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CHILD LABOR PILOT PROJECT ASSESSMENT REPORT

REDUCING RISK OF PROSTITUTION OR TRAFFICKING
OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN
IN TARGET AREAS IN RUSE, BULGARIA

2005

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development.
It was prepared by GroundWork, Inc.

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IN TARGET AREAS IN RUSE, BULGARIA

by

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for

Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor (ECACL)
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DISCLAIMER

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development.

2005

BULGARIA PILOT SUMMARY:

REDUCING RISK OF PROSTITUTION OR TRAFFICKING OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

CONTEXT

In Bulgaria fourteen percent of children between the ages of 5 and 17 work. Roma children are particularly susceptible to child labor (representing 85 percent of all street children). Children engage in paid work in the trade and service sectors, transport and communications, construction, agriculture, and forestry. Children also engage in unpaid work for family businesses or farms, and in their households. Prostitution often occurs through organized crime rings. The police estimate that 10 percent of prostitutes are minors, many as young as 14 years old. Trafficking in young girls is also a problem; girls as young as 14 years of age have been kidnapped and smuggled out of the country to destinations across Europe.

Education is compulsory up to the age of 16 under the National Education Act of 1991; children typically start school at the age of 6 or 7. In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 98.9 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 91.8 percent. Roma children have particularly low attendance and high dropout rates.

DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The pilot was designed to address gaps identified in the system to prevent or combat child labor, including: (1) lack of economic opportunity; (2) paucity of data; (3) low awareness; (4) estimated 36 percent school dropout of Roma children aged eight to 17; (5) inadequate services for vulnerable children; and (6) the need for greater NGO participation.

The pilot initiative was implemented in the city of Ruse by 5 Bulgarian NGOs, including The Women's Alliance for Development (WAD), the Step by Step (SBS) Foundation, the Society for Neglected Children (SNC), the Open Society Club (OSC) Ruse, and the United Nations Association (UNA). Of the five organizations, one was located in Ruse, the rest were located in Sofia, and each was assigned to implement one of five objectives carried out in Ruse.

RESULTS: EDUCATION INNOVATION AND IMPROVED TEACHER-LEARNER DYNAMICS

Data Collection: Design and implementation of data collection was difficult to achieve due to lack of cooperation among and between NGOs, municipal and national government.

Awareness Raising: More than 1,300 students, teachers, parents, and authorities participated in anti-trafficking training through theater, music, and games that engaged participants in lively activity and discussion.

Institutional Strengthening: A national roundtable provided a platform for intergovernmental agencies, NGO, and inter-institutional collaboration; NGO capacity-building training workshops helped implementing NGOs develop collaborative relationships; new partnerships were developed with the Local Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, the Child Pedagogical Office.

Education: The pilot successfully introduced an innovative summer program held in a public school for at-risk youth that encouraged interactive learner-centered teaching techniques, student selection of class topics, peer educators trained to train students on dangers of child labor and trafficking, and parent participation.

Vocational training was also offered for youth ages 16 and 17, job counseling for out of school youth, and pre-vocational training and academic strengthening for youth ages 11-15. These training and counseling

efforts were conducted in small groups with a high degree of interaction among learners and teacher-facilitators. A total of 7 modules were drafted and tested for training at risk youth in child rights, entrepreneurial skills, and job clubs; and teacher training focused on child-centered classrooms, encouraging family involvement and education without prejudice.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report presents the findings of the assessment of the pilot project, “Reducing Risk of Prostitution or Trafficking of Economically Disadvantaged Children in Target Areas in Ruse, Bulgaria.” It is one of a series of five assessment reports on education to combat abusive child labor pilot projects also including, Ghana, Honduras, Nepal, and Romania. A sixth report contains a summary of each pilot project and a synthesis of overall findings of the pilot projects according to their objectives, emphasizing experiences and approaches useful for designing future education projects to redress harmful forms of child labor.

The reports are produced by GroundWork, Inc., under the authorship of Christina Rawley. GroundWork wishes to thank the staff members of the contracting and implementing partners who helped organize and participated in the workshops and meetings. Special thanks go to the youths, parents, teachers, and school principals who participated in the assessment.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|---|
| BEPS | Basic Education and Policy Support |
| CAII | Creative Associates International, Inc. |
| ECACL | Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| IPEC | International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor |
| LCPJD | Local Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency |
| NCS | Neglected Children's Society |
| OSC | Open Society Club |
| PCPO | Police Child Pedagogical Office |
| PRA | Participatory Reflective Assessment |
| SBS | Step by Step |
| UNA | United Nations Association |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| WAD | Women's Alliance for Development |

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the assessment of the pilot project, “Reducing Risk of Prostitution or Trafficking of Economically Disadvantaged Children in Target Areas in Ruse, Bulgaria.” The pilot is supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS)/Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor (ECACL) Activity. The pilot was implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc., in collaboration with five Bulgarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Section 1 introduces the context of child labor and education in Bulgaria, presents a background overview of the pilot, and discusses the purpose and methodology of the assessment. Section 2 presents the self-reported quantitative findings for each of the pilot objectives according to the performance monitoring plan. Section 3 presents an analysis of the participatory reflective assessment (PRA)¹ using a teaching-learning framework to look beyond the numbers to explore various aspects of the transformational education processes and approaches reported by the representative groups of participants and observed during the assessment. Section 4 discusses lessons learned and, Section 5 presents main conclusions and recommendations.

1.1 CONTEXT: CHILD LABOR AND EDUCATION

The International Labor Organization–International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO–IPEC) sponsored a study of working children that identified begging, theft, prostitution, and trafficking as the worst forms of child labor most common in Bulgaria. Although official figures do not exist, Animus, the Bulgarian NGO that has done the greatest amount of research on trafficking and prostitution, estimates that about 10,000 girls and women are trafficked abroad annually. An examination of records of 50 trafficked women who were served in the Animus counseling center showed that 7 percent were from Sofia, 55 percent from other cities, and 38 percent from villages. Girls and women ranged in age from 15 to 40, of which 55 percent were between 15 and 21. More than 70 percent had only primary education.²

In November 2002, a three-person team³ assessed and planned a short-term pilot education intervention to reduce the risk of prostitution or trafficking of economically disadvantaged children in target areas in Bulgaria. Their assessment identified several gaps in the system to prevent or combat child labor: (1) the lack of economic opportunity; (2) paucity of data; (3) low awareness; (4) estimated 36 percent school dropout of Roma children aged eight to 17; (5) inadequate services for vulnerable children; and (6) the need for additional NGO participation. Very few organizations work against trafficking. None are committed solely to combating child labor or trafficking in the Roma community, and none have experience in introducing the subject in the formal education system.

¹ Participatory Reflective Assessments (PRA) involve collective examination and assessment of an activity or program by stakeholders and beneficiaries. Participatory evaluation is people-centered whereby project stakeholders and beneficiaries are key actors of the evaluation process rather than objects of the evaluation. Participatory evaluations are reflective and action-oriented, and seek to build capacity by: (1) providing stakeholders and beneficiaries with the opportunity to reflect on a project's progress and obstacles; (2) generating knowledge that informs practice and can lead to corrective actions; and (3) providing beneficiaries and stakeholders with the tools to transform their environment (UNDP 1997).

² *Case Studies on Trafficking in Women in Bulgaria* by Maria Tchomarova as cited in *Assessment and Design for a Child Labor Pilot Project in Bulgaria* by Archer Heinzen.

³ The assessment and design were conducted November 5-23, 2002, in Bulgaria by a three-person team: Archer Heinzen, team leader/education and child labor specialist; Robert Murphy, democracy and governance specialist; and Nadejda Angelska, human rights specialist.

1.2 BACKGROUND OVERVIEW

Based on the gaps identified in the November 2002 assessment, the pilot project targeted economically disadvantaged communities in Ruse that included Roma and other groups of vulnerable children. Located on the Danube River near the Romanian border, Ruse is known to be an active entry point for international trafficking. In addition, the Ruse region is the home of a larger percentage of minority groups (17%) than the rest of Bulgaria (14%).

1.2.1 EDUCATION INTERVENTION APPROACHES AND OBJECTIVES

The education intervention approach was overall preventive in nature as it focused on at-risk youth rather than specifically targeting working children. However, within the overall approach, developmental and protective interventions typically used to target working children were also used, outlined by Myers (n.d.) as follows:⁴

- **Preventive interventions:** included formal and nonformal education activities designed to prevent at-risk youth from entering abusive work situations by raising the level of accessibility and quality of education.
- **Developmental interventions:** provided safe work alternatives for children who need the income through technical training programs.
- **Protective interventions:** taught at-risk youth, their parents, and community leaders about labor laws and rules and how to make use of them and made them aware of and put them in contact with programs and other resources to which they could turn for help.

The pilot was designed with five objectives in mind:

- Raise the awareness of youth, parents, teachers, and local authorities on the dangers of prostitution and trafficking;
- Improve school retention of economically disadvantaged youth, particularly members of ethnic minorities, through teacher training and summer programs;
- Provide vocational training, job counseling, and life skills classes to at-risk youth;
- Develop a data collection model on child prostitution and trafficking;
- Strengthen NGOs working against child prostitution and trafficking.

1.2.2 LEVEL OF EFFORT, TIME PERIOD, PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS, LOCATION, AND OBJECTIVES

The pilot began mid-January 2003. A two-day launch workshop was held in early February with BEPS/ECACL and the partner organizations, which included The Women's Alliance for Development (WAD), the Society for Neglected Children (SNC), the Open Society Club (OSC) Ruse, the United Nations Association (UNA), and the Step by Step (SBS) Foundation. Objectives for each NGO were based on perceived organizational strengths.

Originally scheduled to end in September, a no-cost extension was granted through December 31, 2003.⁵ This was followed by a second phase/cost extension with three of the five original partners (OSC, SBS,

⁴ See Myers, William E. (no date). *Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor*. Washington, D.C.: Creative Associates International, Inc., p.26, regarding general points of substantial expert agreement regarding preventive, protective, and developmental education interventions.

⁵ Work during the three-month extension period included: WAD stakeholder guide, report on grantee followon funding, final activity report; OSC—spend yet unused money to administer classes in computer literacy, small business start-up, job club and academic tutoring class, and the writing up of tool kits; UNA—translation of child rights tool kit; SNC—final report of trafficking and prostitution awareness study; SBS—time to assemble lists of summer program participants including parents and teachers, list of summer program students who returned to school in Fall 2003, and a final activity report.

UNA) to do the following: continue classes in cooking, life skills, and tutoring and an academic support center; provide training to peer volunteers on working with youth at risk and preventing child labor and trafficking; establish a United Nations (UN) club in the three target schools and implement a media campaign on child labor and trafficking.

Table 1, below, provides a summary of the partner organizations, the level of effort for each, location, and objectives. With a total budget of \$107,000, contracts with five organizations ranged in amounts from \$5,000 to \$40,000. About 80 percent of the total budget was allocated to Sofia-based organizations.

Table 1: Summary of Partner Organizations, LOE, Location, and Objectives

| Organization LOE | Location | Objectives |
|--|----------|--|
| Women's Alliance for Development (WAD) (Total Contract: \$67,000 includes \$21,000 for WAD, plus \$46,000 total sub-grants for OSC, SNC, UNA) | Sofia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a model for collection of data • Strengthen organizational capacities |
| Open Society Club (OSC) \$21,000 | Ruse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide vocational training for vulnerable children age 16 and 17; out-of-school youth seek/find jobs • Provide pre-vocational training and academic strengthening program for vulnerable children ages 11-15 • Provide job counseling |
| Society for Neglected Children (SNC) \$20,000 | Sofia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness (students, parent, teachers, and authorities) of the dangers of child labor, child prostitution, and trafficking |
| United Nations Association (UNA) \$5,000 | Sofia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train UNA youth as volunteers to educate students in two schools • Mentor summer school students |
| Step-by-Step (SBS) (Contract: \$40,000) | Sofia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for teachers and parents • Conduct summer program for at-risk youth |

1.3 ASSESSMENT PURPOSE, AIM, AND METHODOLOGY

This assessment has a dual purpose—first, to record what the project achieved, and second, to identify the lessons learned that offer effective tools, models, or approaches for combating abusive child labor through education.

The evaluation included qualitative and quantitative methodologies, but it emphasized qualitative evaluation in which PRA techniques are used with children, parents and guardians, teachers, and pilot project coordinators and managers in stakeholder workshops. The workshop practice was intended to be flexible, exploratory, and interactive. It used inventive learning activities with participants at all levels (local and national) to promote self-examination of behavior and attitudes that promote effective education for prevention of child labor within the context of the pilot. The purpose of this methodology is to engage a representative sampling of all stakeholder groups in the assessment process in a way that helps all parties learn and generate knowledge that will be useful to them and others in the design and management of future child labor projects.

Field data were collected and triangulated among three groups at the local and national levels: (1) classroom teachers and learners; (2) NGO implementers in Ruse; and (3) NGO implementers in Sofia.

1.4 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND SCHEDULE

The assessment began in January 2004 with discussions with ECACL team staff in Washington, D.C., and a review of the Terms of Reference, data, and reports. Field work was conducted February 9-13, 2004 in Sofia and Ruse.

1.4.1 STAKEHOLDER SESSIONS

Participatory assessment workshop sessions were conducted in Sofia and Ruse. In Sofia the workshop session included representatives of the Sofia-based organizations: WAD, UNC, SBS, and SNC. In Ruse, the workshop session included the OSC, Local Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (LCPJD), and 18 participants representing students, parents, contract coordinators, and managers.

1.4.2 SITE VISITS

Site visits were made to three representative schools and two classrooms, or meeting areas, in Ruse. In addition to classroom observations, interviews were conducted with principals and teachers (trained and untrained in Step by Step techniques).

1.4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE ASSESSMENT

The methodology was intended to provide an opportunity for self-reflection and assessment among the direct participants of the pilot initiative and, as such, relies on self-reported findings of the implementing organizations and on primary data collected with beneficiaries and stakeholders during brief field visits held during a five-day period in country. Thus, the level of participation was limited by time constraints.

SECTION 2:

FINDINGS BY MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

OBJECTIVES, INDICATORS, OUTCOMES

This section presents an overview of assessment findings in terms of the accomplishments of the pilot as reported (1) according to the performance monitoring plan, which is followed by (2) commentary based on the findings of PRA activities.

2.1 OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF CHILD LABOR, PROSTITUTION, TRAFFICKING (SNC, UNA)

The purpose of this objective was to collect information on trafficking and to educate youths, teachers, and school administrators in the dangers of trafficking.

2.1.1 OVERVIEW OF REPORTED RESULTS

- More than 1,300 students, teachers, parents, and authorities participated in anti-trafficking training using video and interactive games.
- 252 students (grades 8-12), 50 teachers, 50 parents, and 20 school administrators in six target schools were surveyed and educated on dangers of trafficking.
- 694 youth from six schools were educated on dangers of trafficking, prevention, and help aids.
- 200 youth attended “Say No!” anti-trafficking rally/performance held for school youth, parents, teachers, and police task-force representatives.
- 38 UNA volunteer youth were trained as peer educators to train students on the dangers of child labor and trafficking.

2.1.2 COMMENTARY

Raising public awareness of the most dangerous forms of child labor increased systemic support to the pilot initiative as children, parents, teachers, police, media representatives, and other community members were educated through a media campaign, seminars with experts, training using educational videos, newsletters, and posters. The following results were self-reported during the stakeholder participatory assessment workshop.

SURVEY

Three hundred and seventy-two students, teachers, and parents were surveyed pre- and post-training. A comparative analysis of students’ opinion and attitudes showed improved knowledge and understanding of the conditions that force youth into child labor, ways to avoid the conditions, ways to help protect and prevent situations, as well as changes in students’ opinions and attitudes. The survey showed that youth relied heavily on media as a major source of information.

Specifically, analysis of data showed that the risk groups of children who could become potential victims of prostitution and trafficking account for about 10 to 15 percent of children living in Ruse. Especially vulnerable are girls aged 13 to 15 years, left without constant parental care and supervision, and girls from non-Bulgarian ethnic groups, who are often trafficked abroad for sexual exploitation (especially girls of Roma origin). This target group requires specialized informational, educational, and preventive measures, not only within the framework of projects and temporary campaigns, but also as part of permanent social and educational policies inside and outside of school. These efforts must also involve the families of at-risk children.

The survey also noted the need for the school, as the main socio-pedagogical factor in the preventive system, to be more effectively involved—not only as an institution, but also as a territory for mobilization of professional resources. These resources include the school’s commission for prevention of juvenile delinquency, pedagogical councilors, and class managers in educating children about the problems of prostitution and trafficking. The survey identified the need to implement a training-of-trainers program for pedagogues, psychologists, and children in the schools.

The Child Protection Department at the municipality Social Support Directorate must assume its natural role in the process of reducing the risk of child prostitution and trafficking of children. Therefore, it is necessary to establish permanent partnerships with the responsible institutions and especially with the Local Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, the Police Child Pedagogical Office, and possible new structures and institutions that will be established in Ruse as provided by the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The pilot created visually interesting information materials to popularize the message among target groups and the media.

- Press conferences were held in Ruse at several stages of the project to provide the media with educational materials to improve their understanding and reporting on trafficking issues.
- Seminars were useful in providing a good base for regional cooperation against child trafficking.
- National roundtable provided a platform for intergovernmental agency, NGO, and inter-institutional collaboration.

In addition, there was newspaper, TV, and radio coverage of NGO capacity-building training.

2.2 OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE SCHOOL RETENTION OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, PARTICULARLY MEMBERS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING AND SUMMER PROGRAMS (SBS, UNA)

2.2.1 OVERVIEW OF REPORTED RESULTS

- 50 teachers trained (four two-day weekend sessions);
- 50 parents trained; parents volunteer as teacher aids; high parent meeting-attendance rate;
- 20 UNA youth trained as peer volunteers became teacher aids in the summer program;
- Student attendance and achievement levels improved; and all but two students enrolled for the following year.

2.2.2 COMMENTARY: THE SUMMER PROGRAM

This objective was carried out through the introduction of a summer program for at-risk youth that focused on innovations in the teaching-learning environment and community participation. Peer volunteers, parents, and community leaders were trained, as were school directors, teachers, and learners, using models of the Step by Step⁶ Foundation and UNA peer learning.

Figure 1: Whole-School Approach: Classroom and Community

| Classroom/School | Community |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Learners | Peer Volunteers |
| Teachers | Parent Participation |
| Directors | Community Leaders |

The summer program was designed for 140 children at risk of dropping out. Table 2, below shows the distribution of participants among the three targeted schools. Each school had children vote from a selection of options on courses they wanted to learn during the summer. Courses selected included arts, computers, sports, regional history, drama, and music. Each teacher had to submit course or lesson plans for each course that demonstrated how they planned to teach it. Teachers were instructed not to follow the school year curriculum guidelines but, rather, to be creative.

A unique feature of the program, initially suggested and encouraged by Creative Associates International, Inc. and implemented by SBS, included the addition of free-choice sessions in which students identified and selected their own learning activities. This provided them with opportunities to learn more about their own interests and abilities. Based on temperament theory—that individuals have highly formed and fundamentally different predispositions at birth—pupils were able to discover interests or special talents in four areas set up as learning centers in a classroom. Learning centers were divided into: language and communication skills (crossword puzzles, word games, books, paper and writing instruments, theatre exercises); strategic thinking skills (math games; strategy games; chess; checkers; cards); manual skills (embroidery, erector/lego set, tinker toys, carpentry); and organizational skills (monopoly; and other social games).

Table 2: Step by Step Summer Program Training in Three Schools

| School/Participants | Parent Participants | Teacher Participants | Student Participants | Students at risk of dropout | Total students of ethnic origin |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| V.Levski | 22 | 22 | 60 | 65 | 381 |
| N.Obretenov | 14 | 14 | 40 | 54 | 214 |
| A.Konstantinov | 14 | 14 | 40 | 62 | 245 |
| Total | 50 | 50 | 140 | 181 | 840 |

Source: Step by Step

TEACHER TRAINING

Fifty teachers were selected for training from the teaching staff in the target schools. These teachers, who were well-qualified in traditional techniques, were introduced to SBS alternative methods in one- or two-day training workshops. SBS also trained 50 parents, and UNA youth volunteers became peer educators in the summer program.

Three modules were produced for the training to introduce teachers to methods for addressing curriculum needs in working with the youth group selected for the program. These included: (1) organization of the

⁶ Step by Step is an educational reform program that has been established in more than 20 Eastern European countries. SBS introduces child-centered teaching methods and supports community and family involvement with the aim of engendering democratic ideals and principles within young children and their families. Designed for preschools and early grades of primary schools, SBS methods encourage children to make choices, take responsibility for their decisions, express their ideas with creativity, help each other, develop critical thinking skills, and practice independent thinking.

classroom environment to introduce changes in the physical environment as well as teaching styles that promote participatory methods; (2) anti-bias education to reach youth of different ethnic origins; and (3) family involvement for including parents' and guardians' participation in school activities. These modules are examined in the materials and methods section below.

An iterative monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process was carried out informally on a daily basis as well as formally during first and last phases of the 20-day program with different stakeholder groups: students, school staff, and families, as well as community representatives and local authorities.

The summer program, the first of its kind to be offered in Ruse, seems to have been very well received by the youth, parents, teachers, school directors, community leaders, and government authorities who reported that the summer program is a very successful way to engage the students' free time with useful activities, enriching their knowledge and skills and keeping them from negative influences on the streets.

2.3 OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE VOCATIONAL TRAINING, JOB COUNSELING, AND LIFE SKILLS CLASSES TO AT-RISK YOUTH (OSC)

2.3.1 OVERVIEW OF REPORTED RESULTS

- 61 children tutored after school; trained youth improved academic performance and reduced school absenteeism;
- 120 youth, ages 16 to 18, take vocational counseling;
- Youth deviant behavior reduced or eliminated in school or in orphanage;
- 88 out of a total of 102 youths certified through vocational training classes;
- Two girls employed in dressmaking, six have summer jobs, and one girl entered university.

2.3.2 COMMENTARY

Vocational and pre-vocational programming carried out to achieve this objective represents 18 percent of all youth participation in the pilot, with greater demand than the program could accommodate. Selection of youth was time-consuming because of the numbers of applicants and the length of time that is needed to confer with school principals, parents, teachers, and the younger-age students, as well as the fact that the older students needed to be carefully interviewed to identify their needs. Selection of teachers who used methods and techniques to provide friendly and flexible learning environments was a challenge, and it required the introduction of teacher training that was not included originally. Computer training was one of the most popular courses offered; others included more traditional programs such as sewing and cooking, which were not as popular, but included greater participation of female youth. Future programs might be diversified to attract and prepare both males and females to meet demands of current and future workplace requirements.

Parental and peer groups in association with vocational programs could also help parents understand their youth and strengthen family relationships.

2.4 OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHEN NGOS WORKING AGAINST CHILD PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING; DEVELOP A MODEL FOR COLLECTION OF DATA ON CHILD PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING (WAD)

2.4.1 OVERVIEW OF REPORTED RESULTS

- 142 people were trained in workshops with media coverage of training;
- Two youth groups of workshop trainees apply for and receive grants related to stimulating student participation in local elections;
- Three of four partners create new activities with each other to expand UNA activities to other schools;
- Contractor expands activities to include gender-equity training of youth;
- Five new projects were acquired; all subcontractors apply for several new funding activities;
- Data-collection model was not prepared.

2.4.2 COMMENTARY

NGO CAPACITY BUILDING

One of the pilot's major objectives was to strengthen organisations and institutions working to combat trafficking through the collection and provision of data and a stakeholder' guide (WAD). As reported above in section 2.1, youth groups, strengthened through training workshops, applied for and received grants related to stimulating student participation in local elections. Three of four NGO partners created new activities with each other to expand UNA activities to other schools, and new projects were acquired. All subcontractors applied for new funding activities.

However, these seemingly modest results in capacity building do not reflect some fundamental lessons learned that emerged during the participatory assessment. They are reported here in two categories: capacity building for pilot activities and capacity building internal to the participating organizations.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PILOT ACTIVITIES

The NGO partners identified several areas in the use of education to prevent child labor where their capacities were most challenged. They included data collection, analysis, and reporting; high demand and the selection of youths to participate in the pilot initiative; and provision of suitable education models.

The lack of data on the worst forms of child labor is a persistent weakness in the systems of most countries, and Bulgaria is no exception. In the case of trafficking, not only do partner organizations lack the capacity to address this issue fully; but, because of many reasons including deeply entrenched corruption, the entire state system lacks the capacity to address the issue. Digging too deeply can prove to be very dangerous, so many statistics are only rough estimates based on reported incidents.

Meeting high demand and selection of participants proved to be a challenge, as it was necessary to confer with many stakeholders in the system—principal, parents, teachers, and students, and juvenile authorities—a process both time-consuming and intense. Older students, especially, need to be interviewed to find out their needs before planning a program.

Provision of suitable education models includes selection of teachers that are flexible and friendly and who have knowledge and experience in group work.

NGO partners recommended strengthening the capacity for collaboration between organizations to provide suitable models in all the above areas.

INTERNAL CAPACITY BUILDING

During the pilot, WAD conducted several workshops designed to address specific needs for internal capacity building among the sub-grantees. These two- to three-day workshops began with a focus on technical issues and shifted mid-way through to focus on process issues. The first workshops, conducted in the first two months of the pilot initiative, focused on improving knowledge of theory and skills for prevention programs of trafficking in human beings and working with disadvantaged children. The second set of workshops, which took place during months four, five, and seven of the workshop, focused on dealing with stress and burn-out syndrome, project management, conflict resolution, and communication skills.

Reflecting on their own internal capacities during stakeholder sessions and interviews, both the contractor and partner NGOs themselves identified the fact that the pilot initiative challenged the capacity of their organizations in a number of ways.

In general, the organizations had not taken into full consideration, or were unrealistic about, their capacity to manage and deliver the large numbers of reports, studies, modules, and trainings requested. As it was, the local organizations felt that too many courses and modules were required and that they could have done a better job had they not been so pressed by time and budget constraints.

On the other hand, the contractor's capacity was limited by the fact that, without in-country presence, it was necessary to manage remotely through e-mails and telephones.

Structure and rules of the organizations and institutions involved were not fully understood. Up-front time was needed for the contractor to get to know the partner organizations and local institutions and for the partner organizations to get to know each other.

The organizations stated that they found the contract agreements confusing, that there was a lack of understanding of the tasks, reports, and deliverables, and that USAID rules and regulations were not fully understood. Several issues were identified. There was a need for (1) briefing on terms of the contract before the signing took place; (2) details on deliverables, which should be stated in writing after full discussion; and (3) training in reporting requirements.

Another challenge concerns the large number of organizations and institutions involved in the pilot initiative, all working within the same districts and schools. The contractor encouraged the organizations to coordinate activities.⁷ However, the partner organizations acknowledged that they did not have the requisite experience or organizational skills to collaborate with other NGOs in this way. All stated a need and desire for skills training in team development, facilitation, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Finally, the capacity of the one organization based in Ruse was further stretched because all the other organizations based outside Sofia depended on them for their local knowledge, connections, and coordination skills. The lesson learned is that it is more efficient to contract directly with local organizations with the recommendation of "local action for local problems."

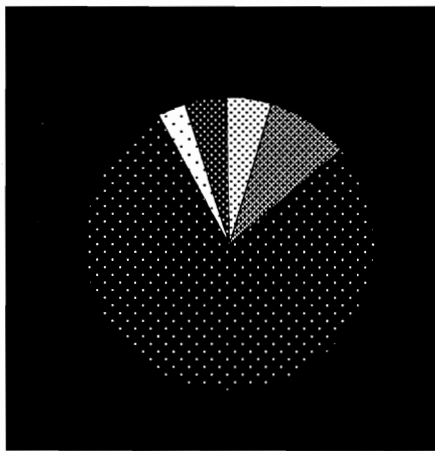
In summary, although capacity building was incorporated into the design of the project, the participating organizations did not seem to have a realistic sense of how challenging the pilot activity would be until they were deeply entrenched in the process. This case shows the need to conduct a study of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—"SWOT"—of organizations and to address organizational gaps with training as part of an overall capacity building commitment.

⁷ In several instances, the contractor introduced areas where the partners could coordinate with each other or with other institutions. These included the cases of SBS and UNA collaboration in summer program training and OSC collaboration with the Local Commission for selecting and training juvenile offenders and other at-risk youth.

2.5 SUMMARY OF BENEFICIARY GROUPS

Figures 2 and 3, below, show beneficiary groups that participated in training or education programs. Figure 2 shows 78 percent of the beneficiaries were student youth, followed by administrators (9%); teachers and parents (5% each); and peer educators (3%). Figure 3 shows most youth (73%) participated in various anti-trafficking awareness-raising activities, while 27 percent participated in longer-term education programs—18 percent in vocational and pre-vocational programs and 9 percent in the summer program. In all, more than 2,000 youth and adults were trained in programs offered.⁸ About 1,300 participated in various awareness-training activities, while a little more than 700 participated in other types of training and education, as shown in Table 3.

Figures 2 & 3: Beneficiary Groups Participating in Training and Education Programs



Student/Youth Education and Training

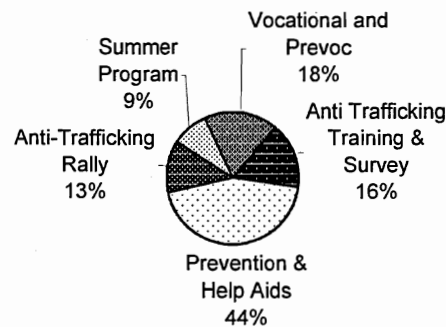


Table 3: Summary of Number of Participants Trained in Awareness-Raising and Education Activities

| | Students/ Youth | Peer Educators | Teachers | Parents | Administrators | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|----------------|--------------|
| Anti-trafficking training and survey | 252 | 38 | 50 | 50 | 20 | 410 |
| Prevention and help aids | 694 | | | | | 694 |
| Anti-trafficking rally | 200 | | | | | 200 |
| <i>Sub total</i> | <i>1,146</i> | <i>38</i> | <i>50</i> | <i>50</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>1,304</i> |
| Summer program | 140 | 20 | 50 | 50 | 20 | 280 |
| Vocational and pre-vocational | 283 | | | | | 283 |
| Institutional capacity building | | | | | 142 | 142 |
| <i>Sub total</i> | <i>423</i> | <i>20</i> | <i>50</i> | <i>50</i> | <i>162</i> | <i>705</i> |
| TOTAL | 1,569 | 58 | 100 | 100 | 182 | 2,009 |

The results reported above through performance indicators indicate that the pilot was successful in producing an array of interventions aimed at youth at risk. The indicators are useful in capturing total achievements in quantitative terms, but they do not capture qualitative improvements and transformational behavior reported and observed during the PRA assessment process. The following sections discuss these results.

⁸ These figures capture the numbers of people directly involved in training; they do not capture those affected by awareness-raising activities that were aired by the media nor numbers of teachers, parents, and students in the targeted schools who may have benefited in some way from a "spillover effect" of peer learning among teachers and students.

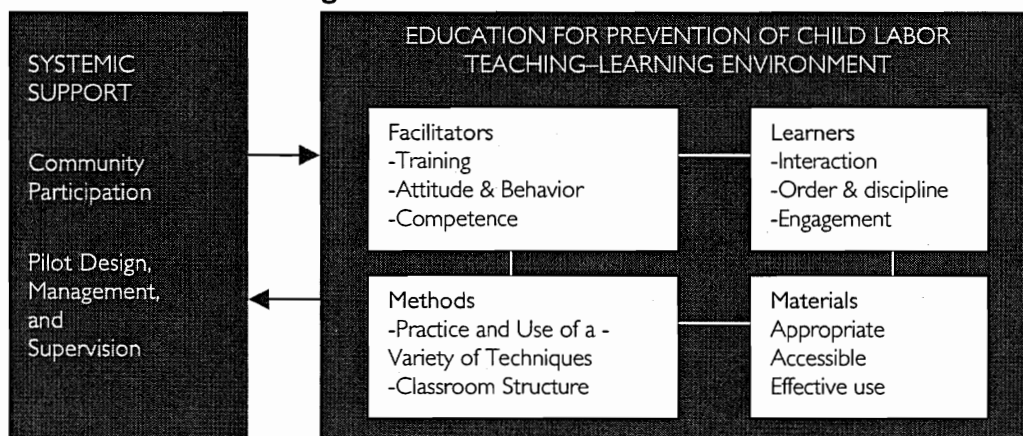
SECTION 3:

TEACHING-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SYSTEMIC SUPPORT

This assessment section reviews the findings of the PRA process. Here, the study looks beyond the numbers reported in the monitoring and evaluation plan to explore various aspects of the transformational education processes and approaches reported by the representative groups of participants and observed during the assessment.

This section's results are clustered within two major areas of an assessment framework, as illustrated in Figure 4, below. First, regarding the teaching-learning environment fostered by the pilot to reach at-risk youths, teachers, and parents, the section presents findings from four areas: the teachers, tutors, and peer educators; the learners; the methods; and the materials used. Second, system support for pilot implementation presents findings on the public awareness campaign, NGO institutional capacity building, and the assessment plan and implementation.

Figure 4: Assessment Framework



Findings for each area are organized into two parts. The first provides a narrative of the central themes explored and points of successes and challenges that emerged in each sector. The second part presents a summary of lessons and recommendations to consider when planning similar programs.

3.1 TEACHING-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The at-risk youth—juvenile offenders, kids with emotional and behavioral difficulties, groups from children's institutions, and young members of dysfunctional or impoverished families—targeted for this pilot require specific interventions that address their life-skill needs. Therefore, education interventions offered through the pilot initiative are designed to (1) improve the quality and relevance of education to keep children in school and away from abusive work; (2) enable children to protect themselves better by instructing them how to recognize and avoid abusive child labor; and (3) offer children training for alternative employment.

In assessing the learning environment for at-risk children, one of the most important characteristics to observe is the relationship between teachers and learners. We looked for teachers who engage their students in active, learner-centered processes—teachers who use behaviour, techniques, and materials that encourage learners to ask questions and who give supportive feedback and monitor progress during class by walking among the desks and stopping to ask or respond to questions or make constructive comments.

3.1.1 TEACHERS, TUTORS, PEER EDUCATORS, AND LEARNERS

The pilot supported education for prevention and protection from child labor with several types of educational interventions at formal and non-formal learning sites. These include after-school tutoring, summer academic strengthening program, and pre-vocational and vocational training and job clubs. In all types, classroom planning and instructional practice are meant to foster participation, often with groups of students working together on tasks and activities. Despite wide variation in the level of practice, this assessment found solid evidence of efforts and success in integrating learner-friendly participatory approaches into the teaching-learning environment in all of the sites visited. Wide variation can be explained by the differences in the types of classrooms and the short number of days of formal teacher training offered.

Based on interviews, focus groups, and observations conducted over five days after the pilot's close of this phase of the activity, Table 4, below, presents a representative overview of the varied types of classrooms supported by the pilot.⁹ All were visited during the assessment, with one exception.¹⁰ Each learning site had been exposed to training specifically oriented toward understanding the circumstances and needs of at-risk youth. The most engaging processes were observed at the sites where tutoring, vocational, or pre-vocational programs were offered by local NGOs with strong experience in working with at-risk youth in Ruse.

Teacher, tutors, and peer educators were encouraged to use learner-centered methods and practiced them with various degrees of success. Vocational cooking classes and after-school tutoring were most successful, whereas the teachers in the formal school classrooms were less adept. This can be explained by the fact that, on one hand, smaller informal classes allowed for greater group or one-on-one interface, while on the other, teachers in the formal settings needed more practice training in the use of participatory methods with larger numbers of students in the classroom.

Learners showed engagement by expressing themselves within group teams or in larger discussions with confidence, asked questions, and appeared relaxed. Again, the students in the less formal or nonformal classrooms showed higher degrees of expression while those in the formal classrooms were more reserved, did not ask questions freely and answered them cautiously, and were less relaxed.

The classroom structure, instructional practice, and methods in the informal classroom settings moved away from or eliminated frontal focus teaching, used flexible structure with movable desks and chairs, and were highly interactive. Conversely, formal classrooms were primarily frontal focused, less flexible with immovable desks and chairs, and had teacher-prompted discussions.

⁹ Note: Although St. Cyril School is part of Phase II, it provides an example of the diversity of approaches developed as an extension of Phase I of the pilot program assessed here.

¹⁰ The results of the summer program presented here are based on classroom observations of teachers trained for the program and on results of interviews and focus group discussions with youth, teachers, and parents.

Table 4: Comparison of Five Learning Environments

| Classroom/ Dimension | St. Cyril School (40% Roma) (OSC) | Vocational Cooking Class (OSC) | Academic Support Center (OSC with LCJD) | Vasil Levski & Nikola Obretenov Schools (SBS) | Summer Program Informal (SBS, UNA) |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| Teacher, Tutor, or Peer Educator | Facilitator (college-age volunteer) Learner-centered Easily approachable Praises learners | Teacher/Facilitator Learner-centered Easily approachable Praises learners | Highly Trained Tutor//Mentor Learner-centered Easy interaction Gives positive reinforcement | Highly Trained Frontal method Teacher-centered Friendly, but distanced | Highly trained teachers and volunteer peer educators Parent participation as teacher aids Learner-centered Active, vigorous |
| Learners | Relaxed, ask questions Expressive Easily walk up to teacher's desk Boys more active than girls | Relaxed, engaged, disciplined, ask questions, demonstrative Boys more verbal and active than girls | Relaxed, engaged disciplined, ask questions, demonstrative All males | Enjoy team activity Reserved Do not initiate questions Boys more active than girls | Empowered to make program decisions Initiate questions |
| Classroom structure, Instructional Practice, and Methods | Frontal focus but teacher moves through the classroom; Highly interactive, creative | Informal Learner-centered Highly group oriented Peer learning Mentoring Interactive Learn by doing Peer groups | Informal lounge and meeting areas with movable desk/chair units Informal Learner-centered One-on-one coaching and peer learning Mentoring | Frontal focus Traditional practice Teacher prompted group discussions | Flexible structure with movable desks Informal Learner-centered Learn by doing and by playing Interactive Creative |
| Materials | Minimal Paper, coloring pens and crayons Books | Fully equipped kitchen | Youth bring textbooks Computers Wall posters on child labor | Textbooks Wall posters Student work displayed | Modules for teachers on classroom management, how to work with youth at risk and how to work with parents |

Materials¹¹ used in informal classrooms were sometimes quite minimal compared with the numerous textbooks and wall posters displayed in the formal classrooms. However, the materials available in the informal classrooms used interactive processes that diversified and maximized the learning experience while the diverse materials seen in formal classrooms seemed to be on display and not integrated into the learning experience of the students.

In general, the formal classrooms showed limited use of methods and materials expected to be most beneficial in a dynamic teaching-learning environment. Although the 50 teachers in these classrooms were trained in SBS methods, the length of training time was limited to several weekends (as described in the following section). Out of 50 teachers trained, 38 teachers were selected to participate in the summer program. Summer program teachers and other SBS-trained teachers differed in that the summer program teachers got supervised practice during the program and interacted differently with youth through the free-choice activities. The most holistic and potentially transformational training approach was conducted within the summer program described below.

¹¹ Modules produced by the pilot are reviewed separately below.

3.1.3 TEACHERS AND LEARNERS: CLASSROOM PLANNING AND INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE

Closing the one-way communication gap that exists between teachers and learners in traditional frontal and rote memorization models of education is an important aspect of all programs for at-risk youth. In contrast to standard classrooms found in formal education throughout the country, the most important differences observed in all types of classrooms in the pilot show improved relationships between teachers and learners, adults, and youth. Again, although not a stated objective or criteria of the project, the summer program offers an example of a qualitative difference that proved important in engaging at-risk youth.

TEACHERS

Most teachers monitor progress during class either by sitting with the small groups (as is the case with after-school tutors) or walking around the classroom, stopping to observe, offering guidance, and asking or answering questions (as is the case in both vocational and formal classroom settings). When students or groups have completed the task at hand, they are asked to report on their results. Individuals from the teams then present verbal responses, write answers on the blackboard, or both.

These dynamics were most commonly observed among the tutored, vocational, or pre-vocational classes visited. By contrast, other classrooms observed in the targeted schools, where teachers were trained—but not practiced—in summer program techniques and processes did not hold particularly lively discussions or exhibit great team spirit. Rather, the task was often left to one person with minimal inputs from team members. These cases illustrate the contrasting differences between *looking* like a team by sitting in group formation and *behaving* as a team by participating in a dynamic group process.

More teacher training to improve facilitation techniques for effective group process needs to be supported in these schools. SBS noted in their reports that this would be the case and can be explained by the short time period allowed for the teacher training as budgeted in the pilot. Teachers also pointed to the need for greater support for the use of alternative methods within the school system itself.

Teachers, tutors, and peer educators in all sites (formal or nonformal) reported that planning active classrooms based on group work, instead of the traditional frontal approach where students sit in rows facing the teacher, requires restructuring and discipline. While particularly challenging, this has proven most rewarding.

The classroom space has begun to reflect the learners' work and their achievements. Group work, displayed in special areas of the classroom, demonstrates the outcomes of their exercises with wall posters, placards, and models, along with use of natural materials that are easily accessible, affordable, and chosen by the children. In these classrooms, the learners and teachers showed great pride in showing what had been produced by the teams. Although wall charts and posters developed under the pilot are evident in most every classroom, one senses that they are more for show than purposefully used within daily activities.

Teachers and learners interviewed at all sites perceive that the participatory activities and cooperative learning groups are empowering and that the youth not only learn from teachers, but also from each other. Teachers now look for ways to support positive learning outcomes for all youths, not just those considered smart or successful learners—and not only boys, but also the girls, Romas, and other typically disenfranchised groups in the project area of Ruse. Teachers also say that the participatory process has helped them understand that the learners have their own body of knowledge and that teachers are learning from them as well as from other teachers and volunteers.

3.1.4 WHAT DID TEACHERS AND LEARNERS SAY?

Teachers and learners have very positive responses to techniques used in the pilot activities.

TEACHERS

Though teachers in the summer program initially resisted the introduction of learner-centered practices, they were finally convinced of the benefits of the techniques. They said that, while participatory instructional

approaches require more preparation time, the preparation eased their load during classes by reducing the amount of time they are required to talk. As a result, they enjoyed their profession more and had new-found respect for and from the students. Both teachers and learners were more active. The teachers felt reinvigorated about their teaching careers and shared their new knowledge with other teachers as they returned to the traditional school sessions.

The teachers found the participatory, interactive methods to be more creative and supportive, giving more responsibilities for students to develop their talents but also giving the teachers possibility to show new skills, knowledge, and techniques. They also pointed out that the school curriculum during the school year does not allow opportunities such that they can learn from their students, understand them better, and find alternative possibilities to support student learning.

Similarly, vocational and pre-vocational teachers and tutors with longer experience working with at-risk youth echoed the necessity to respect the learners. They also stated that teaching needed to be interesting for both teachers and students and that the efforts should be united in a holistic approach.

One of the most unique features reported by the student learners was the peer learning provided by UNA youth volunteers, and students began modelling their behaviour after the young volunteers. Although the teachers at first were prejudiced against the use of youth volunteers, in the end they confirmed that the young volunteers were very successful and that they felt calmer and more secure when the volunteers were present.

Teachers from all types of schools recommended that there should be greater diversity of choice in courses offered and the teaching staff needed to be “optimized” with more professional training in alternative participatory approaches.

LEARNERS

Some of the immediate responses by the learners include the following:

- The teachers were “*really*” willing to support them.
- They became tolerant, found new respect for each other, and had more positive attitudes toward schooling.
- They appreciated the introduction to new technologies, techniques, knowledge, and activities.
- Positive self-evaluation gave them opportunity to show their strong sides and talents.
- They learned to organize themselves and care for their materials and their own work.
- The program allowed freedom to choose and flexibility.
- Their parents and guardians were more interested in their work.

Results of education interventions as reported through testimonials from vocational and pre-vocational students:

- **Alexandra**, a 17-year-old student from the cosmetic course, used to be a prostitute and had a very bad relationship with her mother. A psychologist of the Local Commission has been working with both mother and daughter for years. Alexandra was one of the hardest-working students in the cosmetic course. Now public educators maintain that she is no longer a prostitute and the work with her and her mother is going easily.
- **Dessislava**, a student from the same course, has changed schools four times in three years and had exhibited bad behavior with classmates and parents. Teachers say she now has become more balanced.
- **Vihrena**, student from the cookery class, used to escape from the orphanage where he lives to roam the country. He had committed six robberies. He has become so enthusiastic in cookery that he has improved his behavior. The teacher says he is a talented cook.

- **Borislav**, a student from the same group, also committed six robberies. He has found seasonal summer work as an assistant cook.

3.1.5 OVERVIEW OF MODULES DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE PILOT

Seven modules developed for use in the pilot are reviewed here with comments on content and visual presentation.

MODULES TO TRAIN AT-RISK YOUTH (OSC)

1. *The Job Club* tool kit (42 pp.) is a one-week motivational course that guides participants through a self-analysis of personal skills, aptitude, and ambitions, with tips on how to conduct a job search, communicate, and prepare action plans.

Comments. The tool kit presents a good balance of theory with practice and is well-formatted, highly visual, and easy to use. However, it is gender neutral, so it misses the opportunity to provide guidance in addressing inherent male/female biases in analysis of personal skills, aptitude, and ambitions, communication, job search, and action plans.

2. *Nonformal Education in Outdoor Settings* (19 pp) is a guide developed for a one-and-a-half-day field trip for youth at risk based on principles of experience-based, child-led learning. The goal is to encourage the process of social integration of children from disadvantaged backgrounds by enabling them to discover innate positive qualities and capabilities and acquire new competencies that boost self-esteem and confidence. Methods and approaches combine various technical physical elements with specialized interactive games, discussions, and group and individual reflection. It presents an excellent selection of nearly 40 games to use for ice breakers, warm-up and wrap-up, team work, communication, self expression, the development of conflict resolution skills, clarification of value systems, and group consensus building.

Comments. The tool kit does not offer any general guidance for facilitators and is gender neutral, with no specific attention to male-female differences. The tool kit, while well formatted, could be improved with illustrations.

3. *How to Start Your Own Small Business* (69 pp.) is a primer for a 10.5-day training for vocational and pre-vocational students that guides participants through stages of business development. It teaches entrepreneurial skills, sales and service, basic accounting and documentation; and business-plan development.

Comments. The primer presents solid information for basic small-business start up, including management theory and group behavior. It could be improved with guidance for facilitators, practice sessions and/or case studies, and attention to gender differentiations.

PEER TUTOR TRAINING MODULE (UNA)

4. *Child Rights and Child Labor* (23 pp.) provides information and activities to be used in UN school clubs to develop young volunteer students' skills for working with peers and younger children at risk.

Comments. The table of contents lists eleven interactive games, one of which targets trafficking of girls. The guide contains no specific information on how to use the information or set up training and would be improved with guidance for female and male volunteers on gender-differentiated perspectives that might emerge in training male and female youth as well as with other disenfranchised groups, such as Roma.

TEACHER TRAINING MODULES (SBS)

5. *Education without Prejudice* (25 pp.) is a guide for a two-day workshop for teachers that contains theoretical information and skills for anti-bias education in the classroom. Practice activities are included.

Comments. The guide is strong on theory and contains some information on sexism. However, the practice sessions need further development, including practical information to address gender bias in teaching and learning. The guide has a simple format, contains no visuals, and does not refer to supporting materials.

6. *Family Involvement* (42 pp.) is a guide for a two-day training for teachers that contains procedures for studying the family environment along with planning and cooperation to involve family participation in school to prevent school drop out, abusive child labor, and prostitution.

Comments. This simply formatted guide contains no visuals; handouts are included. It is gender neutral and should be improved with some attention to gender bias within the family that may affect teaching and/or learning in the classroom.

7. *Creating a Positive Classroom Environment* (15 pp.) is a guide designed for a two-day teacher training to introduce the organization of student-centered classrooms and basic interactive methods and to demonstrate the practice of interactive methods.

Comments. The guide is simply formatted and contains no visuals. It is strong on theory and needs further development on practice sessions as well as attention to gender-based bias in teaching and learning.

In summary, although the quality of some of the materials is quite high, many of them share similar weaknesses. These include:

- Lack of attention to gender issues inherent in the subject matter of the modules—most modules are presented in a gender neutral style, and those that mention girls or women lack thorough attention.¹²
- Emphasis on theory with less attention to guidance in practice and processes necessary for improving the teaching-learning process;
- No guidance for briefing and debriefing students before and after participatory exercises to maximize learning outcomes;
- Minimal to no use within the text of visuals, which have the potential to increase considerably the usefulness of information.

These materials, the first of their kind to be developed in the Bulgarian language by local field staff, are already in demand and have been distributed inside and outside Ruse in other Bulgarian cities. Several modules have already been made available to other NGOs in Ruse, including the YMCA, Save the Children, and Youth House. The Open Society Club of Ruse has used the tool kit, *Job Club*, for another project that will train unemployed youth. The Local Commission will use the tool kit, *Non-formal Education*, during ecological marches in the spring. The tool kit, *Non-formal Education in Outdoor Settings*, was discussed and highly recommended during the National Meeting of Local Commissions in September 2003 in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Ten commissions were provided with the tool kit with reports of new requests arriving regularly.

3.2 SYSTEMIC SUPPORT

The success of any initiative depends on systemic support at many levels. In Section 2 above this study assessed systemic support of the Bulgaria pilot initiative through (1) the public awareness campaign and (2) capacity building of local NGOs implementing the project. This section reviews the structure and management of the pilot initiative.

3.2.1 PILOT DESIGN

As described above in Section I, the pilot was designed and implemented as a short-term, low-budget initiative and, in this context, provides us with notable findings in several areas.

Assessment and design of child labor prevention programs that target and measure impact are difficult because of the nature of the issue. Too little time was available for conducting a comprehensive assessment that included an evaluation of the availability and quality of education for at-risk and working children; child

¹² It should be noted that the contractor identified the need to address gender issues and expand activities of WAD to include gender equity training of youth; the issues could well be integrated within the modules as well.

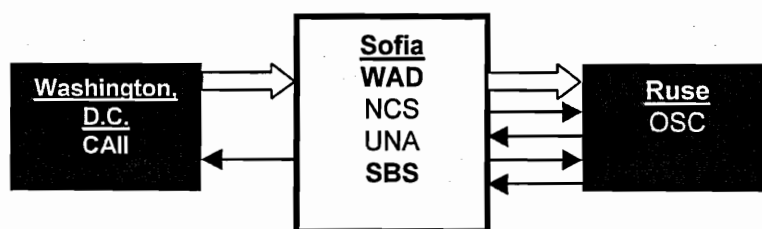
and family perception and evaluation of locally available education; and comparative economic benefits of school, work, and work-study combinations of the precise problem groups and areas.¹³ Nevertheless, the assessment team, through consultation with leaders and organizations in the field with long-term experience in Bulgaria, rapidly identified both the target population and local implementing NGOs. The NGOs were selected for their compatibility in terms of their ability to offer technical expertise to address the needs of a multi-faceted initiative, with each contributing essential parts to the whole. Some had proven strengths in teaching methodology and practice, others in youth programs, communication, and coordination. None had combined expertise in the untested area of the use of education to prevent child labor and could have benefited from sharing their skills with each other, as stated earlier.

Monitoring indicators and work plans show an ambitious pilot initiative (see Appendices 2 and 3). M&E plans were developed by the assessment team in discussions with various stakeholders but without full participation of the NGO implementers themselves. As reported by local NGOs, this was at the source of misunderstanding that caused some resentment among the local contractors.

3.2.2 MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISION

Management and supervision proved to be a challenge, largely as a result of structure and communication difficulties. Figure 5, below, shows the location of main organizations active in the pilot.

Figure 5: Organizational Relationships by Location



Five out of the six organizations were located outside the project area, with the contractor located outside the country and the coordinating organization (WAD) in Sofia. As reported above, this placed a strain on all organizations involved, especially the organizations at either end: the contracting organization in Washington and, most especially, on the one organization located in Ruse. Both incurred expenses above and beyond the contract budget in order to meet expectations.

A high level of success is signified by the fact that all but one of the work plan indicators was accomplished. These achievements were only possible through the work of capable local NGOs with proven on-the-ground experience. However, achievements came at extra cost to the NGOs. Their reports raised the following challenges in meeting the results terms stipulated in the performance monitoring plan: (1) high number of outputs required; (2) low salaries equivalent to \$80 to \$120 per month compared to Bulgarian standards of \$250 to \$300 per month; and (3) the necessity of reallocating funds from NGO overheads to support the pilot. As mentioned above, these conditions served to stretch further the capacities of the NGOs.

These issues need to be weighed very carefully, especially in the context of the current aid environment where the trend of the donor community is to cut back on expenses of long-term consulting on the one hand and the trend of the development community is toward delivery at the local level.

¹³ Myers (2001) has stated that, even in countries where ILO-IPEC has had child labor programs and there is a great deal of academic and NGO analysis, three to six months may be needed to produce a credible situation analysis for new interventions.

SECTION 4:

SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED BY OBJECTIVES

This section summarizes lessons learned according to the four pilot objectives.

4.1 OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF CHILD LABOR, PROSTITUTION, TRAFFICKING (SNC, UNA)

Data collection, reporting and analysis—an urgent need exists for developing greater capacity to collect and report data using international conventions.

Interactive methods, to include video training with games, are needed to educate youth.

Attitudes, particularly old moral ways of thinking and behaving about child prostitution and trafficking, need to be changed.

4.2 OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE SCHOOL RETENTION OF ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, PARTICULARLY MEMBERS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES, THROUGH TEACHER TRAINING AND SUMMER PROGRAMS (SBS, UNA)

Peer volunteers need to be involved in design and planning of programs for at-risk youth. At-risk youth respond very well to older volunteer youths who can provide them with good role models and encourage positive peer-learning opportunities.

Parental participation in the schools and classrooms provides positive reinforcement for youths. Parents should also be involved in program design and preparation.

Research needs to be conducted with learners in advance of planning to determine which courses are of interest and use to them.

Module development requires training, mentoring, and practice. The steps of the lessons need to build on one another, incorporating specific directions for the facilitation process that include briefing and debriefing of participatory activities to maximize the learning outcomes. Greater attention to differentiated needs of female and male youth is needed.

Participatory learner-centered methods engage and transform relationships among and between youth, teachers, and parents.

Training is needed to provide more in-depth skills and experience in child-centred methods, group and team formation and processes, curriculum interpretation, and lesson planning in order to incorporate most effectively the empowering and transformational methods.

Teachers should be encouraged and guided to integrate new materials and methods on their own in their formal education classrooms as well as to work together to prepare other packages using locally available materials and engaging youth in the process.

4.3 OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE VOCATIONAL TRAINING, JOB COUNSELING, AND LIFE SKILLS CLASSES TO AT-RISK YOUTH (OSC)

Parental peer groups in association with vocational programs could help parents understand their youth and strengthen family relationships;

Selection of youth is time-consuming and needs to be factored into the schedule and budget because of:

- High demand (numbers of applicants);
- Necessary to confer with principal, parents, teachers, younger-age students;
- Older students need interview questionnaires to identify their needs.

Suitable education models need to include

- Group Work.
- Selection of teachers and learning environments that is flexible and friendly.
- Flexible, friendly models require new training for teachers in dynamic and interactive methods and informal teaching-learning sites that “do not look like ordinary classrooms.”

4.4 OBJECTIVE 4: STRENGTHEN NGOS WORKING AGAINST CHILD PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING; DEVELOP A MODEL FOR COLLECTION OF DATA ON CHILD PROSTITUTION AND TRAFFICKING (WAD)

- NGOs overestimated their own and other organizations’ capacities regarding availability of data and experience in gathering data.
- Information is guarded and not easily shared among organizations in a highly competitive environment.
- Lack of understanding of the need for an overall picture contributed to a lack of coordination and cohesion among the NGOs in the pilot.

SECTION 5:

MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During its year-long period, the pilot was remarkably successful in introducing several innovative approaches and demonstrating a variety of ways to prevent abusive child labor within formal and nonformal systems.

5.1 INTERVENTIONS

Preventive interventions, such as the summer program and academic support program, require teacher-effectiveness training in interactive, child-centered methods to improve the quality of the teacher-learning experience in addressing needs of at-risk youth.

Protective interventions—providing information in learning environments in formal or nonformal education programs, educating youth on labor laws and how to use them, and where to turn for help—require educating and involving family members and community leaders. Such interventions also require a “whole school” or “whole system” approach that can prove challenging, especially within formal education, and require long-term commitment.

Developmental interventions, such as vocational and pre-vocational training, offer safe work alternatives for youth who need the income. Interventions also need to include basic decision-making and negotiation tools that can be fundamentally empowering and transformative.

Although no definitive answers emerged as to which intervention or group of interventions was most effective in preventing abusive child labor, the pilot initiative heightened awareness and interest among the general public, introduced new processes in formal and non-formal education, and helped organizations identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address in future projects.

5.2 CROSSCUTTING THEMES

Over the course of the pilot year, coordination between the institutions and NGOs involved in the project improved. Combined with activated and improved human resources and the trial use of various activities and techniques, a sound basis exists for continuing preventive activities that incorporate the crosscutting themes listed below.

5.2.1 CONTEXT

Education systems of newly democratizing countries, such as Bulgaria, are challenged by an array of social changes. Donors need to create programs that keep in mind the fact that stakeholders at all levels of newly democratizing societies are in the process of learning different methods and behavior. The transition to democratically based pedagogy can be especially demanding as the process requires not only an understanding of the theory but, most importantly, experience in practices that are empowering and transformative. This is especially true for at-risk youth who often reject authority and will respond better to egalitarian, informal or nonformal, practically based education as opposed to the authoritarian, formal, and theoretically based education traditions used in the Soviet Era.

5.2.2 GENDER

The pilot lacked a specific gender strategy in addressing prevention of prostitution and trafficking. Although gender parity in education has long been met in Bulgaria, gender bias exists in the culture and is reflected in the pilot program. While selection of participants included even numbers of female and male youth, the activity did not

sufficiently address the gender context. Distinctions between female and male youth need to be assessed and clearly articulated in all stages of the project cycle, from assessment and design to planning and implementation.

5.2.3 STRATEGY, ORGANIZATION, AND MANAGEMENT

The pilot strategy, organized with a wide scope of activities and implementers, posed distinct management challenges. Another strategy would be to limit the scope of activities or the size of the target group. Narrower targets and more limited objectives might allow resources to meet the needs of intended beneficiaries more fully and deeply.

Organization and management of the pilot may have been improved with a better understanding of the culture and competencies of local NGOs, featuring:

- Management plans based on assessment of organizational capacities;
- The structure and rules of local institutions—as well as of the donor and coordinating institutions—understood by all;
- The location of the coordinating organizations carefully considered and compensated for;
- Agreements on tasks, reports, and deliverables more fully understood by each implementer before and at activity start up, with review and restructuring if necessary.

5.2.4 TIME AND BUDGET

From the beginning, expectations could have been more reasonably aligned with time and resource constraints. Combined with the ambitious number of deliverables for the pilot, all of the management issues raised above became intensified given the short time period and modest budget. Local contractors and sub-contractors were hard pressed to meet all the research and training demands within the nine-month period initially planned for the pilot. In addition, a change in the exchange rate reduced the BGL amount and shrunk the resources available to local NGO implementers. A three-month no-cost extension gave needed time to finish deliverables. However, implementing NGOs ended up paying expenses beyond the budget out of their own pockets.

5.2.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

M&E plans need to include indicators that capture quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The non-formal programs and informal, friendly teaching-learning environments introduced in formal classrooms use child-centered approaches to provide the learners with a nurturing environment that strongly supports transformative processes. At-risk youth from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to be suspicious of authoritarian settings and resistant to conventional educational approaches and, thus, do better in this type of learning environment. First, pilot interventions for these learners should foster flexible, exploratory, interactive, and inventive learning styles and, second, should seek diversity by making sure that all students (for example, by sex and ethnicity) are actively engaged in the learning process. Consequently, methods and tools should include basic techniques that are shaped by a democratically based, participatory philosophy that encourages broad-based involvement. Although these were not stated pilot objectives nor was the M&E planned to monitor according to these standards, the findings show notable challenges and promising achievements in these areas. Qualitative indicators would be helpful in monitoring the transformational effects of education interventions as well as aiding all stakeholders to achieve expected outcomes and processes beyond simply counting numbers.

5.3 SUMMARY

The positive results and lessons learned from the pilot form a stable prerequisite for further development and extension in Ruse and other regional centers with problems related to prevention of the worst forms of child labor, including child prostitution and trafficking of children for sexual purposes.

APPENDIX I: WAD WORK PLAN

| Activities | Indicators | Outcomes | Re objective | Responsibility | Time |
|---|---|--|--------------|---|---|
| <p>Working Planning Session of NGOs directly involved in the project implementation</p> <p>WAD prepares and signs contracts with sub-grantees and provides guidelines for monitoring, narrative and financial reporting</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agreement and clear working rules • mid-term and final reporting nicely done • sequence of activities (avoid duplication) | <p>objectives, methods, ethics, adjustment of schedules, roles of partners, expectations, difficulties etc. clarified</p> <p>=> infrastructure set up</p> <p>- forms and written clear guidelines for financial and narrative reporting</p> | 1-4 | <p>Project Manager (PM)</p> <p>Project Coordinator (PC)</p> <p>Accountant (A)</p> <p>Technical Assistant (TA)</p> <p>Partners</p> | <p>January 2003</p> <p>Week 2</p> |
| <p>WAD starting organizing meetings to provide and gather information from the outside/ institutions, public/ professional NGOs and summarize it to the partner organizations</p> <p>Meetings and contacts with the stakeholders: incl. IOM, State Agency for Child Protection, Press center of the Ministry of Interior, ICMPD – International Center for Migration Policy Development, National Service Border Police, NGOs: Center “Nadja”, “Animus”, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, GPF- Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation, and organizations from the WAD network and other NGOs and networks working in different regions in Bulgaria</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of institutions and stakeholders involved - at least 15 • at least 30 supporters of the project • information collected and analyzed • record of feed back | <p>overview of the available information put on one place</p> <p>ideas for further steps and national campaign</p> <p>clear methodology of gathering information</p> <p>established channel of regular exchange of information</p> | 1-4 | <p>Project Manager (PM)</p> <p>Project Coordinator (PC)</p> <p>Partners</p> | <p>Starting in the second week of January 2003</p> <p>(on-going activity)</p> |
| <p>Study and Stakeholders Guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting gathering materials regarding international human rights treaties in this field, Bulgaria’s obligations, national reports etc. and identifying sources of information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record of information pieces | <p>All available information gathered and systematized</p> | 4 | <p>PC</p> <p>Partners</p> <p>TA</p> | <p>January 2003</p> <p>Week 2-3</p> |
| <p>WAD starts to prepare structured information about the project activities and distribute it through the stakeholders and WAD network organizations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of information pieces • At least 100 organizations and individuals monthly reached • record of feed back received • - at least 1 page monthly of WAD Bulletin | <p>At least 10 pages of WAD bulletin produced</p> | 1-4 | <p>PC and TA</p> | <p>Permanent on-going activity</p> |

| Activities | Indicators | Outcomes | Re objective | Responsibility | Time |
|--|--|---|--------------|---|--|
| Start of WAD working visits to Russe On-site consultations Provide feedback and consultations to sub-grantees on project implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 records of monitoring and evaluation reports | Overall monitoring and evaluation of the project | 1-4 | PM and PC External CAII evaluator | Start February 2003 on-going activity |
| WAD – SNC consultations concerning Ruse local awareness raising campaign (using the experience of WAD campaigns) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNC performance • quality of the campaign products • media coverage | Well organized awareness campaign – good information materials prepared, clear plan of the activities coordinated with the partners and WAD network | 1 | PC and TA | February 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Meeting/ consultations with official stakeholders re. the Plan/ Strategy combating child prostitution and trafficking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of information gathered • List of contacts • At least 20 stakeholders involved | Identification of stakeholders, entry points for NGOs, short-comings and possible intervention and support by NGOs | 4 | PM and PC external experts | February 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Study and Stakeholders Guide: Developing a methodology of gathering information and conducting the study Working meeting with the experts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 external experts involved in the study • record of the working meeting | Clear and accepted working scheme | 4 | PM, PC and external experts | February 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Design of a questionnaire aiming at collecting/retrieving reliable information about: stakeholder organizations (GO/NGO) available data missing data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of information directories (topics) and number of information pieces included in each topic • List of contacts and stakeholders involved | User friendly forms of structuring information – questionnaires Structured and user friendly data base | 4 | PC and TA | February 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Conduct a 2-day skills training workshop to sub-grantees (OSC, SNC, UNA) TOT in prevention programs of trafficking in human beings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 participants involved • Feed back from the evaluation forms of the participants | Capacity building - advancement of skills and theoretical background of the trainers/partners involved in the project | 1- 4 | PC + WAD trainers Partners | February 2003 Week 3-4 |
| Joint working meeting with the National Network for Equal Opportunities (NNEO) and professional NGOs of the Anti-Violence network for advice, ideas for support and multiplication, eventual public pressure in support of the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of organizations whit concrete ideas and suggestions for support | Presentation of the project activities NNEO memorandum for support | 1,4 | PC, WAD network coordinator and TA | March 2003 |
| Conduct a 2-day skills training workshop to sub-grantees (OSC, UNA) TOT for trainers and volunteers how to work with disadvantaged children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 participants involved • Feed back from the evaluation forms of the participants | Advancement of skills and capacity building of the trainers/volunteers involved in the project | 4 | PC + WAD trainers Partners | March 2003 Week 1-2 |

| Activities | Indicators | Outcomes | Re objective | Responsibility | Time |
|--|--|---|--------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Study and Stakeholders Guide: Dissemination of the stakeholder questionnaires | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 80 questionnaires disseminated | Core information gathered | 4 | TA | March 2003 Week 1 |
| Quarterly report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feed back from CAI | Quarterly report prepared | 4 | PM, PC, Accountant | March 2003 Week 4 |
| Study and Stakeholders Guide: preparing a short statement on the current situation: problems, interventions, short-comings Stakeholders Guide (map of stakeholders, legislation, international commitments, national plan, problem statement) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> record of information pieces | Summary for the guide edition prepared | 4 | PC | April 2003 Week 1 |
| Conduct a 2-day skills training workshop to SNC, UNA- Burn out syndrome for the people involved in the project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 participants involved Feed back from the evaluation forms of the participants | Capacity building of partner's organizations | 4 | PC and WAD trainers | May 2003 Week 1 |
| 3-day working meeting +training: Mid-Term Review of project implementation and results, exchanging experience+ 2-day team building and media competency training (sub-grantees + WAD team) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of achievements Analyses of the difficulties met Number of participants Feed back and evaluation | Review and sequence of activities Capacity building of partner's organizations | 4 | PC and WAD trainers | May 2003 Week 3-4 |
| Meetings/ consultations with officials re. systematic long term cooperation with NGOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record of meetings Record of commitments | Channel of regular exchange of information established | 4 | PC | June 2003 |
| Conduct a 3-day training workshop to sub-grantees on project management (UNA network) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 participants involved Feed back from the evaluation forms of the participants | Capacity building of partner's organizations | 4 | PC and WAD trainers | June 2003 |
| Quarterly report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feed back from CAI | Quarterly report prepared | 4 | PM, PC, Accountant | June 2003 Week 4 |
| Study and Stakeholder Guide: Analyses of the data gathered from different sources and institutions (presented from the external experts) Preparation of the draft of the study Editorial meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feed back from experts 4 editorial meetings | Prepared materials for final editing of the study and stakeholder guide | 4 | PM, PC and external experts | July-August 2003 |
| Conduct a 2-day skills training workshop to sub-grantees (OSC, SNC, UNA) in conflict resolution and communication skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 participants involved Feed back from the evaluation forms of the participants | Capacity building - advancement of skills of partners organizations | 4 | PC + WAD trainers Partners | July-August 2003 |

| Activities | Indicators | Outcomes | Re objective | Responsibility | Time |
|--|---|--|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Test campaign materials of SNC and strategies in another region (e.g. South-West Bulgaria/ Sandanski or South-East Bulgaria/ Burgas) Partner NGOs and WAD network NGOs provide direct input (information, analyses) into the statistics gathered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> record of feed back record of contribution from the network& partners | Analyses of reactions from the region Ideas for future activities and cooperation | 1,4 | PC WAD network Partners | July–August 2003 |
| Discussion and consultations with organizations from the WAD network - ideas for how to design a national campaign and for the elaboration of a strategic plan (Project proposal), using the experience of the local campaign and other relevant information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> record of meetings analyses of the ideas and future proposals | Plan for multiplication of the results from the project | 4 | PC WAD network Partners | September 2003 |
| Publishing the Study and Stakeholders Guide Model for data collection on trafficking of children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 450 copies distributed feed back from the recipients/institutions | Study and Stakeholders Guide published and distributed | 4 | PC, TA | September 2003 |
| Conduct a 1-day wrap-up working meeting with the project partners to: present achievements and learning points discuss possible follow-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 10 participants from the partners organizations involved in the discussions and the planning | Wrap-up final reports Proposal for future activities and sustainability of the achievements=> multiplication of good practices nationwide | 1-4 | PM, PC | September 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Organize round table to present the results to the public, i.e. in a press conference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> media coverage record of feed back at least 20 stakeholders involved | Publicity and public awareness raising about the problem | 4 | PC, TA | September 2003 Week 2-3 |
| Finalize narrative and financial reports and prepare overall WAD report | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feed back from CAII feed back from stakeholders | Final report prepared | 4 | PM, PC, Accountant | September 2003 Week 4 |

APPENDIX 2: STEP BY STEP WORK PROGRAM

Combating Prostitution and Trafficking of Economically Disadvantaged Children in Target

| Activities | Indicators | Outcomes | Responsibility | Time |
|---|--|---|----------------|------------------------------|
| Identify target groups – teachers, parents, children | Collaboration with the MOES, local MOES, municipality and other partners | 50 teachers, 50 parents and 140 children selected | Step by Step | February |
| Develop the module for teacher training Anti-bias, Creating a positive classroom environment, Parent Involvement | Product consistent with the needs | Module translated and adjusted to the target groups | Step by Step | March |
| Teacher training – Anti-bias | Product consistent with the needs | Module appropriately adjusted to the target groups | Step by Step | April |
| Teacher training – Creating a positive classroom environment | Product consistent with the needs | Module appropriately adjusted to the target groups | Step by Step | May |
| Teacher training – Parent Involvement | Product consistent with the needs | Module appropriately adjusted to the target groups | Step by Step | September |
| Parent meetings | Product consistent with the needs | 50 parents | Step by Step | March, April, May, September |
| Arrange the summer program and initial activities to orient the children – meeting the professionals and teachers who will be involved in the summer program | Coordination of the summer activities | Common service plan | Step by Step | June |
| Provide summer program – drama, arts, sports, music, dance, language, mathematics. Professionals will be involved – actors, artists, sportsmen, and teachers from the target schools. | Heightening children's interest towards education | 140 children involved Each service will end with a product to present to the other children, at school and to the community. Parents will be involved in the activities. | Step by Step | July |
| Provide educational materials for the target schools | Child-centered environment | Learning environment changed and improved | Step by Step | March-September |
| Project evaluation | Appropriate tools | Analyzed results | Step by Step | September |

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