



REGIONAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

Coverage: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand

Child trafficking in Asia

Concerned agencies and governments in both the developed and developing world now recognize the trafficking of children for exploitation in domestic work, manufacturing enterprises, commercial sex, agriculture, armed conflict and other “worst forms” of child labour as heinous human rights violations. Still, human trafficking is a huge and widespread problem. A recent ILO study estimated that 2.45 million people globally are exploited in labour as a result of trafficking. Of these, 1.36 million (55 per cent) are in the Asia and Pacific region and 40–50 per cent are children.¹

In the Asia region, the factors that trigger children's vulnerability to being trafficked differ between countries, areas, sectors, ethnic groups, families and individuals. In general, however, poverty coupled with extreme disparities of wealth, lack of education and/or local employment opportunities largely lead to young people's increased vulnerability.

Other factors that increase children's vulnerability to being trafficked include dysfunctional family relationships, rapid urbanization and increasing consumerism, lack of safe migration opportunities, highly discriminating caste systems and patriarchal societies that maintain a low status of girls and women, and the widespread perception of the girl child as a “family commodity”. Political instability and armed conflicts, particularly in countries such as Indonesia (Banda Aceh), Nepal and Sri Lanka, have dislocated families and communities, drawn children into battle and resulted in irregular movements of people, all of which also have increased children's vulnerability to traffickers.

On the demand side, employers' interest in maximizing profits by engaging cheap labour remains the primary motivation for human traffickers. The proximity of more affluent and



Recruitment of a domestic child worker, Nepal (Photo: ILO/Maillard)

ILO-TICSA Regional Project overview

Development objective: To contribute to the reduction of trafficking in children for exploitive labour in south and south-east Asia

Coverage: Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Thailand.

Main areas of work:

- ▶ Prevention of child trafficking through direct assistance to children, families and communities;
- ▶ Protection of child survivors of trafficking through rehabilitation & reintegration assistance, including development of child-friendly guidelines for caregivers;
- ▶ Policy development and capacity building of within governments, employers' and workers' organizations and NGO partners;
- ▶ Improvement of the knowledge base on trafficking (research and documentation).

Duration: TICSA phase II (2003–2006)

Budget: US\$ 3.0 million (+1.5 million under the ILO Time-Bound Programme in Nepal)

Donor: US Department of Labour

¹ Global Report on Forced Labour, ILO, 2005

cheap labour-searching markets in main destination countries is a significant factor in labour migration, which includes a large portion of children whose vulnerability increases once they leave familiar territory, especially among those who cross borders irregularly. A lack of respect for children's rights and an environment that does not protect those rights – through corruption and inadequate implementation of laws and policies – enable traffickers to move young people into exploitative situations.

Many victims of trafficking start out as voluntary migrants or labourers but end up trapped after being misled, deceived or coerced by strangers, fellow villagers or even family members. As traffickers “fish in the stream of migration”, children are then exploited at their destination. Though there appears to be no fixed routes and traffickers seem to constantly shift operations to avoid detection, trafficking seems to follow common migration and general travelling routes. Typically trafficking is not a mechanical process of transport from one place to another but occurs through multiple steps, routes and modes of transportation. Children are trafficked within each country, across national borders (such as from Bangladesh and Nepal to Pakistan and India), within the region (from South Asia to Southeast Asia) and to other regions (such as the Middle East).

Common end purposes of child trafficking

- Domestic work
- Carpet & garment factories (including embroidery)
- Waitress/waiter (cabin restaurants & dance restaurants)
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Construction work
- Circus performance & camel jockeying
- Armed conflict (soldiers)
- Brick kiln/stone quarry
- Agricultural labour or fishing
- Criminal activities such as burglary and drug trafficking
- Organized begging
- Mail-order brides (dowry)

International and regional anti-trafficking commitments

All the six TICSAs countries have ratified ILO Convention No. 182, which explicitly commits governments to take all national, bilateral and multilateral measures necessary to remove children from the worst forms of child labour incl. child trafficking. Most of the countries have developed, or are in the process of developing, policies, laws and national action plans to combat child trafficking. However, none of the countries have ratified the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted in December 2000 and specifically refers to the trafficking of humans (UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children). Relevant international and regional instruments include:

- UN CRC: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- ILO C. No. 182: Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999)
- ILO C. No. 29: Forced Labour Convention (1930)
- ILO C. No. 138: Minimum Age convention (1973)
- ILO C. No. 105: Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957)
- UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)
- SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating the Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002)
- SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia (2002)

The ILO TICSA Project Response



Catch-up education, Sri Lanka.
(Photo: ILO/ Lisborg)

In 2000, ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) began the TICSA regional project in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka (Phase I) and later expanded to include Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand (Phase II, 2003–2006). Building on the technical expertise gained and lessons learned during the first phase TICSA II have concentrated on expanding the knowledge base on the trafficking situation; building the capacity of government,

workers' and employers' organizations and NGOs in the design of anti-trafficking programmes, policy and programme advocacy; and providing direct services to child victims of trafficking. The project's numerous components entail:

Prevention of child trafficking

TICSA aims to prevent children from being trafficked by using a range of multi-pronged strategies that address the vulnerability factors of selected communities, families and their children. Preventive measures include:

- Formal and non-formal education (catch-up classes) to vulnerable children.
- Skills and vocational training to adolescents, including career guidance, job placement and support toward self-employment.
- Economic empowerment by creating better earning opportunities for parents and caretakers of vulnerable children through skills training, support for starting businesses and seed capital.
- Social mobilization and awareness raising by creating multipurpose community child centres (known as “Community Hearts”).

- Community vigilance by creating local monitoring teams, known as Community Vigilance Teams (CVT).
- Cyber watch/Internet surveillance, including the establishment of an anti-trafficking unit within a national body capable of high-tech surveillance such as monitoring Internet use by traffickers, paedophiles.

TICSA II Targets & Beneficiaries

Direct beneficiaries:

- **15,810 children** prevented from trafficking (Including 5110 children under the TICSA component of the ILO Time-Bound Programme in Nepal)
- **1125 child survivors** recovered & reintegrated (Including 750 children under the TICSA component of the ILO Time-Bound Programme in Nepal)
- **1300 adult family members** benefit from income-generating and skills training programmes (Including 460 under the TICSA component of the ILO Time-Bound Programme in Nepal)

Indirect beneficiaries:

- **300,000** persons reached through awareness raising, policy work and capacity-building activities.
Direct recipients:
- **1,000 staff** from governments, employers' and worker's organizations and NGOs trained on anti-trafficking issues.



Street theatre in Bangladesh. (Photo: CEC)

Rehabilitation and reintegration

The TICSA rehabilitation and reintegration component focuses on the protection of children who have been victims of trafficking by improving the quality of care and services. This includes:

- Regional child-friendly standards and guidelines for the recovery and reintegration of child trafficking survivors. This component is meant to respond to a concern that the rapid growth of anti-trafficking efforts has not always been accompanied by an improvement in the quality of child-friendly procedures and care giving within laws and institutions. The child-friendly standards and guidelines are being developed through national and regional consultations and customized to apply specifically to the Asia region.
- Direct withdrawal and rehabilitation of children who have been trafficked into the worst forms of child labour.
- Counselling, psychosocial counselling and social behavioural skills training to child care officers working in rehabilitation centres.
- Legal support and protection from further abuse.
- Development of individualized case management systems based on the unique needs of each child victim (through a multidisciplinary team of experts).
- Reintegration support through family counselling, non-formal education, skills training, career guidance and job placement.

Policy development and capacity building of partners

The ILO TISCA project involves improving the capacity of governments, workers' and employers' organizations and NGOs in the design of anti-trafficking programmes and policies. This includes:

- Review of anti-trafficking legal frameworks. A regional review of the national and sub-regional legal frameworks and law enforcement capacity in combating child trafficking in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The outcome of this review is a technical paper that was discussed during a regional meeting (November 2005). The meeting has paved the way for bilateral, multilateral and subregional collaboration to combat child trafficking.

Improvement of the knowledge base on child trafficking (research)

Several studies have been conducted to improve the general knowledge of child trafficking and to support interventions:

- Rapid assessments and sector studies in each country aimed to provide an analysis of the country-specific situation.
- A regional in-depth study on the demand side of trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. A regional research working group with members from each country has been established. In all countries the study covers children in domestic labour, commercial sexual exploitation and organized begging. In addition in Nepal and Sri Lanka, the study covers the demand for children in armed conflicts and in Sri Lanka it includes children in firework production.
- Research tools and ethical guidelines have been developed specifically for studying the demand side of child trafficking.
- Documentation of ILO TISCA good practices and lessons learned covering prevention, recovery activities and capacity-expanding activities.



Non-formal education, (Photo: ILO/ Lisborg)

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