oil products, with operations in Pará in Northern Brazil and Limeria, São Paulo State. Agropalma offers women workers 180 days of maternity leave, which is 60 days more than what is required under Brazilian law. This maternity leave applies to Agropalma employees at all levels of the workforce including the office staff and estate workers, as well as permanent and casual workers. In addition to maternity leave, they also provide 20 days of paid paternity leave (5 mandatory days and 15 days upon request of the father).

Source: Agropalma, email interview, 20 December 2019



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

should consider providing training to labour contractors on good corporate practices, in particular for working mothers, and training sessions on the protection of child rights.

- **Ensure non-discrimination of pregnant workers**

During the recruitment process, a pregnancy test must not be used as a precondition of employment. Once recruited, workers should remain free from such requests or inquiries as this can result in gender and maternity discrimination. As an alternative, companies may request women workers to inform management about their pregnancies so that the right arrangements can be made to protect them from hazardous work (see Table 6). Workers should be assured that there will not be any negative repercussions such as dismissal or reduction in wages or benefits as a result of their pregnancy disclosure.

- **Take protective measures for pregnant workers**

As part of the overall OSH risk management, ensure that companies have systems in place to specifically protect pregnant workers.

Such measures are:

- No work in hazardous positions
- No overtime
- No night shifts
- The correct protective equipment
- Sufficient water intake during working hours

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: ROTATION TO LOW-RISK WORK FOR PREGNANT WORKERS IN KALIMANTAN

A palm oil company in Kalimantan implements a stronger protection measure for workers who are pregnant or breastfeeding in compliance to the existing law and policy. When a worker is confirmed to be pregnant, she will be rotated to a non-arduous and non-hazardous position. This action is taken to avoid or reduce the negative consequences of the work on the pregnant worker and her child.

Source: UNICEF, 2016

It is essential for companies to assess and identify hazardous workplaces that may create risks for pregnant workers. A risk assessment should be conducted to produce a list of work/tasks that may be particularly hazardous to pregnant workers. All workers should be made aware that they cannot undertake these tasks while pregnant. Table 6 provides some guidance on how to identify hazardous positions for expectant and nursing mothers²⁰.

TABLE 6: HOW TO IDENTIFY HAZARDOUS POSITIONS FOR PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN (adapted from BWI, 2017)

HAZARD	KEY QUESTIONS	IMPACT
Working time	- Does the position require long hours and/or night shifts?	Prolonged working hours or irregular working schedules may leave expectant mothers with insufficient time for rest, which can result in adverse pregnancy outcomes such as low birth weight and smaller head size, preterm delivery, preeclampsia, and miscarriage among other things.
Workplace and hygiene problems	- Is safe drinking water available? - Do workers have access to emergency medical care? Are there existing washing and changing facilities? - Is proper sanitation available?	An expectant mother is more vulnerable to infections, which may harm her and the baby.

²⁰ For more details, please refer to Better Work Indonesia’s Guidelines for Employers on Maternity Protection at Work, ILO Standard on Maternity Protection at Work or other relevant occupational health and safety standards for pregnant workers.

Physical hazards, demands, movements and postures	- Does the position come with physical hazards such as extreme heat or cold, heavy lifting, prolonged sitting or standing?	This may harm the expectant mother, cause foetal lesions or other damage, and lead to low birth weight, miscarriage, or premature birth.
Chemical hazards	- Is the worker exposed to any chemical hazards, such as pesticides, fertilisers, or cleaning agents?	Exposure to hazardous chemical substances may result in miscarriage, stillbirth, birth defects or baby's developmental problems, including early childhood cancer, allergies, premature birth, low birth weight, and many others.
Biological hazards	- Is the worker exposed to mould and fungi, blood and body fluids, sewage, animal droppings, insect stings or poisonous plants?	Some microorganisms may infect the womb and cause miscarriages, foetal death, birth defects, stillbirth, premature birth, or early neonatal death.

Once the risk assessment is completed, it should be regularly reviewed as conditions of the pregnant workers may change. Such lists can be a useful tool for companies and inform their decision-making processes with regards to pregnant workers, e.g. whether a change of work, work equipment, or workplace is necessary during the different stages of pregnancy.

When a worker involved in hazardous work discloses her pregnancy, she should be offered alternative work positions, without negatively impacting her health, her employment, or her salary.

- **Access to antenatal check-ups for pregnant workers**

Companies should support pregnant workers to have access to affordable check-ups. This may include an exemption from work without loss of salary to allow pregnant workers to attend antenatal check-ups.

6.3 Steps to Implement Breastfeeding Support

The RSPO criteria require that suppliers offer working conditions that create enabling conditions for workers and their families including protecting their reproductive rights such as by offering support to breastfeeding women in the workplace. Setting up breastfeeding support mechanisms is one way to ensure the work of the mother does not negatively impact the healthy development of the child. When providing breastfeeding support in line with the RSPO standard and basic child rights, it is recommended to consider the following elements:

- **Needs assessment**

Prior to implementing breastfeeding support programmes, companies should first carry out a needs assessment to determine the scope and purpose of the programme. The assessment can include the following questions:

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING IN CENTRAL KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA

In order to promote breastfeeding amongst new mothers, two palm oil companies in Central Kalimantan province allocated budget and staff resources for the provision of complete and convenient facilities for breastfeeding mothers such as breastfeeding corners (*Pojok ASI*) at clinics and day-care centres, equipped with ice cooler boxes to store breast milk and a 24-hour power connection.

Source: RSPO, 2018

- How many women will be affected by this programme?
- What kind of support are the women looking for? E.g. do they mainly require a private space? Where would that place be ideally? Are they considering pumping and storing the milk? Would they want to directly breastfeed their children, etc.?
- Who should be responsible for monitoring the programme?
- How should the programme be promoted to ensure optimal use by the targeted users?
- Where and how should a space be designated as a breastfeeding facility?



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

- **Breastfeeding facilities**

Companies can build or dedicate a private area for new mothers to breastfeed and/or express milk. The amount of space needed is minimal as long as it can fit a comfortable chair and a small table or shelf for a breast pump. Ideally, it should be a private space that can be locked from the inside, has electrical outlets, is close to a source of clean water for washing hands and milk collection containers and has a cooler to store the milk.

- **Breastfeeding breaks**

In order to make breastfeeding feasible, it is crucial for women to have sufficient breaks. Breastfeeding facilities will only be used if women have enough time to go there, express their milk and return to their workplace without being late and told off by supervisors. Ideally, breastfeeding breaks should be 45 minutes to 1 hour long and should allow for some flexibility.

- **Education resources related to breastfeeding**

Companies can supply workers with educational materials on breastfeeding because breastfeeding is a learned behaviour. Proper information about the benefits of breastfeeding for mother and child may help workers to make an informed choice about infant feeding.

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO MATERNITY PROTECTION AND BREASTFEEDING

- 3.6 An occupational health and safety (H&S) plan is documented, effectively communicated and implemented. (*Indicator 3.6.1 (C) and 3.6.2 (C)*). **Relevance:** The assessments plans and procedures also address occupational H&S risks and provide protection for young workers and pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- 3.7 All staff, workers, scheme smallholders, outgrowers and contract workers are appropriately trained. (*Indicator 3.7.1 (C)*) **Relevance:** Women workers are trained on maternity protection and understand their rights as provided for by local and national laws as well as the RSPO P&C.
- 4.2 There is a mutually agreed and documented system for dealing with complaints and grievances, which is implemented and accepted by all affected parties (*Indicator 4.2.1 (C), 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4*). **Relevance:** The grievance process and other feedback mechanisms are also designed and communicated in a way that makes them easily understood and accessible to women workers to raise issues pertaining to their welfare and rights including maternity protection and breastfeeding support.
- 5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains (*Indicator 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.4, and 5.2.5*). **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements can create awareness about maternity protection and improve labour practices amongst smallholders.
- 6.1 Any form of discrimination is prohibited (*Indicator 6.1.1 (C), 6.1.2 (C), 6.1.3, 6.1.4, 6.1.5 (C), and 6.1.6*). **Relevance:** Non-discrimination also means that pregnant or breastfeeding women are not discriminated against when it comes to their recruitment, access to benefits, work advancement, wages, and dismissal. Pregnancy testing is not conducted as a discriminatory measure. A Gender Committee provides a platform to raise awareness, identify and address issues of concern as well as promote opportunities and improvements for women.
- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient to provide decent living wages (*Indicator 6.2.2 (C), 6.2.3 (C) and 6.2.5*). **Relevance:** Compliance at a minimum with legal requirements relating to maternity protection and the entitlements are clearly detailed in the employment contract. There are also efforts in place to improve workers' access to adequate, sufficient, and affordable food which is especially important to pregnant or breastfeeding women.
- 6.5 There is no harassment or abuse in the workplace, and reproductive rights are protected (*Indicator 6.5.2 (C) and 6.5.3*). **Relevance:** Reproductive rights are protected and specific needs of new mothers such as access to medical care, breastfeeding support and childcare are assessed and addressed.
- 6.7 The unit of certification ensures that the working environment under its control is safe and without undue risk to health (*Indicator 6.7.1 (C), 6.7.3 (C) and 6.7.4*). **Relevance:** Occupational health and safety concerns of pregnant and breastfeeding women are also raised and discussed at relevant forums provided by the unit of certification. Workers are provided with appropriate PPE and have access to the necessary medical services such as antenatal and postpartum checks for expecting and new mothers.
- 7.2 Pesticides are used in ways that do not endanger the health of workers, families, communities or the environment. (*Indicator 7.2.6 (C), 7.2.10 (C), 7.2.11 (C)*) **Relevance:** Young workers and pregnant or breastfeeding women are not allowed to work with pesticides. Workers who handle pesticides are given regular health checks and proper training. They are made aware of the health hazards of pesticides to themselves, their families, communities, and the environment.

7. CHILDCARE

7.1 Challenges

Childcare is essential for all children to achieve their full potential by ensuring they can grow up in safe, healthy and nurturing environments. However, the number of children benefiting from childcare programmes is persistently low (IFC, 2017) and this is particularly true for the palm oil sector where quality pre-school is rare (UNICEF, 2016).

Childcare is often outside the reach of low-income employees (IFC, 2018), but it is often the low-income workers who work the longest hours and therefore have the greatest need for childcare (Lee, Salzwedel, Chyou, & Liebman, 2017). Moreover, as women are more likely than men to bear childcare responsibilities, lack of childcare can prevent women from fully and equally participating in paid work.

While many palm oil companies provide transportation and subsidies for employees' children to access primary and secondary school, these services rarely apply to the early childhood programme, or afterschool activities. There is also evidence that children of migrant workers are discriminated against and not able to access early childhood care or nursery services in palm oil plantations.

The lack of childcare has also been linked to increased risk of child labour. For example, research showed that the absence of on-site educational and childcare facilities is one of the contributing causes of child labour amongst the migrant worker community in the plantation sector in Sabah (Earthworm, 2018). The situation cannot be effectively improved if companies receive little or no guidance on childcare implementation. In fact, poorly designed childcare programmes may be counterproductive. For instance, non-supervised childcare centres can raise safety concerns, while having children's relatives to take over supervisory roles at childcare facilities can lead to income loss for families.

CHALLENGES

Absence of childcare support is a barrier for women to re-enter the workforce.
Cost represents a major barrier for accessing childcare.
Childcare in many places, particularly the less or least developed areas, remains less accessible.
Multiple factors can result in compromised childcare quality.
Lack of quality childcare may contribute to child labour.
Little knowledge and guidance available on how to provide quality childcare support.
Poorly designed childcare programmes may affect children more negatively.

7.2 Steps to Implement Childcare

The RSPO standards require that palm oil producers promote gender equality, protection, and opportunities for working women. Providing childcare is an essential step to create more and better opportunities for women workers. The following elements should be considered when setting up childcare programmes in line with the RSPO standard and basic child rights:

- **Make child protection the first priority**

Ensuring the health and safety of children should always be the priority when setting up any childcare solutions. Please refer to Chapter 3 for more guidance on how to implement child protection.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0271840/Pirozzi

- **Take a needs-based approach**

There are a range of options available for companies to support their workers' childcare needs. The table below lists some childcare options, ranging from highly resource intensive options to less resource intensive interventions. Companies may consider offering one or more of the listed options (see Table 7 below) to comprehensively address workers' needs and generate higher business returns through improved productivity.

TABLE 7: OPTIONS TO SUPPORT CHILDCARE FOR WORKERS (adapted from IFC 2017)²¹.

Childcare options	Potential scenarios
Engagement with other employers in the vicinity to improve provision of childcare	Company A lacks the resources and space to resolve their workers' childcare needs on their own. Therefore, Company A is partnering with other companies in the nearby communities to share resources and support the provision of childcare to all their workers together.
Holiday camps and care during school holiday	Company B observes the difficulties of their working parents to arrange childcare during school holidays. Company B cooperates with the local government or NGO to hold a "school holiday camp" consisting of a daily camp from 7:30 to 15:30 (when parents are at work) and after-care facilities until 17:00 if parents need to work extra time. Working parents can drop the children off before they go to work and collect them after work hours.
Back-up/emergency childcare	Company B allocates spare slots/spaces in their childcare centre for workers who are in need of last minute/emergency childcare service (e.g. school is closed, the usual caregiver is not available). Parents therefore do not have to miss work.
Extended hour care (mainly for the weekends)	It is the peak production season and Company C needs to operate during the weekends for one full month to make sure they can harvest and process as many oil palm fruits as possible. To solve the childcare needs of working parents over the weekend, Company C temporarily extends the operational hours of on-site childcare centres.

²¹ For more information about the range of options for employer-supported childcare, please refer to IFC's report "Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare" (2017).

Childcare subsidies for workers	Company D provides childcare subsidies/allowances for workers who need childcare support as without that support they will not be able to come to work (in cases where the company is unable to provide an onsite childcare centre). The subsidy is to help cover the cost of childcare fees, which may be costly for the worker.
Public-private partnerships to expand childcare provision	Company X and the local government have a shared goal to run a childcare programme in the community. The programme is conducted on a cost-sharing-basis where each party contributes time, money, expertise, and/or other in-kind resources to the partnership. Via this partnership, Company X can contribute to the childcare needs of their working parents and surrounding communities, including smallholders. Company X may provide in-kind support and fund training sessions for childcare staff, which would have greater impact on public childcare service.
On-site childcare centre	Company Y establishes an on-site childcare centre following the working schedule of parents. The childcare centre focuses on early childhood development and education. The centre is staffed with trained personnel to manage the childcare programmes and educational tools, such as interactive games, toys and books.
Safe play area for children	Company Z establishes a safe play area for children of workers and in the community where they have access to educational games and extra-curricular activities (e.g. music and dance lessons, sports, etc.). Outside the play area, there is sufficient space/field for children to play sports such as football after school.

When designing a childcare programme, companies should consider the following aspects:

- **Cover the most vulnerable**

The childcare programme should cover as many working families as possible, particularly children from the most vulnerable groups such as undocumented children, children of migrant workers, sub-contracted or casual workers, single-headed households, families with sick and/or disabled parents, and landless families where both parents must work long hours to provide for the household and the opportunity for income diversification is limited. To properly inform the design and management of the childcare programme, companies should have regularly updated records of children of workers and also children in the surrounding communities (if the childcare programme is part of the company's contribution to community development).

- **Make childcare programmes affordable for workers**

If it is not feasible to provide on-site childcare facilities for workers, companies can still support workers by making childcare fees more affordable such as offering full or partial subsidies. Stipends can be provided to workers in need to help them secure spots in private childcare centres or subsidies paid directly to childcare providers with a specific arrangement to accept children of workers from the company.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: AFRIFRESH, AN AGRIBUSINESS COMPANY IN SOUTH AFRICA, SUPPORTS CHILDCARE

Afrifresh is a South African producer and exporter of fresh fruit. The company specialises in table grapes and citrus fruit (grapefruits, oranges, soft citrus, and lemons), and has buyers in more than 50 countries. Women are an important part of Afrifresh's workforce, representing 35 percent of the permanent workforce and 48.5 percent of the seasonal workforce. They support workers with children by providing creches at the farms, provide transportation for children to go to school and come back home, and flexible work arrangement for professional workers. They consider the monthly expenses of the creches as very small (\$686 per month) that it can be subsumed to other budget lines e.g. electricity of the creche is paid as part of the overall farm electricity bill. The business impacts of childcare to Afrifresh are an enhanced status as an "employer of choice", overtime and productivity gains, increased safety for workers' children living on-site, and ongoing market access and enhanced profile with buyers.

Source: IFC, 2017

● Address "accessibility challenges" in company's childcare programmes

Accessibility is one of the key issues and considerations when companies develop childcare programmes for the workers. Availability and affordability alone cannot guarantee that the childcare provided by companies will be put to optimum use by the target workers. To increase accessibility, consider the following questions:

- Is the childcare centre on-site, near-site or off-site?
- Do workers need to go through lengthy procedures to apply for childcare allowances?
- Is a shuttle bus or other easier/cheaper/safer transportation provided?
- Can workers get to their child during the workday?
- Where can a worker find information about childcare options/benefits offered by the company?
- What has been done to minimise excessive overtime for nursing workers, frequent work shifts and unpredictable working hours?



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

- **Ensure that the quality of childcare meets national standards**

Companies should consider the national/local regulation and standards on childcare²². The government in the country of operation usually sets a standard that childcare providers must meet in order to protect children from harm and also to advance child development and early learning. The standard may also include the provision of care, such as maximum group size, physical environment, such as the building condition, hygiene, etc., the ratio of children to caregivers, and the caregiver qualification²³. Often, the quality of caregiving jobs is the key to quality childcare. Fair compensation and skill development support for caregivers are vital to ensure good care is delivered to children.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: PANDURATA ALIMENTOS LTDA., A FOOD MANUFACTURING IN BRAZIL

With 50% of their permanent workforce and 70% of production workers being women and at least 5% having children under the age of 3, Pandurata Alimentos Ltda. has been taking tangible steps to provide its employees with a number of childcare support measures for more than 30 years, such as: reserved spaces in nearby childcare centres, referrals to local private childcare with lower prices, monthly health advice for pregnant workers, mothers and babies, starter packages for new parents, gift baskets for child's first day of school, and 24-hour nurse/doctor on-site.
Source: IFC, 2017

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: BORUSAN, A HEAVY MANUFACTURING IN TURKEY

Borusan supports parents with children with a wide range of childcare services: a childcare subsidy for Borusan Mannesmann employees, corporate social responsibility project funding the construction of crèche facilities in organised industrial zones (OIZs), breastfeeding and lactation stations at all group locations, parents' leave entitlements, flexible working and leave arrangements (where practical), and policies aiming to increase gender diversity and support women's employment and empowerment.
Source: IFC, 2017

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO CHILDCARE

- 4.3 The unit of certification contributes to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities (*Indicator 4.3.1*). **Relevance:** The contribution to community development (based on consultation with local communities) may include supporting/providing access to childcare.
- 5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains (*Indicator 5.2.2, 5.2.5*). **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements can create awareness on the importance of childcare support for their workers (if relevant) as well as family members who work on their farm.
- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient to provide decent living wages (DLW) (*Indicator 6.2.4 (C), 6.2.5, 6.2.6*). **Relevance:** Requires the provision of access to childcare including sanitation, water supplies and welfare amenities in accordance to legal requirements. Providing DLW can help ensure that working parents can afford childcare for their children.
- 6.5 There is no harassment or abuse in the workplace, and reproductive rights are protected (*Indicator 6.5.2 (C) and 6.5.3*). **Relevance:** Reproductive rights also refer to specific needs of new mothers such as access to medical care, breastfeeding support, and childcare.

²² For instance, in Indonesia, the Directorate General of Early Children Education and Community Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a Technical Guidance for the Implementation of Childcare Service (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-rBla0m14Eir6rFgeHOaFQjhb4aJhOa/view>)

²³ For more information on the key elements to consider when providing childcare support and also more examples of good business practices, please refer to UNICEF's Family-Friendly Policies Handbook for Business (UNICEF, 2020a).

8. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

8.1 Challenges

Plantation workers are often exposed to heat, dust, toxic chemicals, and the use of heavy machineries (Amnesty International, 2016). In Malaysia, for instance, the accident rate in the plantations is higher than in other sectors (Friends of the Earth, 2005). Children in the palm oil industry are directly and indirectly affected by these conditions, either because they themselves work or help out on farms or plantations, or because the health issues and/or accidents of their parents prevents them from receiving sufficient protection and support.

CHALLENGES

Exposure to work-related hazards and high risk of accidents in plantations can directly and indirectly affect the health of children. Children of palm oil workers have precarious access to healthcare services. Food insecurity can lead to poor health of children.

Some RSPO member companies provide on-site medical facilities and transportation to hospitals/clinics. However, such services are often restricted to permanent workers, and medical services catered to children are usually unavailable. Casual workers and their children might therefore be excluded from these services (Amnesty International, 2016).

The transformation of diverse agriculture or forests to oil palm plantations impacts the food supply of the workers and their families. For example, in Papua New Guinea, the switch to oil palm cultivation brought an end to gardening and collecting practices, meaning workers must now buy more food, which in turn has led to higher consumption of processed foods and reliance on cash economy (Tunama, 2014). Pollution from pesticides and agrochemicals can also kill fish and staple crops, impacting food security (NCHR, 2014). Researchers also observed a negative impact of the palm oil sector on water resources in South Asian countries and clean water is now harder for communities to access than previously (Colchester, 2011). All such changes contribute to increased food insecurity, which may subject mothers and children to poor health conditions.

8.2 Steps to Promote Health and Nutrition

The RSPO criteria require that suppliers create decent working conditions that allow their employees and families to live healthy lives. In line with RSPO criteria, companies can play a significant role in increasing the well-being of employees by taking the following measures:

- **Ensure workplace health and safety and safe near-site environment**

Referring to ILO code of practice in safety and health in agriculture (ILO, 2011), establish a proper occupational health and safety management system to ensure good health and safety standards at the workplace and all other premises (e.g. worker housing and related amenities). The occupational health and safety management should contain the following key elements:

- Specific policy on occupational health and safety
- An organisational structure or responsible person/team to ensure overall accountability and responsibility, keep health and safety records and documentation, promote awareness, and provide information to workers, and facilitate training related to occupational health and safety
- Hazard identification and risk assessment

- Planning and implementation of controls
- Monitoring and evaluation of occupational health and safety performance, then carrying out necessary improvement for future implementation

Special health and safety measures should be taken for pregnant or breastfeeding women, and children at the workplace and other premises under the company’s direct control. Please refer to relevant steps in Chapter 2 on child labour and young workers, Chapter 6 on maternity protection and breastfeeding, and Chapter 9 on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and housing conditions.



Photo: © RSPO, Jonathan Perugia

- **Promote food security and access to affordable and healthy food**

Companies can also play a role in ensuring their workers and workers’ families have access to adequate nutrition. This can be assured by paying decent wages to workers so that they can afford nutritious food and ensuring that workers have access to clean water and fresh food at affordable prices, especially if the estates are located far away from towns.

Decent wages and guaranteed access to healthy food and clean water should always be the company’s priority. In addition, companies can also consider the following:

- Facilitate the set-up of shops in the estates that are run by third parties. However, it is important to ensure that the food prices in those shops are not inflated and that there is sufficient variety in food types to promote healthy diets.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In Indonesia, Socfindo developed a mechanism for supplying work tools while supporting small businesses. The company provides raw materials, associated machines, and design services for local entrepreneurs from surrounding communities to create the required work tools, which are then sold back to the estate at a fixed price.

Source: Socfindo, 2018

- Explore the possibility of setting up a grocery cooperative that is managed by the workers.
- Provide small plots of land adjacent to worker housing areas for workers to plant their own vegetables.
- Provide workers with affordable canteen services, food coupons or food subsidies. For example, companies can assist to negotiate or purchase food and vegetables in bulk at wholesale prices, and then resell them to the workers at affordable prices.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: ENSURING AVAILABILITY OF HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS

A company in Indonesia works with their contractors and shopkeepers in providing healthy food at affordable prices. They also work with Women’s Associations and Parent Teachers Association (PTA) to encourage parents to set up mini-canteens in the company’s schools to prepare food for the children. The company also plants fruit trees in vacant areas such as along road shoulders, which their workers can harvest for free. Workers are also allocated allotments in the workers’ housing area to grow vegetables and the company provides the seeds for free.

Source: Bumitama, interview, 2 December 2019.

● Targeted programmes to improve children’s health and nutrition status

Palm oil companies can initiate and run programmes to improve the health and nutrition of workers’ children living in the oil palm estates. This is sometimes conducted as part of education programmes or CSR activities undertaken by the companies. For instance, one company provided healthy snacks daily to the children in their estate schools while another sponsored a breakfast programme for a local school that resulted in an increase in attendance among children²⁴.

Given that many families live on the plantations, companies should ensure and facilitate children’s access to immunisation to help protect them from getting infectious diseases. Companies can do so by partnering with local healthcare facilities, organising regular vaccination sessions on-site, conducting outreach services, etc.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: EXTENDING HEALTH INITIATIVES TO NEARBY COMMUNITIES

Natural Habitats in Ecuador runs a health programme where a doctor gives tours in the communities surrounding their estates and provides health checks for children, looking into matters of nutrition, anaemia, and vaccination. The company also supports the children to have their own garden to learn more about the cultivation of vegetables. The children are allowed to manage and harvest their gardens.

Palmas Aceiteras de Honduras (HONDUPALMA), a company in Honduras, has a health clinic that provides medical services to employees, farmer partners and their workers, independent smallholders, and surrounding communities. The clinic also provides medical attention to children. In addition, HONDUPALMA also supports public health clinics with medicine supplies and infrastructure, and organises medical brigades to service the communities.

Source: Natural Habitats, interview, 2020; Hondupalma, interview, 2020

While RSPO member companies have invested significantly in fire monitoring and prevention programmes, best management practices on peat, and have made policy commitments on “zero burning” and no new peat development, haze caused by forest fires still blanket parts of Southeast Asia (mainly Indonesia,

²⁴ Based on information gathered during stakeholder interviews

Malaysia and Singapore) on an annual basis. It is important that companies have mitigation measures in place to minimise the health impacts of the haze season on their workers and their families such as providing face masks, air purifiers, minimising outdoor work activities when the air pollution index is at hazardous levels, etc.

The world is currently experiencing a global pandemic at an unprecedented scale. Governments are struggling to control the spread of COVID-19 while protecting their citizens from the increasing adverse impacts on health and socio-economic wellbeing. Many companies are similarly challenged to maintain viable business operations while keeping their staff safe and employed. Companies have a social obligation towards their workers and families, to implement necessary precautions and safeguards to minimise risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19, such as physical distancing, provision of PPE (e.g. face masks), staggered work schedules, access to testing, strengthening support for healthcare and medical services, ensuring good WASH facilities including provision of soap and sanitisers, etc.²⁵

GOOD PRACTICE BOX:
THE PALM OIL SECTOR'S EFFORTS TO PROTECT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

Since the outbreak in early 2020, plantation companies have taken action to strengthen existing health and safety measures as well as introduce new SOPs to protect their employees from the spread of COVID-19. Measures taken by some of the companies are highlighted below.

Establishment of COVID-19 inter-departmental management and implementation teams/taskforces to develop and operationalise guidelines and SOPs.

Introduction of special SOPs for worksites and worker housing during the pandemic which is tailored to the regions/countries of operation. The SOP includes physical distancing measures, regular screening of COVID-19 symptoms, increased focus on sanitation (e.g. hand washing and hand sanitising) by educating workers on proper hand washing techniques, setting up hand washing and sanitising stations, disinfecting workplaces and housing areas regularly, imposing travel restrictions, setting up isolation areas, work from home arrangements (where applicable), etc.

Distribution of key materials (e.g. face masks, hand sanitisers, disinfectants, thermometers, etc.) to workers. Workers in key roles are prioritised (i.e. medical staff in estate clinics, employees carrying out regular screening of symptoms, etc.) due to the global shortage of PPE such as surgical face masks.

Provision of support to local communities. Companies distributed PPE such as face masks and hand sanitisers to local communities. Public spaces frequently used by local communities were also frequently disinfected. Companies also ran education and awareness campaigns on COVID-19 and the importance of good hygiene. Companies who have education programmes and managed schools also initiated home learning programmes to enable children to still have access to education.

Partnering with public sector. Companies supported local government's efforts to combat COVID-19 via donations and contribution of equipment, hand sanitisers, soap, WASH facilities (e.g. handwashing stations) and food supplies. Companies also extended the support to local hospitals and healthcare staff.

Source: Wilmar, 2020; Bumitama, 2020; and Musim Mas, 2020

²⁵ Several guidelines have been developed to inform and support various actors on how to better manage and mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Please refer to WHO, 2020; FAO, 2020; UNICEF, 2020b; and ILO, 2020a for more information.

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- 3.4 A comprehensive Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) is undertaken prior to new plantings or operations, and a social and environmental management and monitoring plan is implemented and regularly updated in ongoing operations (*Indicator 3.4.1 (C), 3.4.2, 3.4.3 (C)*). **Relevance:** Consideration of impacts to health and nutrition (as part of food security) are part of the SEIA and if impacts are identified, they are addressed in the social and environmental management and monitoring plan.
- 3.7 All staff, workers, scheme smallholders, outgrowers and contract workers are appropriately trained. (*Indicator 3.7.1 (C)*). **Relevance:** Workers should be adequately trained on health and environmental risks of pesticide exposure; recognition of acute and long-term exposure symptoms including the most vulnerable groups (e.g. young workers, pregnant women); ways to minimise exposure to workers and their families; and international and national instruments or regulations that protect workers' health.
- 5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains (*Indicator 5.2.2, 5.2.5*). **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements can create awareness on the importance of health and nutrition for their workers (if relevant) as well as family members who work on their farm.
- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient in providing decent living wages (DLW) (*Indicator 6.2.2 (C), 6.2.4 (C), 6.2.5, 6.2.6*). **Relevance:** Workers have access to medical services, maternity leave and sick leave in compliance with national legal requirements. Efforts are taken to improve workers' access to adequate, sufficient, and affordable food. Payment of DLW helps to ensure that working parents can access good healthcare and quality foods for their children.
- 6.7 The unit of certification ensures that the working environment under its control is safe and without undue risk to health. (*Indicator 6.7.1 (C), 6.7.2, 6.7.3 (C), 6.7.4, 6.7.5*). **Relevance:** Occupational health and safety concerns of pregnant and breastfeeding women are also raised and discussed at relevant forums provided. Workers are provided with appropriate PPE and have access to the necessary medical care such as antenatal and postpartum healthcare. Accident and emergency procedures are in place and understood by workers and their families (if living on-site).
- 7.2 Pesticides are used in ways that do not endanger the health of workers, families, communities or the environment (*Indicator 7.2.6 (C), 7.2.7 (C), 7.2.8, 7.2.9 (C), 7.2.10 (C), 7.2.11 (C)*). **Relevance:** Young workers and pregnant or breastfeeding women are not allowed to work with pesticides. Workers who handle pesticides are given regular health checks and proper training. They are made aware of the health hazards of pesticides to themselves, their families, communities and the environment.

9. WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH) AND HOUSING CONDITIONS

9.1 Challenges

Palm oil plantations have a considerable impact on local ecological environments, particularly surface water quality due to leaching of pesticides and agrochemicals; palm oil mill effluent discharge; and hydrocarbon contamination in rivers, including increased total suspended solids due to soil erosion in relation to land clearing for plantations. Communities affected by water pollution lose access to important sources of drinking water (Brown & Jacobson, 2005). Drinking, bathing, and swimming in polluted water can cause a range of adverse health impacts to which children may be more vulnerable (UNICEF, 2016). For instance, diarrhoea is reported as one of the most common illnesses affecting children in palm oil settings (UNICEF, 2016), which is commonly caused by contaminated water, poor hygiene practices and limited access to clean water.

CHALLENGES

Lack of access to clean water creates additional health risks for children.
Company-provided housing facilities can present WASH risks if poorly constructed and maintained.
Unequal access to housing benefits - casual workers have less access to company housing.

As stressed by UNICEF, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) has significant impact on people's survival and health, access to education, and long-term development, particularly that of children. Therefore, there is a constant need to address WASH risks on palm oil sites.

Apart from the workshop and working sites, on-site accommodation can equally present WASH risks. Ditches and reservoirs near housing complexes may pose health and safety risk to workers' children, as not all companies have put up safety perimeter fences and warning boards or educated the children to not play in these areas (RSPO, 2018). Moreover, there seems to be considerable discrepancy amongst different groups of workers regarding the extent to which they benefit from housing arrangements. Casual or contract workers (those hired on a temporary basis or through third party recruiters) are not always provided with housing (UNICEF, 2016; NCHR, 2014).

9.2 Steps to Implement Access to WASH and Provision of Good Housing Conditions

The RSPO standard requires that employees work and live in decent, safe, and healthy environments, and have access to clean water and proper sanitation. Hygiene is a key element of a safe environment. In line with the RSPO standard, companies should strive to ensure the following measures are taken:

- **Provide sound and safe construction and management of workers' accommodation**

Take into consideration, as a baseline, the requirements contained in national or local regulations pertaining to workers' accommodation and associated facilities. While not all countries have regulations specific to workers' accommodation, many of them will have general construction standards covering building materials, fire safety, water and sanitation, electricity, etc. which will be relevant.

After reviewing the regulatory frameworks, companies need to assess the accommodation needs of the workers. Companies can use the checklist provided in the guidance note on workers' accommodation published by IFC and EBRD (2009), for this purpose.

In the context of palm oil, an important consideration for many companies, in particular where migrant workers are employed, is the provision of family accommodation. Provision for families will affect considerations for the needed facilities and management such as:

- Space allocations (bedrooms, toilets, cooking facilities) with adequate level of privacy for normal family life
- Access to or provision of facilities and amenities such as nurseries, schools, clinics, and recreation for children

There should be a documented management plan for the housing facilities as well as appointed staff for managing and maintaining the accommodation facilities in order to ensure adequate maintenance and repair.

GOOD PRACTICE BOX: INITIATIVES IN HOUSING AND WASH PROVISION

Two companies in Central Kalimantan, provide clean water and sanitation facilities to keep workers' housing neighbourhoods clean at all times. These two companies supply clean water to the houses of workers and staff all day. They also provide bathrooms and toilets; every housing unit is equipped with sinks for hand washing. The companies have also launched special programmes to encourage hand washing habits at schools, *posyandus* and day-care centres. They procure garbage bins, which are safe and user friendly, even for children. Two other companies in Riau provide three bedrooms per housing unit to ensure more privacy for both parents and their children (the norm is two bedrooms per housing unit).

Source: RSPO, 2018



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

- **Ensure high WASH standards at the workplace and premises**

As required by the RSPO standards, employers should provide all workers, including parent workers, pregnant or breastfeeding women, with decent, safe, and healthy working conditions. In order to ensure that good WASH standards are met, companies should undertake the following measures:

- Compliance with national and local legal provisions on WASH installations, policies, and procedures for permanent, temporary, mobile, and shared worksites/facilities
- Ensure workplace water supply, including clean, sufficient, and accessible drinking water, regular water disinfection measures, qualified wastewater drainage and disposal systems, etc.
- Promote workplace sanitation, particularly adequate number of improved toilet/urinal facilities and management including regular cleaning and disinfection measures, safety and privacy, lighting and ventilation, waste disposal, etc.
- Implement workplace hygiene measures, including promoting personal hygiene (handwashing and hygiene awareness raising), providing shower and cleaning facilities, regular hygiene monitoring, etc.

To comprehensively improve WASH standards at the workplace, companies can also conduct a WASH assessment and design their own WASH programmes²⁶. The WASH programme can also be extended across the company's value chain such as in workers' homes (for workers who are not living in the companies' housing facilities), the communities where the company has a presence or where the workers live, and amongst the company's supply chain.



Photo: © UNICEF/Fauzan

²⁶ For more information on implementing effective WASH programmes, companies can refer to WBCSD's WASH Pledge: Guiding Principles (2020a) and WASH Pledge self-assessment tool for business (2020b) as well as UNICEF's WASH4WORK baseline and monitoring indicators (2019).

- **Promote hand-washing practices amongst children and working parents**

Companies can undertake the following actions to promote and facilitate hand-washing practices amongst children in the company's direct premises and also in the surrounding community:

- Provide sinks, clean running water and soap at company-provided housing facilities, childcare centres, healthcare facilities and schools
- Train children and working parents on handwashing practices and the benefits for children's health and growth
- Provide information and reminders on handwashing, e.g. a signage/poster near toilet sinks, to promote handwashing practices

- **Keep work-related hazards away from children at home**

Ensure that adequate washing and sanitation facilities at the worksite are available and that workers have suitable storage spaces for their clothing and safety equipment, so that they do not bring these items home where they can expose their children and family members to the chemical residues. Train workers on the impact of chemicals on their health and their children's health, so that workers are aware of hygiene issues. For instance, workers must follow proper washing and hygiene procedures after handling chemicals and before undertaking activities such as childcare and food preparation. Similarly, workers should have designated storage areas for their work tools (e.g. harvesting tools) away from the housing area and out of reach of children.

- **Engage workers to maintain housing standards via awareness raising and communal activities**

Some companies organise events and competitions to encourage involvement of their workers in the upkeep and cleanliness of the housing sites, sometimes through annual "spring-cleaning" activities or an annual competition to reward the best kept housing compound. It is also important to organise awareness sessions with workers on the importance of WASH.

CRITERIA IN RSPO P&C WITH DIRECT AND/OR INDIRECT LINKS TO WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

3.4 A comprehensive Social and Environmental Impact Assessment (SEIA) is undertaken prior to new plantings or operations, and a social and environmental management and monitoring plan is implemented and regularly updated in ongoing operations (*Indicator 3.4.1 (C), 3.4.2, 3.4.3 (C)*). **Relevance:** Considerations of WASH issues are part of the SEIA and if WASH impacts are identified, they are addressed in the social and environmental management and monitoring plan.

3.7 All staff, workers, scheme smallholders, outgrowers and contract workers are appropriately trained. (*Indicator 3.7.1 (C)*). **Relevance:** Workers should be adequately trained on health and environmental risks of pesticide exposure; recognition of acute and long-term exposure symptoms including the most vulnerable groups (e.g. young workers, pregnant women); ways to minimise exposure to workers and their families; and international and national instruments or regulations that protect workers' health.

4.3 The unit of certification contributes to local sustainable development as agreed by local communities (*Indicator 4.3.1*). **Relevance:** The contribution to community development (based on consultation and agreement with local communities), may include supporting/providing access to WASH facilities or infrastructure.

5.2 The unit of certification supports improved livelihoods of smallholders and their inclusion in sustainable palm oil value chains (*Indicator 5.2.2, 5.2.4 (C), 5.2.5*). **Relevance:** Support given to smallholders including

capacity building on the RSPO P&C requirements can create awareness on the importance of good WASH practices and the provision of WASH amenities.

- 6.2 Pay and conditions for staff and workers and for contract workers always meet at least legal or industry minimum standards and are sufficient in providing decent living wages (DLW) (*Indicator 6.2.4 (C)*).
Relevance: Requires that workers be provided access to sanitation facilities and water supply that meet or exceed national standards.
- 6.7 The unit of certification ensures that the working environment under its control is safe and without undue risk to health (*Indicator 6.7.3 (C)*). **Relevance:** Requires that sanitation facilities are provided to workers who apply pesticides, so that they can change out of PPE, wash and put on their personal clothing. For parent workers, this helps to prevent them from exposing their children to any residual chemicals when at home.
- 7.2 Pesticides are used in ways that do not endanger the health of workers, families, communities or the environment (*Indicator 7.2.6 (C), 7.2.7 (C), 7.2.8,*). **Relevance:** Requires that pesticides are properly stored, and containers disposed in ways that do not endanger the health of workers and families. Workers who handle pesticides are given regular health checks and proper training. They are made aware of the health hazards of pesticides to themselves, their families, communities and environment.
- 7.3 Waste is reduced, recycled, reused and disposed of in an environmentally and socially responsible manner (*Indicator 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3*). **Relevance:** Waste is properly managed and disposed of and does not pollute water sources.
- 7.8 Practices maintain the quality and availability of surface and groundwater (*Indicator 7.8.1 (C)*). **Relevance:** Practices maintain, protect and monitor the quality and availability of surface and groundwater in compliance with national regulations, including guaranteed access to clean water for workers and community.

APPENDIX 1: WORKING AGE IN THE TOP FIVE PALM OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES

TABLE 8: WORKING AGE IN THE TOP FIVE PALM OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES

	MINIMUM WORKING AGE Full-time work. Age should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling	LIGHT WORK Work that will not threaten health and safety or hinder education or vocational training	HAZARDOUS WORK Work that is likely to jeopardise children's physical, mental or moral, health and safety
ILO C138	15 (developing countries have the option of setting a minimum age of 14)	13	18 (16 under strict conditions)
Indonesia	15	13	18
Malaysia	15	Below 15*	18
Thailand	15	12	18
Colombia	17**	15	18
Nigeria	15	12	18

* Malaysian laws specify the types of light work that are permitted to be undertaken by a child below the age of 15 years. Work that falls outside of the specifications is strictly prohibited.

** In Colombia, the minimum age for admission to work is 15 years old. However, only adolescents over 17 years old that may work full-time (8 hours a day and 40 hours a week and maximum until 8 pm), while adolescents over 15 and under 17 years old are only allowed to work 6 hours a day and 30 hours a week and maximum until 6 pm.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS TO VERIFY AGE

Use the following example questions to crosscheck the facts during an interview:²⁷

- Can you talk a bit about yourself? Where is your hometown? Do you like school? Why? Or why not? Do you have to send money back home?
- How many members are there in your family? What are your parents' names?
- What are your parents doing? Where are they?
- Do you have siblings? Are they studying or working? How many years older/younger than you are your siblings?
- What is your birthday by day, month and year? So, in this case, how old are you?
- What's your zodiac animal/sign? What about your siblings?
- When did you start junior middle school? Have you ever skipped a grade or been held back a grade?
- Which grade did you finish and when? Which grade are your siblings in? Or When did they finish school and at what grade?
- Was there a school in your hometown? Where is it?
- Do you have friends from the same hometown/school here? Do you still keep in contact with your classmates? Which grade are your classmates in now if some are still in school?
- Is this your first job? Have you ever worked before? What kind of job have you done before? How long did you work for the last job?

²⁷ When children are engaged directly, companies should be mindful of how to build communication with children. Questions related to age should be natural and may start with a casual chat about the family situation. Companies can refer to Chapter 3 of the RSPO Child Rights Guidance for Auditor and Certification Bodies which provides basic guidelines on how to communicate with children. More information can also be obtained from UNICEF's tool for companies in engaging stakeholders on children's rights (UNICEF, 2014)

APPENDIX 3: IDENTIFYING HAZARDOUS AND NON-HAZARDOUS WORK TASKS AND PROCESSES AND NECESSARY PROTECTION MEASURES

The following process is adapted from ILO’s Supplier Guidance on Preventing, Identifying and Addressing Child Labour (ILO, 2020b)²⁸.

As the first step, companies need to organise a walk through with key staff (i.e. production managers, HR, supervisor, compliance and occupational safety and health experts) to develop a list of hazardous work, bearing in mind the national law and international labour standards. Make sure the walk-through covers the following areas:

- Activities and areas of all persons having access to the workplace (including contractors and visitors) including processing, materials storage, finished products, public areas, offices, facilities, visiting areas and transport vehicles.
- Infrastructure, equipment, and materials at the workplace, whether provided by the supplier, collectors, or others.
- The design of work areas, processes, installations, machinery/equipment, operating procedures, and work organisation.
- Planned and temporary work, and changes or proposed changes in the worksites, its activities, or materials.
- Consider long-term hazards to health (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances), psychosocial hazards as well as safety hazards (refer to Table 2 in this guidance).

Workers may notice hazards that are not immediately obvious to company management. It is helpful to conduct individual or group interviews with workers and their children to obtain first-hand experiences about the risk and hazards of different jobs, particularly those related to young workers and pregnant/breastfeeding workers. In addition, learn from previous accidents and work-related illness cases to identify less obvious hazards.

After hazards have been identified, next assess the potential risk arising from the hazards identified (a risk assessment). Risk is defined as “a combination of the likelihood of an occurrence of a hazardous event (probability) and the severity of injury or damage to the health of people caused by this event (severity).” The result of the risk assessment will enable you to create a list of individual task and process with associated risk level (low to high) and lead to follow up preventive and risk control actions.

Firstly, the **probability** of the harm is estimated by rating it as “**Likely**”, “**Possible**” or “**Unlikely**”.

PROBABILITY	FREQUENCY OF AN EVENT
Likely ²⁹	Could happen frequently
Possible	Could happen occasionally
Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances

²⁸ This ILO guidance has not yet been published at the time of writing but is due for release in 2020

²⁹ If there is any injury or accident mentioned in the accident report, the rating should be “likely”

Secondly, the **degree of impact** that may be caused by the harm is estimated by rating it as “**High**”, “**Moderate**” and “**Low**”.

SEVERITY OF A HARM OCCURRING	TYPE OF POTENTIAL HARM EVENT (INCIDENT)
HIGH Significant level of harm	Significant level of harm: A hazard/risk that has a high potential of causing fatality, permanent disability, or long-term and serious injury.
MODERATE Moderate level of harm	Moderate level of harm: A hazard/risk that has the potential of causing serious but non-life-threatening injuries or temporary disability to one or more people, and that may require the worker to take time off for recovery. A broken arm or minor fracture requiring immediate corrective action is an example of a moderate injury.
LOW Minor level of harm	Low level of harm: No to very low potential of injury or illness that can require a person to use first aid, or to temporarily suspend their work involvement.

Thirdly, the **risk** can be decided to be “**High**”, “**Moderate**” or “**Low**” based on the combination of severity and probability.

Level of Risk = severity of harm x probability of harm

LEVEL OF RISK		SEVERITY		
		Low	Moderate	High
PROBABILITY	Likely	Medium	High	High
	Possible	Medium	Medium	High
	Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium

Lastly, **immediate follow-up actions** can be determined to protect young workers and help manage the identified risks.

LEVEL OF RISK	ACTIONS AND RISK CONTROLS (FOR ALL WORKERS)	APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNG WORKERS
High Risk	Remove young worker from the task/position immediately and initiate child labour remediation processes. Assess if the right safety precautions are in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Require detailed pre-planning and substantial safe work controls. ✓ Actions and risk controls will be required. Closely monitor progress and compliance. 	X Tasks and processes labelled as HIGH RISK should never be assigned to young workers.
Medium Risk	Remove young worker from the task/position immediately and initiate child labour remediation processes. Documented safe work procedure to be used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Detailed operational planning and controls. ✓ Actions and risk controls will be required before any work. ✓ Workers should understand requirements and implement hazard controls. 	X Tasks and processes labelled as MEDIUM RISK should never be assigned to young workers
Low Risk	Review all local laws and regulations, ensure the task and working environment is safe for young workers. Review current controls and their effectiveness and, if they are inadequate, apply more effective measures	✓ Tasks and processes are likely suitable for young workers.

- ✓ Check local and industry regulations and existing in-house risk assessment reports to ensure position is not off-limits to young workers.
- ✓ Review work/tasks and discuss the task with the young worker before he/she starts working.

APPENDIX 4: PARENTING TRAINING WITH FOCUS ON CHILD LABOUR

TABLE 9: PARENTING TRAINING WITH FOCUS ON CHILD LABOUR

LEVEL	CONTENT
Foundational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase sense of value as a parent worker - Understand the rights and needs of the child at different ages to enhance communication with their children and to enable them to provide better support - Develop communication skills with their children to build closer relationships - Recognise signs of distress and being hurt - Support children's growth and development
Advanced (more child labour specific)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to children's rights and needs, including – but not limited to – their need to have enough rest, receive education and to play - Introduction to child labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you know the legal minimum age of employment? ○ Do you know the compulsory education age in your country? ○ What is the difference between child labour and children helping out at home, or doing some light work outside school hours? ○ Have you ever seen a child working? What was the child doing? Do you think the work is harmful or not to the child? What do you think constitutes harmful work? ○ Why does the child work? - The impact of working to children's health and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do you think working affects children's health? ○ How do you think work affects children's education? ○ In your opinion, is it acceptable that children go to work instead of going to school? Do you think the combination of school and work affects children? - Next steps on what can be done to protect children from child labour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What can you do to better protect children from child labour? ○ What can others do to help you?

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The RSPO is an international non-profit organisation formed in 2004 with the objective to promote the growth and use of sustainable palm oil products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.

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