



Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes



CHILD AND YOUTH VERSION

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.

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This document is based on the thematic paper of the World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. The original paper, Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes, written by Mike Dottridge, contains many references, examples and studies that are not included here. Readers are encouraged to consult the original thematic paper for more detailed information at: <http://www.ecpat.net/WorldCongressIII/index.php>. This document was prepared by Thomas Atwood.

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Glossary of key terms and concepts

Trafficking Protocol

An important international agreement that outlines what ‘trafficking in persons’ means and what must be done to prevent, stop and address it.

Child

For the purposes of this paper, the word ‘child’ will be used to talk about anyone below the age of 18, as per the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Child trafficking

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons below the age of 18 which results in exploitation.

Exploitation

To exploit someone means to take undue advantage of that person for another’s benefit. In this paper, the term will be used to refer to all forms of exploitation, including: sexual exploitation (tricking, deceiving, forcing someone to perform sexual acts against their will), forced labour, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, and the removal of organs.

At-risk

A term used to describe adults and children who, due to circumstances affecting their lives, have a higher likelihood of being trafficked or are otherwise ‘vulnerable’ to trafficking.

Targeted campaigns

Campaigns that concentrate on reaching specific groups of people that have been identified as at-risk.

Transnational trafficking

Trafficking of persons across international borders, from one country to another.

Risk assessment

The term used to describe the process of examining the pros and cons of different actions in order to determine which plan of action is best suited to the child.

Temporary legal guardian

Someone who temporarily fills the role of mother, father or responsible adult, in situations in which a child’s real parents or primary caretakers are not around or are not fit to take care of them.

Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the topics covered in the thematic paper on child sexual exploitation, *Child Trafficking for Sexual Purposes*, written by an expert on the issue, Mike Dottridge.

It begins by looking at one of the most important international agreements regarding child trafficking, the United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, (also known as the *Trafficking Protocol*) discussing the different aspects covered in the Protocol in relation to trafficking.

First, it addresses the question of why clear definitions of key terms such as ‘trafficking’ are needed and how this influences the different types of data that are needed to plan and make the efforts to prevent and address child trafficking more effective.

The paper then examines how governments and NGOs work to prevent child trafficking and looks at the actions that are being taken to protect and assist children who have already been trafficked.

Finally, it discusses the importance of coordination among different actors for effective anti-trafficking, highlighting recommendations on further action that can be taken for increasing collaboration at all levels in the future.

Although the focus of this paper is on child trafficking for sexual purposes, in many cases, the data about trafficking does not focus exclusively on this form of trafficking due to the fact that often the information available does not distinguish between the different forms of trafficking. As a result, you will find that this paper will often talk about trafficking in general. The information and the lessons learned from anti-trafficking initiatives at large are nevertheless valuable, as so many of these can be applied to trafficking for sexual purposes.

What does the Trafficking Protocol say about child trafficking?

In the last seven years, new international laws and protocols have had a large impact on the way we deal with child trafficking, including child trafficking for sexual purposes.

One of the most important international agreements regarding trafficking is the United Nations *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish the Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol)*.

The *Trafficking Protocol* is important for two main reasons: First, it provides us with standard definitions for important terms such as ‘child trafficking’ and ‘exploitation’. Second, it specifies the difference between child trafficking and trafficking of adults. This is extremely important as it determines how children are to be specially protected under the law in situations of trafficking.

The Protocol defines child trafficking as any case in which a child is recruited, transported, transferred, harboured or received for the purpose of exploitation, even if this does not involve any of the means that define trafficking of adults (force, deception, threat).

The key point to note is that even if a child was not tricked or forced or threatened and even if the child *consented* to go willingly, the child’s consent is irrelevant, as recruiting a child into exploitation is considered trafficking and against the law. The irrelevance of the consent of a child is an important difference with the trafficking of adults as it recognises that due to their age and developmental stage, children cannot be considered willing participants in their own exploitation or to have full understanding of all the consequences of their choices. Therefore, the fact that they may have agreed, for example,

to leave with a person offering them a modelling job in a neighboring country where they are then exploited, does not impact on their right to protection, as exploited children are always to be considered victims of a trafficking crime irrespective of their consent. Adults, on the other hand, because they are more able to judge situations of risk and consequences of their choices, must be able to demonstrate that they were tricked, forced or taken against their will in order to be considered victims of trafficking.

How does the Trafficking Protocol define ‘child trafficking’ and ‘exploitation’?

The *Trafficking Protocol* defines child trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation. This includes cases in which the child is recruited and moved within his/her own country, as well as cases in which the child is moved to a different country.

In general, to exploit someone means to take undue advantage of that person.

The *Trafficking Protocol*, however, is mostly concerned with certain ‘worst forms’ of exploitation. These are forms of exploitation that are extremely harmful both physically and emotionally to the child, such as a person being used for sexual purposes. According to the Protocol, exploitation includes all forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude and the removal of organs for commercial purposes.

Confusion over definitions

Although the *Trafficking Protocol* clearly outlines what trafficking is, there is still a lot of confusion over the definition of 'trafficking'.

Usually, when a country signs an international treaty such as the *Trafficking Protocol*, they are supposed to change their national laws to meet the international standards set by the treaty.

Unfortunately, it can be hard to make sure that countries do this, and sometimes it takes a long time before they do. As a result, there is still a lot of confusion surrounding the word 'trafficking', and people often use it to mean different things.

For example, some people use the word 'trafficked' to describe any child that is recruited for the purpose of being exploited. This includes children who have not been moved from one place to another. Other people only use the word 'trafficked' when they are talking about children who have been transported from one place to another.

Clear definitions and data collection

You may wonder why so much importance is given to the issue of definitions and in particular to having a clear definition of 'trafficking' that everyone agrees upon.

One reason is that without clear definitions of important words such as 'trafficking' and 'exploitation', it can be very difficult for governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to collect useful information about the crime of child trafficking, for example, the different ways that it happens, who is involved, what means are used to move children across borders or from one area to another, and what age children are trafficked for what purpose. Without clear definitions, it is hard to know, for instance, if the cases reported from different cities or countries are about the same type of crime or

if they relate to another type of offence. It is difficult to see patterns across areas and track increases or progress in tackling these crimes. This makes it difficult to interpret statistics about trafficking and to plan responses.

Example: The need for clear definitions

The government of country B estimates that there were 20,000 cases of trafficking in the last year. The data is published and organisations concerned want to take action. However, on the basis of this general information, it is hard to determine if the persons involved in these cases are children or adults, if they are boys or girls, if they are from a different part of the country or if they are from another country. Without knowing such information, it is impossible to understand the problem, what needs to be done, what kind of help the different people affected may need or even if they were all exploited through trafficking.

The need for specific data

Besides needing to collect meaningful data about the total number of children being trafficked, it is also important to collect data about other aspects related to the nature of the children that are trafficked.

Some recent studies, for example, have focused their research on questions such as:

- What are the characteristics of children that have been trafficked?
- What techniques have been used to traffic children?
- What kinds of people are involved in trafficking of children?
- Who are people that pay for sex with children?

Information of this kind allows governments and NGOs to focus their anti-trafficking

efforts on smaller, more targeted groups and to design more relevant strategies for specific situations and populations.

Example: Targeting prevention efforts

Research from one country showed that children who live in residential care are more likely to be trafficked than other children. Many of these children have been in institutions for long periods of time and may be susceptible to take risks in order to seek out new opportunities. They may run away from residential home care and respond to the false promises of traffickers.

This kind of analysis and information is useful because it indicates that residential care facilities are good places to focus prevention efforts.

Similarly, information about the techniques that traffickers use to traffic children can help law enforcement agents identify and rescue trafficked children more effectively.

It is therefore important for NGOs and governments to collect detailed and specific information about the different aspects of trafficking and not just overall general trends or the total number of people that are trafficked each year.

What can governments and NGOs do about child trafficking for sexual purposes?

In general, efforts to protect children from trafficking fall into two categories: (1) efforts to prevent children from being trafficked; and (2) efforts to protect and assist children who have already been trafficked. It is the responsibility of every government to protect all the children within its borders, even if those children are not nationals of that country. This is especially true for children who are in dangerous or difficult situations, such as children who are on the street, working children or those who have been trafficked.

Preventing children from being trafficked

Most people agree that in order to prevent child trafficking, we need to identify and address the underlying causes that make children and young people vulnerable to these crimes.

We have already talked a little bit about the importance of gathering accurate and detailed information about children who have been trafficked, the kinds of people involved in trafficking them and how they do this.

Research of this kind has made it clear that there are a wide variety of complex factors that contribute to child trafficking. It has

also been made clear that these factors can interact and combine to create risks at different levels. While some factors are directly linked to criminals that aim to traffic children, others are related to root causes that may involve a history of neglect or abuse by family and society that drive children into vulnerable situations.

As you will see, there are many different 'causes' of child trafficking and each of these needs to be well understood in order to be addressed in a different and appropriate way.

Some factors that contribute to child trafficking

Individual factors: Child neglect and abuse can increase the likelihood that a child is trafficked because it forces many children to run away from home to escape from the abuse and, therefore, take risks that can lead to them being exploited by traffickers.

Economic factors: Poverty is often a contributing factor because it encourages children to leave home to seek a better life, which leaves them vulnerable to traffickers and without adult and social protection.

Societal factors: Certain groups of children, such as children from minority, groups of ethnic populations as well as street children and disabled children are often at a higher risk of being trafficked because they are discriminated against or excluded by the rest of society and do not receive the same level of protection as other children in their society.

Cultural factors: The fact that girls and boys are not always treated in the same way (called gender bias/inequality) can also contribute to different forms of child trafficking. Girls for example, are very vulnerable to child trafficking for sexual purposes while boys may be more trafficked for labour. In those cultures where boys are valued more than girls, girls may be less protected and more easily recruited from families and communities.

Another example of a cultural factor that can impact child protection is the belief by some men who pay for sex that young people are less likely to have diseases such as HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Children are taken to these places where men buy sex from children.

Awareness raising campaigns

One way that governments and NGOs try to prevent child trafficking is by providing information and raising awareness among the public about trafficking.

In the past, these awareness raising

campaigns have aimed to reach as many people as they can with information about child trafficking. Television ads, posters, pamphlets and a variety of other methods have been used to inform adolescents and parents about the risks that young people can face from traffickers. Many of these campaigns provide information on the ways in which children are trafficked. In general, the message has been that it is dangerous to accept offers without careful investigation of what lies ahead, particularly where children are asked to leave home for better opportunities without knowing the reality of what is really awaiting them.

In some regions, so many of these campaigns have been launched that people have stopped taking them seriously. Unfortunately, in some areas, these campaigns have not provided useful or correct information. Overall, it has become clear that not all of these campaigns have been as effective as they could be.

Good examples show that in order to ensure that an awareness raising campaign is effective it is important to target messages and information to specific groups.

Example: Targeting an awareness raising campaign at a specific group

Fundaci3n Paniamor, an NGO in Costa Rica, conducted a study that identified two main trafficking routes in Costa Rica and the surrounding area.

They used this information to launch a targeted awareness raising campaign. For four months, 14 buses along the identified routes featured posters that explained how tempting job and travel offers and opportunities could lead young people to exploitation in the sex industry.

As a result of the campaign, Fundaci3n Paniamor received more than ten phone calls a week related to the issue, as well as more reports of child sexual exploitation.

A more complete approach to preventing child trafficking

The first step of every effort to prevent child trafficking should be to identify which children are at risk. Before doing anything else, governments and NGOs should figure out which groups of children, in which areas, are most vulnerable and face the highest level of risk to being trafficked.

Children at risk

It is common to refer to children who have a higher likelihood of being trafficked as children 'at risk'. Some examples of children at risk include:

- Children who migrate to another country without their parents;
- Children who have suffered abuse;
- Children from certain ethnic or minority groups;
- Children from certain socio-economic backgrounds;
- Children who live on the street; and
- Children that are orphaned.

Besides leading to targeted awareness raising campaigns, information on which children are at risk can also lead to other kinds of prevention efforts. Sometimes these efforts are not to prevent child trafficking directly, but instead focus on addressing the vulnerabilities that contribute to the problem in order to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Example: Preventing child trafficking by addressing its causes

In some countries, children who leave home, unaccompanied by parents, may come from poor or difficult family situations. They may leave home in order to escape violence, or are sent by their parents to find a job and help with money. Since these children usually do not have anyone to look after them, they are often prime targets for traffickers.

As a result, certain prevention campaigns have

focused on creating jobs for young people, so they do not have to leave home.

This is a good example of a prevention effort that does not address child trafficking directly, but can be effective in preventing it.

Demand and culture

Governments and NGOs are increasingly recognising the need to look for ways to decrease the demand for trafficked children, or, in other words, the number of persons who pay to have sex with children and who are looking for children for sex, or those who are not concerned when paying for commercial sex if it is with a young person. They believe that by decreasing the demand for sex with children, they can also decrease the number of children who are trafficked into the sex market.

This approach is very different from ones we have discussed so far.

Understanding efforts to reduce demand

Think of it this way: imagine that the child trafficking industry is like a production unit, and the product is the child. Most of the prevention efforts we have talked about so far have focused on cutting the supply of children that come out of the trafficking industry. However, there is also a need to work on decreasing the demand. To decrease demand requires a focus on changing the behaviour of those who pay for sex with children or the end 'consumers'. When the consumer market for children for sex, primarily made up of adult males, is cut off or no longer exists, traffickers will no longer be able to benefit from the sexual exploitation of children. The idea is that if no one will pay for sex with children, the people that entrap and sell children as a business, whether by offering children for sex on the street, in brothels or through call services or websites, will eventually stop these criminal activities because there is no longer a market or profits.

Reducing demand, however, is difficult. Often, the demand for trafficked children for sex is based on harmful but deeply rooted cultural beliefs and practices that are not seen as exploitative and are also based on economic criminal behaviour and the enormous profits that these generate, all of which those involved are unwilling to give up or change.

Law enforcement

Another way that governments and NGOs try to prevent child trafficking is by enacting tough laws, arresting and imprisoning members of trafficking rings and sometimes also the exploiters. The aim is to stop those involved in trafficking children, to punish them for the crimes they have committed against a child or many children, and to demonstrate that those who commit such violations against children will be caught, prosecuted and punished. This is much easier said than done.

One thing that complicates law enforcement efforts is, as was discussed earlier, the lack of clear definitions regarding what constitutes 'trafficking' and 'exploitation', a factor that can make it difficult to collect evidence against those who commit trafficking crimes.

In a sense, trying to arrest and convict someone for 'trafficking' without knowing exactly what 'trafficking' is, is like trying to give someone a speeding ticket without knowing what the speed limit is. Unless you have defined what the speed limit is, it is difficult to prove to what extent someone has gone above it. For example, many trafficked people are arrested as illegal migrants, when they are in fact trafficking victims. This confusion occurs because the differences between these types of situations are not well understood or defined. Smuggling occurs when a person pays to enter a country illegally – when they enter in this way, they are illegal immigrants but free to find their way. However, a person who is trafficked is brought into a country illegally but with the intent that once they arrive they will be used as an

object for exploitation and profit and will be entrapped into circumstances that allow their exploitation.

Another reason that law enforcement efforts are less effective than they could be is that many law enforcement officials lack the expertise to identify trafficked children. Later in this paper, we will discuss some of the reasons why it is difficult to identify child victims of trafficking.

As you might have guessed, traffickers know that they are breaking the law and usually go to great lengths to remain undetected. As a result, it requires a lot of training and additional resources to identify trafficked children and their traffickers. Unfortunately, the training and resources that are needed by law enforcement to do their jobs properly are not always available or the problem is not a priority for the government of the country.

Protection and assistance for children who have been trafficked

Now that we have discussed ways that governments and NGOs can prevent child trafficking, let us talk about what they can do to protect and assist children who have already been trafficked.

In 2003, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) developed a set of guidelines for assisting children who have been trafficked. These guidelines were updated in 2006.

The guidelines focus on how trafficked children can be identified, how they should be cared for and how they should be treated during legal proceedings (as victims of crimes that need to receive special protection and should not be blamed, under any circumstances, for what happened to them).

The UNICEF guidelines also suggest that a legal guardian or someone who temporarily fills in for the child's parents should be assigned to every victim of child trafficking in order to ensure that there is someone

to advocate for the child's best interests. This is important because many trafficked children have been separated from their parents, families and people they trust in their communities and do not have anyone to help them.

You might be surprised to find out that helping trafficked children is much more complicated than simply rescuing them from trafficking. In fact, there are a number of things that complicate efforts to protect and assist trafficked children.

Determining the age of trafficking victims

Sometimes law enforcement officials incorrectly conclude that a child who has been rescued from trafficking is actually an adult. Since it is easier to avoid suspicion and questioning when you move young people over 18 years of age across international borders, it is common for traffickers to provide adolescents and children with fake identification showing that they are over 18 years of age. This makes it difficult for law enforcement officials to determine the real age of some trafficking victims, practically adolescents who may be made to look older than they are.

Often, the laws concerning children who are rescued from trafficking are very different from the laws concerning adults in the same situation. If a child victim of trafficking is mistaken for an adult, he or she is unlikely to receive the special protection that children deserve according to international law.

There have been a number of cases in which children who have been trafficked for sexual purposes have been mistaken for adults and arrested and jailed in various countries around the world. This is not altogether surprising, since many trafficked children are made to participate in illegal activities such as begging, stealing or selling drugs and sex. But the children who are trafficked must be considered victims of crimes committed against them and should, therefore, not be punished, but protected and assisted.

Presumption of victim status

In order to ensure that trafficked children receive the help they deserve, a number of countries require that in cases where there is a question regarding whether a victim of trafficking is a child or not, the law enforcement officials involved in the case must assume that the trafficking victim is a child and accord them the assistance that is to be given to a child, until it can be proven otherwise. In some countries, trafficking victims who may be children are given the benefit of the doubt when their age cannot be determined, and are treated as children. This is sometimes referred to as the '*presumption of victim status*'.

Identifying and helping trafficked children

Just as it is sometimes hard to determine how old a child is, it can also be hard to determine whether or not a child has been trafficked. There are a lot of children who decide to leave home for various personal reasons, such as difficult family circumstances or social problems, and it can be tough to distinguish children who are being trafficked from other children on the move. Although children who are being trafficked may have been deceived, recruited and entrapped into exploitation in particular ways, there are not any visible characteristics that set them apart from other children.

Presumed trafficked person

In order to help as many people as possible, some governments have also adopted the practice of '*presumed trafficked person*', which calls for law enforcement to assume that a person is a victim of trafficking if the evidence available at the time suggests that they are likely to be a victim of trafficking - even where the status of situation is not one hundred per cent certain. This practice ensures that as many people/children as possible benefit from protection and anti-trafficking programmes and services.

Unfortunately, adoption of '*presumption*' practices is still quite rare, and most governments seem reluctant to adopt this kind into law.

Techniques to help identify trafficked children

One reason why it is difficult to identify trafficked children is that they are often afraid to approach law enforcement or other officials for help. Many trafficked children enter the country illegally, without proper identification, and are afraid to go to the police because they think they will be arrested or deported.

As a result, in order to identify as many victims of trafficking as possible, it is important to provide children with non-threatening ways to seek help. In many cases, children feel more comfortable going to drop-in centres or talking to social workers on the street than approaching a police officer or talking to someone at a hospital. Telephone help lines are also a good way to encourage children to seek help, and have been used around the world to identify trafficked children.

Assisting Victims of Child Trafficking

A key question that all anti-trafficking efforts must consider is: What needs to be done once a child victim of trafficking has been identified?

The first step in providing assistance to a trafficked child is a risk assessment. This means that the pros and cons of each possible plan of action to assist the child in the short and long term are examined before any one plan of action is chosen, taking into consideration the best interests of the child.

As mentioned earlier (in reference to the need for legal guardians), the best interests of the child needs to be the primary concern in weighing and deciding every action. This is why a risk assessment is so important.

For example, if a child has been trafficked from one country to another, it is important to assess all the risks that a child may face in their place of origin before deciding on when and how a child can return home safely. If the child came from an abusive family, for instance, it is probably in their best interest to send him or her back home without working with the family and ensuring that the necessary support is in place to safeguard the child from being at risk again.

It is also important to ask the child what he or she wants. Sometimes, victims are young children and need to be assisted to think through all the consequences of their choices, while in general, the child's views should be taken into account as much as possible.

Overall, the first priority of every government, law enforcement official or NGO should be to ensure that child victims of trafficking receive immediate support and care and are not placed in situations where they may be at risk of re-victimisation.

Unfortunately, there are many examples of cases in which child victims of trafficking were not protected properly, and as a result fell back into the hands of traffickers. This can happen because government and other agencies neglect to put in place the proper safety procedures or do not safeguard all children equally, discriminating against some due to nationality or status.

Ensuring individualised assistance

As a rule, every case of child trafficking should be dealt with on an individual basis. Governments should carefully review the specific circumstances of each case in order to determine what needs to be done. As we have already mentioned, it is not always safe for children to return home. Many child victims of trafficking are recruited from high-risk environments and, unless something is done to make those environments safer, sending them home could lead to them being trafficked again, because, for example, when they return they face hostilities that lead them to run away to escape harm, abuse or deprivation.

In these cases, other forms of care (such as assistance to link them and support them with other extended family members may be required, especially as family is ideally the best place for children) should be made available to these children, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that these children are assisted and cared for. In many countries, NGOs have also set up shelter homes and residential care facilities for children to assist them to recover until they can return home safely.

Some residential care facilities have a hard time deciding how much freedom their residents should have.

Many organisations that run residential

shelters are concerned that traffickers who have entrapped children will try to intimidate them in order to take them back. Such cases are not uncommon. Certain children also develop a psychological dependency on their traffickers, or fear repercussion on their families and there is some concern that such victims will try to return to traffickers.

Example: Preventing victims from returning to the hands of traffickers

In the Netherlands, there have been a number of cases in which young men promise love or marriage to girls under 18 years of age, and then force them to have sex for money instead. Sometimes these girls fall in love with their traffickers and try to escape from residential shelters in order to return to them.

As a result, some organisations keep their shelters 'closed', meaning that they do not let the children leave without permission and they do not let members of the public enter. Some children try to escape from these places, as they can resemble prisons, and when they leave they become vulnerable to traffickers again.

Some people, including some of the children in such residential settings, think being restricted to life behind closed doors is a violation of child rights. One solution that has been used is to separate children into groups – identifying children whose movements should be restricted (due to high risk to their safety) and children who can have more open movement and come and go without risk. In this way, different situations are assessed and there is less chance of young people losing their right to move freely unnecessarily.

Victims of trafficking for sexual purposes

Children who have been trafficked for sexual purposes require specialised assistance.

While all forms of trafficking are violations against children, trafficking for sexual purposes can be particularly traumatic. Many

victims of commercial sexual exploitation suffer from forms of emotional and/or psychological trauma and pain.

As a result, it is generally agreed that victims of trafficking for sexual purposes require specialised psychosocial care with a psychologist as well as with the support of victim support groups that focus on those that have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, whereby they can share their fears and problems and challenges as they move towards recovery.

Unfortunately, in many parts of the world, there are not enough resources to provide every victim of sexual exploitation with the professional care and support he or she needs.

In several regions, however, organisations have found that children and young people

who have themselves experienced sexual exploitation are able and can be trained to provide peer support for other victims to assist them with their recovery process.

One programme in Bangladesh, for example, provides adolescents who have been sexually exploited with an opportunity to interact with each other. These exchanges help them realise that they are not alone as well as assist them to develop new positive and trusting relationships. It also helps them change the way they think of themselves as they move from victims to survivors and supporters.

Often, victims of sexual exploitation feel guilty about what they have been made to do. Support programmes like the one in Bangladesh can help them transform a negative self-image by assisting them to take positive roles as peer supporters, youth advocates and community leaders.

Helping trafficked children return home

For some victims of child trafficking, returning home is an acceptable and desirable long-term solution.

As we have already pointed out, returning a child to the same situation from which he or she was trafficked is unacceptable. Therefore, before sending a child home, it is critical to examine and assess all the factors that led to his or her being trafficked.

Economic and social factors are often root problems. As a result, almost everyone agrees that long-term solutions need to be both economically and socially viable. This means that every child victim of trafficking should receive economic support and other services when he or she gets home, which gives them a good foundation for a new start.

There are a number of different ways to make sure this happens.

Example: Economically viable long-term solutions

In some cases, older children who have been sent home after being rescued from traffickers have been sent to vocational schools (schools where they learn a specific skill set, like how to be a mechanic or an electrician), placed in apprenticeships or have been given jobs to make sure they have enough money to live. Victims (or their families) have also been given small grants or loans to help them finish school or start a new career.

A number of NGOs and advocates have suggested that victims of trafficking should receive compensation to help them make up for some of the losses they have suffered because of the crimes committed against them. After all, victims of other crimes and

incidents, such as theft and car crashes, frequently receive compensation money for their personal losses. Unfortunately, very few child or adult victims of trafficking have ever been compensated or financially assisted in any way.

Legal proceedings

It is also important to look at how legal proceedings affect victims of child trafficking. In other words, how do the laws and legal processes that different governments use to deal with traffickers and trafficking victims affect children who have been rescued from trafficking?

As mentioned earlier, the lack of clear definitions makes it difficult for law enforcement officials to build cases against traffickers. In order to get around this, officials sometimes arrest traffickers for crimes that are easier to prove, such as assisting a child to enter a country illegally. You might think that this is not a big deal, as long as the traffickers are put in jail, but sometimes it has a negative effect on the children involved.

Example: The need for clear definitions in legal proceedings

In certain countries, children are only given special assistance if they are proven to be victims of trafficking. As a result, when traffickers are arrested for lesser crimes, their victims do not always get the kind of help and protection that they need, as they are not recognised as victims of trafficking.

Cases against traffickers have also been undermined by victims' unwillingness to testify.

You will be wondering why someone would not want to testify against the person who exploited them.

Some children are afraid that the trafficker or the trafficker's friends will come after them or their family if they testify. Others are intimidated by the legal process, and unfortunately, they usually have every right to be.

In many countries, children are asked to recount their traumatic experiences in the court and may have to come face-to-face with their traffickers to do so. Both of these experiences can be intimidating and psychologically damaging for children. Some governments have recognised how hard and dangerous it can be for children to testify and have tried to make legal proceedings safer and more child-friendly.

Example: Child-friendly legal proceedings

In the Netherlands, children are not questioned in court. Instead, they are interviewed by the police, who then relay the information to the court. In some other countries, children are allowed to testify through video recordings so they do not have to be physically present in court. More of these child-friendly models need to be replicated around the world to help trafficked children.

Coordination

Now that we have talked about preventing child trafficking and assisting trafficked children, let us talk about how coordination (the ways that different agencies and actors can work together) can make prevention, protection and assistance efforts more effective.

In order to address the diverse factors that contribute to child trafficking, efforts to prevent child trafficking and protect trafficked children have to respond to the range of specific circumstances and factors that impact on children in different environments.

With so much to do, different organisations usually end up focusing on a specific part of the problem. For example, one organisation might focus on working with communities to identify trafficked children, while another might focus on directly assisting child victims of trafficking with medical care and shelter.

Unless organisations coordinate their efforts, children will continue to slip between the cracks and their problems will not be addressed comprehensively. They may receive some help, but without a broad range of interventions to address their problems their recovery will be more difficult and painful. There is also a need for new actors in society to get involved. For example, corporations (private companies) need to get involved in efforts such as prevention and coordinating with others' efforts. Certain corporations offer money and other types of assistance for government and NGO programmes to support their anti-trafficking work but they can also get involved in campaigns or help, advise or distribute public information material on child trafficking through their services and facilities (hotels, buses, taxis, etc).

In fact, coordination among different types of actors is needed and has to happen on a number of levels. In recent years, a number of countries have also developed national coordination structures. These structures are in charge of coordinating efforts between NGOs, government agencies, private and academic institutions and other actors.

For example, there may be many organisations trying to prevent child trafficking, but not enough organisations providing direct assistance to children who have been trafficked. A national coordination structure would be in charge of pointing out this imbalance and suggesting a way to fix it. There is also a need for coordination at local level.

In particular, it is important for organisations that work on identifying trafficked children to coordinate their efforts with groups that provide care and assistance to children.

Many different people have to work together to ensure that each child is given the specific kind of help he or she needs.

Finally, there is a need for coordination at the international level. In many cases, children are trafficked across international borders, and in these cases, agencies from different countries and governments have to work together to respond to these cases and to ensure that the child has assistance and help to return home. In these cases, law enforcement officials from the different countries also have to coordinate their efforts, because evidence related to the case of exploitation of the child needs to be collected in all the different places that it occurred.

Because children are trafficked across international borders, in general, actions related to prosecuting traffickers, preventing child trafficking and protecting trafficked children requires and depends on international coordination.

Conclusion and recommendations for the future

In this paper, we have talked about a number of different topics related to the issue of child trafficking. Some of the key lessons we have learned are:

- Much more can be done to prevent child trafficking than telling parents and children that it happens, and relying on law enforcement officers to stop it.
- In order to make anti-trafficking efforts more effective, there is a great need for different groups and organisations to coordinate their efforts.
- Effective prevention efforts must also address the reasons why children have been trafficked, and not only focus on addressing child trafficking or sexual exploitation when it happens.
- Children who have been trafficked for any purpose deserve to be protected and assisted, and guidelines should be established and used to make sure they receive support in which their best interest and rights are protected.
- Long-term solutions for trafficked children should be tailored to each individual on a case-by-case basis to make sure that children are not returned to unsafe situations or withheld from needed support.
- Child victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation have the potential to make important contributions to anti-trafficking efforts when we give them the opportunity to participate in the programmes designed to help them.

Based on everything we have talked about in this paper, the author of the original thematic paper on child trafficking for sexual purposes

has made a number of suggestions for the future.

These have been divided into two groups:

1. Actions to be achieved as soon as possible

- Based on the analysis of data collected from children who have been rescued from trafficking, governments and NGOs should take action to address the different (economic, social, policy and other) factors that contribute to child trafficking.
- Establish and strengthen cooperation between groups that rescue children and groups that provide protection and assistance to victims of trafficking in order to make sure victims receive the full range of support and care they need and deserve.
- Make sure that everyone who might be a child victim of trafficking is treated as a child and is given all the protection that he or she is entitled to, including a temporary legal guardian.

2. Actions to be achieved by 2013

- Carefully examine legal proceedings to make sure that laws and legal processes make it as easy as possible to catch traffickers and prove that they are guilty.
- Encourage cooperation between groups in different countries to make sure victims of transnational trafficking receive support and protection, and are not returned to unsafe situations.
- Set up at least one programme or campaign to deal with one or more of the cultural or societal values that encourage child trafficking for sexual purposes.

ECPAT International is a global network of organisations and individuals working together to eliminate child prostitution, child pornography and the trafficking of children for sexual purposes. It seeks to encourage the world community to ensure that children everywhere enjoy their fundamental rights free and secure from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation.



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