

Social Work Interventions in Cases of Child Trafficking

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Abstract

Child trafficking remains a pressing global issue, affecting millions of vulnerable children. Social work interventions play a critical role in addressing this complex problem through prevention, protection, and rehabilitation strategies. This research explores the multifaceted approaches employed by social workers to combat child trafficking, focusing on the integration of community-based programs, legal frameworks, and collaboration with law enforcement agencies. Effective interventions include awareness campaigns, fostering resilience in at-risk populations, and providing therapeutic support to survivors. The study highlights best practices and challenges faced by social workers in various socio-economic contexts, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive and trauma-informed care. Additionally, it discusses the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and policy advocacy to create a robust support system for affected children. By examining case studies and current trends, this research contributes to the understanding of effective social work strategies in mitigating the impact of child trafficking and promoting the well-being of survivors. Ultimately, it calls for enhanced training and resources for social workers to strengthen their capacity in combating this grave violation of human rights.

Keywords

child trafficking, social work, interventions, survivors, prevention, rehabilitation, community programs, policy advocacy

1. Introduction

Child trafficking is one of the micro issues that is part of the macro issue of migration. Migrants (adults and minors) are extremely vulnerable to various communications and relations of power, but the most "murderous" of all that they face is being trafficked for sexual and labor exploitation. Out of all trafficked individuals, children are the most selected victims. Child trafficking is a cause, effect, and part of the larger social injustice and the denial of social, economic, and political rights. It is a violation of human rights and is considered to be an abominable practice because of the

exploitation and abuse associated with it. It is largely believed that child trafficking is a highly complex, multi-dimensional problem that is interconnected with histories, cultures, and various factors of demand and supply. In other words, child trafficking is a demand-driven activity. One must take into account various factors while dealing with child trafficking. These hard realities in the lives of truants demand immediate attention and action. (Mbuba, 2022)

The main aim of this paper is to explain the roles and responsibilities of social workers in dealing with the problem of child trafficking and enabling the child to enjoy his or her rights and freedoms. Because of rapid changes in socio-economic systems in the 21st century, there has been a sharp increase in the number of migrants looking for foreign employment. Trafficking of humans, particularly children, is inseparably connected with migration. Quite often, social workers feel that child trafficking is outside their domain and that this problem needs to be tackled within the legal framework. This paper aims to address the concerns of social workers and their roles in tackling the problem of child trafficking. In order to understand the nature of child trafficking, it is important to understand the social and economic conditions under which children and their families live.

1.1. Background and Scope of Child Trafficking

Child trafficking is a problem of larger proportions with historical roots. It is a multifaceted and socially complex issue. The phenomenon is a legalized form of slavery and exploitation in various forms such as forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, child marriage, bonded labor, involuntary servitude, and illegal adoption. It is very difficult to have legal definitions that reach a consensus about trafficking in persons. Human trafficking is defined as three-fold: recruitment, transport, and the receipt of persons by force or fraud. The globalizing world has seen an increase in conflict and trafficking, and that of humans is no exception. (Oaikhena and Aziegbemhin2022)

Trafficking in persons continues to exploit and enrage families and societies even in the 21st century by sending small children and women inside and outside the country. The definition and logic of trafficking are directly connected to globalization, and

whatever the logic of transferring financial profits from one place to another, people will be treated as mere tools. The trafficking of human beings occurs either within the region or externally. What we are more concerned about is the internal trafficking of people in all forms in India. The present socio-economic-political debacle is creating enormous challenges for the nation in all aspects. The social milieu is becoming more complex, depending on pluralism and linked with relational itineraries of humans across geographical locations, political systems, and religious affiliations. It is beyond the limits to understand all about this complex and pluralistic situation. Children and women are subjected to higher risk and vulnerability due to poverty, illiteracy, lack of skills, lack of political mobilization and support systems, and lack of law enforcement administration, as well as a lack of understanding about entitlements. Prevention of sexual exploitation and trafficking in children is possible only through the identification of geographic, gender, and socioeconomic segments in the area that are especially vulnerable and at greater risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation. Identifying girls in red-light areas, runaways, abandoned children, and any girl in areas or households affected by HIV/AIDS as high-risk groups is vital in devising appropriate strategies for prevention. In addition, identifying the processes of entrapment and exploitation, and assessing the actual level of protection and rehabilitation services available, would help support the commitment and actions of governments to implement anti-trafficking measures. Schemes can be integrated into the national and state plans of action against human trafficking, including the sexual exploitation of children. Regular and effective information collection and analysis on trafficking and the protection of children is key to effective policy-making. Data collection is, therefore, one of the key areas of concern for all professionals working in this area.

1.2. Importance of Social Work Interventions

Social workers are vital in addressing the complex challenges arising in the field of child trafficking. The reasons for such an assertion are numerous. First, social workers are advocates for the rights and needs of children. They are in a position to make representations on their behalf and defend their interests. Social workers are also often the first contact points for trafficked children; they need to approach their problems

from multiple angles in order for the children to feel confident and divulge information. Second, the use of trauma-informed approaches is being promoted. These approaches encourage safe collaboration between those affected by the problem and those who have the duty to respond. Engaging with a trafficked child through a framework that does not retraumatize an individual is fundamental to fostering trust and empowerment. Third, social workers are capable of facilitating the recovery and reintegration of these children in the community. In sum, multidisciplinary partnerships are essential to ensure the overall well-being of suspected and identified trafficked children and their families. Omezue-Nnali et al.2022)

Advocacy is an important practice within the field of social service. At the individual level, social workers negotiate with children and their families to ensure they receive what they need. At the macro level, social workers may engage with policy work to create pertinent legislation and thus protect people's rights. Given the multifaceted challenges that trafficked children face, policy influence is instrumental to societal change. Advocacy involves the use of one's voice, and, in many ways, trafficked children have largely been silent. Furthermore, trafficked children are the children of the world and not merely the responsibility of any one country. An analysis of how we intervene, including cross-country learning, not only enhances interventions but can ultimately help generate the impetus for global standards for policy and legislation to prevent trafficking and to protect children's welfare. In terms of intervention response, social workers have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the complexities that their clients face. While it is often assumed that the legal system is the most effective facilitator of assistance, social work services may be the reactor and the facilitator of change essential to the well-being of those entrapped. Within the sphere of interdisciplinary collaboration, social workers have interrelationships with health, housing, and other community-based operative services. Partnerships are generally in place with both governmental and non-governmental agencies to ensure joint interventions and collaborative working to facilitate those affected by child trafficking.

2. Understanding Child Trafficking

Defining Child Trafficking Child trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Arguably, the most relevant element of this definition is that children, unlike adult 'victims', are presumed to be trafficked if the purpose is exploitation, regardless of the means used. The purpose of trafficking is further elaborated, which refers to, amongst other forms, the 'exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation'.

Make-up and Nature of Trafficking A comprehensive understanding of what is meant by 'trafficking' includes an appreciation of the different definitions and forms it takes. No definition of the word appears in general dictionaries; its meaning when used in connection to drugs, and more directly in the terms 'human trafficking' and 'child trafficking', is a new and emerging use. Definitions range from one that specifies 'to trade and sell' to 'dealings'. Regardless of the definition, some essential points are common in its definition: trafficking refers to the illegal trade in people for financial gain and also includes a range of other exploitative practices such as servitude and forced labor. Exploitation is the common thread in all the definitions and can be summarized as an abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, poverty, or other circumstance when compulsion or condition is stated to be a part of an exploitative situation.

2.1. Definition and Forms of Child Trafficking

The international legal definition of child trafficking is stated as an integral part of the Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The concepts listed above were further reinforced by the Palermo Protocol. This international definition is also in line with the context of child trafficking in Indonesia, which was disclosed in some multilateral and bilateral cooperation through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. Although countries establish different definitions, in essence, the concept of child trafficking is the same. Trafficking in children can take many forms, and these different forms sometimes happen concurrently. The most common forms are sexual trafficking and exploitation of children for forced labor, the use of children in armed conflict, and

exploitation of children being used as beggars or street peddlers, the use of children in drug trafficking, illegal adoptions, and organ transplantation, and possible misuse of children in the internet and tourism sector. Every year, some 800,000 to 900,000 people are trafficked across national borders, which does not include millions who are trafficked within their own countries. As many as 50% of trafficking victims are children. The evolution of child trafficking in every area of the global community is different. However, sexual trafficking is the worst form of child exploitation due to the difficulty in distinguishing and detecting trafficked children. While the term “smuggling” refers to moving someone from one side of a border to another, usually for a fee, it is sometimes conflated with trafficking. Forced smuggling, with the term “trafficking,” does not entail that a person crosses national borders. Almost everywhere in Africa, victims of trafficking have been found in both domestic and labor situations. Both trafficking and smuggling are illegal, but victims of smuggled individuals are often protected, whereas victims of trafficking have been beaten and sold and are themselves often afraid or unwilling to report themselves. In different forms, child trafficking is present in every world region, but the regional patterns of activity are different. Thus, the primary methodology associated with child trafficking varies from sub-region to sub-region. For example, in West Africa, children are mainly recruited to be domestic workers, while others are taken onto boats to become agricultural laborers and sex workers in North Africa. Knowledge of both the exact form of child trafficking in a community and where the children will end up is vital for the development of interventions targeting those children most at risk.

2.2. Risk Factors and Vulnerabilities

Risk Factors and Vulnerabilities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child identifies children with vulnerabilities as having low capacity, which tends to make them even less able to influence those aspects of their lives that may lead them to exploitation, thus increasing their risk of becoming victims of traffickers. Children can be rendered vulnerable to traffickers in a number of ways, including social, economic, cultural, contextual, and individual factors. Severe poverty, breakdown within the family, and lack of access to education are the main socio-economic factors that expose children to being trafficked. (Han, 2022)

Discriminatory cultural or traditional practices, as well as resource-poor, war-torn, or post-conflict conditions, tend to perpetuate the prevalence of certain forms of exploitation. Constituting an important and growing part of the general affected population, internally displaced people and refugees in these situations can be rendered even more vulnerable to trafficking. One of the greatest vulnerabilities that traumatized children possess is manifested in their development of psychological problems. Both accompanied and unaccompanied minors among refugee and displaced populations may therefore be vulnerable to being trafficked. The need to adopt a child profile or developmental approach in addressing this issue has been stressed. The manner in which these vulnerabilities translate into the capacity to manipulate them is essential to the way trafficking becomes a reality for the trafficked persons and calls for an understanding of this manipulative sequence in order to conceptualize protective interventions.

3. Role of Social Workers

First and foremost, social workers are in a unique position to identify and offer immediate, albeit temporary, assistance in emergency situations. Over the long term, social workers are responsible for assessing a child's needs and working with them on an individual basis to foster rehabilitation into the community. Furthermore, social workers are hired, trained, and ethically obliged to advocate for the rights of the child and, when possible, to increase awareness regarding government shortfalls in child protection. Confidentiality is an integral aspect of effective practice, and social workers should not disclose information obtained in the context of a professional-client relationship without client consent or other legal justification. It also reinforces the importance of ensuring that the client's best interests are placed above all else, and that clients have the right to make autonomous decisions regarding their own lives, provided they are given sufficient information.

The complex and varied responsibilities that evolve from this complex problem require the social worker to maintain a dynamic relationship with numerous entities, such as law enforcement professionals, emergency medical staff, court officials, immigration officers, and educational institutions. Additionally, social workers are

responsible for ensuring that all the available resources of their organizations are used to fortify, not weaken, efforts. Time, money, energy, and staff must all be used strategically. Unfortunately, many present-day anti-trafficking efforts are hindered by challenges such as lack of treatment facilities, staff that are inadequately trained to meet the unique needs of child trafficking victims, and minimal experience in the child welfare field. Child trafficking is said to be a largely hidden crime—clandestine and lucrative, requiring multidisciplinary collaboration between professionals who have historically had little need to communicate with one another. Successful social work intervention in many cases depends on complete systemic destruction of the trafficking marketplace. Thus, those professionals employed to bring the victims of trafficking to social service agencies must be skilled in investigation methods and the dismantling of criminal networks.

3.1. Key Responsibilities and Ethics

Social workers occupy a range of key positions and have a number of key responsibilities, as reflected in strategy documents and in the practice standards and guidance. Their first responsibility is to protect the rights and secure the welfare of the individual child in their own right, whether or not that individual has the status of a victim of trafficking. However, the historical role of all social work and social care professionals in prevention alongside protection, and their roles as advocates for marginalized individuals or groups, would suggest an advocacy or preventative role for professionals in some circumstances. Listening to young people's voices is also a fundamental role of social work with children and young people. Social workers are bound by a code of ethics and professional conduct.

All social workers working with trafficked children or young people should follow the social work ethics and values. It is essential that practitioners working with children and young people, and particularly those who might be victims of trafficking, have initial and ongoing training in the area of trauma-informed care. Specialist skills in legal knowledge and awareness of immigration law are also required. In the situation of trafficking, social workers work within an interdisciplinary setting with a number of professionals who will have different theoretical backgrounds. Ethical dilemmas may occur in practice, and it is important for social workers to receive good clinical

supervision, which can help in discussing and identifying issues and offer support to individuals. It is important to be aware of one's own internal thought patterns, biases, and cultural preferences and to be aware of how factors such as culture, disability, age, and previous context of the individual child impact them. This is an important skill when working with victims of child trafficking, where a lot of individualized care and support is required, as the diversity of individual children's experiences of child trafficking is vast. (Soni & Yadav, 2022)

3.2. Challenges Faced by Social Workers

Social workers often face multiple challenges within their practice when dealing with cases of child trafficking. Many work in environments with limited resources and lack governmental support and funding to establish well-defined anti-trafficking programs or prioritize the fight against trafficking. The environments in which they work are often challenging, and vast numbers of children are found in acute need of assistance. There are several generic challenges encountered by social workers in their practice, such as emotional distress and vicarious trauma, systemic barriers, and bureaucratic hurdles in providing emergency assistance to children right after the rescue operation. They also often work in resource-scarce environments. Social workers are often not provided with the specialized training or literature on effective social work interventions. Since they are not experts in every field, they work with a large case of different nationalities, backgrounds, and experiences. (Lim, 2022)

When the useful services they can offer are very limited, it affects their outcomes in children's lives. One of the smallest subcategories of work experience training that could be needed is trafficking of children, and the prevention and treatment of victims of this practice. Social workers are not believed when not valued, to the same degree as restrict and distrust people. Furthermore, in working with victims of human trafficking, social workers are under pressure to contribute to potential beneficial outcomes. Since the recruitment of children among all their other case work by social workers, the increased caseloads can have an effect on the social workers who need to intervene in cases of these vulnerable victims.

4. Interventions and Best Practices

There is agreement that interventions provided to trafficking survivors should be delivered by a professional social work team and should be holistic in scope. The child survivor's needs range from basic needs, such as rest and food, to more complex needs, such as medical treatment, legal assistance, shelter, safety, and psychological support. It is, therefore, necessary to begin with a comprehensive assessment and establish the survivor's needs. The assessment should be able to identify whether or not an individual has been trafficked and to identify any needs that should be met. An initial risk assessment will also need to be conducted to ensure the safety of social workers and others involved. The assessment process involves a strong referral process and identification of the specific assistance that each child will need. The provision of health care, shelter, education, legal aid, and other forms of support has also been recognized as essential for children who are trafficking survivors. Throughout the intervention process, best practice principles include the importance of tailoring services for specific individual needs, close cooperation between organizations, cultural sensitivity, monitoring, and flexibility.

The victim assistance continuum is broad and ranges from immediate crisis intervention and safety planning to longer-term, more specialized victim support services. In recent years, attention has been given to the importance of a comprehensive approach at both the entry and exit stages of the victim assistance continuum, which involves meeting the broader range of complex needs a child may have. Reintegration is facilitated through empowering individuals to heal and develop new coping skills, access services, and participate in the wider community. The success of an intervention should be measured through meaningful recoveries in children's lives, whereby they feel they have a stake and benefit in reintegrating back into their families and communities without risk of re-trafficking. Ongoing evaluation and research into interventions would thus be considered a necessity to shape program strategies and models. Tailoring these strategies so that they are more victim-centered and holistic in their approach will be an increasing focus of anti-child trafficking work. Results of current research demonstrate how social workers and organizations are adapting their services to best meet the needs of trafficked children and their families,

based on their experiences and learning over time. Best practices in social work involve taking children's opinions into account and actively involving them in the reintegration process. Community-based models that expand protective and supportive networks in the child's natural environment, as opposed to removing children into institutions, were the more successful of the reintegration strategies, as were family unification models.

4.1. Identification and Assessment

Child trafficking globally is a hidden crime and typically goes undetected and unreported. Thus, detection and intervention at the earliest opportunity are essential to removing children from traumatic situations and any subsequent support they need to recover and rebuild their lives. It is imperative, therefore, that social workers, law enforcement officers, child protection workers, and community-based organizations are knowledgeable about the needs of children who have been trafficked and that all child protection services are alert to the possibility of child trafficking and are able to make rapid and robust assessments in cases of suspected or known child trafficking. Social workers and their organizations must prioritize professional development in child protection: building their skills, confidence, and capacity to assess and respond effectively to cases involving trafficking. To that end, resource packs and training modules are being developed to help child protection practitioners improve their understanding of traumatized children and how best to meet their needs in the most sensitive and effective manner. A range of tools are available to inform child protection agencies about the drivers and likely indicators, and learning is available to further inform multi-agency training and the development of information-sharing protocols. A range of training resources exists to develop this, as well as routine questions that practitioners should ask when undertaking assessments of children; such strategies to draw out effective interviewing are included in these resources. In the twenty-first century, consent is hard to elicit in a child: children find great difficulty in saying no or, contrarily, in saying yes. "Children are pliable but tough," "any child will accommodate an adult they trust." In the context of rescuing trafficked children, "the professional and legal codes that require organizations to seek assent or consent are regarded as a major source of vulnerability and difficulty as they are open

to manipulation of children's desire to meet the needs of adults, including identifying their views or even their best interests." The increased importance of information and communication technology in identifying child trafficking in terms of both the monitoring and detection of trafficking advances reporting: it is no longer a matter of phoning in fear but of entering into an online community. If victims do not have an analogous geographic or spatial community, at least they can find one that shares their linguistic or cultural component and use that as a bridge to report a crime.

4.2. Immediate and Long-Term Support Services

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In a first phase, trafficking victims are in need of immediate crisis support. This includes a secure and safe living and working environment as well as medical and psychological treatment. Many victims are highly traumatized and need behavioral and crisis intervention. They are scared, desperate, and may not understand that they are in a safe place. In a long-term support phase, programs aim to assist in recovery and rehabilitation. Examples include psychological and therapeutic care, awareness and empowerment events, vocational training, education, life skills training, reintegration activities, as well as repatriation support. To enable the involved service providers to address the physical and psychosocial reintegration of trafficked children and to cater for the large and individualized needs of this vulnerable population, several well-coordinated support services are needed. Especially, the close cooperation of police, child protection agencies, health care workers, and NGOs, as well as experts in the field, are of utmost importance to ascertain that the needs of the victim are well answered. Additionally, children recover best when their families are involved in the rehabilitation process and the child is reintegrated back into the core structures of the family and the community.

The initial assistance and intervention should correspond with the child's immediate needs, taking into account the experiences and vulnerabilities that emanate from the child's history of trafficking and other deprivations, as well as from the child's migration and kin situation. Post-trafficking healthcare assistance should be comprehensive, culturally sensitive, empirically grounded, and effective in adequately addressing the full impact of traumatic experiences on the child's health and well-

being. The transition from a context of crisis to a context of sustainable and appropriate post-trafficking care involves a crucial stage that establishes the baseline to ensure successful outcomes of the child's recovery, reintegration, and overall resocialization. Services for trafficked persons should be an integral part of the existing services for persons suffering severe health, psychosocial, or deprivation-related problems, in addition to mainstream health care, social protection, child welfare, and developmental support intervention. Unfortunately, resources are generally limited, and successful integration and sustainability are linked to their value as outcome and impact-driven interventions. Therefore, comprehensive step-down or aftercare programs are often not available for victims of trafficking. Given this precarious reality, results from evaluation, monitoring, and research outcomes provide a strong incentive for policymakers to assign their attention and financial and technical resources to this important segment of the child victim population. The effectiveness of post-trafficking support depends to a large extent on the strategies employed. Commitment to the application of a comprehensive and coordinated approach in all sectors and levels of intervention is essential to ensure integration and sustainability.

5. Collaboration and Multisectoral Approaches

The role of collaboration and the use of multisectoral approaches is significant in addressing child trafficking. Interventions relevant to the care needs of trafficked children necessitate the involvement of various sectors. No single organization is able to fully comprehend, assist, and relocate trafficked children due to the complexity of incidents reported. Legal, health, educational, and social service representatives are required to collaborate to address the multifaceted needs of the child victim. A consolidated response involving partnerships among organizations and government bodies, including law enforcers, is observed to be more effective in trafficking interventions. Partnerships offer opportunities for sharing information, promoting trust, enhancing communication, and encouraging more comprehensive service orientation, given the resource constraints of organizations and the unique legal mandate of law enforcement. (Bhattacharya, 2022)

In practice, some highly successful outcomes have been observed where cooperation or collaboration has taken place, and multisectoral partnerships are reported to have resulted in safer repatriation, greater commitment by receiving communities, an increase in the rate of return of children, more rehabilitative and protective care, and better facilities being made accessible to the child after the grant of legal custody to the child protection organization or institution by the national justice system. In general, the focus has been on the partnership between government entities and organizations. Community-based responses, involving local, national, and global community actors and institutions at the service level, have emerged over the last few years, which have experienced varying degrees of success. It is believed that promoting partnerships at the community level is a vital part of the demand reduction strategy for child trafficking. Active community involvement results in the creation of a protective environment for all children, including developing communities. At present, communication and collaboration between and among government and non-government players are, however, unsynchronized, exacerbated by differing statutes of organizational relationships and internal resistance among operational staff. Organizational cultural differences impact interorganizational agreements; the coordination and effectiveness of partnerships are inhibited by covert resistance to stakeholders, and an inherent tendency for organizations to pursue their own agendas during collaborative ventures has been reported. To be successful, such partnerships need preemptive range building, effective conflict management strategies, clear leadership, shared history, and a strong commitment to common objectives on the part of all players.

5.1. Partnerships with Law Enforcement and NGOs

Children can be trafficked for various forms of exploitation, including commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor in agriculture, industry, mining, extractives, construction, and domestic servitude, as well as various forms of criminal behavior, such as pickpocketing, stealing, begging, and being used in combat by terrorist groups. The complexity of child trafficking requires a system of care and response that brings together experts, police officers, judicial officers, lawyers, therapists, medical professionals, social workers, educators, and others. Traffickers often move victims

across various jurisdictions to complicate tracking and investigations and to limit the support given to victims. In dealing with such a complex issue as child trafficking, social workers can and often should work in partnership with others to increase the identification of victims, intervention and support services, reduce children's revictimization, and break the cycle of trafficking.

Social workers contribute their specific expertise in counseling victims, case management, parenting, and a therapeutic approach to understanding and supporting children and families. Law enforcement agents need to find evidence and use legal tools to identify suspects as human traffickers, while focusing on preventing further exploitation. NGOs typically specialize in crisis intervention and offer victims long-term support, helping to dismantle the networks of traffickers. Each entity plays a different role, but together they can draw upon many years of shared knowledge and experience that can be put to good use in child trafficking interventions. The most successful organizations are those that can share the right amount of information and pool their resources together in a seamless way, especially with the limited resources that are available worldwide. Building on a starting level of trust and emerging roles, these organizations can continue to collaborate and improve the care and support offered to child trafficking victims, and continue to challenge jurisdictional boundaries and questions about which roles and responsibilities are paramount. Jurisdictions do overlap. Taking the time to explain roles and trust can help us work together for real justice or certainly for reunification. In the meantime, we could work on the process of reeducation, stabilization, resilience, and, importantly, trust.

5.2. International Cooperation and Policy Advocacy

The victim-to-survivor continuum of care includes international cooperation and policy advocacy at its highest and most holistic level. Over the past decade, international bodies have developed treaties, conventions, and other instruments to help countries harmonize laws and approaches to reduce the growth in trafficking and to more effectively care for its victims. Of particular concern to the listeners of this chapter, two major international treaties are now in place both for signature and as binding policy for individual countries. These treaties are designed to help protect the inherent human rights of all children, especially from harm caused by trafficking. So

far, over 190 countries are parties to these two important treaties. However, there is still significant work to be done to overcome local concerns, such as inappropriate rules and supporting practices, and still enable countries to more effectively cooperate to combat trafficking at entry, transit, and destination points.

As with definitions of trafficking at other levels, achieving consensus on these two important international instruments was not easy. The process took years of dialogue and negotiation, but the result is a definition of a trafficking victim that is specific enough to help facilitate global-level investigations and monitoring, but broad enough to accept the different national-level definitions of young people at risk as both trafficking victims and/or laborers. Unless there is a shared conceptual framework for identifying victims and effectively monitoring the success of national and international interventions to assist young victims, then it is not possible or even logical to advocate policy approaches. In light of this advice, there has continued advocacy as part of responsibilities to the Focal Point for the trafficking of children that countries should cooperate in this international fight by developing, signing, and then ratifying these important legal instruments. A status of cooperation is reported from a number of countries not only in Europe but worldwide, and as a result, significant progress is being reported in the coordinated search for and care of children, often stolen from their own countries, and sold into often oppressive and exploitative work. NGOs and grassroots organizations have been vital in both highlighting the potential extent of the trafficking problem and the gaps in current international responses through outlining individual cases and seeking to influence policy and practice. Social workers are firmly rooted in this area of policy influence that shapes the parameters of their practice. They, as individuals, can and may become powerful advocates for children on a micro- and macro-level in this possibly highest level of the victim-to-survivor continuum. The ability of children's workers to influence policy or political agendas is always limited by their dependence on the upper echelons for access to resources and implementation, and the political and socio-cultural agendas of the individual agency and country, as well as issues of racial and economic exploitation that underpin uneven power-sharing recordings internationally. (Genovese, (2022))

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