

Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Russia is an associated member of ILO-IPEC.³⁶⁶¹ In January 2000, the government began working with ILO-IPEC on a 3-year project to rehabilitate working street children in St. Petersburg.³⁶⁶² The program has included awareness-raising workshops for local government officials and the establishment of an action committee to develop recommendations for city government.³⁶⁶³ The Government of Russia has also supported the development of ILO-IPEC working papers on the situation of working street children in St. Petersburg,³⁶⁶⁴ the surrounding Leningrad region, and Moscow.³⁶⁶⁵ In 2003, ILO-IPEC began to develop a model rehabilitation project for working street children in the Leningrad region, and to work with the government to establish a regional child labor working group.³⁶⁶⁶ The Ministry of Labor and Social Development is working with UNICEF to establish a number of regional child rights ombudsmen.³⁶⁶⁷ USAID also assists the government in efforts to prevent child abandonment and strengthen community services for children in the regions of Tomsk, Khabarovsk, and Magadan.³⁶⁶⁸

In 2002, President Vladimir Putin called for immediate measures to address the problem of working street children. In response, the Ministry of Labor established a hotline for reporting cases of child abuse, including the problem of street children.³⁶⁶⁹ In August of the same year, the government initiated a 4-year USD 200 million “Children of Russia” program to improve child welfare, among other goals.³⁶⁷⁰ The program has expanded the number of institutions serving orphans, street children, and children and families at risk throughout the country.³⁶⁷¹ Also in 2002, the Governor of St. Petersburg, a trade union federation, and employers signed an agreement aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labor.³⁶⁷²

³⁶⁶¹ ILO-IPEC, *IPEC Action Against Child Labour: Highlights 2002*, Geneva, 2002, 16.

³⁶⁶² U.S. Consulate– St. Petersburg, *unclassified telegram no. 1504*, July 17, 2002.

³⁶⁶³ The action committee consists of trade union, police, academic, employer, religious and other NGO representatives. See *Ibid.* The project has also established teacher training in schools with high dropout rates, directed families with at-risk children to existing services, and provided rehabilitation to young girls living on the street and food, health care, and other necessities to street children. See U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*, October 2002.

³⁶⁶⁴ ILO-IPEC, *In-depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in St. Petersburg 2000*, St. Petersburg, 2001, 8; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/russia/ra/street_s.pdf.

³⁶⁶⁵ ILO-IPEC, *In-Depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in Moscow 2001*, Moscow, 2002, 6; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/russia/ra/street_m.pdf. See also ILO-IPEC, *In-Depth Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in the Leningrad Region 2001*, St. Petersburg, 2002, 8; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/russia/ra/street_l.pdf. ILO-IPEC has provided training to social workers and school personnel in Moscow on child labor issues. See U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*, September 16, 2003.

³⁶⁶⁶ U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁶⁷ Such positions have been established in the cities of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg, and in the regions of Arzamas Volkskiy, Novgorod, Chechnya, Ivanovo, and Volgograd. Ombudsmen only have the authority to request enforcement actions from government agencies. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices– 2002: Russia*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18388pf.htm>.

³⁶⁶⁸ U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁶⁹ U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*. See also U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁷⁰ The program also aims to improve children’s health and prevent juvenile crime. See U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁶⁷¹ The Ministry of Labor estimates, however, that thousands more centers are necessary to meet the demand for services. See U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁷² U.S. Embassy– Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

The government has developed a National Plan of Action on children's rights,³⁶⁷³ and has a federal commission headed by the Minister of Labor and Social Development that focuses on child labor and education issues.³⁶⁷⁴ Some regional governments, particularly Samara and Novgorod, have given priority to providing assistance to abandoned children, while other regions, such as Primorskiy Kray, have chronically under-funded children's programs.³⁶⁷⁵ The government has engaged in various awareness-raising efforts on the problem of trafficking,³⁶⁷⁶ and has begun a project to develop a regional commission against trafficking and to establish a center to assist victims.³⁶⁷⁷

In 1997, the World Bank provided a loan to the Russian government for a 7-year project to improve the quality of social science education, strengthen school management, and increase textbook quality and availability in secondary schools.³⁶⁷⁸ In 2001, the government received World Bank financing for an Education Reform Project to improve general and vocational education and to enhance public educational spending.³⁶⁷⁹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Recent statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Russia are unavailable. Reports indicate, however, that child labor is a problem in the informal sector.³⁶⁸⁰ The breakup of the Soviet Union and the transition to a market economy have increased poverty levels in Russia, and in 2002, the World Bank reported that children had a higher poverty rate than the population as a whole.³⁶⁸¹ Economic downturn, the deterioration of social services, and the erosion of family protections have led to an increase in the number of street children in the country.³⁶⁸² Estimates of the number of street children range from 100,000 to 150,000, with possibly 3 million additional children at risk of living on the streets.³⁶⁸³ Experts surveyed by ILO-IPEC in 2001 generally agreed that

³⁶⁷³ Deputy Prime Minister and Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation, Valentina Matvienko, Statement at the United Nations Special Session on Children, May 10, 2002; available from <http://www.un.org/ga/children/russiaE.htm>.

³⁶⁷⁴ In addition to government efforts to assist children at risk of working or living on the street, USAID is working with international and local NGOs on an "Assistance to Russian Orphans" project that seeks to prevent child abandonment, promote policy change and increase public awareness on the problems of orphans. See U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁶⁷⁵ U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Russia*, Washington, D.C., June 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21277.htm>.

³⁶⁷⁷ U.S. Embassy- Helsinki, *unclassified telegram no. 769*, June 13, 2003.

³⁶⁷⁸ The project also provides assistance to universities. See World Bank, *Education Innovation Project*, [online] November 5, 2003 [cited November 5, 2003]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P008825>.

³⁶⁷⁹ World Bank, *Education Reform Project*, project appraisal document, Washington, D.C., April 30, 2001, 4; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P050474>.

³⁶⁸⁰ See also ILO-IPEC, *Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in Moscow*, 36. See also U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁶⁸¹ World Bank, *Memorandum of the President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Finance Corporation to the Executive Directors on a Country Assistance Strategy of the World Bank Group for the Russian Federation*, Report No: 24127-RU, Washington, D.C., May 14, 2002, 1, 3; available from [http://www.worldbank.org.ru/ECA/Russia.nsf/ECADocByUnid/B38DE4AEF2AEB41EC3256CB50033CC73/\\$FILE/Russia%20CAS%2024127-RU.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org.ru/ECA/Russia.nsf/ECADocByUnid/B38DE4AEF2AEB41EC3256CB50033CC73/$FILE/Russia%20CAS%2024127-RU.pdf).

³⁶⁸² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6d. See also ILO-IPEC, *Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in Moscow*, 17. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Russian Federation*, CRC/C/15/Add.110, United Nations, Geneva, November 1999, para. 12; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/f60a0928c30f787980256811003b8d5d?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/f60a0928c30f787980256811003b8d5d?Opendocument).

³⁶⁸³ World Bank, *Memorandum of the President*, 4. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, 1745-52, Section 5, which estimates that 50,000 children a year run away from home.

there were between 30,000 and 50,000 street children in Moscow.³⁶⁸⁴ Children work in informal retail services, perform apprenticeships in small shops, sell goods on the street, wash cars, deliver goods, and collect trash.³⁶⁸⁵

Children in Russia are engaged in prostitution³⁶⁸⁶ and pornography.³⁶⁸⁷ Children are trafficked for sexual exploitation from Russia to various countries, including China,³⁶⁸⁸ and are trafficked internally generally from rural to urban areas.³⁶⁸⁹ There are reports that rebel forces in Chechnya recruit and use child soldiers.³⁶⁹⁰

Primary education is free until age 15, but the Law on Education allows a child to finish school at the age of 14 with parental and government approval.³⁶⁹¹ Most families pay additional fees for books and school supplies.³⁶⁹² There are no primary school enrollment or attendance rates available for Russia.³⁶⁹³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for regular employment at 16 years,³⁶⁹⁴ and regulates the working conditions of children under 18, including bans on overtime, hazardous work, and night work.³⁶⁹⁵ Children may work at ages 14 and 15 with parental approval, as long as such work does not threaten their health and welfare.³⁶⁹⁶ The Constitution prohibits forced labor.³⁶⁹⁷ Articles 132- 135 of the Criminal Code prohibit forcing a minor under the age of 14 to engage in sex or any acts of perversion, while Article 151 of the Code prohibits involvement of a minor in prostitution.³⁶⁹⁸ Although there are no specific legal provisions concerning child pornography,³⁶⁹⁹ Article

³⁶⁸⁴ ILO-IPEC, *Analysis of the Situation of Working Street Children in Moscow*, 21.

³⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁶⁸⁶ Donna M. Hughes, *Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation: The Case of the Russian Federation*, No. 7, IOM, Geneva, June 2002, 17; available from <http://www.iom.int/documents/publication/en/mrs%5F7%5F2002.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6d and 6f.

³⁶⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6f. See also Hughes, *Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation*, 24.

³⁶⁸⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- Russia*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6f.

³⁶⁸⁹ Hughes, *Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation*, 17. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- Russia*.

³⁶⁹⁰ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers 1379 Report*, London, November 2002, 76; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/cs/childsoldiers.nsf/6be02e73d9f9cb8980256ad4005580ff/c560bb92d962c64c80256c69004b0797?OpenDocument>. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 56.

³⁶⁹¹ Although no law exists to make education compulsory, the Constitution holds parents responsible for ensuring their children receive basic education. See U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁶⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹³ Overall school enrollment is reportedly high, but truancy is a growing problem in poorer regions of the country. See *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹⁴ *Labor Code*, (February 1, 2002), Article 63.

³⁶⁹⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6d. The new labor code came into force on February 1, 2002. See U.S. Department of State official, electronic communication to USDOL official, November 29, 2002.

³⁶⁹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6d.

³⁶⁹⁷ *Constitution of the Russian Federation*, Article 37; available from <http://www.friends-partners.org/oldfriends/constitution/russian-const-ch2.html>.

³⁶⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State official, electronic communication to USDOL official, October 19, 2003. See also U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁶⁹⁹ Government of Russia, *National Laws, Legislation of Interpol member states on sexual offences against children: Russia*, Interpol, [database online] [cited August 21, 2003]; available from <http://www.interpol.int/public/children/sexualabuse/nationallaws/csaRussia.asp>. The Criminal Code does prohibit unlawful preparation of pornography for distribution. See Article 242 as cited in Government of Russia, *National Laws, Legislation of Interpol members*.

135 has been used to prosecute child pornographers.³⁷⁰⁰ There are no laws specifically prohibiting trafficking in persons,³⁷⁰¹ although articles of the Criminal Code may be used to prosecute traffickers.³⁷⁰²

The Ministry of Labor and Social Development and the Ministry of Interior are responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws, but fail to do so effectively.³⁷⁰³ The Ministry of Labor reported that 12,000 child labor violations were registered in 2001,³⁷⁰⁴ and that 36 children died in work-related accidents in 2002.³⁷⁰⁵ The government has successfully prosecuted criminals engaged in the production and distribution of child pornography.³⁷⁰⁶ Furthermore, the police attempt to address the issue of street children. In 2001, for example, 253,000 parents were cited for leaving children unsupervised. Some of these children were returned to their families and provided assistance from social workers, while in other cases parents were denied custody or criminal charges were filed against parents.³⁷⁰⁷

The Government of Russia ratified ILO Convention 138 on May 3, 1979, and ILO Convention 182 on March 25, 2003.³⁷⁰⁸

³⁷⁰⁰ U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁷⁰¹ Hughes, *Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation*, 24. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6f.

³⁷⁰² U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15215*.

³⁷⁰³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Russia*, Section 6d.

³⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰⁵ U.S. Embassy- Moscow, *unclassified telegram no. 15120*.

³⁷⁰⁶ The U.S. Department of State provided assistance in these efforts. See *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰⁸ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 30, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.