

HANDBOOK FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

Protecting children from trafficking: what should schools do?



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Foreword

This handbook has been prepared as part of the awareness-raising initiative Preventing and Combating Child Trafficking in North Macedonia. It seeks to raise awareness and enhance knowledge among teachers and other education professionals regarding the crime of child trafficking and the role they can play in preventing and combating it.

The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the mechanism for monitoring application of the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, considers identification of child victims to be essential to preventing re-trafficking. GRETA has affirmed that “there continue to be important gaps in the identification of child victims of trafficking”¹.

An analysis of the child trafficking situation in North Macedonia shows that the number of child victims of trafficking relative to adults has been increasing. In 2019 in North Macedonia, according to relevant institutions and civil society organisations, of the 124 people identified as potential victims of trafficking, 85 were children. Of the six actual victims identified, four were children. In 2020, seven actual victims of human trafficking were identified, of which six were children. However, the real scope of the problem is likely to be much wider than official statistics show.

This problem of human trafficking is governed by the existing international standards in the Palermo Protocol and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (CETS No. 197), which have been incorporated into national legislation in North Macedonia.

The Macedonian Criminal Code makes human trafficking a criminal offence in its Article 418-a. This article bans human trafficking and prescribes a prison sentence of at least four years. The criminal offence of trafficking in children is dealt with in Article 418-d, which calls for at least eight years of imprisonment.

To combat human trafficking in North Macedonia, the National Commission, within the Ministry of the Interior, has prepared a National Strategy and Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration for the period 2021-2025. The action plan foresees programmes to protect children and prevent them from being trafficked. Such programmes also feature among the activities of the Subgroup for Combating Child Trafficking, which monitors the specific needs of child victims, protecting their interests and rights.

The Macedonian Bureau for Development of Education has prepared a set of guidelines describing the procedure for reporting and protecting a school pupil victim of any form of violence, neglect or lack of care. The guidelines include establishing programmes for the prevention of child trafficking. To help schools implement such programmes, there is a need to train teachers and other education professionals in applying the action plans for protecting children and preventing them from being trafficked. This handbook has been prepared to increase teachers’ knowledge about child trafficking. It contains the indicators for identifying children as potential victims of trafficking and gives information on how to refer potential victims of child trafficking to an appropriate institution.

1. GRETA (2018) “Trafficking in Children, Thematic Chapter of the 6th General Report on GRETA’s Activities”, pp. 22-23 available from [GRETA Trafficking in children Thematic Chapter](#) accessed on 14 April 2021.

Educational institutions aim to provide conditions for children to develop safely and to protect them from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. The most serious form of violence and crime befalling children is human trafficking. To prevent this from happening, schools must plan and implement appropriate activities, including: monitoring and timely recognition of trafficking risk indicators in students; providing support to the child upon their return to school; implementing resocialisation and reintegration programmes; co-operating with the authorities and institutions responsible for identifying and supporting child victims of trafficking.

Such prevention programmes are implemented in schools at three levels: primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.

To solve the complex problem of child trafficking requires a multidisciplinary approach. Prevention and protection activities undertaken at the school level as described in this handbook are but one component of the overall action against trafficking in human beings/children in North Macedonia, which is described as a whole in the National Strategy and Action Plan.

Thus, when carrying out preventive activities at every level, schools co-operate with a range of stakeholders, including: the Bureau for Development of Education, the Centre for Social Work, police, local government, civil society organisations, parents, subject experts and international organisations.

This handbook is composed of several interrelated sections that reflect the knowledge and skills teachers and educators need in order to identify children who are potential victims of trafficking.

Professor Verica Trajkova and Marija Angjelkovic

April 2021, Skopje

Chapter 1

Human trafficking

Human trafficking threatens fundamental human rights and freedoms worldwide. It is a highly profitable form of organised crime with extremely severe consequences for its victims. Millions of people, including children, youth, women and (to a lesser extent) men are forced into prostitution, begging, domestic servitude, plantation labour and other forms of exploitation.

What is human trafficking?

According to Article 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings:

“Trafficking in human beings” [means] the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

“Exploitation” [includes], at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Any child, woman or man who has suffered physical, psychological or emotional pain and has experienced any type of violence, including sexual violence, may become a victim of trafficking.

All victims share the following characteristics: they have been deceived, misled, sold, exposed to daily physical and psychological violence, treated as goods or as sources of earning, their rights have been violated and their lives have been threatened.

Potential victims are recruited, in other words attracted and deceived, in a variety of ways, as follows:

- ▶ by individual recruiters who operate in a given neighbourhood or who offer seasonal work abroad;
- ▶ through non-formal networks which may include acquaintances, friends, and sometimes, unfortunately, even family members;
- ▶ through advertising in media using attractive notices for (semi-)legal jobs within the country or abroad, such as fashion agency modelling, beauty pageantry, childcare, customer service, singing, working onboard cruise ships, or matchmaking with a foreigner;
- ▶ increasingly, over the internet, where initial contact can seem to be a friendly invitation to socialise, leading to dating and a declaration of love and marriage proposal and ending with blackmail, the posting of provocative images and embarrassment;
- ▶ by sudden, brutal abduction.

Human trafficking may be internal to a country or international. A given country may be a country of origin, where victims of trafficking are recruited; a country of transit, through which victims are transported to be exploited elsewhere, or a country of destination, where foreign and domestic victims are exploited. North Macedonia falls into all three categories.

Human trafficking factors

In North Macedonia, trafficking in human beings is a criminal offence, as set out in Articles 418-a (trafficking in human beings) and 418-d (child trafficking) of the Criminal Code. Several factors lead to human trafficking. These can be classified in two groups:

- ▶ push factors, including poverty in the countries/regions of origin, economic transition, lack of education, lack of information about human trafficking, insufficient employment opportunities in one's own country, dysfunctional families, gender discrimination on the labour market, all forms of violence including domestic, lack of legal migration opportunities.
- ▶ pull factors, including desire for employment, better salaries and profitability, financial support for victims' families, access to certain benefits, seeking higher-quality education, desire for adventurous and exciting life, "appealing" marriage offers, getting to know new places and cultures, acquiring better social status, and so on.

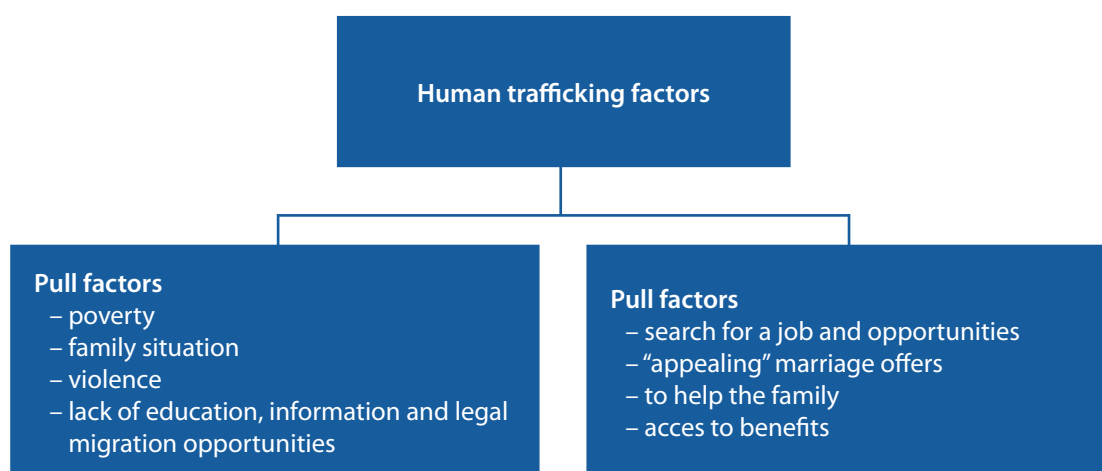


Figure 1: Push and pull human trafficking factors

According to data established by GRETA,² the total number of victims of trafficking in a set of 47 European countries increased by 44% between 2015 and 2018, with 10 598 victims identified in 2015, and 15 310 victims identified in 2018.

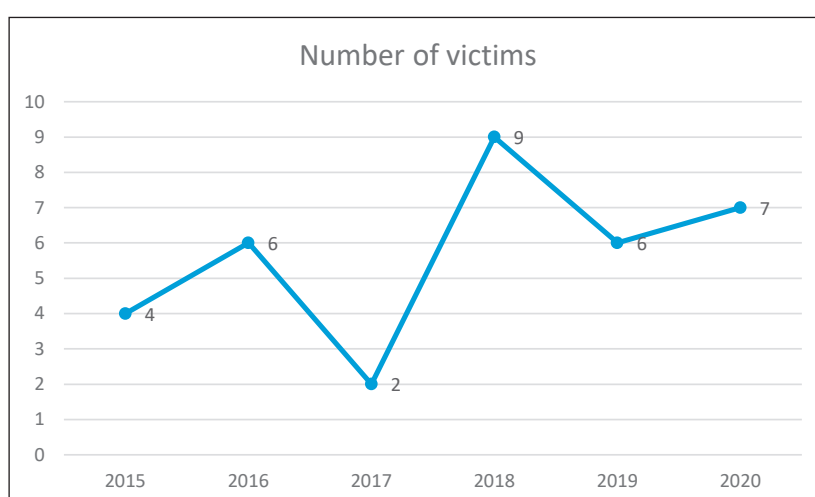


Figure 2: Number of victims of human trafficking in North Macedonia, 2015-2020

2. GRETA (2019), 9th General Report on GRETA's Activities, available from <https://rm.coe.int/9th-general-report-on-the-activities-of-greta-covering-the-period-from/16809e169e> accessed on 8 April 2021.

In North Macedonia between 2015 and 2020, 34 victims of human trafficking were identified, of which 24 were children. Out of 124 potential victims identified by the government and civil society organisations in 2019, 85 were children.

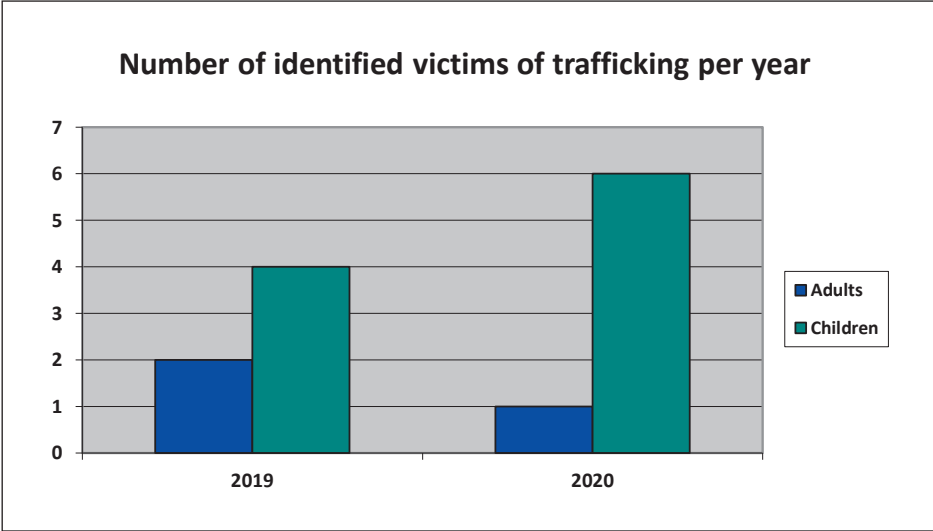


Figure 3: Numbers of adults and children victims of human trafficking in North Macedonia, 2019-2020

The real scope of human trafficking in North Macedonia is probably much higher than the official figures suggest, considering the numbers of identified potential child victims of trafficking.³

3. See annual reports of the National Commission on combating trafficking in human beings and illegal migration available from [annual reports AT commission](#) accessed on 16 April 2021.



Chapter 2

Child trafficking

Children are a vulnerable population. Their psychological and physical capabilities are in a developmental phase, they have limited capacity to identify risky situations and actions and to protect themselves from danger. They are thus susceptible to various forms of abuse and can be deceived into becoming victims of trafficking. To prevent this, early detection and identification of potential victims among schoolchildren is vital.

Child trafficking, like all forms of child abuse, is a serious problem. It endangers not only children's health, but also their physical and psychological development and education. Trafficking is organised under the supervision and control of people who gain material and other benefits from the practice. Just like human trafficking in general, child trafficking is a crime and it may display characteristics of an organised or transnational act. The specific characteristics of child trafficking require teachers and other education professionals to be trained in special procedures to protect children and refer them to appropriate assistance.

Child trafficking, according to Article 418-d of the Criminal Code, comprises recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or accepting a child for the purpose of exploiting them, and it will be considered "human trafficking" even in the case no force has been applied. The consent of the child victim is irrelevant.

Typical characteristics of children particularly at risk of being trafficked are:

- ▶ economically disadvantaged or dysfunctional families;
- ▶ a lack of parents or parental care;
- ▶ addiction present in the family (alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.);
- ▶ upbringing or educational issues;
- ▶ "rough" (street) living or sleeping;
- ▶ lack of birth registration;
- ▶ rural origins;
- ▶ institutional or residential care;
- ▶ exclusion from education;
- ▶ low self-esteem and resilience;
- ▶ lack of information about human trafficking;
- ▶ an adolescent desire for a better life;
- ▶ disabilities.

Poverty and a history of sexual and physical violence are among factors that make children vulnerable to trafficking. Some children are abducted and sold, others are deceived with a promise for a better life or a better job, and some find that trusting traffickers is the only economically viable option. Once they become trapped in the trafficker's control, they are held and exploited in conditions resembling slavery.

Depending on children's gender and age, they may be subjected to different forms of trafficking: girls are mostly used for prostitution, pornography and other sexual activities; boys are used in services, artisan shops, and in similar activities, as well as in farming; adolescents are used for committing criminal offences; smaller children are used for housework, begging and committing criminal offences; babies and toddlers, irrespective of their gender, are trafficked for the purpose of adoption; and all children, irrespective of their gender and age, may be used for illegal removal of organs.



Types of child trafficking

Children are trafficked for:

- ▶ sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery;
- ▶ servitude;
- ▶ forced marriage;
- ▶ begging;
- ▶ illegal adoption;
- ▶ coercion into committing criminal offences;
- ▶ illegal removal of organs.

Sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery

“Sexual abuse of a child” is a broad term that includes several forms of sexual exploitation and methods of abuse: sexual harassment of a child for the purposes of sexual exploitation, prostitution, incest, rape or child pornography. The latter entails the presentation of children in real or simulated sexually explicit activities, or the presentation of children’s genitals.

Child trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation is the abuse of children’s labour. This is conducted in forms, at times and under working conditions inappropriate for their age and best interests. It damages their physical and mental health, their emotional, moral and social development and prevents them from attending school regularly or makes them drop out from school entirely. Such trafficking is organised under the supervision or control of people who obtain material or other benefits from it. There are several types of child trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation:

- ▶ street work (wiping windshields, petty vending);
- ▶ agricultural work (seasonal work, picking fruits and vegetables);
- ▶ hospitality industry services (waitresses, escorts for guests at tables, dancers);

- ▶ farm work (tending to or breeding livestock);
- ▶ construction industry work (mining, factories).

Servitude

Children of both genders, sometimes below the age of 10, are put to work in households during the day, returning to their homes late in the evening. Older children, especially girls, often end up living in their master's home. They frequently come under full control by the master and members of their family, without any access to educational opportunities.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage, child marriage, and being sold as a mail-order bride typically befalls girls aged 14-16. They are forced to marry people from another region, most often abroad. The notion of marriage is a smokescreen put up by criminal organisations involved in human trafficking. The victims are described as brides while they are in fact privately sold for prostitution, forced into marriage or kept in domestic slavery. This type of child trafficking, unfortunately, is sometimes carried out with the consent (howsoever obtained) of the child's own parents. The process is typically launched by a foreign mediation agency of sorts or an intermediary person (an acquaintance or relative) who lives abroad. The parents are promised that their child will have a better life or receive offers of monetary compensation. The children are (il)legally transferred to the destination country to those who have "ordered" them, and they end up as trafficking victims for servitude, begging, criminal activities, etc.

Begging

Begging is an activity taking place on busy streets, at traffic lights and in front of malls or markets. It is most often done by groups of children, or a child/children accompanied by an adult.

Children particularly at risk of this form of trafficking are of both genders, ageing from birth to adolescence but most frequently aged 8-14, school drop-outs, those from dysfunctional families, neglected and abused children and those from marginalised groups.

Forced begging entails making children solicit money from people on the streets in various ways. Children are used for forced begging because they can easily trigger compassionate feelings from bystanders, and they can be easily manipulated by the trafficker. They are often accompanied by an adult, who collects their money. Children are forced to beg under pain of corporal punishment or starvation. Children with special needs are also used for forced begging.

Illegal adoption

Illegal adoption or extracting parental consent under coercion for "giving the child up for adoption" due to high demand is yet another form of child trafficking. The "baby mafia" most often abuses Roma children. The high demand for legal adoption cannot be satisfied in all cases, creating demand for illegal adoption. The latter is frequently satisfied through child trafficking. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in developing countries, where the combination of extreme poverty, inefficient legislation and bureaucracy enable the supply of children, while the need for children in destination countries and their financial power create the demand.

Coercion into committing criminal offences

This type of child trafficking happens mainly in larger cities. Young children of both genders are trained to commit petty crimes, such as pickpocketing and petty theft (snatching handbags, stealing from cash machines), as well as severe criminal offences against property and dealing drugs. Because most legal systems stipulate more lenient punishments for minors (or even no punishment at all when the perpetrator is under a certain age), the criminals who abuse children in this way perceive them as protection from criminal responsibility. Child victims most often become subjected to several forms of criminal exploitation simultaneously.

Illegal removal of organs

Organ trafficking is a criminal offence that is committed in three broad categories. First, there are cases where traffickers force or deceive victims into giving up a particular body part. Second, there are cases where the victims formally or informally consent to sell their body parts but are deceived and are either not paid or paid

less than promised. Third, organs are removed without the victim's knowledge when receiving "treatment" for a particular disease, which they may not even have in the first place. As for children, they are abducted, their body parts are removed in inhumane conditions, and are sold on the black market of organs for further transplantation.

Consequences of child trafficking

Child trafficking represents a serious violation of the rights of the child. Child victims are frequently exposed to danger, including physical and psychological coercion, abuse and regular and repeated violence. Their psychophysical development, health and education suffer, and they frequently develop enduring and repetitive post-traumatic stress disorders.

Therefore, early detection of signs that indicate a child being a potential victim of trafficking is a fundamental step to preventing the practice. Awareness of indicators is indispensable for correct and timely identification of children who are potential or actual victims of trafficking. Children who have, unfortunately, become victims of trafficking, need special protection and assistance that must be provided by adults, institutions, and professionals.



Chapter 3

Indicators for early detection and identification of potential victims of child trafficking

Early detection of potential or actual victims of trafficking is the basis for reducing their vulnerability and providing them with protection and assistance. To this end, a set of indicators can be used to determine that a person may be a potential or actual victim of trafficking. Indicators can be useful to support education professionals in making assessment of a particular case that may constitute child trafficking, and to determine further steps required to provide the child with necessary protection and assistance.

Preliminary identification of potential child trafficking victims

Preliminary identification refers to the first contact with the possible victim and verifies the presence of specific indicators of a child trafficking case. This identification step is about noticing risk factors, which does not necessarily imply that the child is in fact a victim of trafficking.

For a child to be identified as a victim of trafficking, there must be an intention for exploitation, or, at least, a recruitment to exploit the child and obtain an unlawful gain. The identification of the child as a victim of trafficking is done by a social worker and/or a police officer.

Various sets of indicators have been developed by international and civil society organisations to strengthen the roles of different professionals within the victim identification process (police officers, labour inspectors, social workers, teachers). For more information, see the appendix.

Classification of indicators for children as potential or actual victims of trafficking

As mentioned above, different groups and classifications of indicators for human/child trafficking exist. However, none is complete in terms of the indicators it includes for the different types of child trafficking. For the purposes of this handbook, the indicators for child trafficking have been classified into the following groups.

- A. Specific indicators for identifying children who are potential victims of trafficking
- B. Specific indicators for identifying child victims of particular types of trafficking

A. Specific indicators for identifying children who are potential victims of trafficking

1. Signs of physical abuse:

- ▶ signs of physical work (coarse hands, blisters);
- ▶ injuries that are not consistent with explanations about their causes;
- ▶ injuries whose origin is not logically explained;
- ▶ frequent changes in the child's physical health;
- ▶ frequent headaches or stomach aches;
- ▶ neglected, starved or untidy appearance;
- ▶ constant physical fatigue;
- ▶ symmetrical injuries (the same on both hands or on opposite parts of the body);
- ▶ multiple injuries, at various stages of healing;
- ▶ attempts to cover injuries with clothing.

2. Signs of psychological abuse:

- ▶ numb, passive, insecure or hopeless appearance;
- ▶ avoidance of eye contact;
- ▶ aggressive tendencies;
- ▶ seclusion or isolation;
- ▶ depression, fear or anxiety;
- ▶ drowsiness, falling asleep in class;
- ▶ signs of psychological fatigue;
- ▶ exhaustion, confusion;
- ▶ shyness;
- ▶ difficulty in controlling emotions: anger, fury, rage, sadness;
- ▶ fearful or upset appearance;
- ▶ signs of disorientation, confusion, phobia, or panic attacks;
- ▶ spatial and temporal disorientation.

3. Behavioural indicators:

- ▶ noticeable variations in behaviour (from unexpected calmness to acute anxiety);
- ▶ feelings of guilt for their situation;
- ▶ delinquent behaviour;
- ▶ signs of sedative abuse or addiction;

- ▶ lack of interest in lessons;
- ▶ variation in attention span;
- ▶ inability to concentrate on lessons;
- ▶ paranoid or submissive behaviours;
- ▶ avoidance of direct conversation;
- ▶ conflicting, incomplete or untrue accounts given when talking;
- ▶ passivity or hyperactivity;
- ▶ complete lack of trust;
- ▶ avoidance of conversations about their situation;
- ▶ lack of similar-aged friends;
- ▶ failure to establish or maintain friendships with peers;
- ▶ breach of legal norms and regulations (conflict with police);
- ▶ frequent tardiness for school or total absence (especially at times of seasonal work);
- ▶ lack of explanations for being late, refusal to answer, or answers that are apparently incorrect;
- ▶ difficulty learning and low educational attainment;
- ▶ failure to do homework;
- ▶ inclination towards risky, dangerous and illegal behaviours;
- ▶ refusal to participate in extra-curricular activities (performances, events, etc.);
- ▶ parents/guardians not attending parent-teacher meetings.

These changes in behaviour may not typically give rise to a suspicion that the child is a potential victim of human trafficking but may be indicative of another problem faced by the child, e.g., domestic violence or different forms of exploitation.

However, the presence of any of these indicators requires increased attention from teachers because they all indicate a possibility of child trafficking.

The presence of three or more indicators may raise a suspicion that the child is a potential victim of trafficking.

Therefore, it is critical for teachers to be aware of specific signs pointing to a trafficking situation to be able to consult anti-trafficking professionals in good time and take adequate measures to protect the child from a harmful situation. Of course, this does not mean that one should automatically attribute changes in the child's behaviour to trafficking as this reasoning may lead to neglecting other explanations, such as domestic violence. Rather, teachers should be attentive to the possibility of child trafficking. If child trafficking is not confirmed, the presence of indicators may help identify other harmful situations which require protection, specialised assistance and support.

B. Specific indicators for identifying child victims of particular types of trafficking

1. Indicators of exploitation of children for labour

Typical characteristics of the work environments where children victims of human trafficking are exploited for their labour include:

- ▶ work in cattle farms or pens, agricultural households, massage salons, night clubs, hospitality establishments, factories, production lines, mines, plantations;
- ▶ provision of services under threat and without consent;
- ▶ equipment and tools not adapted to be use by children;
- ▶ children's movement controlled by others;

- ▶ work inappropriate for children's age, in inadequate conditions, for many hours, without breaks or time off or adherence to legal regulations;
- ▶ physical or financial punishments, restrictions to movements and meals;
- ▶ no permission to leave the "job" or "boss".

2. Indicators of children being forced into begging

Child victims of trafficking for the purpose of begging:

- ▶ are of preschool, school, and adolescent age;
- ▶ have developmental impairments (primarily physical disabilities);
- ▶ display their physical injuries, which seem to have been inflicted intentionally;
- ▶ keep begging relentlessly, no matter the weather conditions;
- ▶ are constantly and covertly observed and controlled by others.

3. Indicators of child trafficking for the purpose of committing criminal offences

Children trafficked for the purpose of committing crimes are:

- ▶ forced to commit thefts;
- ▶ punished if they do not "collect" or steal enough money;
- ▶ involved in the distribution and sale of illicit products, drugs, weapons and stolen items;
- ▶ known to intelligence services because of their previous involvement in similar criminal activities in another country or location;
- ▶ found accompanied by adults who are not of the same nationality or ethnic community.

4. Indicators of sexual exploitation of children

Child victims of sexual exploitation:

- ▶ are most frequently female, aged 12-18;
- ▶ work in pubs, hotels, motels, massage parlours;
- ▶ are not permitted to refuse an order to serve a client;
- ▶ are not permitted to leave their "job" or "boss";
- ▶ are accompanied by people who control them;
- ▶ are sometimes subjected to violent sex;
- ▶ are sometimes victims of incest;
- ▶ sometimes refuse to talk about sexual abuse.

5. Indicators of children being trafficked for domestic servitude

Children trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude:

- ▶ live with the family who exploits them;
- ▶ have been hired for inappropriate tasks;
- ▶ eat separately from the family members;
- ▶ are fed leftovers;
- ▶ have no private space and sleep in inadequate rooms;
- ▶ are never allowed out alone and are deprived of communication with other people from the neighbourhood;
- ▶ are subjected to insults, ill-treatment, threats and violence;
- ▶ are subjected to corporal punishment;
- ▶ are not permitted to leave the family.

6. Indicators of children being victims of forced marriage or being “mail-order brides”

Forced marriage of children is characterised by:

- ▶ recruitment of children via their parents, relatives and others for the purposes of “getting married” abroad;
- ▶ empty promises and deception about a better life;
- ▶ organisation of a “wedding” without the presence of the “husband”;
- ▶ children subjected to several types of exploitation simultaneously, especially sexual exploitation;
- ▶ begging, petty theft, servitude;
- ▶ physical and psychological violence from the members of the family.



Chapter 4

The role of schools in the prevention of child trafficking

Schools are educational establishments where children's development should take place safely, free from all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. The most serious form of violence and criminal offence inflicted on children and youth is human trafficking, a criminal phenomenon that is, unfortunately, widespread both globally and in North Macedonia.

In North Macedonia, a much higher proportion of human trafficking victims are children than adults. Thus, preventing the trafficking of children in particular merits specific attention. When seeking to prevent and combat child trafficking, all stakeholders must be involved. This includes schools, which have an especially important role to play in preventing child trafficking. For schools to be able to protect children and prevent them from being trafficked, teachers, non-teaching professionals and other relevant school services must be familiar with the problem of human and specifically child trafficking in the first place, as well as methods for early detection of potential victims and referral to relevant institutions. Increased understanding and knowledge among education professionals about child trafficking will significantly contribute to preventing and combating child trafficking in particular and trafficking in human beings in general.

The complexity of the child trafficking phenomenon requires awareness raising, training and capacity building by many institutions. Schools are of prime importance among these when it comes to children.

To prevent and combat child trafficking, schools must:

- ▶ recognise and monitor the signs in children that indicate possible human trafficking;
- ▶ ensure support for children being re-integrated into school and their broader environment after dropping out;
- ▶ co-operate with the authorities and institutions that are responsible for identifying and supporting child victims of trafficking.

Schools can fulfil these obligations by:

- ▶ continuously monitoring changes in children;
- ▶ applying the indicators for preliminary identification of potential victims;
- ▶ notifying the relevant social work centres, the police and the child's parents/caretakers.

A school has two mechanisms available in combating child trafficking: prevention and intervention.

Prevention

Prevention is the most significant mechanism for interception and timely detection of any possible child trafficking activities, as well as for making an intervention to mitigate harmful consequences for the children concerned.

Preventive activities should involve all education-related stakeholders, including teachers, other staff working in schools, school directors, children, parents, representatives of local communities, as well as non-governmental organisations working in the field of anti-trafficking.

Preventive activities in schools should be planned as part of their violence prevention programmes, which are an integral part of their annual work programmes.

In addition to planned activities, schools may plan and implement additional preventive activities in the field of anti-trafficking as a function of their needs and resources.

Types of prevention

Prevention can be implemented at three levels in schools:

- ▶ primary prevention;
- ▶ secondary prevention: intervention;
- ▶ tertiary prevention: resocialisation.

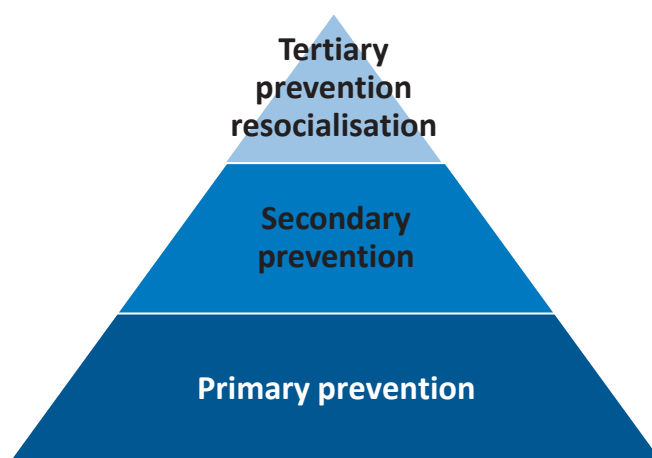


Figure 4: Types of prevention

The first level, primary prevention, is particularly important, and involves activities for the prevention of the phenomenon of child trafficking in the first place.

The second level is secondary prevention, comprising actions taken after the signs of possible human trafficking have been detected.

The main component of secondary prevention is intervention, which entails referring the case to the relevant institution, i.e., social work centres or the police for a (final) determination of whether the child in question is a victim of trafficking or not.

The third level is known as tertiary prevention or “resocialisation and reintegration” and consists of steps taken following the identification of the child as a victim of trafficking. In North Macedonia, this type of prevention is implemented in the Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking.

Once child victims of trafficking leave the centre, the role of the school is to involve the child in their own education to help them overcome trauma and to prevent them from becoming a victim once more.

The role of schools in preventing child trafficking

The first step a school can take to prevent child trafficking is to establish a programme of prevention and intervention activities. This can be a standalone programme, or it can form part of a wider programme against school violence, abuse and neglect. Other actors may be included in the implementation of the such programmes, including representatives from social work centres.

One person is selected to be responsible for the implementation of the programme on preventing child trafficking (it is recommended to select a colleague who is an expert on the subject). If a teacher or another employee suspects that a pupil is a potential victim of trafficking, they report the case to the responsible person,

who submits a report to the director. This report is submitted to the social work centre for formal identification and to the Bureau for Development of Education. The latter's report is submitted to the Subgroup for Combating Child Trafficking and the National Anti-trafficking Commission by the bureau's member seconded to this commission.

Preventive activities in schools

A programme of preventive activities can include:

- ▶ training teachers to recognise signs of child trafficking;
- ▶ using indicators for preliminary identification of potential victims of child trafficking;
- ▶ educating pupils about dangers they might encounter when getting involved in child trafficking and ways to protect themselves from these (ideally carried out through peer-to-peer education);
- ▶ educating parents to recognise initial changes in the behaviour of their child and co-operate with the school in preventing child trafficking.

Implementation methods of preventive activities in schools

Several methods exist to carry out preventive activities in schools:

- ▶ panels;
- ▶ discussions;
- ▶ presentations;
- ▶ peer-to-peer education;
- ▶ workshops;
- ▶ forum theatre;
- ▶ films;
- ▶ social network campaigns.

Intervention

The second mechanism to combat child trafficking is intervention.

When suspicions are raised, or when there is concrete information that a child is a victim of any form of trafficking, the school must intervene. This takes the form of:

- ▶ co-operating with the institutions responsible for identification and protection of victims (social work centres and/or the national referral mechanism within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy);
- ▶ providing support to the child in the school;
- ▶ involving the child in their own education if they have dropped out of school;
- ▶ supporting the child's reintegration into the education system;
- ▶ assisting the child in overcoming the trauma they experienced as a victim of trafficking.

How can a school implement intervention activities?

To carry out intervention activities, school staff must take the following steps:

- ▶ prepare a programme of activities on preventing child trafficking, possibly including it within a broader programme against school violence, abuse and neglect;
- ▶ select a person to be responsible for reporting potential victims of child trafficking;
- ▶ apply the indicators for preliminary identification of trafficking victims;
- ▶ consult with all relevant participants;
- ▶ notify the relevant social work centres, the Bureau for Development of Education and the child's parents/guardians;
- ▶ notify the police in special cases (when the potential victim is in danger);
- ▶ act quickly and efficiently.



Local community resources available to schools

To protect children and prevent them from being trafficked, schools may call upon experts from other relevant institutions who have specific knowledge about child trafficking.

Such expert and institutions include:

- ▶ the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and its national referral mechanism;
- ▶ centres for social work;
- ▶ the police;
- ▶ the Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking;
- ▶ non-governmental organisations;
- ▶ professionals from other fields such as psychologists or experts in childhood development;
- ▶ volunteers.

Chapter 5

The role of teachers and expert colleagues in preventing and combating child trafficking

Teachers and expert colleagues as individuals and the education system as a whole are key allies in protecting children from child trafficking. Their capacity to identify potential child victims of human trafficking in schools is of the utmost importance to keep children safe and to combat human trafficking.

What must a teacher do when there is a suspicion that a child is a victim of human trafficking? A teacher, having observed certain indicators in a child, and having become suspicious that the child is at risk of being trafficked, must take the following steps:

- ▶ encourage and empower the child to complete their school assignments;
- ▶ ensure that the child is well integrated in their class and in a group of peers;
- ▶ adapt their communication to the child's age and needs;
- ▶ make it clear to the child that the teacher trusts them;
- ▶ accept the child's experience, no matter what it is, making sure they inform the child that such experiences may also happen to others;
- ▶ refrain from judging or patronising the child.

The role of the expert colleague (the person responsible for the preventive programme) is to:

- ▶ inform the child about the next steps that the school will take, who else will become involved, who will be informed about the case and what the information will be used for;
- ▶ involve professionals in supporting the child, be they another teacher, an expert colleague, or an external professional;
- ▶ consult continuously with the social work centre, the Centre for Victims of Human Trafficking and the child's parents;
- ▶ react even when other systems fail to do so or do not react on time;
- ▶ and provide support to the child throughout the whole process.

Interviewing a child who might be a victim of trafficking

Once a teacher suspects that a child is a victim of trafficking, they must interview the child to confirm or refute the suspicion.

Objectives of the interview

Overall goal: To assess the suspicion that a child is a (potential) victim of trafficking and to protect the child.

Specific objectives: To obtain information about the child, whether they have family, their experience and needs.

Figure 5: Objectives of the interview

An interview with a child who might be a victim of trafficking should be carried out according to the following guidelines:

- ▶ the interview should take place as soon as possible following suspicion being raised that they are a potential victim of trafficking;
- ▶ the interview should be conducted by a person trained in conducting interviews with children;
- ▶ the duration of the interview should be adapted to child's age, developmental stage, health and psychological conditions and needs for food and water.

When interviewing a child, the interviewer must adhere to the following rules:

- ▶ inform the child about the objectives of the interview;
- ▶ get to know the child better, their characteristics and problems: where they live, whether they have family, who they live with, their family's social status;
- ▶ establish the child's emotional condition: whether they show signs of anxiety, fear or depression;
- ▶ establish what forms of abuse the child has experienced: physical, emotional, psychological, forced labour, sexual violence;
- ▶ listen carefully;
- ▶ observe non-verbal cues and gestures;
- ▶ show empathy;
- ▶ maintain adequate distance;
- ▶ concentrate on the conversation;
- ▶ encourage further conversation if and when the child becomes silent;
- ▶ be attentive, do not force the child into conversation;
- ▶ verify that the child has consented to the interview (if they refuse, the child must not be interviewed);
- ▶ refrain from offering prompts for responses;
- ▶ gradually move from general to specific details about what has happened to the child;
- ▶ ask questions about specific events. For example: "I've heard you've just returned from... could you tell me what happened there?";
- ▶ ask specific questions, using "what", "where", "who", "when" and "why": these can reveal more details;
- ▶ use open-ended questions such as "Who was there?", "Where were you when this happened?" or "Who hurt you?";
- ▶ use closed questions requiring "yes" or "no" answers: "Did he hit you?" "Did this happen often?"

The following are required features of an interviewer:

- ▶ experience in conducting interviews;
- ▶ patience and flexibility;
- ▶ a capacity for observation (early detection of anxiety, suffering, anger, crying, relevant body language and so on).

Because children who are potential victims of trafficking are so vulnerable, teachers must take great caution to avoid certain behaviours towards them.

Among others, these include:

- ▶ displaying a lack of trust in the child;
- ▶ showing no emotion, or showing emotions too strongly;
- ▶ judging or criticising the child;
- ▶ failing to inform the school team;
- ▶ failure on the part of the director to quickly inform the key institutions (immediately following the team's report);
- ▶ to withdraw support for the child if or when other institutions fail to react immediately.

Chapter 6

Procedures for reporting suspected cases of child trafficking

To detect potential victims of child trafficking and refer them to the appropriate services, schools must:

- ▶ carry out preliminary identification of potential victims of child trafficking;
- ▶ co-operate with relevant institutions and authorities for identification and support of victims of child trafficking, such as the social work centre and the police;
- ▶ support the child within the school, include them in their own education if they dropped out and support their integration within the education system.

If a teacher notices any signs that a child might be a victim of trafficking, the procedures for reporting and referral must be followed.

Case reporting and referral

If a teacher or other school colleague notices signs of change in a child in relation to their studies, their behaviour or health condition, this may raise suspicion that the child may be a potential victim of trafficking. If such signs are noticed, they must immediately inform the person responsible for the anti-trafficking programme within the school, who in turn must inform the director of the school.

The procedure for reporting such cases is as follows:

1. The person within the school who is responsible for reporting potential victims of child trafficking reports the case to the director. Either of them then reports the case to the social work centre, who are responsible for identifying the victims of human trafficking, and the Bureau for Development of Education. If the child is identified as a victim, the case is reported through the national referral mechanism. If urgent intervention is required, the case is reported to the police.
2. The social work centre and the police are notified in writing about all available facts and circumstances. These institutions take further steps to identify, refer and protect a victim of human trafficking.
3. The child's parents or guardians, if not involved in the case, are informed about the changes detected in the child's behaviour and the actions taken by the relevant institutions.
4. Following the report of the suspicion of child trafficking, the person responsible for the school's anti-trafficking programme draws up an official note, establishing a record of the communication between and various statements to and from the relevant people and institutions involved in the case and any other facts that any of them is aware of.
5. Education staff actively co-operate with the professional team at the social work centre and participate in the development of the individual plan and programme for protecting the child.
6. The institutions (school, professional teams, social work centre and the police) keep each other informed about all cases and the actions taken. They take part in the steps taken according to the child's individual protection plan, which is developed by the social work centre.
7. Upon request by the prosecutor's office or the police, the school immediately submits documentation concerning the case, for the purpose of quick and efficient resolution of the case by the judiciary.

The procedure should be quick and confidential and should focus on protecting the best interests of the child.

It is worth underlining that every suspected case must be reported to the person responsible for a school's anti-trafficking programme for identification by the social work centre.

Chapter 7

Key contacts for child protection in North Macedonia

Name of the institution	Contact
Secretariat of the National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking	Telephone: (02) 3143 343; (02) 3238 595; 072 257 225
Ministry of the Interior, National Unit for Suppression of Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking	Telephone: (02) 3142 377; 070 383 896
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, national referral mechanism	Telephone: 076 456 795; 075 311 726

Child protection is covered by several legal instruments:

- ▶ Criminal Code: Child trafficking – 418d;
- ▶ Law on Labour Relations: provides for special protection of workers who have not yet turned 18;
- ▶ Law on the Family;
- ▶ Law on Juvenile Justice;
- ▶ Law on Protection of the Child;
- ▶ Instruction on the procedure to report and protect the school child victim of any form of violence, abuse and neglect.

Appendix – Case studies

Study 1

Darko is an 11-year-old child with no parents. He goes to a local school and is a good pupil. His guardian is his aunt, who lives with an extramarital son aged 15. The aunt does not have a job, she receives social welfare payments and lives in a suburb in substandard conditions. She is rarely at home, and the children are always hungry. The aunt socialises with suspect people, and her son, who has dropped out of school, is involved in petty theft and always has money. One day, the aunt complains to a friend that she has trouble keeping these children. The friend offers to find them a job so that he and the aunt can profit. The aunt immediately agrees without asking what kind of job it is.

The next day, her friend arrives in a car and picks up the children. He takes them to a distant village, where a friend of his operates a cow farm. He is given €300 by the operator of the farm for the children. They agree that the operator of the farm will keep paying the aunt's friend €100 each month. The friend hands over the children, receives some money and leaves.

The friend gives some of the money to the aunt and tells her that she will keep receiving €50 a month. Darko tells the operator of the farm that he is expected to attend school and that he has not called the school to tell them that he will be absent. The farm operator says he will enrol Darko in the village school where he will continue his education. This does not happen.

The children are made to work hard. They clean out the barns, they work in the fields, they take the cows out to graze in the pastures and return late in the evening to sleep. They receive rations of dried food for the day, and only a slim dinner in the evening. The operator of the farm is not cruel to them, but he is strict and controls when and how they work. They are prevented from communicating with anyone except the farm operator. They are not paid for their work.

Darko repeatedly asks when he will return to school, but the answer is always the same: "soon".

The teacher makes several attempts to reach out to Darko, but never succeeds in finding the aunt. One day she meets the aunt and enquires about Darko. The aunt replies that Darko has left her and she has no idea where he has gone. This case was detected during a field visit and inquiry carried out by the professional team of the Inter-Municipal Social Work Centre.

Questions:

1. Is Darko a victim of human trafficking?
2. If yes, what type of child trafficking (type of exploitation) features in this case?
3. List the indicators that led you to determine the type of child trafficking (type of exploitation).
4. Could the teacher have done more to help Darko? Explain your answer.

Study 2

Suzana is 13 years old. She comes from a poor family. She goes to school only occasionally. She has not been to school for the last 6 weeks, and no-one has ever provided an explanation for this. Her family does not respond to invitations from the school. The school's child development specialist, having received no answer from the family as to where Suzana is, speaks to her friends, who say that they have heard she may be working in a bar in a village near Tetovo.

The specialist reports the case to the social work centre, including the information that Suzana may be in a bar near Tetovo. The social worker forwards this information to the police.

During the police raid on the bar, Suzana is found.

In the preliminary interview, she reveals that her father had arranged the work in the bar through a friend. A person she did not know took her by car to the bar.

Ever since, she had been forbidden to leave the premises. The father was promised €50 a month.

1. Is Suzana a victim of human trafficking?
2. If yes, what type of child trafficking (exploitation) is featured in this case?
3. List the indicators that helped you determine the type of child trafficking.
4. What action could the school take? Explain your answer.

This handbook is intended for teachers and other education professionals who may come into contact with potential child victims of human trafficking. It provides information about child trafficking, including indicators for identifying children as potential victims, and explains how to protect and refer them to the appropriate services. In this way, schools will be better equipped to play their role in the prevention and protection of potential child victims in the overall action against trafficking in children in North Macedonia.

An analysis of the situation in North Macedonia shows that the number of child victims of trafficking relative to adults has been increasing. According to relevant institutions and civil society organisations, the majority of all identified victims of trafficking are children – four out of six of the actual victims identified in 2019 were children and this increased to six out of seven in 2020.

Primary and high school teachers, psychologists and pedagogues play a key role in preventing and combating trafficking in children through proactive identification, protection, and referral of potential child victims of human trafficking. This handbook aims to help them carry out this role in effective manner that is respectful of victims.

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