



THE LENINGRAD REGION, RUSSIA

March 2004

FACT SHEET

In June 1999 the International Labour Conference in Geneva unanimously adopted a new Convention dealing with the issue of the worst forms of child labour (# 182). Through its International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) the ILO launched a massive campaign against child labour and its worst forms calling for the global ratification of Convention # 182. The worldwide focus on abhorrent forms of child labour such as forced labour, engagement into prostitution, illicit activities and hazardous work gave the ILO's technical cooperation a new East-European dimension matched by a rise in child labour projects.

The 2003 – 2004 IPEC project in the Leningrad Region was designed as an initial action against the worst forms of child labour. The project's background reflects the findings of the 2001 IPEC survey in the region and the Russian authorities' increasing pursuit¹ to improve the protection of children's rights. The IPEC survey² carried out in 2001 in the Leningrad Region revealed an alarming growth in the number of children forced into severe forms of exploitative and dangerous work, such as prostitution and other of the worst forms of child labour. The Government of the Leningrad Region being fully aware of the critical situation of working street children took the leading role in a project targeted at the elimination of child labour in the region. Along with the central Government of the region, some municipal authorities (in particular, the Vssevolzhsk and Priozersk municipalities) have demonstrated political will and increasing capacities to tackle the problem at a local level. With child labour being a new issue for the official structures, the Government is

referring to the ILO's experience, in particular the one gained in the IPEC St. Petersburg Project.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The IPEC Project is very much focused on developing the capacities of local institutions to coordinate the child labour campaign. One of the key instruments is the development of the regional child labour policy.

Developing a Policy for the Administration of Priozersk against Sexual Exploitation of Working Street Girls. IPEC has contributed to the creation of a local policy framework against the sexual exploitation of girls. As the problem of the exploitation of girls being addressed – these girls being the most vulnerable among children – the policy reflects modern understanding and is new for Russia.



Cover page of the "Priozersk Policy Against the Sexual Exploitation of Underage Girls".

The created Policy Document covered the first phase of the campaign against child labour in the Priozersk District, preparing the foundation for a concerted action to rehabilitate and prevent child labour and its worst forms among street girls.

¹ In particular, the Russian President's January 2002 statement on street children provided the impetus for child programmes.

² In-depth analysis of the situation of working street children in the Leningrad Region 2001. ILO/IPEC Working Paper. ILO 2002.

The Child Labour Policy of the Leningrad Region.

In early 2004 the Leningrad Government adopted its child labour policy and a plan of action with clear objectives, outputs, activities and indicators, regarding the issue. The document defines the tasks, roles and responsibilities of the participating institutions. The elaboration of the respective policy was linked to the given mandates each institution possesses in the social protection system, tuned to the task of addressing the issue of child labour. Simultaneously, it led to establishing a **Child Labour Unit** within the Government which will largely take over policy implementation functions with respective units established/developed within its major partner institutions (e.g. Labour Inspectorate, police, local authorities, medical authorities).



Cover page of the "Initial Policy Framework of the Leningrad Region against Child Labour and Its Worst Forms".

Creation of a Child Labour Free Safe Zone: At the moment the IPEC Project is largely implemented in the two bordering districts of the Leningrad Region: the Vssevolzhsk and Priozersk Districts. The local administrations have initiated experience sharing and planning between the social experts of both districts. It will strengthen collaboration between the local organizations and committees dealing in the protection of children's rights. Thus a 'bridgehead' for the further extension of models of prevention and rehabilitation of child labour and its worst forms in the Region will be created. The signing of a Memorandum between the Priozersk and Vssevolzhsk district administrations is also envisaged. The document will provide the outlines of the political and practical cooperation on the prevention and rehabilitation of child labour and its worst forms. This Memorandum will serve as a basis for developing proposals and recommendations for the DFID on-going Poverty Reduction umbrella project and its Project 4: Families and Children. The Safe Zone model, earlier developed by IPEC St. Petersburg, will be suggested as the central instrument in achieving sustainable impact on the situation of working street children.



Participants of the Experience Sharing and Planning Workshop in Priozersk at the Social Shelter of the Priozersk District.

DIRECT ACTION

Direct Support to Working Street Girls in Priozersk: This Action Programme is based on the above Policy Against the Sexual Exploitation of Underage Girls developed by the Priozersk administration. It is supporting a Rehabilitative Centre for Working Street Girls in Priozersk, as well as providing consultancy assistance to the Centre's staff. At this pilot stage it is planned to render help to 20 working street girls. As confirmed by the local and regional authorities, this model will later be financed by the local budget and replicated in other territories.



Girls in the Rehabilitative Centre for Working Street Girls in Priozersk

Comprehensive Rehabilitative and Preventative Model for Working Street Children and Their Families in the Vssevolzhsk District of the Leningrad Region: The Action Programme's aim is to create a model of a socio-rehabilitation centre in order to provide comprehensive support to working street children and their families. This model is being applied in the Vssevolzhsk District, which the regional authorities have chosen as the main pilot site. Later they envisage to apply this model to other districts of the Leningrad Region.

The model is based on the existing practices of social work developed by IPEC and its partners in St. Petersburg with special focus on the elimination of child labour and its worst forms. An additional sustainability factor while creating the model is the modern multi-purpose equipment of the Centre provided by the district. The Centre is designed to reach out to various target groups (girls, boys, parents).

Four modules are operational in the Centre: *street social services, comprehensive rehabilitation of working street girls (30 girls), self-help groups (30 families), and medical services (100 children).*



The library of the Vssevolozhsk Rehabilitative Centre where IPEC has started the rehabilitation action programme for working street children.

In December 2003, in order to secure the effective prevention of child labour and the rehabilitation of working street children, a training and experience-sharing workshop was organized. Its aim was to acquaint the staff of the Centre and the representatives of the concerned organizations with modern strategies of prevention of child labour and rehabilitation of its victims. The training was carried out by experts who took an active part in the implementation of IPEC Projects in St. Petersburg (Women's Labour Exchange, Child Protection Foundation, Humanitarian Action).



Training and awareness-raising workshop in Vssevolozhsk

School Based Child Labour Monitoring System Established in Selected Territories of the Vssevolozhsk District: This preventative approach is

being implemented in four selected schools of the Vssevolozhsk District, located in the settlements *Vartemaki, Bugry, Rahja, and Sverdlova*. Based on the detailed Plans of Action developed by school experts in cooperation with the education authorities, **120 children at risk** will receive social, psychological and pedagogical help. The schools have been selected on the basis of dropout rates, and will afterwards be used as pilot sites for testing the created model. The Plan of Action and methodical recommendations of the district education authorities will be submitted to the regional Government for further dissemination and application.

COOPERATION IN THE REGION

ILO/IPEC action programmes in the Leningrad Region are actively supported by **the Nordic Council of Ministers**, whose St. Petersburg Office contributed to the 2001 survey of working street children. Substantial support has been committed to the Vssevolozhsk Rehabilitation Centre for working street children.

DFID Poverty Reduction Project: According to the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Leningrad Region Government and DFID in March 2002, a three-year poverty reduction project in the Region was launched in 2003. As defined in the DFID Project Documentation, the project's goal is to increase the effectiveness of social and health services provided to socially excluded families and vulnerable children. This would be done through building capacity in the regional and selected municipal authorities to develop and deliver family-focused social and health services. The DFID Project will promote an inter-sectoral approach, bringing together all the agencies involved in child and family social and healthcare protection (social protection, education, health, employment services and internal affairs) as well as relevant NGOs and civil society organizations. Most of the attention will be paid to the nine depressed areas identified jointly by DFID and the regional authorities, the Priozersk District being one of them. The regional authorities welcome the support of the IPEC models from the DFID Project.