



THE ATLAS BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The *Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking* (ATLAS) project is a U.S. Department of Labor funded project that aims to strengthen labor and criminal legal frameworks concerning child labor (CL), forced labor (FL), and human trafficking (HT); improve enforcement of these frameworks; and increase coordination among law enforcement and social protection entities. ATLAS is implemented by Winrock International, in partnership with Lawyers Without Borders (LWOB) and Partners of the Americas (POA).

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

In order to support and inform the work of the ATLAS project and provide evidence-based information on the effectiveness of global interventions to combat CL, FL, and HT, Winrock, supported by LWOB, compiled the Body of Knowledge (BOK). The BOK is a research document that reviews the existing evidence on the effectiveness of interventions in the realms of legal frameworks, enforcement, and coordination. The ATLAS BOK team searched electronic databases for relevant studies published after 2005 and evaluated them for their quality, ultimately choosing 99 studies ranked as “moderate” (44) or “high” (55) quality for inclusion in the review. The identified studies were sorted by topic (legislation, enforcement, or coordination) and assessed to determine whether the interventions achieved their stated objectives, primarily identifying, investigating, referring, prosecuting, and sentencing cases of CL, FL, and HT.

RESULTS

LEGISLATIVE

Researchers evaluated 45 studies that met the quality criteria and focused on legislative actions to combat CL, FL, and HT, including creating and updating laws and action plans to meet international standards. They found that the passing of laws at the national level is correlated with a decrease in CL and sex trafficking, and at the subnational level is correlated with increased awareness of HT. However, the research also indicated that strengthening legal frameworks in isolation is not sufficient to combat CL, FL, and HT; it must also be accompanied by efforts to strengthen the agencies responsible for providing services to victims. When those agencies do not carry out their mandate as intended, victims lose faith in the legal system and are less likely to report crimes against them.

Four specific interventions were found to be effective in the realm of legislation:

- Creating or updating sub-national anti-HT laws in addition to national legislation.
- Setting appropriate penalties for employers who promote/engage in CL, FL, or HT.
- Instituting adequate legal structures to support implementation of policies on CL, FL, and HT.
- Conducting advocacy to create more conducive policy environments.

★ ENFORCEMENT

The BOK identified 56 studies relating to enforcement, out of the 99 that met the quality criteria, in the areas of identification by law enforcement, identification and enforcement through supply chains, prosecution and legal services for victims, and training for law enforcement and social protection entities.

Interventions found to be effective include:

- Conducting trainings for law enforcement, prosecutors, and immigration officials on identifying HT, incorporating industry and mental health professionals into these trainings.
- Conducting follow-up activities after trainings to provide additional support and ensure long-term behavioral change.
- Trainings for judges on effectively prosecuting HT and FL cases, and for people working within industries on identifying labor infractions.
- Providing legal services to help victims navigate the legal and immigration systems, especially when combined with rights-based education and/or comprehensive support interventions.
- Conducting awareness raising interventions alongside other interventions.
- Increasing the provision of/access to online referral mechanisms.
- Placing premiums on prices for high-risk goods and services to decrease demand from industries that rely on CL, FL, or HT (the studies supporting the effectiveness of this intervention are ranked of “moderate quality”).

The BOK concluded that rights education must be paired with provision of legal services and interventions to increase trust in law enforcement and the legal system in order to be most effective. Challenges to identification include the lack of capacity of law enforcement to recognize the signs of trafficking, and conflation of the definitions of trafficking and smuggling. Trainings for law enforcement and legal actors on HT were consistently found to result in increased knowledge, but the evidence that they lead to behavioral change or improved outcomes was more mixed. The review did not find evidence that awareness raising interventions led to behavior change, but additional research is needed.

✿ COORDINATION

Researchers reviewed 9 studies on coordination that met the quality standards. Coordination between stakeholders including health services providers, law enforcement, government agencies, NGO's, and public policy experts was found to improve policy outcomes, build capacity, and improve victim services in the realm of CL, FL, and HT. These studies mainly rely on qualitative data which is not always possible to directly correlate between the interventions and outcomes, so more research is needed on this topic.

Specific coordination interventions found to be effective focused on rehabilitation and victims services, including:

- Promoting holistic case management practices that establish a working relationship with victims and include the creation, implementation, and ongoing review of care plans.
- Providing staff training in rehabilitation programs.
- Providing psychotherapeutic interventions to reduce re-victimization.
- Regulating rehabilitation programs to ensure their efficacy.
- Providing legal support as part of rehabilitation programs.

The BOK is already being used to inform the project's programming and guide the development of our activities in Paraguay and Thailand, where ATLAS is currently operating. It is a tool that can be used by stakeholders including governments and implementers to design interventions and identify best and promising practices.

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