


CIRCLE° South Asia Regional Newsletter


Greetings from Kathmandu!


Welcome to the fourth CIRCLE South Asia Newsletter. In this issue, the initiatives of three CIRCLE partners are featured. The CIRCLE team expects that this newsletter will sustain the momentum of CIRCLE's activities against child labor in South Asia, and continue to contribute to the global Community Practices on education and child labor. This newsletter serves as a forum to link education and child labor and encourage collaboration between anti-child labor and other development practitioners. The CIRCLE team invites you to send us comments and suggestions for this newsletter to make it a better tool in promoting vibrant, effective communities free of child labor.


CIRCLE would like to thank the editorial team, CIRCLE and other Winrock staff, for their enthusiasm in collecting and editing these newsletters.

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Finally, the CIRCLE team would like to wish all the readers a very happy new year 2007.

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)

<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

HOUSEHOLD WOMEN'S INITIATIVE TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ASHA/ CIRCLE PROJECT CHARMAL, SMBALPUR, ORISSA, INDIA

One has to see it to believe it!

Eliminating the commercial exploitation of children around the world is a daunting task, but one that is achievable. Programs that address not only the effects, but also the roots of child exploitation must receive adequate attention, motivation, and a commitment that addresses the needs of working children. It is the duty of every adult to see that children, the greatest asset of mankind, grow up in the best possible environment without any obstruction or impediment.

The Tribal societies in Orissa are considered the most vulnerable Indian population due to chronic poverty, illiteracy, and lack of adequate primary health and education facilities. CIRCLE is serving the most at-risk children and youth, who work in those communities in stone quarries, mines, watching cattle, collecting of kendu leaves, or rolling beedis. These children are underserved by the existing support system primarily because: 1) they live in inaccessible dense forest areas isolated from the mainstream society 2) they are children of landless parents or daily wage laborers who migrate seasonally 3) their parents are ignorant of their rights 4) civil support agencies find it difficult to serve them due to poor telecommunication systems 5) both parents usually work, so the children are left unattended 6) lack of civic participation, and finally, 7) the children are First Generation Learners. Because parents are not used to benefiting from government services, they have not accessed available support systems to their full potential.

The ASHA/ CIRCLE Project implemented in Charmal Block of Sambalpur District, Orissa, is working to address these issues. As an enabling institution and community partnership catalyst, ASHA has developed a network of 11 Anchalik Vikash Sangathans (Regional Development Federations) represented by 225 Nari Sanghas (Women's Associations), consisting of 5209 individual household women members, and has formed a consortium of 5 registered local, mostly women-lead, voluntary organizations. In addition, cadres of 64 youth groups and 108 Village Development Committees are active in the project area.



The successful implementation of the program generated overwhelming support by the women's groups, and the issue of child rights was widely discussed at the community level. At least 50 percent of the targeted working children have been withdrawn from hazardous labor. Over 500 child laborers previously employed in hazardous sectors have enrolled in ASHA's alternative schools. In addition, ASHA works with the women's groups to secure livelihoods and food

security. The focus of the livelihood program primarily emphasizes capacity building and increased participation.

Work with the women's groups has been successful because they have identified Education Volunteers (EVs) from within the community to help transition the children from home to school.

Women's group in awareness event

Another significant event for ASHA was the Women's Parliament. More than 200 women of all age groups participated in the parliament, and discussed issues related to violation of child rights in the

context of education and employment of child labor in hazardous sectors. This is certainly a community based initiative that is both sustainable and innovative in terms of reaching out to distinct communities and inaccessible geographical area.

CIRCLE/ASHA believes that if the community needs are addressed with the participation of everyone, without gender discrimination, then the issue of child rights especially health, education and child labor can be well addressed with minimal financial and administrative support. This will, in turn, facilitate a change of attitude in individual households and the community towards children and child rights.

Workshops Organized by RADAR

Rural Access Development & Research (RADAR), Nepal has organized two consecutive one day workshops in Tulsipur Municipality Hall on 6th December, 2006, and in Gorahi Dang on 24th January, 2007. The first workshop entitled "Worst Form of Child Labor & Role of Stakeholders" was conducted during the visit of Dr. Milan Adhikary, Regional Manger for South Asia, CIRCLE Project. Mr. Bishnumani Dhital, advocate and RADAR consultant presented a paper. Similarly, Dr. Milan Adhikari highlighted CIRCLE outreach programs in South Asia and in Nepal. She has also focused on RADAR and other ongoing partners of Circle Project. Ms. Binita Shrestha, assistant administration and finance officer was also present in the workshop. Both local government and non government officers, leaders of the communities, leaders of the child clubs and representatives of the journalists and INGOs under Child Labor were present. The workshop included interactive working groups to explore how a) Local governmental groups, b) NGOs groups, c) Parents groups, and d) Child Club groups could eliminate child labor. They each created action plans for the Dang district that will be presented to various local government bodies and other concerned agencies.

Similarly, the second workshop "Role of Stakeholders in Children and Youth Development" began with sharing perspectives about 1) Government bodies 2) NGOs/CBOs/INGOs and 3) the Private sector. The government bodies included various government officers from different offices; the second group included personnel from NGOs including BASE and RADAR, CIRCLE partner organizations and INGOs. The third group included the personnel from media, small scale business and transport associations etc. Each working group presented their findings based on the themes "Existing problems that children and youth have faced and are still facing in Dang District and mid western region" and "How to address the problems of children and youth?" The findings of the groups offer appropriate programs to address children and youth issues.

Overall, the workshops were very effective and productive in creating action plans, as well as in addressing children's and youth issues from various perspectives.

CLAP introduces Human Rights Education for School Children



In collaboration with the Institute of Human Rights Education (IHRE), Tamilnadu, and PECUC of Bhubaneswar, CLAP through CIRCLE/RPE initiated the process to introduce Human Rights Education for school children in Badamba. Mr. Nagendra Pradhan, Minister of School and Mass Education, Orissa, assured that the State Government shall promote this initiative to introduce Human Rights Education in the School Curriculum. In preparation, CIRCLE/RPE allocated a number of teachers from Badamba to attend the Teacher's

Training Program and three Upper Primary Schools provided books on Human Rights. The students displayed keen interest in Human Right Education, and are expected to attain significant knowledge both theoretically and practically in reducing the instances of child labor in their communities.

Sharing CIRCLE experiences in Global March Conference

A one day conference entitled “Strategic Planning on Child Labor” was held by Global March South Asia in collaboration with the International Centre on Child Labor and Education (ICCLE). The Regional Manager of CIRCLE for South Asia highlighted CIRCLE’s activities and approach based on the Triangular Paradigm: Situations of Poverty and Child labor as they impact on the right to education. She presented the existing scenario of child labor in Nepal and explained the project’s goal, objectives, and outreach in Nepal, other South Asian Countries, and globally. In addition to praising the innovative and promising good practices of the Project, she also elaborated on the challenges overcome, details of the achievements and finally project results. It is expected that the sharing of CIRCLE experiences in this collective platform will help combat child labor in relation to poverty and education, and to strategize about future actions in the country through collective efforts.

Abolition of Child Labor through Education: Aasaman Experience

Aasaman is a local CIRCLE-partner NGO in Nepal working in child rights. Aasaman has already completed the CIRCLE project “Abolition of Child Labor through Education”, and its results are laudable. Aasaman implemented various intervention programs for its target communities.

Below is an interview with Mr. Durga Shrestha, Executive Director of Aasaman, highlighting his opinions and experiences in the fight against child labor in Nepal.

1. How long has Aasaman been working in the field of child labor? Why are you involved in this field?

Aasaman Nepal has been working in the field of child labor ever since its establishment in 1999. It is guided by five non negotiable principles (5 NN principles), the spirit of which is that any child out of school is a child laborer, and the central goal of the organization is to eliminate all child labor by bringing in all children into the school system.

The non negotiable principles of Aasaman Nepal are as follows:-

- All children must attend full time formal day schools (not night schools or non formal education centers)
- Any child out of school is a child laborer (whether waged, non-waged, in factory, fields or at home)
- All work/labor is hazardous: it harms the overall growth and development of the child.
- There must be a total abolition of child labor (any law regulating child work is unacceptable).
- Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labor must be condemned (e.g. arguments about harsh reality poverty , the necessity of children's earning, poor quality of teachers or schools etc are all anti-children)

Personally speaking, I have been working in the field of education and community development in both governmental and non governmental organizations for the past 36 years. During this course, I have worked for formal and non formal education. This has made me realize that education is a must for social transformation, and to break the cycle of poverty prevalent in our country.

The government of Nepal has also realized the importance of this issue and started the ***Education for All Campaign***. In order to meet EFA goals, all children should be enrolled in formal full time school, should obtain quality education, and continue schooling. Child labor hinders this aim, and the overall development of children. Engaging children in labor even for economic purposes, or to help in household work, is detrimental for his/her overall development. School is the best place where children's rights are protected. Therefore, realizing this issue, I along with Aasaman team, have been working in the field of child labor.

2. In your view, what are the major causes of child labor in Nepal?

The primary reason perpetuating child labor in Nepal is the lack of effective government policies to ensure quality, compulsory and free education for children, and lack of accountability among civil societies for ensuring children's right to education. In addition, lack of employment opportunities for adults in the country, and ineffective implementation of existing policies against child labor are exacerbating the problem.

3. What are the major contributions of your organization in combating the child labor in this region or in Nepal?

Major contributions of Aasaman Nepal in combating child labor in our working areas are:

- We have been able to transform the attitude of people against deep rooted social norms about child labor and education. In the past, child labor was a normal part of life in Aasaman Nepal's working areas. It was seen as inevitable by poor parents, tolerated by communities and implicitly endorsed by government. But now, it is socially unacceptable for any child to be doing anything during school hours except learning.
- Aasaman Nepal has created various support structures at the local level, and empowered them through trainings to create a strong cadre of committed youth activists who are able to train others, advocate and work to eliminate child labor by getting all children into school. These galvanized youth have been able to join hands with sympathetic teachers, community leaders and government officials to create Child Rights Protection Committees.
- Aasaman Nepal has also worked closely with activist teachers and popularized the idea that teachers are also responsible for out of school children, and not only those who are enrolled in schools.
- We have worked with parents for the retention guarantee of children in school (i.e. to promise to keep their children in school in return of learning guarantee from teachers or to promise that children will achieve basic learning objectives.)
- We have been able to mobilize local people and local resources for improving the school environment and made school the center of attention for all concerned.
- We have worked closely with government educational sector to enhance government accountability towards children's education and to bridge the gap between the government sector and local community for the sustainability of its interventions.

4. Tell us about innovative anti-child labor activities implemented by your organization through the CIRCLE project?

Innovative anti-child labor activities implemented by Aasaman Nepal through CIRCLE project are:

- We have contributed in the creation and mobilization of various forums for a mindset change of local people regarding child labor and education. These groups are fighting social ills deeply rooted in the Terai region, such as against early child marriage, child labor issues and other women's issues, on their own initiative.
- We have initiated the involvement of the community in every activity, especially in school improvement programs (SIPs). Before formation of SIPs, Aasaman Nepal involved community people from different levels and showed their importance on the matter. The SIPs were prepared with massive involvement of the community in envisioning the future of schools. Moreover, there was presence of government officials; active participation in the development plan has ensured everyone's active involvement in implementation as well.
- Before Aasaman Nepal intervention, the stake of the community in school improvement and community development activities was little seen; there was a big gap between schools and the community, viewed as a different entity of society altogether. Aasaman Nepal has enabled the perception that the community and school should work in harmony. School systems cannot improve in isolation without community. Moreover, Aasaman Nepal has made a community contribution compulsory in each activity it conducts. The stake of the community in school improvement programs has therefore gradually increased.

5. Do you think the CIRCLE-Aasaman intervention will be enough to address the issue of child labor?

CIRCLE- Aasaman Nepal intervention was able to sensitize the local community and local government bodies regarding child labor and education issues to some extent. This project has contributed to addressing these issues openly. However, it is not enough to meet the desired goal of abolition of child labor completely. For that, further interventions such as linking child labor and education issues at the local level to all political parties, and lobbying for the same at the central level to influence and shape policies that affect children's right to education need to be done so as to provide a favorable environment for children.

6. How can be government policy be made effective to address the issue of child labor?

Governmental policy in Nepal is not completely effective to counter the problems of child labor. Policy encompasses not only the formulation of it, but also effective implementation and monitoring as well as the impact it has on society. The constitution of Nepal has clearly stated that children below 18 years of age should not be engaged in any kind of hazardous work, and the government has also ratified the Child Rights Convention however, effective implementation of these policies is lacking in Nepal. As a result, many children are still engaged in such work. Government agencies, political powers, as well as the civil society also need to be responsible and accountable. Until and unless the government system is strengthened and held accountable for providing compulsory quality and free education for children below 14 years of age, and for ensuring employment opportunities for adults, child labor eradication cannot be achieved in Nepal. Policies regarding the mentioned purpose should be brought into action, and not only in the constitution. The government should not only define policies, but also implement these policies, monitor the implementation process, identify lacking parts and plan strategies to address these gaps more effectively.

Box 1: Events and Items of Note

- November 27-8, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary attended retreat program in Winrock International USA.
- November 9-16, 2006: Program Officer, Ms. Nora Weiss, of Empowerment and Civic Engagement (ECE) from USA visited Nepal.
- December 5-8, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary and Ast. Finance & Administrative Officer Ms. Binita Shrestha visited the RADAR in Dang for monitoring the project activities.
- December 17, 2006: Ms Priyanka, Consultant of Bal Ashram Trust India, a CIRCLE partner, who came to attend Global March for Children in Nepal visited CIRCLE Office Nepal and introduced to CIRCLE staffs as well as Winrock staffs too.
- December 19-25, 2006: Regional Manager for South Asia Dr. Milan Adhikary visited to ASHA and CLAP, India for project monitoring purpose.
- January 22-25, 2007: Program Manager of CIRCLE Project, USA Mr. Jason Befus visited to RADAR-Dang for project monitoring and to attend the workshop organized by RADAR.



Facilitator and students at WATCH/CIRCLE NFE CENTER NAWAL PARASI

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)
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5. BAT (India) (balashram@gmail.com)
6. CAC (Nepal) (cac_nepal@hotmail.com)
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9. CLAP (India) (satapathyramakant@rediffmail.com)
10. CRED (India) (cred@eth.net)
11. CSID (Bangladesh) (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. RADAR (Nepal) (radardang@mail.com.np)
21. VOCRDC (India) (vocrdc@yahoo.com)
22. WATCH (Nepal) (watchftp@wlink.com.np)

How you can contribute to our cause:

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.
 5. Share your experiences and ideas for awareness-raising.

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