

ILO On-line: How many children are victims of trafficking today and what impact do you expect from the global economic crisis?

Hans van de Glind: In the absence of reliable new data on child trafficking, our most recent estimate in a 2005 Global Report was that 980,000 to 1,250,000 children - both boys and girls - are in forced labour as a result of trafficking. The economic crisis is affecting different countries in different ways, but generally increased unemployment, poverty and vulnerability can lead to children dropping out of school and working prematurely. This may put children at risk of being trafficked into various forms of labour exploitation; in particular those that migrate away from their families (to cities) in search of work.

ILO On-line: How is child trafficking and labour exploitation linked?

Hans van de Glind: ILO Convention No. 182 (1999) on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) classifies child trafficking among “forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery” that are to be eliminated as a matter of urgency. Most trafficked children end up in child domestic labour, commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural work, drug couriership, organized begging, child soldiering and exploitative or slavery-like practices in the informal economy.

ILO On-line: How do child trafficking and migration relate and differ?

Hans van de Glind: Child trafficking is a combination or series of events that may take place in the child's home community, at transit points and at final destinations. Those who contribute to it with the intent to exploit – recruiters, intermediaries, document providers, transporters, corrupt officials, service providers and unscrupulous employers – are traffickers, even when they take part only in a small fragment of the whole process. In places where the social safety nets are weak and services do not reach the socially excluded, the weakest families are increasingly likely to send their children for work to the cities. Most of these children migrate for work, but if they are not well prepared and informed before their migration, they put themselves at risk of being lured into exploitation. What starts as migration may thus become trafficking. While it is certainly legitimate for children of working age to want to migrate, we should work towards preventing trafficking from happening in the migration process.

ILO On-line: What measures can be taken to prevent child trafficking?

Hans van de Glind: The key to fighting trafficking is to stop it from being profitable through strict law enforcement, confiscation of profits of traffickers and increased protection (and reduced vulnerability) of children. Understanding risk and vulnerability factors and putting in place ways of recognizing these in children and their families – and then working to reduce or eliminate their vulnerability – is another important way to protect children from trafficking. It is crucial that countries recognize the negative impact of the economic crisis on the weakest members of society and that the crisis may unravel many years of progress in implementing the Global Action Plan target of eliminating the worst forms of child labour, including child trafficking, by 2016. Countries need to improve protection policies and mitigate the effects of the economic crisis on labour markets and education systems. This can be done, for example, by reducing the cost of schooling through free uniforms, textbooks and school meals, and by easing credit constraints of poor households. Countries should re-prioritize their expenditure patterns to benefit the poor and vulnerable.

ILO On-line: What is the ILO doing to fight child trafficking?

Hans van de Glind: Through IPEC the ILO works with governments, workers and employers' organizations and NGOs to fight child trafficking in the context of the realities in countries and regions. We provide policy advice, training and technical and financial assistance. In collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations, we recently launched a resource kit on *“Combating trafficking in children for labour exploitation for policy makers and practitioners”*. We have now added a training package to this kit.

ILO On-line: Why a training manual on child trafficking and what makes this manual special?

Hans van de Glind: Most training manuals regarding trafficking don't focus specifically on child trafficking and its labour exploitation dimension. This new manual explains what child trafficking is and how it can be addressed in the broader frameworks of labour, migration and children's rights. It is designed to be used in

formal training settings or individual self-study. The manual was developed through a partnership under the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), and was led by ILO and UNICEF.

ILO On-line: What is the benefit of targeting officials of governments, workers and employers organizations, NGOs and international organizations at the policy and outreach level?

Hans van de Glind: They all have a valuable role to play in fighting child trafficking. The manual helps to break down barriers that sometimes divide us, offers opportunities to appreciate our comparative advantages and paves the way for collaboration on reaching the target of eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) including child trafficking by 2016.

ILO On-line: What are the main issues and messages covered in this training manual?

Hans van de Glind: The manual puts child trafficking in a broader context of children's rights, labour markets and migration dynamics and underlines the need for a comprehensive multi-dimensional response to the complex issue of child trafficking. It points at the overarching need to understand vulnerability – to move beyond 'poverty' and explore a range of vulnerability factors that have an impact on the level of risk for each child: at individual child, family, community, institutional and workplace levels; and in source communities and at destination. In our responses to trafficking we should be clear about which children are (most) vulnerable and who creates the demand for exploitation (and where), and target our actions accordingly. For more on the labour dimension of child trafficking and other core messages of the training manual please see [Training manual: Main issues and messages](#).

Further information on child trafficking: Contact Hans van de Glind at vandeglind@ilo.org

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