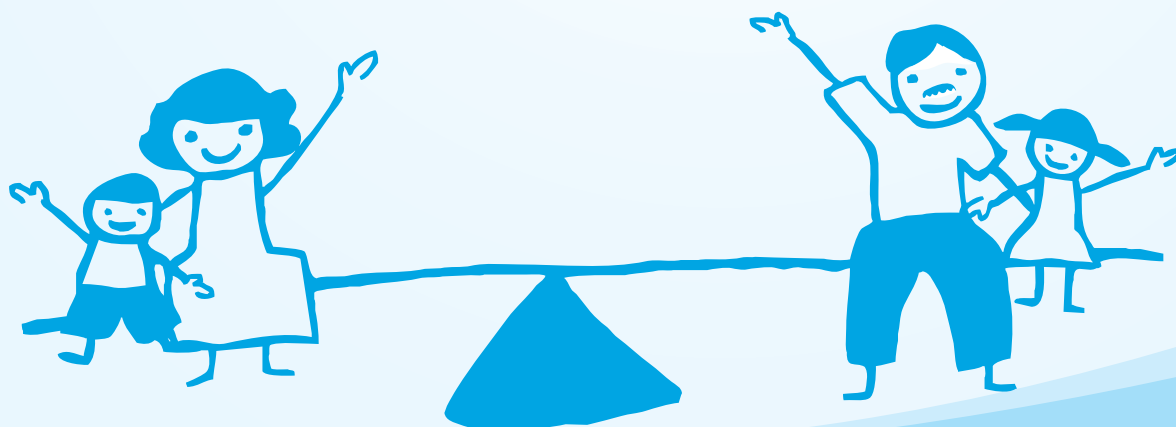


Promotion of Gender Equality in Action against Child Labour and Trafficking

A Practical Guide for Organizations

by

Nelien Haspels and Busakorn Suriyasarn



International Labour Office
International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
Subregional Office for East Asia

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In Action against Child Labour and Trafficking
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Foreword

Families in all societies aspire the best for their daughters and sons. However, worldwide, millions of children and youth fall victim to severe labour and human rights abuses, slaving away in domestic services, the entertainment or manufacturing industries or on the land. The overall majority are girls and young women, but boys are also found among them. Often, they have migrated or have been trafficked. They work and live in an unfamiliar environment under conditions which take away their childhood and health, and rob them of the fundamental respect and rights to which they are entitled as human beings.

Trafficking and labour exploitation of the young are not simply an issue of basic survival strategies of the poor. The desperation of families to subject children - knowingly or not - to exploitation may be explained by lack of opportunities. Single mothers especially often have few alternatives, and male and female teenagers alike are drawn to the city lights. However, the problem goes beyond individual, economic constraints and ambitions. It is multi-faceted, large in magnitude and caused by a complex interplay of factors. Economic disparities between and within countries, the demand for cheap labour, the low status of women, the commercialization of their bodies and the increasingly adept criminal networks drive the demand side of the problem in the context of globalization. Poverty, the desire for a better life and consumer goods, political conflicts, natural disasters, compounded with lack of education and accurate information, legal loopholes and a host of other factors continue to increase the supply of the younger generations for various forms of exploitation.

Children and youth who find themselves in precarious, exploitative and abusive working and living conditions share a common feature: They face social inequalities and discrimination, because they are young and poor, belong to marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities and migrants, and in the case of girls, because they are female. Traditional cultural and gender values assign women and children to the lowest ranks in the family and community hierarchy. This encourages the disregard of their rights and makes them especially vulnerable with little say on their own destiny. Understanding the gender, age and ethnicity dimension to labour exploitation and trafficking and the linkages with other social and economic inequalities is key to start to-the-point, sustainable action towards the elimination of these abuses.

This Practical Guide for Organizations: 'Promoting gender equality in action against child labour and trafficking' aims to serve as an easy-to-use manual for policymakers and practitioners committed to tackling the problem of severe labour exploitation and trafficking among girls and boys, men and women. The guide has benefited from many inputs from experts and practitioners with extensive experience in the field from many member States of the ILO (international Labour Organization), as well as close cooperation within the ILO, with resources provided by the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. It is hoped the guide will contribute to identifying effective ways to minimize the plight of vulnerable girls, boys and their families, and provide them with means to realise a decent standard of living through their economic, social and political empowerment.

Chris Evans-Klock
Director, Subregional Office for East Asia
ILO Bangkok and Geneva, November 2003

Alice Ouedraogo
Director, IPEC Policy Branch

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Introduction

The elimination of child labour and trafficking, and the promotion of equality between girls, boys, men and women go hand in hand. Child labour is work which subjects children to exploitation and abuse. Trafficking for labour exploitation means taking young or older people to other places to employ them in work against their will. The promotion of gender equality means giving equal opportunities to boys and girls, and men and women. The use of a gender lens is vital to prevent and solve child labour and trafficking problems.

The combat against child labour and trafficking, and the promotion of equality between men and women address fundamental human and workers' rights in life and at work. These are vital for sustainable, people-centred, social and economic development of societies in the global economy. Action against child labour and trafficking, and promotion of gender equality do not mean a trade-off with other development gains, but an increase in the quality of life for all with long-lasting benefits to children, families, communities, and societies.

Both boys and girls from low-income population groups are involved in child labour, and women and men of all ages can become victims of trafficking. However, evidence suggests that girls and women are often found working in the worst forms of labour which is related to the low status given to them in many societies. Girls are particularly vulnerable to child labour exploitation, face different problems and have other coping strategies than boys. Programmes against child labour and trafficking need to take these differences into account if they want to effectively reach both girls and boys.

In addition, while the crucial role of parents in looking after the well being of their children is acknowledged worldwide, many parents from low-income groups are hampered in doing so. Mothers, especially single mothers, face additional constraints at work and in life, because they are poor and they are women. Many fathers on the other hand have not been fully involved in taking care of their offspring. It is therefore necessary to enable both parents to share the family responsibilities related to the upbringing of their children.

Recognizing the constraints of women in the world of work, the ILO member States have emphasized the importance of giving explicit attention to the promotion of equal opportunities and chances to men and women at work and in life in all spheres of ILO action. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) identified the working girl as a priority target group since its start in the early nineties. In 1999, guidance on addressing girls' needs was reflected in the ILO Recommendation on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. ILO experience has shown that concerted efforts are needed to guarantee that both girls and boys involved or prone to be engaged in child labour are provided with effective preventive or curative services and to ensure that equality principles are applied when providing incentives to parents and other caregivers irrespective of sex and gender considerations.

This Practical Guide for Organizations provides an overview of strategies and tools to reach both girls and boys when combating harmful child labour practices and trafficking abuses, to address the specific constraints of girls and young women prone to or engaged in child labour, and to strengthen the role of both parents in educating their children and protecting them from labour exploitation. The guide is intended for staff of governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in combating child labour and trafficking. It will also be of use to policy makers engaged in promoting human rights of children and women and fundamental principles and rights at work.



Aims of the Guide are to:

- inform specialists and programming staff in the child labour field who are not familiar with gender equality issues or who wish to refresh their knowledge on this subject
- assist staff and partner organizations of the ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in developing, implementing and evaluating gender-responsive action programmes.

The guide consists of two parts:

- Part 1 provides the basic definitions and strategies for the promotion of gender equality in policies and programmes against child labour and trafficking. It gives an overview of the key gender differentials in child labour and sets out the conceptual tools for addressing gender inequalities in policies and programmes against child labour and trafficking.
- Part 2 contains six practical tools, two guides and four checklists:
 - The first guide provides a summary of the main definitions, conceptual tools and strategies explained in part 1. It can be used in awareness raising or training activities or serve as a 'quick reference' guide.
 - The second guide deals with the systematic integration of gender issues in the design of projects or action programmes against child labour. It complements the guidelines on the design of action programmes as specified in the IPEC standard operating procedures.
 - The first checklist can be used to assess to what extent gender concerns are integrated into the design of an action programme.
 - The second checklist provides a tool to review to what extent the design of research gives the relevant guidance for carrying out gender analyses.
 - The third checklist can be used to review the use of gender mainstreaming strategies in policies and programme development.
 - The fourth checklist provides a tool to assess the capacity of organizations to address inequalities and promote gender equality in action against child labour and trafficking.

This Guide responds to the overall ILO Action Plan on Gender Mainstreaming for Gender Equality which was adopted in 2000. It is part of a series of ILO capacity building initiatives to systematically address gender inequalities in action against the worst forms of child labour and to raise awareness on fundamental human and labour standards, and children's and women's rights among population groups at risk of severe labour exploitation. It has been developed under a pilot project 'Promotion of Gender Equality in Action against Child Labour in East Asia (GECL)', implemented by the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia (SRO-Bangkok) in cooperation with IPEC. Main project strategies include:

- capacity building of partners in mainstreaming equality and rights approaches in design, monitoring and evaluation tools and programming processes
- developing innovative tools geared at the social and economic empowerment of children, youth and families, and
- strengthening knowledge sharing and networking among child labour and gender specialists in East Asia.

