



**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE (ILO)**  
**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR**  
**(IPEC)**  
**IN BULGARIA**

The ILO's **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC)** has been working in Central and Eastern Europe to provide technical and financial assistance to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and to implement the ILO's child labour conventions: Minimum Age Convention (1973) No.138 and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (1999) No.182. Since March 2004, Bulgaria is part of the projects implemented in the region under the common programming framework **Project of Technical assistance for the Elimination of Child labour, including Trafficking, in countries of Central and Eastern Europe (PROTECT CEE)** that also includes Albania, Kosovo (UNMIK), Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

ILO/IPEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Bulgarian Government in March 2005 laying the foundation for cooperation with to progressively prohibit, restrict and eliminate child labour in Bulgaria and increase awareness at national level on the causes, consequences and solutions to child labour.

The ILO core conventions on child labour have been ratified by Bulgaria, which include the ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, ratified in April 1981, and the ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, ratified in July 2001. These conventions, with accompanying recommendations, provide the legal framework for combating child labour in Bulgaria.

#### **Policy Upstream Work**

Following the signature of the MOU, institutional framework to address child labour was established, including a Child Labour Unit was established within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), the Directorate "Labour Conditions, Crisis Management and Alternative Service", and a National Steering Committee (NSC) for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour was established based on an Ordinance issued by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy (November 2005).

Although the Bulgarian legislation and policy were in general conducive towards protection of children, but further efforts were needed to mainstream the WFCL in a systematic way into legislation, policies, plans of action and programmes, as well as to support the enforcement of legislation.

ILO-IPEC Bulgaria mainstreamed child labour directly or through the National Steering Committee on Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour into relevant documents, as follows:

- The OSCE 'Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism' implemented in Bulgaria by Foundation Association Animus and the State Agency for Child Protection (May 2005).
- Government Ordinance no. 6, 2006 on "Terms and Conditions for Granting Permission for Work of Persons under 18 years of age". It lists the hazardous types of work children should not perform in the formal and the informal sectors.
- Annual National Programmes for Child Protection (2005 – 2008).
- Coordination Mechanism for Referral, Care and Protection of Repatriated Bulgarian Unattended Children signed by the Chair of the State Agency for Child Protection, Deputy Ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Labour and Social Policy and the Executive Director of the Agency for Social Assistance (in 2005 and currently in the process of its revision).
- National Strategy for the Child (2008-2018).
- National Reports on the Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2006-2008 and 2008 – 2010).
- National Programme for Prevention and Combat of Trafficking in Human Beings 2007.
- National Strategy on Human Rights Education 2008-2015 (draft).
- Standard Methodology for the Centres for Street Children.
- Cooperation Agreement on the Child Labour Monitoring signed among the General Labour Inspectorate, State Agency for Child Protection, and the Agency for Social Assistance (in June 2008).

Most of the listed documents were meant to lay the grounds for the development of the main IPEC model to combat WFCL – the Child Labour Monitoring System. ILO-IPEC Bulgaria particularly contributed to the revision and amendments to the Child Protection Act related to CLMS as follows: i/ the dropping out of school is listed as a risk factor that justifies public intervention for child protection, ii/ improvements in court procedures for provision of protection measures and iii/ setting out coordination mechanisms and national and local levels for child protection. The changes will ease the upscaling of CLMS into the agendas of relevant governmental bodies.

An important development in Bulgaria is that the sector of social services to children at risk or victims of WFCL such as: Crisis Centres for Children Victims of Trafficking, Centres for Street Children and Community Support Centres (that provide a number of services such as psychosocial counselling, non formal education, safe short term placement, etc.) is expanding. The service providers could be NGOs, municipalities or companies. Central Budget allocations are secured to maintain the above services at local level. The amounts are approved on an annual basis by the Government. The annual budget allocations are, as follows: 2008 - USD 622,696, 2009 - USD 1,495, 800. The advocacy efforts of IPEC Bulgaria and the partners contributed to this achievement.

## Capacity Building and Tools Development

Under the Action Programmes implemented in Bulgaria, capacity building activities were an important device to provide technical support to the Government and the social partners to successfully integrate the elimination of WFCL in their workplans and every day activities. During Phase I of the project (2004-2006)t, the following professionals received training on CLM and other child labour related issues:

- 34 labour inspectors,
- 75 social workers,
- 63 teachers trained in SCREAM or on CL monitoring;
- 60 leaders and members of Trade Unions trained on prevention of WFCL;

- 36 journalists trained to cover the topic of WFCL;
- 45 other professionals – members of the NSC, police, municipal officials, trained to carry out prevention type of activities and CL monitoring.

The capacity building activities were expanded during Phase II of the project (2006-2009) with a view to ensure the sustainability of the project results, to include:

- 52 professionals on CLM plus 14 experts trained as a Core Team of Trainers on CLMS to be used for further trainings,
- 30 social workers and psychologists trained on outreach social work to support the identification of child labourers;
- 28 officers from the regional Probation Offices to the Ministry of Justice – trained on CLMS in order to link the system of probation (as a sentence to children involved in illicit activities) to the CLMS.

The **tools produced in Bulgaria** for awareness raising on child labour and capacity building for professionals in the field are much valued by ILO-IPEC partners:

1. "Combating CL: A Handbook for Labour Inspectors" translated in Bulgarian, 2005
2. ILO 'Trade Unions and Child labour - Trade Union briefing on Convention 182' – translated in Bulgarian, 2005
3. A Handbook for Journalists on Child Labour, 2006
4. Manual on Child Labour Monitoring In Bulgaria, 2006
5. SCREAM - Supporting Children's Rights Through Education, The Arts And The Media, ILO, translated into Bulgarian, 2006
6. Sub-Regional Manual on Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Children Withdrawn from Trafficking and other WFCL, ILO-IPEC (translated into Bulgarian), 2007
7. Manual on Outreach Social Work in Bulgaria, 2007
8. ILO-IPEC Child Labour and Education - Questions and Answers' and 'Facts on Child Labour', translated into Bulgarian, 2008



### Models to combat WFCL and Direct Support to Children

Seven Action Programmes (APs) and over 20 Mini-Programmes, Terms of Reference and ExColls were implemented in Bulgaria in the framework of PROTECT CEE in 2004-2009. The Action Programmes aimed to ensure that children at risk or involved in WFCL receive direct support for their prevention or withdrawal

and that the good practices in working with children and their families that proved to be effective and efficient will be properly documented and disseminated for replication.

The AP “**Piloting CLMS in Bulgaria**” was implemented by CARE International – Bulgaria (2005-2007). CLMS was set up at institutional level in four target municipalities: Krasna Poliana, Vrabnica and Serdika in Sofia and Kurdjali. In addition to capacity building and tools production, 291 children (172 boys and 119 girls) were assisted. Out of them, 29 child labourers (11 boys and 18 girls) were identified by MDTs (begging, working in dump site and tobacco, restaurants and markets) and referred to appropriate services (cash benefits from the Child Protection Departments, material assistance to support the family for the new school year, enrolment in school/kindergarten, recreational and awareness raising activities, risk reduction materials – gloves and masks for 11 children at legal age working in hazardous conditions). Also, 262 children (101 girls and 161 boys) at risk of WFCL and their parents were referred to the Directorate for Social Assistance for receiving Income Support Benefits and Child Benefits. Children received also: material assistance to support the family for the new school year, recreational and awareness raising activities - peer education sessions. A total number of 226 parents of children direct beneficiaries received consultations on the risks and hazards of WFCL and the value of education. A Draft National Action Plan (NAP) against WFCL was prepared and presented for discussion in a NSC meeting.



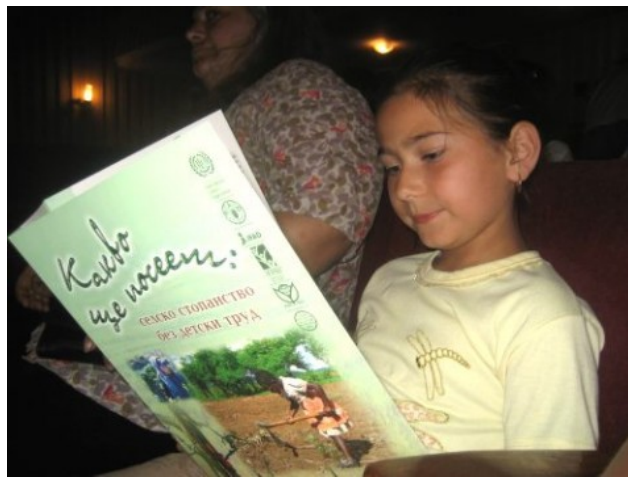
The Action Programme “**Mainstreaming the Combat against Worst Forms of Child Labour into the Agenda of Youth Clubs and Service Providers in Six Regions of Bulgaria**” was implemented by Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) (2005-2007). A training curriculum for peer educators was drafted and 52 youth



leaders were trained (TOT) on prevention of WFCL. 120 volunteers (aged 13-18) were trained by the peer educators to plan and implement activities for the prevention of WFCL. Trained peer educators and volunteers organized several activities in 16 schools and 12 social institutions, reaching 3,569 children (1,927 girls and 1,642 boys) through awareness raising peer based sessions on the impact of child labour on education, school arts competitions, and outdoor activities. The trained volunteers provided mentoring to 66 children (29 girls and 37 boys) withdrawn from WFCL in the day-care centres and shelters of BRC in Russe,

Pazardjik and Dobrich. The following awareness-raising materials were printed and disseminated in schools from the targeted areas and to the partners under the other IPEC APs: - 6,000 leaflets and 1,000 posters based on ILO Convention 182 and on the ILO Report 2006 - the End of CL within Reach.

Within the AP **“Prevention of Children at Risk to Enter Trafficking and Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Children Victims of Trafficking”** (2006-2007). implemented by Animus Association Foundation, 43 professionals from three residential care institutions in Sofia, Bracigovo and Podem, IA, State Agency for Child Protection and the Agency for Social Assistance increased their capacity to provide life skills training, rehabilitation and reintegration services to children at risk / victims of trafficking due to the trainings provided within the AP. 60 children (47 girls and 13 boys) from three residential institutions were prevented to enter WFCL by receiving life skills training and individual consultations. 29 children (21 girls and 8 boys) victims of trafficking were referred to Animus by the Child Protection Departments (CPDs) or other partners and received the following services: safe temporary accommodation, nutrition, health services, psychosocial counselling, clothes and shoes, referral to the Labour Office for vocational counselling and training (3 girls). 10 parents of the children victims of trafficking received consultations for good parenting. The IPEC Regional Manual on Psychosocial Rehabilitation of Children Withdrawn from trafficking and other WFCL was translated into Bulgarian and printed in 500 copies.



The AP **“Awareness Raising and Prevention of Worst Forms of Child Labour through Peer-to-Peer Education”** was implemented by UN Association of Bulgaria. 8 teachers/pedagogical advisers and 107 youth leaders from UN clubs in eight cities were trained on WFCL issues and have increased capacity to: 1/ provide peer-to-peer education and mentoring to children vulnerable to WFCL and 2/ organise media campaigns. They provided peer to peer educational sessions to 1,136 children (10-12 years old) from vulnerable families and mentoring programme to 199 children at risk to enter WFCL (individual help for homework and recreational outdoor activities). 3,408 parents and siblings received leaflets on WFCL. The mentoring programme was widely appreciated by both teachers and children. Two tools were drafted, published and distributed to the UN Clubs: 1/ Tool Kit on CL for youth (incorporated into the Bulgarian SCREAM) and 2/ a Notebook for the mentoring programme (activity not funded under this AP).

In the framework of the AP **“Media Campaign against the Worst Forms of Child Labour”** implemented by ProMedia Foundation, 19 reporters received information about WFCL. Two training seminars were held on 29 November and 5-6 December 2005 for 23 children. A “Handbook for Journalists” was drafted and printed in Bulgarian and English. 30 sector-based investigation reports describing the situation of the children in worst forms of child were published in the media. Journalists took part in the National contest for the best report piece with publication in regional / national media. The Award Committee was composed of relevant social partners and NGOs. The winner had produced a TV documentary on trafficking of Bulgarian children to Vienna (for begging purposes).

In the framework of the two APs still under the implementation in Bulgaria (by October 2009) – **“Capacity Building and Linking the Juvenile Justice System to the Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) in Bulgaria”** (implemented Social Activities and Practices Institute) and **Supporting the Up-scaling efforts of the Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS) in Bulgaria** (implemented by the Social Service Bulgaria)

- 471 children (270 boys and 201 girls) were withdrawn from WFCL and prevented of entering WFCL in agriculture, street work, sexual exploitation and illicit activities through provision of educational and other services, out of which 88 children (58 boys and 30 girls) were withdrawn from WFCL and 383 children (212 boys and 171 girls) were prevented of entering WFCL.
- Surveys on child labour in agriculture were conducted in 52 villages in the rural areas in Targovishte, Shumen and Pazardjik based on the List of hazardous work (that includes jobs linked to agriculture). The findings were used by the Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Local Action Committees to support identification of the direct beneficiaries.
- 52 professionals and 14 members of the Core Team of Trainers trained on Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS).
- 30 social workers and psychologists trained on outreach social work to support the identification of child labourers.
- 28 officers from the regional Probation Offices to the Ministry of Justice trained on CLMS in order to link the system of probation (as a sentence to children involved in illicit activities) to the CLMS. A help desk is ensured for providing telephone/e-mail backstopping on a regular basis to all trained probation officers.
- Continued backstopping was provided to 31 social workers, psychologists from three Crisis Centers in Sofia (Dragoman), Veliko Tarnovo (Balvan) and Pazardjik and local NGO representatives (trained on psychosocial counselling during Phase I) through four-hour monthly debriefing sessions.
- In order to up-scale the tools produced and the models piloted, a list of proposed amendments to the job descriptions of the officials and a 20-pages draft brochure on institution specific responsibilities as part of the CLMS.
- A Study on the Juvenile Justice System addressing the shortcomings in the legislation in the field and its implementation was drafted. Based on the study, a five-page policy briefing document for advocacy purposes was prepared and it is ready for printing out in 200 copies.
- Over 120 parents of former working children received: 1/ awareness raising sessions on the consequences of child labour, hazards and consequences of WFCL and 2/ family counselling. Over 30 local stakeholders, 130 parents and 810 children were involved in marking the WDACL 2009 in APs locations: Targovishte, Shumen and Pazardjik.

**Since work began in Bulgaria in 2004, ILO-IPEC has:**

- increased the knowledge base on the WFCL with over 10 manuals and guidelines used for capacity building with governments, social partners and implementing partners;
- provided direct services to about 6, 296 child labourers and children at risk;
- reinforced the legal and policy frameworks in line with ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182;
- tested intervention models like peer education, life skills, Child Labour Monitoring System (CLMS), and psycho-social rehabilitation of victims of trafficking.

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