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MEJOR LA ESCUELA



# STOP CHILD LABOUR TOUR IN CENTRAL AMERICA

November 2007

## FINAL INTEGRATED REPORT

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes the main aspects of the **Stop Child Labour Tour in Central America** which took place during November 2007.

The tour was organized under the auspices of the European '*Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work*' campaign, headed by Hivos together with the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (FNV) and the fellow organizations Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (Kinderpostzegels) and Save the Children Netherlands.

In Central America, the tour was supported by the following local partner organizations: PRONICE (Guatemala), Asociación Compartir (Honduras), CIDENIC (Nicaragua) and Defensa de los Niños y las Niñas Internacional (DNI) (Costa Rica). During the tour, local organizations (both trade unions and NGOs), government bodies and international agencies engaged in field visits, exchange meetings and workshops with the visiting delegation consisting of two representatives of the M. Venkatarangaiya Foundation (MVF) from India and one representative from the Albanian Teachers' Union.

The tour covered Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. In the course of a month, the organizations and visiting delegation could share experiences, reflect on the challenges in the region and identify concrete strategies to best answer the specific problems in the own context.

This report summarizes the most important outcomes of the field visits, exchange meetings and workshops that took place. It highlights first hand experiences from the field and intervention strategies that proved effective. It also sets out the lessons learned and the recommendations that followed from the event. This is expected to contribute to the follow-up and development of promising initiatives in the region.

## 2. BACKGROUND

**About the international campaign '*Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work*'**



The '*Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work*' campaign was launched in 2003 and took as its starting point the successful work undertaken by MVF in India. The campaign is working in close cooperation with partner organizations across the world that are implementing concrete strategies for getting children out of work and into school. First hand experience and success stories from the field are the main source of inspiration for the campaign and serve as important input to strengthen the lobby and awareness raising activities in Europe.

The campaign is based on some **guiding principles** (appendix 1) with a focus on *all* forms of child labour. The campaign argues that the abolition of child labour is inextricably linked with the provision of education for all. The campaign also believes that child labour is a cause rather than an effect of poverty. In other words: it is not necessary to make an end to poverty first in order to be able to end child labour. In fact, the opposite is true: in order to tackle poverty the problem of child labour must be dealt with.

The rationale behind the campaign is that the Millennium Development Goals 2 and 3 on education for all with equal access for boys and girls can only be reached if all forms of child labour are eradicated and if all children up to the age of 15 are given the opportunity of full-time education. The aim of the campaign is that by 2015 all children should be receiving formal, regular and uninterrupted education for at least 8 or 9 years.

The campaign is being carried out by the Alliance2015 Network, in which the following

European development organizations participate: Cesvi (Italy), Concern (Ireland), Deutsche Welthunger Hilfe (Germany), IBIS (Denmark), Hivos (Netherlands) and People in Need (Czech Republic), in cooperation with three other Dutch organizations: the Dutch Teachers Union (AOB), the Dutch Federation of Trade Unions (FNV) and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN).

### About the Stop Child Labour movement in Central America



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In 2004, MVF and the 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' campaign organized an international conference on child labour and education in Hyderabad, India.

Several NGOs from Central America – mainly from Guatemala and Honduras – attended the conference. Besides, there were participants from many other countries in Africa, Asia and Europe.

At this conference it was decided by the Central American delegation, to organize a regional consultation on the matter in order to explore the possibility of extending the campaign to the region and involve more Central American organizations in the world-wide movement against child labour.

In June 2006, the Honduran Asociación Compartir – together with Hivos as lead of the 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' campaign – organized a regional conference: 'Alto al trabajo infantil; Sí a la educación' (Stop Child Labour: Yes to Education) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The regional conference was attended by 50 organizations from the whole region plus European, Indian, African and South American guests.

One of the most important results of this event was the **Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour** (appendix 2), which established an important precedent and formed the basis for a regional action plan to stop child labour.



Awareness-raising campaign against child labour, carried out by children putting stickers on vehicles in the city of Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

## 3. STOP CHILD LABOUR TOUR IN CENTRAL AMERICA

Due to the complexity of the various agendas and the problems of distance, it was not possible to agree on a common course of action to be pursued over the first year. Therefore, the Dutch members of the 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' campaign Hivos and FNV as well as the fellow agencies Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland and Save the Children Netherlands agreed to support the organization of a special tour with two representatives from MVF, India and one representative from the Albanian Teachers' Union in order to give fresh impetus to the contacts and stimulate joint action.

The tour took place between 2<sup>nd</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2007. In each of the participating countries a one-week programme was organized for the visiting delegation to meet with local organizations, international agencies and government bodies.

In each country the programme was prepared and organized by a local organization. The tour started in Guatemala with the support of **PRONICE**. In Honduras the tour was supported by **Asociación Compartir**, in Nicaragua by **CIDENIC** and in Costa Rica by **DNI**. Without the enthusiasm and commitment of these local organizations, the tour would not have been successful.

The Stop Child Labour tour in Central America is the culmination of a great deal of effort made by all parties involved. It goes without saying that this effort is of tremendous importance and value in strengthening the stop child labour movement in Central America and building coalitions for effective action to eliminate child labour and provide education to all.

We expect that this effort will encourage all parties involved to put the issue higher on the agenda and strive for coherent policies and practices to realize children's rights to protection from work and provision of formal, full-time and quality education.

### **Overall objective**

The overall objective of the Stop Child Labour tour in Central America was to exchange information between MVF, the Albanian Teachers' Union, and the organisations that will be visited about their respective working methods around the issue of child labour, in order to inspire and motivate one another to develop coherent and effective actions to eradicate all forms of child labour and the provision of education for all. In addition, the tour aimed at identifying success factors and good practices concerning the elimination of child labour in the respective countries that can be used as input for the lobby and advocacy work of the '*Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work*' campaign.

### **Specific objectives**

More specifically, the objectives of the Stop Child Labour tour in Central America have been defined as follows:

#### **For the field visits and exchange meetings:**

- Exchange information and engage in dialogue about the context-specific aspects regarding child labour and school enrolment in the respective countries.
- Exchange information and engage in dialogue about (potential) successful approaches and strategies that are in line with the Honduras Declaration, to enrol and retain working children in formal, full-time education.
- Provide concrete input for the lobby and advocacy activities in Europe, for example, in terms of successful examples or initiatives towards eliminating child labour and provision of education.

#### **For the workshop sessions in each country:**

- Reflect on and consolidate the experiences and key insights that have been gained during the field visits and exchange meetings.
- Define and discuss good practices and (potential) successful strategies concerning the elimination of child labour.
- Propose feasible and concrete follow-up initiatives towards the elimination of child labour and the enrolment and retention of children in education.
- Develop feasible and concrete plans to mobilise a broader range of stakeholders around the issues of child labour in order to move others - including companies and governments – to concerted action towards the elimination of child labour and provision of education for all.

## 4. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Below, you will find a description of the main outcomes of the event. First there is a short description of the participating organizations. Then there is a summary of the experiences of organizations working against child labour in each country. Finally, you will find a summary of successful strategies, lessons learned, and points of similarity and difference in approaches to child labour.



Meeting with the Minister of Employment and Social Affairs of the Republic of Honduras.

## PRONICE - Guatemala



PRONICE is a social-educational association that aims to impact public opinion and exert political influence, in order to promote coherent policies and practices in favour of compliance with the rights of children and adolescents.

Its rationale lies within the Convention of the Rights of the Child; the conviction that children and adolescents deserve high quality attention in order to achieve their full potential within the framework of their human rights.

PRONICE implements and advises on:

- Formation and training of social educators and personnel of public and private institutions.
- Social science investigation into the situations, problems and expectations of children and adolescence.
- Production of educational, informative and advertising materials and guides.
- Program design in investigation, education and communication.

## COMPARTIR- Honduras



This organization works in urban, marginal communities, seeking civil participation for development. It operates on the basis of an intervention methodology based on integral attention in the context of extreme poverty. The organization develops programmes in the fields of education, health, social and community integration in order to identify and support children at social risk and to reduce drop-out rates, bearing in mind the motto that *“the child that cannot be found in school, will be found on the streets”*.

## CIDENIC – Nicaragua



CIDENIC is a consultancy agency dedicated to investigation and development in Nicaragua. CIDENIC provides services to public institutions, NGOs and international co-operations. The agency works, amongst others, in the fields of gender, children and youngsters and civil participation.

CIDENIC cooperates with organizations working in the field of child labour in Nicaragua, such as Fundación del Río, NITCA and INHPRU, which develop intervention models and strategies in communities where the problem of child labour still exists.

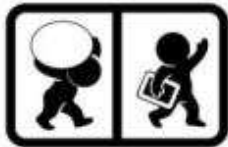
## DNI – Costa Rica



DNI is an internationally renowned organization in the field of children and young people. It has developed a Programme for Child and Adolescent Labour. DNI is engaged in social mobilisation programmes and political lobby to improve policies and practices for realizing children's rights.

DNI has been working in this area since 1994 and has developed projects on urban, rural and domestic child labour together with ILO-IPEC, the Ministry of Employment, local governments, NGOs and has even succeeded in gaining the support of private companies.

## MV Foundation – India



MVF works on the eradication of child labour in Andhra Pradesh, in the south of India. It has developed an integral approach that involves community groups, volunteers, schools, teachers, heads of families, local authorities and the government, making an effort to remove children from work and (re)integrate them into school.

MVF's approach is based on a firm conviction that no child works and that all children in the 5-14 years age group must be in school. In other words it recognizes the inextricable link between the program for universalisation of education and abolition of all forms of child labour. It follows an 'area-based approach' as against a target based approach. It seeks to address the rights of the entire universe of children- both in school and out of school- in the 5-14 years age group in its area of operation.

MVF's approach deems all children out of school as child labour and understands that being out of school is intrinsically hazardous to their growth and well-being. It does not discriminate children on the basis of the work situation they are in. It recognizes that being out of school and deprived of their right to education, children are subject to enormous difficulties. Therefore it is essential that the child returns to school and is supported by its family and its community to complete his/her education. This is considered the key strategy for climbing the social ladder and overcoming poverty.

## Albanian Teachers' Union



The education sector in Albania expressed its intention to contribute to the eradication of child labour in the country through two of its teachers' unions which up to that point had only represented the interests of the teachers.

Since 2000 they have been investigating the economic, family and environmental conditions that force children into work. They also analyzed whether it was possible to remove children from work and (re)integrate them into the education system.

At present, they are trying to make school an attractive proposition and are working on awareness-raising within communities and families so that they themselves will want to stand up against child labour.

The Albanian Teachers Union is convinced that *"the unions should protect the rights of the teachers and the teachers should assert the rights of boys and girls"*.



Employees of MVF visiting communities and families in Nicaragua.



### Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop – Guatemala

<b>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP</b>
CEIPA Quetzaltenango. CEIPA Retalhuleu. EDECRI. FUNDAL. Social Movement for Children's Rights. CONACMI. CHILDHOPE. PAMI. EPRODEP. Caja Lúdica. ASCATED. AMIGUITOS. Save the Children Guatemala. HIVOS. CEADEL. EMECE. ACI. PRONICE. MV Foundation. PRODESSA. PENNAT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involving fathers and mothers of the families in giving attention to boys and girls that are working.</li> <li>- Involving the Councils of Community Development.</li> <li>- Capacity building for mothers so that their income improves and that they will not allow their children to work.</li> <li>- Going into places where children work, in order to develop projects there.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The efforts of the projects have positive results and are of great significance to minors and families involved.</li> <li>- There is no single vision about child labour that would allow the establishment of one single strategy. The different views do not allow decisive alliances.</li> <li>- The projects have few resources for taking on the immense task of eradication of child labour in their respective districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Critical reflections were made on the subject and the problems related to child labour.</li> <li>- Careful study and discussion about the Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour .</li> <li>- Gathering of knowledge about the experience of MVF. Learning about their successful experiences.</li> <li>- Participation by representatives of all invited institutions. Only the government representatives did not participate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initiate more activities for the elimination of child labour.</li> <li>- Increase number of enrolments and keep children at school.</li> <li>- The State should comply with the Rights of Children.</li> <li>- Agree on plans and public policies, jointly between the governmental and non-governmental sector, in order to eradicate child labour.</li> </ul>

### Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop – Nicaragua

<b>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CIDENIC</li> <li>- INHPRU Somoto</li> <li>- Comisaría de la Mujer y la Niñez -Comisaría de la Mujer y la Niñez de la Policía Nacional</li> <li>- Fundación del Río</li> <li>- Fundación Niños Trabajadores de la Calle (NITCA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Structured, interconnected activities.</li> <li>- Take children's proposals and needs and their communities as a starting point.</li> <li>- Encourage compliance with the law, persuade private companies about legal actions.</li> <li>- Work with an approach based on the change of attitude and persuasion (fathers and mothers, teachers, public servants, community).</li> <li>- Guidance for children into adolescence, empower them to be youth leaders.</li> <li>- Work on educational strengthening linked to recreation and socialization among peers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizations have to work together, but at the same time play their individual part. None of the organizations should be more important than the interests of the children.</li> <li>- Gender aspects are essential in order to understand the problem (women who are heads of the family encounter different challenges for getting their children out of child labour).</li> <li>- Alliances between sectors are essential for the exchange of knowledge and for growth, both in power and political influence.</li> <li>- Capacity building programmes for public servants, parents, teachers and children, in order to increase organized capacities and responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persuasion and availability of local agents to work in this area.</li> <li>- Follow-up and promotion of the Convention of Honduras against Child Labour is considered to have priority.</li> <li>- Organize a workshop in January 2008 in order to initiate a National Network for the Fight against Child Labour.</li> <li>- Produce an integral Action Plan with the National Network that includes: development of productive projects, capacity building programmes, regional exchanges and development of national awareness-raising campaigns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting up a National "Stop Child Labour Network".</li> <li>- Develop a project of national impact in this area, that includes an ethical code for corporate social responsibility, moral incentives so that companies do not contract minors and legal sanctions for employers who do not observe the rules.</li> <li>- Development and execution of a pilot project of integral intervention that combines all successful strategies that have been put into practice in the country.</li> <li>- Panel-discussions for analysis of the national child labour situation and regional and international linkages.</li> </ul>

### Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop – Honduras

<b>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Asociación Compartir</li> <li>- CARE/CRS</li> <li>- FOPRIDEH</li> <li>- Casa Alianza</li> <li>- COLPROSUMAH</li> <li>- College of Educators</li> <li>- Ministry of Employment</li> <li>- Ministry of Education</li> <li>- Direction of Education</li> <li>- District Direction of Education</li> <li>- College of Educators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination of the work with all sectors (public institutions, local organizations, organized civil society) contributes to awareness-raising and facilitates the intervention of the community.</li> <li>- Parents and teachers should work together. Capacity building and awareness-raising in both sectors.</li> <li>- Capacity building and strengthening of children so that they contribute with ideas and local solutions.</li> <li>- Create local and national networks that protect children's rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As far as child labour is concerned, negotiation is better than confrontation. Radical principles are coercive. Suggestions should be made avoiding any arrogance.</li> <li>- A change is needed in the cultural patterns that assume that working is good for children.</li> <li>- Families have to be convinced that sending their children to work will not lift them out of poverty: the work of the children does not help to get out of poverty.</li> <li>- The local government facilitates that local companies do not employ children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consensus and availability in order to organize a pilot project for the eradication of child labour in Honduras.</li> <li>- FOPRIDEH joins 74 teachers' organizations and the Ministry of Education with all its sections in order to support the project.</li> <li>- Five teachers' unions include the subject of child labour in their political and operational agendas</li> <li>- Identify areas and teachers that are interested in participating in the pilot project, as well as tracing children that are in working situations.</li> <li>- Organize workshops to involve teachers in the eradication of child labour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize a National Committee for the Pilot Project that elaborates a National Plan for the Eradication of Child Labour.</li> <li>- Aim to influence education policies and laws concerning child labour through the Committee.</li> <li>- Organize local campaigns for awareness-raising of the general public.</li> <li>- Win the approval of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment for the Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour.</li> </ul>

## Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop - Costa Rica

<b>PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS</b>	<b>SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- DNI</li> <li>- CEFEMINA</li> <li>- CMTC Union</li> <li>- OATIA</li> <li>- Ministry of Employment</li> <li>- Teachers' Union</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening local and national institutional resources.</li> <li>- Support projects through institutional platforms, at both national and local government levels that bring in resources to the project, mainly in the areas of reintegration, professional and technical training that generates productive alternatives.</li> <li>- Conditional subsidies for families that keep their children at school.</li> <li>- Creation of child care facilities especially for mothers who are heads of the family.</li> <li>- Development of housing projects and programmes of micro-business with technical help and capacity building by State institutions (INA - ITCR).</li> <li>- Capacity building and awareness-raising among inspection employees of the Ministry of Employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The eradication of child labour demands an integral approach and a united front between State, NGOs and civil society.</li> <li>- Pressure on the State and its institutions is a priority in order to have public resources work in favour of minors.</li> <li>- It is not sufficient to demand for the State to comply. Civil society has to be empowered, especially the minors themselves.</li> <li>- It is necessary to create alliances with other sectors (private companies, co-operations, churches, NGOs, etc.) in order to mobilize resources, and share information and learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability and commitment of the invited institutions to follow up on the actions.</li> <li>- DNI will call a further meeting in order to broaden the support for the campaign.</li> <li>- Development of a Central American Platform involving the institutions who took part in the tour and other allies is a priority, in order to coordinate activities in the region, operate as an interconnected movement in the creation of public policies, and promoting the campaign in the countries and the region.</li> <li>- Regain local, regional and global approaches, combining all levels.</li> <li>- Reflect on the part of trans-national companies to be played in the solution of the problem, and their contributions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a regional action plan in order to unify actions.</li> <li>- Establish a regional alliance via the 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' campaign, benefiting from its experience in connecting and coordination.</li> <li>- Develop a strategy of regional awareness-raising linked to the global campaign.</li> </ul>

### Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop – impressions by MVF

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACES VISITED</b>	<b>REMARKS (Venkat Reddy)</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
Guatemala	Municipality of San Felipe, youth, women and families' groups, CEIPA, CEADEL, Legumix company, PENNAT, Caja Lúdica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a gap between schools and communities, school policies push children out of school and into work.</li> <li>- People of the poorest communities identify education as the way to stop children from having to work. An organization is needed to put a great deal of effort into presenting its demands to the State.</li> <li>- CEIPA does not believe in the complete abolition of child labour. It believes that this is a western concept that does not apply to the Central American reality. This vision has to change in organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthen the relationship between communities and NGOs: the organizations have good relationships that facilitate cooperation in a specific intervention area to create child labour free zones, but communities and organizations have to be made aware of the need to do this.</li> <li>- Lobbying the government should concentrate on policies that reduce child labour, and should focus on integral strategies that consider the needs of the children first (at schools, in communities and organizations).</li> <li>- There needs to be increased commitment on the part of the schools and a follow-up on their activities needs to be provided, defining specific intervention areas so that they can unite against child labour and do not contribute to keeping children away from school.</li> </ul>
Honduras	Asociación Compartir, Casa Alianza, Municipality of Yamaranguila, Barrios de Tegucigalpa, FOPRIDEH, Teachers' Unions, Ministry of Education, Stickers Campaign, Ministry of Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Because of its experience and characteristics, Asociación Compartir is an organization that is able to replicate MVF's area based approach. Asociación Compartir has the support of important sectors (Ministry of Employment and civil society organizations) to initiate activities toward realising child labour free zones. The Ministry of Employment is open to the challenge of applying the MVF approach and exploring the possibility of creating child labour free zones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Train the staff of Compartir in the strategies and methodologies founded on the area based approach.</li> <li>- Monitor the development of the committee that was established during the exchange workshop and monitor the promise by the Ministry of Employment to write a letter to the Minister of Education and to call on local governments to work in this area.</li> </ul>
Nicaragua	CENIDH, ANDEN, CODENI, OIT/IPEC, INPRHU, Fundación del	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Teachers' Union ANDEN, is clearly a possible partner to learn about accelerated learning programmes for older children that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the possibility of a pilot project with Fundación del Río and INPRHU in order to work with the MVF methodology.</li> </ul>

	Río, NITCA, CEPREV	<p>enter school and leave child labour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- INPRHU is a well-known organization in this field, but it needs to further consolidate its strategies to a more robust policy towards any type of child labour, not only dangerous or domestic labour. Fundación del Río and its activities are much closer to the methodology employed by MVF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An organisation is needed to work intensively on the concept of eradicating child labour in all its forms and on promoting school as the best place for all children.</li> </ul>
Costa Rica	DNI, CEFEMINA, OIT/IPEC, Proyecto entre Compas in Alajuelita	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The organizations that participated in the workshop showed their interest in the MVF methodology.</li> <li>- It is important to explore the possibility of child labour free zones in Costa Rica with support of NGOs and trade unions and teachers' unions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping in contact with unions and organizations to train them in the MVF methodology.</li> </ul>

<b>SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES OF THE PROJECTS IN INDIA</b>	<b>LESSONS LEARNED IN THE PROJECTS</b>	<b>RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establishment of Child Labour Free Zones. Start operating in one specific area, later extending to the whole zone.</li> <li>- Support the work among community volunteers' teams for identification, persuasion and follow-up of the different cases.</li> <li>- Organize bridge camps in order to promote reintegration of minors into school.</li> <li>- Empowering civil society to stand up for the rights of minors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is necessary to involve the whole community in the work: teachers, unions, colleges, NGOs, governments, private companies.</li> <li>- Establishment of a set of non-negotiable principles is essential to convince community and State.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The regions share the problems of child labour, therefore the exchange of experiences increases learning.</li> <li>- The Declaration of Honduras is a valuable instrument, but the problem is that organizations are not actually using this instrument and are not organizing their activities around the declaration.</li> <li>- The experience in India and Central America shows that NGOs require improved relationships with schools.</li> <li>- MVF and Albania can contribute to the process in Central America at the global level of the campaign.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of the MVF for follow-up of the actions in the campaign in Central America.</li> <li>- Share technical information with the organizations in Central America, using what the MVF has learned over time.</li> <li>- Support NGOs that participated in the tour in order to draw up and promote the Declaration of Honduras by way of operating in a network.</li> </ul>

### Exchange meetings, field visits and workshop – impressions by Albanian Teachers' Union

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>PLACES VISITED</b>	<b>REMARKS (Stravi Liko)</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
Honduras	FOPRIDEH, 5 Teachers' Unions: COLPROSUMAH, PRICPMAH, COPRUMH, COPEMH, COLPEDAGOGOS, Ministry of Employment, Secretary of State for Education.	- The unions in Honduras are not yet involved in the area of child labour, but have shown an interest.	- A meeting of the union sector with its leaders in order to discuss the matter and to insert it on the political and operational agenda of the unions.
Nicaragua	CENIDH, ANDEN, CODENI, OIT/IPEC, INPRHU, Fundación del Río, NITCA, CEPREV	- The unions are aware of the situation and are concerned about the problem, but do not have a specific project dealing with the matter.	- Discuss the matter together with the sector leaders and get it onto the unions' agenda. - Organize a workshop with support of the NGOs to raise awareness and involve 25-30 union leaders of both countries (Honduras and Nicaragua).
Costa Rica	CMTC Union	- They have developed two concrete projects against child labour in communities, working with the State, schools and communities. - They have succeeded in generating useful alternatives so that families can increase their incomes and ensure that children are at school.	- Set up a contact between the unions of Albania and the CMTC Union in order to include them in the exchange of experiences.

NB: Stravi Liko did not visit Guatemala and Costa Rica. Nevertheless, the union that participated in the workshop in Costa Rica has interesting experience and has developed specific projects against child labour. Therefore it is important to include it in the follow-up.

## 5. REFLECTION

A general reflection on the tour shows that the intended objectives were achieved. In a special way, this tour has contributed to reactivating the contact between local organizations in the region. It has been an unique opportunity to share information about experiences, to identify good practices and discuss possible coalitions for joint action. The first hand experience from India and Albania brought in important lessons at a technical and human level. It allowed local organizations to see both differences and similarities in their methodology, strategies, and thematic and ideological approaches with respect to child labour.

An important conclusion generated by the event shows that the regions can maintain differences in their contexts but they are like-minded in wanting to tackle the problem of child labour.

Two clear tendencies can be observed with regard to the vision on child labour. MVF believes that child labour produces and increases poverty and maintains a series of very strong principles for its eradication. However, in Central America, most of the organizations are of the opinion that child labour is a direct consequence of poverty and generates social inequality. Nevertheless, all countries and regions are convinced that child labour should be eradicated, because it prevents the integral development of minors and full compliance with granting them their human rights.

Overall it was agreed that the eradication of child labour does not need to wait for poverty alleviation. Indeed, the success of the program for eradication of child labour lays in resonating with the demand of the poor for educating their children as a non-negotiable principle. In order to realize structural change it remains important to work through existing institutions and build community pressure/support to strengthen these institutions and their capacities to ensure that they commit themselves to protection of child rights and education.



Exchange between MVF and the Teachers Union of Albania with beneficiaries of INPRHU-Somoto, Nicaragua

## 6. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Central America is a region with important social-economic differences in each country. There are also considerable differences with respect to the presence and capacity of the State to support and mobilize the eradication of child labour. These aspects make it difficult for NGOs and civil society to fight against all forms of child labour.
2. It is clear that the work undertaken by the NGOs is powerful and is appreciated in the region, which is positive. However, the fact remains that the Central American organizations still have different visions and positions with regard to child labour. Some strive for eradication of all forms of child labour, while others aim their efforts only at elimination of some forms of dangerous child labour.
3. It is still necessary to work on these differences with a view to strengthening the Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour and getting it onto the agenda. It is necessary for the whole sector of organizations involved to recognize the same principles and intentions so that the Declaration of Honduras is able to gain power in the region and at an international level.



4. In terms of South-South exchange, the experiences of India and Albania are extremely important, especially because they have already produced tried and tested tools, methodologies and strategies that have been successful in their local context.
5. It remains important to encourage the implementation of successful strategies in the region, taking into account the specific challenges in each context and using those strategies most appropriate to the specific situation.



Work meeting of MVF with Gonzalo Carrión of CENIDH - Nicaragua

### Lessons learned by the visiting delegation

The participation in several meetings and other activities, the exchange of experiences with colleagues from Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Costa Rica, was a very valuable experience for the visiting organizations, for which all these matters will of course have a direct impact on their work when they return home to their countries

### Lessons learned by MVF:

1. We were exposed to a completely different political and social environment. In some areas there is no democratic freedom, a lack of public involvement in government institutions and no opportunities for negotiation within the system. We were surprised by the worsening of structures for social support, by the difficulties faced by one-parent-families, especially those with

mothers as heads of the family, child abandonment and the violence in society. In spite of all these problems we continued our interactions with hope and care for the poor. It was useful to observe how NGOs can still create community participation in such a difficult context. The work undertaken by NGOs has been very relevant.

2. We were also impressed by the innovations carried out by NGOs in support of children who often go to school in remote villages and areas. We are aware of the significance of such initiatives for keeping the children at school.
3. Working together with NGOs from so far away and passing universal principles on to them, has given MVF enormous confidence. We think that MVF should emphasize its own capacities and so assume new responsibilities as a facilitator and create a vision for its new obligations. To this end, we would require regular interaction with the 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' campaign
4. It was useful to have a representative from the Albanian Teachers' Union with us. It generated a sense of urgency to take the subject to a global level and to constantly strengthen our support. Due to his presence in Honduras and Nicaragua we succeeded in winning over teachers at schools and their unions.



Children from the Reading Club of the Compartir Association-Honduras

### **Lessons learned by the Albanian Teachers' Union:**

1. The first impression after our work in Honduras and Nicaragua was that in both countries child labour is an emotive subject for everyone. We visited associations such as: COMPARTIR and FOPRIDEH, CIDENIC and CENIDH, business associations such as: ANDEN, COLPROSUMAH, COPEMH, COPRUMH and almost all the others, the Minister of Employment, the Minister of Education and other educational institutions, ILO-IPEC and INPRHU PANT, where parents and pupils saw themselves involved in various activities to protect children and eliminate child labour. This does not only mean that child labour is a problem in both countries, but also gives hope that improvements are expected and that child labour will be reduced.
2. The example of INPRHU PANT in Madriz (Somoto), was really impressive. There were two main lessons learned during the visit. The first one was the confirmation that poverty is not the main cause of child labour, (the case of a family with 4 children going to school regularly, although this family was living on the bread line). The second one was that this case actually shows the importance and effectiveness of the work of activists with individual pupils and their parents in order to create some base-line conditions and convince them to keep their children at school.



Readers' Club from the Compartir Association, Honduras

3. From having spent time with indigenous colleagues, learning about their experiences first-hand by means of their clear and simple explanations, we learnt at least three things: First, the importance of the real and effective collaboration of associations and other NGOs with teachers, who are the main agents in schools; Secondly, the importance of using effective methods such as bridge schools and other forms of non formal education; Thirdly, that the next step should be especially the creation of child labour free zones, first as an example, and subsequently establishing them in all areas.

## **7. FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

Though on balance the tour was a positive experience, it is clear that there is still a lot to be done and that the agreements made in each country need to be made concrete. There is a regional consensus between organizations with respect to their commitment to continue the support of initiatives that aim at cooperation in order to eradicate child labour. Various concrete actions have been identified that can be used in terms of an agenda:

### **At a regional level:**

1. Elaborate a regional action plan in order to unite efforts.
2. Establish a regional alliance through a campaign in order to make use of the experience in connecting and coordination.
3. Develop a strategy of regional awareness-raising that is linked to the '*Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work*' campaign.

## At a national level:

### Guatemala:

1. Collectively agree on plans and public policies by the governmental and non governmental sector in order to eradicate child labour.
2. Increase enrolment and keeping children at school.

### Nicaragua:

1. Development of a "Stop Child Labour" National Network. In order to start setting this up, a workshop will be held in January 2008.
2. Create a project of national impact on this theme that includes an ethical code for corporate social responsibility, moral incentives so that companies do not contract minors and legal sanctions for employers who do not comply with the rules.
3. Draw up and execute a pilot project of integral intervention that combines all successful tools that have been put into practice in the country.

### Honduras:

1. Organize a National Committee for the Pilot Project that is to elaborate a National Plan for the Eradication of Child Labour.
2. Succeed in influencing educational policies and laws concerning child labour, through the Committee.
3. Organize local campaigns for awareness-raising amongst the population.
4. Achieve approval by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment for the Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour .



Painting workshop for children –  
Compartir association - Honduras

### Costa Rica:

1. Eradication of child labour requires integral activity and a united front between State, NGOs and civil society.
2. Pressure on the State and its institutions is a priority in order to have public resources work in favour of minors.
3. Demanding compliance by the State is not sufficient, empowerment of civil society is necessary, especially of young people.
4. It is necessary to create alliances with other sectors (private companies, co-operations, churches, NGOs, etc.) in order to mobilize resources, share information and learning.
5. DNI will call its next meeting to broaden support for the campaign.



Personnel of the Union of Albania and MVF, in a meeting  
with the Teachers' Union ANDEN-Nicaragua

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that resulted from the event are the following:

### **MVF's recommendations for the Central American Region:**

From the report by Mr. Venkat Reddy, from MVF, important recommendations for the region can be taken to support follow-up:

1. It is necessary to mobilize the community through the NGOs, because they have a strong position and credibility within communities; therefore, they are ideal for promoting the ideas and principles of education as a non-negotiable right for children. This message may have a major impact on the community if it comes from organizations that have a reputation and are standing within the community because of the work they have done for it.
2. The organizations in Central America should focus their attention on eradicating child labour and strengthening the school system, since some organizations only work on some forms of child labour, and not on total eradication of all forms.
3. A way of making progress in the region is to start the training of key organizations that can follow the methodology of the Area Based Approach as developed by MVF.
4. Training in this methodology and work strategies will facilitate the development of concrete projects to realize child labour free zones.

### **The Albanian Union's Recommendations for the Central American Region:**

The recommendations by Mr. Stravi Liko, from the Albanian Teachers' Union address the activities and the participation of unions in Central America.

1. The teachers unions in Honduras and Nicaragua are receptive to this matter and are committed to working on the eradication of child labour. An initial workshop is necessary to raise awareness with the leaders so that they can place the matter on the unions' political agenda.
2. Therefore it is recommended to coordinate the workshop with the support of local organizations (ILO, Compartir, CIDENIC) that already have experience in this area and can transfer this to the unions, and also help in drawing up a common agenda.
3. A concrete proposal is: to start the support of teachers' unions in Honduras and Nicaragua, to realize a pilot project in 2 or 3 schools, that can mobilize some 25-30 teachers and 130-150 children at risk, or children who do not attend school because of child labour.
4. The development of this pilot project may help NGOs and unions to form closer ties so that they can work together and succeed in establishing a child labour free zone.
5. In Honduras, it is necessary for the teachers' unions to start the formalities at the Ministry of Employment, so that they can be included in the National Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour.

**Recommendations for the ‘Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work’ campaign and the consortium of European agencies:**

1. The exchange of experiences has proved to be successful in giving a fresh impetus to the activities and in stimulating the creation of proposals. Therefore it is recommended that technical and financial support in the region is maintained, in order to be able to advance and consolidate the initiatives in Central America.
2. In the same way, exchange of technical information with other organizations that work in this area, will facilitate and motivate the work in the Central American region.

**Recommendations for follow-up in the region:**

1. One of the vital recommendations for the follow-up is directly related to the challenges met by the tour. There is no doubt that it is relevant that organizations should be able to set up an Action Plan that organizes and prioritizes actions in Central America.
2. On the other hand, given that the organizations have a weighty agenda and do not work exclusively in the area of child labour, it is desirable to set up a coordinating group in the region that follows up on actions and commitments made.
3. It is also desirable that this coordinating group can delegate and coordinate tasks and functions in each country so that real progress can be made.

4. It is important that the ‘Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work’ campaign, considers the possibility of supporting another meeting in the region to set up the action plan for the region. It is therefore desirable that first the capacities and performance of the organizations that participated in the event are assessed, in order to appoint a leading organization that can move the process forward.
5. In this respect, MVF makes an important observation in its report, when it mentions that the visit to the region allowed them to identify that there are very capable organizations and leaders to boost the challenge of regional activity. This is the case with DNI in Costa Rica, Asociación Compartir in Honduras and Fundación del Río in Nicaragua.

**Recommendations for strengthening the Declaration of Honduras for the Eradication of Child Labour:**

1. This declaration is a fundamental paper, because it prescribes a position in the Central American region. This Declaration should shed light on the actions that are aimed at working regionally.
2. In the same way, it is recommended that this paper is shared with other strategic agents in the region that can give their approval to make alliances grow and set the work of political influence on its way.

# APPENDIX 1.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 'Stop Child Labour, School is the best place to work' Campaign



#### Guiding principles

SCL has defined a set of principles that guide the campaign's work and support in the South:

**Definition of Child Labour:** Child Labour is work performed by a child that is likely to interfere with his or her education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. (*Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32.1*)

#### **Principle 1: Child labour is the denial of a child's right to education**

The elimination of child labour and the provision of full-time formal education are inextricably linked. The focus of attention must be to actively integrate and retain all 'out of school' children into formal education systems. Children have the right to education at least until the age they are allowed to work which is 15 (while developing countries can choose 14). In addition efforts must be made to remove all barriers to local schools as well as ensuring the necessary financial and infrastructural support for the provision of quality education.

#### **Principle 2: All child labour is unacceptable**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (quoted above) along with a host of other international agreements unequivocally affirm the right of all children to live in freedom from exploitation. Approaches to the issue have tended to prioritize and segregate solutions to different types of child labour depending on certain categories. These range from children working in hazardous industries, children doing so-called non-hazardous work - including domestic work - but missing out on school. The SCL campaign believes that such distinctions, while helping to cast a spotlight on the worst abuses, tend to be too narrow in their focus and offer only partial solutions. Efforts to eliminate child labour should focus on all its forms, preferably aiming at all children in a certain community.

#### **Principle 3: It is the duty of all Governments, International Organisations and Corporate Bodies to ensure that they do not perpetuate child labour**

All governments have a duty to ensure that they do not permit, or allow child labour to exist within their State. Furthermore they have a duty to ensure that State agencies, corporate bodies as well as their suppliers and trading partners worldwide, are fully compliant with the CRC and other international agreements protecting the rights of the child.

As part of their corporate social responsibility, all transnational and other business enterprises using child labour should create and implement a plan to remove children from their workforce, including their supply chain, and enrol them in full-time education.

#### **Principle 4: Core Labour standards must be respected and enforced to effectively eliminate child labour**

The eradication of child labour is closely linked to the promotion of other labour standards in the workplace: the right to organise and collective bargaining, freedom from forced labour, child labour and discrimination. A living wage, health and safety at work, the absence of forced excessive overtime are also crucial. Child labour undermines the opportunities for adult employment and decent wages. Experience has shown that child labour is highly unlikely to exist when a free trade union is present and where core labour standards are respected.

## APPENDIX 2.

### DECLARATION OF HONDURAS FOR THE ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR

#### DERIVED FROM THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION “Stop Child Labour, Yes to Education”

21, 22 and 23 of June, 2006.  
Tegucigalpa, M.D.C. Honduras, C.A.



The undersigned organizations and unions, having met in Tegucigalpa from 21-23 June 2006 within the framework of the **Regional Consultation *Stop Child Labour, Yes to Education***.

#### Considering that:

- a. The State is the main responsible body for the eradication of child labour and of guaranteeing the right to education.
- b. There is an interrelationship between child labour and education.
- c. Each child has a right to high-quality education.
- d. Informal education should tend to integrate boys and girls into formal education.
- e. No form of child labour should be accepted, not for any boy or girl.
- f. There is a close interrelationship between child labour and the implementation of working conditions/rules.
- g. Eradication of child labour also implies working together with the families on the transformation of family strategies aimed at this matter, from an approach of rights.
- h. Child labour causes and consolidates poverty.
- i. The business sector has the responsibility to eradicate child labour in its operations.

#### And taking into account that:

- All boys and girls who do not attend school, can be considered as working children or as children running a high risk of becoming working children.
- Almost two million working boys and girls are recognized as such in the Central American region at this time.
- In current statistics, work done by boys and girls at their homes is still not documented.
- Even though all the countries in the region have national action plans, none of them has been adequately complied

**In view of the fact** that all countries in the region have subscribed to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, Conventions 138 and 182 of the ILO, the Dakar Framework for Action on the Education for All Agreements and the Millennium Goals, they have the responsibility to continue the policies to comply with them.

The necessity **came up** to realize a regional consultation in which the following participated: El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, plus the special guests: India, Zimbabwe, Argentina and the Netherlands.

**We agreed:** on the necessity to form a regional structure made up by NGOs and unions in order to follow up on the courses of action in favour of eradication of child labour and to prioritize access and maintenance of boys and girls in formal education.

**We suggest:**

The following courses of action:

1. Create a regional platform that succeeds in strengthening the national and local networks, in organizing collective, effective actions in the demand for compliance with the legal framework for the rights of boys, girls and adolescents.
2. Organize actions of awareness-raising, making manifest and promote the considerations as described in this document, at regional and national levels, in which all entities see themselves being involved.
3. Mobilize all social agents and sectors such as governments, private companies, communities, leaders, families, boys and girls, in the efforts to eradicate child labour and comply with the right to education.
4. Carry out an audit and social control by civil society to demand compliance and effective budget allocation for the national action plans to eradicate child labour.
5. Manage resources to guarantee the execution of the defined strategies.