



PROJECT OVERVIEW

PAKISTAN

The Regional Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation TICSA II operates in Pakistan as a part of ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC).

Child trafficking in Pakistan

The size of child trafficking in Pakistan is not known and more comprehensive research is needed. However, a large number of children are working full time in hazardous sectors in the urban and rural informal economy, which suggests trafficking of young people into these situations takes place. Within the country, child trafficking takes the form of bonded labour in a range of industries such as in agriculture, construction, commercial sexual exploitation, brick making, domestic work and organised begging.¹

In terms of cross-border trafficking, Pakistan is a sending, receiving and transit country. Boys and girls from Pakistan are known to be trafficked to the Middle East and the Persian Gulf to be exploited in camel racing, the entertainment sector and as domestic labours. Women and children trafficked from East Asian countries and Bangladesh to the Middle East and Persian Gulf often transit through Pakistan. Finally, women and girls from Bangladesh, India, Burma, Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia have been trafficked to Pakistan for bonded labour including commercial sex.

Child trafficking persists in Pakistan as a result of the interplay among many factors, including widespread poverty in rural areas. Nearly one-third of the country's population of 140 million live below the national poverty line.² Under these conditions, many rural families send their children to work in the cities or abroad. The work may be hazardous and dangerous to children's development,



Photo: ILO/Cabrera

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 Rapid Assessment Studies of Bonded Labour in Different Sectors in Pakistan, Islamabad: ILO and the Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, 2004.

² Human Development Report, 2004

but both the children and their parents focus on the immediate return: cash to the families and daily food for the children. Children vulnerable to trafficking typically are from poor rural communities where schools may not be accessible or are of low quality.

Other obstacles for children's access to quality education (and thus increasing their vulnerability to being trafficked) are the inability of parents to afford schooling costs, attitudes of that the school curriculum is irrelevant to real needs, teachers without proper training and their use of corporal punishment and verbal abuse, and restrictions on girls' mobility in certain parts of the country.

Cultural practices that give differential values to the males and females also contribute to girls' increased vulnerability to being trafficked. Many parts of the country are dominated by patriarchal structures that perpetuate a low perceived status of girls and women and the widespread position of girl children as a "family commodity". Early marriage for girls and the bride price custom have subjected girls to hardship and physical abuse by their husbands and in-laws. The low cultural value ascribed to girl children also deprives them of education opportunities and social assistance in hardship conditions.

Finally, on the demand side it is largely employers' motives to maximize profits by engaging cheap labour and a general lack of concern for children's well-being that causes trafficking to occur. Corruption within government and the lack of adequate implementation of laws and policies facilitate the problem.

National responses and commitments

The Constitution of Pakistan forbids slavery and prohibits all forms of forced labour and traffic in human beings (Article 11, 1-2). Major national legislative developments on human trafficking includes: the Government the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance (2002) and Prevention and the Control of Human Trafficking Rules (2004). The ordinance applies to all children younger than 18 and prescribes 7- 14 years of imprisonment for perpetrators.

Following the ratification of ILO Convention No. 182, the Government created a National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and requested technical assistance from the ILO for its implementation. A Child Labour Research Unit has been established within the Ministry of Women's and Children's Welfare. Although the NPA does not include any particular attention to child trafficking, national agencies have directed increased attention to the problem and the National Commission on Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) and its national and international partners are making efforts to undertake various activities to expand the knowledge base, create awareness, improve agencies' capabilities and enforcement measures on trafficking issues.

Pakistan has ratified a number of relevant international instruments, including:

- ▶ 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)
- ▶ 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

In 2000, ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) began the TICSA regional project in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The project expanded in 2003 to include Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. The TICSA project focuses on building a knowledge base on child trafficking and raising awareness among policy makers. The project also draws from regional expertise in the areas of anti-trafficking legal frameworks and the rehabilitation services for child survivors of trafficking. More specifically, the ILO TICSA project in Pakistan entails the following:



Boy at school, Pakistan (Photo: ILO)

Improvement of the knowledge base on child trafficking (research)

Research has been undertaken to obtain a better understanding of the trafficking situation in the country and to use the results toward formulating action-oriented programmes. Specific research and documentaries include:

- ▶ A rapid Assessment of Trafficking of Children for Sexual and Labour Exploitation.
- ▶ A study of the Demand Side of Trafficking of Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation. (Part of a regional study).

Partner organizations: Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Anthropology and Economics departments, Quaid-I-Azam Islamabad University, National Commission on Child Welfare and Development

Policy development and capacity building of partners

- ▶ Awareness raising, advocacy and capacity building of various tiers of government targeting four district governments in southern Punjab and upper Sindh provinces.
- ▶ Review anti-trafficking laws and procedures in Pakistan.

Partner organizations: Ministry of Social Welfare, National Commission on Child Welfare and Development, Lawyers for Human Rights and Legal Aid

Rehabilitation and reintegration

The ILO TICSA project responded to the immediate needs of children returned from the United Arab Emirates, where they were trafficked to perform as camel jockeys, by strengthening the capabilities of care-providing institutions. This includes:

- ▶ Needs assessment of shelter facilities and service providers in Lahore and Rahim Yar Khan
- ▶ Designing a multidisciplinary approach on the rehabilitation of child victims of trafficking
- ▶ Training shelter staff on psychosocial counseling for child survivors of trafficking

Partner organizations: National Commission for Child Welfare and Development Child Protection Bureau, Sahil, Rozan, LHRLA

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