

**IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS  
OF THE SITUATION OF WORKING STREET CHILDREN  
IN THE LENINGRAD REGION  
2001**

**ILO/IPEC WORKING PAPER  
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE  
ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR**

**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE ST.PETERSBURG**

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This report presents the results of a comprehensive study into the problem of working street children, conducted in the Vsevolozhsk and Priozersk districts of the Leningrad Region of Russia. It gives quantitative estimates and other data descriptive of working street children in these districts, their occupations and conditions of work, and the reasons that drive children to seek independent sources of income. It also provides an analysis of children's attitudes and expectations. The report uses the results of sociological surveys conducted in June through August 2000 on working street children and their employers, and experts from a range of government agencies and non-governmental organizations. Besides offering sociological analysis, the report describes the federal and regional policy aimed at safeguarding the lawful rights and interests of children and offers recommendations concerning practical interventions into the problem.

The report is intended for practitioners in the area of social protection, social workers, teachers of social disciplines, and sociologists.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's Russia street children are becoming a prominent social problem. Over the last ten years, as the country struggled with a sweeping economic decline and shift of values, it has also had to cope with a side effect of this massive transformation: homeless and neglected children. In urban areas, especially large cities, troubled families are unable to provide proper care and education for their children. Financial deprivation and other social evils have begun to affect families, and their children's mental and physical development. Many children are thus driven from their families to embrace the perilous street world. Away from home, deprived of shelter and parental care, these children are becoming a new cheap workforce and easy prey for the rampant criminal world.

Today, both the state and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are striving to respond adequately to the problem. Yet it is evident there is not enough capacity to tackle it. The community remains largely apathetic and passive. Meanwhile, the working street children phenomenon has crossed the boundaries of industrial centres into smaller localities and rural areas. This report reflects an initial attempt at an in-depth analysis of the street children situation in an area with a predominantly rural population. For that purpose, two districts in the Leningrad Region were selected for a case study.

The analytical part of the study used a battery of one-to-one interviews of working street children and their employers. A wealth of factual material was obtained through a series of surveys among experts working in this field. In total, the survey questioned 406 street children, some of whom were involved in prostitution and illegal business practices (dealing in drugs, stolen property, etc.), as well as 21 employers from various industries. The sample of experts consisted of 15 representatives of governmental and NGOs whose mission is to provide assistance to street children, state officials at various levels, and law enforcement officers.

The street children survey used a purposive sample of convenience consisting of three target clusters. The first cluster consisted of children under 14 engaged in non-criminal economic activities, the second of children under 18 engaged in prostitution, and the third of children under 14 engaged in criminal activities. Respondents were selected at random in a series of stages, based on information obtained from experts about their actual places of work or residence. After children there were contacted and interviewed, new potential respondents were identified and it was decided how they could be involved. As a rule, two techniques were used to expand the sample: the snowball technique and the

key informant technique. The only criteria for a child's inclusion in the sample were age and involvement in street work.

The chief reason why these methods were used in the design of the sample was the lack of verifiable data and expertise concerning the street children population, classified by sex, age, activity, etc. In such cases sociologists normally favour a random sampling of respondents because, according to the law of averages, random sampling ensures maximum representation of a heterogeneous or diverse population.

Preparation of the report was supported by the International Labour Office (ILO) under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), as well as by the Information Office of the Nordic Council of Ministers in St. Petersburg. The aim of the study underlying it was to provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the problem, trace its roots, identify the common varieties of child labour, and articulate the hazards it poses for the physical, mental and moral development of children. It has revealed a number of social and economic factors affecting the situation of working street children. The result of the study is a set of recommendations that, if implemented, could help to improve the situation

The project team was led by researchers and professors of the Department of Sociology at St. Petersburg State University. They were joined by representatives of the Leontief Centre for Social and Economic Research, the Regional Economies Institution of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the North-Western branch of the Russian Public and Municipal Administration Research Centre, the Region-Expo think-tank and the sociological research agency «Marko». Contributions to this report were also made by committees of the Leningrad Government responsible for political decisions in the area of children's and adolescents' rights.

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# 1. BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The standards and approaches of the International Labour Organization (ILO) were used to prepare and carry out the survey (particularly its classifications and structure, and the selection of the sample). In particular, the classification criteria for groups of children used by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) were adopted. Definitions of some basic terms and concepts used by the authors of the present report are provided below.

This section highlights the most important aspects of child labour as a phenomenon new to Russia, examines community attitudes and standards relating to unprotected working children, and reveals individual points of conflict between Russian national legislation and the ILO core Conventions relating to child labour.

## CHILD LABOUR

Publications and documents of the International Labour Office define child labour as «both paid and unpaid work and activities that are mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children. It is work that deprives them of opportunities for schooling or that requires them to assume the multiple burdens of schooling and work at home and in other workplaces; and work that enslaves them and separates them from their family. This is meant by child labour — work carried out to the detriment and endangerment of the child, in violation of international law and national legislation<sup>1</sup>.»

Accordingly, child labour is to be viewed as: a) a grave social problem with severe social, economic and medical implications, and b) an illegal activity that comes under a statutory prohibition. Therefore, this report lays special emphasis, first, on the moral, social and political implications of child labour, and second, on its legal implications. Child labour should be denounced by the nation as an intolerable social phenomenon and should evoke adequate responses on the part of the authorities and public groups resulting in nation-wide and regional programmes that eradicate child labour.

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<sup>1</sup> Action Against Child Labour, ILO Geneva 2000.



## MINIMUM AGE<sup>2</sup>

Article 2 (3) of the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) states that the minimum age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling. The Soviet Union ratified the Convention in 1979<sup>3</sup> by establishing the minimum age at 16 years, and this norm was reflected in the previous Labour Code. In Russia, as a successor state to the Soviet Union, employment of children in industry and agriculture before they reach the age of completion of compulsory schooling was prohibited by law and, importantly, denounced by the general public. In 1995, however, Russia reviewed the minimum age norm, reducing it to 15 years<sup>4</sup>. This contravened Article 2 (2) of Convention 138, which only permits a Member state to specify a minimum age higher than that previously specified. Moreover, Article 173 of the current Labour Code of the Russian Federation permits the employment of children aged 14 in light jobs on the conditions they continue to attend educational establishments and perform their work duties outside their lesson time<sup>5</sup>. In general this provision agrees with Convention 138 (Article 7 (1)). In reality, however, expert surveys and analyses of official departmental documentation suggest that the age of 14 years is widely viewed as the minimum age of admission to employment.

In the absence of a consistent official position on child labour, early employment is increasingly perceived as an acceptable, and even desirable, solution to the problem of socially unprotected children. The community is learning to see early employment as an answer rather than a problem, and is becoming less and less sensitive to the exploitation of children.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note the references to the Labour Code of the Russian Federation are to the provisions of the Labour Code in force at the time of writing. This Labour Code was replaced in February 2002 (Labour Code of the Russian Federation, № 197-FZ of December 30, 2001, adopted December 21, 2001, approved December 26, 2001, in force February 1, 2002). However, references to sections in the Labour Code at the time of writing are accompanied by references to the new Labour Code.

<sup>3</sup> Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Decree no. 8955-IX «On the Ratification of ILO Conventions», 5 March 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Law of the Russian Federation № 182-FZ «On the Amendments and Addenda to the Code of Laws on Labour of the Russian Federation», 24 November 1995. But see the new Labour Code, Art.63, which permits employment of children aged 15 only if the child has completed secondary education or has left school officially.

<sup>5</sup> See the new Labour Code, Art. 63, this provision is not changed.

This emerging attitude ignores and condones violations of the immutable constitutional right of the child to general basic education. It should be borne in mind that in Russia the age of completion of compulsory schooling is established at 15 years. Children who start working at the age of 14 have slim chances of completing their general basic education. This slight and seldom noticed loophole in the legislation may amount to mass violations of the right to education.

Nearly all experts acknowledge that family and school are the child's main support systems and, more broadly, the defenders of his/her rights. When families are weakened by protracted unemployment, discord or parental alcoholism, it is the duty of the school to support their children. Pushed into early employment, children can no longer use this support system, with disastrous implications for their situation and their rights.

## **WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR**

In the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (no.182), the worst forms of child labour are defined in Article 3 as:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;
- the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties;
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Russia has not ratified the Convention. Nevertheless, it has an elaborate legal framework that may serve as a basis for such ratification. In particular, Russian legislation bars children from being involved in hazardous forms of labour (the fourth category in the Convention).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Labour Code of the Russian Federation (as amended 30 April 1999), Art 175.

An analysis of the special literature and legal documents relating to children reveals a serious discrepancy between what is known about social security and protection of the rights of the child, and what is being done by the public and legal professionals to avert egregious violations of these rights. Involvement of children in prostitution, criminal activities and dangerous work remains an area of uppermost concern. Notably, there are no effective sanctions against persons using the labour of children in prostitution and pornography.<sup>7</sup> The current legislation defines as criminal offences only carnal connection, other acts of a sexual nature and immoral actions toward persons who are known to be under the age of 14. Here, in the same way as with the minimum age, the legislation reduces the age of protected persons.<sup>8</sup> This largely stems from the prevailing public attitude towards children engaged in prostitution, according to which social stigma falls upon adolescent girls compelled to engage in a sex trade under trying circumstances, but not upon their respectable adult clients. Instead of declaring a war on pimps and clients of child prostitution, the public lashes out at the children, labelling them prostitutes.

The worst forms of child labour remain new and little-known phenomena in Russia. This has both positive and negative implications. On the positive side, the worst forms of child labour have not yet developed into a chronic social malady and their early but acute symptoms can still be nipped in the bud. On the negative side these new problems have emerged in the middle of a full-blown economic crisis and caught the public off-guard. As a result, the public is not fully aware of the extent of prostitution, begging, and the use of children in drug-dealing and hazardous jobs, nor has it dealt adequately with the problem.

## **WORKING STREET CHILDREN**

Russian social workers use several terms to describe the most common categories of children whose rights are violated. These are: ‘children without care’ (*beznadzornye deti*), ‘neglected children’ (*besprizornye deti*) and ‘children in difficult situations’ (*deti v trudnoi zhiznnoi situatsii*). Though reflecting the existing state of affairs, these terms neither characterise specific

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<sup>7</sup> Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, Arts. 134, 135.

<sup>8</sup> Article 134 of the Criminal Code revised 1 January 1997 established the maximum age of the victim at 16 years. The Law of the Russian Federation of 15 June 1998 reduced it to 14 years.

concerns associated with child labour, nor name the categories of employed children. Illegal labour relations involving children and the worst forms of child labour are now a reality in Russia. As this and other studies illustrate,<sup>9</sup> the problem is growing fast in scope.

The problem also goes far beyond the domain of educational science and family sociology, and resists all known remedies such as improving recreational activities for children or registering young offenders in police departments. It has been mentioned already that child labour should be viewed in the wide context of an illegal market environment where child labour is welcomed by both employers and clients and meets with no statutory prohibitions or adverse factors. Contributing to this is the state of the public consciousness. In fact, society tolerates the exploitation of children in the street. Neither the media nor public leaders advocate or endorse obvious actions such as boycotting trading areas, filling stations or hotels that use child labour.

Given the gravity of the new problem, there is a need for an entirely new term that adequately encompasses children involved in the worst form of child labour. They are even more vulnerable than children in difficult situations, such as children without care and neglected children. The terms ‘children without care’ and ‘neglected children’ do not reflect the entire range of specific problems associated with child labour and connote few if any of its distinctive features. Besides, there is no clear dividing line between these terms. For instance, it is not evident when a ‘child without care’ becomes a ‘neglected child’ and what criteria (hours spent in the street, caloric count of food, etc.) should be applied to each category.

To eradicate child labour, especially in its worst forms, one should be equipped with a set of classification criteria, and precise qualitative and quantitative indicators of unacceptable child labour, that are defined by legislation. This legislation should also define the acceptable conditions, number of hours, acceptable risks, and job functions of work permissible for children in accordance with international standards.

The experience of social work in Russia has not yet furnished plausible definitions helping to identify the situation of children predominantly involved in the worst forms of labour. A new term is therefore needed to give an exhaustive description of this new phenomenon and to sensitise the public to the problem

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9 IPEC study of working street children in St. Petersburg; Child prostitution in the North-West of Russia (a study by the Institute of Sociology supported by the Council of Ministers of Nordic Countries).

so that concerted actions can be taken to eradicate child labour in the streets of the Russian cities. In this regard, 'working street children' seems to be an appropriate term to designate the scope of this study. It is widely used by the IPEC programmes in Russia. It explicitly names the new problem and retains the social overtones of the terms 'children without care' and 'neglected children'<sup>10</sup>. The term 'working street children' also points to the very core of the problem, i.e. child labour and indicates the street, informal nature of these children's work. However, it should be borne in mind that the possible existence of the worst forms of child labour in the Russian Federation is not limited only to this category. This study and other IPEC activities are only showing an entry point to a wider question.

Researchers as well as the authors of this report believe that the new concept of 'working street children' should be matched by a set of quantitative and qualitative standards and criteria to describe varieties of work that can under no circumstances be performed by children. Naturally, at the core of this concept should be the worst forms of child labour. This has particular relevance for the task of elaborating a nation-wide action plan to implement the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

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<sup>10</sup> Report on Street Children, RF Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 10. The authors propose that 'street children' be used to include both 'children without care' and 'neglected children'.

## **2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION**

The analytical part of the Leningrad Region survey uses data obtained through interviews of three categories of respondents, namely:

- working street children;
- persons acting as employers of street children;
- experts of governmental and non-governmental organizations providing assistance to street children and children at risk.

In accordance with the target group composition and the study objectives, three types of questionnaires were prepared for in-depth semi-standard interviews of each group.

Initially, the study assumed that the term ‘child’ was defined as persons aged between 5 and 14 years. Later, the fact was taken into account that the age of 18 is recognized as the upper limit by a body of international documents dealing with protection of children against certain hazardous forms of labour. Accordingly, the sample was extended to cover the age set between 5 and 18, thus adding children involved in prostitution and other criminal activities.

The main criterion used in the selection of children was their engagement in economic activities in exchange for remuneration, such as money, food or other items.

The survey of children used a purposive sample of convenience. The sampling population consisted of three target clusters: children under 14 engaged in non-criminal activities in the street; under 18 engaged in prostitution, and under 14 engaged in other criminal activities. The selection of children was carried out in stages, in their places of actual work or residence. The sample covered both working children who live with their parents and those who live in the street (‘neglected children’). The survey used multi-stage sampling. Initial data on key locations of daytime or nighttime concentrations of children was received from the experts and informants.

The sampling method was largely based on the assumption that most street children concentrate around large trading areas, marketplaces, railway stations and bus terminals. Wherever possible, these areas were selected also for interviewing persons acting as employers of street children.

After the children in these locations were contacted and interviewed, new potential respondents were identified and it was decided how they could be

identified. Two techniques were typically used to expand the sample: the snowball technique and the key informant technique. The essential criteria for inclusion of a child in the sample were age and engagement in street work. The lower age limit in the sample was determined by the actual age of children encountered by the interviewers.

A group of qualified interviewers was selected and specially trained for working with street children. Interviewing work was often very difficult. To facilitate establishing contacts with children and win their trust, interviewers gave them gifts and food.

The survey of children used a 48-item questionnaire structured around the following themes:

- structure of the population of working street children
- living and working arrangements
- causes of child labour
- children's perceptions of themselves
- value orientations
- behaviour attitudes
- preferred lifestyles

The structure of the population of working street children was described through the following criteria:

- sex
- age
- education
- place of residence
- place of birth
- place of parents' residence (St. Petersburg or other)
- parents' occupation

The following factors were given primary importance in the analysis of the living and working conditions of working street children:

- housing, living arrangements
- health conditions
- life threats and risks
- molestation
- relations with the law enforcement
- schooling
- sources of income

- forms of remuneration
- size of remuneration
- duration and intensity of work

A different technique was used to make contact with children involved in prostitution. First, a map detailing places of concentration of street prostitutes in the districts in question was prepared on the basis of information provided by the police and local residents. Then, specially trained male interviewers, disguised as clients, drove to these locations in expensive cars and picked up underage girls involved in prostitution. The interviewer then drove away from the site and suggested that the girl be interviewed on the conditions that her time be paid and anonymity guaranteed. Those girls who agreed to be interviewed (refusals were rare) answered questions following a specially prepared questionnaire. The interviewer also recorded information provided by the respondent outside the questionnaire.

The survey of persons acting as employers of street children also used a purposive sample of convenience. The major problem here was that hiring of persons under the age of 14 is illegal and therefore is never formally documented. ‘Employers’ are secretive about the use of child labour and reluctant to be interviewed. Initial data on employers of children was obtained from working children themselves, as well as from the police and social workers. Later, these employers were contacted and, if willing, interviewed.

The employers’ questionnaire consisted of 23 items covering the main indicators and conditions of work of street children. They were grouped as follows:

- employers’ perceptions of the working street children problem
- type of business
- who initiates child employment
- type and nature of street children's work
- forms of remuneration
- size of remuneration
- normal duration of work
- intensity and gravity of work
- employers’ opinion concerning possible solutions

Prior to the survey of experts, a list of organizations dealing with street children was compiled. Interviewers made initial contacts with these



organizations and then visited them. Interviews were administered at each expert's workplace, in the form of an informal conversation lasting 1–1,5 hours. As a rule, interviews were taped.

Expert interviews used 55-item scripts exploring the following themes:

- approximate number of working street children in the district
- structure of the population of working street children
- living and working arrangements
- optimal arrangements for working street children
- legal framework required to tackle the problem
- problems encountered in coordinating response to the problem
- recommended steps to solve the problem

Almost all experts gave straightforward opinions concerning the nature of the problem, provided recommendations on possible assistance mechanisms and showed that they were prepared to co-operate in the future. In addition, experts were an important source of information for interviewers in finding, contacting, and arranging interviews with street children.

### **3. RELEVANCE OF THE CHILD LABOUR PROBLEM IN THE LENINGRAD REGION**

The social and economic transformations of the past decade have brought about a number of long-forgotten social phenomena, such as child vagrancy, begging, and homelessness. More children now are forced, for various reasons, to earn their living and they have become the cheapest and least protected labour force available on the market. A good number of street children engage in illegal practices (dealing in drugs and stolen goods, pornography, prostitution, etc.).

In matters related to child labour, Russian legislation has always been oriented towards the standards of developed countries. Russia is a party to the ILO Convention No.138 on Minimum Age. The current legislation provides considerable protection for children against hazardous and heavy work. The Labour Code restricts heavy and dangerous forms of child labour as well as work in dangerous and harmful conditions. This applies to all types of underground work and work likely to jeopardise the morals of children (gambling, night clubs, alcohol production, alcohol, tobacco, and the trade or transportation of toxic substances).<sup>11</sup> These types of work can only be performed by persons who have reached 18 years of age. However, evidence suggests that legislation banning child labour is not always a sufficient deterrent to the growth of this market.

The increase in the number of street children is becoming a social problem that is especially felt in the large urban areas, although small towns and rural areas are not exempt. In the Leningrad Region this problem also exists, though not as acutely as in Moscow or St. Petersburg. Also, in areas with a predominantly rural population, child labour displays a marked difference in nature and dynamics.

The survey of children and experts<sup>12</sup> in two districts of the Leningrad Region (Priozersk and Vsevolozhsk) confirms that the child labour phenomenon does exist in the area and may soon evolve into a grave social problem. Two of five experts surveyed (40%) believe that even now exploitation of street children should be viewed as a social problem for their districts. About one expert in

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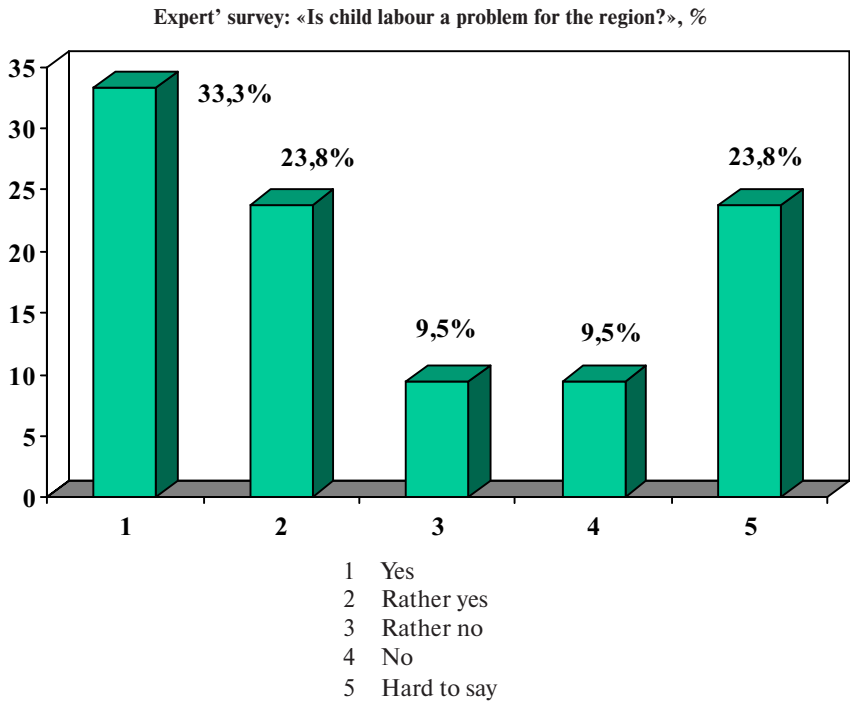
<sup>11</sup> Labour Code of the Russian Federation, Art.175, new Labour Code, Art. 265.

<sup>12</sup> Experts included professionals whose work lies in the area children and their rights.

five felt it was somewhat of a problem, and the rest (40%) did not think that cases of child labour should be viewed as a grave social problem.

The majority of employers who hire children agree with these experts. Of 21 employers surveyed, one third (33%) did not hesitate to qualify working children as a problem and another one fourth (24%) partially agreed with them. In other words, most persons (57%) who have direct contact with working children acknowledge that exploitation of street children is a problem for their districts (see Diagram 3.1)

Diagram 3.1



Despite that, the experts believed that the local residents did not view child labour as an acute problem. This was stated by 36% of experts, and most of them (43%) think that the problem is getting little attention and no coverage in the media (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1

**Expert on public sensitivity to child exploitation in the Leningrad region**

Answer option	%
No such problem exists, the situation is over-exaggerated	—
The problem gets too much attention unlike other equally important problems	7,1
In general population is fairly well informed about the problem	7,1
Population is poorly informed about the problem	35,7
No information is available, the problem gets no attention	42,9
Hard to say	7,4

Experts not only felt that members of the public were insufficiently informed of the problem of working street children, they also believed many official institutions (such as law enforcement agencies, trade unions and employment services) were not responding adequately to the problem.

Most of the response, experts said, is coming from NGOs and relevant departments in the district administrations. They specifically mentioned that employment services and law enforcement agencies were providing insufficient or inadequate responses. (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2

**Experts' survey: Do the following relevant institutions respond adequately to the problem of working street children?, %**

	Answer option		
	Yes	No	Hard to say
District administration	46,7	46,7	6,7
Law enforcement	16,7	46,7	16,7
Trade unions	42,9	50,0	7,1
Employment service	—	53,3	46,7
Non-governmental organizations	53,3	33,3	13,3

Notably, those government agencies that, according to some experts, are paying little attention to working street children appear to be the best equipped with the legal, administrative, financial and information resources needed to tackle the problem. This is true of the law enforcement and local employment services. For example, by introducing specialised job placement services for children under 15 these agencies can help to meet the legitimate demand for jobs and partly fill jobs unwanted by adults. Greater commitment on the part of these government institutions is sure to bring about an improvement in the situation.

## **4. WORKING STREET CHILDREN IN THE LENINGRAD REGION**

### **4.1. ESTIMATED QUANTITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Admittedly, there are no accurate statistics regarding the number of street children in the Leningrad Region. No such information could be obtained even from officials working in the area; about 50% of experts failed to provide estimates of the number of street children in their districts. The other 50% furnished varying estimates ranging between 100 and 1000 for each district (there are 29 districts in the Region). The latest available statistics show there are about 365,000 children under 18 in the Leningrad Region.

The experts also made a number of suggestions regarding the possible classification of street children:

- Children aged under 13 years of age comprise about 50% of the total number of street children;
- In this category, between 50% and 100% can be referred to as working children, given that attending to private kitchen gardens, gathering of mushrooms and berries for sale, collection of empty bottles and waste and begging can be classified as work;
- Between 10% and 30% of these children are involved in criminal activities (theft, dealing in drugs and stolen property, etc.);
- Between 10% and 30% of all working street children under the age of 18 are involved in prostitution or production of pornographic materials.

The majority of working street children (between 60% and 80%) is boys, experts said. Boys are also more ready to become engaged in criminal activities. Underage prostitution, on the other hand, is dominated by girls. Experts believe that children under the age of 12 do not, as a rule, engage in criminal activities. Most of them work in agriculture, construction, collection of waste, etc. Starting from age 12–13, children become increasingly involved in criminal activities.

The street community is mostly filled by children fleeing from broken, low income and single-parent families (70–80%), although there are some children from normal families who want to earn pocket money.

In total, the IPEC sociological survey in Vsevolozhsk and Priozersk districts of the Leningrad Region examined 406 working children. Most of them worked

as vendors and cleaners at trading zones and kiosks, loaders, agricultural workers engaged in weeding, hilling and watering of crops, berry-pickers at farms, etc. The majority of respondents were in the 8 to 13 age bracket. All of them worked illegally, according to the Russian legislation, which prohibits employment of citizens under the age of 14, 87 were also involved in such criminal activities as theft, drug-dealing and dealing in stolen property. The sample also included 105 girls aged 13–17 who were involved in prostitution<sup>13</sup>.

The following table shows the age structure of the sample. Over two thirds of the sample (63,1%) consisted of adolescents aged 10–13.

Table 4.1

Age structure of the sample, %

Age, yrs	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
8	1,1	—	—
9	3,6	—	—
10	6,0	—	—
11	6,6	—	—
12	19,1	—	—
13	31,4	1,9	22,2
14	5,7	9,5	55,6
15	9,0	28,6	16,7
16	9,8	34,3	—
17	7,7	25,7	5,6

It was found that most working street children found their first job at the age of 10 to 12. This was the case with nearly half of the respondents (46,2%). Nearly one out of five (20,9%) children began work at the age of 6–9, but did not engage in criminal activities. Later, at the age of 10–11 they were likely to become involved in stealing, dealing in non-ferrous metals and drug dealing. Many girls surveyed had been drawn into prostitution at the age of 13–14 (Table 4.2)

<sup>13</sup> The number of children involved in prostitution and other criminal activities was determined in such a way as to ensure that they adequately represented their category. It does not, therefore, reflect the proportion of this category in the total population working street children across the districts in question.

Table 4.2

**Age of first street job, %**

Age, yrs	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Under 6	0,8	—	—
6-7	5,8	—	5,6
8-9	15,1	—	11,2
10-11	30,5	1,0	55,5
12-13	24,8	21,0	16,7
14	12,9	43,8	5,6
15	8,5	28,6	5,6
16	1,6	5,7	—

The survey also found that three out of five (59,6%) working street children were boys. Only prostitution appeared to be entirely dominated by young girls (100%). There also exists a sex market for young boys, but they did not appear in the sample due to its small size.

The overwhelming majority of respondents were born in the Leningrad Region (83,6%). A minority were St. Petersburg residents and migrants from other parts of Russia or even the CIS. About one out of ten children surveyed in Vsevolozhsk was a St. Petersburg resident (9,8%). 4–5% of the respondents had been born elsewhere but later moved to the Region (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

**Place of birth, %**

Place of birth	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
St. Petersburg	9,8	7,6	7,6
Leningrad region	83,6	85,7	85,7
Other region/city of Russia	4,4	4,8	4,8
CIS	1,9	1,9	1,9
Baltic states	—	—	—
Other	0,3	—	—

A significant proportion of working street children had ceased to attend school on either a part or full time basis, and was no longer interested in

secondary education. Only 64,4% were attending school on a regular basis, the others had already dropped out, temporarily or permanently. Thus, one out of six respondents (15,9%) reported that they had not been to school in the last 1–3 years.

The children involved in prostitution and criminal activities attended school even less. Only one third (34,2%) of the children involved with prostitution, for instance, were attending school regularly and two out of five (43,8%) had practically dropped out, since they had not been to school for over 1 year.

Table 4.4

**Recent school attendance, %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Attended school every day/nearly every day	64,4	34,3	50,0
Quit school in recent months	12,3	11,4	57,8
Quit school: 1 year ago	6,2	10,5	16,7
more than 1 year ago	10,6	26,7	5,6
2-3 years ago	5,3	17,1	—
Never attended school	1,1	—	—

The impact of street work on the condition of children can be illustrated by comparing the age and educational attainment of respondents with those of non-working children. Some children left school the moment they got a street job. As many as half of the respondents (50,5%) were children aged 12–13 who, with normal schooling, would have finished 6–7 grades. In reality, only 44,9% of them had done so (see Table 4.5).

**4.2. VALUE ORIENTATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR ATTITUDES OF STREET CHILDREN**

The survey demonstrated that the moral and psychological condition of working street children is characterised by severe personality disorders that shape their distinctive value systems. Severance of normal social ties and abnormal socialisation patterns inevitably affect personal attitudes and lead to skewed value orientations. The children’s identity and behaviour patterns are



Table 4.5

**School progress  
(grades completed by the time of survey), %**

Education, grades	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
0	1,1	—	—
1	2,5	—	—
2	4,7	—	—
3	5,5	1,0	—
4	4,4	—	—
5	16,8	7,8	—
6	14,9	8,7	5,6
7	30,0	38,8	33,3
8	9,4	10,7	33,3
9	8,5	25,2	27,8
10	0,6	1,9	—
11	1,7	5,8	—

affected by street rules and customs, as well as weakened family bonds. Increased sense of vulnerability and the need for self-reliance breed avoidance, irritability and aggression.

As a result, street children treat others with a dramatic level of distrust. Of the children surveyed, 71% said that «there were very few people who could be trusted», which indicates avoidance, denial, suspicion and alertness. Working children often become victims of physical and emotional pressure, which explains why it is difficult for them to have confidence in others. Projecting their relationship with the immediate environment onto the whole world, they become convinced that no one may be trusted.

Table 4.6

**Answers to questions concerning personal attitudes, %**

Statement	Answer		
	Agree	Disagree	Hard to say
There are few people in the world who can be trusted.	71,0	21,6	7,4
I don't think it is a big deal if you tell a lie sometimes, because so many people do so.	55,8	37,4	6,9
I consider myself a religious person (believe in God).	69,7	16,4	13,9
My dream is to come back and live with my family.	21,0	29,6	49,5

Street children’s delusions and scepticism toward the world caused them not only to sever ties with their family but also to deny the value of family life. Only one out of five children still wanted to live with his/her family, about half of them could not express their attitude toward family life and about one third did not share the opinion that family life is valuable.

In a constant game of survival, street children become deceitful and sly. Over half of the children surveyed were prepared to lie if it was necessary or profitable. As sincerity and honesty are seldom in demand in street life relationships, children become deceitful, evasive and calculating. The proportion of children who continued to value truthfulness and did not agree that occasional lying was good was as low as 37%, and even lower among children involved in criminal activities and prostitution (28% and 23% respectively).

To compensate for lack of confidence in people and the world, children often develop religious feelings. About 70% of the children surveyed considered themselves religious. Over two thirds (77%) of girls involved in prostitution and 50% of boys involved in criminal activities said they believed in God. The depth and sincerity of this faith is questionable, especially as it is coupled with distrust, deceitfulness, rejection of family values, bitterness and often violence. Nevertheless, religious feelings can be used as a point of departure to help street children build the right attitudes. The church may play a dramatic role in the life of street children by offering them an alternative value system — by encouraging trust, understanding, hope, and by showing new ways to better living.

Street children are aware that their position is distinct from that of children who live in homes. When asked to compare their lifestyles with those of their peers living in normal families, children noted numerous differences, all of which they tended to interpret to their advantage (Table 4.7). Thus, two thirds of them said they could better appreciate genuine friendship and help.

Table 4.7

**Answers to questions concerning differences from non-working peers living at home with parents, %**

Answer options	Yes	No	Hard to say
I know more about life and people	42,0	36,0	22,0
I can better appreciate genuine friendship and help.	64,7	18,0	17,3
I am more courageous and determined.	41,2	32,5	26,3

Two out of five children (42%) stated that they knew more about life and people. This was especially the case with boys involved in criminal activities (89%). Faced with daily hazards in their environment, children are on the defensive, and display firmness and determination. A high proportion of the children surveyed believed they were more courageous and determined than their peers who lived with normal families (42%). This opinion was more popular among boys with criminal records: over three-quarters (78%) in this category stated they felt superior to 'home kids'.

Admittedly, the children's true situations and outlooks are only partially reflected by their self-evaluations. No doubt when faced with everyday trials, street children do develop courage and determination. Witnessing brutality, deceit and violence, they learn a lot about the vicious side of life. At the same time, children with abnormal socialisation patterns tend to have a sense of identity distorted by self-assertion and overstatement of individual capacities. They use their bravado as a weapon of defence, since many of them are not as sure of themselves as they would like others to believe and perceive their environment as hostile and hazardous.

Other children with low self-esteem may underestimate their capacities. These children have intense feelings of neglect, intimidation and vulnerability. Although they may express contempt for family life, many street children harbour secret desires to live like their 'normal' peers who have homes, go to school and receive an education. The task of any intervention in the problem of street children is to change their personal attitudes and restore their faith in the world.

### **4.3. FAMILY AND HOUSING**

Analysis of the family situation of the respondents demonstrates that family can be the main factor driving children into the street. Only two out of five (38,0%) respondents had a normal two-parent family. One out of five (21,3%) lived in a family with a stepmother/stepfather. About one third (33,1%) came from single-parent families.

Those of the respondents who were involved in prostitution or criminal activities had much worse family situations. Only 25,7% of girls involved in prostitution and 33,3% of children involved in criminal activities lived in two-parent families. In general, this category of street children was characterised by a higher proportion of children cared for by relatives, not parents (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8

**Family composition, %**

Family composition	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Mother and father	38,0	25,7	33,3
Single mother	30,6	32,4	27,8
Single father	2,5	1,0	—
Mother + stepfather	19,7	27,6	22,2
Father + stepmother	1,6	2,9	5,6
No parents, brought up by relatives	4,9	7,6	11,1
Orphan	1,4	—	—
Other	1,4	2,9	—

The respondents' family incomes support the assumption that dysfunctional, often low-income families push their children into the street. Less than one third (31,7%) of street children have families with two earners. The incomes of families whose children are involved in prostitution are, in general, even lower. Only 17,1% of them had two earners. On average, one tenth (9,6%) of respondents had unemployed parents. In the case of children involved in prostitution, this was one sixth (17,1%) (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9

**Employment of family members of working street children, %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Both parents (incl. stepmother/father) are breadwinners	31,7	17,1	50,0
Only mother/stepmother is a breadwinner	28,4	25,7	38,9
Only father/stepfather is a breadwinner	18,7	21,0	—
Neither parent (incl. stepmother/father) are breadwinners	9,6	17,1	—
Other	11,6	19,0	11,1

The parents of most respondents had a place to live, such as their own flat or house. However, many respondents reported they did not want to go home because their parents were alcoholics who had turned their homes into underworld hangouts. Only 0,3% said they had no home at all. At the same time, a greater proportion of girls engaging in prostitution — one out of six (7,6%) — lived in dormitories (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10

**Housing situation of parents of working street children, %**

Housing	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Separate flat	68,1	54,3	100,0
Shared flat	2,7	7,6	—
Dormitory	4,7	15,2	—
Homeless	0,3	—	—
Other	24,2	22,9	—

Most respondents had not fully severed ties with their homes and could still return to their families if they liked. Only 9,2% of them would leave home for long periods of time (weeks, months) or seasonally. This proportion is significantly lower than in big cities. For example, in Moscow this figure was 29,0% and in St. Petersburg 13,4%. At the same time, for a few categories of children, this figure is far above the average in the region. 16,3% of children involved in prostitution live more or less away from home.

On leaving home, street children usually stay with friends or relatives. Some fail to find permanent lodging and dwell in basements, attics or simply in the street. To some extent living at home is seasonal: the proportion of children living with their families or relatives is greater in the winter and in summertime more children dwell in basements and in the street. Yet, these seasonal variations are not high: as a rule, most street children, including those involved in criminal activities, prefer to live with their family or relatives. Only 1% of respondents lived in basements, attics or outdoors.

Table 4.11

Answers to the question: «How often do you live or stay overnight outside your home», %

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Live at home permanently	70,2	50,5	61,1
Sleep out 2-3 days/week	19,4	31,4	33,3
Sleep out for weeks (up to 1 month)	7,1	10,5	5,6
Live outside my home permanently (over 1 month)	1,6	4,8	—
Live outside my home seasonally (in summer)	0,5	1,0	—
No answer	1,1	1,9	—

#### 4.4. SCHOOL IN THE LIFE OF STREET CHILDREN

The education system has a role to play in keeping children off the street. To accomplish this, schools can use the potential of qualified educators, psychologists and social workers. Most street children are prepared and willing to study. However, the way in which the educational system intervenes should take into account the different categories of street children.

One common opinion among the respondents was that there was no point in going back to a normal secondary school. Only one out of ten (10,1%) of them said it was the only educational option they envisaged. This figure was twice as low among children involved in prostitution and zero among those involved in criminal activities. The two latter groups are more prepared to receive vocational training without general education. The rest would prefer a combination of general school education and vocational training (see Table 4.12).

#### 4.5. HAZARDS AND RISKS FACED BY STREET CHILDREN

Life away from home and parental care proves to be detrimental to the psychological and physical health of children. While the majority of children

Table 4.12

**Preferred type of education, %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
I do not want to study at all	7,1	13,3	5,6
I want to go to school only	10,1	5,7	—
I am ready to go to school and receive vocational training	52,5	16,2	38,9
I do not want to go to school but I would like to receive vocational training	22,2	40,0	55,6
Hard to say	9,0	24,8	—

surveyed claimed their health was no worse than anybody else's, certain categories of them admitted having severe health problems. For example, only 5,7% of girls involved in prostitution rated their health as 'very good' and one fourth (23,8%) of all the girls admitted they fell ill quite often. Only 5,6% of children involved in criminal activities admitted their health was bad. In general, slightly above one third (33,9%) of the respondents considered themselves absolutely healthy (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13

**Perceptions of personal health, %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Very good health, don't remember latest disease	33,9	5,7	61,1
Sometimes fall ill, but not more than others	51,6	70,5	33,3
My health is not good, I fall ill more often than others	13,9	23,8	—
Bad health, serious disease(s)	0,5	—	5,6

Apart from health problems, street work is fraught with other dangers, such as work accidents. Many respondents reported having been in situations at work in which their life or health were in danger. For example, one child had barely escaped death when a felled tree nearly tumbled on him; an animal carcass fell on another in a slaughterhouse. Children with jobs building summerhouses often get buried under logs, bricks, etc. One child reported having been injured by a falling cement bag. The illegal status of such workers makes them absolutely defenceless against employers. Many street children are victims of physical violence and abuse, especially if they work as prostitutes.

Over half (55,2%) of the children involved in prostitution confessed to having been in situations where their life and health were endangered. Such situations are slightly less frequent for other categories of street children: only one-third of the children (see Table 4.14) reported them.

Table 4.14

**Answers to the question: «Have you ever been in a situation at work when your life/health was in danger (you were beaten or your lifewas seriously threatened)?», %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Yes	31,4	55,2	33,3
No	61,7	38,1	61,1
I decline to answer	6,8	6,7	5,6

In addition to hazards to life and health, working street children often become objects of sexual harassment. Due to their disadvantaged legal status they are easily victimised, both physically and psychologically. On average, two out of five respondents (40,2%) reported having been sexually harassed by adults. One out of ten children in prostitution reported having been subjected to perverse sexual violence. Some had been thrown out of cars after serving their clients (3,4%). However, even children with non-criminal occupations are not safe. For example, many children in the sample lived near rivers and earned money by catching and selling crayfish. 12,6% of them had been at risk of suffocation during diving.



Table 4.15

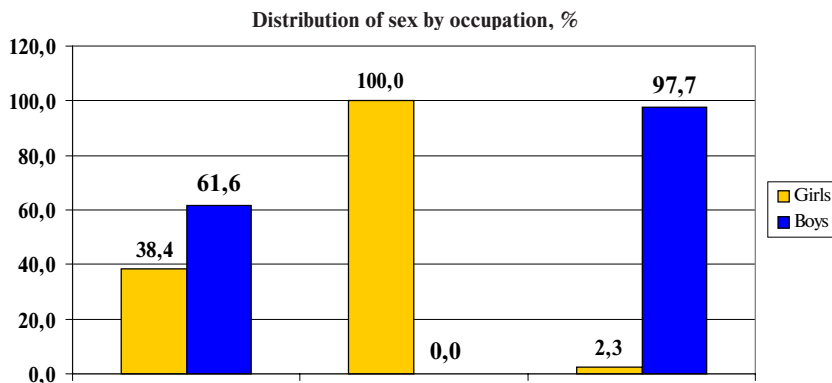
Answers to the question: «Have you ever been sexually harassed by adults or adolescents?», %

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Yes	40,2	98,1	22,2
No	54,6	1,9	77,8
Declined to answer	5,2	—	—

#### 4.6. WORKING STREET CHILDREN IN THE LENINGRAD REGION: GENDER ASPECTS

At present, there are no statistics available about the gender distribution of working street children in the Leningrad Region. Therefore, the sample of the present survey was designed according to experts' recommendations so as to ensure adequate representation of individual categories of street children. The sample included 156 girls and 250 boys. Almost all children involved in criminal activities were boys (97,7%). However, as was mentioned before, the children involved in prostitution consisted entirely of girls (see Diagram 4.1).

Diagram 4.1



- 1 Total sample
- 2 Children involved in prostitution
- 3 Children involved in criminal activities

Because it was necessary to carry out a representative study of children involved in prostitution and pornography, the senior age groups of the sample had a higher proportion of girls. Thus, the upper age limit in the sample varied from 18 years for children involved in prostitution to 14 years for children involved in other criminal activities to 13 years for other occupations. Consequently, the sample segment above 13 years was mostly dominated by the occupational criterion, which explains the predominance of girls in it. For these reasons, cross-gender comparisons in this chapter are only relative, and factors used to analyse gender differences are quite limited.

Diagram 4.2 shows the overall sex and age composition of the sample. Most boys are found in the age group between 12 and 13 years (70,4%). This age bracket has a lower proportion of girls, because, in order to analyse children involved in prostitution, the age limit for girls was extended to 18 years. Nearly all respondents above 16 years old were involved in prostitution and pornography.

Diagram 4.2

Sample composition by age and sex, %

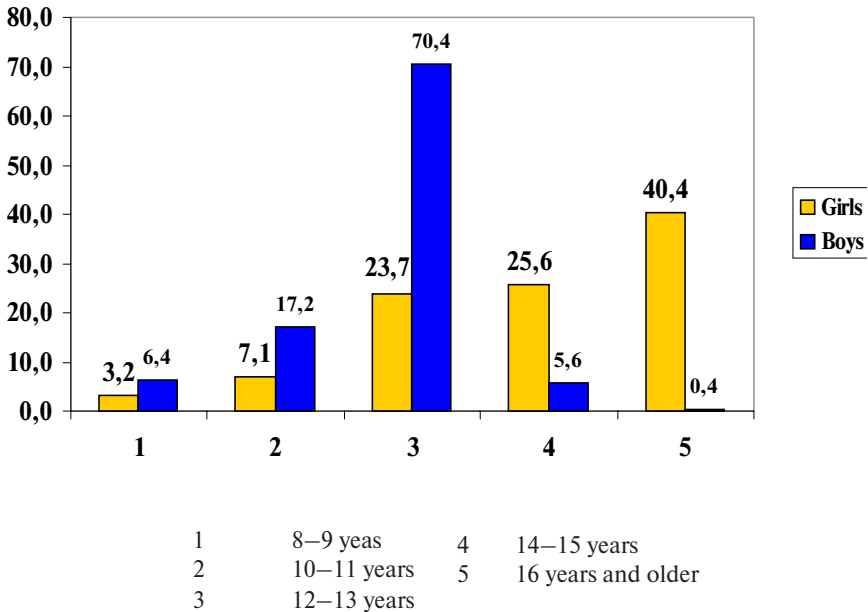


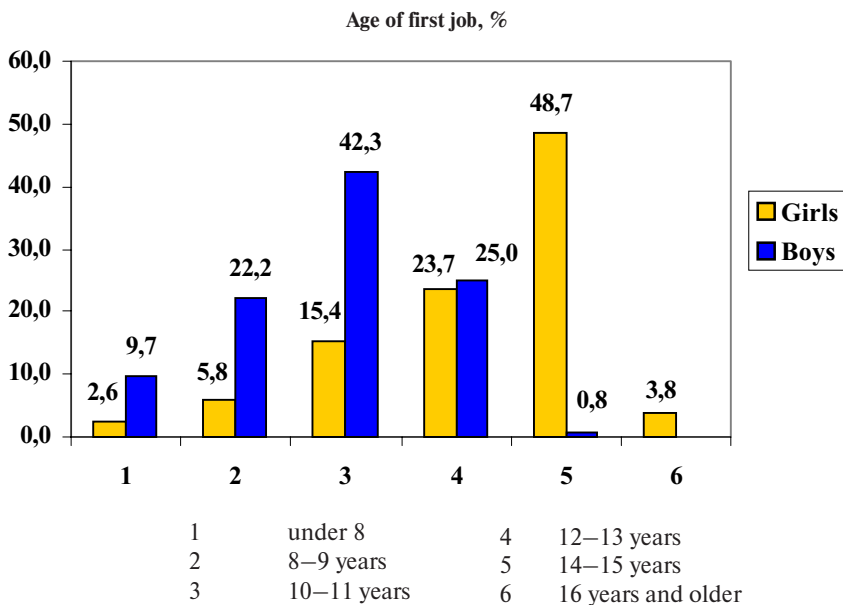
Table 4.16

Distribution of sex in age groups, %

Sex	Age group				
	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16 and up
Girls	23,8	20,4	17,4	74,1	98,4
Boys	76,2	79,6	82,6	25,9	1,6

Gender appears to determine the age when a child gets his or her first street job. In general, boys tend to take jobs earlier than girls (99,2% of boys and only 47,6% of girls had begun work before the age of 14). Some children began work at the age of 8 (9,7% of boys and 2,6% of girls). One out of four boys (22,2%) said they had worked since the age of 8–9, which was four times as often as the girls (5,8%). Over 40% of boys but only 15,4% of girls had worked since 10–11 years of age (42,3%). About half of the girls had worked since the age of 14–15 (48,7%).

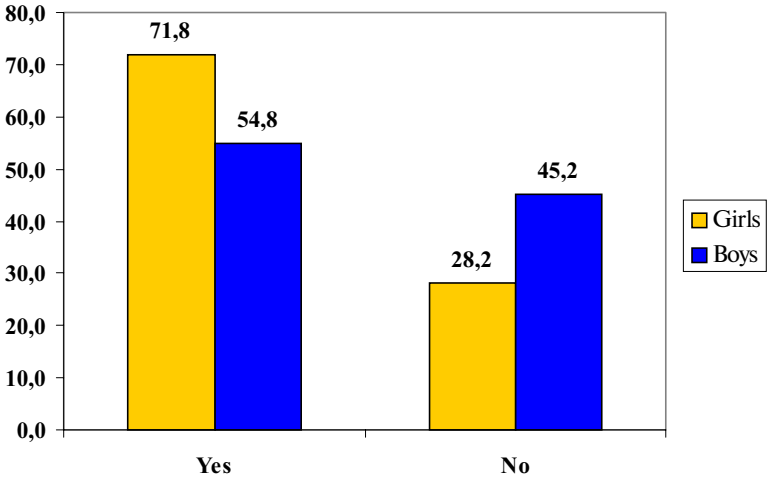
Diagram 4.3



The average working hours were longer among boys than among girls (6,3 and 5,9 hours respectively). At the same time, 71,8% of girls reported situations in which they had to work for 6–8 hours a day and about one third (39,7%) remembered they had had to work for 8–12 hours a day. The incidence of such cases was lower among boys (54,8% and 32,0% respectively) (see Diagrams 4.4, 4.5). The respondents' hours of work appear to correlate with the types of job and age. 10–13 year-old boys involved in hard manual labour are physically unable to work for 8–10 hours and longer.

Diagram 4.4

Sex distribution in answers to the question:  
 «Have you ever worked for more than 4 hours a day (6–8 hours)?», %



There is a noticeable difference between the reasons girls and boys work. The number of girls who said they worked to survive was four times higher than the number of boys (32,1% against 6,9%). Girls were more ready to admit that they worked under threat (none of the boys surveyed named threat or coercion as the cause of work). Girls were more likely to work to buy drugs (17,9%). More boys than girls said they worked to earn pocket money or wanted to buy expensive items or food. Also, more boys than girls said they worked to assist their parents (38,5%) (Diagram 4.6).

Diagram 4.5

Sex distribution in answers to the question:  
«Have you ever worked for more than 4 hours a day (8–12 hours)?», %

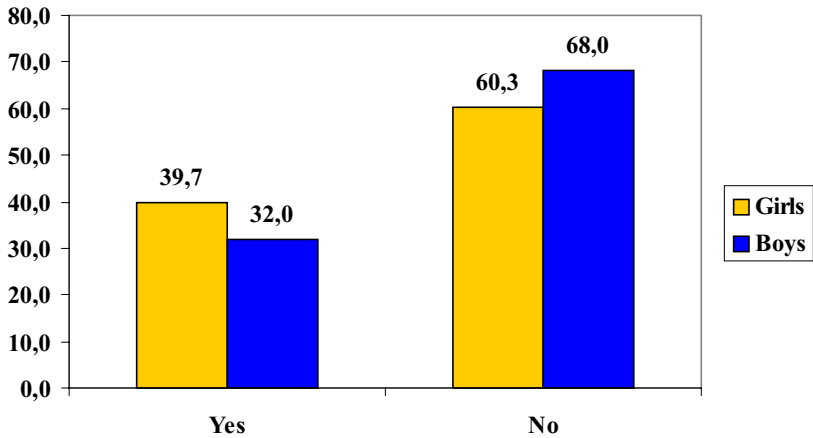
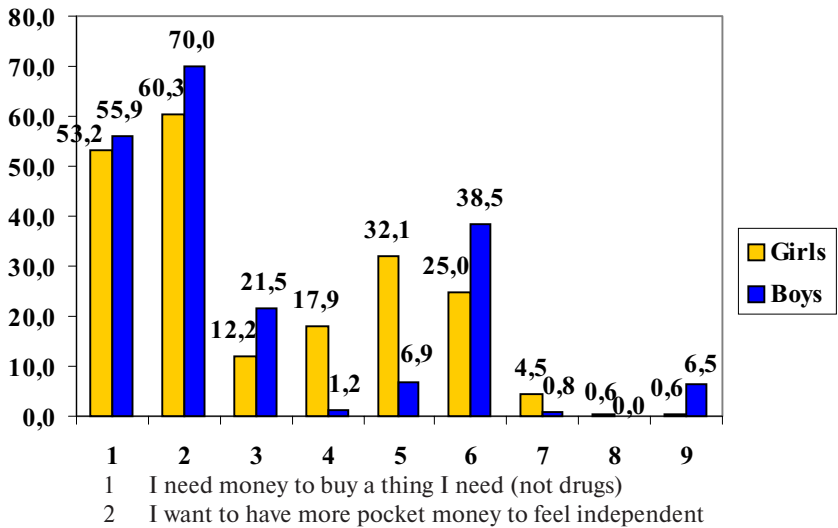


Diagram 4.6

Replies to the question: «Why do you work?», %

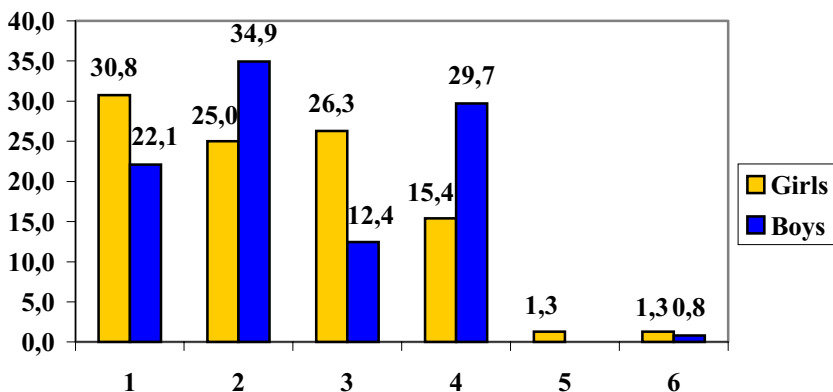


- 3 I need money to eat more (most of my earnings I spend on food)
- 4 I need money to buy drugs
- 5 I work to survive
- 6 I need money to support my parents
- 7 I need money to support my brother/sister
- 8 I am forced to work under threat
- 9 Other

Over half of working street children (55,8% of girls and 57% of boys) had no adult patrons organising their work. 41,7% of girls and 42,1% of boys worked under the supervision of an adult ‘master’. At the same time, girls working alone said they had a ‘master’ twice as often as boys (26,3% and 12,4% respectively). 19,7% of boys and 15,4% of girls working in a group with other children worked under the patronage of adults (Diagram 4.7).

Diagram 4.7

Sex distribution in answers to the questions: «Do you work for an adult manager? Who organises and oversees your work and gives you directions?», %

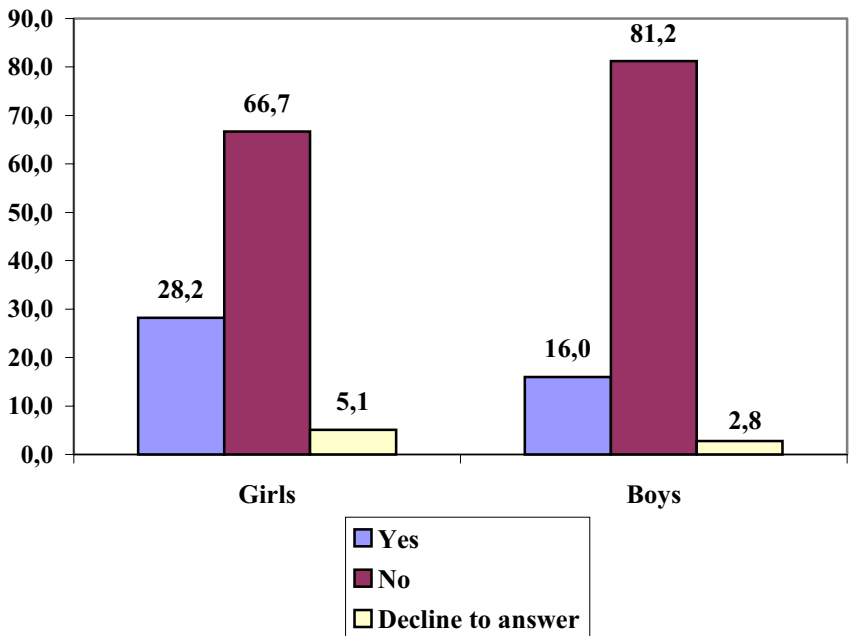


- 1 I work my own, without anybody's supervision
- 2 We work as a group, without a manager
- 3 I work on my own, but I have a manager (owner of the business)
- 4 We work as a group with a manager (owner of the business)
- 5 Other
- 6 No answer

An overwhelming majority of boys were content with the obligation to (81,2%) share earnings with adults. This proportion was somewhat lower among girls (66,7%). Approximately one girl out of four (28,2%) confessed she had been in a situation in which she had to give away some of her earnings under threat. This was predominantly the case among girls involved in prostitution. In general, 5,1% of boys and 2,8% of girls were afraid to furnish any information about this matter.

Diagram 4.8

Sex distribution in answers to the question: «Have you ever been in a situation when you had to give away under threat all or part of the money you earned?», %

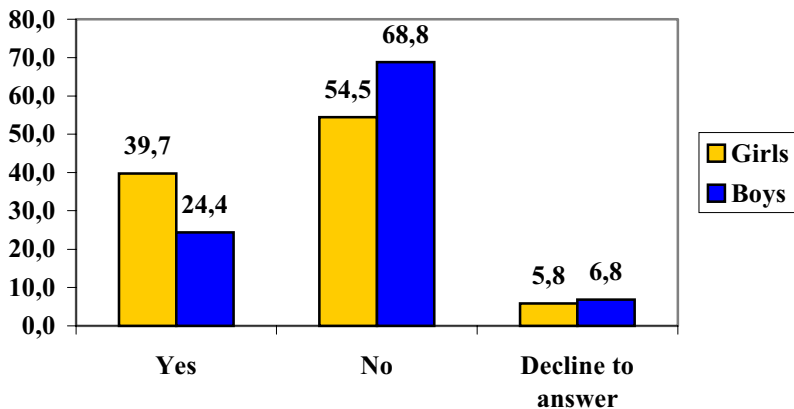


At the same time, about one half of all respondents (54,5% of girls and 68,8% of boys) had never been in a situation at work in which their life or health was in a serious danger. Girls more often than boys reported having been in situations where their life or health was at a serious risk (they were beaten or their life was threatened) — 39,7% against 24,4% respectively. Nearly

equal proportions of boys and girls declined to answer this question (5,8% of girls and 6,8% of boys).

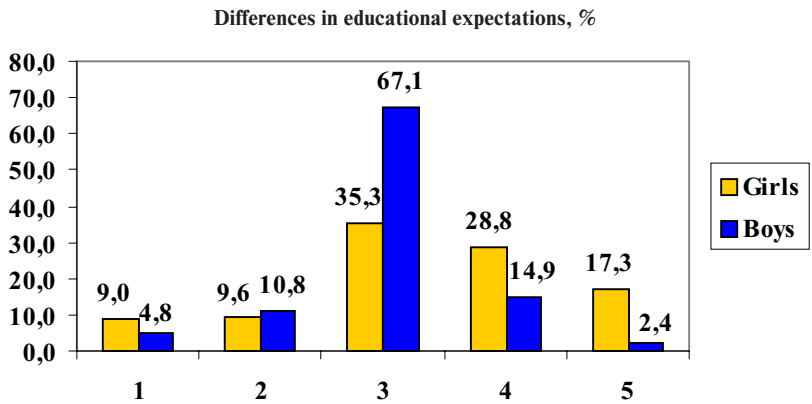
Diagram 4.9

**Sex distribution in answers to the question: «Have you ever been in a situation at work when your life/health was in danger (you were beaten or your life was seriously threatened)?», %**



Boys and girls had different attitudes towards education. In general, girls were much less interested in continuing general education and more inclined to acquire specific vocational qualifications. The share of girls not interested in any kind of education was almost two times as high as that of boys (9,0% against 4,8% respectively). Nearly 70% of boys were not only willing to continue their education but also to obtain vocational qualifications. Boys appeared more concerned about their future and the possibility of having a good job in an interesting field. Only one third of the girls (35,3%) said they wanted to obtain vocational qualifications in combination with a general school education. One out of five (17,3%) girls found it hard to answer the question while among boys this proportion was significantly lower (2,4%).





- 1 I do not want to study at all
- 2 I want to go to school only
- 3 I am ready to go to school and obtain vocational qualifications
- 4 I do not want to go to school but I would like to obtain vocational qualifications
- 5 Hard to say

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF STREET CHILD LABOUR**

### **5.1. CHILDREN'S MOTIVES FOR SEEKING WORK IN THE STREET**

Most working street children are not confronted with the work-or-die dilemma and undertake casual jobs to earn a little pocket money. The survey found that such underage workers amount to about two thirds of all young street workers (66,4%). The majority of them save money to purchase something they could not otherwise afford (55,3%). Still, for some children street work is a major, if not the only, source of income. This was the case with about one sixth of the sample (17,8%), though it was higher for certain jobs — for example, 42,9% of girls involved in prostitution. About one third of working street children work to financially assist their parents, siblings or relatives.

Children working under pressure form one of the most vulnerable groups of street labour. ILO Convention No.182 classifies forced labour as one of the worst forms of child labour, requiring immediate intervention. In the two districts of the Leningrad Region their proportion was very low (0,3%). At the same time, it was 3 times as high for certain categories of children, such as children involved in prostitution.

One important observation made was that the sample had a relatively high proportion of children addicted to drugs, especially among girls involved in prostitution. In total, the share of children spending all or part of their earnings on drugs was 8,5%. It amounted to nearly one fourth (26,7%) among children involved in prostitution (Table 5.1).

Both respondents and their employers often had similar perceptions of the causes of child labour. According to the employers, over half (61,9%) of children work because they want to have more pocket money and not because they have to earn a living. Among them, one child out of four saves money to buy an expensive thing he or she needs (23,8%). At the same time, even the employers conceded that a considerable number of street children work to survive. By their estimations this is the case with two out of five working street children (38,1%). The employers also noted that some children work to buy drugs. Yet, their estimations (4,8%) turned out to be two times lower than the answers given by children themselves.

Table 5.1

Answers to the question: «Why do you work?» (Name 2–3 reasons), %<sup>14</sup>

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
I need money to buy a thing I need (not drugs)	53,3	50,5	33,
I want to have more pocket money to feel independent	66,4	66,7	94,4
I need money to eat more (most of my earnings I spend on food)	18,3	4,8	16,7
I need money to buy drugs	8,5	26,7	5,6
I work to survive	17,8	42,9	–
I need money to support my parents	31,4	10,5	27,8
I need money to support my brother/sister	2,5	5,7	–
I am forced to work under threat	0,3	1,0	–

## 5.2. FORMS AND PLACES OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labour is mostly used in the informal sector. Officially, children are not employed, primarily because the Russian labour legislation prohibits entering into contracts with children under the age of 14 (Article 173 of the Russian Labour Code, Article 63 of the new Labour Code).<sup>15</sup> Also, in a number of sectors workers are frequently hired informally, without due registration. This is often the case with temporary jobs in trade or the service sector where all payments to workers are made in cash either daily or at the end of work.

Experts named some 30 jobs where child labour is most commonly used. During the Leningrad Region survey, street children mentioned about 40 jobs. Non-criminal jobs (different from prostitution and illicit activities) can be divided into the following categories:

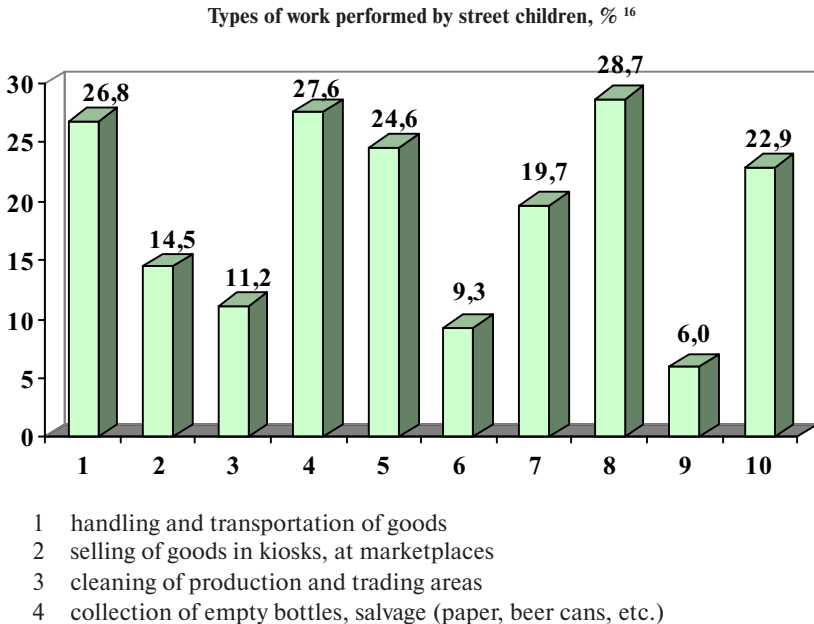
<sup>14</sup> Respondents could choose more than one answer option, so the total percentage is above 100%.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussion *infra*, in section 1 «Basic Terms and Concepts».

- **retail** (assisting street vendors, delivering and loading/unloading goods, cleaning trading areas, etc.);
- **agriculture** (weeding, gathering berries or vegetable crops, accessory work at butchers, shepherding, tending of cattle, etc.);
- **construction and finishing work** (painting, accessory work in construction of kiosks, summerhouses, sawing of timber, etc.);
- **collection of salvage** (waste paper, bottles, jars, cardboard boxes, etc.);
- **gathering and trading of natural resources** (mushrooms, fish, berries, etc.);
- **other services** (cutting firewood, washing cars, baby-sitting, guarding summerhouses, renting horses and boats in recreation areas, etc.).

The jobs most often mentioned by the children themselves were assisting street vendors, collecting salvage and performing agricultural work (Diagram 5.1).

Diagram 5.1



<sup>16</sup> Respondents could choose 2–3 answer options, so the total percentage is above 100%.

- 5 agricultural work (weeding, watering, butchery, shepherding, gathering of berries, vegetable crops, wild mushrooms, etc.)
- 6 begging
- 7 theft (non-ferrous metals, kiosks)
- 8 prostitution
- 9 drug-dealing
- 10 other

Employers said they hired children for: handling and transportation of goods (28,6%), accessory work at marketplaces, in kiosks (23,8%), weeding, hilling of crops (14,3%), baby-sitting (9,5%), cutting firewood (9,5%), accessory work in construction (4,8%), etc. Many children practise more than one odd job. For example, in addition to selling or handling goods at marketplaces some children also work as janitors there. Other common street jobs are gathering mushrooms, fishing and collection of recyclable waste. Girls involved in prostitution often combine sex services with day work in cafes, kiosks and trading zones.

While performing illegal but non-criminal jobs, children often engage in semi-legal or overtly criminal operations. For example, some respondents admitted they had stolen (burgled summerhouses, kiosks and shops), robbed (mugged drunk pedestrians), and begged. Another popular 'job' among street children was to collect, or rather steal, objects made of non-ferrous metals. The criminal world mainly uses children as drug runners, prostitutes etc. Sex services are mainly provided in private apartments, summerhouses and saunas.

Children in small centres, where even adults have scarce job opportunities (the Leningrad Region had a very high level of unemployment), tend to seek jobs in more populated areas. Bottle collectors from Priozersk district usually congregate in the village of Losevo because of the high traffic of holiday makers and transit travellers. Others seek jobs as loaders or restaurant workers at the nearby Volna shopping centre which is an attractive place for children from small villages and the town of Priozersk to gather.

Children who fail to find jobs locally come to St. Petersburg (1–1,5 hours is not considered a long way to travel to work). Most of them concentrate around railway stations (Piskarevka, Rzhevka, Kushelevka and Devyatkinov) and underground stations (Ladozhskaya and Prospekt Bolshevikov) and around Kalininskaya vegetable handling terminal. Their most common occupations are begging, petty robbery and prostitution, occasionally they perform odd

jobs at marketplaces, offer wares for sale in the street, sort vegetables and fruits at the terminal, and perform other casual non-criminal jobs.

### **5.3. CONDITIONS AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK**

As a rule, employers hire 1–3 children (52,3% of cases). Yet, in some jobs children tend to work in groups of 5, 7 and more, especially in agriculture, construction of summerhouses, etc.

Most jobs are seasonal or one-time. Only one employer out of four (23,8%) said they hired children on a permanent basis (baby-sitters, wood-processing plant work, etc.). About half of the employers surveyed (52,4%) said they hired children seasonally (unloading of watermelons, weeding and hilling of plants, guarding of summerhouses and private houses in winter, etc.). 28,6% of employers said they hired children from time to time.

Usually, children work short hours. The survey found that the average workday for children is about 6 hours. However, some children work longer (8–12 hours), especially if their employment is ‘organised’ and ‘permanent’. Generally employers acknowledge this but underestimate the frequency with which it occurs. The average workday duration, according to employers, is only 5,5 hours.

Nearly one fifth of employers (19,0%)<sup>17</sup> admitted having used children in night work, which qualifies as involvement of children in heavy work or the worst forms of labour. At the same time, 4,8% employers reported cases in which they had to use corporal punishment for various faults.<sup>18</sup>

Long hours of work are not the only hazard to the health of street children. There is the risk of injury and disease caused by lifting heavy weights, neglecting to take protective measures in the workplace, and abuse by employers and other persons. Children involved in prostitution and criminal activities suffer not only physically, but also psychologically, by performing jobs destructive to their morals.

When asked about the difficulty of their work, most children did not complain. However, nearly half of the children surveyed (45,5%) admitted that their work was tiring, and 7,7% said their work was exhausting. At the same time, children involved in prostitution and criminal activities answered this question quite differently from each other (Table 5.2).

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<sup>17</sup> 81% of the employers surveyed claimed they had never used children in night work.

<sup>18</sup> About the same proportion of employers (4,8%) declined to answer the question concerning corporal punishment.

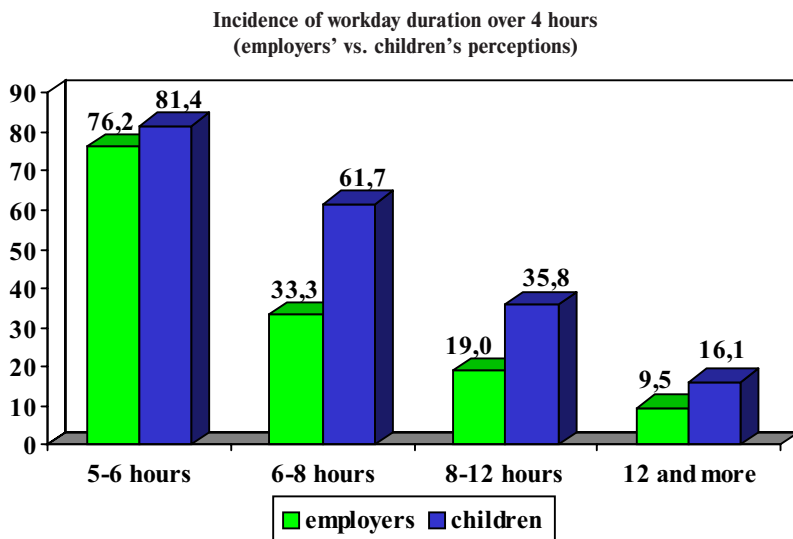


Table 5.2

Answers to the question: «How hard is your work?», %

Answer option	All children	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in criminal activities
It is easy for me to work. I never get tired.	54,5	41,9	88,9
My work is hard but tolerable.	37,8	49,5	11,1
I get tired soon and it is hard for me to hang on.	7,7	8,6	—

#### 5.4. REMUNERATION

Most of the children surveyed said the main form of remuneration they received was money. In some cases, though, children also received bonuses in the form of items of personal use, food, alcohol and cigarettes. Remuneration in the form of food was most commonly given to children working in retail sales. Children involved in illegal business and prostitution were often paid in alcohol, cigarettes and drugs in addition to money (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3

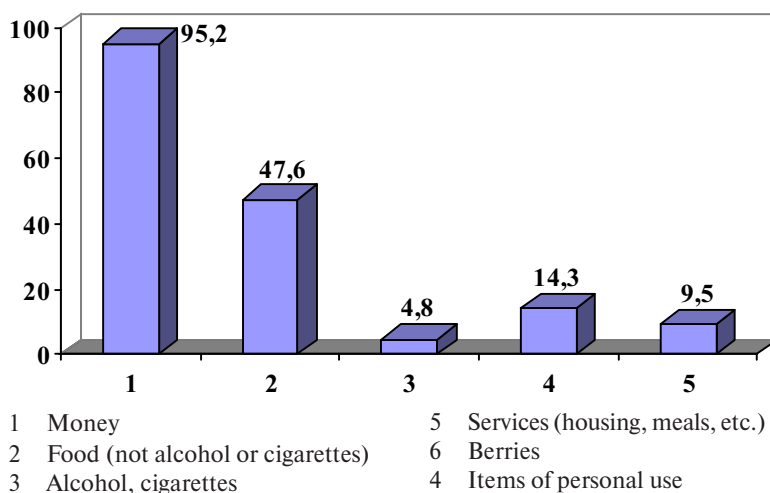
Forms of remuneration, %<sup>19</sup>

Remuneration	All children	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
Money	99,2	100,0	100,0
Food (not alcohol or cigarettes)	20,2	—	5,6
Alcohol, cigarettes	8,8	22,9	11,1
Items of personal use	4,1	1,9	—
Drugs	6,9	21,0	16,7
Other	5,5	17,1	5,6

Employers also said money was the main form of remuneration used to pay their children. In addition, they also mentioned food, berries (for children gathering berries), services (housing, meals, etc.). At the same time, only 4,8% of employers mentioned alcohol and cigarettes (Diagram 5.3).

Diagram 5.3

Employers answers to the question: «How do you usually pay children working for you?», %



<sup>19</sup> Respondents could choose 2–3 answer options, so the total percentage is above 100%.



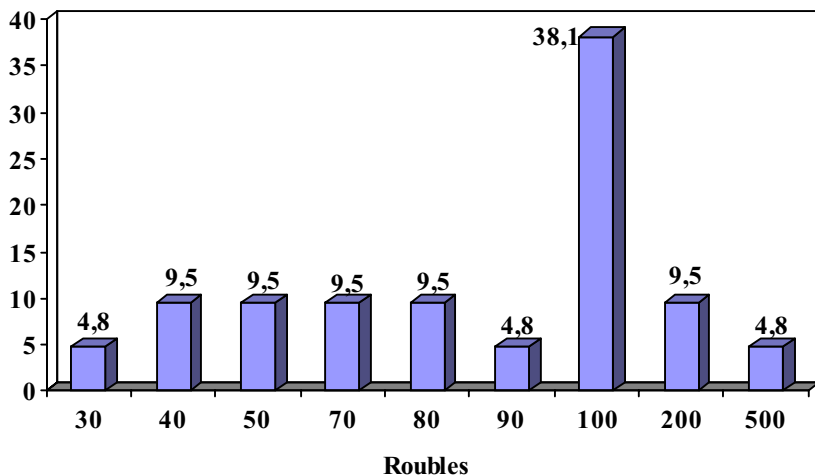
Pay levels vary considerably depending on the type of occupation, functions (legal or illegal) and on other factors. Prostitution and criminal activities appear to be the most lucrative occupations, with daily earnings starting at 200 roubles. Most children in this category earned between 200 and 400 roubles daily (85,7%). 14,3% of them even claimed they earned 4,000 roubles daily. Most children involved in prostitution reported daily earnings between 150 and 500 roubles (71,4%), 22% cited sums less than 150 roubles and only a few said they earned between 600 and 1,500 roubles daily.

Non-criminal jobs were generally far less profitable. The majority of children surveyed said they made between 50 and 100 roubles a day. Some said their daily earnings were only between 10 and 45 roubles (7,9% of the sample).

Employers and children evaluated the rates of pay differently. The most common sum cited by employers was 100 roubles (Diagram 5.4).

Diagram 5.4

Employers' answers to the question: «What are the average daily earnings of the children working for you (including in-kind remuneration)?», %



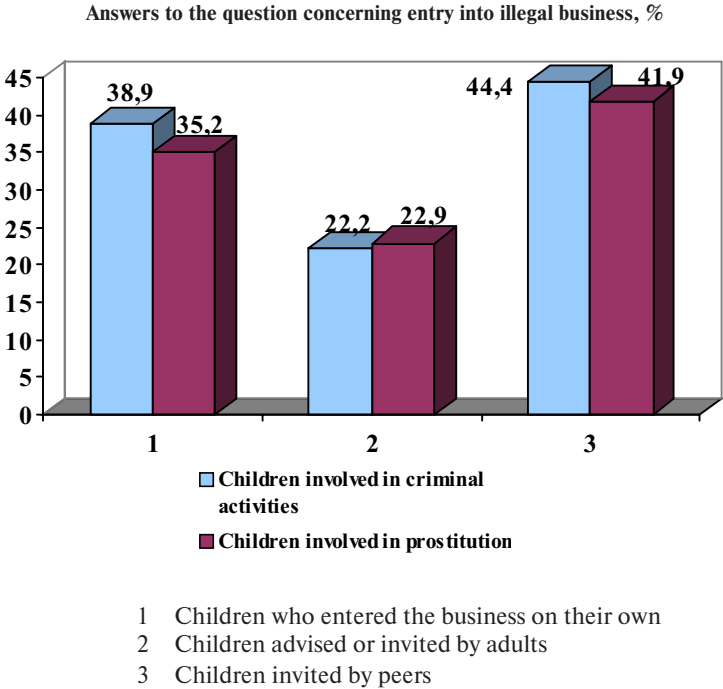
### 5.5. ROLE OF ADULTS IN EMPLOYMENT OF STREET CHILDREN

Most children find work on their own (34,7%) or through peers, adult acquaintances or relatives (42,0%). About 5,7% of the children surveyed had

been sent to their jobs by parents. More often children were advised or invited to work at a certain place by their adult relatives or families they knew (15,3%). Employment of 12,3% of the children had been brokered by casual adult acquaintances. Only a small minority of children (1,6%) found jobs through ads placed in the street or on doors to apartment blocks, or from teachers.

Totally different ways to find jobs are used by children involved in prostitution and criminal activities. Nearly one child out of three was criminalised by adults or peers. Diagram 5.5 shows how children become involved in prostitution and criminal activities.

Diagram 5.5



In the majority of cases, street children work without an adult manager. No matter whether their activities are controlled by an adult manager or not, children prefer to work in groups. Group work makes it easier to find jobs and resist threats. In some jobs, group work is indispensable. This is less so for girls

involved in prostitution (64,7% of them work on their own). At the same time, two out of five children involved in illegal businesses (41,2%) said they worked in a group with an adult manager. Table 5.4 shows data on the participation of adults in the work of street children.

Table 5.4

**Replies to the questions: «Do you work for an adult manager? Who organises and versees your work and gives you dorections?», %**

Answer options	All respondents	Children involved in prostitution	Children involved in other criminal activities
No, I work on my own	26,3	39,0	29,4
We work as a group, without a manager	32,3	24,8	23,5
I work on my own, but I have a manager (business owner)	17,5	25,7	—
We work as a group with a manager	22,2	6,7	41,2
Other	0,5	1,9	—
Declined to answer	1,1	1,9	5,9

One third of the experts were sure it was employers who were chiefly interested in exploiting child labour, primarily because it is cheap (children are paid low wages and can easily be dismissed or replaced). Another 13% believed that it was parents, especially in dysfunctional families, who wanted to exploit child labour. However, the majority of experts (46,7%) felt it was the children who were interested in working in the first place, because street work enabled them to sustain themselves and often was their only source of income.

Employers tended to view child labour as a positive phenomenon. The main argument they used to support this opinion was that street jobs enable children to earn a living. Besides, employers said, children learn to appreciate the value of labour rather than idleness, and stay under the supervision of adults. Street labour can be the salvation of children living apart from their families; their only alternative is institutionalisation. However, increasingly permanent employment precludes children from receiving a proper education and, more importantly, affects their morals, social attitudes and physical health. For these reasons, the majority of employers tend to view child labour as a grave social problem.

## **6. GOVERNMENT AND NGO RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF STREET CHILDREN**

### **6.1. FEDERAL POLICY TOWARDS SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF CHILDREN**

In Russia, the protection of the rights and lawful interests of children is a part of the overall federal social policy. It consists of a system of measures aimed at securing basic priorities related to the well being of children and adolescents.<sup>20</sup> The National Action Plan for Children reflects these national priorities, such as a commitment to human values and a democratic, law-abiding state. It corresponds to a number of international instruments, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 128) and others.

To meet the demands of the most challenged children, Presidential Decree no. 1969 of 18 August 1994 started the «Children of Russia» presidential programme.

The goal of the federal policy is to reverse negative trends in the situation of children, stabilise their condition and create conditions in which the younger generations can receive better support. To this end, the following policy priorities were selected:

- *strengthening legal support to children and adolescents;*
- *providing education and development services to children and adolescents;*
- *providing support services to children at risk;*
- *regulating underage employment.*

A number of policy decisions and practical measures are required to achieve these priorities.

Despite some vigorous efforts to provide a legislative ‘safety net’ for children’s rights in the recent years, current legislation still contains provisions that do not take into account the social and economic challenges of the transition period and cannot effectively protect children from their impact.

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<sup>20</sup> National Action Plan for Children — «State Policy Guidelines Towards the Amelioration of the Situation of Children in the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2000», approved by presidential decree no. 942, 14 September 1995.

Despite its statutory prohibition, employment of children under 14 has become widespread, especially in the trade and service sectors and certain production industries. It is also widely practised by criminal and semi-criminal gangs. Especially vulnerable are children without parental care. Street children are easy prey to unfair businesses and the world of crime. Having no legal protection against economic exploitation, children engage in jobs endangering their health, impairing their physical and moral development and that bar their access to education.

One reason why child labour is becoming more prevalent is that employers show disregard for labour laws not only with regard to children, but also to adults. Current legislation provides limited protection of children and adolescents against infringements on their security, attempts upon life and degrading treatment. Violence, inappropriate education, intimidation and coercion are on the rise not only in the family, but also in schools and at workplaces. Currently, there is no greater legal culpability for criminalisation of children and adolescents.

Protection of children's rights by the Russian legal system is undermined by weak enforcement mechanisms and a multiplicity of complicated and often contradictory departmental regulations and instructions. Another concern is the lack of awareness of legal rights and knowledge about legislation protecting children and family among parents, educators, social workers and children themselves.

Therefore, to comply with the provisions of the United Nations and ILO Conventions and Russian Constitution that safeguard the rights of children and adolescents, current legislation should be amended and new legislation added to provide as follows:

- job quotas for underage employees at enterprises; tax and compensation benefits for enterprises employing underage workers;
- enforcement of labour legislation through increased control over employer policies concerning remuneration of underage workers, application of statutory norms related to occupational safety and health, working conditions, etc;
- stringent sanctions against employment of children under 14, especially in the case of workplace accidents and other damage to the health of underage workers;
- an effective juvenile justice system and juvenile courts;
- increased criminal responsibility for involvement of minors in production,

circulation and marketing of pornographic productions, prostitution, use of narcotic substances and alcohol.

- an adequate correctional system for juvenile offenders; employment procedures for adolescents released from correctional institutions, etc.

The education system has an important role to play. However, the Russian education system is plagued by a host of problems that arose during the transition from state planning and control to more diverse providers of education. As a result of this transition, some 1,5 million school-age children are now outside the school system, about one third of the students have personality disorders, and the crumbling schools are struggling with a critical shortage of funds.

The adoption of a new education package in 1994–1995 resulted in a relative stabilisation and showed future pathways for education. This progress was strengthened by further regulatory steps, among them 4 presidential decrees, over 25 government resolutions and the long-awaited Model Regulations on General Schools for Orphaned Children and Children Without Parental Care. With the adoption of Presidential Decree no. 1487 «On Guarantees of the Right to Education for Citizens of the Russian Federation» issued on July 8, 1994, it became possible to significantly reduce social tension caused by high school enrolment issues. Government Decree no. 407 «On Priority Measures in Support of Education in Russia» projects the steps needed to support the education system in times of economic instability.

Further, the government came up with a federal programme on the development of education, which has already entered its implementation stage. A document on educational policy drafted by the State Council of Russia specifies measures to be taken in order to achieve stabilisation and further development of the education service. The document also includes social support measures for school students. A set of special programmes, among them «Gifted Children» and «Children of Russia», has been designed to meet the challenge of helping children to reach their intellectual and physical potential, amidst today's social and economic realities.

Another strategy adopted in response to the problem of working street children is laid down in the federal targeted programme «Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency», approved by Government Decree no. 906 on June 27, 1996. The programme aims to create a public system for the

prevention of child neglect and juvenile delinquency, and improve the legislative and methodological bases for these activities.

The education policy of the state is regulated by the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the Law on Education and other federal and regional laws and bylaws. These documents establish the functions of and the division of powers between federal and regional legislature and executive organs, as well as the capacities of local administrations in the area of education.

The primary goal of the government policy in the area of education and development of minors is to create conditions in which children's potentials are revealed, and individual educational needs are met in the best possible way under the current economic situation.

This goal requires a number of essential objectives to be achieved:

- stronger government guarantees of accessible and free-of-charge pre-school, general education, and initial vocational training;
- prevention of juvenile delinquency, child neglect and violence to children;
- provision of support measures for adaptation and development of the least protected groups;
- provision of training services with a consistent focus on skills, competencies and attitudes that ensure a trainee's competitive entry to the job market (preferably locally), broad general and professional outlook and independent thinking.
- re-creation and development of human resources for the whole community;
- introduction of per capita funding of education providers; multi-level and multi-source funding, mobilisation of extra-budgetary sources of funding.

Russian labour legislation prohibits employment of children under the age of 14. Because of that, all street labourers under this age are employed illegally and do not enter into labour agreements. This precludes the state from using labour inspections and other responsible agencies to exercise supervision over their working conditions and serves to explain why employers frequently disregard the rights and interests of working street children.

According to expert estimates, even in the case of children of 14 years old and up, violations are not infrequent. In 1998 only, the Russian Labour Inspection detected over 8 thousand such violations.

The most frequent types of violations are:

- Employment of persons under the age of 21 in enterprises without due medical examination, failure to conduct regular medical examinations of underage workers annually or failure to conduct medical examinations at the expense of the employer as required by the Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Legislation, Art. 176 («Medical Examinations of Young Persons»);
- Admission of minors to work without the issuance of a required circular; failure to administer due training and instruction in occupational safety, failure to provide protective clothing and equipment, non-issuance of personal employment record cards to underage employees as required by Article 18 of the Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Federation («Labour Agreements/Contracts») and breach of other norms governing procedures of admission to and documentation of employment.
- Entry testing upon employment of minors in violation of Article 21 Part 3 of Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Federation («Testing upon Employment»);
- Failure to establish shorter work hours for underage employees; engagement of underage employees into overtime work in violation of Articles 43 («Reduced Work Hours for Workers under the Age of 18») and 54 («Restrictions on Overtime Work») of the Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Federation;
- Frequent use of adolescent employees in heavy and hazardous jobs as well as jobs that may be destructive to their moral development in violation of Article 175 of the Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Federation («Restricted Occupations»);
- Provision of paid leaves shorter than 31 calendar days to underage employees in violation of Article 178 of the Code of Labour Laws of the Russian Federation («Paid Leaves for Employees under the Age 18»).

In addition, employers tend to violate general provisions of labour and Occupational Safety and Health legislation, regardless of workers' ages or gender. The most frequent types of violations are: wage arrears, non-payment of compensation for injuries at work, failure to comply with work and rest requirements, disrespect for work safety and hygiene regulations, etc.

Violations of adolescents' labour rights as a result of disregard for current legislation can be effectively countered under the framework of the General



Agreement between all-Russian trade union associations, employer associations and the federal and regional governments, as well as through regional and industrial agreements which should contain mechanisms for the enforcement of the rights of underage employees. There should be a stronger legislative focus on sanctions against disregard for adolescents' rights at work and employment of minors in jobs that are hazardous for their physical, mental and social development, especially in small businesses. More attention should be given to underage employment in targeted social programmes.

## **6.2. REGIONAL POLICY TOWARDS THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF THE CHILD**

The protection of rights and interests of the child in the Leningrad Region is governed by a body of federal and regional policy documents and a number of international convention and norms. The basic policy documents providing for the fundamental rights of children as citizens of Russia are the Constitution and the Civil Code and several federal laws, such as «On Employment of Population in the Russian Federation», «On Education», «On Government Allowances to Citizens with Children», «On the System for the Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency», «On Further Social Guarantees for the Protection of Orphaned Children and Children without Parental Care» and others. Regulations and other bylaws issued by the Russian government, its Ministries and departments, and a number of comprehensive targeted programmes protect in practical terms the legitimate rights of children.

Prevention of child neglect is a common task of government social protection agencies, education authorities, child care departments, health departments, employment agencies, law enforcement agencies and youth departments.

Prevention activities are co-ordinated by the Board for Minors under the Governor of the Leningrad Region. Its main responsibility is to maintain liaisons among all specialised departments concerned with children and adolescents and its mandate is to protect their rights and prevent delinquency.

The Leningrad Region consists of 29 municipalities. Each municipality has a Board for Minors and Protection of Their Rights. In addition, 8 government-funded Boards for Minors with permanent staff and 106

community-based Boards function in remote localities such as villages and volosti (rural districts).

This system of prevention of child neglect and juvenile delinquency is constantly monitored by the regional government; on-going activities are placed on the agenda of specialised government committees, co-ordination meetings are held between law enforcement agencies, government committees and municipal departments and their heads, municipal councils, administrative councils at village- and volost- level and interdepartmental seminars.

Components on street children are included into some of the on-going regional programmes, particularly:

- «Development of Education in the Leningrad Region»;
- «Pathways for Youth Policy»;
- «Family»;
- «Promotion of Employment»;
- «Programme on Recreation, Health and Employment of Children in 2001»;
- «Disabled Children»;
- «Guidelines for Prevention of Deviant Behaviour among Young People»;
- «Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Education and Sports in the Leningrad Region in 2001–2005»;
- «Culture in the Leningrad Region in 2001–2005»;
- «Programme on the Development of the Public Children’s Clinic in 2001–2005».

The regional public education service is currently implementing a series of so-called ‘concept programmes’:

- «Rural Schools»;
- «Education»;
- «Primary Vocational Education»;
- «Special-Needs (Corrective) Education»;
- «Psychological and Moral Support to Development».

Meeting the requirements of the federal law «On the System for the Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency», municipalities have come up with a series of programmes aimed at countering child neglect and preventing juvenile delinquency, detecting and treating alcoholism among children and adolescents, and a series of comprehensive targeted programmes on juvenile delinquency.

Following the Resolution of the regional government «On Operation Adolescence» issued on 13 September 1994, four phases of the operation are carried out in the region each year. These are:

1. «**Contingent**» (15 February through 15 March);
2. «**Family**» (1 April through 30 April);
3. «**Summer**» (1 June through 31 August);
4. «**Employment**» (15 September through 31 October).

The goals of the operation are laid down in the Federal Law «On the System for the Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency». They include:

- promoting social justice and lawful interests of minors, enabling minors requiring special intervention by the state to increase their participation in social and economic activities; creating a supportive environment for personal growth and education as well as prevention of crime;
- fostering cohesion and co-operation between elements of the government system for the prevention of child neglect and juvenile delinquency.

In 2001, the Family phase of the operation detected 4936 neglected minors who were subsequently registered at social protection agencies. In 2000, 6,002 such minors were detected. Among the children registered in 2001,

- 17% were under 7 years old;
- 46% were between 7 and 14 years old;
- 37% were between 14 and 18 years old.

88 neglected children were institutionalised during the operation.

The Family phase also provided accurate information for the data bank of families at social risk. By 1 May 2001, 11,012 such endangered families and 17,738 children living in these families were registered.

In addition, this phase of the operation revealed families who provided insufficient parental care for their children and required intervention. In particular, procedures to sever parental rights were started against 151 parents. Also, it was found that the children of 53 parents required institutionalisation, 247 alcoholic parents required voluntary treatment, and another 27 parents had limited legal capacities. 63 criminal cases were started against parents, 22 of them in relation to child abuse.

By 1 April 2001, the Leningrad Region Police Department had registered 4,299 parents and guardians with anti-social behaviour (5,249 in 2000).

In 2001, Boards for Minors and public organizations conducted 449 joint inspections, revealing 283 adolescents who required intervention on the part of the state. As a result, 131 adolescents were institutionalised. In total 2,817 persons participated in the operation, among them 844 law enforcement officers, 1,666 representatives of specialised departments and organizations and 307 citizens.

To provide adequate assistance to neglected children and children without parental care (including working street children), the Region is building and strengthening a system of institutions for children and parents in need of public intervention.

Currently, the Region has a network of residential child centres, comprising:

- 8 family and child social assistance centres;
- 7 social rehabilitation centres;
- 5 social shelters for minors;
- 1 centre for children left without parental care.

The new facilities opened in 2001 are:

- a social rehabilitation centre for minors in Vsevolozhsk district municipality,
- a social shelter at the Family and Child Social Assistance Centre in Lomonosov district municipality,
- a child neglect prevention department in Kingisepp district municipality.

Specialised institutions for minors are planned to be opened in 2001–2002 in Gatchina and Shlisselburg and in Kirovsk and Boksitogorsk district municipalities.

New approaches to social rehabilitation are being introduced by the social protection services, among them:

- family education groups;
- summer placement of children in families;
- employment of parents in shelters.

An important new ingredient of prevention work is the family education group. Institutionalised children move in with the families of their educators, but no official placement occurs. The children remain entitled to permanent supervision by the social service of their institution, which pays the educator a salary and child allowance. To-date, 90 children have been placed in family education groups.

The regional government gives special attention to the professional development of staff at social rehabilitation institutions for minors. In the

year 2000, the professional development package in the «Family» programme amounted to 80,000 roubles while in the first half of 2001 it amounted to 45,000 roubles. A regional conference on «Neglected Children and Adolescents: Primary Concerns» is scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2001.

Each municipal department dealing with social protection in the Region has a database of foster families, refugee families, dysfunctional families, children at risk, children registered by social protection agencies and their parents, and assistance provided to people in these categories, as well as other relevant information.

Another important aspect of the social protection agencies' work is organization of summer holiday camps and recreational activities for children.

The regional government issues annual decrees «On Summertime Health Care, Recreation and Employment of Children and in the Summer». Similar regulations are adopted by heads of municipalities. In these activities, priority is given to orphans, children left without parental care, disabled children, deviant children and children from low-income families.

Recreation decrees are implemented by the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Committee for Summertime Recreation, Health Care and Employment of Children and Adolescents that makes weekly visits to municipalities to provide practical support. The Committee's results are then finalised by municipal administrations. Each Committee member has a personal responsibility for an individual aspect of the programme.

In 2000, the Leningrad Region social protection agencies ran about 1,000 summer camps, among them:

- 152 health camps for 10,436 children and adolescents from socially disadvantaged families;
- 699 health camps for 95,970 children under the General and Professional Education Committee;
- 33 health camps for 2,565 adolescents and young people under the Committee for Youth, Physical Education, Sports and Tourism;
- 34 health camps with medical programmes for 3,354 children with health disorders under the Healthcare Committee;
- 17 residential health camps for children and adolescents between 6 and 15 years old (run by factories and farms jointly with the regional Social Insurance Fund).

An additional 250 camps for children from rural areas and 21 camps for police-registered adolescents were set up in response to the needs of the regional community.

In the summer of 2000, these health camps accommodated 72,275 children from socially disadvantaged families, among them 36,435 children from single-parent families and families with many children, 8,200 orphans and children deprived of parental care, 3,115 physically challenged children, 833 children with disabilities and 6,677 police-registered adolescents (7063% of all adolescents under permanent police supervision).

A part of the educational strategy of the Leningrad Region is to set up temporary jobs for children aged 15 and up. In 2001, 61,800 children were employed in work teams, training farms and 'pilot businesses'; 5,214 jobs were given to police-registered adolescents; 8,900 adolescents were given jobs in family businesses.

An important innovation of the 2001 summer season was diversification of recreation services for various categories of children. 983 health camps were established for 100,820 children against 950 in 2000. 271,150 adolescents got temporary jobs. In addition, the Health Care Committee established 40 health camps that ran medical programmes for children with health problems and another 33 camps were established by industrial and agricultural businesses jointly with the Russian Social Insurance Fund.

The Leningrad Region branch of the Russian Social Insurance Fund allocated funds for daily meals of 45,700 children in day-care health camps based in regional schools and residential camp subsistence for 1,900 institutionalised orphans, children with disabilities and children from socially disadvantaged families.

On the municipal level, social protection agencies accommodated 8,405 children in day-care health camps and 3,006 children in residential health camps; 400 children were placed in local health resorts. Summer recreation and treatment was provided to 300 clients of social shelters and 30 children with disabilities, the latter jointly with a city coalition of parents of disabled children. 400 children from low-income families were sent to residential health camps, 2,700 children received free daily meals and 1,700 children from remote localities received food packages. 300 pre-school children were placed in specialised summer camps and 5,800 families received clothes and other assistance.

The «Employment» phase of Operation Adolescence aims to provide social and legal assistance to minors who do not study or work. It consists of gathering information about children who do not show up in secondary and vocational schools in September, and have no employment.

In 2000, the operation detected 2,426 families with parents neglecting their children's education. 2,616 of them received various forms of assistance, including:

- school re-entry (526 children);
- transfer to general and specialised boarding-schools (57 children);
- institutionalisation (141 children without parental care);
- placement in social shelters (72 children);
- re-entry in vocational schools across the Region (170 children);
- transfer to special school for deviant adolescents (13 children with criminal record).

Unemployed adolescents aged 15 and up can take advantage of individual job counselling. In 2000, employment centres found jobs for 755 adolescents. Each employment was supervised by child-care agencies with regard to the young workers' rights.

The Leningrad Region has an established system to monitor the realisation of children's and adolescents' rights and effective mechanisms for sanctioning violators. Inspections carried during 2000 resulted in the following punitive measures against persons breaching children's rights:

- Administrative sanctions were applied to 21 officials responsible for violations of rights of minors;
- 728 parental cases were brought before Boards for Minors;
- 732 parents were registered by law enforcement agencies;
- 133 parents were deprived of parental rights for failure to provide adequate care to their children, and 281 children were institutionalised or adopted.

As a result of the Employment phase of Operation Adolescence, the education authorities were advised to:

- report unauthorised non-attendance and school leaves. In 2000, schools registered 1,795 children who had no parental supervision, were absent from studies, failed to prepare homework, etc.;
- introduce courses and curricula promoting respect for the law;
- identify socially challenged families and assist them in educating their children;

- give children access to extra-curricular activities and clubs (sports, science and other);
- promote various types of summer camp recreation among police-registered adolescents.

An important way to help children at risk is to give them temporary jobs. As a part of the Employment Promotion Programme for the Leningrad Region, the regional department of the Federal Employment Service offers assistance to adolescents who want to find jobs. This requires negotiation of the scope of work, programme coverage and the expected cost structure between the service, municipal administrations, relevant departments and employers.

In 1999 the employment service helped employers to create 6,222 jobs for children aged 15 and up, in 2000 — 10,138 jobs and in the first half of 2001 — 9,935 jobs. Priority was given to orphaned children, children deprived of parental care, adolescents registered by Boards for Minors and children from families without parental income.

The efforts made by all the executive agencies involved in the prevention of child neglect and juvenile delinquency resulted in a sufficient reduction in juvenile crime statistics, namely:

- 1,63% reduction of juvenile crimes;
- 5,6% reduction in the number of juveniles acting as associates in crimes;
- 1,5% decrease in the proportion of crimes committed by juveniles.

The positive trend continued in the first 6 months of 2001. In particular, the following crime indicators continued to decrease:

- juvenile crimes (–12,8%);
- juvenile participation in crimes (–23,3%);
- juvenile recidivism (–31,5%);
- registration of juveniles by Boards for Minors (–39,5%).

Stabilisation was achieved largely due to close co-operation between committees and departments in the implementation of Operation Adolescence. In addition to permanent monitoring, public services detect and sanction causes of unlawful behaviour, provide social assistance to families and educational, medical, rehabilitation and employment services to children.



The Government of the Leningrad Region considers that sports and physical education have an important place in the overall prevention work.

On March 22, 2001 the government adopted the regional programme «Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Education and Sports in the Leningrad Region in 2001–2005». The programme aims to create a supportive environment for healthy lifestyles, and to contribute to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and drug addiction in the region. Implementation of the programme is backed by 33,8% of the total regional prevention package.

In 2001, physical education and sports received 4,5 times more regional funds than in the previous year. The total physical education and sports budget amounted to 25,901,000 roubles. Three new athletic schools will be opened in 2001 (in Volosovo, Kirovsk and Lomonosov) and the network of community- and school-based health and sports clubs for adolescents will continue to expand.

In 2001, the regional government allocated 150,000 roubles to support five municipalities in opening community athletic teen clubs. In 2001, the government will co-invest funds in the construction of three athletic facilities in Priozersk, Lodeynoye Pole and Vyborg. The total government contribution to these projects will amount to 7,5 million roubles. Five such projects with a total contribution of 11,5 million roubles are planned for 2002.

A series of sub-programmes are being put in place to promote involvement in various sports (track-and-field, swimming, cycling, badminton, callisthenics, judo, skiing and figure skating). The skiing sub-programme aims at a tenfold increase in the number of skiers, primarily children and adolescents.

New athletic events are organised to attract more children to healthy recreation. In 2001, the first Youth Games, a festival of 16 sports, were held. The contest proved extremely successful in attracting children aged 12–16 to active sports. Other popular contests, such as «Leather Ball», «Golden Puck», «Merry Dolphin», «White Rook», «Wonder Checkers», attract over 10,000 participants each year.

In 2001, over 800,000 roubles were allocated to popular competitions among teen clubs, double the amount allotted in the previous year. In total, there are 45 athletic schools for 40.5 thousand children functioning in 23 municipalities. 9 municipalities have 39 teen athletic clubs and 45 staff servicing 2,703 children.

At the end of the programmes, each district will have an athletic school, with a total of 51 thousand children involved.

With a view to more efficient implementation of the law «On the System of Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency», the following priorities were set before the regional cultural organizations and institutions:

- expansion of the student population in colleges of arts and humanities to 30 thousand and more (in over 100 children's arts schools and the regional Culture and Arts College);
- recreation services for children and adolescents through a wide system of amateur clubs (over 120 thousand children);
- involvement of children in literature clubs and regional public libraries (196 thousand readers under 14 years; 117 thousand readers aged 15–20 years);
- closer co-operation between cultural organizations and institutions and education authorities in servicing children and adolescents in summer holiday camps;
- outreach activities in children's homes and boarding schools for orphaned children (musical education, performances, etc.);
- production of shows for children and adolescents at regional theatres; tours and the annual theatre festival «St. Petersburg Palaces [Open Doors] to Children»;
- organised tours for children in local historical museums and galleries;
- diversification of educational services for police-registered adolescents in co-ordination with law enforcement agencies and other stakeholders.

The problem of child neglect and child vagrancy is also addressed by a number of international projects and programmes. For example, Vyborg municipality is implementing a joint Russian-Finnish training programme on drug prevention for specialists working with children and young people. A UNICEF project is underway, aiming to select district- and town-level leadership who are expected to come up with new safe recreational activities. Other initiatives include the social programmes «Family», «Street Children» and «Coast». Active prevention work is carried out by «Dikkon», a charity foundation for protection of children that provides free meals, educational and medical services to 60–80 adolescents each month. The foundation also offers temporary shelters and crisis counselling services.

A new form of social aid to children without parental care and orphaned children is now being piloted. The Mayor of Sosnovy Bor issued a decree according to which several orphaned children are to be transferred to military units where they will receive education and military training. The decision was taken in accordance with a number of federal regulations, namely Article 24 of the Law «On the System of Prevention of Child Neglect and Juvenile Delinquency», Government Decree no. 124 «On the Approval of Regulations Concerning the Admission of Underage Citizens of the Russian Federation to Education in Military Units and the Provision of Their Daily Allowances», Government Decree no. 745 «On the Approval of Regulations Concerning the Status of Children Receiving Education in Military Units.»

## **7. EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES AGAINST CHILD LABOUR**

### **7.1 EXTERNAL CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR**

According to the experts involved in the study, unhealthy family life and economic deprivation are the principal reasons for the emergence of street children and subsequently child labour in the Leningrad Region.

Strained by financial difficulties, families cannot cope with the increasing demands of their children and sometimes even fail to provide them with adequate nutrition. This appears to be the main reason why children look for their own sources of income.

In socially disadvantaged, alcoholic or morally bankrupt families, pecuniary challenges are often coupled with destructive dynamics in the relationships. These factors combine to spur children into the street, temporarily or permanently, leading them to a vagrant existence, prompted too early to make independent decisions. Economic hardships and family dysfunction can therefore be named as the main causes of child labour.

Another important cause mentioned by the experts is the overall social and economic situation of the last decade. The crisis of the 1990s resulted in a degradation of the nation, manifested by rising inequality, a decline in the standard of living, insecurity, sweeping criminalisation of life and a resulting disintegration of community values, decline of social cohesion and the usual social standards, weakening of public regulation, and decrease in solidarity. This weakens and distorts the primary socialisation of children. Today's street children are in many ways a by-product of the transition period.

The last in the hierarchy of causes of child labour named by the experts were the effects of the media and education providers. The positive (or negative) impact of these public institutions on child labour in the Leningrad Region is believed to be minimal.

Therefore, underlying the tendency of children to look for various, often illegal, sources of income, is a range of economic, moral and psychological challenges associated with a general lack of social security.

Experts concede that, in terms of root causes and their impact on child behaviour, there is no fundamental difference between criminal and non-criminal activities. The basic difference is that child prostitution is caused by social and family challenges (parental alcoholism, loose morals), rather than

by economic deprivation. In addition, experts believe that the spread of non-criminal employment is more influenced by the media than the general situation in the country. In other words, experts tend to view children engaged in prostitution as a social malady and a personality disorder, rather than a product of economic privation.

## **7.2. CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVES TO STREET LIFE**

As the IPEC survey in the Leningrad Region demonstrates, the problem of child exploitation is hard to resolve, not only because this category of the workforce is in demand among employers but also because children are quick to adopt 'street-smart' skills. Finding themselves in the street, they very soon embrace an alternative value system and become accustomed to regarding street work as indispensable even if it had not been so viewed before. As a result, not every child is prepared to abandon street work in favour of a different, even more decent, alternative. The survey showed that this is the case with nearly half of the respondents: 48% of children did not want to change the course of their lives unlike the other half (52%) who did. In the children's opinion, what are acceptable alternatives to street life?

First, children said they wanted to have a permanent place to stay at night but otherwise enjoyed their 'independent' living and did not want to change anything. This opinion came from 7,7% of all the children surveyed and from one fifth (20%) of children involved in prostitution. The means that a permanent shelter is the main type of external help these children are prepared to accept. Having that, they would continue to live and earn money in the same way. Although this kind of response will create more comfortable and safe conditions for children who have lived in the street long enough, it will not solve the problem.

Second, a small proportion of children (2,2%), said they would like to live with foster parents because they had no family or could not re-unite with it. Some children (1,4%) said they wanted to live and study at a government boarding school for orphaned children.

Other options, such as living, studying or working in a peer 'commune', a privately-run shelter, a rural family-type house with a foster mother or receiving education as cadets at an army base or military school were even less attractive (under 1%). No one wanted to live in a church or monastery home and receive religious education.

Most of the children (38%) dreamt of returning to their families (provided that there were normal relationships) or to their close relatives (they gave such answers as: «I want to live at home with parents who do not drink», «I want to live with my Granny/sister», «I want to live at home but without my father»). A large proportion of girls (17,5%) hoped to end their troubles by starting their own family. Notably, two thirds (74%) of children involved in prostitution associated ‘normal’ lifestyle with having their own family; among them, two out of three girls wanted to marry (64%). Thus, a large, if not prevailing, proportion of street children saw family (parents, relatives or their own) as a central element of their future lives.

The survey also demonstrated that street children begin to perceive work as a basic necessity that shapes their lifestyles. Only 13% of them said they could do without their earnings if they were given normal conditions and a healthy social environment (Table 7.1). The remaining majority of children said they would be trying to earn money under any conditions.

Table 7.1

**Answers to the question: «Would you abandon your street work if you were offered normal living conditions?», %**

Answer options	All children	Children involved in criminal activities	Children involved in prostitution
Yes, I can do without my earnings, even pocket money.	13,4	11,1	2,9
Basically yes, but I will still do odd jobs from time to time to earn some pocket money.	47,8	38,9	53,3
I will continue to work anyway.	34,7	50,0	39,0
Other	4,1	—	4,8

In view of their desire to have pocket money or money to buy food, it was necessary to study their perception of alternative, legitimate and controlled employment with normal work conditions. The survey found that traditional employment held little appeal for street children (Table 7.2).

Only 43% of the respondents said they would work in school workshops, take part in public works such as landscaping and planting of trees, and among children involved in prostitution or criminal activities this proportion was even lower (10–17%).

Table 7.2

**Answers to the question: «Would you quit this job if you were offered other paid alternatives?»**

Alternatives	Proportion of respondents who agreed, %		
	All children	Children involved in criminal activities	Children involved in prostitution
Agricultural work in a young team	11,4	16,7	8,6
Public works in parks and gardens	6,7	—	—
Employment at a vocational school workshop	14,4	—	1,0
Employment at a workshop of an inter-school career guidance centre	10,6	—	—
None of the above	56,9	83,3	90,5

There is a need to develop new forms of legitimate employment for children aged 15 and up. When doing so, one should take into account trends on the regional labour market, as well as the children's own aspirations and abilities. For instance, the survey showed that 40% of working street children would like to deal with technology, machines and computers whereas another 31% would prefer 'relationship' occupations (retail market, education, management, etc.).

Another effective way to divert children from street work is to establish informal organizations of children based on common interests and work. In addition to providing legitimate work opportunities, children's organizations enable them to appreciate team spirit, mutual support and group recreational activities. The survey showed that nearly a half of working street children (45%) feels positive about joining an organization (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3

**Answers to the question: «Would you like to join a youth organization with a distinctive style, common work and recreation activities and support and protection for its members?»**

	All children	Children involved in criminal activities	Children involved in prostitution
Yes	29,8	44,4	1,0
Rather yes	15,0	27,8	6,7
Rather no	10,4	—	14,3
No	31,1	27,8	47,6
Hard to say	13,7	—	30,5

Children involved in prostitution or criminal activities expressed sharply contrasting sentiments about youth organisations. Because they have already experienced ‘team spirit’ in their subcultures, the overwhelming majority of criminalised children said they were prepared to join youth organizations (72%). In comparison, children involved in prostitution were predominantly against such organizations (62%). On the practical level, regional, municipal and district organizations for children and young people are a powerful but largely ignored tool in the struggle against child labour and child neglect.

An analysis of children’s perceptions of their living arrangements demonstrates that while leaving home and living in the street may be easy, withdrawing from the street is a much greater challenge. Re-entry is the most difficult for children with substantial experience of street life. In view of this, special attention should be given to preventive measures among high-risk families and children and to creating conditions whereby they will not become working street children in the first place.

Most importantly, the survey revealed a proportion of street children who would like to change their lives. These children are in need of careful, individualised intervention. Because every child counts in the struggle against exploitation, each of them deserves a personalised, needs-based approach, with thorough examination of the causes of their labour, their aspirations and plans.

**7.3 EXPERTS ON EFFICIENT SUPPORT MODELS FOR STREET CHILDREN**

The gradual but welcome regulatory, institutional and administrative response to the problems of street children leaves much to be desired in the way of practical outcomes. This was noted by most of the experts involved in the survey. Thus, only 13% of experts acknowledged that current employment programmes for young people (seasonal work, temporary placement, etc.) are helping to improve the situation of working street children (see Table 7.4).

Table 7.4

**Experts’ answers to the question: «How effective are current employment programmes for young people in improving the situation of working street children?»**

Answer options	%
Ineffective	13,3
Partially effective	73,3
Quite effective	13,3
Hard to say	—



A major difficulty in the struggle against child labour is that even children who have been in the street for a short time become extremely reluctant to re-enter normal life. About one third of experts (31%) spoke of a period of 1–2 months in the street after which return to normal life becomes very difficult. Despite this, efforts to bring children back to normal living are not abandoned and are sometimes successful. Thus, between 7 and 500 children return to families, shelters and children’s homes every year. Yet, most of the experts surveyed (46%) failed to recount success stories in their own work.

As practitioners, experts maintain liaisons with executive agencies dealing with street children. These are local administration committees (on social protection, education, youth, physical education and sports) and law enforcement agencies, mainly Boards for Minors. These are the agencies that experts typically describe as doing a good job to solve the problem.

Most experts ignored successful public organizations working in the region (the exceptions being athletic club «Otradnoye» and teen club «Non-Stop»). They were also silent on the activities of the Red Cross, church parishes and the Committee for the Protection of Children’s Rights. This suggests that traditional administrative measures remain the prevailing kind of response to the problem in these districts.

Notably, only one expert included secondary and vocational schools in the list of organizations that provide an adequate response to the problem. The experts were divided concerning the role of the education system. First, they said, most street children do not attend schools; second, combating street child labour should not be a major concern of the education system and third, the education system does not have the institutional capacity and personnel. At the same time, vocational schools have more potential for dealing with the problem, experts said (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5

**Experts’ answers to the question: «What role can education institutions play in dealing with the problem of working street children?»**

	Answer options			
	An important role	A minor role	The have no role at all	Hard to say
Secondary public schools	20,0	60,0	13,3	6,7
Vocational schools	50,0	35,7	7,1	7,1

Most experts said that schools should make their contribution by placing greater emphasis on vocational qualifications and career guidance. Schools should continue to run agricultural teams and restore workshops, negotiate agreements with enterprises and provide commercial services for citizens. Besides crop production, school farms should take up stockbreeding and other legitimate forms of employment for needy children.

Schools should also shift the thrust of their programmes towards motivating former dropouts to resume studies. This requires diversification of educational services and the use of special, individualised, curricula.

After analysing the problem and possibilities for improvement, the experts built a hierarchy of preconditions that should be in place to solve the problem of working street children:

- Comprehensive, holistic approach to the problem, involving support services to families, relatives of the children — 100%,
- Mass media campaign — 100%,
- Adequate legal framework — 93%,
- Greater input from local administrations — 93%,
- More funding — 86%,
- More international projects in this field — 80%,
- Establishment of a regional co-ordination centre — 67%,
- A special regional programme on the elimination of child labour — 64%.

Most experts believe that the family should be the main area of action. This will help to eradicate the root causes, rather than the effects, of child vagrancy.

No less important, according to the experts, was to improve recreational opportunities for children such as clubs, societies, circles in schools, social work centres, municipalities, etc.

The experts also identified job placements for children aged 15 seeking independent income as a solution. Legal employment at enterprises, apprentice workshops, summer camps can be effective alternatives to street work.

In addition, it is important to strengthen the capacity of specialised institutions catering to children not living with their families (temporary centres, children's homes, shelters, rehabilitation centres).

New forms and approaches should be tested, such as children's villages, small homes (such as the Children's Ark); hotels, canteens and showers for street children. Street counselling and free-of-charge medical assistance to street children should be introduced more widely. The experts gave positive feedback to the 'family group' pilot programme conducted by the Volkhov

centre for rehabilitation of minors. Under this programme, the centre's staff place street children temporarily into their families.

Pervading the experts' and employers' opinions is a general belief that the country needs a proactive public policy towards the eradication of child labour. This can be achieved through co-ordination of activities and mutual strengthening of all stakeholders in the process, including the government structures at various levels, public organizations and the private sector. To this end, a special comprehensive programme should be put in place in the following areas:

- Effective strategies for the resolution of family problems, strengthening the foundations of family as a social institution;
- Creation of special jobs for children and provision of legitimate job placement services;
- Provision of recreational activities for children, re-establishment of children's organizations;
- Sensitising the public to the problem of street children and elaboration of effective intervention strategies.



**IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS  
OF THE SITUATION OF WORKING STREET CHILDREN  
IN THE LENINGRAD REGION  
2001**

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