

## CIRCLE NGOs ACTIVATE Child Labor Monitoring

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During the Regional Launch Meeting for Round 3 CIRCLE NGOs held in June 2006, Winrock emphasized the importance of instituting an appropriate child labor monitoring system. A training module was devoted for this purpose, resulting in improved plans for regular tracking and verification in child labor and the education status of assisted children.

Winrock developed tools like the Child Profile Form and Student Tracker for identifying child laborers and at-risk children at each project's start. These tools enabled NGOs like Quidan Kaisahan and HOPE Foundation to determine education status, types of work and specific hazards which need to be addressed for improved protection of children.

### Data Collection

Quidan Kaisahan used education mapping to obtain updated and reliable information on child labor in their target communities. Those community's barangay governments used this new data to update their profile on children and create better plans for them. The child labor profile served as basis for Quidan's own targeting of out-of-school child laborers and at-risk children who would need an alternative learning education service. The student tracker, which contains information on the progress of education inputs and improvements in work conditions- i.e., withdrawal from hazardous work and prevention from work, helped Quidan identify problems

of learners, specifically trends in absenteeism due to work involvement.

The initial data collected by HOPE Foundation on child laborers and at-risk children was



### Parents learn about child rights and their role

used to heighten awareness of stakeholders, especially parents. HOPE conducted a series of awareness-raising sessions amongst teachers, parents, local officials, landowners, farm overseers and students as a step towards mobilizing them to participate in the program.

### Child Labor Monitoring

Child labor monitoring entails 1. forming a team that will be tasked primarily to check places where children may be working; 2. verifying that work conditions have improved or that children have been withdrawn from harmful work; 3. referring children to appropriate services; 4. ensuring that they are participating in their educational programs; and 5. that their overall situation has improved. For Quidan Kaisahan, their monitoring team is composed of those who interact with the children regularly, school teachers for in-school children, the women's

organization, and the Barangay Council for the Protection of Women and Children (who prepare and oversee the Child Welfare Plan lodged within the development plan).

HOPE empowered the Parent Teacher Community Associations (PTCA) to act as their child labor monitoring team. As a member of the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children, PTCA was seen as the most appropriate body for in-school children and those listed as out of school in the child labor tracker. During the training process, HOPE encouraged members of the Council to develop programs responsive to child laborers in rice and sugar producing communities targeted by CIRCLE.

During the training, HOPE also conducted a series of advocacy sessions with the Councils, convincing them that child labor is a growing phenomenon in their areas and that education can help reduce this problem. As a result, three of HOPE's PTCAs monitored the children's attendance in-class and talked to the children and their teachers. Home visits and consultation with parents and even neighbors are planned to verify reasons for absenteeism and other school problems. The PTCAs hope to engage the parents in specific actions that would improve children's participation in school and help them reduce their work or totally stop it. Direct observation of children's work places is also an activity to be undertaken as well as continuous advocacy with the Council for more appropriate services for children in general.

Cons



Construction-related tasks not fit for children



## Strategies for Dealing with Child Labor, Especially its Worst Forms: Lessons Learned

CIRCLE NGOs in SEA shared a number of valuable lessons and guidelines in further improving their interventions toward the reduction of child labor through education.

One of their realizations is that awareness raising on child labor amongst economically disadvantaged parents is still a major challenge, especially when promoting a major shift in traditional ways of thinking and dealing with children. It is important to use all avenues to mobilize parents' support in promoting their children's rights. Legal literacy and education on the detrimental effects of child labor should form part of parent education programs.

NGOs who need to rescue child domestic laborers from extremely abusive conditions need to develop capacities for dealing with juvenile justice system as well as engage multi-sectoral support in managing

these special cases. Legal assistance in post-rescue operation is a specialized field as well as provision of custodial care and protection. This is a challenging area for many NGOs who work with victims of prostitution, trafficking and exploitative domestic labor.

Child labor is an issue that can be mainstreamed in all child development initiatives in communities. In engaging families to address child labor issues, it is equally important to tap community actors and leaders who can act as educators, advocates and community monitors, among others. The formation of community watch groups or quick action teams can facilitate the identification of child laborers, provision of support, the coordination of services and monitoring of children and families.

Meetings with families of child laborers should be purposeful and solution-oriented to moti-

vate more parents to participate. Support in terms of access to livelihood training, capital and technical assistance should be available. These gatherings should empower families to take practical steps to deal with family issues affecting child laborers. Parents should be convinced that it is to their best interest to educate their children and protect them from child labor.

A center-based approach supported by specialized institutions, private sector and other donors has proven effective in providing a home for rescued children. Centers give traumatized children a safe haven for healing and recovery as they are educated, trained, and counseled with the support of peers and staff. Center-based services are instrumental in instilling hope and providing essential life skills for health and success for child victims before rejoining their families and communities.

## Making Parents Allies in the Fight against Child Labor

It is an well-known fact that a major cause of child labor is poverty. Some parents allow, if not force, their children to engage in hazardous tasks in order to augment their meager family income. Because of economic need, children are made to work rather than go to school, allowed to do overtime labor rather than rest and play, or forced to engage in activities harmful to their person. More often than not, this is coupled

with or caused by parents' lack of understanding of the needs of children. Sometimes they even view child labor prevention as a threat to the family. Small wonder that in the struggle to minimize child labor, parents are usually perceived as the first to stand in the way.

HOPE Foundation has recognized from the start that parents play a pivotal role in the fight against child labor. While most interventions are school-based, HOPE has

also identified strategic ways of working with parents, particularly through the Parent Teacher Community Association or PTCA.

A series of PTCA sessions on child labor have yielded encouraging results so far: the recent seminar workshop on child labor was conducted in a non-threatening manner, and parents engaged in participative activities on child rights. Parents were made to understand each right of the child and illustrate how this is

*Continued on page 3*



One of the parents from Vasquez Elem. School sharing her thoughts on the rights of the child

upheld or violated in the community. There were interactive sessions on understanding developmental stages of children, showing how school, play and imagination help the child's holistic development. The key message was that: Engaging a child in heavy work that is not appropriate to his/her age and capability and that forces him/her to skip vital development tasks, robs a child of the chance to grow into a healthy, happy and productive member of society. The exercise on child work versus child labor helped parents to clearly distinguish between the two concepts. Child Labor laws were discussed in the context of the state helping the parents protect and uphold the rights of their children.

In subsequent meetings, some parents shared how their knowledge from child labor workshops affects their views about child labor:

*"When I pass a child in the sugar cane field, I begin to wonder if he is a child laborer."* (Remedios Tajanlangit, PTCA Secretary of Vazquez E/S) ... *"Now, I reflect on what I ask my children to do. Will it do them good or will it cause them harm?"* (Elma Matutina, Day Care Worker and PTCA member of Limsiaco E/S). Ginalyn Paraat (PTCA member of Limsiaco E/S), who openly admitted that her children are child laborers now refrains from making them work in the sugarcane farm -if she can help it. Suzette Sabido (Barangay Nutrition Scholar and PTCA Treasurer of Cabadiangan E/S) convinces a neighbor that it is dangerous for her young son to engage in "karga/tapas" (cutting and hauling sugarcane). The enlightened mother has also prevented her son from joining a group of



One of module 3 training activities, the making of "The ME Bag"

young men going out to harvest and haul sugarcane into ten-wheeler trucks.

Some of these parents are now being trained to be peer educators and community monitors. Aware that they are the first protectors of their children, they are committed to convincing other parents to uphold their children's rights too.

*"When I pass a child in the sugar cane field, I begin to wonder if he is a child laborer."*  
*"Now, I reflect on what I ask my children to do. Will it do them good or will it cause them harm?"*

### There are six steps suggested for determining hazardous child labor

- 1 Create a structure
  - ⇒ Determine who will manage the process
  - ⇒ Involve employers, workers and other with special expertise
- 2 Get existing and new information
  - ⇒ Review international standards
  - ⇒ Take stock of current laws and regulations
  - ⇒ Gather information on risks, hazards and locations
- 3 Compile the list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children under 18 years of age
  - ⇒ Identify criteria for selecting items for the list
  - ⇒ Determine hazardous occupations, activities and conditions
  - ⇒ Decide how to protect youth who are old enough to work legally
- 4 Formalize the list
  - ⇒ Consult the social partners
  - ⇒ Have the "competent authority" give the list legal force
- 5 Promote and use the list
  - ⇒ Use the list for awareness raising
  - ⇒ Set a timetable for action
- 6 Review the list periodically
  - ⇒ Update the list and laws

Source: "Steps Toward Determining Hazardous Child Labour". Compiled by ILO/IPEC, June 2006. A toolkit of reference materials and practical examples

## CIRCLE

Community-based Innovations to Reduce Child Labor through Education

**Goal and Objectives** - The goal of CIRCLE is to prevent child labor, especially the worst forms. The CIRCLE objectives are to identify and promote replicable, community-based educational innovations that successfully address the prevention or reduction of child labor and to document their Best Practices.

CIRCLE project activities contribute directly to the following objectives of U.S. Department of Labor Child Labor Education Initiative:

- Strengthen formal and non-formal education systems and mobilize a wide array of actors to improve infrastructure;
- Raise awareness of the importance of education for all children and the hazards of child labor;
- Strengthen national and local institutions and policies to address education and child labor; and
- Ensure sustainability of these efforts.

CIRCLE solicits and administers sub-contracts on a competitive basis to non-governmental (NGO), community-based organizations. CIRCLE has funded over 65 community-based organizations in 23 countries addressing various sectors of child labor and providing education alternatives. See the CIRCLE web site [www.circle.winrock.org](http://www.circle.winrock.org) for information on the organizations, countries and projects.

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**CIRCLE Spotlight Story on Lingap Pangkabataan****G Represents Child Domestics in LPI Board of Trustees**

**G joins other children and members of Board of Trustees during the Lingap Pangkabataan, Inc. General Assembly**

At age 10, G's father sent him to Manila for reasons unknown to him. All he knew was that both of his parents were drug dependents and he suffered much from being physically abused by his father.

G stopped schooling and stayed with a family, working as ambulant orchids vendor. He soon found an aunt in Metro Manila some years later with whom he stays up to the present. At his aunt's home, G was able to resume his schooling, but with much difficulty. Upon waking up at 5:00 a.m., he was expected to clean the house, cook breakfast and lunch and wash dishes. He would go to school at 6:30 a.m. and return home at 4:00p.m. He would then continue doing household chores which included doing the laundry, ironing, cooking and attending to other errands for his aunt's children. The latter treated him badly, since they know that his mother is not the legitimate wife of their uncle. Despite his fatigue from school and daily household chores, G still worked on his school assignments late at night, often sleeping at 1:00 a.m.

G's performance in school suffered not only because of his heavy burden at home but also due to his lack of workbooks and school supplies. It did not also help that his uniform and pair of shoes were hand-me-downs, and often in bad shape.

NGO Lingap Pangkabataan, Inc. immediately took G into the CIRCLE project upon meeting him in school. He was counseled, and provided much needed workbooks, school shoes, enrolment fees, school supplies, transportation allowance and assistance in school projects.

LPI also reached out to G's aunt to explain the project, asking her to allow G to participate in LPI's activities for child laborers. LPI and other child domestic laborers continued to provide moral support to G, often assisting him in his school work and projects.

G exhibited his talents especially during the LPI Youth Camp in April 2006. His leadership qualities were appreciated by his peers, even electing him as their representative in the LPI Board of Trustees. This Board had just enacted a policy to harness substantive child participation in the Board, requiring one seat to be allotted to a child representative. As the youth representative, G is expected now to speak on behalf of the children's association about issues affecting children in various Lingap communities. During the LPI General Assembly in July 2006 and in the Board of Trustees meeting in November 2006, G ably represented the children's interests. In that meeting, G supported a proposal to revive and strengthen participation of children from Lingap projects through strategic linkages with existing networks for children.

In recognition of his leadership, G was selected to represent the child domestic sector during a National Children's Conference held in October 2006. He helped prepare the Children's Declaration to be presented during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Children's Conference set in December 2006. G also actively participated in a dialogue with government agencies where programs for children were presented and Millennium Development Goals was reviewed.

At present, G is assisting LPI staff organize advocacy activities related to the Children's Association children's theater. He also serves as a volunteer in helping other child domestics use computers for their school research projects and assignments.

Lingap continues to coordinate with G's aunt regarding his activities in the organization. Although she has not been very cooperative, G does his best to stay in school, with much support from his peers at Lingap. He is an honor student and is determined to finish his secondary education as well as represent the children's interests faithfully.

**CIRCLE Notebook****Eliminating Hazardous Child Labor Step by Step**

For countries which have ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, it is critically important to formalize a list of hazardous child labor to be able to know where and on what to concentrate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

ILO Convention has stated that one of the worst forms of child labor is "work which by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children." ILO requires each county to prepare its own list of hazardous work according to its particular context. ( See page 3 for six steps in determining... )

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