



Evaluation Summaries

Combating trafficking of children for labour and sexual exploitation in the Balkans and Ukraine

Quick Facts

Countries: *Romania, Ukraine, Moldova, Republic of, Albania*

Mid-Term: *June 2006*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Child Labour*

Evaluation Management: *IPEC*

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Project Code: *RER/03/50/USA*

Donor: *United States*

Keywords: *Sexual exploitation of children, child labour, human trafficking*

Executive summary of the report

Trafficking in human beings has been linked to the political and social transition that countries in South Eastern Europe have experienced over the last decade. Trafficking occurs both within countries (internal trafficking) and across international borders (external trafficking). Populations that are the poorest, most disenfranchised and most marginalized are the populations most vulnerable to trafficking. ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour classifies trafficking among “forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery.”

Albania, Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine were among the countries in South Eastern Europe most seriously affected by the problem of trafficking in children. In addition,

the governments of these countries had made an initial commitment to the elimination of child labour through ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182). Therefore, these countries were selected to participate in the Project *Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation in the Balkans and Ukraine*. The three immediate objectives of the project are:

1. “At the end of the project, national policies, legislation and judicial procedures will be geared to address the issue of trafficking in children.
2. At the end of the project, in selected high risk areas, mechanisms to reduce the vulnerability of children to trafficking will be in place and the quality and range of services for long-term reintegration of child victims will have been improved.
3. At the end of the project, a sub-regional information exchange network will be operational and will support and strengthen the existing regional structures.”

While different in scope and detail, the project in the four countries has addressed these three objectives. The projects have been comprehensive, appropriate and relevant to their national contexts. Supporting efficient and effective use of resources, the ILO/IPEC teams have been successful in linking project objectives and national priorities. The projects

have supported national directions while including multiple stakeholders. They have been flexible enough to support diverse strategies within a range of Action Programmes.

Projects have had a significant impact on policy and legal frameworks at the national level, while at the local level they have supported the functioning of multi-disciplinary teams and peer educators. While they have also supported rehabilitation services and employment opportunities for children and youth from the most vulnerable groups, these initiatives are often at the earlier stages of implementation.

The project has established the basis for national and local ownership of both policy initiatives and direct services that assist the target populations, while enhancing existing institutional capacities and maximizing the use of donor funds.

The evaluation report recommends continuation of the project's comprehensive, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary strategy within the upstream-downstream approach; an approach that is fundamental to project design. While advocacy work deserves continued attention, at this juncture emphasis should also be placed on the delivery of services to direct beneficiaries.

Capacity building continues to be important, particularly from the sustainability perspective. However, as much as possible, ILO/IPEC needs to support a model which maximizes the use of people who have already been trained in order to expand and deepen local capacity. Enhancing local capacity also means paying attention to the composition of local multi-disciplinary teams that are implementing CLMS, ensuring they are representative of the community and include all those professionals (e.g., representatives of the judicial system) whose presence will enhance the team's effectiveness.

Some project expansion is recommended to ensure the representation of high need areas in certain countries (i.e., north-east Albania,

western Ukraine, border of Transnistria in Moldova), although expansion needs to be considered in light of future funding realities, the existence of reliable implementing partners in those areas and cooperation with local authorities.

Within some Action Programmes an increased focus on the inclusion of parents and families as partners is warranted. Despite the challenges, concerted efforts to involve the Roma community should be undertaken where Roma populations are involved in, or affected by, the Action Programmes, as well as on the strategic level.

Implementing partners from numerous Action Programmes have raised the issue of inflexible targets. Not only should targets be reassessed, perhaps with an increased focus on prevention, the criteria for children withdrawn and prevented also warrant discussion to ensure that the criteria can be operationalized.

Good practices need to be documented and shared as a key strategy for knowledge building and awareness raising in the region. The sub-regional information exchange network holds much promise for the future and initial steps have been taken in building this network through vehicles such as meetings, newsletters, and websites. In addition to enhancing the sub-regional network, time and space needs to be allocated within country initiatives so good practices can also be shared among implementing agencies and others in the pilot regions and beyond.

While there are areas for improvement and suggested actions to support sustainability, the project has had a major impact at the national level and in the communities selected for implementation of the pilot interventions. Sustainability will be fostered through continued upstream and downstream work with an emphasis on embedding effective practices within existing national and local structures.