

THINK LOCALLY, ACT GLOBALLY?

An actor-oriented case study on the transnational cooperation of NGOs on BAYER and child labour in Andhra Pradesh, India

- Master Thesis -



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Abstract

The master thesis analyses a transnational campaign on a particular case of child labour – namely in the cottonseed production of the multinational company Bayer CropScience in Andhra Pradesh, India. Adopting an actor-oriented approach, it looks at the way in which various non-governmental actors from Europe and India have created a transnational network on the case, thus re-embedding the local problem into a global context. Based on a study of written publications and on interviews with all organisations participating in the campaign as well as with ‘external’ actors, it is established how the local problem is (re-) defined through the interaction of various actors with different approaches and interests. The findings suggest that an actor-oriented approach may help understand how the internal dynamics of a (transnational NGO) network influence its orientation and effectiveness.

Abbreviations

CBG	-	Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren (Coalition against Bayer-Dangers)
CLEG	-	Child Labour Elimination Group
CRC	-	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPF	-	Child Rights Protection Forum
CSR	-	Corporate social responsibility
DWHH	-	Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (German Agro Watch)
EWN	-	Eine Welt Netz NRW (One World Net North-Rhine Westphalia)
GMCL	-	Global March against Child Labour
ICN	-	India Committee of the Netherlands (Landelijke India Werkgroep)
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
ILO-IPEC	-	International Labour Organization – International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour
MNC	-	Multinational company
MVF	-	MV Foundation (Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya Foundation)
NCLP	-	National Child Labour Project
NGO	-	Nongovernmental organisation
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children’s Fund

1. Introduction

The slogan ‘think globally, act locally’ was coined in the 1970s by the environmentalist movement. The tackling of global environmental challenges, so the argument, should start at a small scale, at home. Many campaigns on development issues today appear to follow the reverse motto: ‘think locally, act globally’ (see Evans, 2000: 231). A problem that manifests itself at the local level attracts the attention of (non-governmental) actors in other parts of the world. Those start raising the issue in their home countries where they (partly) see the roots of the problem.

One such example is the case of child labour in the cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh, India. In that state, a large number of children work in the cotton fields of farmers, who supply seeds to local, national and multinational companies (MNCs). While since the mid-1990s several Indian actors, in particular the child rights NGO MV Foundation, have been trying to tackle this problem at the local level, it gained international attention when a report was published in 2001, mentioning the problematic role of MNCs within the situation. Subsequent studies on the issue have mobilised several European and American NGOs to pressure the companies concerned to take their responsibilities by ensuring that their suppliers in Andhra Pradesh would discontinue the employment of children. Among the targeted MNCs is the German company Bayer CropScience, whose subsidiary Proagro produces cottonseeds in Andhra Pradesh. Several German, Dutch and local Indian actors have started cooperating in the Bayer case, thus creating a ‘transnational network’ which has grown over the years.

Previous research on transnational (NGO) networks has mostly looked at how a network’s effectiveness is influenced by the political and economic environment in which it operates. More recently, authors have started to criticise the conception of networks as stable and unitary actors and have asked for a perspective on networks that takes account of the network constituents’ agency characteristics. The argument is that networks are made up of a number of individuals or organisations with distinct values and perceptions of a problem and with different interests. The confrontation of these values, perceptions and interests may have important impacts on the orientation and effectiveness of the network as a whole. Moreover, a bias towards northern perspectives on transnational networks has been identified and criticised within existing literature.

This master thesis suggests a way in which both of these shortcomings might be overcome. It explores the potential of an actor-oriented approach as developed by Norman Long to analyse the internal dynamics of a transnational network. Long sees networks as forums in which actors with various understandings, values and ‘individual projects’ can exercise human agency through the interaction with their counterparts. Rather than being a stable and uniform entity, a network is, in this view, a dynamic interface where contests over meanings take place.

The present paper applies some features of an actor-oriented analysis to the transnational cooperation on Bayer and child labour in the cottonseed production of Andhra Pradesh. It examines how, and to what extent, actors from Europe and India with diverse issue-orientations and backgrounds have formed a common campaign on the case. A particular focus is thereby put on how the local problem is being defined and redefined within the transnational network. On the basis of the findings, it is critically discussed whether the ‘local vs. global’ dichotomy as such is an appropriate concept to understand the nature of the transnational cooperation.

In order to put the work of the transnational network on Bayer and child labour in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed industry into context, an introductory chapter briefly presents current debates on child labour, its potential link with globalisation as well as attempts at different levels (local, national, global) to find a solution to the problem. The transnational network itself will then be analysed in two steps, treating the views of European and Indian actors on the cooperation separately. A last chapter deals with ‘external’ perspectives on the network, i.e. with the views of actors in India who are concerned with child labour in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed production, but do not form part of the transnational cooperation. Before going into the analysis of the case, however, the theoretical basis and methodological approach of the research will be explained in more detail.

2. Theoretical Approach and Methodology

2.1 Theories on transnational networks

Since the mid 1990s, the phenomenon of non-state agents acting and cooperating across borders has received increased attention by social scientists. The development of transnational alliances among nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) is at the same time a reaction to global political, economic and social trends, and part of those trends, often with the intention to prevent and mitigate their negative effects.¹

In *Bringing transnational relations back in* Thomas Risse-Kappen defines transnational relations as “regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization.” (Risse-Kappen, 1995: 3) He looks at different types of transnational actors – such as multinational companies, international non-governmental organisations and more loosely organised transnational alliances – and examines how domestic structures and international institutionalisation influence the impact that transnational actors and coalitions have on state policies.

A more particular focus on ‘transnational advocacy networks’ is set by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their well-known work *Activists beyond borders*. In their definition, a “transnational advocacy network includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 2) Principled beliefs and values, “[i]deas that specify criteria for determining whether actions are right or wrong and whether outcomes are just or unjust” (Ibid.: 1), play a central role in motivating the formation of those networks according to Keck and Sikkink.² In contrast to Risse-Kappen, Keck and Sikkink argue that issue and actor characteristics (of the networks and their targets)³ are more important in explaining the success and failure of networks than domestic structures and the degree of international institutionalisation.

¹ See for example Edwards, Hulme & Wallace (1999) for a discussion of the first aspect.

² A very similar definition for ‘international issue-networks’ can already be found in Sikkink (1993: 415): “An international issue-network comprises a set of organizations, bound by shared values and by dense exchanges of information and services, working internationally on an issue.” These networks are “driven primarily by shared values or principled ideas – ideas about what is right and wrong” (Ibid.: 412).

³ ‘Actor characteristics of networks’ in this context means the characteristics of the (whole) network as an actor, not the actor characteristics of the organisations constituting the network. Although Keck and Sikkink recognize that ‘actor characteristics of networks’ derive in large part from the network’s internal structure, which is often characterised by asymmetrical power among the members, they do not further develop this aspect (see Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 206-209).

Risse and Sikkink combine and deepen their insights by looking at the issue area of human rights. Their main argument is that “the diffusion of international norms in the human rights area crucially depends on the establishment and the sustainability of networks among domestic and transnational actors who manage to link up with international regimes, to alert Western public opinion and Western governments.” (Risse & Sikkink, 1999: 5) They develop a ‘spiral model’ of human rights change in order to explain how the internalisation of international norms evolves from mutual influences of the society, the state and international or transnational networks.

A variety of other authors have built on the theories developed by Risse, Keck and Sikkink. Peter Evans sees transnational networks as a form of “globalization from below” (Evans, 2000: 230) established in order to challenge the hegemony of global elites, thereby opening new venues to tackle local problems at a global level. “Some activists are turning the old aphorism ‘think globally and act locally’ around. They are ‘thinking locally’ in worrying about how to solve problems that manifest themselves at the local level, but ‘acting globally’ in building transnational networks and campaigns that use extra-local political leverage to make local improvements possible.” (Ibid.: 231) Next to transnational advocacy networks, Evans identifies the labour movement and ‘transnational consumer/labour networks’ as the main organisational forms of transnational counter-hegemonic action. The latter come very close to the transnational advocacy networks as described by Keck and Sikkink, their primary distinction being “that transnational corporations rather than local violators of global norms are the principal targets, and translating norm violations into a credible threat of material losses is the key to success.” (Ibid.: 231) The mechanism through which the threat can be upheld is the risk to a corporation’s image if information about unfair conditions under which a product is produced is made public in consuming countries. However, Evans argues that “leveraging transnational connections with consumers will work in the long run only if combined with local organizing.” (Ibid.: 234)

All the above mentioned studies look at transnational non-state actors and networks in terms of their impacts on or their embeddedness in the global (and local) politico-economic environment in which they operate. They examine transnational networks as a whole with regard to their relations with external actors and structures but widely fail to assess the internal dynamics that exist among the network members. Leroi Henry et al recognize this shortcoming. They particularly criticise the strong focus on shared values (as set by Keck

and Sikkink) by arguing that “rather than being the cement that binds networks together, these values have proved divisive within the network and its component parts. Assuming that all members share core values obscures the reality of competing definitions and interests within networks and promotes a conception of networks as stable institutions rather than entities which are dynamic and constantly evolving.” (Henry et al, 2004: 851) According to them, power relationships within networks and in particular the relationship between power and values have been widely neglected in the studies so far and have remained theoretically underdeveloped (Ibid.: 839, 851). Therefore they state that one main task of future research should be to examine “how power relationships within networks limit their effectiveness and how they influence the orientations of networks” (Ibid.: 852).⁴

A similar research agenda is outlined by Sarah Radcliffe who mentions different areas that remain to be explained further within theories on transnational networks, among others: “How are [transnational development networks] constructed, and how are a discourse and practices (re)-produced at various points of the network? [...] On what basis are actors communicating, and which actors are attributed greater/lesser authority in the formation and maintenance of networks?” (Radcliffe, 2001: 26) The approach to this research must be based, according to Radcliffe, on “a wider conception of the subject, a subject which is attributed more agency and power within campaigns rather than the agent-less status identified in the latest research.” (Ibid.: 26)

Next to the neglect of internal dynamics of networks and of their members’ agency characteristics, another criticism points to the bias of existing research towards northern perspectives. Henry et al deplore that “[i]n the transnational networks literature the main and often only objects of analysis within the networks are the northern actors, with southern perspectives being marginalized and only being of importance when they affect the legitimacy of northern actors.” (Henry et al, 2004 : 850) Radcliffe even goes one step further by questioning “stigmatizing representations of network members, especially when those networkers are associated with particular value-laden imaginative geographies, often racialized and postcolonial.” (Radcliffe, 2001: 27) This implies that it is not only necessary to include perspectives of southern actors but also to question common representations of

⁴ Yanacopulos, in a later article, partly adopts an agency perspective on the members of NGO coalitions (which in comparisons to networks involve more permanent links, stronger commitments and values). However, by looking only at strategic motivations of NGOs for joining coalitions from a resource dependency perspective, she does not provide insights into the relationship between power and values of coalition members and into how this relationship influences the orientation of the coalition (see Yanacopulos, 2005).

southern and northern organisations and their respective roles within transnational networks.⁵

2.2 *Incorporating an actor-oriented approach into theories on transnational networks*

An actor-oriented approach to development intervention as elaborated by Norman Long provides some very promising ideas and concepts to deal with the identified gaps in the literature on transnational networks.⁶ Stressing the central significance of ‘human agency’, Long argues that

agency (and power) depend crucially upon the emergence of a network of actors who become partially, though hardly ever completely, enrolled in the ‘project’ of some other person or persons. Agency then entails the generation and use or manipulation of networks of social relations and the channelling of specific items (such as claims, orders, goods, instruments and information) through certain nodal points of interpretation and interaction. (Long, 2001: 17)

Interaction within networks is, in this view, at the same time offering opportunities and setting constraints for the network members to pursue their ‘individual projects’.

Adopting a social constructivist perspective, Long acknowledges the existence of ‘multiple social realities’, i.e. the fact that people (and institutions) work with different understandings, beliefs and commitments that confront each other in their interactions. In order to analyse the dynamics of those interactions, Long develops the concept of ‘social interface’. “Interfaces typically occur at points where different, and often conflicting, lifeworlds or social fields intersect; or more concretely, in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented around problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive standpoints.” (Long, 2002: 6)⁷ By looking at the linkages and networks between actors, an interface analysis offers a way to explore how differences in worldviews or cultural paradigms are produced and transformed through interactive and communicative processes and how, within these processes, knowledge is constructed. “[K]nowledge emerges as a product of interaction,

⁵ Such a stigmatisation of roles of ‘southern’ and ‘northern’ organisations can for example be found in Keck and Sikkink who generalize that “for the less powerful third world actors, networks provide access, leverage, and information (and often money) they could not expect to have on their own; for northern groups, they make credible the assertion that they are struggling with, and not only for, their southern partners.” (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 12f)

⁶ Long himself cites Milardo to critically emphasize that “[n]etwork analysts are concerned with explanations of behaviour connected with the patterned interconnections of members, rather than the independent effects of personal dispositions or dyadic relationships.” (Milardo, 1988: 15; cited in Long, 2001: 258)

⁷ Long uses the concept of social interface mainly to explore how external (development) interventions enter the lifeworlds of local actors and institutions. However, looking at this quotation, the concept seems very well applicable to other forms of social interaction – including cooperation within transnational networks of NGOs.

dialogue, reflexivity, and contests of meaning, and involves aspects of control, authority and power.” (Ibid.: 8) In this sense, an interface can be seen as composed of multiple discourses that are employed by different actors to promote their political, cultural or moral standpoints and that are mobilised in struggles over social meanings and strategic resources. A major task of interface analysis, according to Long, is “to spell out knowledge and power implications of this interplay and the blending or segregation of opposing discourses.” (Ibid.: 9)

This paper applies an actor-oriented perspective to transnational networks as an attempt to overcome the neglect of the network constituents’ agency-characteristics. A transnational network is, in this view, conceptualised as a social interface at which the different member organisations encounter each other with their different understandings, beliefs and commitments. While grouping around a common problem, members try to bring in their different interpretations and to push forward their interests and ‘individual projects’. Looking at the organising and discursive practices within networks is therefore expected to reveal more about the dynamics of power and knowledge that shape the network’s discourse and with this its social practice (as Long argues that those two cannot be separated, see Long, 2001: 53).

With regard to the stigmatisation of ‘southern’ and ‘northern’ actors, Long, in a way similar to Radcliffe, condemns “the image of an all powerful ‘outside’ and an inferior ‘inside’” (Ibid.: 34) which is omnipresent in the intervention discourse as well as a common disregard for local knowledge and local development capabilities. “An actor-oriented perspective alerts us to the dangers of assuming the potency and driving force of external institutions and interests, when the latter represent only one set among a large array of actors who shape outcomes.” (Ibid.: 224) Long furthermore questions common representations of the dichotomy between ‘local’ and ‘global’ settings: “Rather than seeing the ‘local’ as shaped by the ‘global’ or the ‘global’ as an aggregation of the ‘local’, an actor perspective aims to elucidate the precise sets of interlocking relationships, actor ‘projects’ and social practices that interpenetrate various social, symbolic and geographical spaces.” (Long, 2002: 3) Recent economic, political, cultural and environmental globalisation processes have brought about new conditions that are ‘relocalised’ within national, regional and local frameworks of knowledge and organisation. In this context, Long argues that “[...] we need to study in detail the disembedding of localised ideas and relations as they acquire global significance, and their subsequent re-embedding in yet

other locales [...]. Such processes entail the emergence of new identities, alliances and struggles for space and power within specific local/global scenarios.” (Long, 2001: 220)

2.3 *Methodological approach*

This paper makes use of certain elements of the actor-oriented approach in order to examine the internal dynamics of the transnational network that has evolved around the Bayer company’s involvement in the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh. It analyses how actors with different orientations and backgrounds (in terms of thematic interests, experience, cultural background etc.) engage in a common campaign, dealing across borders with a problem that has arisen at the local level. The execution of a sound actor-oriented analysis would require an in-depth ethnological study of the actors involved through prolonged participatory observation. This is obviously far beyond the scope of a master thesis. The informational basis of this paper is therefore restricted to written material produced and published by members of the network, interviews with them and field visits in Andhra Pradesh. Additionally, information from ‘external’ sources is considered, as established through interviews with actors concerned with child labour in Andhra Pradesh who are not directly involved in the Bayer campaign.⁸

The main criteria used in this paper for qualifying an organisation as being part of the network is that it is interacting with other members of the network (through common activities or publications, participation in common meetings etc.), and that it perceives itself and is perceived by other network members as being part of it. In this way, one Dutch NGO (India Committee of the Netherlands), six German NGOs (Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Eine Welt Netzwerk NRW, Germanwatch, Global March Against Child Labour/Germany, and Südwind) and two local Indian actors (the NGO MV Foundation and the researcher Davuluri Venkateswarlu) have been identified as members of the transnational network on the Bayer/child labour case.⁹

⁸ The disadvantage of basing the research on interviews and written publications instead of participatory observation is obviously that it is hardly possible to get beyond the official ‘front stage’ version of the positions of the different actors. A reading between the lines (in the form of discourse analysis) can – only – partly compensate for this.

⁹ It should be mentioned that treating an organisation as a (uniform) actor implies a simplification – as organisations are by nature collective actors, consisting of several individuals. In the given case, most European NGOs have one clearly identifiable person who is responsible for this particular campaign and therefore appear to act in a uniform manner. The issue seems potentially more problematic for MV Foundation as will be discussed in chapter 5.

The research has been carried out in two phases which are presented separately. The first part evaluates the ‘European perspective(s)’ of the network on the basis of written material produced by the Dutch and German NGOs and of semi-structured interviews. This part of the research examines the organising and discursive practices of the European members of the network and the way in which (and in how far) a common campaign with common goals has been developed out of their ‘individual projects’. The differences in orientation and priorities of the individual NGOs (i.e., in the words of Norman Long, the different political, moral and cultural standpoints and the ‘individual projects’) are assessed by looking at how the Bayer case fits within their general work and at their previous experience with different aspects of the case. Moreover, it is compared how the actors describe the objectives they pursue in the campaign. Within the network (i.e. at the ‘social interface’) the various standpoints encounter each other. Actors take up ideas and formulations of their partners and bring in their own concerns. They might also abandon some of their concerns that are not taken up within the network or decide to engage in separate activities. The interplay of different positions is analysed by looking at the concrete forms of cooperation, at the roles that different NGOs play within the network, and at the issues are taken up primarily. For this purpose, NGO representatives have been asked to describe and evaluate the cooperation and to assess in how far they see their objectives represented and reached by the campaign.

As the main focus of this paper is in on the way in which the *local* problem of child labour in the cotton seed industry in Andhra Pradesh is addressed within a *global* (or transnational) campaign, particular attention is given to the channels through which knowledge on the local situation in India enters the campaign in Europe and how this knowledge is ‘processed’ and employed by the European organisations. For this it is important to look at direct contacts of European NGOs with Indian actors and indirect sources of information on local developments. Next to this, it is assessed how European organisations see the role of Indian actors.

The second part of the research deals with the ‘Indian perspective(s)’ on the transnational cooperation. Similar to the analysis of the ‘European side’, the role of local actors within the organising and discursive practices is established through an analysis of published written material and through semi-structured interviews. The aim is to explore the respective positions of local actors within the network and about their view on the contribution of the transnational campaign to solving the local problem. Local actors have

therefore been asked to evaluate the success of the transnational campaign in terms of its impact on the local situation as well as to give reasons for its success or failure. Based on this information it is discussed whether it is appropriate, from the Indian perspective, to speak of a ‘common campaign directed towards common goals’.

In a further step, the view of actors external to the network has been established through interviews with UNICEF and the ILO, and through field visits that included conversations with farmers, former child labourers and local NGOs that do not form part of the transnational network. The assessment of the situation at the ‘field level’ helps identifying some limitations of the transnational network. It shows to which extent the campaign is perceived at the local level and, in turn, which actors and aspects of the local situation are out of view at the global level. Finally, interviews with Bayer in Germany and India as well as with its local partner NGO are obviously important in this context as they (potentially) constitute the crucial link of transforming globally raised concerns into concrete local action. Combining the insights of the different parts of the research, the conclusion will critically reflect on the extent to which a *common* campaign has been developed, on the way in which local circumstances are addressed by the transnational network and on the usefulness of the local-global dichotomy as such.

Next to practical considerations, treating the two phases of the research in a separate way has two advantages. Firstly, it allows to emphasize the different ‘social realities’ perceived by European and Indian actors (notwithstanding varying perceptions within either of these two sides) while treating both representations equally. Secondly, this way of presenting the research in its successive phases takes better account of the position and learning process of the researcher. According to Long, an actor-oriented approach demands a strong sensitivity to how the researcher’s observations and interpretations are necessarily tacitly shaped by his own biographical and theoretical perspectives. He argues that these subjectivities should be turned to analytical advantage by inquiring “into how far specific kinds of knowledge (our own included) are shaped by the power domains and social relations in which they are embedded and generated.” (Long, 2002: 2)

All the interaction and communication as well as the different perceptions of the actors – be they European or Indian – naturally have to be seen in relation with the broader debates surrounding the issue of child labour and the role of MNCs within this problem. This context will briefly be introduced in the following chapter.

3. Global and Local Perspectives on Child Labour

3.1 A short introduction to the problem of child labour

In its recent report *The End of Child Labour: Within Reach*, the ILO makes a positive evaluation of worldwide efforts to end child labour and optimistically sets the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour within the next decade (ILO, 2006). However, the ILO recognizes that still much needs to be done. According to ILO estimates, in 2004 there were 217.7 million child labourers worldwide, of whom 126.3 million were in hazardous work.¹⁰ India is the country with the largest number of child labourers in the world. The World Bank estimates the number of child labourers in India at 44 million.¹¹ The production of hybrid cottonseeds accounts for a particularly large number of child labourers in India – nearly 450,000 in 2000-01. At that time, about 65% of the cottonseeds were produced in the state of Andhra Pradesh with about 250,000 children working in the cotton farms (Venkateswarlu, 2003: 4, 14).¹² The vast majority of them are girls. The work mainly consists in manual cross-pollination of the hybrid cotton flowers. It can be characterized as hazardous because the labourers are exposed to toxic pesticides leading to severe health problems.

The causes and consequences of child labour are complex and in part contested.¹³ With regard to India, the ILO states: “A complex set of supply and demand forces has led to child labour. These include factors such as parental poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment; social and economic circumstances; lack of access to basic education and skills; and deeply ingrained cultural values.” (ILO, 2004: 15) The existence of a link between poverty and child labour is generally acknowledged. Poverty can be seen as a cause of child labour and/or as a consequence.¹⁴ In the first view, children are sent to work in order to contribute to the family’s income and often its survival. The second view holds that child labour, by impairing the children’s human capital (especially in terms of health and education), reduces their future prospects of earning a decent income – and thereby prevents them

¹⁰ The ILO defines ‘hazardous work’ as “any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child’s safety, health (physical or mental) and moral development” (ILO, 2006: 6). We here do not have the possibility to elaborate on the controversies surrounding definitions of child labour. For a brief overview on this issue see Betcherman et al (2004: 8).

¹¹ The figures of the official Indian census are considerably lower while unofficial estimates are often much higher. The latest official census from 2001 cites the number of 12.7 million child labourers. On unofficial estimates see e.g. Oonk (1998: 3).

¹² Andhra Pradesh is the state with the second largest child labour population of the country (1.36 million according to the 2001 census) with most of the children working in agriculture.

¹³ For a more extensive discussion of the socio-economic context of child labour in India see Gupta & Voll (1999).

¹⁴ Compare the e.g. positions of Hensman (2001: 12), ILO (2005: viii) and Raman (1998) on this issue.

from contributing to the economic and social growth of the country. Moreover, given that child labour is cheap labour, it can be argued that “[e]ach working child takes the place of an adult worker, perpetuating adult unemployment and lowering the wage structure.” (Gupta & Voll, 1999: 85)

While the incidence of child labour negatively correlates with the school enrolment ratio, it positively correlates with illiteracy (Mishra, 2000: 27). The link between child labour and education can be explained as a weighing of (perceived) costs and benefits of work vs. schooling. In this view, a child is sent to work “where available schooling does not seem to promise longer-term gains, either because it involves costs that cannot easily be met, or because it is of poor quality, or simply because the parents and/or child do not believe in its usefulness.” (ILO, 2005: 4) This explanation, next to including economic considerations, points to the importance of (socio-cultural) perceptions and values. Those perceptions exist among parents, employers and the children themselves. Lakshmidhar Mishra explains that in India the opinion is still widely spread that investment in education is futile or only brings marginal returns. Many parents therefore believe that it is better to send their children (and especially girls) to work, unaware of the long-term consequences. Working children often share this view and prefer to contribute to their parents’ income by manual work rather than attending education which they find dull, demotivating and uninteresting. Many employers prefer children to adults as workers “because they have nimble fingers, are non-unionized, and, therefore, lack collective bargaining power, can be easily dictated to in terms of remuneration and conditions of service.” (Mishra, 2000: 275) Gerard Oonk (1998), in line with the MV Foundation (see chapter 5), questions some of the common views on child labour and education, including the belief that poverty and parental disinterest are among the most important causes for not sending children to school. He argues that the poor quality of education is the main reason why many children of poor families do not attend school.

Looking beyond factors influencing the decision of sending children to work at the household or community level, several authors have dealt with the wider structural reasons underlying the problem, examining the impacts of globalisation on child labour. Their findings have been quite diverse and inconclusive. Given the scarcity of reliable data on child labour it is hardly possible to establish sound statistical evidence. Besides this, it is very difficult to determine clear causal relationships, given the multiplicity of channels through which globalisation can potentially influence child labour. Bearing these

methodological difficulties (explicitly recognized in most of the research) in mind, there are two basic conflicting views on the relation between globalisation and child labour.

According to the first view, the combination of extremely uneven social and environmental production standards worldwide on the one hand and neo-liberal policies allowing for a high mobility of capital and goods on the other hand give unscrupulous parties the opportunity to benefit from comparative cost advantage in developing countries, including through the exploitation of children as cheap labour force (see Haas, 1999 and ILO, 2005: 15). The other view points to the crucial role of education in the context of globalisation:

Upgraded working methods and quality control, more sophisticated management procedures and documentation, and better understanding of and compliance with legal frameworks have increased – and will continue to increase – the demand for literate, educated workers even at the level of the family business. This also has implications for child labour and for family decision-making about educating children. (ILO, 2005: 15)

Alessandro Cigno et al argue that a country's initial (educational) conditions are important in determining whether it will benefit from globalisation or not. They stress that no empirical evidence can be found pointing to an increase in child labour through globalisation, but they admit that “child labor is likely to rise where the share of educated workers is very low” (Cigno et al, 2002: 1587). Their conclusion is however that in this situation “the problem is not so much globalization, as the country's inability to take part in it.” (Ibid.: 1588) Finally, Rohini Hensman mentions another effect of globalisation on child labour in the Indian context: “[G]lobalisation, by stimulating a worldwide outcry against child labour, has also for the first time focused the attention of the Indian government and Indian trade unions on this problem, as well as providing the possibility of new remedies.” (Hensman, 2001: 12)

3.2 *Global, national and local approaches to address the child labour problem*

Corresponding to the complexity of the issue, the approaches to address the child labour problem are also multiple. There are three principal international conventions concerning child labour. The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), adopted in 1989, asks State Parties to “recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” (Art. 32, 1) In particular, minimum age(s) for

admission to employment, a regulation of the hours and conditions of employment and sanctions ensuring the effective enforcement of these regulations shall be provided.

The question of minimum age had already been addressed by the *ILO Minimum Age Convention* (No. 138, adopted in 1973). Applying in all economic sectors regardless whether children are employed for wages or not, it provides that the age of entry to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling. It contains flexibility clauses for the implementation in developing countries. In 1999, the ILO adopted the *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention* (No. 182) which prohibits certain forms of child exploitation, such as slavery, trafficking, forced labour, recruitment in armed conflicts, prostitution and pornography, illicit activities and work that is hazardous to children's health, safety or morals. Taken together, Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 define the types of work that are unacceptable under international standards. Along with the CRC they are among the most widely ratified international conventions. However, neither of the two ILO Conventions has been ratified by India so far.¹⁵

Several Indian acts of legislation touch on the issue of child labour. Next to Constitutional provisions, prohibiting (only!) the employment of children in factories, mines and hazardous work (Art. 24),¹⁶ and several sector-specific labour laws, the *Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act* is of particular importance. Adopted in 1986, this Act mainly bans the employment of children (below the age of 14) in specified occupations, regulates the working conditions for children engaged in certain permitted forms of work, and enhances the sanctions for violations of provisions for the (non-) employment of children. The Act has been criticised for containing gaps and unclear definitions as well as for difficulties that arise in monitoring its implementation (see Mishra, 2000: 170-176). Only in 2006 the Act was expanded to prohibit the employment of children as domestic servants, in hotels and in restaurants. However, in many sectors – including agriculture and therefore the work in cottonseed fields¹⁷ –, child labour remains neither prohibited nor regulated and existing legislation is hardly implemented.

¹⁵ India has ratified the CRC in 1992 with certain reservations (see Mishra, 2000 192f). According to Mishra (Ibid.: 190) the principal obstacle to the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 138 has been the inability of the Indian central and state governments (who share the competences in legislation on labour) to agree on a common minimum age covering all sectors of employment.

¹⁶ See Mishra (2000: 164-166) for a critical assessment of the Constitutional provisions on child labour. She points for example to the fact, that a definition of 'hazardous' is not to be found in the Constitution.

¹⁷ Some aspects of the children's work in the cottonseed production are covered by Indian legislation, namely the handling of pesticides, the industrial processing of cottonseeds and the situation of bonded labour. The 'normal' work of the children in the field however is not prohibited by Indian law.

Despite the problematically weak (and weakly enforced) legislation, there has been growing activity on the issue of child labour in India. Several UN programs, like UNICEF or UNDP are running child labour projects in the country. Since 2000, the ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) is running a special 'Andhra Pradesh State Based Project' which aims at mobilising the civil society, workers and employers against child labour.¹⁸

India adopted a National Child Labour Policy as early as 1987 and established National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) with the aim of progressive identification, withdrawal and rehabilitation of working children. A major activity undertaken by the NCLPs is the establishment of special schools to provide non-formal education to former child labourers. However, despite the announcement and initiation of ever new ambitious programmes, the targets set by Indian authorities in the field of child labour are regularly not achieved. This also holds for the State Government of Andhra Pradesh which, in a *Strategy Paper on Poverty Eradication* in 2000, has declared itself "committed to take decisive action on all fronts – legislative, administrative and socio-economic – to put a complete halt to the exploitative and shameful process of child labour within a definite time frame of 5 years. Andhra Pradesh will be free from child labour before 2005."

There are countless initiatives of non-state actors (including international, national and local NGOs as well as trade unions and employers federations) in the field of child labour in India. In Andhra Pradesh alone, there are hundreds of NGOs working on child labour at the grassroot level. The most influential among them is certainly MV Foundation whose special 'community-based' approach has been replicated by governmental programmes in the state as well as by a large number of NGOs within and beyond Andhra Pradesh.¹⁹

At the global level, various 'ethical trade' initiatives intend to prevent or mitigate negative social and environmental impacts of globalisation, including the employment of children by MNCs or their suppliers. The *OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises* and the *UN Global Compact* are two important multinational initiatives including provisions on child labour, adopted in 1976 and 2000 respectively. The OECD Guidelines comprise recommendations on corporate social responsibility (CSR) addressed by

¹⁸ On ILO-IPEC's activities in India, see ILO (2004). On the cooperation of trade unions within the Andhra Pradesh State Based Project see ILO (2002).

¹⁹ MV Foundation and its approach on child labour will be introduced in more detail in chapter 5.1.

governments to MNCs from signatory countries.²⁰ The Global Compact is a broad network comprising UN agencies, governments, labour and civil society organisations as well as more than 1000 companies (including Bayer) who have agreed on ten basic principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Both initiatives are purely voluntary. However, there are mechanisms to implement and monitor compliance – the only possible sanction being the ‘naming and shaming’ of a company. With regard to child labour, the OECD Guidelines provide that “[e]nterprises should, within the framework of applicable law, regulations and prevailing labour relations and employment practices [...] contribute to the effective abolition of child labour”. (chapter IV, 1 b) The provisions of the Global Compact simply read: “Businesses should uphold the effective abolition of child labour.” (Principle five)

Next to these broad initiatives (and often referring to them), there are CSR initiatives at the level of individual companies or sectors. In response to growing concerns by consumers, many big companies have adopted corporate codes of conduct and publish reports on CSR in which they lay down their commitment to social and environmental standards. Bayer for example has a clear position with regard to child labour. The company’s *Sustainable Development Report 2005* states:

Fighting on behalf of chartered human rights around the world is a part of Bayer’s corporate policy. This is not just established in our code of conduct: We also emphasize this claim through our membership in the Global Compact and the formal recognition by Bayer AG’s Board of Management of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Companies and the International Labor Organization’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Companies and Social Policy.
(http://www.nb.bayer.de/en/Human_rights.aspx)

The company’s activities against child labour in Andhra Pradesh are cited as an example. The *Code of Business Conduct* of Bayer CropScience in India underlines: “Bayer strictly prohibits the use of child labour in any form.” (Bayer CropScience, 2005: 4)

Yet, the corporate approach has significant limitations. Firstly, in the absence of sufficient (enforcement of) global or national legislation, the effectiveness of CSR depends very much on the goodwill of the company. David Graham and Ngaire Woods point to the importance of making self-regulation in the self-interest of the company in order to make sure that codes of conduct are actually complied with. In this view, the risk of losses resulting from a damage of reputation is crucial. However, this mechanism mainly works

²⁰ The OECD Guidelines have been signed by 30 OECD and 9 additional countries. A fundamental revision in 2000 explicitly extended them to worldwide activities of concerned MNCs, including their suppliers.

for companies with high visibility.²¹ Secondly, compliance with CSR standards is extremely difficult to monitor as violations may occur at various points of often complex supply chains.²² Companies differ in the ways they conduct internal monitoring or accept controls by independent agencies.

Finally, it has to be noted that even when making serious efforts, MNCs alone will not be able to put a definite end to the child labour problem as export industries only account for a small percentage of the child labour population. In some countries, MNCs may face a social and governmental environment which is unreceptive or even hostile to the 'imposition of Western standards'. The case of child labour is complex in the sense that simply taking the children out of work will often rather harm than benefit them. Children have to be enrolled in education and it has to be ensured that their dismissal does not endanger the livelihood of the family. But in many cases, the appropriate social and educational infrastructure does not exist and MNCs can hardly be expected to fully take over the responsibility of government to provide education and social security.²³

Many of the above mentioned arguments and approaches regarding child labour can be found in the transnational campaign on the involvement of the Bayer Company in the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh. The ways in which, through the interaction of different actors, they confront each other, are combined and to some extent merged into a common position will be examined in the following.

²¹ On the effectiveness of corporate self-regulation see Graham & Woods (2006). Specifically with regard to child labour see Kolk & van Tulder (2002) and McClintock (2001). For a more general introduction to ethical trade initiatives and their implications for development see Barrientos (2000).

²² It is contested up to which point MNCs should take responsibility for the practices of their suppliers. See Germanwatch (2004) on this discussion.

²³ See Kolk & van Tulder (2002: 267-269) for a discussion of the limits of multinational responsibility.

4. Transnational Cooperation in the Bayer Case – European Perspectives

4.1 The emergence of a ‘transnational network’?

The India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) was the first European NGO that took notice of the child labour problem in the cottonseed industry in Andhra Pradesh. The ICN is concerned with “how social, economic and political developments in the West influence the daily lives of millions of Indians” (http://www.indianet.nl/liw_f_e.html). It aims at influencing public opinion and political decision-making processes in the Netherlands and in Europe by lobbying, generating publicity in the media, and organising public meetings and campaigns. One concern of the ICN is to alert

[...] western consumers and companies about the effects of their behaviour. In these days of globalisation, the social and environmental conditions in developing countries such as India are increasingly the responsibility of every citizen in the world. The ICN finds it of paramount importance to inform consumers and companies in the Netherlands and Europe about these conditions and the measures that can be taken to improve them. (Ibid.)

The Dutch organisation had been in contact with the child rights NGO MV Foundation (MVF) from Andhra Pradesh since 1996 when looking at the broader child labour scenario in India.²⁴ In 2001, Davuluri Venkateswarlu, an Indian researcher in touch with MVF, published the study *Seeds of Bondage: Female Child Bonded Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh*. A few lines mentioning the involvement of MNCs caught the attention of the ICN who decided, in cooperation with MVF, “to help put some pressure on the companies to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem” (interview Oonk). The ICN commissioned another study by Venkateswarlu further examining the role of MNCs. Published in 2003, it estimates that about 247,800 children were working for supplying farmers of MNCs in Andhra Pradesh, among them 2000 for Proagro Seeds Ltd., a subsidiary of the German Bayer Company.²⁵

Pointing to these findings, the ICN contacted different organisations in the home countries of the MNCs involved. In Germany, it first got in touch with the Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren (CBG), an organisation whose purpose is:

- the gathering and diffusion of information about damages to human beings and the environment as well as the threat to employment positions that are (said to be) caused by the BAYER Company, one of its subsidiaries or associate companies.

²⁴ The ICN has previously worked on child labour in the carpet and sports equipment industries in India.

²⁵ The other companies mentioned in the study are Advanta and Unilever (British-Dutch), Emergent Genetics and Monsanto (American), and Syngenta (Swiss).

- the organisation of a dialogue between the causer, the affected and the interested with the aim of avoiding or removing these damages.
(<http://www.cbgnetwork.org/1545.html>, own translation)

In summer 2003, the CBG came in contact with two other groups in Germany. The German section of Global March Against Child Labour (GMCL) had also been made aware of the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh by the ICN. GMCL started as a people's movement with a worldwide march in 1998, intending to raise awareness on child labour and to push for the adoption of a Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour at the International Labour Conference in Geneva. From this initiative, GMCL has developed into a global network campaigning and lobbying for the 'Triangular Paradigm' of poverty alleviation, eradication of child labour and education for all (see Schmidt, 2004). It works at different levels, targeting international organisations, governments, companies and the civil society at large. The second organisation contacted by the CBG was Germanwatch, a lobbying organisation preparing, in its own words, "the ground for necessary policy changes in the North which preserve the interests of people in the South" (www.germanwatch.org). The main emphasis of Germanwatch is on climate change, world (and in particular agricultural) trade, and development policy. It also deals with regulation of the activities of MNCs through overseeing the implementation of the OECD Guidelines. Germanwatch is a founding member of the network OECD-Watch, comprising NGOs concerned with the OECD Guidelines (among them the ICN).

Three other organisations started working on the Bayer case later on. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (DWHH) is one of the largest NGOs in the field of development cooperation and humanitarian aid in Germany. Its mandate – to fight worldwide against hunger – is to be understood in a broad sense: it includes emergency relief, mobilizing the German society for development issues, and addressing the underlying causes of poverty by running development projects in various countries. In 2003, DWHH initiated the international campaign 'Stop child labour! School is the best place to work' in which it cooperates, among others, with the ICN, GMCL and MVF in promoting basic education and eliminating child labour. Through this cooperation, DWHH became concerned with child labour in Andhra Pradesh. In the beginning of 2004, 'Südwind - Institute for Economy and Ecumenism' came across the study by Venkateswarlu. As a research institute, Südwind analyses the problems of developing countries and tries to find strategies to address them, "based on the conviction that there is a connection between the prosperity of industrial nations and the poverty that is prevalent across broad sections of society in developing countries." (www.suedwind-institut.de/0eng_sw-start-fs-htm)

Südwind started working on Bayer and child labour within the context of its work on socially responsible investment. Later in the same year, the Eine Welt Netz NRW (EWN) became active in the Bayer case after having become aware of an OECD complaint submitted by the CBG, Germanwatch and GMCL. This umbrella organisation coordinates 'One World Initiatives' in the German federal state North Rhine-Westphalia and is concerned with the impact of various actors of that state on environment and society in developing countries. Established in 2002, it has a broad mandate covering among others global environmental protection, democratisation, maintenance of cultural diversity, promotion of human rights and contribution to civil conflict solutions and peace.

Is it appropriate to speak of a 'transnational network' with regard to the cooperation of NGOs in the Bayer case? In the definition of Keck and Sikkink (1998: 8), "[n]etworks are forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange." They add that "[g]roups in a network share values and frequently exchange information and services. The flow of information among actors in the network reveals a dense web of connections among these groups, both formal and informal." (Ibid.: 9) Often, networks are seen in contrast to more rigid organisational structures: "In principle networks have the potential to provide a more flexible and non-hierarchical means of exchange and interaction that is also more innovative, responsive and dynamic, while overcoming spatial separation and providing scale economies." (Henry et al, 2004: 839)

Interestingly, only one of the interview partners, Antje Paulsen from DWHH, uses the term 'network' to describe the cooperation with other actors in the Bayer case. Others speak of 'the group' or 'the coalition' to designate the totality of organisations involved.²⁶ One NGO representative explicitly contrasts the cooperation in the Bayer case with networks working on broader issues: "I believe that there is a difference between building up a fundamental network and cooperating in a specific case, in which one has to strongly react to developments, and then, if everyone also has a different interest..." (interview Heydenreich) Nevertheless, the organisational characteristics of networks mentioned in the literature seem to apply. The NGOs involved frequently exchange information and also services. The interaction takes place on a voluntary basis and notwithstanding the fact that

²⁶ The term 'coalition' clearly seems too strong in this context, at least when following the definition by Yanacopulos. She describes coalitions as forming more permanent links than transnational advocacy networks, generally having permanent staff members, a more permanent membership base, a headquarters or secretariat, and being organisations in and of themselves (Yanacopulos, 2005: 95).

individual organisations appear to be more or less dominant and hold different roles, the cooperation can be characterised as horizontal and non-hierarchical. The concrete forms of interaction will be analysed more in detail in the following section as well as the interplay of the ‘different interests’ mentioned by Heydenreich.

4.2 *A common campaign directed towards a common goal?*

As indicated, the European NGOs cooperating in the Bayer case differ considerably with regard to their broader orientation. The majority of the organisations works on social responsibility of companies (e.g. Germanwatch, CBG, ICN), consumers (e.g. ICN, EWN), or investors (particularly Südwind). (Only) four organisations (GMCL, DWHH, ICN, Südwind) have previous experience on the issue of child labour.²⁷ Most of the NGOs mainly do lobbying or campaigning work and seek to sensitise Western governments and non-state actors for development concerns, while cooperating more or less closely with local partners. DWHH differs from the other European NGOs involved in that its main focus is on project and relief work directly in developing countries.²⁸ The organisations moreover vary with regard to their size and resources, as well as their internal organisational structure.

Given the differences among the NGOs involved, it comes with no surprise that the objectives they pursue in the Bayer campaign are also multiple. While all organisations agree that the improvement of the local situation (especially for the children) is of central importance, they at the same time follow aims at other levels. According to Gerard Onk from the ICN, the case “became also part of a larger discussion on CSR issues”.²⁹ Cornelia Heydenreich says that one interest of Germanwatch is “to test existing instruments [of corporate responsibility...] and if necessary to work towards a better implementation of the instruments, as e.g. the OECD Guidelines, or to look in how far further instruments are needed for corporate responsibility worldwide.” Similarly, Antje Schneeweiß from Südwind explains that she intends to explore the possibilities of tackling problems in developing countries through an approach of socially responsible investment. The CBG, according to Phillip Mimkes, “always ask[s] Bayer to take responsibility for its production

²⁷ While the EWN itself does not have experience on child labour, some of its member organisations do. Südwind first looked at the Bayer case exclusively from the angle of ethical investment. Only in 2006, Südwind publications have looked at the situation in Andhra Pradesh from the child labour perspective.

²⁸ In contrast to the other ‘campaign organisations’, DWHH is an ‘organisation that also campaigns’ (see Leipold: 2000, 453f for this distinction).

²⁹ Unless indicated otherwise, all quotations in chapters 4.2 and 4.3 are taken from the interviews listed in the annexe.

conditions and its products, that is in principle for the complete chain of its entrepreneurial activity.” In the opinion of Jens Elmer from the EWN and Antje Paulsen from DWHH, improvements in the Bayer case should become a signal for other multinational and local companies employing child labourers in the cottonseed production, but also, according to Elmer, for government, showing that the problem can be solved and leading to better legislation on child labour in India. The EWN moreover stresses that the Bayer case should be used to inform people in Germany about unjust North-South relations.

Starting from this spectrum of objectives, the organisations have engaged in common as well as separate activities. On the one hand, they deliberately combine their efforts to reach greater effectiveness. In that way, they mutually benefit from different types of expertise and seek to make better use of their limited resources by dividing up tasks. Especially smaller NGOs hope to gain greater weight within alliances. The OECD complaint commonly submitted by the CBG, Germanwatch and GMCL is a good example in this regard. Originally, Germanwatch advised the CBG on the OECD Guidelines and complaint procedure, but then joined as a second complainant. As Mimkes explains, the CBG moreover contacted GMCL “because we are not specialised in child labour and therefore also wanted to take child labour initiatives on board, also to get their know-how.” Heydenreich describes the distribution of roles in the OECD complaint as follows: “Rainer Kruse from the Global March [...] was, so to say, the expert for the issue of child labour in our ‘triple alliance’, while I was the one for the OECD Guidelines and Philipp [Mimkes] was the expert on Bayer.” For each of the organisations involved, this particular form of cooperation makes it possible to advance its individual concerns: Germanwatch’s expertise on the OECD Guidelines allows the CBG and GMCL to make effective use of this instrument to hold the Bayer company responsible for its production conditions and to pressure it to improve the situation for children in Andhra Pradesh. For Germanwatch, the Bayer case is also interesting as a means of testing the OECD Guidelines with regard to the contested question of supply chain responsibility.

On the other hand, the NGOs tackle the case separately from various angles, according to their respective specialisations.³⁰ In this, they closely coordinate their strategies. The CBG, Germanwatch and the EWN have expressed their protest at Bayer’s annual stockholders’ meetings. The EWN and DWHH have held direct meetings with the company. Südwind seeks to sensitise investors and contacts rating agencies focussing on

³⁰ Several interview partners intimated that some organisations, in particular the EWN and Südwind, have preferred to run their own activities – however in coordination with the other NGOs.

sustainability. Both, the EWN and Südwind have organised conferences dealing among others with the Bayer case and to which they invited the Indian researcher Davuluri Venkateswarlu. The ICN links the campaign on Bayer to those on other MNCs. Heydenreich summarizes: “Every organisation has its function or a different role, so to speak. I think this is very interesting.”

During several meetings, telephone conferences and e-mail exchanges, the NGOs do not only coordinate their strategy but also seek to work out a common position – or to develop a “common frame of meaning” in the words of Keck and Sikkink (1998: 7). One result has been the following list of six demands towards the cottonseed companies, and in particular the MNCs, brought forward by nine American, Dutch and German NGOs:³¹

1. Immediately implement a plan of action to eliminate all child labour in the cottonseed industry in India and ensure that every child goes to school. This should be done in close co-operation with civil society organisations and government authorities. In Andhra Pradesh, the present co-operation with the MV Foundation should be intensified in order to reach the objective that no child should work in cottonseed production in the new 2005 season.
2. Pay fair procurement prices to farmers to allow them to hire adult labourers and pay them at least the official minimum wage as well as equal wages for both men and women.
3. Eliminate all forms of bonded labour in cottonseed production in India.
4. Respect the workers’ right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.
5. Provide training to farmers and seed organisers on safe handling of pesticides, and provide protective gear and clothing for pesticides handling.
6. Provide public, independently verified, evidence on the implementation on the above demands.

(ICN: Press release, 4th October 2004)

Elmer explains that the NGOs involved, given the variety of their orientations, always try to find the intersection of their interests which also implies that “sometimes you do more than you would normally do. [...] There are different poles and orientations what makes it difficult to draw up a paper which is backed by everyone.” In fact, while all the six demands repeatedly appear in the documents written by the NGOs, close reading shows differences in the organisations’ priorities.³² The EWN, for example, stresses in particular

³¹ According to the ICN press release, these demands are made by the International Labor Rights Fund, the ICN, FNV Mondiaal, Amnesty International Netherlands, Novib/Oxfam Netherlands, Germanwatch, the CBG, GMCL and DWHH. Interestingly, the German version of a joint press release of the CBG, Germanwatch and GMCL from 11th October 2004 citing the same demands does not mention DWHH but instead includes MVF and the Dutch NGO Hivos. It also omits the last sentence of the first paragraph. The English version of the same press release mentions neither DWHH nor MVF, but its wording of the demands is identical with the ICN press release. The EWN only started working on the case at that time.

³² See ‘Written material produced by European NGOs’ listed under ‘References’ and NGO websites.

the danger in the use of pesticides and the necessity for the MNCs to pay fair procurement prices to the farmers. The latter issue is also very much emphasized by the ICN while the former is one of the main concerns of the CBG.³³ GMCL strongly urges for immediate action pointing to the persisting danger for the children. It also criticises the violation of ILO Conventions.

One potentially ‘dividing’ factor within the network is the attitude and strategy towards the company. While most organisations to varying degrees seek to enter into dialogue with Bayer, there are differences with regard to how far they see the company as part of the problem of child labour in Andhra Pradesh or as part of the solution. For example, in a joint press release of the CBG, GMCL and the ICN from 31st July 2003, Philipp Mimkes (CBG) is cited with the words: “It is disgraceful that rich companies like Bayer benefit from the exploitation of children.” Rainer Kruse (GMCL) says in the same press release: “The German Bayer company could become a forerunner in the liberation of the children from drudgery by paying reasonable procurement prices to the farmers.”³⁴ Variations in the formulations used by different organisations are admittedly often quite subtle and not always consistent. However, the phrasing of the CBG (and to some extent also the EWN) is discernibly more moralising and sceptical than of most other organisations. While for the CBG, Germanwatch and the EWN the case is, in the first place, a (CSR) ‘case on Bayer’, for other organisations it is rather a ‘case on child labour’. In particular Gerard Oonk stresses that the ICN never looked at the issue as something it should deal with in terms of particular companies but as part of the cooperation with MVF and its work in Andhra Pradesh. The question of ‘how to deal with Bayer’ is further complicated by the fact that the company has a general policy of not talking to the CBG which has made common meetings with all OECD complainants impossible. This has on the one hand led to certain strategic complications within the network and has, at some points, diverted discussions from the actual problem of child labour to procedural issues. On the other hand, Bayer’s way of communicating separately with the NGOs has been perceived as a strategy intended to divide the network – what made the organisations stick together.

The interview partners naturally speak of a ‘campaign’ when talking about their work. According to Keck and Sikkink, campaigns are

³³ Recently, the CBG and the EWN have engaged in campaigns against the marketing of dangerous pesticides by Bayer.

³⁴ One might also bear in mind, in this context, that DWHH, runs activities funded by Bayer in other parts of the world (e.g. in Kenya).

sets of strategically linked activities in which members of a diffuse principled network [...] develop explicit, visible ties and mutually recognized roles in pursuit of a common goal (and generally against a common target). In a campaign, core network actors mobilize others and initiate the tasks of structural integration and cultural negotiation among the groups in the network. [...] They must also consciously seek to develop a ‘common frame of meaning’ – a task complicated by cultural diversity within transnational networks. (Keck & Sikkink, 1998: 6f)

This definition widely fits the NGO cooperation in the Bayer case, although with certain nuances. The organisations engage in several parallel, but coordinated, activities in the form of variable alliances among network members. Strategic coordination is at the core of their cooperation. Rather than pursuing *a common goal*, the activities are directed towards a set of goals which has arisen from a compilation of (apparently mutually non-exclusive) individual goals, reflecting various perspectives on a problem. There has, however, been a clear tendency towards a stronger integration of the positions within the network as the members have realised the strengths of cooperation.

While some of the European NGOs in the network have previously been in contact and worked together, others cooperate for the first time. Especially the combination of ‘CSR groups’ and ‘child labour groups’ is new for most of the participants (the ICN being the only organisation that forms part of both CSR and child labour networks of NGOs) and has, according to several interview partners, provided new perspectives and insights. The set of organisations involved has largely determined the instruments and venues that have been considered and employed in the case.³⁵ It has opened new ways for the NGOs to bring forward their ‘individual projects’, while combining them with other demands. On the whole, despite some divergences of interest and opinion, all interviewed European NGO representatives describe the Bayer campaign as an example of successful cooperation. In the opinion of Mimkes, the fact that “out of a broad spectrum of groups the same demands were made [...] certainly led to the large public interest and, through this, the comparatively large public pressure on Bayer. [...] The involvement of such a broad spectrum of organisations was certainly of great importance for the campaign and has certainly contributed to the success.”

³⁵ The given set of organisations with certain specialisations and working styles also makes that some potential instruments and arguments for tackling the case are neglected. The Global Compact, for example, of which Bayer is one of the founding members has seldom been used in the argumentation of the NGOs.

4.3 *Addressing local issues in a global campaign*

While for the ICN and DWHH the campaign on MNCs developed out of the cooperation with the local partner MVF, the other organisations involved first became aware of the case and then established the contact with local actors.³⁶ Several NGO representatives stress that it was very important for them to directly get in contact with local actors at the moment they started working on the case in order to get first hand information about their perspective and the local situation.³⁷ For all European NGOs MVF (in particular the general secretary, Shantha Sinha) and the researcher Davuluri Venkateswarlu are the crucial local partners in the Bayer campaign. Most organisations do not have any further local contacts that are relevant for the case. Interestingly, the CBG, the EWN and Südwind explicitly mention Venkateswarlu as their central contact person in India while for the ICN and DWHH the cooperation with MVF is at the heart of the case. The ICN, Oonk explains, “[...] looked at it as part of our cooperation with the MV Foundation and the work they were doing in the field and the fact that they were encountering this big problem with the big group of children.” Similarly, Paulsen describes the view of DWHH: “We have a project partner [MVF] and we act as an extension of this project partner or give a voice to this project partner. And that is why we think that we are predestined to have a say [in the Bayer case] – and also obliged.” The ICN, DWHH and GMCL intend to promote MVF’s particular approach to child labour.

While all the European NGOs are in regular contact with the Indian partners, there has recently been a tendency towards concentrating the communication in order to better use the resources of the local actors. Heydenreich explains: “If everyone asks separately, that is also a burden for our [Indian] partners. Therefore it is now more important for me that we coordinate the questions we have and that we say: you ask the questions or you.” Both, Shantha Sinha and Davuluri Venkateswarlu, have been to Europe. Sinha was invited by DWHH in the context of the ‘Stop Child Labour’ campaign in November 2005, Venkateswarlu participated in a conference on ethical investment organised by Südwind in October 2004 and in a panel discussion organised by the EWN in October 2005. At these occasions, some representatives of German NGOs met the local partners personally – an experience which they describe as important.

³⁶ An exception is GMCL which knows MVF from a people’s march for education in India in 2001.

³⁷ The fact that other NGOs started working on the case mainly on the basis of the studies by Venkateswarlu but without proper consultation with the local partners was critically mentioned by one interview partner.

The main function of the local partners with regard to the campaign in Europe is to provide information on the local situation.³⁸ Two studies commissioned by the ICN and written by Venkateswarlu are crucial in this regard: *Child Labour and Trans-national Seed Companies in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh*, published in 2003, and *Child Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh: Recent Developments*, published in 2004. The first study describes the child labour situation in the cottonseed industry in Andhra Pradesh in much detail, including the working conditions, the number of children, their background and the impact the work has on the children. It then analyses the role of MNCs, including the companies' reactions to the problem. The second study focuses on recent interventions of various actors (including MNCs) against child labour. It also gives an update on the current child labour situation. These studies form the basis on which the European NGOs started working and continue to work on the case. Quotations from them are omnipresent in the NGOs' publications and argumentation. A third study by Venkateswarlu and Lucia da Corta, *The Price of Childhood: On the Link Between Prices Paid to Farmers and the Use of Child Labour in Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh, India*, which was published in 2005 is cited more selectively by certain network members, in particular the ICN and the EWN who commissioned this study together with the American NGO International Labour Rights Fund.³⁹ Shantha Sinha is often cited as an additional source on the issue of unequal terms of contract and unfair procurement prices paid by MNCs to local farmers. She also gives inputs with regard to new developments, especially on attempts of cooperation between MVF and MNCs.

Several NGO representatives stress that they depend on local partners for being able to evaluate developments that take place in Andhra Pradesh, including Bayer's interventions – and with this also for their argumentation towards the company. One interview partner describes the choice of going into detail on the local circumstances and focusing on the level of structural improvements as a dilemma due to limited capacities. It is seen as important that the local partners do not only have more direct access to first hand information but also a better understanding of socio-cultural aspects and the mentality of the local population. While representatives of the ICN, DWHH and GMCL have been to India several times within other contexts, Jens Elmer of the EWN is the only German NGO representative who, together with a journalist, went on a field trip to India, especially to

³⁸ Cornelia Heydenreich indicates that, at times, the flow of information goes into the opposite direction when mentioning that she explained the OECD complaint procedure to the Indian partners.

³⁹ There are other studies by Venkateswarlu which are hardly taken into account by the German NGOs, namely one on the child labour situation in the Indian states of Karnataka and Gujarat and one earlier study on *Female Child Bonded Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh*.

undertake own research on the Bayer case. This trip was, according to Elmer, necessary to independently verify conflicting data from Venkateswarlu and from Bayer, e.g. on the number of children still working in cotton fields of the company's suppliers.⁴⁰

Next to the assessment directly at the local level, some NGOs also rely on the opinion of European actors whom they consider to have a good expertise on local circumstances and particularly strong contacts to Indian actors – namely the 'India expert' Gerard Oonk and Rainer Kruse from GMCL. Both Oonk and Kruse give a mixed appraisal of Bayer's current efforts against child labour. They recognise that Bayer has undertaken some steps to tackle the problem, the effectiveness of which in terms of bringing children from the cotton fields into school needs to be assessed carefully. The fact that Bayer pays bonuses to farmers who discourage the use of child labour is criticised by Oonk and Kruse as setting a wrong signal and not being sustainable on the long run – especially given the fact that it cannot be replicated by all MNCs and national producers involved. In turn they argue that the companies should pay higher procurement prices to the seed farmers, pointing to the latest study by Venkateswarlu. In addition to this, Kruse is critical about Bayer contracting the local NGO Naandi Foundation to implement the company's child labour projects. He deplores that these questions regarding the approach pursued by the company could not be fully taken up within the network. Oonk stresses that Bayer's activities alone can only have a marginal impact on the problem and that a comprehensive solution has to include the whole range of international and local actors involved – a reasoning which is followed very much by the Bayer company itself.

Besides being a source of information, local partners also enhance the credibility and legitimacy of European NGOs. The organisations in Europe repeatedly stress that the Indian partners consider the pressure exerted by them on MNCs as crucial, arguing that without the campaign in Europe MNCs would have never addressed the problem. European actors underline that the fact that (some) MNCs are making first steps to address the problem opens ways for local actors to tackle the problem of child labour as a whole.

Summing up, the European perspective on the transnational network sees the main role of European actors in putting pressure on MNCs in their respective home countries and in

⁴⁰ Michael Schneider criticises that this field trip was only undertaken to find "Bayer's mistakes" and not directed towards cooperatively solving the child labour problem. Elmer admits that the EWN "of course always had more trust in the organisation in India than in the Bayer company, but we wanted to verify this [the conflicting data] for our own work, but also for the other organisations." He however stresses that the EWN has met with a representative of Bayer to discuss this issue.

linking the case to wider structural questions of North-South relations. Indian partners provide information on local circumstances, monitor the activities of producers in India and, ideally, use the signal of improvements achieved by certain MNCs to tackle the broader child labour problem in cooperation with other Indian partners, such as the government or local firms. Certain European actors, in particular the ICN but also DWHH and the EWN, have a crucial role as a link between the Indian and the European side. Their expertise on local circumstances is acknowledged by other network members as they have been to Andhra Pradesh and have more personal contacts to local partners. Finally, they commissioned the studies that form the basis of the campaign in Europe. With this, they go beyond simply transmitting information from Indian to European actors to actively co-determining and shaping the information that is made available to NGOs and the broader public in Europe.⁴¹ It also has to be kept in mind that the ICN's prior work and contacts in India have largely determined who is seen as a relevant local partner in the Bayer case. Gerard Oonk sees the combination of aims at the local and at the global level as one of the salient features of the campaign:

It was successful not because of the results have all been reached already. But because of the close link of what is happening locally and what we can do globally. Very often you work much more on policy levels either or you work grassroots and you cannot get a grip on the global dynamics. I think the interesting thing in this campaign is that we have a very strong local partner and we were able to put some pressure on the companies.

Turning to the Indian perspectives, the following section examines how local actors inside and outside the network perceive the transnational cooperation in the Bayer case.

⁴¹ It can, for example, be assumed that commissioning a study at least in part implies determining the subjects which are to be written about.

5. Transnational Cooperation in the Bayer Case – Indian Perspectives

5.1 Extending the local to the global – Indian actors of the transnational network

Two actors have been identified on the Indian side as being part of the transnational network: the child labour NGO MV Foundation and the researcher and consultant Davuluri Venkateswarlu. This chapter analyses their perspectives on the transnational NGO cooperation in the given case. In order to better understand their respective positions, both actors will first be introduced. It seems appropriate to go into more detail on MVF's approach to child labour as it was their philosophy and method which initially attracted the interest of some crucial European partners.

During more than 15 years of existence, MVF has gained a reputation far beyond its central project area in Andhra Pradesh.⁴² Since it started focussing on child labour in 1991, MVF has initiated a broad movement on this issue, building on community-based people's organisations and forums. It has adopted a special method to promote children's rights which is constantly developing and being readjusted. At the core of the strategy is the idea that the objective of universal education and related issues like the abolition of child labour and child marriages can best be realised by involving all people concerned. MVF therefore works with children, parents, teachers, government officials, employers etc. alike. The strategy is based on motivation and persuasion and aims at bringing about a fundamental change of attitudes in society which is favourable to the child. MVF does not seek to establish educational institutions parallel to existing structures, it rather prepares former child labourers in bridge course camps for mainstreaming into regular government schools. It moreover works with government teachers and politicians to improve the public education system. MVF believes that poverty and a lack of demand for education are not the main reasons behind child labour. The problems are rather the lack of a social norm for education, a lack of support structures and an inhospitable environment within schools. Over the years, MVF has worked out a *Charter of Basic Principles for Emancipation of Child Labour* – the five “non-negotiables”:

1. All children must attend full-time formal day schools.
2. Any child out of school is a child labourer.
3. All work/labour is hazardous; it harms the overall growth and development of the child.
4. There must be total abolition of child labour.

⁴² For the approach and history of MVF see Anjum (2006), Mahajan (2004), Mukherjee et al (2005) and Wazir (2002a, 2002b).

5. Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned.

The approach of MVF challenges established conceptions and practices regarding child labour in several ways. MVF works for *all* children and refuses to take up the cause of any particular section or group of society – unlike many NGO and government programmes which target specific ‘disadvantaged’ groups. The organisation rejects the distinction between ‘hazardous’ and ‘non-hazardous’ work which is made, among others, in Indian law and by the ILO. In the same way, MVF disapproves of the idea to teach child labourers in evening classes or in special schools outside the governmental education system as done by many NGOs in India. In the view of MVF, establishing evening schools for children who work during the day means accepting and thereby perpetuating child labour.

The MVF model for the elimination of child labour has been projected to the national and international level. At the national level, there have been attempts by the government and other NGOs to replicate the method of MVF. At the international level, namely the before mentioned campaign ‘Stop Child Labour – School is the Best Place to Work’ in Europe has sought to promote the MVF approach. The transnational campaign on the involvement of MNCs in the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh, however, is a new and unprecedented form of international cooperation for MVF.

Davuluri Venkateswarlu is the Director of ‘Glocal Research and Consultancy Services’ based in Hyderabad. As a political scientist with a specialisation in labour issues, he works as a researcher and consultant, mostly for NGOs, on issues like child labour, gender relations, rural development, agriculture and irrigation.

Both of the principal Indian actors within the transnational network, MVF and Davuluri Venkateswarlu, have been working on child labour in the cottonseed production long before European NGOs became aware of the problem. When expanding its project area in Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh in 1996, MVF discovered that many children were working in agricultural fields. Rumours had it that farmers from outside the region were employing a large number of children in the production of cottonseeds. MVF decided to ask Venkateswarlu to explore this issue in depth and a first study in Telugu language was published on the issue in 1998. As Venkat Reddy, Co-ordinator of MVF, explains, the perspective on child labour in the cottonseed industry at that time still had a purely local character and the problem was exclusively addressed at the local level. Only after 2001, when a second study briefly mentioning the involvement of MNCs was published in

English, the focus started turning towards the global dimension. This study brought the ICN to commission a third report which discussed in detail the role of MNCs and the complex chain system which links them to local farmers.⁴³ It was this third report (together with active networking undertaken by the ICN) which brought about broad international attention and participation of NGOs, as well as media, rating agencies and investors. According to Davuluri Venkateswarlu, the fact that the reports were published in English and made available on the internet was crucial to the successful establishment of a transnational cooperation in the case (interview Venkateswarlu).

5.2 *A common campaign directed towards a common goal?*

At first sight, both Indian actors of the transnational network seem to pursue the same goal: the eradication of child labour. However, there are clear divergences in their focus and approach. Consequently, their evaluation of achievements and their view on the cooperation with actors from abroad also differs.

As explained earlier, MVF has a holistic approach to child labour. In its view, the work on and with MNCs cannot be separated from the work on child labour in the cottonseed industry in general which is in turn part of the overall effort to eliminate all child labour. This perspective underlies a MVF report on *Elimination of child labour in cottonseed farms through social mobilisation*. The largest part of the report deals with community efforts, including sensitising local government authorities and farmers. However, the report states that there are heavier obstacles “for farmers who are enmeshed in a complex web of relations with the seed industries, both national and global” (MV Foundation, 2005b: 3). For this reason, MVF found it necessary to directly deal with companies and started discussions with the Association of Seed Industry in 2003.

At the beginning of 2005, MVF gave a critical assessment of developments that had taken place so far. The fact that some companies (among them Proagro) acknowledged their responsibility and agreed to establish a Child Labour Elimination Group (CLEG) for joint monitoring of cotton fields by NGO and company representatives had been considered as promising at one point in time. However, MVF soon saw its expectations

⁴³ MNCs depend on local seed farmers in order to produce a large quantity of seeds (as Indian law restricts the size of land that an individual or company may own). The link between the companies and the farmers is established by an independent ‘seed organiser’ who makes arrangements for production and payments with companies on the one hand and farmers on the other. The farmer, finally, chooses the labour he employs – including children (see Venkateswarlu, 2003: 25f).

deceived: “In reality, [...] the resolve to end child labour did not transmit down to the lower levels of the hierarchy within the cottonseed industry; village level contracts continue to be negotiated with poor families surreptitiously. The only message that translated down to the field level was of ‘we are under watch’, which led farmers and seed organisers not to be explicit in their business dealings.” (Ibid.: 12)

The relationship of trust between companies and MVF got increasingly eroded. In April 2005, an internal note of MVF on *Consultative meetings between MV Foundation and seed companies against child labour - 2005* still included a remark that points to a potentially cooperative approach “If companies seriously make attempts at not employing children the issue will not be discussed in the media or in international forums. However, this decision will not be binding on the MVF if something adverse happens.”⁴⁴ During the following months, several incidents let MVF come to the conclusion that companies were not seriously committed to what they promised but only acted in order to “convince the international people” (interview Venkat Reddy). In August 2005, MVF withdrew from the CLEG.⁴⁵ The attempt of cooperation with the companies, in the eyes of MVF, had clearly failed.

The NGO decided to continue its work on child labour in the cottonseed industry separately, focussing on community mobilisation, i.e. on the work with children, farmers, local government officials etc. Next to this, monitoring of (multinational and national) companies still goes on as MVF volunteers continue to inspect cotton fields in Kurnool and Mahbubnagar Districts. Presently, the main monitoring area of MVF is Uyyalawada Mandal in Kurnool District – where Bayer has never produced (local companies and Monsanto are present in this area, previously also Syngenta). This underlines that MVF’s current focus is not on the Bayer case. It should also be mentioned that only at the coordinator level, MVF staff is aware of the campaigning of European NGOs on the issue. Local MVF volunteers, who do the field monitoring, know about the involvement of MNCs, but not about the transnational campaign.

⁴⁴ This remark could be seen as an indicator that MVF, at that time, still hoped for cooperative problem solving with the companies rather than pursuing an adversary approach of exerting media pressure through its international partners. It could, however, also be interpreted in the sense that the ‘threat’ of media and international exposure is used as a strategic device to pressure companies into compliance.

⁴⁵ Among the reasons for MVF’s withdrawal were disputes regarding joint field visits: it appeared that farmers received prior information and therefore could take children from the fields on time. Conflicts also arose on the question of how to verify the age of children and about data that was allegedly hidden by companies. Moreover, Bayer’s ‘ambiguous’ strategy of, on the one hand, declaring to combat child labour within the CLEG and, on the other hand, financing *evening* schools (thereby accepting and perpetuating child labour, see chapter 5.1) was seen by MVF as a proof that a ‘real commitment’ of the company was missing. (Assertions differ on whether the schools have really been evening schools at any point in time.)

In contrast to MVF, Davuluri Venkateswarlu has developed a special focus on the particular aspect of MNC involvement. While his first studies (Venkateswarlu 1998, 2001) explore the conditions of (girl) children working in cottonseed production in general terms, later studies concentrate on the role of MNCs. This is natural as those later studies are commissioned by western NGOs working on this particular aspect. Venkateswarlu has participated in the discussions with MNCs since 2003 and is also a member of the CLEG. Unlike MVF, he continued participating in this forum when differences of opinions came up in summer 2005. The withdrawal of the ‘big player’ MVF was, according to Venkateswarlu, partly based on misunderstandings between the NGO and companies and constituted a major setback for the CLEG. However, he had the feeling that the work in the group should go on as he saw signs of willingness on the companies’ side to correct shortcomings that had been discovered during the first field inspections. The CLEG has continued working with the involvement of different actors, such as small local NGOs, the ILO and an employers consortium against child labour.⁴⁶ Although, in the words of Venkateswarlu, the CLEG has to some extent “lost its vigour” after MVF left, for him it continues to be a valuable forum for (sometimes tense) discussions with companies and common reviews of their activities regarding child labour. He underlines that developments in the CLEG are highly dependent on continuous pressure on the MNCs in their home countries (interview Venkateswarlu).

It is obvious that the two Indian actors follow very distinct approaches to the child labour situation in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed industry. It therefore does not (or no longer) appear appropriate, on the Indian side, to speak of a ‘common campaign directed towards a common goal’. When they began to deal with child labour in the cottonseed production, the cooperation of the two Indian actors was relatively close: Venkateswarlu took the issue up when he was asked by MVF to write a study about the situation; later on, both engaged in joint discussions with companies and started working in the CLEG. At least since the middle of 2005, however, the ways of both actors separated, and currently, they continue their work from very different angles. The distinct perspectives of Indian actors on the situation also translate into divergent evaluations of the transnational cooperation in the case as will be explained in the following chapter. While it seems important for European NGOs to bear these clear differences between both Indian actors in

⁴⁶ Only two companies (both of them multinationals) were left in the CLEG at that time: Emergent Genetics (which had been bought by Monsanto) and Proagro (owned by Bayer).

mind when basing their campaign on information from MVF and Venkateswarlu, it seems that not all of them are fully aware of it.

5.3 *A successful linking of the local and the global?*

Both MVF and Davuluri Venkateswarlu describe the cooperation with European NGOs on MNCs and child labour in the cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh as generally successful. Their respective evaluations, however, differ in certain important aspects.

In the opinion of Davuluri Venkateswarlu, the transnational cooperation of NGOs in this case “clicked well” and the campaign had a “very good impact” at the local level.⁴⁷ He identifies three main reasons for the success. Firstly, the problem could be substantiated by solid, thoroughly investigated evidence about the local situation. Secondly, this evidence, in the form of several studies, was made available in English language on the internet. Finally, “even the companies moved” in this case and – after initial reluctance – recognised the child labour problem as well as the fact that they had to play a role in the situation. The latter is, according to Venkateswarlu, due to the fact that a clear link between the local and the global level could be established and that companies could be proven to have large control over the farmers’ employment practices.

Venkateswarlu is the interview partner (on both the European and the Indian side) who sees the clearest link between the pressure exerted by European NGOs and steps undertaken by MNCs (especially Bayer) to tackle the child labour problem in its supply chain in Andhra Pradesh. He says that, if Bayer developed a proactive attitude on the issue, it was “to 95% because of the pressure”. He also relates particular actions undertaken by European NGOs or media articles launched by them with certain positions and decisions taken by Bayer in India.⁴⁸ It might seem unsurprising that Venkateswarlu describes the linking of local investigation, global pressure and local action in such positive terms – as his main role consists precisely in establishing this connection.

MVF is discernibly less euphoric in evaluating the impact of the transnational cooperation. In the opinion of Venkat Reddy, the transnational campaign, while putting

⁴⁷ Unless otherwise mentioned, quotations in this chapter are taken from the interviews conducted with Davuluri Venkateswarlu and Venkat Reddy (for MVF).

⁴⁸ For example, he believes that at the beginning of 2006, after a report on Bayer had been broadcasted in the TV programme ‘Monitor’ and with the annual stockholders’ meeting approaching, the management of Bayer in Germany exerted strong internal pressure on its Indian branch to realise the goal of ‘zero child labour’.

some pressure on MNCs, was “not fully successful”. It is not the NGOs involved who are to be blamed for this: European organisations are seen as “supporters” and “friends” who “stand behind the MVF movement”. The pressure exerted in western countries on the MNCs involved is in line with pressure exerted by MVF at the village and state level in India. According to Venkat Reddy, it helped insofar as “once they [i.e. western NGOs] raised the voice, the companies came to the discussion table”. The companies, however, have blocked real improvements. Instead of showing a real commitment to eliminate child labour, they react to media exposure in their home countries and concentrate on convincing international consumers and investors that they are acting in a socially responsible way. If the companies were “really into CSR”, so Venkat Reddy, they would also, on their own initiative, come forward to tackle the issue of child labour in the cottonseed industry in other Indian states such as Gujarat. There the problem is less visible in the absence of local NGOs that are able to conduct field monitoring.⁴⁹

Venkat Reddy is optimistic that the campaign can become fully successful. In his view, “the solution lies at the local level”. Strong local organising is necessary in order to gather and disseminate information on the situation and developments on the ground. Moreover, there needs to be an involvement of other crucial actors such as the government. Having a strong local basis to international campaigning is stressed as an essential requirement by both Indian actors. MVF and Venkateswarlu see this as an aspect which positively distinguishes the transnational cooperation on child labour in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed production from previous international campaigns against child labour, such as in the carpet industry.

The variations in perspective among both Indian actors also translate into different perceptions of the transnational network on child labour in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed production. Speaking of a ‘network’, in terms of Keck and Sikkink, as a relatively closed group of ‘relevant actors’ is contrary to the holistic and inclusive approach of MVF who sees any actor who, at any point in time, can potentially contribute to the cause of child rights as ‘relevant’. European NGOs are in that sense not to be distinguished and put apart from any other actor working on child labour at the local, national or international level.

⁴⁹ Gujarat is another important centre of cottonseed production in India. Proagro does not produce in that state, but has a production in Karnataka and a marketing agreement with a company in Tamil Nadu. According to Suhas Joshi, Proagro also pursues a clear ‘no child labour’ approach in Karnataka. The focus of anti child labour projects is however in Andhra Pradesh, where the problem is said to be more pronounced. This statement is contrary to results of a study by Venkateswarlu which finds a share of child workers in Karnataka’s cotton fields which is similarly high to the one in Andhra Pradesh (Venkateswarlu, 2004b).

This conception becomes understandable when bearing in mind the nature of MVF as a collective actor – as a movement rather than an organisation. Every group or individual cooperating with MVF and adhering to its principles becomes, so to speak, a part of the movement – which therefore cannot have clear limits.⁵⁰ Davuluri Venkateswarlu, in turn, is a unitary actor. Concentrating on the CSR aspect of the situation and for this depending on the transnational linkages, he seems to perceive the European NGOs as a relatively well-defined group.

The overall picture of the perspectives of the Indian side of the transnational cooperation is far from uniform. Both Indian actors clearly pursue distinct ‘individual projects’. The broad and holistic approach of MVF on child labour stands in contrast with the specific focus of Davuluri Venkateswarlu on MNC involvement. While Venkateswarlu’s work is essentially based on the strategic use of transnational linkages in order to reach results at the local level, for MVF, the transnational cooperation focussing on MNCs is currently not a priority. The question of ‘how to deal with Bayer’, which was identified as a ‘potential dividing factor’ already on the European side, has clearly separated the Indian actors since summer 2005, making a common strategy for the moment impossible.

Interestingly, despite their different views, both Indian actors consider the work of European NGOs as part of their respective strategy. In this context, the main role of European actors is to put pressure on MNCs in order to ‘make the companies move’. Venkateswarlu sees this role in the specific context of the work done in the CLEG while MVF regards European NGOs as general supporters of its movement for child rights. These views are not mutually exclusive. In fact, as has been established in chapter 4, some of the European NGOs have a stronger focus on CSR while others feel particularly committed to the promotion of MVF’s philosophy and method. This differentiation among European NGOs however is not seen as clear-cut on the Indian side. While, of course, some of the European NGOs are better known to Indian actors (especially the ICN and DWHH), no distinction in the approach of European NGOs was mentioned in the interviews. Even more importantly, the division of Indian actors does not seem very present in the thinking on the European side.

⁵⁰ It appears meaningful, in this context, that Venkat Reddy, co-ordinator of MVF, in the interview does not a single time use the term “partner” to designate European NGOs, but only speaks of “friends” or “supporters”.

Regardless of the fact that the Indian actors have very distinct roles within the situation in India, they see their function in relation to their European partners largely in the same way. Their main task in the transnational cooperation consists in providing detailed information on the local situation, in monitoring progress and in the interaction with relevant actors in India. As mentioned earlier, both Indian actors stress the importance of strong local organising and agree that the ultimate solution to the problem of child labour in the cottonseed industry has to be worked out at the local level.

The division of tasks between European and Indian actors is broadly seen in the same way on both sides of the transnational network. It widely fits the motto of ‘think locally, act globally’: The basic identification of the local problem as well as the main reflections on a solution are done on the Indian side. Action, in the form of pressuring the company, but also talking to it, is undertaken on both the local and the international level. There are, however, certain nuances to this dichotomy and in particular to the ‘local thinking’. While European actors receive the information on the local situation mostly from their Indian partners, they process this information in order to fit it into their respective working mandate. This may include adopting a more or less specific definition of the problem (also a more or less dramatic one), and a linking of the problem to wider structural questions of North-South relations. As already mentioned (see chapter 4), some of the European actors may have a considerable role in shaping the information on the local situation that is provided to other network members – e.g. by developing and sharing their own expertise on the local situation or by (co-)defining the terms of reference of crucial research studies. At a more fundamental level, the ‘local thinking’ within the whole transnational network will significantly be determined by the set of local actors who form part of the membership. This aspect will briefly be looked at in the following section.

6. Beyond the Network – External Perspectives on the Transnational Cooperation

As indicated earlier, there is a huge variety of actors working on child labour in India (see chapter 3). Also the particular problem of child labour in the cottonseed industry in Andhra Pradesh has been taken up by a wide range of organisations, most of which do not form part of the transnational network on Bayer. Looking at the perspectives of those actors on the local situation and at their ‘external’ view on the transnational campaign (as far as such a view exists) can be expected to be relevant for an actor-oriented analysis of the transnational network in at least two regards. On the one hand, it allows to point out who *does not* form part of the network – and whose perspective is therefore left out of the transnational campaign. In that way, it can be shown, how the view of (especially European) network members on the situation is limited by the set of (local) actors directly cooperating with them. On the other hand, external views on the network give an impression to what extent the transnational campaign is perceived as a relevant intervention at the local level (and to what extent this perception matches with the way in which the network assesses its own impacts). A complete analysis of the ‘external perspectives’ on the transnational network would amount to writing another thesis. Far from having this ambition, the present chapter aims at giving an impression of the potential usefulness of such an examination by briefly describing the views of a limited number of external actors that were interviewed on the issue in India.

The Bayer company is the external actor that might be assumed to have most to say about the transnational campaign. Unsurprisingly, Bayer denies that any of its activities against child labour in Andhra Pradesh is related to the campaigning of NGOs or to media exposure. The company instead points to its long history of social commitment. Nevertheless, employees of Bayer working on CSR clearly have an opinion on the campaign which is interesting to look at.⁵¹ Michael Schneider of Bayer CropScience speaks of the transnational network as of an actor with relatively high internal coherence and clear limits. In his view, the cooperation within such a network has certain limiting effects for the individual member organisations. In particular, any potential interest in developing a solution *in cooperation with* the company is spoiled by purely decrying organisations through group pressure.⁵² Moreover, the almost exclusive reliance on two

⁵¹ Bayer is another extreme example of a collective actor. The ‘perspective of Bayer’ as reported here is most widely based on remarks made by Michael Schneider during two interviews.

⁵² While Michael Schneider of Bayer CropScience deplores the purely criticising attitude of the NGOs, most interviewed NGO representatives generally welcome (most of) Bayer’s projects and programmes against

local partners (who moreover largely pursue their material self-interest with the campaign) as sources of information is critically questioned by Michael Schneider. By leaving other important actors in India, such as local NGOs and international organisations, out of view, the picture of the local situation becomes skewed towards the purely negative side.

Next to the company, international organisations working on child labour in Andhra Pradesh know about the work of western NGOs on the MNCs' involvement in the problem in general terms, but not about details on the organisations involved and the activities undertaken by them. Both the ILO and UNICEF primarily work with the Government of Andhra Pradesh, trying to encourage and develop an integrated approach to child labour. While neither of the international organisations particularly focuses on MNCs, both Murali Krishna from the ILO and Sudha Murali from UNICEF believe that the involvement of those companies gives the situation an additional dimension. The ILO has initiated a dialogue between the employers' association of small local companies ('Seedsmen's Association') and the union of large and multinational companies ('Association of Seed Industry') in Andhra Pradesh. The aim is to make both sides learn from each other with regard to their anti-child-labour policies. This idea comes close to the 'signal effect' of companies with leading policies on child labour for which some of the European NGOs hope in the Bayer case. Both the ILO and UNICEF recognize that MNCs can potentially play a role in solving the child labour problem in the cottonseed industry in Andhra Pradesh, in particular by paying higher procurement prices to their supplying farmers and strictly enforcing a no-child-labour policy. They therefore see the campaign on the MNCs' involvement in western countries as useful support to address this particular aspect of the situation. In the end, however, a vast number of structural and social issues has to be tackled at the local level in order to bring about substantial improvement.

Other actors working against child labour in the cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh show little awareness of the transnational cooperation on the involvement of MNCs. Already Bayer's local partner NGO, Naandi Foundation, does not know any details on the network in Europe. Preetha Bhakta, co-ordinator of the Education Resource Group of Naandi, states that she has read about the work of European NGOs on the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh. But it is obvious that she is not aware of the campaign on Bayer. According to her, none of the European NGOs has ever contacted Naandi in order to request information on Bayer's projects. The unawareness of Naandi is all the more

child labour in Andhra Pradesh and agree that Bayer has been relatively proactive, compared to other MNCs in the same situation.

surprising as Naandi is actively involved in the monitoring work of the CLEG and knows about the work of both Indian network members on the issue. Being a funding and implementation agency rather than a campaigning organisation, however, Naandi's focus clearly is more on implementing projects for Bayer than on working in the CLEG. Other NGOs working at the local level against child labour are not at all aware of the transnational campaign and very sceptical about potential contributions of MNCs to solve the problem. One example is the Society for People's Economic and Educational Development (SPEED) which is running a residential bridge course camp for former child labourers in the cottonseed production area and was previously also participating in the CLEG's work.

Actors at the field level, such as local MVF volunteers or members of village based 'Child Right Protection Forums'⁵³, generally see the problem from a different perspective. Rather than reflecting theoretically on the sustainability and morality of a company's policy, they see how certain measures work out on the ground. Based on their experience, they worry about certain issues that are not raised (in the same way) in the transnational campaign. For example, they do not question the long-term practicability of the incentives and sanctioning system introduced by Bayer (as done by Rainer Kruse from GMCL and Gerard Oonk from the ICN), but they criticise that this mechanism is not effective as most farmers are not aware of it. This concern was confirmed in interviews with two farmers who have been producing cottonseeds for Bayer in the seasons 2003/04-2004/05 and 2005/06 respectively. The first farmer has employed children on his field, the second has not, but neither of them has heard about or experienced the incentives and sanctioning mechanism. Both of the interviewed farmers have not been able to read and fully understand the agreement they have signed with the company. Another issue mentioned by some field level activists (but raised by none of the network members within the interviews) is that the financial support of educational infrastructure in villages by companies might bear a risk of compromising. Villagers might be less inclined to condemn the employment of children by a company's supplying farmer if they know that the same company has given funds for a school in their community. A final main concern at the field level (which has been taken up in the transnational network) is the immediate health risk to the children working in the cotton fields.

⁵³ 'Child Right Protection Forums' (CRPFs) are village-based associations which undertake activities such as reviewing the status of children who are out of school and trying to enrol them into school as well as building networks and alliances to motivate others to respect and advocate child rights. While MVF has helped the establishment of CRPFs at a large scale throughout Andhra Pradesh, these forums work independently.

The perspectives of actors working against child labour in Andhra Pradesh's cottonseed production but not forming part of the transnational cooperation on the Bayer case help putting the case into context and reveal a number of aspects that remain widely out of the view of especially the European NGOs. This is not to say that the transnational network could and should take up all aspects of the problem. The fact that actors from abroad work on the issue from a particular angle (namely the involvement of MNCs – or even a particular MNC) is seen as natural in India. However, also when working on a particular case, it seems important to keep the wider picture of local circumstances in mind, such as societal issues underlying child labour and the interlocking of different actors involved in the problem and its solution. The factors remaining out of the immediate reach of the transnational campaign have crucial limiting effects on what the network can potentially achieve. Those should be kept in mind for example when evaluating the development of the local situation and the 'performance' of the targeted company. This aspect is explicitly recognised by Davuluri Venkateswarlu who argues that Bayer should not primarily be criticised on the basis of the *number* of children working for its supplying farmers but on the basis of whether or not it has kept its promises for the implementation of concrete steps to tackle the problem.

Finally, a last external actor is to be mentioned briefly who might not only have distinct perspective, but also a discernible influence on the network: the investigator of the network herself. It may at first sight seem odd to describe the (supposedly independent and non-interfering) researcher of a network as an 'actor', but there are good reasons for taking this view. The research method adopted here – in particular conducting *semi-structured* interviews and making field visits – implies subsequent interaction with all network members. While the perspective of the researcher is shaped with every new interview, previously established information naturally enters the interaction with actors in the form of how and what questions are asked and of discussions that emerged at various points. The direct confrontation with an external perspective (as well as with half-digested perspectives of other network members) could indeed give actors an impetus for re-thinking part of their work and cooperation. Several actors indicated that the interview was a valuable opportunity for them to reflect on the history and current developments of the campaign and at various times information was brought up that the interview partner was not yet aware of. The learning process of such a type of interactive research is mutual in character.

7. Conclusion

The present analysis of NGO cooperation in the case of Bayer and child labour in the cottonseed production of Andhra Pradesh has shown that an actor-oriented approach can be useful for analysing the internal dynamics of a transnational network. It has been examined how actors with various backgrounds and interests gather around a specific problem and, to some extent, develop a common campaign. The actors share basic principles and values – most importantly the idea that child labour has to be abolished and that those who are involved, in this case MNCs, have to take responsibility.

It has, however, also proven true that some differences regarding ‘principled ideas and values’ among actors constitute a dividing factor within the network. In this respect, the question of how to deal with the company is most important in the case under examination. This question has led to certain complications in the cooperation on the European side and even more importantly on the Indian side of the network. Contests over meanings, different interpretations of the situation and the attempt of each individual actor to push forward his particular interest and ‘individual project’ give the network a “dynamic and constantly evolving” (Henry et al.: 851) nature rather than a stable and uniform character.

Originally, the case of MNC involvement in Andhra Pradesh’s child labour problem was taken up by some crucial European actors (especially the ICN and DWHH) in support of the MVF’s work. MVF however saw the attempt to include the MNCs in their strategy as a clear failure and subsequently focussed on other aspects of the situation. The central Indian actor decided to partly retreat from the work of the transnational network (which it has never perceived as a separate entity anyhow). The withdrawal of MVF has certainly slowed down activities on the case in India – and probably also within the entire transnational network. While the work on MNCs (and in particular Bayer) and child labour in Andhra Pradesh’s cottonseed production continues, the idea of some organisations to promote the MVF’s approach to child labour within this particular campaign has receded into the background. The campaign of the transnational network has largely become a campaign on a CSR case on child labour, rather than one on a child labour case with a CSR aspect.

This development has had important implications for the network’s perspective on the local situation. MVF is probably the actor who has the broadest overview of what is happening at the field level. The organisation does however no longer seem to follow

Bayer's activities in the area in a systematic way.⁵⁴ The crucial source of information on the local situation in the given case is therefore Davuluri Venkateswarlu who directly interacts with the companies, has access to Bayer's data on child labour and at the same time conducts own investigations of the situation. The perspective of Venkateswarlu is very different from MVF's holistic approach, in the sense that it is more focussed on monitoring (particular) companies and less on the overall interplay of factors that influence the local situation (including various governmental and private actors as well as structural/societal factors).

The picture of the local situation is shaped by actors of both the European and Indian side. On the one hand, European NGOs choose the local partners they contact (or even engage in the case of Venkateswarlu) in order to get *a certain type* of information. Especially when taking external perspectives into account, it becomes clearly visible how the set of (in particular local) actors involved shapes and limits the perspective of European NGOs on the local situation. On the other hand, local actors are far from only being passive providers of information. They are clearly involved in setting the agenda of the network and pursue their own 'individual projects' with very distinct ideas on how the local problem of child labour should be approached. 'Thinking locally' within the campaign clearly happens through both an Indian and a European lens. Acting is not only done at the global level in the form of exerting pressure on MNCs in their home countries, but at least as importantly at the local level where the solution has to be worked out – a fact which is recognised at both sides of the network.

Throughout the thesis, a distinction of 'local vs. global' (or Indian vs. European) actors has been made. This is useful and can be justified in the sense that a relatively clear (and uncontested) division of labour is perceived within the network between 'global' and 'local' actors. However, the dichotomy is not as clear-cut as one could assume. On the European side, some actors are closer to the situation in India than others (in their way of thinking as well as their level of information) – and some of them are commonly regarded as 'experts' on local issues. The Indian actors, in turn, have been to Europe in order to do international advocacy work.

The 'local vs. global' dichotomy becomes even more questionable when looking at the 'individual projects' of network members. Here, at least one important dividing line,

⁵⁴ As mentioned earlier, MVF still monitors cotton fields, however not with a specific focus on Bayer's production area. The overall knowledge about Bayer's *current* activities and projects seems incomplete.

entirely independent from geographical spaces, comes to mind: the contrast of more ‘CSR oriented’ actors and more ‘child labour’ oriented actors. Not all of the organisations involved can clearly be classified in either of the categories, but it is clear that, e.g. organisations like the CBG, Germanwatch – and most probably also Venkateswarlu, at least during the last few years – are distinct from e.g. MVF and GMCL in that they concentrate more on the CSR aspect of the case. Another criterion of distinction that should be mentioned (and that is potentially linked to the ‘CSR vs. child labour’ distinction) is the perspective of different actors on the transnational cooperation itself – i.e. the degree to which organisations conceive of the ‘transnational network’ as a relatively well-defined entity in itself.

A stigmatising “image of an all powerful ‘outside’ and an inferior ‘inside’” as condemned by Long (2001: 34) is clearly inappropriate in the case under examination. One of the strongest actors within the transnational cooperation is the Indian NGO MVF. Far from being in need of ‘empowerment’ through international supporters, MVF over the years has gained a strong reputation and authority at both the local and international level. In fact, both European and Indian actors of the network equally stress the importance of their partners abroad in order to make their work – and the whole campaign – effective. A rhetoric of dominance and subordination is not discernible within the network. It is certainly true that network members have lesser or greater authority and power, but these attributes seem independent from their geographical location.

While the thesis has pointed to the potential usefulness of an actor-oriented approach to show how the agency characteristics of network members lead to internal dynamics that influence the network’s orientation, it has not shown in a systematic way which pattern these mechanisms follow. While one important message of this paper is that dynamics evolving from the interplay of actors with different values, perspectives and ‘individual projects’ are important in order to fully understand the functioning of a (transnational NGO) network, it does in no way deny the relevance of factors external to the network identified in earlier works. Further research would therefore at least have to go into two directions. Firstly, the internal factors and mechanisms determining a network’s orientation and effectiveness have to be explored in a more systematic and complete way. Secondly, both perspectives, internal and external would have to be brought together in order to establish a complete picture of what influences the functioning of transnational NGO networks.

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Deutsche Welthungerhilfe – <http://www.welthungerhilfe.de>

Eine Welt Netz NRW – <http://www.eine-welt-netz-nrw.de>

Germanwatch – <http://www.germanwatch.org>

Global March Against Child Labour, German section – <http://www.globalmarch.de>

India Committee of the Netherlands – <http://www.indianet.nl>

MV Foundation – <http://www.mvfindia.in>

‘Stop Child Labour! School is the Best Place to Work’ Campaign – <http://www.schoolisthebestplacetowork.org>

Südwind – <http://www.suedwind-institut.de>

ANNEXE I

List of Interviews and Field Visits Conducted for the Thesis⁵⁵

Interviews:

1. Gerard Oonk, Co-ordinator, *India Committee of the Netherlands*, Senior policy advisor *Stop Child Labour Campaign*
Utrecht, 5th July 2006.
2. Philipp Mimkes, Member of the board, *Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren*
Cologne, 7th July 2006.
3. Cornelia Heydenreich, *Germanwatch*
Berlin, 1st August 2006.
4. Michael Schneider, Department Corporate Social Responsibility/Corporate Communications, *Bayer CropScience Limited*
Monheim, 24th August 2006.
5. Jens Elmer, *Eine Welt Netz NRW*
Münster, 25th August 2006.
6. Antje Paulsen, *Deutsche Welthungerhilfe*
Telephone Interview, 29th August 2006.
7. Antje Schneeweiß, *Südwind Institut*
Siegburg, 8th September 2006.
8. Rainer Kruse, *Global March Against Child Labour* (German Section)
Telephone Interview, 5th October 2006.
9. Venkat Reddy, Co-ordinator, *MV Foundation*
Secunderabad, 29th January 2007.
10. Suhas Joshi, Manager – strategic initiatives, *Proagro/Bayer CropScience Limited*
and Michael Schneider, Department Corporate Social Responsibility/Corporate Communications, *Bayer CropScience Limited*
Hyderabad, 30th January 2007.
11. Davuluri Venkateswarlu, Director, *Glocal Research and Consultancy Services*
Hyderabad, 31st January 2007.
12. J. Bhasker, Co-ordinator Kurnool District, *MV Foundation*
Secunderabad, 2nd February 2007.

⁵⁵ The interviews with Phillip Mimkes, Cornelia Heydenreich, Michael Schneider, Jens Elmer, Antje Paulsen, Antje Schneeweiß and Rainer Kruse have been conducted in German and subsequently have been translated by the author into English. All other interviews have been conducted in English. Conversations during field visits were usually conducted in Telugu with English translation.

13. Preetha Bhakta, Co-ordinator Education Resource Group, *Naandi Foundation* Hyderabad, 15th February 2007.
14. M. Murali Krishna, Project Officer Andhra Pradesh State Based Project, *ILO* Secunderabad, 5th March 2007.
15. Sudha Murali, Child Protection Officer, *UNICEF* Hyderabad, 5th March 2007.

Field visits:

1. *Field visit to Kurnool and Mahbubnagar Districts, 5th and 6th February 2007*
 - Attended a Sarpanches meeting, Uyyalawada Mandal, Kurnool District
 - Meeting with MVF volunteers, Uyyalawada Mandal, Kurnool District
 - Meeting with a farmer producing cottonseeds for Proagro during the seasons of 2004/05 and 2005/06, Kurnool District
 - Meeting with a farmer producing cottonseeds for Proagro during the 2006/07 season, Mahbubnagar District
 - Visit to a residential bridge course camp for former girls and boys child labourers, run by the local NGO SPEED; meeting with four former girl child labourers, Maldakel Village, Mahbubnagar District
 - Meeting with Ravi Prakash, Director of local NGO SPEED, Gadwal, Mahbubnagar District
2. *Field visit to Ranga Reddy District, 23rd February 2007*
 - Attended a meeting of representatives of the Norwegian Bank for Investment Management with ca. 30 MVF field level activists (as well as other MVF staff) from the Districts of Ranga Reddy, Mahbubnagar and Kurnool on CSR in the cottonseed production, at Aloor Camp (MVF residential bridge course camp for former girl child labourers, Ranga Reddy District)
3. *Field visit to Mahbubnagar District, 26th and 27th February 2007*
 - Meeting with P. Rambabu, Program Officer Mahbubnagar, Naandi Foundation, Gadwal, Mahbubnagar District
 - Visit to 'Creative Learning Centres' financed by Proagro/Bayer CropScience in the villages Kothapalli and Venkatonipalli in Gadwal Mandal, Mahbubnagar District
 - Meeting with members of 'Child Rights Protection Forums', MVF staff and twelve former child labourers, Gadwal, Mahbubnagar District

ANNEXE II: Overview of important developments and activities in the Bayer campaign⁵⁶

Developments in Indian Part of the Network	Developments in European Part of the Network	Developments Outside the Network
1996		
The India Committee of the Netherlands starts cooperating with MV Foundation.		
1998		
D. Venkateswarlu writes a first study on child labour in the cottonseed industry in Andhra Pradesh for MV Foundation (in Telugu language)		Pasua Narsamma (13 years) dies working in a cotton farm in Ranga Reddy District. This incident brings into focus the exploitation of young girls by hybrid cottonseed producers. One year later, Balaraju (12 years) dies under similar circumstances in the same district.
2000		
		The ILO-IPEC starts the first four-year phase of the Andhra Pradesh State Based Project for the elimination of child labour.

⁵⁶ This overview does not claim to give a complete list of all developments and activities of the Bayer campaign. It only lists the developments and activities mentioned on the websites of the organisations involved and on Bayer’s website as well as those mentioned in the interviews.

2001		
<p>The study "Seeds of Bondage: Female Child Bonded Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh", written by D. Venkateswarlu and commissioned by the Business and Community Foundation and Plan International is published. A second study by the author, "Multinational Seed Companies and Girl Child Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh", commissioned by Catholic Relief Services, remains unpublished.</p>	<p>The India Committee of the Netherlands becomes aware of the involvement of MNCs in the child labour problem in Andhra Pradesh and, together with MV Foundation, decides to take action.</p>	<p>According to the official census, there are 12.7 million child labourers in India, 1.36 million of them in Andhra Pradesh.</p> <p>The Government of Andhra Pradesh announces the objective to completely eliminate child labour in the state by 2005.</p> <p>In September, the Seedsmen Association of Andhra Pradesh, an organisation of seed producers, passes a resolution to stop using child workers on cottonseed farms.</p>
2002		
		<p>In April, the Seedsmen Association of Andhra Pradesh starts a model project for the elimination of child labour in Boothpur mandal in Mahbubnagar district, Andhra Pradesh</p> <p>Under the ILO-IPEC programme, projects are implemented in two further mandals of the same district (Maldakal and Tadur), with a special focus on girl child labour in hybrid cottonseed production.</p>

2003

The study "Child Labour and Trans-national Seed Companies in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh", written by D. Venkateswarlu and commissioned by the India Committee of the Netherlands is published.

On 7th September, representatives of seed producers (the Association of Seed Industry of which Proagro is member, and the largest Indian company Nuziveedu) meet with MV Foundation. A 'Child Labour Elimination Group' (CLEG) is formed for internal monitoring of seed farmers' labour practices and for joining efforts to solve the child labour problem. The CLEG is also supposed to work out a plan with MV Foundation for external monitoring. NGOs welcome this meeting as a first open acceptance by the companies of their responsibility in the child labour problem.

On 13th December, the Association of Seed Industry meets with MV Foundation. They agree on a common action plan.

In Germany, Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Germanwatch, Global March Against Child Labour and Deutsche Welthungerhilfe start working on the Bayer case.

On 31st July, the India Committee of the Netherlands, Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren and Global March Against Child Labour publish the study "Child Labour and Trans-national Seed Companies in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh", written by D. Venkateswarlu, in Europe as well as a joint press release.

On 18th December, Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Germanwatch and Global March Against Child Labour write an open letter to Bayer CropScience. Bayer replies on 4th February 2004.

Bayer denies that it (or its Indian subsidiary) employs child labourers. (See e.g. the media articles in *tageszeitung*, 31.07.2003, and in *SWR1*, 10.08.2003)

In May, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, together with several other NGOs starts the international campaign "Stop child labour! School is the best place to work". Partners in this campaign are among others MV Foundation, the India Committee of the Netherlands and Global March Against Child Labour.

In its annual assembly on 13th September, the Association of Seed Industry passes a resolution "to proactively discourage directly and through its members the practice of child labor in hybrid cottonseed production and further take effective steps along with other stakeholders towards eradication of this evil from the hybrid cottonseed industry."

2004

On 25th March, several representatives of seed companies (among others Bayer/Proagro) meet with MV Foundation and D. Venkateswarlu and discuss about a campaign against child labour in cotton seed production.

In June/July, three MNCs, among them Bayer/Proagro, provide lists of villages of production and seed organisers to MV Foundation in order to facilitate joint monitoring of farmers.

In September, the studies "Child Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Gujarat and Karnataka" and "Child Labour in Hybrid Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh: Recent Developments", written by D. Venkateswarlu and commissioned by the India Committee of the Netherlands are published.

In September, MV Foundation issues the statement "Combating Child Labour in Cottonseed Production: Statement on the Present Role of Multinational Companies in Andhra Pradesh".

Südwind and the Eine Welt Netz NRW start working on the Bayer case.

At the annual stockholders' meeting of Bayer, Germanwatch criticises the company's role in Andhra Pradesh.

In October, Südwind organises a conference on ethical investment in Bonn. D. Venkateswarlu is among the participants.

On 11th October, Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Germanwatch and Global March Against Child Labour submit an OECD complaint against Bayer to the National OECD Contact Point at the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour.

In January, Proagro organises an orientation meeting for its supplying farmers in Kurnool district dealing with the issue of child labour.

In June, Mallesh (13 years) dies during the spraying of pesticides in a cotton farm in Kurnool District. In reaction to this incident, MV Foundation calls upon the Government to conduct an enquiry into the exploitation of children in the sector.

From 2nd to 5th November, an international child labour conference is held in Hyderabad, capital of Andhra Pradesh under the title "Out of Work and Into School - Children's Right to Education as a Non-Negotiable". Among the participants are Antje Paulsen (Deutsche Welthungerhilfe), Clive J. Pegg (Proagro), Shantha Sinha (MV Foundation) and Davuluri Venkateswarlu.

2005

From April to August, in total 10 meetings are held between Indian representatives of MNCs (among them Bayer), D. Venkateswarlu and MV Foundation to discuss details of an action plan for the elimination of child labour in supplying farms.

In meetings on 10th and 26th August, after common monitoring visits by MNC and MV Foundation staff to farms, MV Foundation expresses serious concerns about the way in which those visits were conducted as well as on data provided by the companies. According to Proagro, MV Foundation is unreceptive to attempts of solving existing problems. MV Foundation withdraws from the CLEG (i.e. from cooperation with MNCs).

On 1st September, MV Foundation circulates a report of its co-ordinator for Kurnool District on shortcomings in the companies' efforts to eliminate child labour.

In February, the Eine Welt Netz NRW starts a campaign under the slogan 'Wer hat mit Kinderarbeit und Kopfschmerzen zu tun... und reimt sich auf MAYER?' ('Who has to do with child labour and headaches and rhymes with MAYER?')

In March, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and the Eine Welt Netz NRW hold (separate) meetings with Bayer on the child labour issue in Monheim.

For 22nd March, the National OECD Contact Point arranges a meeting of the three complainants (Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Germanwatch, Global March Against Child Labour) and Bayer. Bayer cancels the meeting because of the participation of the Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren.

On 30th April, the Eine Welt Netz NRW protests at Bayer's annual stockholders' meeting.

On 27th April, Bayer writes a letter to the Eine Welt Netz NRW, replying to a letter from the NGO dated 20th April. Bayer announces a plan of action (called 'Harvest of happiness') to solve the child labour problem in its supply chain.

In September, Jens Elmer (Eine Welt Netz NRW) and the journalist Werner Paczian undertake a field trip to Andhra Pradesh.

2005 (continued)

<p>On 20th October, the study "The Price of Childhood: On the Link Between Prices Paid to Farmers and the Use of Child Labour in Cottonseed Production in Andhra Pradesh, India", written by D. Venkateswarlu and L. da Corta and commissioned by the India Committee of the Netherlands, the International Labour Rights Fund and the Eine Welt Netz NRW is published.</p>	<p>In October, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe has a second meeting with Bayer in Monheim.</p> <p>On 22nd October, the Eine Welt Netz NRW organises a panel discussion with D. Venkateswarlu, J. Elmer and W. Paczian in Düsseldorf. The invited representative of Bayer, W. Faust, cancels because of "health problems".</p>	<p>Proagro signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Bank of India to provide seed growers with access to low interest rate credit.</p> <p>Naandi Foundation (in cooperation with Proagro) starts setting up 'Creative Learning Centres' preparing former child labourers for joining the formal school system.</p>
<p>Shantha Sinha visits Europe in the context of the 'Stop Child Labour' campaign. She personally meets some representatives of German NGOs working on the Bayer case.</p>		
	<p>On 25th December, the Coordination gegen Bayer-Gefahren, Deutsche Welthungerhilfe, Germanwatch, Global March, India Committee of the Netherlands and Südwind write a common letter to Bayer asking for details on the implementation and results of the 'Harvest of happiness' programme.</p>	

2006

The CLEG (with participation of Proagro and D. Venkateswarlu) profoundly reviews the field monitoring system .

At Bayer's annual stockholders' meeting, the Eine Welt Netz NRW criticises the company's role in Andhra Pradesh.

On 19th January, the German TV programme 'Monitor' broadcasts a critical report on child labour in Bayer's supply chain in Andhra Pradesh.

In July, Proagro conducts a training for cotton seed farmers in Andhra Pradesh to enhance productivity. The training forms part of an initiative called 'Target 400 Programme'.

On 10th October, the ban of the employment of children in domestic work as well as in hotels and restaurants imposed by the Indian Government becomes effective.