UNICEF: The State of the World’s Children — Excluded and Invisible

“...For millions of children, the main cause of their invisibility is violations of their right to protection. Firm evidence of the extent of these violations is hard to acquire, but several factors appear central to increasing the risk of children becoming invisible: the lack or loss of formal identification; inadequate State protection for children without parental care; the exploitation of children through trafficking and forced labour; and premature entry of children into adult roles such as marriage, hazardous labour and combat. Children affected by these factors include those not registered at birth, refugees and displaced children, orphans, street children, children in detention, children in early marriages, hazardous labour or combat, and trafficked and indentured children.” (pg. 35)

Refugee and internally displaced children are at “...risk of military recruitment by armed groups and forces, abuse and sexual exploitation. Girls are especially at risk of abduction, trafficking and sexual violence, including rape used as a weapon of war.” (pg. 38)

Trafficking causes multiple rights violations for children

“Trafficking of children takes many different forms. Some children are forcibly abducted, others are tricked and still others opt to let themselves be trafficked, seduced by the promise of earnings but not suspecting the level of exploitation they will suffer at the other end of the recruiting chain. Trafficking always involves a journey, whether within a country – from the rural areas to a tourist resort, for example – or across an international border. At the final destination, trafficked children become part of an underground world of illegality into which they effectively disappear.

The relocation takes children away from their families, communities and support networks, leaving them isolated and utterly vulnerable to exploitation. Often they are even more disempowered by being transported to a place where they do not speak the local language, making it much more difficult for them to seek help or escape. Because they are there illegally and without documents, they may feel unable to trust the police or other officials or to access the rights of citizens that entitle them to services.

Trafficked children are also almost invisible to the eye of the statistician. Collecting data about these children is notoriously difficult. Although reliable global statistics are impossible to compile, it is estimated that trafficking affects about 1.2 million children each year.

UNICEF cont. pg. 2

Numerous Abuses Against Children = Trafficking

U.N. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children

Art. 3 For the purposes of this Protocol:
(a) Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
(b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
(c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered trafficking in persons even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
(d) Child shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.
UNICEF cont. from pg. 1

Though the trafficking of children is a shadowy practice with neither particular rules nor predictable sequences, some dominant regional patterns are identifiable:

- In West and Central Africa, the most common form of trafficking is an extension of a traditional practice – often a survival strategy – whereby children are ‘placed’ in marginal positions within other families. Increasingly, this practice is being used to exploit children’s labour, both within and outside the home. Children are also trafficked into plantations and mines, and in those countries affected by conflict, they can be directly abducted by militias.
- In East Asia and the Pacific, most trafficking is into child prostitution, though some children are also recruited for industrial and agricultural work. It is largely driven by poverty and especially by the pull of the wealthier countries in the region. Girls are also recruited as mail-order brides and for domestic service.
- In South Asia, trafficking forms part of the immense child labour problem in the subcontinent, often related to debt bondage, whereby a child is in effect ‘sold’ to pay off a debt, frequently a debt deliberately imposed by the exploiter with this in mind. In addition, significant numbers of children are trafficked for other purposes, including into prostitution, carpet and garment factories, construction projects and begging.

- In Europe, children are mainly trafficked from east to west, reflecting the demand for cheap labour and child prostitution in the richer countries of the continent. There are organized criminal gangs exploiting the open borders to channel children into unskilled labour, work in the entertainment sector and prostitution.
- In the Americas and the Caribbean, much of the visible child trafficking is driven by tourism and focused on coastal resorts, again feeding a demand for child prostitution and easily exploitable labour. Criminals who move drugs across borders are reportedly becoming involved in human trafficking as well. Often children trafficked into one form of labour may be later sold into another, as with girls from rural Nepal, who are recruited to work in carpet factories or hotels in the city, but are then trafficked into the sex industry over the border in India. In almost all countries, the sex trade is the predominant form of exploitation of trafficked children, a practice that entails systematic, long-term physical and emotional abuse.

**Children in forced labour and domestic service are among the most invisible**

An estimated 8.4 million children work under horrific circumstances: They are forced into debt bondage or other forms of slavery, into prostitution and pornography or into participation in armed conflict or other illicit activities.

According to the ILO, “forced labour is present in all regions and kinds of economy…. The offence of exacting forced labour is very rarely punished…. For the most part, there is neither official data on the incidence of forced labour, nor a widespread awareness among society at large that forced labour is a problem. It remains, with very few exceptions, one of the most hidden problems of our times.” Debt bondage, whatever the origin of the debt, leaves children under the complete control of a landowner, entrepreneur or moneylender in a state little distinguishable from slavery. They may be making gravel in Latin America or bricks in South Asia, or quarrying stone in sub-Saharan Africa. The work is often hazardous and much too heavy to be appropriate for children; the conditions of service betray every aspect and principle of human rights, let alone any conception of childhood.

Children in domestic service are also among the most invisible child labourers. Their work is performed within individual homes, removed from public scrutiny, and their conditions of life and labour are entirely dependent on the whims of their employer. The number of children involved in domestic service around the world is unquantifiable because of the hidden nature of the work, but it certainly runs into the millions. Many of these children are girls, and in many countries domestic service is seen as the only avenue of employment for a young girl, though in some places, such as Nepal and South Africa, boys are more likely to be domestic workers than girls.

Children exploited in domestic service are generally paid little or nothing over and above food and lodging. Many are banned altogether from attending classes or have such restrictions placed on their school attendance that it becomes impossible. All too often domestic service becomes a 24-hour job, with the child perpetually on call and subject to the whims of all family members.

UNICEF cont. pg. 3

**Prayer Intention of Pope Benedict XVI for February 2006:**

“That the international community be ever more aware of the urgent duty to put an end to the trafficking of human beings.”
Child Pornography — Sweden

The number of Swedes using the Internet to seek out sexual images involving children is on the rise. ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes) reported. Helena Karlen, head of Swedish Ecpat, said they have joined Swedish police and 12 Internet operators to block access across Sweden to sites containing child pornography.

The filters, installed in May 2005, block between 20,000 and 30,000 attempts to access some 1,100 child porn sites daily, a number that has doubled in a few months. The number of international commercial sites providing paying customers in Sweden and elsewhere with pornographic material featuring children has soared 400 percent in the past five years. “Each of these sites has thousands of pictures, so you can imagine how many children have had their lives ruined,” Karlen said.

Anyone who produces, purchases, or is in possession of pornographic images featuring children risks up to six years behind bars in Sweden. Just looking at such pictures on the Internet is not illegal however. “I really hope that this too will be criminalized soon,” Karlen said.

http://www.todayonline.com/articles/86673.asp

France: Child Prostitution Ring

Thirty-nine men and 27 women went on trial in March 2005 in western France, accused of taking part in a vast child prostitution ring in which parents offered their children for sex, often for food or small sums of money. It was the biggest criminal trial in French history.

They were accused of involvement in the prostitution ring in which 45 children, aged from six months to 15 years, were raped or sexually assaulted between January 1999 and February 2002. Some of children now have problems eating, and others have become aggressive or barely talk, prosecutors said. (http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/nm/20050303/wl_nm/france_trial_de_2)
ZIMBABWE: Children Being Abused

The worsening humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe is making children more vulnerable to abuse, according to child rights NGOs.

One report in January 2006 indicated that staff at a primary level boarding school outside the capital of Harare were charged with abusing 52 girls, while 14 primary school girls were also allegedly abused by staff members at a school in Harare.

The Girl Child Network (GCN), an NGO working in 32 of Zimbabwe’s 58 districts, said in 2005 it had recorded an average of 700 rape cases per month of girls under the age of 17 - more than 8,000 cases. According to GCN about 93 percent of the children raped in Zimbabwe are girls and seven percent boys.

“It is a combination of factors: the large number of AIDS orphans compounded by increasing poverty, which has forced girls to take up risky professions such as sex work and forced marriages.”

About half the girls raped were from child-headed households. Due to AIDS/HIV in Zimbabwe, one in five children are orphaned.

(Source: IRIN http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/IRIN/05aa4815fd17861bba3c1018f3e77c6c.htm)

Singapore

Singapore may introduce a law banning citizens from having sex with children overseas despite reservations about its effectiveness and ability to be policed, the government announced in May 2005.

Many Singaporeans travel to Indonesia’s nearby Riau islands for cheap sex. Girls are well-known to be trapped in the prostitution trade there.

More than 30 countries, including the United States and Australia, have enacted laws that allow for their nationals to be prosecuted at home for having sex with minors abroad.

(http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/7242_1369002,001800080000)

Children Disappear

As many as 300,000 Togo children – between the ages of 5 and 15 – have been sent to work in foreign cities or countries, many sent by their parents.

Someone, often another relative, comes and tells them their children will have a better education somewhere else, or a better job, which will support the family in turn. And they believe these people.

In reality, many of those children are made into virtual slaves. A nine-year-old girl may have to sell things on the street all day or work in agriculture, exposed to dangerous chemicals.

A report conducted in Togo indicated that girls are often physically, emotionally and sexually abused. Some, who become pregnant after being raped, are simply “turned out onto the street” by their so-called employers.

One of the ways in which they then survive is to become commercial sex workers. (http://www.voanews.com/english/Africa/2005-05-25-voa54.cfm)

“Those who traffic children look not in the rich suburbs but in the slums and among the most destitute for their victims.”

UNICEF Report
Cyber-Danger

A report, issued by End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purpose (ECPAT), warns that an increasing number of children are exposed to serious violence through the Internet. The report studied such forms of cyber violence against children as child pornography, live online sexual abuse for paying customers, online sexual solicitation and child sex tourism and trafficking.

It warned people of the scale and changing forms of cyber violence with web cameras, online multiplayer games and teen websites. The problem has grown pervasive and is outstripping the resources of law enforcement agencies. ECPAT reports that the child pornography industry is worth billions of dollars annually, although most child sex abuse images are traded for non-monetary gain. More than half of the child sex abuse images sold for profit are generated from the United States, followed by Russia, Spain and Sweden.

In Thailand some 20,000 children were reported sexually abused in 2004; this number increases annually. However, the majority of offenders are not prosecuted, being relatives of the child victims.

Some child workers, trafficked from other countries and illegally hired in Thailand, were frequently abused by their employers physically and sexually.

The ECPAT report also called for the development and implementation of worldwide industry standards for child protection by an international Internet Technology (IT) working group.

Individual IT companies should implement codes of conduct to protect children and provide safety information and pre-installed safety software with every purchase of a PC or mobile phone, the report said.

(http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/Press_Release.pdf)

Children and the Internet

A two-year research study, the ‘U.K. Children Go Online’ project, conducted by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) involved a series of focus group discussions and then a national survey of 1,511 children (9 to 19 years old) around the UK, together with their parents, in order to examine young people’s Internet use. The report compared more skilled Internet users with beginners.

Some of the findings included:

• Children and young people who are more skilled at using the Internet take up more online opportunities than beginners, such as using the Internet for learning, communicating with friends or seeking advice

• It is the skilled youngsters, more than the beginners, who are likely to encounter online risks (bullying, online porn or privacy risks, etc.)

• Those who manage to avoid the risks seem to do so by making only a narrow and unadventurous use of the Internet

The study suggests parents need to employ supportive practices, rather than simply restricting Internet use, and strengthen their children’s online skills. Schools should provide more specific guidance on Internet safety, on the reliability of websites, and should teach children how to search the Internet.

It is vital that parents and teachers really understand how children are interacting on the Internet outside of the classroom, where it is generally filtered, protected and supervised.

For more information, contact:
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Email: m.bober@lse.ac.uk
Website: http://www.children-go-online.net

U.N. Report on Child Porn on the Internet

A report by Juan Miguel Petit, Human Rights Special Rapporteur, on ‘The Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography’ focuses on child porn on the Internet. The report contains information from Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations in 51 countries in reply to a questionnaire sent by the Special Rapporteur.

The topics addressed are: a) manifestations of child pornography on the Internet; b) international instruments and definitions; c) national legislation; d) law enforcement agencies; and, e) initiatives to combat this problem.

The report touches upon issues such as Internet grooming and luring; the age of consent to sexual activity vis-à-vis the age used in child pornography legislation and the role and responsibilities of Internet Service Providers.

During the 2006 session of the Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur hopes for representation from key sectors, such as credit card companies, Internet Service Providers, Interpol.
‘Caritas Internationalis’ Documents Commitment

In November 2005 Caritas International (CI) published a 12-page statement on its “Commitment on Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.” Caritas strongly condemns human trafficking “as a criminal act, which violates basic human rights and the inviolable dignity and integrity of the human person.”

The document lists the following key actions in:

- raising public awareness and enabling people to take necessary actions with regard to trafficking in human beings, and thus preventing trafficking;
- advocating for alternatives for vulnerable groups
- assisting and protecting trafficked persons;
- advocating for the rights and for the protection of trafficked persons, for effective anti-trafficking legislation and measures, for effective enforcement of such legislation and measures;
- advocating for migration policies and economic policies that reduce vulnerability of people to trafficking
- and networking with authorities and with Churches and relevant actors in international civil society to jointly elaborate effective partnerships to challenge the human trafficking phenomenon.

The document highlights those factors that drive trafficking in supply and demand countries. It also lists those factors that seem universal, the “catalysts” operating throughout the world.

In the document CI lays out its full strategy for combating trafficking, emphasizing the special needs of women and children due to their specific vulnerability.

The document states that “a particular challenge is posed by the complexity of effectively addressing the ‘demand’ side of the phenomenon. The ‘market’ for trafficked persons is global, diverse and often highly ‘individual’. The ‘users’ or ‘clients’ of trafficked persons are therefore hard to identify and to confront or target as a ‘group’. In many cases these ‘clients’ may even be unaware that the person that they ‘use’ is a victim of the crime of trafficking. This challenge therefore requires a broad scope of the efforts in public awareness raising, through the media, through education programs, through public debate and through the Churches.”

One significant component is COATNET, an international ecumenical network serving as a source of information, coordination and advocacy. COATNET has a broad global reach and offers a multi-lingual website (www.coatnet.org).
Nestle Charged with Trafficking, Torture, and Beatings of Child Laborers on West African Cocoa Farms

Global Exchange, Organic Consumers Association and the International Labor Rights Fund have been urging Nestle and other chocolate companies to address the problem of illegal child labor by buying their cocoa beans from Fair Trade certified farms. Fair Trade ensures that cocoa farmers receive a fair price for their harvest. Slave labor is strictly prohibited on Fair Trade farms, which are inspected to ensure that Fair Trade standards are met.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), U.S. Department of State and UNICEF, thousands of children work on cocoa farms in West Africa, particularly in the Ivory Coast. The U.S. chocolate industry agreed to work toward ending illegal child labor on cocoa farms through a voluntary protocol called the Harkin-Engel Protocol. But that protocol expired on July 1, 2005, and the industry failed to come up with a system for monitoring and certifying that U.S. chocolate products aren’t made using forced child labor.

Therefore a lawsuit was filed by the Washington, DC-based International Labor Rights Fund and the civil rights firm Wiggins, Childs, Quinn & Pantazis on behalf of a class of Malian children, who were trafficked from Mali to the Ivory Coast and forced to work 12- to 14-hour days with no pay, little food and sleep, and frequent beatings. The suit was brought under two federal statutes, including the Torture Victims Protection Act. On Feb. 6th representatives of Nestle, Cargill, and Archer Daniels-Midland appeared in a U.S. District Court in Los Angeles charged with allowing forced child labor to be used on their West African cocoa farms. Human rights groups have long criticized the chocolate industry for failing to stop illegal child labor, including child slavery, on West African cocoa farms, but this is the first time the issue went to court. The charges against the companies include trafficking, torture, and forced labor of children who cultivate and harvest cocoa beans, which the companies import from Africa.

Global Exchange and the Organic Consumers Association held a creative protest outside the courthouse just prior to the hearing to demand that Nestle stop using illegal child labor and switch to Fair Trade cocoa. Activists, dressed as Butterfinger and Crunch bars, held signs that said, “No to Child Slavery on Cocoa Farms” and “Nestle: There’s Nothing Sweet About Child Labor.” Activists also handed out Fair Trade Valentine’s Day chocolate.

UNICEF Report

ACTION: “Making children visible requires creating a protective environment for them. The key elements of a protective environment include:

- Strengthening the capacity of families and communities to care for and protect children.
- Government commitment to child protection by providing budgetary support and social welfare policies targeted at the most excluded and invisible children.
- Ratification and implementation of legislation, both national and international, concerning children’s rights and protection.
- Prosecution of perpetrators of crimes against children, and avoidance of criminalizing child victims.
- An open discussion by civil society and the media of attitudes, prejudices, beliefs and practices that facilitate or lead to abuses.
- Ensuring that children know their rights, are encouraged to express them and are given vital life skills and information to protect them from abuse and exploitation.
- Availability of basic social services to all children without discrimination.
- Monitoring, transparent reporting and oversight of abuses and exploitation.

Key to building the protective environment is responsibility: All members of society can contribute to ensuring that children do not become invisible. While families and the State have the primary responsibility for protecting children, ongoing and sustained efforts by individuals and organizations at all levels are essential to break patterns of abuse.” (pg. 35)
New Website
In January 2006 the National MultiCultural Institute (NMCI) launched a web portal (www.humantraffickingsearch.net) that provides over 15,000 web entries of informational resources on issues related to human trafficking and modern-day slavery from around the world. It covers topics such as Human Trafficking, Child Labor, Bonded Labor and Sex Slavery.

Updated regularly, it covers over 120 countries and a broad range of articles, research studies, congressional testimony, case studies, UNODC public service videos, a data map on child labor, and a daily news service.

NMCI seeks to enhance communication and respect among people of diverse cultural backgrounds by sponsoring annual conferences, conducting multicultural and diversity training and consulting, and providing a forum for dialogue on current issues of culture and diversity in a global society.

Visit www.nmci.org for more information about NMCI.

Editor’s Correction
For the January 2006 issue of Stop Trafficking, in the article reporting on the TVPA reauthorization (pg. 3 points 3 and 4) we offer a correction.

Mary Ellen Dougherty SSND of the USCCB Office of Refugee and Migration Services, wrote, “The ‘guardian ad litem’ did not go through, although USCCB worked very hard to make that happen, and in spite of the fact that the President mentioned it in his remarks at the signing. Also ‘provide victims with access to counsel’ did not go through.”

Stop Trafficking!
is dedicated exclusively to fostering an exchange of information among religious congregations, their friends and collaborating organizations, working to eliminate all forms of trafficking of human beings.

Use the following web address to access back issues of Stop Trafficking!

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