



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE FOR CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION CASE MANAGEMENT



MY Voice

THE CENTRE
FOR CHILD RIGHTS AND BUSINESS

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINE

In December 2021, Social Accountability International (SAI) launched the **MY Voice** project to address forced and child labour in the garments and palm oil industries in Malaysia. The project seeks to increase workers' voices in social compliance systems, increase access to remedies for forced and child labour, and help improve communication and coordination between local actors to identify, prevent and remediate cases of forced and child labour.

The **Child Rights Action Hub** ("Action Hub") is an initiative under the MY Voice project. It addresses child labour at scale, with a focus on child labour prevention and remediation, particularly in the lower tiers of Malaysia's palm oil sector. It also facilitates collaborative action, enabling private sector actors (retailers, brands and suppliers) to participate in joint activities to address child labour and support the long-term prevention and remediation efforts of government, NGOs and UN organisations for children in Malaysia's palm oil supply chain.

The Action Hub has three key workstreams:

1. **Training and providing resources to support case managers, community focal points¹ and service providers on child labour prevention and remediation**
2. **Sharing knowledge and good practices on child labour prevention and remediation**
3. **Child labour remediation that includes individual-level solutions, employer corrective and preventive action and community initiatives**

One key outcome under the Action Hub's workstream is improving the capacity of local case managers with regards to child labour remediation. This includes providing guidance and support to accredited **case managers** and **child labour remediation (CLR) service coordinators** on planning, implementing, monitoring, and successfully closing child labour cases when they are remediated.

MY Voice implementing partner, **The Centre for Child Rights and Business** ("The Centre"), with its global knowledge and experience in child labour prevention and remediation, manages the Action Hub. To standardise the operation of child labour remediation programmes under the Action Hub, this guideline is developed by The Centre to inform the case managers and CLR service coordinators on:

- Standardised procedures for planning, implementing, monitoring and closing child labour remediation cases
- International standards on child rights and best practices on child labour remediation

The guideline is accompanied by two annexes and 11 tools, which provide useful information on child rights in Malaysia, as well as tools for case managers and CLR service providers to manage child labour cases.

1.2 WHO IS THIS GUIDELINE FOR?

This guideline is designed for Action Hub case managers and child labour remediation service coordinators, who are involved in remediating child labour cases in the palm oil sector in Sabah, Malaysia.

¹ Community Focal Points (CFPs) are locals who identify and monitor child labour risks, raise awareness, and promote attitude and behaviour change. CFPs are chosen by their community with the help of a case manager. Ideally, there should be multiple CFPs in each community.

Case Managers

These are organisations or individuals (such as school teachers, social workers, community leaders or representatives) selected among community actors to carry out local operations of child labour case management with the technical support of The Centre. Applicants for case manager positions must be independent and have no conflict of interest with the concerned supply chain. Once selected, they will receive training to be accredited as case managers to manage child labour remediation cases as part of the Action Hub.

Child Labour Remediation Service Coordinators

These have expertise in human rights and child rights issues and corporate compliance or governance. They will coordinate the communication and implementation of the remediation service between the case managers and the Action Hub.

1.3 WHY CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION?

Providing remediation to address the negative impacts a company has caused or contributed to is part of the company's human rights due diligence obligations specified in OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and legislation regarding human rights and/or child labour.

In palm oil plantations in Malaysia, children can be found helping their parents with work or engaging in hazardous processes, such as slashing, harvesting, loading and spraying.² These children are often from poor, marginalised families and may be stateless, preventing them from fully realising their rights to education, health and safety and freedom from violence. Child labour remediation is therefore a crucial measure to protect children's basic rights³. By implementing the child labour remediation programme, we intend to:

- Remove affected children from child labour situations by providing alternatives and ensuring their safety and well-being
- Eradicate the future use of child labour by requiring companies to carry out corrective actions to improve their policies, procedures and management systems regarding child labour and by taking preventive measures, such as improving the level of child labour awareness among upstream actors

1.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles must be observed when applying this guideline to ensure that the child's best interest is protected throughout the remediation process.

² Wahab, Andika. (2021). Understanding Children Assisting Parents, Working Children and Child Labour in the Palm Oil Sector in East Malaysia (Sabah). 10.13140/RG.2.2.25408.87048.

³ Annex 1 explains children's basic rights specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child.

TABLE 1: GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THIS GUIDELINE

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
Prioritise the best interests of the child	This means prioritising the child's protection, well-being, and right to live, grow and work in an environment favourable to their mental and physical development during any decision-making process. There may be competing or conflicting interests between children and adults, but the child's interests must be the subject of active consideration; it needs to be demonstrated that children's interests have been explored and considered.
Do no harm	This means that actions should consider the broader context and whether they negatively impact children socially, financially or environmentally. If there is any reason to believe that specific actions or programmes make children worse off than before, the action should not be taken.
Provide greater protection of children's rights	This guideline follows international standards and domestic laws as minimum requirements. Where domestic laws differ from international standards, this guideline follows the more stringent kind.
Uphold confidentiality and privacy	When handling information and communication related to children, always consider their and their families' rights to confidentiality and privacy. Any data and information obtained from and related to children and their families shall not be disclosed without prior knowledge and informed consent.
Obtain consent from children	Ensure that you have the child's and their legal guardian's explicit consent for any action (e.g. before bringing the children to safety or interviewing them). Children's consent for the activities is essential when the legal guardian cannot be reached. All remediation activities should be carried out voluntarily. Respect the rights, interests and views of the child and their family and make sure not to impose a certain option or opinion on the child or their parents/caregivers if they are unwilling to accept it.
Make it voluntary	All remediation activities should be carried out voluntarily. Respect the rights, interests and views of the child and their family. Do not impose a particular option or opinion on the child or their parents/caregivers if they are unwilling to accept it.
Do not discriminate	Children and their families should not be discriminated against based on gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, migration status, political belief/affiliation, genetic information, educational attainment/literacy or economic status. Children should have the choice to speak with male or female case managers depending on who is more appropriate for them. Case managers should actively avoid critical, derogatory or hostile language and combat discrimination and prejudice.
Uphold children's right to participation	Throughout the remediation design, implementation, monitoring and closing phases, children's voices should be heard and respected. The case manager should discuss and listen to the child's opinions on matters related to their lives throughout the process and design/alter activities accordingly. The case manager should use creative techniques to engage children. Due to gender norms, specific actions may be required to effectively facilitate the meaningful participation of girls, as they may face higher levels of exclusion or rely on others for their livelihoods.

1.5 KEY TERMS

TABLE 2: KEY TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Child	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ⁴ defines every human-being below the age of 18 as a child. Malaysia ratified the UNCRC on Feb. 17, 1995.
Compulsory education	Six years of mandatory primary school education, starting from the age of six under the Malaysian Education Act 1996.
Child labour	The ILO defines child labour as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.
Hazardous work	Hazardous work is defined by the ILO as work that is likely to jeopardise children's physical or mental health, safety or morals and should not be done by anyone under the age of 18. In Peninsular Malaysia, hazardous work is specified in the Fourth Schedule, Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1966 . In Sabah, the list of hazardous work is specified in the Third Schedule, Labour Ordinance of Sabah, Amendment Act 2024.
Light work	ILO Convention No. 138 specifies light work as work that should, (a) not be harmful to a child's health and development and, (b) not interfere with attendance at school and participation in vocational training. The list of light work is specified in Section 2 of the Children and Young Persons (Employment) Act 1966 for Peninsular Malaysia. The Labour Ordinance of Sabah, Amendment Act 2024 defines light work as work 1) that is not likely to be harmful to their health, mental or physical capacity or; 2) work that is not likely to prejudice their attendance at school that include any place which teaches any religion, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received.
Minimum working age	The minimum age that allows a person to work full-time is 15 years; 13 years is the minimum age for light work.
Young worker	A person who has reached the age of 15 but is still under 18 (Labour Ordinance of Sabah, Amendment Act 2024).

⁴ United Nations Convention on The Rights Of The Child (CRC): <https://www.unhcr.org/media/united-nations-convention-rights-child-crc>

2 WHO SHOULD BE THE TARGETS OF CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION?

Based on the Sabah Labour Ordinance and international standards, child labour in the palm oil sector in Sabah, Malaysia refers to one or more of the following:

- Anyone employed who is below the legal minimum age (15 years)
- Anyone under the age of 18 doing hazardous work
- Children below the light work age (13 years) engaged in work
- Children between 13-14 years old (light work age) and working beyond legal standards
- Any children under the age of 18 in a forced labour situation⁵
 - *Unfree recruitment of children including both forced and deceptive recruitment*
 - *Children enduring difficult working and living conditions, facing penalties, threats or force*
 - *Children prevented from leaving their employer*
 - *Coercion of children*

Regular palm oil-related work processes and tasks are considered hazardous for children under 18 due to the unsafe working environment⁶ and hazardous processes involved (e.g. use of harmful substances, sharp tools, heavy lifting and complex machinery). **Factsheet on Children's Right at Work (Tool 1)** provides more details regarding the legal regulations related to child labour and the employment of young workers under the age of 18 in Sabah, Malaysia.

In palm oil plantations in Malaysia, child labour risks are heightened by intergenerational statelessness, complex migration dynamics, and a lack of documentation among some migrant descendants⁷. In the palm oil sector, about 33,600 children (nationwide) were found to be in child labour situations, according to the Employment Survey (2018)⁸ in Palm Oil Plantations by the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC). Poverty, lack of documentation and the absence of facilities such as primary and secondary level education or skills training, particularly in rural areas, are commonly cited as reasons why children engage in hazardous work or assist their parents, leading to child labour.⁹

⁵ International Labour Organization. (2012). Hard to See, Harder to Count. Survey Guideline to Estimate Forced Labour of Adults and Children.

⁶ Unsafe working environment for children refers to an environment where children are exposed to e.g. extreme weather, wild animals, harmful agrichemicals, pesticides, sharp tools or complex machinery.

⁷ Wahab A., Dollah R. (2023). Measuring Child Labour in Oil Palm Production in Sabah, Malaysia.

⁸ Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities. (2018). The Employment Survey in Oil Palm Plantations, Malaysia.

⁹ Wahab A., Dollah R. (2023). Measuring Child Labour in Oil Palm Production in Sabah, Malaysia.

3 OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROCESS AND PARTIES INVOLVED IN REMEDIATION

3.1 PARTIES INVOLVED IN CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Child labour remediation normally involves the engagement and interactions of the parties below. All parties involved should work together attentively to protect the child's best interests throughout the remediation process.

TABLE 3: STAKEHOLDERS OF THE ACTION HUB AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

ACTOR	RESPONSIBILITIES
The Child Rights Action Hub ("Action Hub")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee child labour remediation case management • Manage service providers and technical support • Communicate with concerned stakeholders of the child labour case • Appoint and train CLR service coordinators, case managers, and community focal points • Finance the living stipends and tuition fees (if applicable) as evaluated or agreed upon in the remediation proposal • Monitor the financial status of each CLR programme
Community Focal Point¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify child labour cases and report them to the Action Hub • Carry out immediate actions when child labour is first suspected or identified
Case Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify child labour cases and carry out the necessary immediate actions as stated in Chapter 4 • Lead the remediation process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct in-person assessments with children and their families - Develop remediation plans - Oversee the management of each CLR case - Contact the children, legal guardians and school to monitor their status and provide support - Seek support from communities and other resources - Transfer living stipends and tuition fees in cash to the concerned children's legal guardians and school teachers, respectively, if necessary - Draft all CLR-related reports
CLR Service Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Action Hub in coordinating and communicating with case managers, concerned businesses, Action Hub partners and other service providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Act as the first point of contact between the Action Hub and case managers, especially for troubleshooting and escalation

¹⁰ Community Focal Points (CFPs) are locals who identify and monitor child labour risks, raise awareness, and promote attitude and behaviour change. CFPs are chosen by their community with the help of a case manager. Ideally, there should be multiple CFPs in each community.

ACTOR	RESPONSIBILITIES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Manage case managers and service providers, e.g. lead periodic meetings and prepare meeting agendas and summaries</i> - <i>Conduct regular meetings with the Action Hub</i> - <i>Review reports prepared by case managers (e.g. in-person assessment report, monitoring report, closing report)</i> - <i>Facilitate meetings with the concerned businesses to discuss the case status</i>
The Action Hub Partners ¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report child labour case(s) identified in their palm oil supply chain • Provide or facilitate relevant training to staff members on CLR • Provide funding for CLR as corrective action
Plantation where the child labour case occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the corrective actions to prevent child labour from occurring again in the future
Third Party Service Providers ¹²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide services such as shelter, cash assistance, hospitals for health care, education, training and counselling (for all children involved in child labour cases, regardless of status)

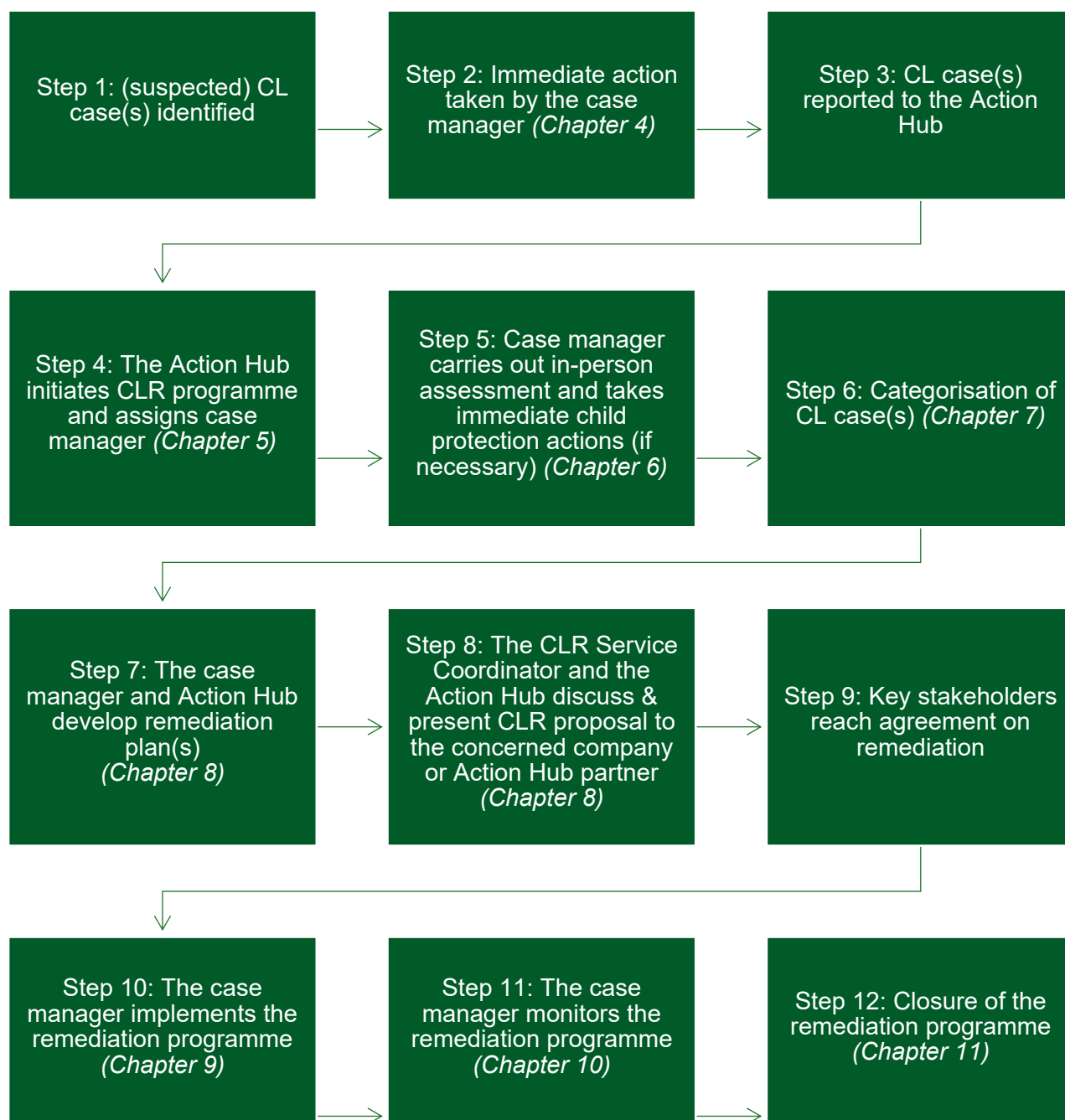
¹¹ The Action Hub Partners refers to companies such as retailers, importers, traders, agents, suppliers and refineries that set up an MoU or Letter of Intent with the MY Voice Child Rights Action Hub. Action Hub Partners (AHP) will have a platform to report and remediate child labour cases.

¹² Third Party Service Providers are government agencies, such as social welfare, labour department and private sectors, NGOs, Community or Alternative Learning Centres or others who provide services on education, training, shelter, cash assistance, healthcare or counselling.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROCESS

Child labour cases might be identified in various ways, e.g. by CFPs, local stakeholders or case managers. Once a child labour case is suspected or identified and reported to the Action Hub, the child labour remediation process will be initiated by the Action Hub as below:

CHART 1: THE ACTION HUB CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROCESS

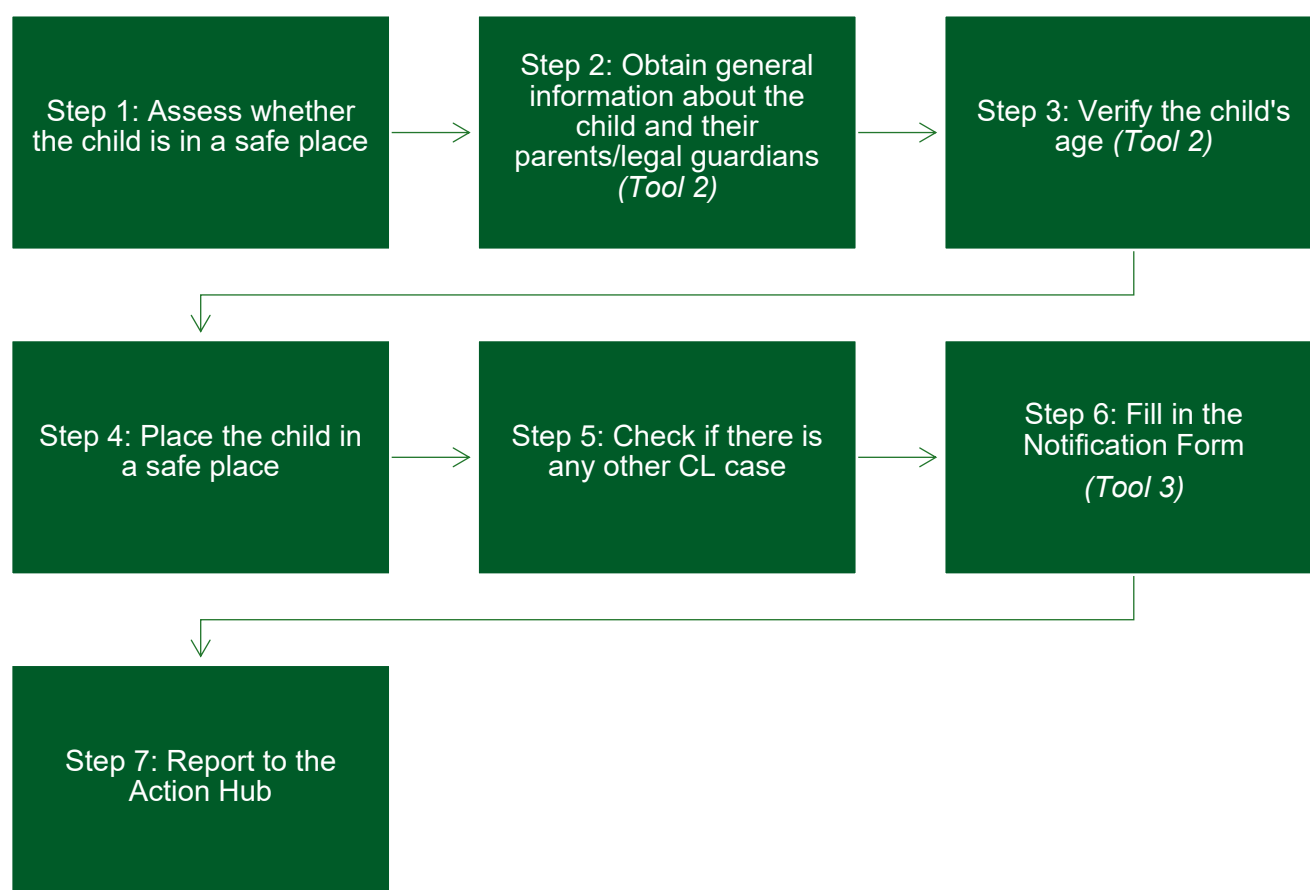


Please refer to each chapter for the roles and detailed actions needed for the case manager and the CLR service coordinator.

4 UPON IDENTIFYING CHILD LABOUR CASES AND TAKING IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

Child labour cases might be identified in various ways, e.g. by CFPs, local stakeholders or the case manager. Whenever a child is referred to a case manager, whether by the person who identified the case or by the case manager themselves, it is suggested that the case manager take the following steps:

CHART 2: THE PROCESS AFTER IDENTIFYING CHILD LABOUR CASES



There might be a possibility that the case is first reported to the Action Hub, which will then assign a case manager to carry out the immediate actions. In either scenario, the same steps should follow.

STEP 1: ASSESS WHETHER THE CHILD IS IN A SAFE PLACE

A safe place is a place where the child is not involved in any dangerous work at the plantation (including using tools, harvesting, loading, slashing, hazardous chemicals or pesticides) and is supervised by a trusted adult.

TABLE 4: CASE SCENARIOS AND RESPONSE

SCENARIOS	RESPONSE ACTIONS
The child is in a safe workplace and doing non-hazardous work	➡ Child remains at that worksite temporarily until the initial assessment is completed.
The child is in a dangerous workplace or doing hazardous work	➡ Immediately remove the child from the hazardous post. Together with child's parents or legal guardians, adult friends or relatives, accompany the child to a safe environment, e.g. office, dormitory or home.

If the child needs to be removed from the worksite, their safety and welfare should always come first. No child should be put at greater risk by any action that may be taken. Where the child's parents, adult friends or relatives are onsite or nearby, case managers should inform them first and ask them to accompany the child to a safe environment. Where this is not the case, after obtaining the child's consent, the case manager should lead the child to a safe, open space where others can visibly see the case manager and the child. The case manager is advised to avoid staying in a private space with the child alone.

If the child does not wish to leave the worksite or join the interview, the case manager should find someone to convince the child and build trust with the child and family first. This person might be influential in the community or at the workplace. It will take some time, but this is a necessary step. The child and family need to give their consent to take part in the long-term remediation programme. All remediation activities should be carried out voluntarily and consider the rights, interests and views of the child and their family.

STEP 2: OBTAIN GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD AND THEIR GUARDIANS

The case manager should ask the child to show their identity documents (e.g. ID card and birth certificate). Case managers should also talk to the manager in a formal workplace. Obtain the following information:

- The child's name, age, birthplace and contact information (e.g. phone numbers, address, social media channels)
- Names of the child's parents/guardians, as well as their contact information
- Employment contracts, age documents, time records and working history, if available

TIPS FOR OBTAINING GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD

1. Casually chat with the child; do not scare them.
Start with questions like "Do you like working here?".
2. Ask the child's coworkers about their situation and check their IDs, too.
3. Do not let the child leave your sight.

STEP 3: VERIFY THE CHILD'S AGE

If the child's identification documents (e.g. ID cards, birth certificates) are available, case managers should try to verify the child's age. If there are doubts about the accuracy of the information or the identification documents are absent, the case manager should establish the child's approximate age by speaking with them. If the child is young, it might not matter to your assessment if they are five or eight years old, but it will matter if they are 11 or 13 (reaching the light work age).

This communication should be carried out calmly. Introduce yourself, ask open-ended, general questions (see below) to establish rapport and explain why they cannot work. Listen to the child to understand their needs and assure them that they have done nothing wrong and are not "in trouble". If the child is a girl, it is often preferable for a woman to speak with her.

Contact the child's parents or legal guardians, inform them about what has happened, and collect information about the family.

Given limited documentation, the case manager must cross-check answers from various stakeholders to estimate the child's age and working history. Please see **Sample Interview Questions (Tool 2)** that case managers can use with parents, children and plantation managers for Steps 2 and 3.

In cases where multiple children are involved, and individual communication with the concerned children cannot be organised due to the number of case managers onsite, group interviews with all children should be initiated to collect only basic information for remediation, such as each child's name, age, address and contact details.

Verifying a child's age can be very challenging, especially when there are limited worker files or no official identification documents available. If doubts remain after the interviews and document inspection, the case manager can turn to the Action Hub for support.

STEP 4: PLACE THE CHILD IN A SAFE PLACE

If there are severe suspicions or clear indications of a child labour case, the case manager should, after obtaining the child's consent:

- Remove the child from the work site
- Lead the child to a safe place (e.g. home, dormitory, childcare centre, community centre) with the assistance of the child's parents, legal guardians, relatives or adult friends. The place should be equipped with clean drinking water and not be adjacent to the workplace

If the parents are not nearby, contact them and explain the temporary settlement plan for the child, e.g. plans for food and accommodation. Ask them to pick the child up if possible. Members from the local community or the community authority can be contacted for assistance and to help identify safe facilities as needed.

If the child refuses to leave the workplace and move to a safe place, the case manager should identify someone who can convince the child. If the child is in a hazardous work position, the case manager must not leave the child alone on-site but consider options to protect their health and safety.

STEP 5: CHECK IF THERE IS ANY OTHER CHILD LABOUR CASE

Check if any other underage workers or young workers are engaged in hazardous work at the same site or facility and take appropriate action if necessary.

STEP 6: FILL IN NOTIFICATION FORM

Fill in the **Notification Form (Tool 3)**.

If the child is brought to the case manager, the Action Hub will ask the person who identified the case to fill out the Notification Form if they have not already done so.

STEP 7: REPORT TO THE ACTION HUB

- Send the **Notification Form (Tool 3)** to the Action Hub within 24 hours and ask the Action Hub for guidance and support
- Briefly introduce the child's situation and explain the child's temporary settlement plan, e.g. plans for food and accommodation

GOOD TO KNOW – WHEN HANDLING CHILD LABOUR CASES

- Talk calmly; do not shout or threaten the child in any way
- Do not make any promises that cannot be adhered to later
- Do not blame the child or their parents/caregivers
- Ensure that parents/caregivers face no retribution
- Listen to the child to understand their needs
- Clearly explain the possible remediation options or measures that could be taken at later stages
- Avoid 'drama' and try to lighten the psychological impact on the child as much as possible

5 INITIATING THE CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROGRAMME AND ASSIGNING CASE MANAGERS

Once the child labour case is reported to the Action Hub, the Action Hub and/or the CLR service coordinator will verify the information in the **Notification Form (Tool 3)** and inform the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner about the case. With their consent for an in-person assessment, the Action Hub will assign a case manager to start the remediation process based on the location and character of the case.

Under regular circumstances, case managers should not be changed during the remediation implementation phase unless personnel changes or when case managers' performance or skills are insufficient to protect the child's best interests.

At this phase, the assigned case manager should:

- Read the **Notification Form (Tool 3)** and contact the person or organisation that identified the case for necessary clarification
- Contact the child and parents/legal guardians to introduce themselves and discuss the purpose and schedule of the in-person assessment (this should be arranged within two working days of the case being identified), ensuring the child and legal guardians are present on the assessment day
- Pre-evaluate whether the child needs emergency financial support based on the information provided in the Notification Form
- Research local customs and any related resources, e.g. security and available community services
- Inform the Action Hub about their detailed schedule of the in-person assessment, including their plan and concerns for the assessment and logistical arrangements, such as when and how they will get there and the length of the assessment
- Submit the travel budget application to the CLR service coordinator once the Action Hub confirms the date
- Book the related transportation and hotels if the travel budget is approved

At this phase, the assigned CLR service coordinator should:

- Verify the information in the **Notification Form (Tool 3)** and inform the concerned company or Action Hub partner about the case (with the support of the Action Hub)
- Review the case manager's travel budget and share it with the Action Hub for approval
- Prepare the case manager for an in-person assessment
- Apply for remediation funds to the Action Hub if emergency financial support is needed

The case manager and CLR service coordinator should allocate time for planning in-person assessments: half a person-day per case (for one child). The planning time can be extended according to the number of children and families involved in multiple child labour cases from one plantation.

For Multiple Child Labour Cases

If there are multiple child labour cases identified, the case manager should contact the Action Hub and:

- a. Prioritise steps for children who need immediate child protection actions (see Chapter 6.4)
- b. Check if more case managers could join the assessment in a short time (ideally within three working days, and two to three children per case manager)
- c. If (b) is not possible, check if staff from the Action Hub can provide onsite support
- d. If (c) is not possible, check whether a nearby community focal point could help arrange a quiet place for an initial group discussion with children and their parents/legal guardians to gather basic information about their work history, educational background, family address, contact information and more
- e. Confirm a suitable time for more in-depth interviews with each of the children and their legal guardians. Then, create a schedule to interview each one individually

Data Protection Rules

For communication during the remediation period, all sensitive information (e.g. personally identifiable details, child's relationships or family conflicts related to the programme implementation) should be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis and with as few people as possible.

To protect the privacy of the child, communications (e.g. emails, relevant documents) between the CLR service coordinator and case manager **should not**:

- Include the child's info (e.g. names, addresses, photos)
- Include photos of the child

Instead, the CLR service coordinator and case manager should develop a system for referring to cases in a coded manner, such as Child A, Child B and Child C.

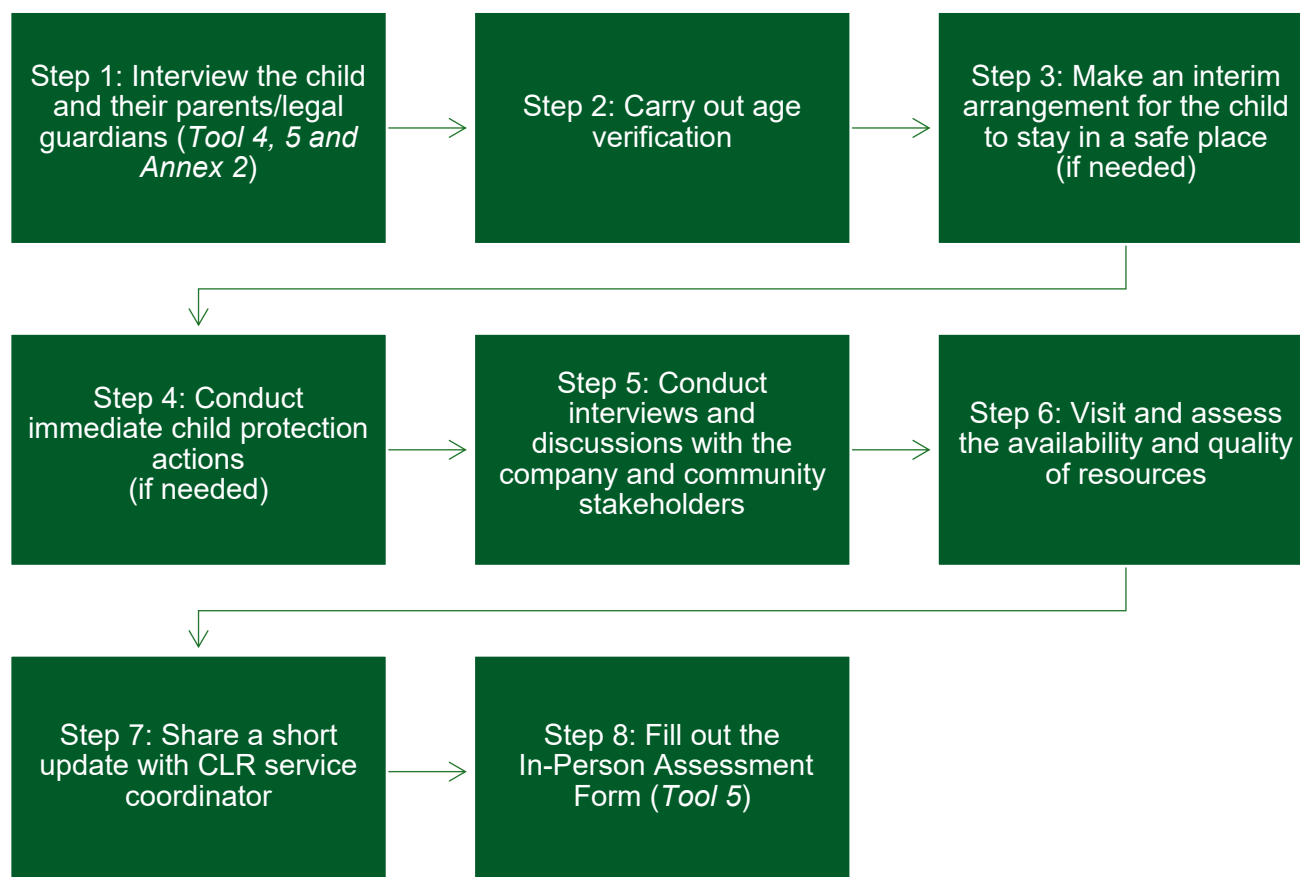
Once the case is reported to the Action Hub, the community focal point or other person who identified the case must not store any data related to the child and their family.

The Action Hub must store personal information to help with case management. The Child Rights Action Hub will work with the CLR service coordinator to establish a system/platform for securely storing, sharing and disposing of data.

6 CASE MANAGERS CONDUCTING IN-PERSON ASSESSMENTS

The in-person assessment provides a basis for understanding the child's working conditions and family situation. It is used to help decide whether and how to remediate a child labour case. Once the case manager arrives onsite for the in-person assessment, they should complete the following steps. If there is any issue or challenge during the assessment, the case manager should contact the CLR service coordinator immediately instead of waiting until the assessment is done.

CHART 3: CONDUCTING IN-PERSON ASSESSMENTS



The case manager should allocate half a person-day per case for the in-person assessment (for one child). For multiple child labour cases from one plantation, the in-person assessment can be extended according to the number of children and families involved.

6.1 STEP ONE: CARRY OUT INTERVIEWS WITH THE CHILD(REN) AND THEIR PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS

Firstly, the case manager must obtain the **Interview Consent Form (Tool 4)** from the child and their parents/legal guardians. *Written consent is highly preferred.* Verbal consent should be recorded and shared with the Action Hub only if the child and their parents/legal guardians cannot read and write or in any situation where written consent is not possible.

Then, the case manager should collect detailed information about the child and family. This includes:

- (a) The child's real name, age, date of birth, birthplace, current residence, contact information, educational background, study interests, future plans, etc.
- (b) Names of the child's parents/guardians, status of other family members, current residence, contact information, family background, financial situation, etc.
- (c) The child's working history, including the length of daily working hours, wages, working positions, reasons for working, any relatives or friends who are also working there, workload, etc.

Please see the **In-Person Assessment Form (Tool 5)** for detailed information on what exactly a case manager should collect during the interview.

If possible, the child's parents/legal guardians should be present during the interview. However, the questions for the child should be answered by the child instead of others. If the guardians cannot join the interview on-site, they can assign someone they trust to sign the consent letter on their behalf and be present during the interview. Then, the case manager should talk directly with the parents/legal guardians and check if the interviewees are the family's decision-makers.

WORK PROCESS DURING THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CHILDREN AND PARENTS

1. Obtain the consent form (Tool 4)
2. Confirm the age and working history of the children (Tool 5)
3. Obtain other general information about the children and their families (Tool 5)
4. Explain the risks for children working in the production area (Tool 4)
5. Explain our work process and the possible remediation options (Tool 4)
6. Exchange the contact information
7. Confirm that all information will be kept confidential (Tool 4)
8. Check if the children and parents/guardians have any questions to ask (Tool 4)
9. Inform the family that there might be a long waiting time before the remediation plan is confirmed (Tool 4)
10. **Be careful not to make any promises or disclose the amount of funds they will receive for taking part in the remediation! (Tool 4)**

The in-person assessment is **NOT** just about filling out forms. Critical challenges for the case manager may include:

- Helping the child and their guardians fully participate in the assessment process, which may seem stressful or overwhelming
- Reducing the worry, anxiety and fear experienced by the child and their family

Thus, during the interview, prioritise building trust with the child and their family:

1. Apply a warm, friendly and caring approach free from blame or argument
2. Explain why you are there doing the assessment
3. Ask if it is okay to take notes during the interview. Only jot down keywords to save time and respect the child and their family
4. Encourage them to tell their story. Initially, it may not always be logical, but keep encouraging them to talk and ask questions later about details. This helps them feel that you are genuinely interested in their life rather than conducting an interrogation
5. Address their concerns about remediation and explore their interest in education and its importance. If the children show little interest in education, the case managers should identify

the underlying reasons so the Action Hub can respond appropriately (e.g. explore strategies or possible alternatives that fit their needs and interests)

If you are unable to speak with both the child and their parents/legal guardians in person, it is acceptable to have a phone call with them instead.

TIPS FOR INTRODUCING THE PURPOSE OF THE IN-PERSON ASSESSMENT

The family may feel disconcerted to be contacted/met by us unexpectedly about a matter relating to their children. We also anticipate that they may have many questions about who we are and why we are contacting/meeting them. To give them more clarity about our work and to answer potential questions they may have, avoid 'drama', and try to lighten the psychological impact on the child as much as possible. The case manager can introduce the purpose of the in-person assessment as below:

We would like to know a bit more about you and your child's situation to help us find alternative options to help you that are acceptable to you both. Our options aim to support your children in building a brighter future and may include enrollment in a school or education programme. You and your family will not incur any expenses. We intend to give your child the best possible option. That is why we would like to have an in-person discussion with you to decide on the best plan for your children and family."

For more tips, please refer to Annex 2 on Communication Skills.

6.2 STEP TWO: AGE VERIFICATION

A critical element during the interview with the child and their parents is cross-verifying their age. This is especially important if the case manager could only estimate the child's age due to a lack of age documents in the immediate actions stage. Even if the child's age has been verified during immediate actions, a cross-verification is needed at this stage to record and design the remediation programme.

During this process, the case manager should pay attention to the key considerations outlined below.

6.2.1 IN WHICH SITUATION SHOULD AGE VERIFICATION BE DONE?

Age verification should be carried out in the child's best interest, in a friendly manner, and only when there are severe doubts about the child's age.

- Age verification should only be done with the children's informed consent. If the child refuses to give consent, the case manager should understand their reasons and/or check with their legal guardians. If they refuse to give consent or cannot tell their exact age/birthdate, the case manager can estimate their age by asking age-related questions
- **A qualified independent guardian must be appointed** to advise the children. A **female** adult should be present when interviewing female children
- **Medical examinations, including bone and teeth check-ups, are not considered appropriate** or reliable. At no point shall a child undergo a medical examination to verify their age
- Interviewers should be **mindful of possible psychological stress** for a child. Be gentle to the child, as this is an assessment and not an interrogation. Know when to stop probing. An estimation backed up by justification is acceptable when verification is not feasible

- If the child's age cannot be confirmed, or there is a margin of error, we can design the remediation programme based on the estimated age in favour of the child

6.2.2 HOW SHOULD AGE VERIFICATION BE DONE?

Depending on the information available during the assessment, it can involve cross-checking age-related documents and interviewing children, family members or relatives.

Cross-checking age-related documents:

- Any age document available (e.g. birth certificate, MyKad (NRIC), MyKid, MyPR, MyKAS, Temporary Pass, medical certificate, school certificate)
- All documents need to be original
- The certificate's date of issue should broadly match the card's condition. For example, it is suspicious when a certificate issued many years ago still looks brand new
- Check with relevant authorities if you have doubts about the authenticity of the documents

MORE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGE DOCUMENTS

- **Birth Certificate:** Parent(s) must register their newborn baby within 60 days to avoid later registration charges. Birth Certificates will be provided by the National Registration Department (NRD). Note: An application by an eligible applicant must produce evidence of birth from the hospital and a parent's ID document, including the child's parents' marriage/divorce/death certificate.
- **National Registration Identity Card (NRIC):** Compulsory for Malaysian citizens aged 12 and above. Known as MyKad (blue), it has photo identification and fingerprint biometrics and is a validation and proof of citizenship, other than the birth certificate. The first six digits in the NRIC number are the person's date of birth, YYMMDD. The 7th & 8th digit refers to the place of birth, the 9th-11th digit is a unique number, while the 12th digit represents the gender of the person (odd numbers for males and even numbers for females)
- **MyKid:** is a chip-based children's identity card or personal identification document issued to children under 12. It does not include a photograph and thumbprint biometric data. For the registration of new births, MyKid will be processed during the birth registration application. Children born before 2003 do not have a MyKid.
- **MyPR** is an identity card or personal identification issued to residents of Malaysia with permanent resident status. All residents of Malaysia with permanent resident status are required to change their identity card to MyPR, effective June 1, 2006. The MyPR is red.
- **MyKAS** (green) is a temporary resident identity card issued under Regulation 5 (3) of the National Registration Regulations 1990. It has an expiry date indicated on it. It must be renewed within five years. It is issued to individuals born in Malaysia whose citizenship status cannot be determined.

After checking the age documents listed above, the case manager should interview the child, their family members and relatives to cross-check the authenticity of the documents or determine the age when none of the above documents is available. The interview should include the following points:

- Ask the child to introduce themselves, their past education and work experience
- Ask about the situation of their family members, siblings and their ages
- Ask which year the child started school
- Ask the child's exact date of birth (year/month/day)
- Check the local calendar of events and ask a series of "before and after" questions to see if the child was born before or after certain events

TABLE 5: SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO BE USED DURING INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	REFERENCE
Please introduce yourself; where is your hometown?	After the interview, do a background search to calculate and compare age information
How many people are there in your family? What are the names of your parents?	Same as above
What do your parents do? Where are they now?	Same as above
Do you have siblings? Are they in school or at work? How much older/younger are they?	Same as above
Do you have friends here? What do you like to do with your friends? Where do you usually meet? Are they in school or at work?	Some casual topics about the child's daily life
Where did you get your birth certificate? Who helped you process it? How much did it cost? When did you receive it?	Verify the issuing authority
How old are you? In which year were you born?	/
How many years of education have you received? When did you drop out? Which grades are your siblings in now? What is the highest grade they have completed? When did they drop out? What is the name of the last school you stayed in?	After the interview, verify the name of the school
What are your favourite subjects in school? Who is your favourite teacher? Who is your best friend in school?	Some casual topics about the child's daily life
Is this your first job? Have you had other jobs before? What kinds of jobs have you had? How long were you in your last position for?	Understand working history and the actual working years

6.3 STEP THREE: MAKE INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHILDREN TO STAY IN A SAFE PLACE

After interviewing the child and their parents/legal guardians, if the child is still working at the plantation on the assessment day, the case manager should require the child to be accompanied to leave the worksite and relocate to a safe place or home.

TABLE 6: CASE STATUS AND ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

CASE STATUS	RESPONSE ACTIONS
The child is a confirmed underage worker	➡ Together with the parents/legal guardians, accompany the child to leave the worksite after the interview to a safe environment, e.g. dorm or home.
The child is a suspected underage worker	➡ Ask the child to leave the worksite on the assessment day until the age verification can be completed to prove that the child is above the minimum working age.
The young worker is engaged in a hazardous work post	➡ Ask the child to leave the hazardous post.

The case manager must escort the child to a safe place in a non-work environment supervised by a trusted adult. If possible, coordinate with the child's guardians to bring them back home or to another safe place. Use the emergency fund to cover the child's basic needs such as food, housing, etc. (when necessary).

If there is no explicit option for “a safe place”

If the child is not conducting hazardous work, let the child continue working if it decreases the risk of them disappearing and their work does not present an immediate risk to their health or development. Seek support from the community to help identify safe facilities as needed and contact the Action Hub immediately.

Remember:

- The child's safety and welfare should always come first
- Avoid 'drama' and try to lighten the psychological impact on the child as much as possible
- If possible, do not escort the child independently. Ask the child's parents /friends /relatives to accompany you
- All decisions should be made in the best interest of the child
- No child should be exposed to increased risk due to any action. It is essential to ensure that removing the child from the workplace is conducted in a professional and ethical manner
- If the child feels scared, they may disappear after the interview or be reluctant to contact the case manager again

6.4 STEP FOUR: CONDUCT IMMEDIATE CHILD PROTECTION ACTIONS (IF NEEDED)

If the child is in their usual living area (e.g. home or dormitory) at this stage, the case manager should briefly check the child's living conditions to detect any potential risk for the child. Together with the information collected via interviews with the child and their family members, the case manager must carry out immediate child protection actions if they notice that the child is in the following situations during the in-person assessment:

- Exposed to immediate dangers or harm
- Exposed to risks if they stop working (e.g. girls at risk of being married off when the family realises they can no longer work)
- Well-being threatened (e.g. there is reason to believe that the employer, recruiters or guardians are harming/could harm the child)

The immediate child protection actions taken by the case managers may include:

- Collaborating with the child's parents/legal guardians and relatives to immediately remove the child from work and to ensure that the child is in a safe space
- Providing an emergency fund for the child if their family needs financial support, e.g. medical fees, food, etc.
- Notifying local child protection services if child labour is linked to severe protection issues (risk of abuse, threats to child's wellbeing)

Emergency Fund for Children in Vulnerable Situations

The Action Hub will administer the emergency fund and allocate it to children in vulnerable situations. Children facing higher risks will receive emergency support sooner, such as emergency funding, usually not exceeding MYR 2400 (equal to USD 500), or access to available child protection services with the assistance of the local community.

The case manager can request fund allocation from the Action Hub. They must be transparent in selecting the children who will receive the funds and communicate with the Action Hub immediately.

6.5 STEP FIVE: CONDUCT INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH THE COMPANY AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

If the case manager has sufficient time and consent during the in-person assessment, they should also interview or hold focus group discussions with the plantation manager and visit the community stakeholders, such as local NGOs, community leaders, health workers, school teachers, local clinics, etc.

The interview with the plantation manager should focus on:

- Explaining the purpose of the visit
- Building trust with the concerned child and family in preparation for remediation
- Explaining legal standards regarding child labour
- Clarifying their concern about remediation
- Sharing all available information about the case promptly and allowing access to necessary documents
- Introducing how they will work with the concerned company
- Explaining that no blame should be placed on the children and their family
- Checking how much and when the plantation will pay the remaining wage if the child has not been paid yet

Interviews with community stakeholders could engage the following actors:

- Community leaders and key actors to discuss the identified child labour issue and the potential support they can provide for the remediation
- Local authorities, e.g. the Child Welfare Committee, to present the child labour risks and ask them for any recommendation or support they can provide

6.6 STEP SIX: VISIT AND ASSESS THE AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF RESOURCES

If there is sufficient time and consent during the in-person assessment, it is also recommended that the case manager visits and assesses:

- **Nearby childcare centres:** Check if the place can function as a temporary shelter for the child if no other interim safe place can be found. The case manager can also explore whether the childcare centre can provide daycare service for the parent workers as part of the potential remediation programme
- **Schools or training centres:** Check if the place can provide education, skill-learning opportunities or literacy programmes for the concerned children
- **Hospital or health care centres:** Check if the place can provide health checks and medical treatment for the concerned children (if applicable)

6.6.1 RECAP OF ALL WORK TO BE DONE ONSITE DURING THE IN-PERSON ASSESSMENT

Before you leave the child and their family:

1. Check if they have signed the interview consent letter and ensure you have collected it
2. Confirm the actual age of the child

3. Collect general information about the child, including their working history, educational background, family financial situation, plans, etc.
4. Check if the child has a safe place to stay and if they need emergency support
5. Check if the child is interested in returning to school or learning any practical skills
6. Check if the parents or legal guardians can support the child's education and inquire about any concerns they may have
7. Verify if the child and their family members have committed to participating in the remediation process
8. Obtain the contact information from the child and their parents/legal guardians and if they agree to keep in contact with you
9. Leave your contact information
10. Confirm that all information will be kept confidential
11. Check if the child and parents/guardians have any questions
12. Verify if the child has been paid for their work. If not, check how much and when the plantation will pay the remaining wage

6.7 STEP SEVEN: SHARE A SHORT UPDATE WITH THE CLR SERVICE COORDINATOR

Within one day of completing the assessment, the case manager must update the CLR service coordinator with the following information. The CLR Service coordinator would then send the short update via email to the Action Hub immediately:

- List of all stakeholders (name and positions/roles) engaged during the assessment
- Number of confirmed child labour cases with children under the minimum working age
- Number of confirmed child labour cases with young workers in hazardous positions
- Number of suspected cases of child labour
- Information collected about the children:
 - *Basic information, including educational background, family status and relevant documentation*
 - *Work history, position and salary details*
 - *Educational interests*
 - *Family situation (e.g. the number of family members and the source of the family's income)*
 - *Interviews with parents/legal guardians*
 - *Emergency fund for the proposed amount of [XXX] due to [REASON]*

A table with the above details for each case is needed if there are multiple cases. The Action Hub will liaise with CLR service coordinators on any crucial decisions about the cases.

6.8 STEP EIGHT: COMPLETE THE IN-PERSON ASSESSMENT FORM

Within one day after the in-person assessment, the case manager should complete the **In-Person Assessment Form (Tool 5)** and send it to the CLR service coordinator. The CLR service coordinator will double-check that all information is correctly filled in and will forward it to the Action Hub.

The form should include detailed information about the child and their family, as well as the local educational fees, living costs, minimum wage, etc.

The case manager and CLR service coordinator should allocate time to complete the In-person Assessment Form: a total of one person-day per case (for one child). The time can be extended according to the number of children and families involved in multiple child labour cases from one plantation.

7 CATEGORISING THE CHILD LABOUR CASES

Based on the **In-Person Assessment Form (Tool 5)**, the Action Hub, case manager, and CLR service coordinator should discuss categorising child labour cases jointly. Each child's risk level determines the remediation actions needed.

The following criteria will serve as a general guideline to categorise each case for either individualised or collective remediation:

TABLE 7: GUIDANCE ON RISK LEVEL AND REMEDIATION

Intensive and individualised remediation plans are appropriate for children in the following situations:	Light and collective* remediation plans are appropriate for children in the following situations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematically recruited and purposely being exploited as child labourers • Being kept against their will or in other forced labour situations¹³ • At risk of physical and/or psychological harm, abused or neglected • Doing dangerous and hazardous work, including excessive overtime or night shifts • Has dropped out of school and cannot complete compulsory education due to work • Is severely injured from the worksite or has occupational diseases <p>Is under 12 years old and lives alone without family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly working longer than 14 hours a week and/or more than eight hours on a particular day or working at night • Regularly working with their families, but unlikely to drop out of school imminently • School attendance or performance is affected by the work and there is not enough time for play, rest and study • Doing work that is not immediately hazardous, but potentially harmful to their health and development due to the long hours

** Even if only a single child is identified, some collective prevention measures may still apply to children in the above situations.*

¹³ See ILO guidance on 11 indicators of forced labour: ILO. Indicators of Forced Labour: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@declaration/documents/publication/wcms_203832.pdf

8 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROPOSAL

Within three working days after the in-person assessment, the case manager shall draft the **In-Person Assessment Report and Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** based on the categorisation of the case (see Chapter 7). The CLR service coordinator must review and send it to the Action Hub for approval. The **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** must be drafted based on the guidance in Chapters 8.1 to 8.4 below.

Once the Action Hub has reviewed the **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)**, the CLR service coordinator may be consulted for further clarification and discussion. The **In-Person Assessment Report and Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** should be presented to the concerned company or Action Hub Partners within five working days after the assessment is completed.

The case manager and the CLR service coordinator should allocate time for completing the **In-Person Assessment Report and Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)**: spend two to three person-days per case (for one child). For multiple child labour cases from one plantation, the time for filling in the form can be extended according to the number of children and families involved.

8.1 REMEDIATION AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Child labour remediation should be implemented at three levels and may include the following elements:

8.1.1 REMEDIATION FOR THE CONCERNED CHILDREN

Based on the above categorisation, the critical elements for individual remediation may include:

TABLE 8: CHILD-LEVEL REMEDIATION

Intensive and individualised remediation	Light and collective* remediation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational support (e.g. school search and enrolment; cover fees for schooling, stationery and uniform, etc.) Monthly financial support (to deter the child from dropping out of school due to poverty) Monitoring services (keeping regular contact with key stakeholders to prevent the child from working until they reach the minimum working age and finish the school year) Connecting with local service providers (e.g. for psychological consulting) (only when necessary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees for the children previously engaged in work Monthly trainings/meetings with parents and community actors Community focal points are selected and trained to closely monitor the risks and provide support Community interventions when needed (e.g. school improvement, after-school centre, youth development programme) Case referral to the local child protection system when necessary

**The measures can also be adapted to single cases, but in most situations, more than one child is expected to be affected.*

8.1.2 REMEDIATION AT THE EMPLOYER (E.G. PALM OIL PLANTATION) LEVEL

The concerned employer or company shall develop a corrective action proposal, which may include the following elements:

- Training with key plantation personnel on child labour standards and management systems to prevent child labour (e.g. age verification)
- Policies and management system development and strengthening
- Child labour risk assessment

8.1.3 REMEDIATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Remediation efforts to tackle the root causes of child labour at the community level could include:

- Improving children's access to education, improving school infrastructure
- Supporting the development of local income-generating activities for the concerned family or the entire community
- Providing decent work opportunities for youth
- Establishing childcare centres
- Organising community awareness-raising activities on child labour
- Recruiting and training community focal points to closely monitor the risks and provide support

8.2 LENGTH AND COST OF THE REMEDIATION

8.2.1 REMEDIATION FOR THE CONCERNED CHILDREN

Each intensive and individualised remediation plan is **tailor-made for the child** and their family. The length of such remediation is based on the following:

- Age of the child. The remediation programme should continue until the child reaches the minimum working age
- Length of the selected education/training programme. It is recommended that the education or training programme lasts at least **six months** to ensure the child benefits from education over the long-term
- Capacity and interest of the child
- Support from the concerned company and parents

The cost of this intensive and individualised remediation is calculated based on the following:

- Tuition fees or costs of education/training programme until the child reaches the minimum working age
- Living costs until the child reaches the minimum working age
- Fees for further remediation support from third-party service providers (e.g. hospitals, psychologists)
- Service fee for the Action Hub, the case manager and CLR service coordinators

The length of light and collective remediation may vary depending on the number of children involved, available resources and the children's ages. It is crucial to ensure that all child labour risks are addressed effectively and that children are provided with long-term education access. When children are in situations requiring light and collective remediation, the case manager and the CLR service coordinator must consult the Action Hub when developing the **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)**. The Action Hub will provide guidance based on the characteristics of the cases.

8.2.2 REMEDIATION AT THE EMPLOYER LEVEL (E.G. PALM OIL PLANTATION)

As the corrective action at the employer level may vary from case to case, it is generally suggested that the case manager and the CLR service coordinator discuss the length and cost of the corrective actions with the Action Hub.

In general, the cost of remediation at the employer level may depend on whether it requires the support of external parties. For example, if capacity-building training on child labour is planned and needs to be implemented by a third-party expert, the service fee for the third-party expert may be included. The remediation cost might be minimal if the corrective action plan only includes internal actions.

8.2.3 REMEDIATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

The length and cost of the remediation at the community level depend on the suggested remediation actions and resources available. The case manager and the CLR service coordinator should discuss details with the Action Hub.

8.3 SENDING REMEDIATION PROPOSAL TO THE CONCERNED COMPANY

The Action Hub will review the **In-Person Assessment Report** and the **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** submitted by the CLR service coordinator. Once finalised internally, the CLR service coordinator must send the remediation proposal to the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner within five days of completing the assessment.

9 IMPLEMENTING A CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION PROGRAMME

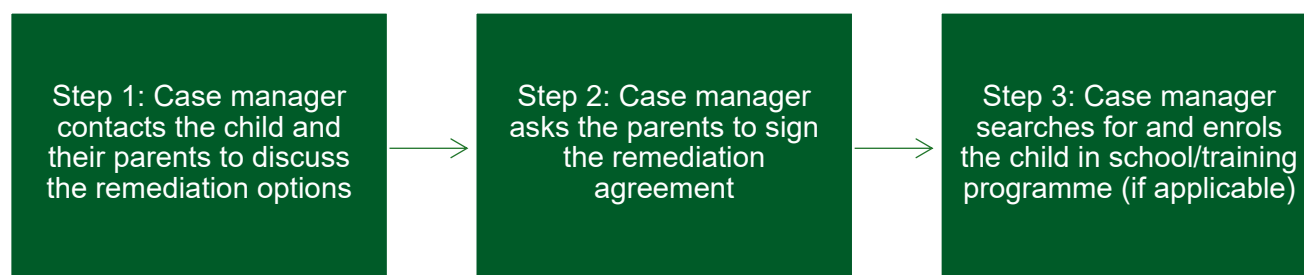
A speedy decision on the **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** is important to safeguard the family's trust and maintain the required cooperation for the remediation programme. Once the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner confirms the proposal, the Action Hub or the CLR service coordinator will inform the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner about the next steps. The CLR service coordinator must not share the detailed remediation proposal with the concerned company unless instructed by the Action Hub Partner.

Although fast action and decision-making is important and expected, it can occur that there is a waiting period before the proposal is confirmed. During the waiting time, if necessary, the case manager, **with confirmation from the Action Hub**, can pay an emergency fund to support the child and their family's basic living expenses if the child's parents/legal guardians agree to stop the child from working. The case manager can search for schools or training programmes if the family supports their child's education.

The remediation programme will be launched once the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner confirms the proposal.

9.1 REMEDIATION OF THE CONCERNED CHILDREN

For **intensive and individualised remediation** cases, the case manager shall carry out the following steps:



The case manager and CLR service coordinator should allocate time together for school research (two person-days) and family visits (one person-day per case for one child).

In Step 2, when the case manager asks parents or legal guardians to sign the consent letter for the **Education Support Programme (Tool 7)**, the case manager may need to:

- Translate the agreement to the local language
- Explain the programme and agreement in detail

Once the consent letter is signed, the case manager should:

- Provide a copy of the consent letter signed by parents/legal guardians and stamped by the case manager; each party should retain a copy
- Send a digital copy to the Action Hub

In Step 3, when the case manager searches and enrolls the child in a school or training programme, the case manager needs to:

- Understand the needs, interests and concerns of the child and family regarding school or training programmes
- Conduct desk research on the proper options and accompany the child and their family to schools or training centres. Check the school's qualifications and assess the child's education level and other needs
- Once the school or training programme is confirmed, the case manager may have to:
 - *Help the child with enrolment*
 - *Prepare the child for school by buying the necessary books and other educational materials*
 - *Talk to the school headmaster and teachers to briefly explain the situation and monitor actions in the future*
 - *Pay the tuition fee with funds received from the Action Hub*
 - *Assess the education level and other possible needs, including private tutoring, health care, psycho-social counselling, etc.*
 - *Ensure same-sex tutors for children of each gender (e.g. female tutors for female children)*

School Searching and Admission

The Action Hub recommends that the educational programme spans a duration of at least six months if possible. This will help ensure that the child benefits from the education in the long run.

The educational programme could be:

- Formal education, such as compulsory education in public schools
- Informal education, such as training or literacy programmes provided by local communities, NGOs or private tutoring
- Vocational training, e.g. a study in vocational school or short-term skill learning courses in training organisations or companies

The case manager should follow the confirmed remediation proposal to implement related remediation actions, including but not limited to school searching, health checks, family visits, school visits, regular check-in calls, etc. The case manager must contact the children monthly and take notes for the monitoring report. The case manager should also be sensitive to sudden issues and promptly communicate them to the CLR service coordinator.

For **light and collective remediation** cases, depending on the confirmed **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)**, the case manager may carry out the following steps:

- Contact the children and their parents to discuss the remediation options
- Ask the parents to sign the agreement
- Pay tuition fees for the children previously engaged in work
- Conduct monthly training/meetings with parents
- Provide community-based interventions when needed (e.g. school improvement, after-school centre, youth development programme)

9.2 REMEDIATION AT THE EMPLOYER LEVEL (E.G. PALM OIL PLANTATION)

Depending on the confirmed corrective actions, the case manager may take steps such as:

- Conducting capacity-building training for key personnel on child labour standards and management systems
- Providing guidance and helping the company revise their policies and procedures regarding child labour
- Helping the company set up an effective management system to prevent and remediate child labour

9.3 REMEDIATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Depending on the confirmed remediation proposal, the case manager may take steps such as:

- Identifying the community actors that are key to preventing child labour in the community
- Selecting local community focal points and training them to monitor the risks of child labour in the community and to provide necessary support
- Carrying out community interventions when needed (e.g. improvement of school infrastructure, establishing childcare centres, providing decent work opportunities for youth)
- Referring the case to the local child protection system when necessary
- Organising monthly community awareness-raising activities or meetings on child labour

Choosing a community focal point:

Community Focal Points (CFPs) should be chosen by their communities with the case manager's help. Whenever possible, a community should have more than one CFP to ensure that they can support each other during outreach activities and provide timely responses when dealing with sensitive child labour issues or vulnerable groups in need of protection and safeguarding. The recommended profile for CFPs is as follows:

- Good standing and reputation in the community
- Literate in the local language
- Good communicators
- Represent the community's diversity, e.g. including men and women (married and unmarried), youth, ethnic minorities, migrants/seasonal workers, or other marginalised groups, etc.

10 MONITORING CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION CASES

Throughout the remediation programme, the case manager must contact the child and the child's parents/legal guardians to provide support as mentioned in the proposal, monitor progress, and report back to the Action Hub. The CLR service coordinator will review the **Monitoring Reports (Tool 8)** shared by the case manager before sending them to the Action Hub.

Depending on the remediation programme, the case manager must send the **Monitoring Reports (Tool 8)** to the Action Hub monthly, quarterly or bi-annually. The monitoring frequency will be clearly defined in the **Remediation Proposal (Tool 6)** and should be carried out accordingly by the case manager. For most remediation programmes, the case manager must continuously monitor and draft monthly reports to the Action Hub during the first months.

Total time case manager and CLR service coordinators should allocate together for the **Monitoring Reports (Tool 8)**:

- **Intensive monitoring with monthly reports:** three person-days/month/child
- **Medium monitoring with quarterly report:** two person-days/month/child
- **Low-frequency monitoring with a quarterly report:** one person-day/month/child

10.1 MONITORING THE REMEDIATION OF THE CONCERNED CHILDREN

For **intensive and individualised remediation** cases, the case manager must:

- Conduct monthly follow-ups on the case via phone calls, messages and visits with the child, their parents, other family members and school teachers to track the child's and family's latest status
- Prepare the **Monitoring Reports (Tool 8)**
- Support the child and family if any issues or challenges arise
- Transfer the monthly living stipends and tuition fee on time
- Raise awareness of child rights for both children and their parents/legal guardians
- Prepare the child before the remediation programme ends

During the monitoring period, the case manager needs to understand the latest status and assess any risk or impact on the child's rights, including rights to survival, development, participation and protection. The concerned child may face various challenges, including but not limited to difficulties in studies, psychological issues, illness, child marriage, impact from the natural disaster, death of family members, etc. Where needed, the case manager and the CLR service coordinator must discuss with the Action Hub how to support the child within the programme.

Besides education and financial support, with the development of an ongoing remediation programme, the child may also need:

- **To be empowered.** It is important to respect children's participation rights and encourage them to think more about their lives after explaining the pros and cons. During the remediation, it is crucial to prioritise advocacy to empower children. Examples of empowerment include:
 - *Helping children speak for themselves (e.g. self-advocacy, self-assessment of their capability, personality, skills, etc.)*
 - *Helping children have control over the support they receive (e.g. through school selection and choosing their course of study)*

- **To receive social support.** Access to social support is crucial as it helps individuals and families address various needs, improve their financial situation, access necessary resources and build a better quality of life. Examples of social support include:
 - *Poverty alleviation, such as job opportunities for adults in the family, income generation or skill development services*
 - *Information and referral services, such as skill training opportunities, free hotline or psychological consultation or shelter programmes*
 - *Awareness-raising campaigns, such as the importance of saving plans, education, health and nutrition*
- **To receive psychological support.** Emotional support and guidance from specialised professionals are crucial in addressing and remedying psychological issues in children.
 - *If the children are facing psychological problems, seek support from local NGOs, specialists and/or social workers with psychological backgrounds to support the children and increase the chances of a successful remediation*

For **light and collective remediation** cases, depending on the confirmed remediation proposal, the case manager may request the community focal points to carry out the following monitoring actions with remote support or onsite support (budget dependent) from the case manager and CLR service coordinators:

- Monthly visits with each family to identify any risks of child labour
- Monthly training or meetings for all concerned families to raise their awareness of child labour
- Monthly follow-up on community interventions (e.g. school improvement, after-school centre, youth development programme)

Once the community focal points complete the above actions, they should report the status to the case manager, who will draft the monitoring report.

If the remediation includes transferring tuition fees for the children previously engaged in work or if the case has been referred to the local child protection system, the case manager must monitor the progress of each case by:

- Reviewing all payment records for the tuition fee transfer
- **(For children who are getting support from the local child protection system)** Conducting family visits and/or phone calls with the children and their parents/legal guardians and visit the relevant local child protection system to understand the status at least once per half-year

The Action Hub will provide the case manager or CLR service coordinator with the format to be used for monitoring reports on a case-by-case basis for each **light and collective remediation case**.

10.1.1 PHONE INTERVIEWS

During the monitoring process, the case manager should carry out follow-up phone interviews at least once a month with the following stakeholders:

- **Teachers from school or vocational training programmes**, to review the child's progress and possible challenges faced in the school
- **Parents/legal guardians**, to learn if there are any parental challenges or big changes in the family, e.g. any plan to move the family, marry off a female child
- **The child**, to understand if they are satisfied with school life, relationships with family members (especially parents/legal guardians), teachers and classmates, and any challenges about schooling or training

- **People who are close to the family**, if case managers think their intervention can help address certain challenges, e.g. child marriage or domestic violence. These people have the family's trust and can impact the family's decisions. They can be family relatives and community leaders, especially male relatives in single-parent families

The frequency of these phone interviews varies from case to case. For cases with challenges, more frequent phone interviews will be needed.

10.1.2 FAMILY VISITS

The frequency of the family visits depends on the case's progress and the possibility of school dropout. It shall be arranged at least:

- In the first month at the start of the remediation programme
- During long school holidays
- In the month before the children reach the minimum working age
- When completing the remediation programme

The family visits will help the case manager obtain first-hand information to evaluate the remediation programme's progress and solve any problems the child might face.

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE FAMILY VISITS

1. Book the time with the family in advance and ensure you can meet the child, legal guardians, and family members that the child is close to. Make sure the family decision-maker is present, especially during the first visit; their understanding and support of the child's remediation programme are key to success.
2. Keep in mind your objectives for this visit. Your goal is to understand their latest status and address any issues, especially during a special circumstance, e.g., risk of child marriage, irregular school attendance or natural disaster.
3. Contact local influencers, e.g., community leaders, schoolteachers, etc., if their support is needed to help the family understand the programme and persuade the family to decide on the child's best interest. For example, if the family plans to marry off a girl child.
4. Build rapport to get in the door. Knock with authority, but not in a threatening way. Introduce your first and last name and organisation. When possible, smile. Observe apparent rules in the home.
5. Politely ask the family member to turn off the television or radio so you can both concentrate on the interview and/or paperwork.
6. Before the interview starts, emphasise that all information collected will remain confidential and take notes after. Inform the child and their family that you would like to take a few notes to reflect on later before you take anecdotal notes during the visit, especially during the first visit.
7. Prior to leaving, summarise the information you have shared and collected from the family. Give them an opportunity to discuss anything else that is important to them.

Please keep in mind that trust cannot be built in one day. Your care and support will be seen gradually!

10.1.3 *TIMELY TRANSFER OF LIVING STIPENDS AND TUITION FEES*

Depending on the confirmed remediation proposal, the case manager can transfer the living stipends or tuition fees to the children and their families. Choose a reliable way to transfer the money or provide it in person in cash. During this process, pay attention to the following:

- The living stipends should be given to the parents/legal guardians or caregivers who live with the children in the same month the fund is transferred to the case manager
- The tuition fees should be paid directly to the school or training centre. If the family needs to buy school supplies and uniforms, a reasonable amount can be paid to the family according to the remediation proposal
- Monitor cash flow to ensure the transfer is within the budget, and keep tracking and updating it on the **Payment Tracker (Tool 9)**

Maintain all the payment records. Ask the receivers to sign a receipt if the payment is made in cash. The case managers must share photos of all payment records and recipients with the Action Hub.

10.1.4 *PREPARE MONITORING REPORTS*

After confirming the status of the children in the remediation programme, the case manager needs to send the **Monitoring Reports (Tool 8)** within one working week after a monitoring period (either monthly, quarterly or bi-annually) to the CLR service coordinator, who will then review and share them with the Action Hub. The Action Hub must finalise the reports and share them with the concerned company or the Action Hub Partner (if necessary). The monitoring reports should include:

- The status of the children
- Challenges and problems encountered during this period
- Suggested solutions
- Payment slips of living stipends and tuition fees
- Support provided by case managers

10.1.5 *UPDATE THE ACTION HUB ON ANY CHALLENGES OR SIGNIFICANT CHANGES*

If the child experiences significant changes in their life that might affect the implementation of the remediation programme, the case manager and the CLR service coordinator must **send an update to the Action Hub as soon as possible** rather than waiting to report the incident in the following monitoring report.

10.2 **MONITORING OF THE REMEDIATION AT THE EMPLOYER LEVEL (E.G. PALM OIL PLANTATION)**

The monitoring of the remediation depends on the agreed corrective action plan.

10.3 **MONITORING OF THE REMEDIATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL**

As the community's remediation may vary depending on the resources and number of children, the case manager or CLR service coordinators must contact the Action Hub to discuss the monitoring frequency, actions needed and the template for such a monitoring report.

11 CLOSING OF CHILD LABOUR REMEDIATION CASES

11.1 CLOSING OF REMEDIATION FOR CONCERNED CHILDREN

11.1.1 CLOSING OF INTENSIVE AND INDIVIDUALISED REMEDIATION PROGRAMMES

Usually, one to six months before a case ends (depending on the length of the remediation programme), the case manager must discuss future plans with the child and family and help them prepare for the closure of the remediation programme. During this process, the case manager must:

- Check if the children want to continue their education and if the family can support themselves when the programme is closed
- If additional funds are available for tuition fees, check whether the children are interested and willing to learn new skills in a vocational training programme. This will ensure they can acquire skills that will support their future employment, particularly if they plan to work after the programme ends
- Check whether the training centre can recommend job opportunities for children in their programme who are nearing the end of their vocational training. Check whether the children and their families would be interested in considering other job opportunities

After collecting the above information from the children and families, the case manager should promptly discuss it with the Action Hub and seek potential support from the concerned company, Action Hub Partners, or other sources. The Action Hub will evaluate the education support on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

1. The commitment, motivation, and capacity of the children and their family to continue their education and/or vocational training when they reach the minimum working age or finish compulsory education
 - This should be determined through various means, including the children's attendance, grades, school reports and interviews with the children and their families
2. The financial situation of the family
 - Whether the child would be able to continue their education without financial support
3. Available local resources
 - Whether education/vocational training is available locally
 - Whether relevant jobs/career opportunities are available in the nearby area
4. Whether the child has the skills and capability to complete the education/vocational training programme

When the remediation programme ends, the case manager must prepare the **Final Report (Tool 11)** and send it to CLR service coordinator, who will review and share it with the Action Hub for finalisation. The report will include:

- Proposed remediation plan and deviation from plan (if any)
- A summary of the case management
- The outcome of each case and the next step for the child
- Final financial statement
- Recommendations and lessons learned from the remediation

The Action Hub shall send the final report to the concerned company or Action Hub Partner.

The case manager and the CLR service coordinator should allocate time for preparing the closing reports: one and a half person-days per case (for one child) each. For multiple child labour cases from one plantation, the closing reporting time can be extended according to the number of children and families involved.

Case closure may be a positive step or difficult for children and families involved. The case manager may need to provide additional support and explanation to the child and their family, which may include:

- Explaining when and why the remediation programme has ended
- Exploring and reflecting on the feelings involved
- Understanding the child's future plans and supporting them accordingly. For example, if the child intends to start working soon after they reach the minimum working age, offer guidance on health and safety at work, as well as basic communication and problem-solving skills to help them adapt better to the work environment
- Refer the child and their family to available resources, such as formal job opportunities

11.1.2 CLOSING LIGHT AND COLLECTIVE REMEDIATION PROGRAMMES

One month before the case ends, depending on the budget, the case manager should arrange phone interviews with community focal points, children and their family members, or onsite visits to the community to collect the final status of the programme.

As the programme may vary significantly from case to case, the case manager or the CLR service coordinator must contact the Action Hub to receive the template of the closing report. In general, the closing report should cover:

- Proposed remediation plan and deviation from plan (if any)
- Summary of critical achievements (e.g. improved awareness of child labour, the establishment of a childcare centre, improved school enrolment rate of children in the community)
- Total number of beneficiaries (including children, parents and local stakeholders)
- Final financial statement
- Recommendations and lessons learned from the remediation

11.2 CLOSING OF REMEDIATION AT THE EMPLOYER LEVEL

Generally, the action plan should be completed within 30 days of the child labour case being identified. If the case manager has provided capacity-building training as part of the corrective actions, then a **Capacity-Building Closing Report (Tool 10)** should be drafted and sent to the Action Hub. If other actions are taken, the case manager or CLR service coordinator shall contact the Action Hub to discuss the actions needed to close the remediation programme and the template for the closing report.

11.3 CLOSING OF REMEDIATION AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

As the remediation in the community may vary depending on the resources and number of children, the case manager or CLR service coordinator shall contact the Action Hub to discuss the actions needed to close the remediation programme and the template for the closing report.

12 TROUBLESHOOTING SKILLS

There can be various challenges during the child labour remediation process. Common issues/challenges in the remediation process include, but are not limited to:

- The family refuses to take part in the programme
- Lack of trust in the Action Hub
- Fear of causing problems for the concerned company
- Threats from the concerned company
- Losing contact with the child or their family

During the remediation

- Children show disinterest in studying and are reluctant to return to school
- Parents want to marry off a female child
- Children return to work for a different employer
- The living stipend is not used to support the children (e.g. the family uses it for their own needs)
- Severe impact on the family due to a natural disaster

After the remediation

- There are no proper work opportunities for young workers who would like to work

When faced with such challenges, case managers should remember that remediation is teamwork; if they cannot solve the issues themselves, they should immediately seek support and guidance from the CLR service coordinators or the Action Hub.

However, it is also important to strengthen the case manager and the CLR service coordinator's troubleshooting skills. Here are some tips:

- The priority of the remediation work is to obtain the trust of key stakeholders. The case manager shall clearly explain the intention of and options in the remediation programme and be patient. It takes time for people to understand a completely new service. Sometimes, the case manager may need to first talk with someone the family trusts and engage them (if there is no conflict of interest) to persuade the family
- Monitor the remediation progress as much as possible. Each case may present unique situations. Rely on your instincts and expertise, and always discuss challenges with the CLR service coordinator and the Action Hub whenever possible
- Identify the root causes of the issues/challenges rather than just addressing surface-level problems. As you get to know the family more over time, you may uncover deeper issues. Work with the team to determine if adjustments to the remediation plan are necessary. Avoid making assumptions based on initial impressions
- Raise awareness about child rights with the children and their families and actively listen to their perspectives. Combat prejudice and gender stereotyping. Provide education on parenting skills, nutrition and the benefits of education

Remediation for scenario 1: the child and/or family is not willing to stop the child from doing age-inappropriate work

This may happen during the assessment period, and sometimes the child may restart age-inappropriate work during the remediation period. In such a scenario, the case manager should:

- Try to understand the root causes of their doing so. Possible reasons might include:
 - *Lack of trust in the remediation programme*
 - *Urgent family needs requiring the child's income*
 - *The perception that the work is not age-appropriate*
 - *Concerns about the child's safety if left alone at home*
- Address the root causes and try to gain their trust, help them understand the remediation programme and solve their worries.
- If the child is engaged in hazardous work and the risk level is high, seek the support of influential people in the local community, workplace managers and other influential people to ensure that the child and their family agree to stop the child from working and move them to a safe place. Once the child is safe, discuss and arrange an interim solution for their situation.

Recommendation for scenario 2: The child is not willing to return to school

Due to various reasons, children may sometimes be unwilling to return to school. Our focus should be on the children's best interests and general well-being. To address this issue, the case manager should:

- Assess why they are not interested in education. Reasons might include poor education quality at their previous school, negative schooling experience such as bullying, beliefs that schooling is useless or uncertainty about what they'd like to learn or do in the future.
- understand that it takes time to uncover the root causes, but the case manager should address these issues one by one and help the children understand the value of the education. Even if there is no formal schooling or skill training, explore the children's interests and consider options such as literacy programmes, private tuition or interest-based classes.

Even when the child finally agrees to study in school, during the schooling period, the case managers should:

- Check in regularly with the child through their preferred communication channels for informal chats. Provide links to helpful resources and information to support their interests (if the child has access to a mobile phone or laptop). Assess if any additional support is needed, such as addressing school bullying issues.
- Maintain contact with the school teacher and/or private tutor and visit schools as required in the remediation plan to monitor the child's school attendance and performance. Discuss ways to improve study efficiency and plan for further education.
- Complete the school visit report after each visit.

Recommendation for scenario 3: child marriage

Marriage before the age of 18 is a human rights violation. It:

- Robs the child (usually girls) of their childhood
- Causes social isolation – children are cut off from their families, friends and other sources of support
- Limits opportunities for education and employment
- Heightens the risks of domestic violence
- Worsens the economic and health outcomes relative to unmarried peers. Further, these negative outcomes are eventually passed down to their children, further straining a country's capacity to provide quality health and education services
- Girls are not physically mature enough to give birth if pregnancy occurs during adolescence, with a higher risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth

In such situations, the case manager could:

- Empower the children to say “No” to their family
- Contact local organisations to help the child
- Encourage the child to continue their education or work to become financially independent

13 ANNEXES

13.1 ANNEX 1: WHAT ARE THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)¹⁴ defines a child as “every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, the majority is attained earlier”. Children and young people have the same human rights as adults, but also enjoy specific rights that recognise their special needs due to physical and mental immaturity. The UNCRC outlines basic entitlements and freedoms that apply to all children without discrimination.

GOOD TO KNOW- WHAT ARE CHILDREN’S BASIC RIGHTS

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international agreement that sets out the rights that must be realised for children to develop to their full potential. In total, the Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child's life and set out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It comprises four main pillars - the right to survival, the right to protection, the right to development and the right to participation.

1. The Right to Survival

Since the first moment children are born, they have the right to life. They have the right to a registered name and nationality. They have the right to be cared for and protected by their parents and not be separated from their families. This includes quality healthcare, age-appropriate nutrition, clean drinking water and a safe place to live.

2. The Right to Protection

Once children are born and survive, they have the right to be protected from all forms of harm including domestic violence. They must be protected from physical violence and psychological intimidation, whether within or outside their families. The right to protection also includes being protected from child labour, dangerous tasks, and any activities that impede their education. Likewise, children must be protected from harmful substances, drugs, trafficking, smuggling, kidnapping, sexual abuse and all forms of exploitation against children.

3. The Right to Development

Education and development are essential rights. This should begin with the right to access to early childhood development services, the right to complete compulsory education and enjoy cultural or sports activities. This also includes the opportunity to further specialised skills (e.g. vocational training programme) and physical and mental abilities that open the possibilities of a brighter future and to realise their dream.

4. The Right to Participation

Children are members of society. They have the right to freely express their thoughts, views and opinions, and participate in society, particularly in the areas affecting them. Especially during the development progress of a remediation plan, their voices must be seriously considered in line with their age and maturity.

¹⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
<https://www.unhcr.org/protection/children/50f941fe9/united-nations-convention-rights-child-crc.html?query=love>

13.2 ANNEX 2: COMMUNICATION SKILLS WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Effective interviewing and communication are central to child labour remediation practices. Without these skills, the case managers will be less able to:

- Learn what children and parents are thinking and feeling
- Provide the support that is needed
- Identify and understand complicated situations in a timely and accurate manner
- Negotiate, mediate and intervene in a sensitive and appropriate way

HOW TO BECOME A GOOD LISTENER

DO

- Show interest and consideration
- Focus
- Smile
- Maintain eye contact
- Maintain an open posture
- Acknowledge that you are listening by nodding, “uh, uh”, “yes”, “mmm”, smiling and giving out positive cues
- Ask for clarification if needed
- Summarise or paraphrase to ensure you have understood
- Pay attention to body language/facial expressions
- Try to understand the other’s emotions
- Put your emotions aside
- Be patient
- Keep listening even if you think you have heard it before or disagree

DON'T

- Make suggestive facial expressions
- Interrupt
- Move to other problems
- Change the topic
- Daydream or cause a distraction
- Argue
- Look around, look at your watch, play with a pen or your hair, or other actions that give the impression that you are not fully listening
- Have an inappropriate posture
- Use inappropriate expressions

Communication must be a two-way process to be effective. It is not enough for the case manager to simply provide information; they must also ensure that it is understood. Both the case manager and the children and their families need to work together to make this happen. The case manager should be mindful of cultural practices that could lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretation. For example, they should avoid using jargon or complex terms that the child and their family may not understand during the in-person assessments.

13.2.1 INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN

To achieve the interview objectives most effectively, use a combination of storytelling, drawing exercises, and interactive interviews. Ask the child to tell you a story about their life. This approach helps them feel more comfortable and spontaneous, rather than providing rehearsed answers to expected questions. While they share their story, keep your objectives in mind and extract the necessary information.

Drawing exercises are very effective for putting children at ease and allowing them to express their opinions or viewpoints comfortably. Ask the child to create a drawing about themselves, their family, life, school or home, and then ask follow-up questions based on the drawing. This method can also help uncover their dreams and aspirations and can help you determine the best course of action to support them.

It is also essential to show empathy for challenges and concerns. The case manager must acknowledge the experiences, perceptions and feelings of a child/parent/family. Moreover, pay attention to your tone and body language, as these are essential components of effective communication. Mastering and interpreting body language correctly can significantly enhance the success of your communication.

GOLDEN RULES OF CHILD-FRIENDLY INTERVIEWS

- Create a trusting and relaxed environment
- Treat the child with respect
- Explain to the child why you are talking to them
- Start with general topics to break the ice
- Always listen
- Do not jump to conclusions
- Use a language that is easy to understand
- Be neutral/objective; avoid being judgmental about what you are told
- Always keep in mind: “is this in the best interest of the child?”
- Avoid long interviews (up to one hour); if necessary, take breaks
- Very upset children may prefer short meetings, but usually at least 20 minutes are needed
- Stop the interview if the child seems very upset
- If you cannot complete the interview, schedule another one

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

General questions to create a trusting and relaxed environment with child:

- *Could you please draw your family?*
- *How many brothers and sisters do you have and what are their ages?*
- *What does a usual day involve for you? (Describe a typical day in your life)*
- *What would you like to do when you are not in school?*
- *What is your favorite type of music/movie/sport?*

13.2.2 INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS

Help the parent/family accept and be comfortable with the uncertainty. For example, you can say, *“Parenting is a very complex task. Of course, every parent wants the best for their child, and it is normal to sometimes be unsure about how to proceed and what decision to make. We are here to help you understand how to navigate this.”*

Try to identify the positive aspects of the situation (e.g. the relationship between a parent and child, a strong interest by a parent in supporting the child’s education) or the challenges (e.g. financial difficulties to support education, no access to proper education resources).

Check your understanding of what the parent has told you to limit communication problems. For example, you can say, *“What I understand from your explanation is XXX”* or *“Let me check that I have understood you correctly: you told me xx.”*

Avoid starting a question with “why”. This can be interpreted as a form of questioning and may trigger resistance. Instead of saying, *“Why did you do that”*, try to understand the reasoning behind a parent’s decision or action by asking, *“Tell me more about your strategy or decision when you did XXX.”*

Example Questions

- *At what age do you think your child can work in a plantation or factory? What leads you to this belief?*
- *What concerns do you have when your child is working there?*
- *Who introduced your child to work there?*
- *Where do you live now?*

TIPS FOR INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS

DO

- Begin the conversation with socially accepted polite talk
- Explain the general reasons for the interview/talk. The parents must know exactly who they are speaking to, as well as the nature of, and reasons for communication
- Use questions that start with who, what, where, when and how to help establish the situation (not closed questions). Use these as a framework for prompts
- Phrase questions to ideally require explanation, rather than a simple YES/NO response, i.e., they should be “open-ended” questions
- Keep your own comments, knowledge and conclusions separate from the information obtained from the interviewee
- Help the parent to accept and be comfortable with the uncertainty
- Identify the positive aspect of the situation
- Check your understanding of what the parent has told you to limit communication problems

DON'T

- Do not start with direct questions
- Avoid starting a question with “why”
- If a question causes silence or cannot be answered, avoid suggesting answers, as these may reflect your bias. Ask the question in a different way later
- Avoid paraphrasing responses, as it is essential to understand the original language
- Avoid leading questions as these may only confirm your own thinking e.g. *“Do you send your children to work because it will help them to acquire a practical skill necessary for adult life?”*
- Avoid sounding surprised by any responses