








CIRCLE° South Asia Regional Newsletter

Greetings from Kathmandu!

The CIRCLE team in Nepal presents the third issue of the Quarterly South Asia Newsletter. The newsletter continues to share experiences and information related to [the CIRCLE](#) projects and the general child labor status in [the](#) South Asian region with [CIRCLE](#) partner organizations, stakeholders, beneficiaries and other [interested](#) parties. [The Nepal CIRCLE staff thanks](#) our readers for [their](#) interest and partnership in efforts to combat the various forms of child labor in communities and neighborhoods.

This issue highlights an innovative feature of three partner organizations, followed by an interview of a successful NGO initiative which [should](#) be of interest to all involved in the fight against child labor.

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CIRCLE welcomes your comments and suggestions to help us [ensure that this](#) newsletter is better able to meet your information needs. We also encourage CIRCLE partner organizations to become involved in this newsletter by contributing ideas and stories.

Finally, I would like to thank [the](#) editorial team, CIRCLE [and other](#) [Winrock](#) staff, for [their](#) enthusiasm in collecting and editing these newsletters to perfection.

Dr. Milan Adhikary
Winrock International, CIRCLE Project
Regional Manager for Asia

See ILO-IPEC's 2006 Global Report on Child Labor

[“The end of child labor: Within reach”](#)

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/about/globalreport/2006/index.htm>

°Community-based Innovations to Reduce Child Labor through Education (CIRCLE).
Funding provided by the U.S. Department of Labor under cooperative agreements E-9-K-2-0048 and E-9-K-4-0005

Regional Launch Meeting

The CIRCLE Regional Launch Meeting for Asia was held in Cebu, Philippines from June 20th to 23rd June, 2006. The meeting was successfully completed with the combined effort of Winrock International staff, particularly the US Project Manager, Mr. Jason Befus; Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Ahikary; Deputy Regional Manager for South East Asia, Ms. Ana Dionela; Elias Cayanong, OIC Director, Jess Macasil, ILO-IPEC Field Coordinator, Lucille Alcalá, Provincial Education Officer, ABK Cebu, Ms. Nida Cabrera, Commissioner, Cebu City Commission on the Welfare and Protection of Children and Atty, Ms. Nina Valenzona, Share a Child Movement's Executive Director, were speakers on topics regarding education initiatives and child labor issues. Winrock International, under a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) awarded 6 sub-contracts, 3 NGOs from South Asia and 3 from the South East Asia region.



Photo: Regional Launch Meeting held in Cebu, Philippines

A total of 12 participants (Project Coordinator/Manager and Accountant) from each NGO were present at the meeting. In South Asia- Bal Ashram Trust (BAT) was awarded a medium-sized grant and ASHA from India and Shree Tarun Club (STC) from Nepal were awarded smaller ones. Similarly, the three awarded NGOs of South East Asia are Share a Child Movement (SCM), HOPE Foundation and Quidan-Kaisahan of Negros Occidental from Philippines. The objective of the meeting was not only to provide guidance on Winrock International reporting methods and process and management, but also to provide opportunities of learning on various perspectives through interaction with different stakeholders concerned with child labor and education. These six NGOs made a commitment to place their strategies and objectives in actions and work to reduce the instances of child labor from their respective regions.

Sending Children Back to School by Constructing Toilets.....

Aasaman-Nepal recently completed its “Abolition of Child Labor through Education” project by implementing various intervention programs and activities under the slogan “All Children Must Go To School”. An innovative initiative of Aasaman under this project has not only achieved its primary goal of increasing access to education for local children, but also succeeded in improving the health and sanitation of locals, and the surrounding environment as well.

Aasaman’s capacity building efforts have been admirable. The target group has gained in-depth knowledge of the vice that is child labor through promotional campaigns for enrollment, and awareness-raising on early marriages and birth registration. Another exemplary achievement has been the formation of a Women’s Forum; to work against child labor and violence against women in their community from within the community itself.

This program also has contributed to improved programs in local schools by repairing old and damaged toilets in many schools in the area. Women forum members from Haraiya Tole of Farhadwa VDC in Sarlahi District have shown their dedication to education by constructing a toilet for the school children. Lack of proper toilet facilities was one of the reasons children, especially girls, stayed out of school. Now, after toilet construction, the number of children attending school has increased. Girls are also more comfortable, and are more regular at school.



By project completion, teachers, students and community members expressed a dire need of a toilet in Shree Pra VI Jamuniya School. Aasaman has supported this initiative by forming a construction committee with the overall objective of attracting and retaining the number of children attending school.

Photo: Repaired toilet in Pra VI Gair

Involving Children in Environmental Protection.....

Child labor is a major social and economic challenge confronting society in almost all countries of the world. In terms of the size of the population involved, child labor is probably the issue affecting the largest number of children. India is not an exception to this, and is mired by high incidence of child labor in various forms. In this situation, the presence of *Arunodhaya*, an Indian NGO, has been instrumental in fighting against child labor at the local level.

Arunodhaya implements various intervention programs in Chennai within various slum communities where the concentration of child laborers and drop out children is high. The formation of a Child Laborer's School, a Guided Learning Center, Women's Self Help Groups, Youth Forum, and a Child Labor Monitoring Committee has brought about remarkable impacts throughout the project period. In addition to these various anti-child labor interventions, Arunodhaya has taken the notable step of highlighting environmental rights of these children. Arunodhaya conducted a survey in the targeted area themed "Children's Right to Environment" to draw attention to hazardous environmental issues faced by child laborers, such as smoke from limekilns, plastic waste materials from factories, oil leakage and spillage from oil companies, lack of toilet facilities, dumping of garbage, and lack of safe drinking water.



Photo: Human Chain Rally

Environment" to draw attention to hazardous environmental issues faced by child laborers, such as smoke from limekilns, plastic waste materials from factories, oil leakage and spillage from oil companies, lack of toilet facilities, dumping of garbage, and lack of safe drinking water.

The physical and emotional hazards to children, as well as the accompanying environmental degradation and health hazard to the community at large, were stressed. In order to relay all these messages clearly to the general public, Arunodhaya involved the children in the presence of the local counselors, leaders, and school representatives, in a street play and a huge rally.

Likewise, Arunodhaya also conducted human chain rallies with participation of local children in various villages in the area. Children carrying placards voiced demands for a clean and healthy environment for all to the government and public through cultural programs and street plays.

Addressing HIV & AIDS: CWISH

HIV/AIDS is becoming a major concern in Nepal. The illness has affected all segments of society. The poorest are worst affected and lack awareness about transmission and prevention of the illness. Risk of infection from HIV/AIDS is high amongst child laborers already, and threatens to increase poverty and contribute to the number of children involved as laborers further.

In an effort to prevent such a scenario, CWISH has conducted HIV/AIDS, occupational health care and safety programs in its Non-Formal Education (NFE) centers.



Photo: Children broadcasting information regarding HIV/AIDS in Chabil Centre

In this program, children were educated in a child-friendly environment about HIV, its mode of transmission, prevention, and physical and emotional needs of the infected. The myths and realities of the illness were also explained. Issues were explained through lectures, story-telling and role plays. The HIV awareness program has been found to be effective for child domestic laborers, shown by the children on World AIDS Day celebrations. In some NFE centers, children reported that they have begun requesting for new blades at hair saloons, and that they have discussed the issue within families of employers. The children report that many of their employers are very happy with this new awareness, and encourage children to safeguard themselves against this and other social maladies by learning about them. This approach has enabled children at risk of labor to understand HIV/AIDS and share this knowledge with the community.

An Interview Section:

South Asian countries including India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, harbor a high incidence of child labor. Concerted efforts need to be made from all sectors to fight this socio-economic challenge, and at present various INGOs, NGOs, CBOs, donor agencies, civil societies and national governments, are all raising conscientious about tackling the problem at the root: the community.

Many CIRCLE NGOs in South Asia have shared their successes as best practices so as to speed up the remediation of child labor in their societies. In this respect, CLAP (Committee for Legal Aid to Poor), a CIRCLE partner Indian NGO, is soon to complete its “Right Path to Education” project. The project is implemented through various intervention programs for target communities.

This interview section thanks Mr. Ramakanta Satapathy, Project Director of CIRCLE/RPE project, CLAP, for sharing his opinions and experiences in the fight against child [labor](#).

1) There are other burning issues in our society. Why is CLAP focused on the fight against child labor?

Despite of being universally condemned, one of the tragic realities today is the existence of child [labor](#). It is the worst form of Human Right violation. India being the largest democracy in the world has the dubious distinction of sustaining the world's largest concentration of these vulnerable children. It not only results in wage-depreciation, but also it perpetuates

poverty. It increases adult unemployment and leads to economic inequality. The practice produces malnourished and sick citizens, resulting in physically and mentally deformed citizens who will contribute less to the national development process. Persistence of child labor increases bottlenecks in the development process and has a direct and tangible bearing on the poor economic growth of the country. Realizing all these facts, CLAP has stands in its forefront as a specialized agency on child rights, and deals with the issue through a life-cycle approach. In this context, CLAP intervenes at the State and the National level with a view to stimulate civil society to defend the Rights of Children and strengthening institutional mechanisms as well as influence public policy concerning child labor.

2) In your view what are the major challenges resulting from child labor in your country?

I think the most important factor is poverty which puts the parents in a dilemma to choose between earning and education. This gives rise to a negative mindset of parents and society, which gives priority to earning over education. Due to ignorance and a lack of education, guardians simply focus on short-term benefits as solutions to poverty, and cannot foresee the future implications of the lack of education and negative effects of child labor. Repercussions do, however, ultimately travel to families and to society as a whole. Communities excuse children working in the pretext of learning family skills. Other factors include ineffective approach of the concerned governments, and absence or non-implementation of laws prohibiting employment of child labor.

3) What major contributions has your organization made in combating child labor in your region or country?

Being a legal aid, research, and advocacy organization, we played a vital role in 2002 by advocating for making primary education a fundamental right of children between 6-14 years through 86th Constitutional Amendment. We believe education is all-powerful, the only means through which we can rehabilitate child labor and remove it. Further, we undertake rigorous campaigns to make people aware of the issue of child labor, and the alternative to educate children to prevent child labor. We also conduct research and prepare advocacy documents for other NGOs on the issue. This provides free legal aid and support to the child laborers and their families for rehabilitation.

4) In your opinion, what issues need to be addressed for the elimination or reduction of child labor?

Firstly, massive awareness-raising on all the contributing factors of the issue should occur to change age-old mindsets. This must involve opinion-leaders, religious leaders, and local community groups. Education should be made compulsory for all in all countries. Laws relevant to this issue are to be made very stringent, and exemplary action should be taken against employers of child labor. Children themselves need to be engaged firsthand in campaigning and monitoring attendance and dropouts. International pressure must be put on the countries not implementing the CRC and other International commitments like the ILO convention. The civil society should boycott services and products involving employment of child laborers. Last but not the least, the benefit of all welfare schemes and services are to be converged at the doorstep of poor parents to enable to send their children to school.

5) Is government policy in India effective in addressing the issue of child labor?

There are a good number of policies and laws in India which discourage child labor, and encourage education. Yet, like other policies, it also has many grey areas needing immediate

| review and modification. Like in the case of Child [Labor](#) (Prohibition & Regulation) Act 1986, child laborers should not be allowed to work, and should be regulated by the law. The legislative intent is conspicuous here. What is needed is total prohibition. However while the provisions we have can also check these problems to a large extent, the problem is that the law enforcement mechanism lacks the willpower and motivation to implement the law strictly in greater interest of the children and the society.

6) More NGOs than ever now vie to work in the field of child labor, but still the condition is not as hoped. Why this contradiction?

I think there is a gap in approaches, thought and action. Networking and coordination need to be developed amongst all NGOs involved in this cause. Furthermore, since most NGOs depend upon foreign or outside funding to carry on programs, they are circumscribed to wind up the project even if it requires continued serious attention and time to effectively deal with the problem at hand. A long-term strategic intervention at a single place is what I think is necessary to bring tangible results like MV Foundation in Rangareddy district of Hyderabad, India.

Primary Education Enrollment and Completion as a Backbone

Primary education is a basic right of today's children. Primary education provides extensive learning and sharing experiences for children, enables them to realize their potentials, and live their lives to the fullest capacity as appropriate to their particular stage of development. The benefits of primary education extend beyond the family to the larger community, and ultimately to the nation. Increased number of children who complete school leads to economic growth, social and political stability, decline in crime rates, and improved social services from a population of literate adults.

Yet in today's world, various social and economic hurdles prevent many children, mostly those poorest in rural areas, from gaining access to quality education. Major factors contributing to a high dropout rate from school are: poverty, followed closely by illiteracy, war, famine, population growth, lack of familial support, traditional beliefs and norms, and discrimination. All detract from a child's learning experience and stunt physical and emotional well-being. As a result, many children are entering the worst forms of child labor both willingly and unwillingly, placing their fragile mental and physical health at considerable danger. It is therefore imperative to increase access to quality education for children, increase net enrollment, and support school completion in order to prevent dropouts and exploitation.

It is with this overall motive that several formal and non-formal primary schools have been established in South Asian countries with involvement of governments and the non-government sector. The following table illustrates the net enrollment, completion, and female to male student ratio in primary education in CIRCLE South Asia countries. Clear problems can be found, according to these statistics. They can be attributed to traditional discrimination and the preference for sons in certain societies. Girl children are clearly more vulnerable to being exposed to child labor, bonded labor and to early marriages, which may in turn further trigger an assortment of social complications.

Sincere and collective collaboration and support from all individuals, societies, communities, concerned agencies, parties, and countries as a whole is imperative in order to ensure universal primary education and educational systems with high enrollment and completion rate for all children, especially for females.

Table: Educational Status of Students in Primary Education of South Asian Circle Countries

S. No.	South Asian Circle Countries	Primary school net enrollment/attendance ratio (1996-2004)			Primary Completion rate as % or relevant age group (2000/01-2003/04)			Female student as % of males – In Primary school (2000-2004)	
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Gross	Net
1	Bangladesh	79 (n)	78	80	73	71	76	104	105
2	India	77 (n)	80	73	81	85	77	94	94
3	Nepal	74 (n)	80	67	78	84	72	89	88
4	Pakistan	56 (n)	62	51	NA	NA	NA	71	74

Source: South Asia Booklet on Child-relevant Socioeconomic Indicators, UNICEF 2006

Box 1: Govt. of India Declared Employment of Domestic Servants as Hazardous form of Labor

The Government of India has increased the list of prohibited occupations and processes, and has prohibited employment of children below 14 years of age as domestic servants, or in the hospitality sectors, including hotels, dhabas (roadside eatery), resorts, restaurants and tea shops. This prohibition shall be enforced from 10th October, 2006. This is good news for CIRCLE Partner NGOs as well as for the child right activists and organizations working against child labor. Earlier, in the child labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, a Central Government Act had prohibited employment of children below 14 years of age in identified hazardous sectors, including 13 occupations and 57 processes. This change, as claimed by the Government, is aimed at “ameliorating the condition of hapless working children” from “psychological traumas and at times even sexual abuses”. The CIRCLE/RPE project area helps such children who work in hotels and tea shops and the domestic sector. CIRCLE partners welcome this decision, and will continue advocating for complete prohibition of employment of children below 14 years of age which interferes with its Fundamental Right to Education as guaranteed under Article 21 (A) of Indian Constitution.

Box: 2 Events and Items of Note

- May 8-12, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary visited CSID, MUK & NDS Bangladesh for monitoring project activities.
- May 21-23, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary and Ast. Finance & Administrative Officer Ms. Binita Shrestha visited the WATCH in Rupendhei, Nawalparasi for monitoring the project activities.
- May 28-3 June, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary visited Arunodhaya, VOCRDC, and Deepalya India for monitoring project activities.
- June 17-26, 2006: Regional Launch Meeting held in Manila, Philippines. Three NGOs namely BAT a medium funded project and ASHA a small funded project both from India and STC a small funded project from Nepal signed an agreement with the CIRCLE Project, Winrock International under a cooperative agreement with United States Department of Labor (USDOL).
- August 9-11, 2006: An Intern Mr. Pratap Rai visited BASE offices Banke and Dang and New Sub-contract Partner Shree Tarun Club (STC) Dang for monitoring project activities.

Congratulations!

To CIRCLE New Partner Organizations for their successful project implementation

STC-Nepal,
BAT-India
ASHA-India

Collaborate; Network; Share Skills & Ideas

Collaboration, networking and sharing skills can leverage development gains into lasting and sustainable changes that benefit everyone. The CIRCLE partner projects listed below (in alphabetical order) provide learning experiences in this process.

1. Aasaman Nepal (aasaman@wlink.com.np)
2. Arunodhaya (India) (aruno@xlweb.com)
3. ASHA (India) (ashango@rediffmail.com)
4. BASE (Nepal) (dangbase@mail.com.np)
5. BAT (Nepal) (balashram@gmail.com)
6. CAC Nepal (cac_nepal@hotmail.com)
7. CCF (Pakistan) (ccf@nexlink.net.pk)
8. CDP (Bangladesh) (cdp@khulna.bangla.net)
9. CLAP (India) (satapathyramakant@rediffmail.com)
10. CRED (India) (cred@eth.net)
11. CSID (csid@bdonline.com)
12. CWEDA (Nepal) (sudu@wlink.com.np)
13. CWIN (Nepal) (cwin@mos.com.np)

14. CWISH (Nepal) (cwish@wlink.com.np)
15. DDS (Nepal) (not available)
16. Deepalaya (India) (info@deepalaya.org)
17. DWAY (Pakistan) (dwaybannu@hotmail.com)
18. MUK (Bangladesh) (msislam67@yahoo.com)
19. NDS (Bangladesh) (nds@bdonline.com)
20. VOCRDC (India) (vocrdc@yahoo.com)
21. WATCH (Nepal) (watchftp@wlink.com.np)
22. STC (Nepal) (tarunclub@ntc.net.np)

Contribute articles to the Newsletter:



Indian girls learning through non-formal education

1. Contact us with story ideas and discussion topics
2. Interview or talk to community members and beneficiaries who have received positive benefits from your project.
3. Involve your child beneficiaries in telling their own stories.
4. Talk to everyone you know about the harmful and anti-development effects of child labor and make education for all a reality. Share your experiences and ideas for awareness-raising.

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