



International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour International Labour Office

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

AT A GLANCE

May 2002

In January 2000 the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a three year Project “Street Children of St. Petersburg: from Exploitation to Education”. It was designed as a pilot project to tackle the new phenomenon of child labour in Russia. A two-pronged approach was chosen - both training relevant government institutions as well as NGOs on how to combat street child labour, and provide direct support to working street children and their families.



*Begging mother
and baby in the
Underpass near
“Nevsky
Prospect” Metro
Station*

In January 2002 the Russian President urged the state authorities to develop extraordinary and immediate measures to address the issue of street children and their families. During 2001 – 2002, officials from the Russian Ministry of Labour repeatedly referred to the IPEC experience in St. Petersburg as a unique domestic testing ground with targeted rehabilitation and preventative strategies and methods to be replicated in the rest of the country.

At the professional level, IPEC St. Petersburg represents an extensive network of the St. Petersburg State University experts, politicians, NGO workers, Police officers, Trade Union leaders, volunteers, religious activists, employers, and school teachers. Institutionally, they form the Action Committee – an advisory board that formulates priorities and strategies for the city. This practice is to serve as a prototype of a national Steering Committee, as the future ratification of ILO Convention 182 will require.

IPEC St. Petersburg: Action Programmes

Training:

Emphasising capacity building of officials on child labour prevention and rehabilitation resulted in a set of training initiatives in the Kirovsky District of St. Petersburg. In 2000 the Kirovsky District was chosen as an IPEC project site. The overall purpose of IPEC efforts in the district has been a creation of a reproducible domestic model of cross-departmental cooperation on prevention and rehabilitation of child labour. Experts representing the St. Petersburg State

Having ratified ILO Convention 138 pertaining to the Minimum Age for Work, Russia has yet to ratify Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour which would place this issue on the political agenda.

Russia faces rapidly growing violations of child labour with reports of an increasing number of cases of child prostitution, forced and hazardous labour, as well as cases of violence among Russian street children. These increases caught traditional social institutions off guard in the 1990's.

University: Department of Sociology, carried out the training.

Training of School Staff on Child Labour Prevention

Bridging the gap between the school and street social work, a staff of 50 secondary schools in the Kirovsky District was equipped with practical knowledge and skills in social work, enabling them to prevent school drop-outs and thus, potential child workers. Moreover, 500 children at risk were identified and sets of corrective practices were designed for them individually.

Training of the Staff Members of the Local Self-Governing Bodies

Twenty childhood inspectors and 50 members of staff from Local Self-Governing Bodies in the Kirovsky district of St. Petersburg were trained on the issue of child labour. An effective mechanism of cooperation between the local self-governing bodies and educational system was developed, and the legal system of protection of the rights of the child at the city level was improved.

Training of Inspectors of Police Units on the Affairs of Children

Twenty inspectors of the Police Units on the Affairs of Children in the Kirovsky District of St. Petersburg were trained on the issue of child labour. New effective joint programmes between the Police, Local Self-Governing Bodies, and Educational Departments were worked out, laying the groundwork for the Safe Zone, a zone free from child labour, in St. Petersburg (launched in February 2002). Additionally, close working contacts were established between IPEC and the Police Administration on the Affairs of Children. The training triggered some unplanned local initiatives. Thus, the Police Administration along with the City Prosecutor's Office performed a series of checks in the trading areas to investigate the use of children in hazardous labour (cargo handling and night work). University students, as volunteers, participated in the checks alongside the police officers.

Four manuals (500 copies each) on practical aspects of social work were published in the

course of the three training programmes. The manuals appeared to be in high demand by different institutions and individuals active in the sphere of child protection.

Rehabilitaion:

Comprehensive Model for the Rehabilitation of Working Street Girls in Saint Petersburg

This Action Programme was designed to develop a rehabilitation model and apply it to 100 street girls and girls at risk of sexual exploitation, from ages 12-17, who are affected by lack of education, continuous family crisis, social exclusion, and isolation.



*Psychological rehabilitation group session for
former working street girls.*

The girls were withdrawn from the streets and provided with creativity development and training opportunities, with emphasis on family counselling and rehabilitation. Simultaneously, the policy-makers, City Authorities, the Police, and the public at large were sensitised on the issues of the girl child and specific risks related to this particular group of working street children.

Being virtually the very first project in the city to address specific needs of a working girl child, the Action Programme has largely contributed to changing the public attitude on this most vulnerable group of children. In line with the overall ILO gender-mainstreaming policy, the Action Programme seeks to raise awareness among stakeholders on specific risks working street girls are subject to on the streets. In a broader sense, the Action Programme helps raise high on the political

agenda the most pressing issue of the sexual exploitation of children.

The local and international media has extensively covered the Street Girls IPEC Action Programme. To secure tangible results, IPEC raised additional funding for the Action programme using contributions of the Nordic Council of Ministers and UNICEF. The Implementing Agency is the St. Petersburg Women Labour Exchange.

Withdrawal of Street Children from Work at the Level of Local Communities

The strategy of this Action Programme is a multifaceted intervention, at the local level, against child labour performed by street children. It involves local self-governing bodies, schools and families of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Local self-governing bodies and schools were equipped with results of the IPEC Analysis¹. The existing capacities of local self-governments were channelled to concerted action, guided and advised by specialists in street social work. Schools were used as the initial sites to identify children at-risk. Families with children involved in the worst forms of child labour were capacitated on child labour prevention/rehabilitation through the self-help group methodology. The self-help groups combined direct support to the families as well as awareness on the adverse nature of child labour.

The Action Programme improved the situation both on the practical as well as political level with special emphasis on:

- building capacity of the newly established local authorities in three city districts on the prevention and monitoring of child labour;
- rehabilitating 1000 working street children through providing medical services, additional nutrition, and schooling at the level of their local communities;

¹ IPEC In-depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in St. Petersburg, August -October 2000

- rehabilitating 72 families with 200 children involved in the worst forms of labour through the self-help group methodology, equipped with income-generating, pedagogical, and crisis management skills, providing medical services and additional nutrition; and



Girls at a creativity development session

- sensitising city and community policy-makers as well as the public at large on the issue of working street children through a set of awareness-raising actions to address the situation of children within local communities. The Implementing Agency is the Foundation “Child Protection”

Developing and Supporting Socio-Medical Mechanisms for Rehabilitation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in St. Petersburg

The practical component of the Grant Programme, launched in May 2002, will result in establishing a night drop-in centre for street children engaged in the worst forms of child labour such as child prostitution and night work. The political impact of the Grant Programme will yield intensification of political pursuit at the district level to effectively address child labour and its worst forms. The Implementing Agency – “Humanitarian Action” as a local branch of Medecins du Monde – is already playing a coordinating role in the district social policy. It is fully integrated in the local social protective schemes. This NGO is involved in the planning, design, and fulfilment of social programmes in the city along with the administration, educational authorities, police, local communities, and state medical institutions.

The expertise of Medecins du Monde shows that a positive result of social work with street children can be reached only in the case of stepped rehabilitation (e.g. street – medical centre – drop-in centre/hospital – home/shelter). Accordingly, the Grant Programme will strengthen the middle part of the rehabilitation chain through running a drop-in centre. The Grant Programme has also been supported by UNICEF.

PREVENTION

Establishment of a Child Labour Free Zone in the Kirovsky District of St. Petersburg

One of strategic concepts designed specifically for St. Petersburg was to network all key players in a so-called **Safe Zone**, free from child labour, launched in February 2002. For all agencies concerned with the protection of children's rights, it means the effective fulfilment of all provisions as defined in the national legislation. The Safe Zone is to embody a comprehensive insight into the problem of child labour aimed at protecting children from exploitation on the streets and preventing new children from slipping into the street environment.

The comprehensiveness of this methodology will be ensured through strengthening the main social institutions at the district level. The key elements of the newly established network will include, but not be limited to, educational authorities, police, local governments, the labour inspectorate, trade unions, academia, media, and NGOs.

Serving as a model for further replication, the Safe Zone will stimulate development of the local schemes for child labour prevention. This, in turn, will increase understanding of child labour and its worst forms as a new phenomenon for the Russian society.

Replicating IPEC experience in other parts of Russia

In May 2001, the St. Petersburg State University team carried out a **Survey of child labour in Moscow** with the overall methodology based on IPEC St. Petersburg expertise. This was a full-scale sociological research project, covering 1,500 working street

children, and more than 200 employers and experts from social state and NGO institutions. This event stimulated deep political discussion and brought the issue and the role of the ILO into much sharper focus. At present, Moscow authorities are designing a child labour project with the ILO/IPEC using the St. Petersburg model.

The St. Petersburg example stimulated unplanned local initiatives in the neighbouring administrative areas. In June 2001, upon request, and with the support of the Regional Government, IPEC conducted a **Survey of child labour in the Leningrad Region** – a vast rural area neighbouring Finland. The report, featuring the magnitude and scope of the problem, was published in April 2002 in Russian and English. On March 6th 2002, the Government of the Leningrad Region held a Child Labour Conference where a Regional Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour was established. At the moment, launching of an additional IPEC Project in the region with the Finnish support is envisaged.

Promoting Social Dialogue

Relations between IPEC and the St. Petersburg Federation of Trade Unions are particularly useful and have allowed in preparing changes to the St. Petersburg Tripartite Agreement regarding the child labour issue. The St. Petersburg Governor, the Trade Unions and Employers Organisations signed the new Tripartite Agreement on February 4th 2002. For the first time in Russia, the document contains provisions on the elimination of child labour and its worst forms and adoption of corporate codes of conduct. The Trade Union Federation is doing a lot of campaigning on child labour in the community.



Child Labour Conference in the Government of the Leningrad Region, March 6, 2002

In the view of the recently adopted UN Global Compact – a declaration for the employers – effective abolition of child labour has become a strategy of attaining modern globalisation principles. On April 26th 2002, IPEC St. Petersburg served as a case study during the ILO's Global Compact meeting with the Russian employers. The leading Russian oil and energy companies were briefed on the problem of child labour and the activities of IPEC - St. Petersburg.

In September 2002, IPEC - St. Petersburg will organise a similar round table meeting with St. Petersburg employers, under the auspices of the City Parliament and its majority - the *Edinaya Rossiya* Party.

Awareness-raising

In addition to the awareness-raising activities done in the project mentioned above, the IPEC St. Petersburg team initiated and participated in the following:

- 3 video presentations;
- a 30 minute BBC documentary presentation;
- 30 print articles in Russian and foreign newspapers and magazines;
- 2 radio programmes.

Publications

- Action Against Child Labour (in Russian), Moscow, ILO, 2001 ISBN 5-94063-010-3
- In-depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in St. Petersburg 2000 (in English) St. Petersburg, 2002 ISBN 92-2-112738-9; (in Russian) no ISBN
- In-depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in Moscow 2001 (in English) St. Petersburg, 2002 ISBN 92-2-112989-6; (in Russian) St. Petersburg, 2002 ISBN 92-2-412989-7
- In-depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in the Leningrad Region 2001, St. Petersburg 2002, (in English) ISBN 92-2-112990-X; (in Russian) ISBN 92-2-412990-0
- New Tool to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour. ILO Convention 182 (in Russian), St. Petersburg. 2002 no ISBN