

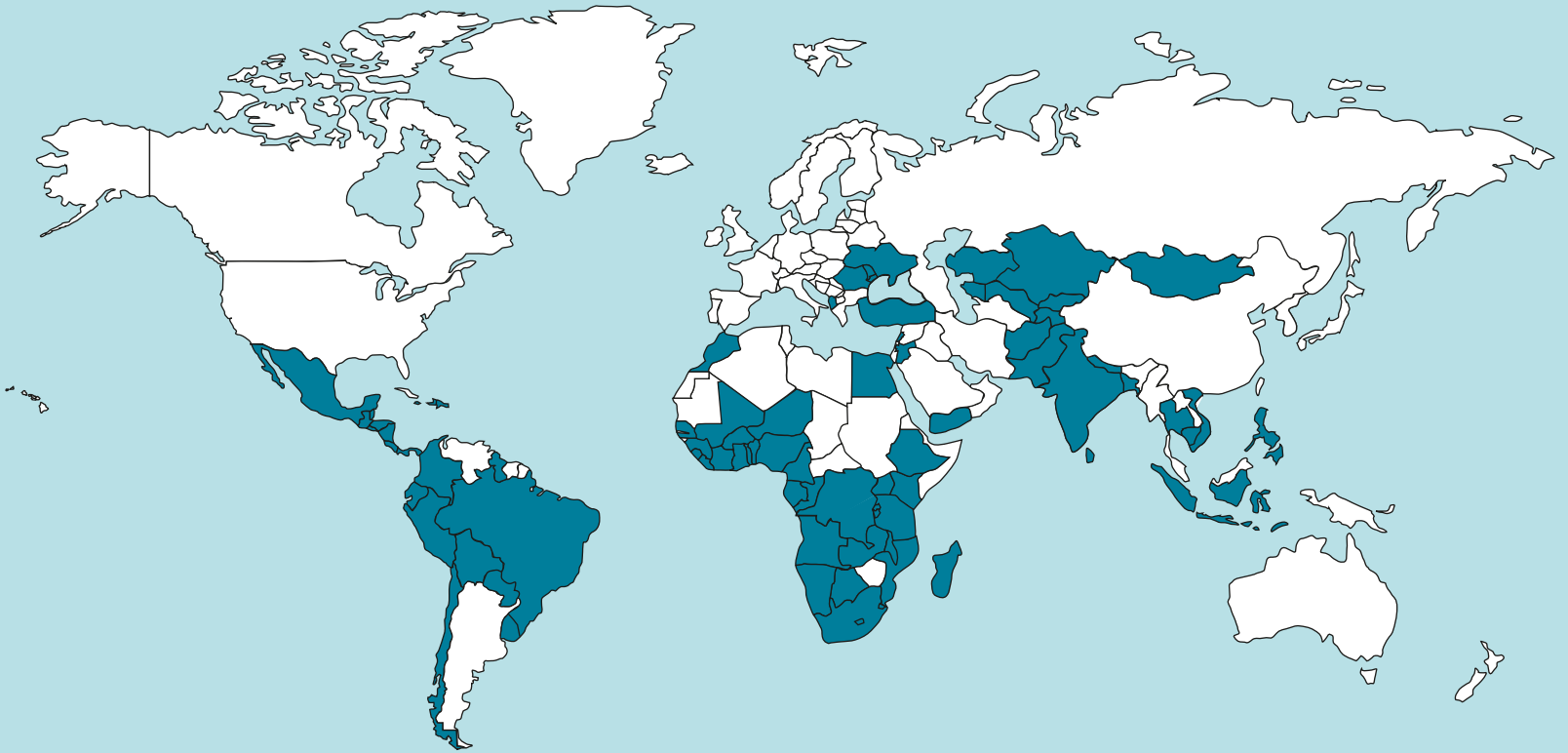
Faces

Faces of Change



Highlights of U.S. Department of Labor Efforts to Combat International Child Labor

Faces of Change



AMERICAS

Belize
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Dominican Republic
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Guyana
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Congo, Republic of
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Madagascar
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Mozambique
Namibia
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Senegal
Sierra Leone
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Swaziland
Tanzania
Togo
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ASIA

Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Cambodia
India
Indonesia
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Mongolia
Nepal
Pakistan
Philippines
Sri Lanka
Tajikistan
Thailand
Uzbekistan
Vietnam

USDOL has funded projects or project-related activities to eliminate child labor and increase understanding of the issue in these 80 countries.

Foreword



A decade has passed since the 174 member countries of the International Labor Organization unanimously adopted Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Convention 182 calls for urgent action to end the exploitation of children in abusive or hazardous work. The United States was one of the first countries to ratify this convention, which quickly became the keystone of the modern-day global campaign against child labor.

We have taken this commitment seriously. Since 1995, the United States has provided over \$720 million for projects around the world that have increased the global knowledge base on child labor, bolstered national efforts to confront the issue, and implemented action initiatives that have rescued some 1.3 million children from exploitive labor. While we have accomplished a great deal, there is more that must be done to protect children from premature entry into the workforce at the expense of their education and healthy, productive development.

Exploitive child labor puts the world's most vulnerable children at risk and perpetuates a cycle of poverty that prevents families and nations from reaching their full potential. Education is a key tool needed to break this cycle, as the children of uneducated mothers are far more likely to be out of school and their own children, in turn, are more likely to follow the same path of work over school. This is why U.S. Department of Labor-funded projects, including the ones featured in this second edition of *Faces of Change*, focus on providing education and training opportunities as a means of withdrawing and preventing children from exploitive child labor.

The children, families, and communities featured in this publication put a personal face to the global phenomenon of child labor. Their stories show how children and their parents, when given the opportunity, will choose education over child labor. With this education, children not only learn the basic skills they need to succeed in life, but discover that they, too, can dream of something better for themselves, their families, and their countries. It is for these dreams that we must re-double our efforts to eradicate this world of abusive, exploitive child labor.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hilda L. Solis".

Hilda L. Solis

U.S. Secretary of Labor

Faces *of* Change



Highlights of U.S. Department of Labor Efforts to Combat International Child Labor

The face of child labor takes many forms. It is the child who works in pesticide-laden fields for hours each day. It is the girl who is forced to drop out of school to support her siblings following the loss of her parents to HIV/AIDS. It is the boy who exchanges his pencils for tools after his school is destroyed by a devastating earthquake. The worst forms of child labor are played out on the world stage every day, from mines and factories to rural plantations to crowded city streets.

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) recognizes that child labor deprives children of the opportunity to receive an education and the chance of a better future. It traps them in a perpetual cycle of poverty and illiteracy. In response, USDOL has supported programs around the world that have removed hundreds of

“We have to encourage parents so they will send their children to school because it’s in school where I’m learning...”

— Yasner, 10, Nicaragua

thousands of children from hazardous work conditions and prevented countless others from suffering a similar fate. The children served by these projects have been given the chance to go to school, learn new skills, and have a better future.

This second edition of *Faces of Change* is intended to highlight the innovative strategies used by USDOL-supported projects and the impact they are having on

children, their families, communities, and governments. This change is reflected in the eyes of a former child fisherman, the first in his family who can read and write. It is heard in the laughter of boys playing soccer who until recently labored in cramped workshops stitching soccer balls. It is seen in the smile of a mother whose children no longer face the hardship of long, dark hours in a mine.

Faces of Change supports the conviction that the elimination of the worst forms of child labor is not only desirable, but necessary as both a human rights imperative and an investment in the education and skills of generations to come. USDOL hopes that the people and stories profiled in this booklet will inspire others committed to finding solutions.

encourage

Forces of Change: The United States and the Global Campaign against Child Labor

In 2004, there were some 218 million child laborers ages 5 to 17 around the world.* Children work for a variety of reasons. Often it is simply a matter of survival—they are required to work to help provide basic necessities for themselves and their families. Others work because they cannot afford to study, lack access to quality educational programs, or are discouraged from attending school by cultural norms. Some of the world's children work for a few hours a day alongside their parents in family businesses or perform light work that is not considered to be exploitive. Others, however, toil under deplorable and abusive conditions with little or no pay and without the opportunity to go to school. Child labor perpetuates generational poverty, impedes the economic development of nations, and has an impact on global markets.

The worst forms of child labor, as defined by ILO Convention 182, include slavery, forced or compulsory labor, debt bondage, trafficking, involvement in illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation, forced recruitment of children into armed conflict, and work that can be harmful due to the conditions under which it is performed. These forms have been identified as worst forms of child labor by the international community through the development and promotion of ILO Convention 182, one of the most widely ratified of all ILO Conventions.

The United States has been at the forefront of global efforts to combat child labor, especially in its worst forms. USDOL is a leader in supporting pioneer efforts to turn the principles of International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 182 into concrete reality. Since 1995, Congress has provided \$660 million to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects in more than 80 countries.

These projects are strengthening national policies and institutions, enhancing public awareness, and increasing the knowledge base on child labor. With the support of USDOL, over one million children have been withdrawn or protected from exploitive child labor and provided with educational opportunities.

USDOL works with a number of non-governmental and international organizations, as well as private sector firms to combat child labor. The ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC) has been a USDOL partner since 1995. Congress has appropriated over \$370 million to USDOL to support ILO-IPEC, making the United States the program's leading donor country. USDOL-funded efforts include global, regional, and country projects to build capacity in order to sustain commitments to eliminate exploitive child labor. They also include technical assistance programs focusing on data collection to document the nature and extent of child labor throughout the world, and cutting-edge research to inform program and policy decisions. With USDOL support, ILO-IPEC, UNICEF, and the World Bank founded the Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project to address the need for more accurate statistics on working children. IPEC is also using USDOL funding to trace the impact of child labor projects as they are implemented and to develop tracking systems to identify the longer-term effects on children and their families.



*International Labor Organization, *The End of Child Labour: Within Reach*, Geneva, May 2006.

USDOL International Child Labor Programs: Changing Child Labor Practices

The projects featured in *Faces of Change* show how a comprehensive approach that addresses institutional and societal issues can meet this complex challenge. This means supporting projects that address the specific situation of each country, region, or locality. Just as no two countries are alike, no two projects and no two stories are alike.

Faces of Change is intended to bring to life the varied experiences our partners and beneficiaries share. It attempts to translate the technical vocabulary of international treaties, laws, regulations, and economic agreements into human terms. The stories that follow will answer questions like: What happens to a community when an education center is built in its village for the first time? What are the dreams of a girl rescued from sexual exploitation? How do children feel when they are no longer forced to use a gun but are given tools to craft carpentry with? How do skills training and increased wages affect parents' ability to provide for their children? How do families and children respond when their homes and livelihoods are washed away by natural disaster? The elimination of child labor, as demonstrated by *Faces of Change*, is achievable, and is being achieved, in villages, cities, and nations across the globe.

The projects highlighted in this publication illustrate the themes that cut across USDOL-funded programs: Education and Youth Employment; Legislation and Enforcement; Crisis Intervention; Political Stability; and Trade Development and Economic Participation.

USDOL-funded projects use both short- and long-term strategies to address exploitive and hazardous child labor. Crisis intervention may be necessary in the wake of natural disasters that displace families or to intercede on behalf of children orphaned and vulnerable as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Institutional reform may be needed to improve accessibility to education and employment, or to enforce existing laws related to child labor and trafficking. Although USDOL projects vary, one key objective is constant—to achieve lasting change.



EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The lack of access to quality and relevant education is a major cause of child labor around the world. Through the projects it funds, USDOL provides education, youth employment, and training as alternatives to exploitive child labor. Project activities may include mainstreaming child laborers and at-risk children into formal schools or enrolling them in catch-up programs, non-formal education, or vocational training. They may also involve working with educators to improve their skills or develop a curriculum that is relevant and encourages children to stay in school. USDOL-funded programs create an educational framework that promotes opportunity and security for families and offers a better quality of life for future generations.

LEGISLATION AND ENFORCEMENT

The elimination of the worst forms of child labor can only be achieved by engaging national, state and local stakeholders. These stakeholders influence laws and policies governing child labor and come from the government, law enforcement, non-governmental organization (NGO) and private sectors. Oftentimes existing legislation and law enforcement frameworks are weak. USDOL projects work to strengthen such frameworks to ensure regulations and policies governing child labor are in place and adequately enforced. Law and enforcement-related activities are especially important when criminal activities, such as trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, are occurring. The projects highlighted in this section of *Faces of Change* deal with these types of illegal activities. These projects include conducting information campaigns, providing training to labor inspectors and other enforcers, and facilitating the formation of national policies and informational networks that protect children from hazardous and exploitive work. They show that individuals and institutions can work together to protect and nurture human capital—a nation's most valuable asset.

CRISIS INTERVENTION

USDOL-funded programs are designed to be sustainable in the long term. However, some programs address immediate threats to the health and welfare of working and at-risk children. Children who are displaced following a natural disaster are at greater risk of encountering abuse, exploitation, and hazards in the workplace. The 2004 Asian tsunami left tens of thousands of children orphaned or separated from their families. It destroyed schools and made children vulnerable to trafficking and more likely to work in the worst forms of child labor. USDOL-funded programs in Sri Lanka and Indonesia took immediate steps to provide crisis intervention to tsunami survivors, including withdrawal or prevention from exploitive and hazardous work and access to formal and informal education. In areas of northern Uganda torn apart by decades of civil war, USDOL has supported efforts to rescue and rehabilitate children who have been forced to bear weapons or work in some capacity for armed militias.

POLITICAL STABILITY

Political unrest often contributes to an increased incidence of exploitive child labor. Conflict and instability can force displacement, fracture societies, destroy economies, and close schools and other social services, making children more vulnerable to child labor and possibly recruitment into armed militias. For example, instability in Afghanistan has created a surge of refugees into neighboring Pakistan. The influx into the Northwest Frontier Province severely affected the socio-political and economic aspect of this already impoverished province. The provincial government has become unable to provide people with adequate services and educational infrastructure. Under these conditions, many households find it difficult to meet their basic needs. One of the effects of this instability is that children are more susceptible to dropping out of school and working in exploitive child labor. Working in partnership with government officials, employers, and other stakeholders, USDOL-funded projects promote political stability by offering greater educational and vocational opportunities for child workers and at-risk children.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Exploitive child labor cannot be seen in isolation from the poverty that is so often a primary contributor to it. Sustainable progress in combating exploitive child labor must be based in part on improving the economic situation that traps so many children and families, particularly in developing countries.

USDOL is working with other U.S. Government agencies seeking to create a more stable and prosperous international economic system in which all workers can achieve greater economic security, share in the benefits of increased international trade, and have safer and healthier workplaces. Trade agreements offer the opportunity of improving economic opportunities in developing countries. It is also necessary to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable in those societies, including children, are protected from exploitive and hazardous labor. By actively supporting projects to address child labor in many of the countries where the United States has signed or is negotiating trade agreements, USDOL plays an active role in helping to address this need. USDOL-funded projects in these countries provide children and their families with greater opportunities to attend school and receive training, setting the stage for broader economic participation. Two of the projects highlighted under this theme—one in Morocco and the other in Central America—demonstrate how USDOL-funded projects are making a difference using such strategies.

USDOL is also actively engaged in research on the worst forms of child labor that contributes to U.S. government policy decisions related to trade. In 2000, Congress passed the Trade and Development Act (TDA), which added a new criterion for countries receiving trade benefits. The TDA called for USDOL to report annually on efforts by these governments to meet their international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of labor, such as those stipulated under ILO Convention 182. In this way, the law provides incentives for trading partners in developing countries to make continual progress to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.



Education and Youth Employment:

Providing Alternatives to Child Labor

Many children work as a simple matter of survival. While this is often a cause of child labor, the lack of accessible and relevant educational alternatives is also a major factor pushing children into exploitative work. In country after country, even the poorest parents respond to the effects that education has on their children. The children's new-found self-confidence, ability to acquire useful skills, and excitement about learning make parents realize their children can have a better life.

Because it is instrumental in eliminating and preventing child labor, education is a fundamental element of all projects funded by USDOL. When there is a family commitment to education, and social partners work together to draw child laborers into education, the stage is set for removing children from exploitive labor and keeping them in school.

The strategies employed by USDOL-funded projects are unique to the problems they seek to address. The three projects described in this section—from India, Tanzania, and Central America—exemplify the types of innovative practices that are being implemented to offer children, their families, and their communities an avenue to a brighter future. Whether it is through transitional educational centers that aim to mainstream children into formal schools, or after-school enrichment programs, tens of thousands of children are receiving a basic education and an opportunity to continue on into secondary school. Projects are improving school curricula in cooperation with government agencies, training teachers, and finding practical and innovative ways to deliver quality educational services, such as radio-based schooling.

In India, migrant workers' children attending transitional education centers receive transfer certificates so they can continue their learning uninterrupted when their families return to their home villages. In Tanzania, older children have received vocational training to gain marketable skills and free themselves from exploitive and hazardous work. Projects in Central America are keeping children out of work after regular school hours by offering them school reinforcement programs. These innovative interventions are representative of the kinds of education services that are central to all USDOL-funded direct action projects.

FROM MAKING BRICKS TO BECOMING BUILDING BRICKS OF SOCIETY — THE INDUS CHILD LABOR PROJECT

It is 8 a.m. in Tamil Nadu, India, and a group of children are being rounded up as teachers go door-to-door, collecting their students to start the school day. The school they attend, known as a Transitional Education Center (TEC), provides non-formal education to children whose families work in brick kilns, ovens that produce bricks similar to those used in the TEC walls. In this part of India, bricks are not often used as the building blocks of an education center; more often, their production is an obstacle to a child's education.

One TEC student, Ranji, found his math lesson useful to calculate that his father's supervisor was paying him far less than what was due to him in wages. With this new knowledge in hand, Ranji's father challenged his supervisor and appealed for his full payment.

Children of migrant families are frequently involved in the hazardous work of manufacturing bricks, forgoing their chance of an education and a better future. The USDOL-funded INDUS program, implemented by ILO-IPEC, has used innovative methods to give children a second chance at an education by mobilizing employers and making them active partners in the fight against hazardous child

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labor. Together, INDUS and brick kiln owners' associations have opened TECs to provide children with alternative educational opportunities and the ability to transition back into the formal education system.

The INDUS project uses transitional education to play a catalytic role in creating opportunities for children withdrawn from work, who have either never been to school or have dropped out of the formal education system. The project helps them gain the necessary proficiency to enter TECs, and ultimately, to make a smooth transition into formal education. INDUS' transitional education strategy prepares child laborers from ten hazardous sectors for formal schooling in various time-frames, either through TECs, like those for children working in the brick kilns, or through a Residential Bridge Course (RBC). RBCs are designed to target specific populations and may include a residential center that provides housing, non-formal education instruction, or vocational training to prevent or withdraw children from hazardous child labor.



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The Transitional Education Center model has expanded to reach more children through brick kiln owners' associations' establishment of 27 TECs where children continue to be taught mainstream academic classes and are offered extra-curricular activities.

India

One of the innovations in the brick kiln TECs is the use of a transfer certificate. Children of migrant families face the difficulty of being constantly mobile. They live part of the year in their native villages doing agricultural work. Once the harvest is over, they move to the brick kilns located on the outskirts of urban areas. Children who have attended schools in their native villages are often forced to discontinue their studies when they migrate with their parents to the kilns. Prior to the establishment of TECs, there was a dire lack of educational opportunities in the brick kiln areas, and upon returning to their native villages children were not only behind in their studies but were without a transfer certificate, making re-entry into formal education virtually impossible. With the help of the INDUS project, the TECs have been able to solve the principal problem of the children's migration patterns. India's federal government has empowered the project staff to give TEC children transfer certificates, allowing them the opportunity to transition back into the formal education system as they re-enter school in their native villages.

The positive impact TECs make by providing education to children in brick kilns is due in large part to the commitment of its teachers, whose work doesn't finish when their students leave the centers as they migrate from the kilns. The same teachers that came to collect their TEC students daily from the brick kilns now conduct follow-up support visits to the children's native villages to ensure that they are back in formal education. These teachers have followed the success of students like Vasuki who was once unable to attend school because she had to look after her younger siblings. With the help of a TEC, she went back to school, where she was asked to sing a song. Vasuki chose a song intended to raise awareness about child labor and about the dreams of a child of attending school and becoming an important person. Back in school, and with a brighter future ahead of her, Vasuki was singing a song about herself.

Like many other girls her age, Rashida had no other place to turn when she accepted a position as a domestic servant. After she had finished primary school, her parents could no longer support her and her many siblings. They sent Rashida to live with her aunt, who pressured her to get married at the age of 14. Unable to continue her studies and not wanting to get married, Rashida set off with a stranger for Dar Es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, with the promise of a better life.

Rashida recalls, “For almost 2 years, that lady turned me into her slave. I had to perform house chores from very early in the morning until very late at night, taking care of her children.” When threatened with physical abuse, Rashida escaped, seeking refuge with a neighbor. It was during this time that Rashida met another young girl who shared similar experiences as an exploited domestic servant. Rashida’s new friend told her about a center operated by CHODAWU (the Conservation, Hotels and Domestic Workers Union) that could provide her with help and vocational training.

**The Timebound Approach:
Working Towards Lasting
Impact**

The Government of Tanzania was one of the first governments in the world to commit itself to the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, as defined by ILO Convention 182, within a specific timeframe. Since the initiation of the Timebound Program (TBP) in Tanzania in 2001, the issue of child labor has become a priority on the nation’s development agenda. With the support of the TBP, the Tanzanian Ministry of Education has reviewed its Complementary Basic Education Training curriculum to incorporate the special needs of former child laborers.

USDOL is supporting vocational training centers like those run by CHODAWU across Tanzania as part of ILO-IPEC’s Timebound Program to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (TBP). Vocational education and complementary basic education are integral to the efforts underway in Tanzania to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in five sectors—commercial sexual exploitation, child domestic labor, commercial agriculture, mining, and fishing—by 2010. The project is fomenting change at all levels, from individual children, their families, their communities, and the country’s very laws, policies, and institutions.

Under the TBP, implementing partners at the district and community levels, help identify children eligible for assistance (who are working in the worst forms of child labor or at risk of doing so), and provides them with age-appropriate educational services. The program links children between the ages of 5 and 7 directly to Tanzania’s formal primary school system. Children 8 years of age and older who have not attended primary school and are illiterate are directly linked to up to 3 years of Complementary Basic Education (COBET) services.





“With its holistic approach in addressing child labor, the TBP has brought change at all levels.”

– Marilyn Blaeser,
Chief Technical Advisor
Tanzania Timebound Program

COBET provides basic education outside of the formal school system and is an avenue for entry into the formal school system if children are able to pass the necessary exams.

Finally, children between the ages of 14 and 17 who can read and write—like Rashida—are eligible to receive vocational training. CHODAWU, a TBP implementing partner, runs several training centers, which offer programs such as tailoring, batik tie-dye, carpentry, welding, mechanics, and driving. The centers follow a curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education and assist graduates in obtaining employment.

With her years of economic exploitation now behind her, Rashida is receiving training in hairdressing and tailoring and hopes to one day open her own business. Rashida’s dreams are mirrored in the countless other children who have been rescued from exploitive conditions and have gone on to receive vocational training, their lives significantly changed for the better.

Some of these children not only have changed their own lives but are now working to change the lives of others. Jiulize, once a child laborer, has accomplished Rashida’s dream of owning her own business, a tailoring shop, and makes extra income by training other youths in basic tailoring. Through the TBP, children like Rashida and Jiulize have not only recovered their dignity, dignity which was taken from them as they labored behind the doors of their employers, but their new skills have also given them an opportunity for economic independence.

Mambo Elimu Centers

A radio-based curriculum and local mentoring were education innovations introduced by Education Development Center (EDC), a USDOL Education Initiative grantee in Tanzania. The EDC project supported the objectives of the TBP but worked in different geographic areas of the country. As a key part of its strategy, the project established and operated community-based learning centers (called Mambo Elimu) and used the new radio-based curriculum to ensure a consistent level of quality across the centers. The project also hired and trained mentors from the communities to teach the children, helping to build local capacity and ownership of the project. The radio-based curriculum proved to be so successful that when the EDC project ended, the Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Vocational Training agreed to take over the operation of all 288 Mambo Elimu Centers. In addition, Tanzania Broadcasting Services agreed to provide free air time and to broadcast the curriculum five days a week, covering material for 2 grade levels each day.

Central America

Yasner Mendoza, 10 years old, lives in the small rural town of Wapi, Nicaragua. Now a confident fourth-grader, Yasner used to work with his father after school and on weekends. He remembers, “After classes, I had to climb a steep hill to gather yucca. I don’t know how long it took, but it took a lot of time because my feet hurt. I didn’t like doing that but I had to do it. Once I even broke my left arm, and then my father registered me in Espacios para Crecer (Places to Grow).”



Dominga and her twin brother Diego Tomás Juárez live in the municipality of Joyabaj, a mountainous area of El Quiché, Guatemala. Through their community’s participation in a Primero Aprendo pilot project, the 10-year-old twins are now attending school. They are learning how to read and write in Spanish and their native language, Quiché. Dominga, who otherwise may never have had the chance to receive an education, is proud to be learning. She explains, “Since I started going to school I haven’t missed even one single day, not even when I’m sick ... because I like learning and playing with my friends. Besides, in school they give us a daily snack that I like a lot.”

Espacios para Crecer is one of over 50 pilot programs supported by Primero Aprendo, a USDOL-funded project operating in Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Implemented by CARE-USA in cooperation with Catholic Relief Services, DevTech Systems, and other partners, Primero Aprendo is on the cutting edge of efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor and address the educational needs of child laborers and at-risk children. The educational

Dominican Republic

pilot program is designed to generate best practices that can be replicated in different types of settings by governments, international donors, and local organizations. Pilot programs emphasize innovative curriculum, teacher training, awareness raising, and parental participation.

Espacios para Crecer is an after-school program that complements the formal school curriculum. Enrolled children receive academic reinforcement, or “leveling,” in math, reading, and writing. The program also teaches children important life skills and engages them in sports and recreational activities such as art, theater, and music.



Many children’s lives have changed dramatically as a result of Primero Aprendo. Child laborers who became involved in the project have either substantially reduced the number of hours they work or have stopped working altogether. Regular participation in an educational program alone is a radical change in the lives of many children participating in this project, but there are other benefits as well. These benefits include opportunities for socialization with their peers and teachers as well as scholastic competition, a major motivator for continuing and improving in their studies. The strategy for working with at-risk children focuses on raising awareness among parents on the importance of parental support for their children’s education and sensitizing teachers to their special educational needs. Nick Mills, project director, explains,

“Because our approaches are community-based, changes are not limited to the children.

The idea of our models being tested is that to have a lasting impact on the child labor situation, the culture must be changed. Children must be viewed truly as children—with rights that must be respected. For cultural changes to happen, the entire community must be targeted.”

Primero Aprendo is also promoting institutional changes in the countries where it operates. For example, the project signed an agreement with the Regional Council of Education Ministers to support education as a tool to combat child labor. To disseminate good practices across the region, it has developed a project website. Primero Aprendo is also working to strengthen the capacity of National Child Labor Commissions, government ministries, the private sector, and local organizations in dealing with child labor issues. Primero Aprendo is also broadcasting radio and video spots across the region to raise awareness of the dangers of child labor and the importance of education.

Though it took Yasner’s broken arm to convince his father to fully support his education, the changes brought about in Yasner’s life by *Espacios para Crecer* will likely spur similar changes for other children and families. An enthusiastic student, Yasner says he wants to encourage his classmates to study so they, too, will have a better life. He continues, “We have to encourage parents so they will send their children to school because it’s in school where I’m learning, and one doesn’t learn by working.”

These children attend a “School Reinforcement Classroom” sponsored by Primero Aprendo in the community of El Naranjo, in Somoto, Nicaragua. Through its academic support and recreation activities, the after-school program, which serves 32 children, has helped keep them in school while achieving better academic performance, and preventing them from working during after-school hours.





Legislation and Enforcement:

Creating a Foundation for Ongoing Change

The enactment and enforcement of legislation are cornerstones of national efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor. National laws and policies addressing exploitive child labor create a foundation for all other efforts to address the problem. They help to highlight priority areas of action and can be a conduit for directing resources. While legislation is important, it has little worth without effective enforcement. For this reason, legislation and enforcement must go hand-in-hand.

USDOL supports projects, such as the three highlighted in this section, that enhance government capacity to draft and enact laws and policies. USDOL-funded projects also provide the tools needed to implement and enforce them. In West and Central Africa, a USDOL-sponsored anti-trafficking project not only helped countries adopt national legislation relating to child trafficking but played a key role in the conclusion of a multilateral agreement, signed by 24 countries, to fight trafficking in the region. In Central America and the Dominican Republic, a USDOL-funded project to fight the commercial sexual exploitation of children is supporting efforts in these countries to formulate new laws, providing training to law enforcement officials, and providing opportunities for the sharing of good practices among public prosecutors in the region. Similarly, a USDOL-supported anti-trafficking project in the Balkans and Ukraine is providing technical assistance to participating countries as they develop national policies and a legal framework to fight child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and other worst forms of child labor.

These efforts are essential because government commitment is key to achieving sustainable progress in eliminating exploitive child labor. While poverty and lack of economic development are enormous obstacles, it is also important to recognize that the adoption of both policies and laws as well as the strengthening of national capacity to combat exploitive child labor can open up new opportunities for systemic and sustainable change.

THE LUTRENA PROJECT: FIGHTING CHILD TRAFFICKING IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Tens of thousands of children are trafficked each year within West and Central Africa for labor exploitation. These children are bought and sold like commodities, or lured away from impoverished families by the promise of a paying job and better life. Child victims of trafficking toil on plantations and mines, beg on the streets, work as domestic servants, and are forced into commercial sexual exploitation.

Salomon, from Cameroon, was abandoned by his parents just after his birth. The women who took care of him sold Salomon at the age of 7 to a man who treated him like a son and allowed him to attend school. But Salomon's good fortune did not last; when the man died, Salomon was left to fend for himself on the streets.

Mandarine, 16 years old, is the oldest of four children in a single-parent household from Bali Nyonga, Cameroon. When Mandarine turned 11, her mother, unable to pay her school fees, sent her away with a "friend" to work as a domestic servant. Her new mistress promised to sponsor her through

Africa

class seven and then on through trade school. When Mandarine worked in that household, she would wake up at 5 am to perform chores and prepare the children for school. After school and on weekends, Mandarine was sent to sell soap at the market. For the three years she lived in the mistress' home, Mandarine was not allowed to visit her mother, and her mother was never told where she was.

Mandarine was so overwhelmed with work that she failed her school exams and eventually returned home.

Children like Salomon and Mandarine are at the heart of an anti-trafficking initiative implemented by ILO-IPEC. The project, known as LUTRENA (Combating Trafficking in Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa), is working to withdraw and prevent children from trafficking, with a special focus on the most vulnerable groups—children under 12 and girls. This USDOL-funded project has worked primarily in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo—all countries seriously affected by trafficking. The project is working to reduce the demand for trafficked children through tougher laws and enforcement and to address supply by providing children and their parents with viable alternatives.



LUTRENA is also playing a leadership role in bolstering the legal framework at country, sub-regional, and regional levels. The project has helped countries establish national child trafficking steering committees and child trafficking units within appropriate government ministries. With technical assistance from LUTRENA, countries have adopted national legislation relating to child trafficking. In addition, the project played an instrumental role in the development and signing of multi-lateral agreements, including the Multilateral Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in West and Central Africa, ratified in July 2006 by 24 West and Central African countries. The signatories to this agreement have agreed to put into place a Joint Plan of Action, including a child trafficking monitoring system developed by LUTRENA. They are also forging networks to collaborate in the investigation, arrest, and prosecution of trafficking offenders.

The children in this photo live in a fishing community in Ga District of Ghana and are at high risk of being trafficked. As LUTRENA beneficiaries, these children were provided educational stipends so that they could attend formal schools. The children's parents participated in skills training and livelihood activities to increase household income.

As part of its sustainability strategy, LUTRENA seeks to work within existing systems rather than create parallel ones. For example, in Mali, a child labor monitoring program is being integrated with the educational monitoring system already in place at the school level. With training and material support provided by LUTRENA, local child labor surveillance committees are working in partnership with school administrators, management committees, and teachers to track the academic progress of potential trafficking victims and, if necessary, intervene in the classroom or at home when a student appears to be in danger of dropping out.

Services provided by LUTRENA helped turn Salomon and Mandarine's lives around. After Salomon was taken off the streets by one of LUTRENA's partners, he received life skills classes and pastry-making training. He uses those skills to make a living at a local market.

When Mandarine finally returned home, she was referred to a social worker at the Gwan Multi-Purpose Center in northwest Cameroon, a learning center sponsored by the project. She received training in sewing and embroidery. After graduating, Mandarine was given a new sewing machine so she could start her own business.

LUTRENA has given children like Salomon and Mandarine, beset by early hardship, a new start in their lives. "While the children's struggle has not ended," states LUTRENA staff, "they are now living a life that is free from danger, abuse, exploitation and work unsuited to their level of physical and mental development; a life where adults are not to be feared. They understand that as children, they have rights, including the right to learn a trade and receive the fruits of their labor."

STOP THE EXPLOITATION: PREVENTING AND ELIMINATING THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, PANAMA AND DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Maria was only six years old when her story of abuse began. After her drug-addicted father left home, Maria's mother became physically aggressive with her and her grandfather began to abuse her sexually. When Maria was 14 years old, her mother threw her out of the house. She was taken in by a woman who became her pimp. The woman used money earned by Maria to supply her with drugs, and eventually Maria became caught in a cycle of drugs and debt. Maria's dreams of pursuing her studies and living a better life were largely forgotten.

The USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC project "Stop the Exploitation: Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Central America, Panama, and the Dominican Republic" is working within these countries to deter would-be exploiters by strengthening legislation, boosting enforcement, fostering regional cooperation, and increasing public awareness of the criminal nature of child sexual exploitation. Using these strategies, the project has been able to initiate a rising tide of public intolerance towards the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The project used various strategies to support the improvement of national legislation criminalizing the sexual exploitation of minors in project countries. First, it analyzed existing international conventions relating to commercial sexual exploitation to identify minimum requirements and create a foundation for the formulation of new laws. In addition, the project sponsored a regional meeting of parliamentarians and legal experts to discuss criminal laws against commercial sexual exploitation and define a common base for future laws. One goal of the regional cooperation was to ensure that no country in the region would be left behind and considered a haven for national and foreign sex exploiters. There have been many positive developments in the legislative area since project implementation began in 2002. Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, and Honduras have made changes to their criminal laws relating to areas such as child commercial sexual exploitation, child pornography, and trafficking.

Since to be effective, laws must be enforced, the project has also provided law enforcement officials with training, technical assistance, and opportunities for exchange of experiences. For example, in 2004, the project held a seminar bringing together public prosecutors from the region to establish priorities for improving criminal investigation of commercial sexual exploitation cases and to create a common enforcement network. The project also offered training courses for specialized police agents and public prosecutors in San Jose, Costa Rica to learn new investigative techniques for



Central America

This poster, which states “If you’re looking for a story, look for the exploiter,” targets journalists and mass media and focuses on the need to change media’s approach to covering commercial sexual exploitation of children. This campaign was endorsed by journalists’ associations in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama in alliance with the National Commissions against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and ILO-IPEC.



The Central American countries participating in this project have committed themselves to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation by ratifying diverse international conventions, including ILO Convention 182. The strengthening of legislation, as well as the exchanges and training courses for prosecutors and law enforcement, chart a roadmap to help Central American countries meet their international commitments—today and in the future.

child commercial exploitation cases. After recognizing that the Costa Rican Office for Sex Crimes at the Public Ministry had shown good results in identifying and arresting commercial sexual exploiters, the project organized several initiatives enabling a Costa Rican investigative team to share good practices and lessons learned with their counterparts from other project countries. In 2005, the Costa Rican team trained specialized police agents and public prosecutors in the region in new investigative techniques.

These initiatives have had a profound impact on the ability of law enforcement in the region to investigate and arrest those engaged in the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents like Maria. With the creation of a regional law enforcement network, prosecutors and police investigators are now more likely to cooperate with each other when a sex exploiter crosses the border into another country or when there is a child that has been trafficked to another country for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Participating countries have also agreed upon guidelines to properly repatriate children who have been trafficked to neighboring countries.



The media campaigns supported by the project have enabled it and its partners to fuel and capitalize on increased public concern about the child sexual exploitation. Materials such as this poster help to reinforce the law enforcement and deterrence aspects of the project. A public awareness campaign supported by the project, called “It’s a Crime,” is targeted towards potential exploiters. It sends the message that to pay for sexual activities with a person under the age of 18 is a crime that is punished with jail. The campaign was placed in various mass media outlets in Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras, and El Salvador, in collaboration with the National Commissions against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Sokol was born and raised in the town Korça, in southern Albania. He lives with his unemployed mother and three half-siblings and, until recently, had never attended school. Instead, Sokol spent most of his time begging on the streets. By the age of 10, Sokol had already lived through difficulties that most adults will never experience. During the first decade of his life, Sokol was trafficked four times over the mountains into Greece. Each time, Sokol's mother entered into negotiations with the traffickers and received money in exchange for her son.



While in Greece, Sokol lived in a house with other children and was sent out on the streets to beg and steal, from sunrise to sunset. Sokol had to give part of his earnings to the traffickers, but managed to hide away some extra money for himself. Sokol says that he had better clothes and food in Greece, but the children were sometimes beaten, taken into scalding showers, or burned with cigarettes. The group would often move to avoid capture by the police, but on one occasion Sokol was apprehended and imprisoned for a month.

Sokol's story illustrates the economic desperation that fuels child trafficking and other worst forms of child labor in areas of Central and Eastern Europe. In 2003, in response to the problem, ILO-IPEC began implementing PROTECT CEE—a project to provide technical assistance against the labor and sexual exploitation in selected countries in Central and Eastern Europe. USDOL is funding project activities in Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine—countries considered to be among those most affected by trafficking in the region. All of these countries have ratified ILO Convention 182, formalizing their commitment to taking immediate measures to prohibit and eliminate

Eurasia



the worst forms of child labor. PROTECT CEE, through its focus on developing laws, policies, and an institutional framework that conform to these international commitments, is working to prevent other children from being drawn into trafficking and exploitive labor situations similar to that of Sokol.

At the national level, the project is working with individual governments to ensure that national laws, policies, and enforcement mechanisms address child labor and trafficking issues. In Albania, for example, PROTECT CEE contributed to the Government's National Strategy and National Action Plan on Youth, which include provisions on child labor and were approved by the Albanian Council of Ministers. In Kosovo, PROTECT CEE provided support to the Government in the development and implementation of a list of hazardous work to be banned, as a matter of priority, for children under the age of 18. The project also provided assistance to the Government in the design of a Child Labor Monitoring Profile to set up standard operating procedures for identifying and withdrawing children from worst forms of child labor. In Romania, PROTECT CEE provided technical guidance to the Government for a number of policy initiatives, including a National Strategy against Trafficking in Human Beings and an accompanying Plan of Action. The project also provided technical support in the drafting of new legislation relating to child labor and successfully promoted the official recognition of a National Steering Committee for Preventing and Combating Child Labor. Finally, in Moldova, PROTECT CEE contributed to the design of a National Plan of Action for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and the institutionalization of a Child Labor Unit within the Government's Labor Inspectorate.

At the regional level, PROTECT CEE is working to establish an overarching framework to enhance cooperation and strengthen mechanisms for preventing trafficking and other worst forms of child labor. The project is also helping participating countries share knowledge and best practices.



While the focus of PROTECT CEE is on policy and legislative development and reform, it is also providing direct services such as education, vocational counseling, and training to victims or potential victims of trafficking in selected high-risk areas. To prevent trafficking and help reintegrate trafficked victims into the education system, the project promotes peer education in after-school youth centers and provides psycho-social counseling. PROTECT CEE also provides social workers, school psychologists, teachers, and job counselors with special training materials and guides to enable them to address the special needs of trafficking victims. In especially marginalized communities, the project promotes viable employment opportunities as a means of preventing child trafficking.

PROTECT CEE aims to have a sustainable impact in eliminating the worst forms of child labor in the countries where it operates. By supporting new initiatives and reforms in legislation, enforcement, and policy, the project seeks to create a basis for long-term change. The project's pilot activities, meanwhile, are having an immediate and direct impact on thousands of children's lives.

The last time Sokol returned from Greece, Help for Children, a local project partner, persuaded him to attend school. At first, he fought with other children and disrupted classes. Little by little, as his teachers and social assistants continued to work with him, Sokol began to change. According to PROTECT CEE staff,

he has made new friends and has revealed a sense of humor, a beautiful singing voice, and a strong wit. "I want to be a driver when I become an adult." Sokol says with a smile.



USDOL-funded projects are using diverse strategies to promote the strengthening of legal frameworks and improved enforcement of laws against exploitive child labor. These efforts don't just take place at the national level; many projects are also piloting innovative approaches to support the development of local laws and ordinances, instilling a culture against child labor at the community level. Some projects are spurring community monitoring systems, with community volunteers taking an active role in monitoring the work and schooling status of children. When local stakeholders, including traditional leaders, become involved in such activities, community action helps bring about tangible changes in the attitudes of parents, teachers, and potential employers.



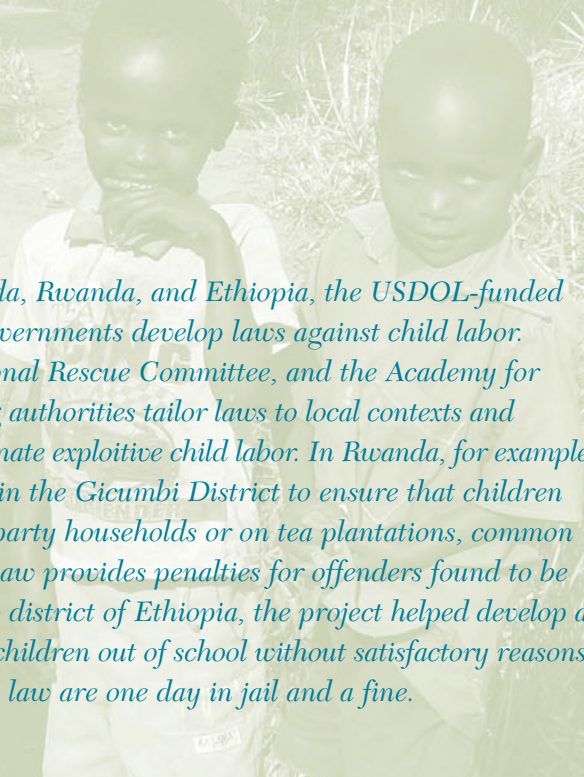
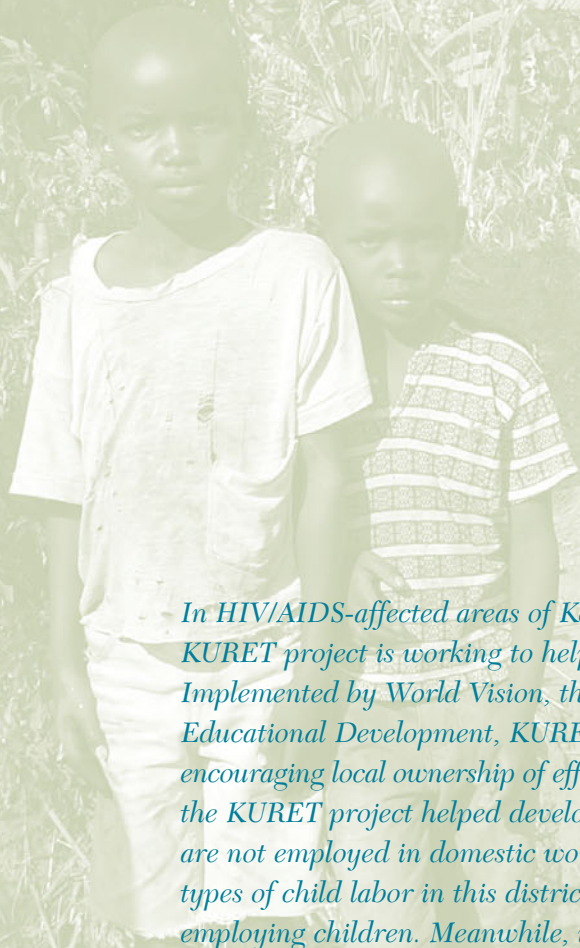
In the Philippines, the USDOL-funded ABK Initiative, implemented by World Vision, has also supported the development and passage of provincial and local laws against exploitive child labor. As part of its project monitoring strategy, the ABK Initiative has developed community watch groups (CWGs), made up of parents, teachers, and children, which play a key role in the monitoring of project beneficiaries. CWGs have frequent contact with project beneficiaries and are tasked with checking and maintaining records on the school attendance and work status of project beneficiaries. While this type of community-based monitoring is not a replacement for law enforcement by government authorities, it is proving to be an effective and locally-owned way of promoting a common understanding of the hazards of exploitive child labor and the importance of attending school, and creating and reinforcing a culture of responsibility.

Philippines

Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, the USDOL-funded CYCLE project, implemented by the International Rescue Committee, is creating awareness amongst community leaders and employers of the hazards of exploitation, spurring several Chiefdoms to put into place local laws against child labor. For example, in the diamond-rich area known as Tongo Fields, the Paramount Chief, his council of elders, and members of his council have declared it a violation of customary law for any mining group to employ a child in mining activities in the Lower Bambara Chiefdom. The punishment for violators is a seizure of the offender's mining license and a fine. The project has supported the revitalization of local Child Welfare Committees and a mining committee in Tongo Fields. Members of the mining committee, who work on a volunteer basis, carry out monitoring visits to mining sites so that they can verify that children are not working. Due to the work of the committees and the monitoring visits, employers have begun to refer children to the CYCLE project for services. In areas bordering neighboring Guinea, the Soa Chiefdom Committee has banned the use of children for cross border trade. The Committee has encouraged town and village chiefs, especially those located along the border, to ensure that customary law is not violated. In addition, the Chiefdom police have been empowered to make arrests.





In HIV/AIDS-affected areas of Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, the USDOL-funded KURET project is working to help district governments develop laws against child labor. Implemented by World Vision, the International Rescue Committee, and the Academy for Educational Development, KURET is helping authorities tailor laws to local contexts and encouraging local ownership of efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor. In Rwanda, for example, the KURET project helped develop a by-law in the Gicumbi District to ensure that children are not employed in domestic work in third-party households or on tea plantations, common types of child labor in this district. The new law provides penalties for offenders found to be employing children. Meanwhile, in the Mieso district of Ethiopia, the project helped develop a by-law that penalizes parents who keep their children out of school without satisfactory reasons. The penalties for parents found breaking this law are one day in jail and a fine.



Africa

Crisis Intervention:

Responding to Children's Increased Vulnerability



Faces of Change shows the myriad of challenges children face every day, as extreme poverty has made them vulnerable to exploitive child labor as a means of survival. While some children have been born into this vulnerability, all children may potentially become vulnerable during or after a crisis.

A crisis can take many forms, as illustrated in this section of *Faces of Change*. It may be a natural disaster like the 2004 Tsunami whose waves swept away tens of thousands of lives and destroyed infrastructures across Asia, or the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan that fractured the lives of those who survived. Natural disasters like these can impact millions of lives in a matter of minutes. As shown in other profiles in this section, a crisis may also arise from a more chronic problem, such as civil unrest, conflict or war. Whatever the causes of the crisis, children are among the most vulnerable members of society. Natural disasters and conflict situations may displace families from their homes, separate family members, and leave children orphaned and alone.

In such situations, schools may be destroyed or unable to function adequately, forcing children to discontinue their studies. Many children may also begin working to meet their basic necessities. In war situations, children may be drawn into the conflict, serving as soldiers, porters, scouts, or personal assistants to adult combatants.

USDOL recognizes children's increased vulnerability during times of crisis, and supports projects that respond to the unique situations that these, often unexpected, crises create. The six projects described in this section work to decrease the vulnerability of children affected by conflict and natural disasters in Latin America, Asia, and Africa through a multi-dimensional and community-specific approach. They offer children a chance at more than just an education; they offer hope, support and some stability during times when they are needed most.

FRACTURED EARTH, FRACTURED LIVES: RESPONDING TO CHILDREN AFFECTED BY THE 2005 PAKISTAN EARTHQUAKE

October 8, 2005, started out as a normal school day for the children of Balakot, a sleepy hillside town of 20,000 in northwestern Pakistan. In a matter of moments, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale left the town in rubble, fracturing not only the walls of the children's schools but the very foundation of their lives. Ninety percent of homes in Balakot, which is located near the earthquake's epicenter, were destroyed, leaving thousands of families homeless and children vulnerable.

Prior to the earthquake, USDOL was already providing funds to ILO-IPEC in its efforts to support the Government of Pakistan's Timebound Program to eliminate selected worst forms of child labor in line with the government's National Policy and Plan of Action to Combat Child Labor. Recognizing that in the aftershock of the earthquake, many children would be at risk of discontinuing their studies and

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Pakistan

being trafficked or drawn into economic exploitation, USDOL provided additional funds to provide educational services to children affected by the disaster, including children who were orphaned or separated from their families. The project also referred affected parents to available government and other assistance programs.

To address the dire economic situation faced by many families, the project works closely with beneficiary families to increase their income and reduce reliance on the labor of children. It provides information on how to obtain economic support from the government and other organizations, an essential component in decreasing the risk of children being drawn into work that is exploitive or that could jeopardize their participation in schooling. The project also provides information on micro-credit, social welfare services, and employment opportunities. Links are established between target families and provincial authorities to help families obtain special administration funds and increase their overall income.

Recognizing that community participation and ownership are essential for ensuring long-term sustainability of recovery efforts, an important component of the RC's function is community mobilization. Mobilization activities involve parents, relatives, teachers, and other members of the community and focus on child labor-related issues such as non-enrollment in schools, absenteeism, and drop-outs.



As a vital part of its project, Rehabilitation Centers (RCs) were created to respond to children's increased vulnerability. The RCs establish a "safe space" for children suffering from the effects of the earthquake and nurture their social and emotional development. In addition, they are meant to be places of creative learning, offering educational and recreational activities. Like all USDOL-supported projects, a key strategy of the RCs in eliminating and preventing child labor is to offer children education and vocational training opportunities. Initially, the centers provide basic literacy classes to children who are unable to read or write. The project builds on these classes by providing supplemental learning support programs and

close monitoring of the children's progress. The RCs also offer recreational activities such as art, theater, and sports, and therapeutic activities designed to meet the children's specific needs. In addition, to help families cope with the trauma and loss experienced by the earthquake victims, the centers provide psychological support services.

Indonesia

RIDING THE WAVE: STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN POST-TSUNAMI INDONESIA

Nanda's statement conveys a common dream among youths around the world, but for children like Nanda it is a dream that was almost swept away when the 2004 tsunami devastated the province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. Nanda lost more than just her school in the waves that crashed onto this island; she also lost two of her best friends. Her parents suddenly lacked work, and her two sisters were forced to drop out of school. Although Nanda was able to stay in school, she suffered the same fate as 20,000 other Acehnese students, and failed her national exams.

“I want to have a good job. That's why I want to stay in school, at least until I have finished my senior high school.”

— Nanda, a high school student in Aceh, Indonesia

USDOL responded to the needs of students like Nanda by supporting an ILO-IPEC program that allows children to continue their education and decrease their risk of entering exploitive child labor. The tsunami not only devastated school buildings; it also took the lives of many of the island's teachers. The education system, which was already crippled by a long period of civil conflict in Aceh, now faced an even deeper crisis.



Kifliadi, a 17 year-old boy, was working long hours panning gold, through a hazardous process that is traditionally used by communities involved in informal gold mining in Pasir district (East Kalimantan province) in Indonesia. The USDOL-supported project has successfully withdrawn Kifliadi from this hazardous work, and he now enjoys studying in high school. After completing training in agroforestry and collective group management, Kifliadi is now actively involved in a livelihood group for youth.

To curb the increase of failing students due to the weakened education system, the project, along with the Aceh Provincial Education Office, developed special training programs for students from schools in the districts of Banda Aceh, Aceh Besar, and Aceh Jaya. The programs focus on schools with a high failure rate, such as those in Banda Aceh—where Nanda lives—where the failure rate was 39 per cent. Nanda was among 20 students in her village who joined a junior high school remedial program supported by the project. This program provides extra academic support to enable the students to prepare for and pass the necessary exams.

The project has also worked with the Education Office and Primagama, a training institution, to provide remedial training for teachers from a variety of different disciplines. After the training, teachers develop a remedial program, which they are able to take back to their schools to help children re-enter the education system.

In addition to formal education, the Aceh project focuses on providing skills training to 15- to 17- year olds who are out of school and lack employable skills. The training program provides children with an opportunity to learn a new skill and helps establish a regular routine outside the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps where many displaced families are still living. These programs facilitate the rehabilitation process for children recovering from the trauma of the tsunami.

The tsunami changed the face of Aceh in many ways—families lost loved ones and entire communities vanished. It is the youth of Aceh and children like Nanda, who will use their education to help their island rebuild, developing new communities out of the post-tsunami wasteland.

The tsunami that struck South and Southeast Asia in December 2004 killed thousands and left survivors stripped of their assets and livelihoods. In Sri Lanka, the disaster primarily hit poor areas, exacerbating poverty and vulnerability among low-income communities. Many children lost their families. Schools were destroyed. In order to meet their basic needs, many parents were forced to send their children to work. Other children were susceptible to abuse and exploitation, including exploitative child labor.



Sithi is one of these children. Her family lives in Kinniya, an ethnically diverse island in Sri Lanka's North-East that suffered greatly during Sri Lanka's two decade long civil war. Before the tsunami, Sithi's family moved away from Kinniya and the conflict, accompanied by dreams of economic opportunities and a peaceful future. When the move proved

unsuccessful, her family was forced to return to Kinniya, where Sithi's father struggled to provide for his eight children by selling vegetables, a struggle that only grew after the tsunami carried away his rented home, his family's meager belongings, and his children's school.

In order to decrease the vulnerability of children to exploitive child labor, USDOL funded ILO-IPEC interventions to help families affected by the tsunami. The tsunami project provides children, like Sithi, with "back to school" support, including uniforms, shoes and socks, school kits and books, and enrolls them in remedial education. With USDOL support, a local implementing partner, Kinniya Vision, has opened the first permanent community center in one of Sri Lanka's hardest-hit areas, where Sithi's family and others displaced by the tsunami continue to live in temporary shelters. It has quickly become a focal point for the community. Today, life skills and vocational training are being taught in addition to art and recreational activities. Painted in bright, child-friendly colors, the center is a symbol of hope to a community of children desperately trying to rebuild shattered lives.

There are countless other stories similar to that of Sithi and her family. Rita and her three daughters are among the thousands of Sri Lankan families living in southern Sri Lanka who were displaced by the tsunami. Their home destroyed and with no way to earn a livelihood, the family sought shelter in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in the southern city of Unawatuna. A social worker contacted the family when the local education authorities confirmed that the girls' school had been swept away. USDOL-funded interventions helped Rita's girls to re-enroll in another school in the vicinity. As for Rita, she received vocational training through the project in industrial sewing and is now employed and able to support her girls.

Education and training are provided free-of-charge to these at-risk children. The program also provides skills training to parents of families displaced by the tsunami, those who have lost all income sources and have no way to start over. Since the tsunami, the Darusetha Program has undertaken interventions that have helped thousands of families like Rita's start to rebuild more than just their homes; it has helped them rebuild their lives.

Since the beginning of Northern Uganda's 20-year civil war, over one million people have been displaced from their homes. Tens of thousands of children abducted by armed militias have been forced to serve as soldiers, porters, personal assistants, and sexual slaves, often enduring unspeakable



suffering. Many of these children, upon escaping from militia groups, returned to a place they could no longer call home. Some children, left orphaned or displaced from their villages, had no choice but to abandon their studies and work to support

themselves and their siblings. The Opportunities for Reducing Adolescent and Child Labor through Education (ORACLE) project, funded by USDOL and implemented by the International Rescue Committee, is working to provide educational opportunities, vocational training, and a chance of renewal for Uganda's "lost generation" of war-affected children.

Six kilometers from Kitgum town in northern Uganda, 18-year-old Ayaa Josephine lives with her nine younger brothers and sisters in an area hit hard by the country's brutal civil war. Her family, like so many others, has suffered the ravages of the conflict. When she was only 10, Josephine's father was killed by rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The militia held her in captivity for three months, until she escaped and found her way home to a family shattered by personal loss and war.

Josephine made her way through primary school while helping her mother with domestic chores and taking on casual labor to supplement her mother's income. Secondary school, however, was not an option. Josephine began to work long hours in other people's gardens to support her younger siblings. When her mother was paralyzed by a stroke, Josephine became a domestic servant.

ORACLE operates in the Kitgum and Pader districts, where most families have been uprooted from their homes and now live in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps. IDP camps are overcrowded and lack basic services such as health care, water and sanitation. Educational opportunities are extremely limited due a lack of resources and overcrowding. Since few teachers are willing to be posted to schools in these districts, teacher to pupil ratios can be as high as one to 150. Learning centers, which may house the population of as many as seven schools, are built to be temporary structures and lack basic items such as chairs, desks, and sanitation. Absenteeism is rampant and drop-out rates are high, particularly among girls.

ORACLE is working to address the needs of Uganda's "lost generation" by offering them educational opportunities. ORACLE supplies beneficiaries with the material support—such as books, uniforms, school supplies, and shoes—that they need to attend primary and secondary school. To address the shortage of school supplies in overenrolled classrooms, the project provides learning materials and teaching resources.

The project also offers "catch-up" courses outside of the formal school system. These classes help children who have missed sometimes years of schooling to catch up and successfully transition into



formal education or vocational training programs. In these classes, coursework is condensed, and classes are on a flexible schedule to encourage full participation. Emphasis is placed on educating girls, whose domestic responsibilities or lack of confidence may have kept them from attending school previously. ORACLE also offers skills training for these children in fields such as metal work, carpentry and joinery, and tailoring. As part of its strategy for promoting sustainability, ORACLE is strengthening teaching capacity in the region through its support of the Kitgum Primary Teachers College (Kitgum PTC). In addition to providing material support to students, ORACLE is improving the school's infrastructure by supplying copying machines, typewriters, cabinets, and learning resources. As a result of this capacity-building, teachers graduating from Kitgum PTC are better equipped to engage students, manage their classrooms, and understand relevant psychosocial and child rights issues.

With the support of ORACLE, Josephine enrolled in Modern Tailoring School in Kitgum Town Council. Within a year, Josephine became an expert tailor with training in business management. When she graduated, she was given a sewing machine and six yards of materials to start up a business. She soon sold what she made from those first supplies and used the proceeds to rent a market kiosk. Today, Josephine, who once earned pennies working in someone else's garden, is growing her own dreams. She plans to expand her textile business and speaks with dignity and pride about being able to keep her family together and support her siblings in school.



**Apollo
Nsibambi**

Apollo Nsibambi, an orphan, was abducted at the age of 16 by LRA insurgents. Apollo was forced to carry heavy weapons, and even wounded soldiers in combat situations. During his time with the LRA, Apollo witnessed the murder of several of his fellow abductees. He says of those days, "I would cry within my heart for fear of being killed." When Apollo returned from captivity, schooling was an unlikely prospect for him, being an orphan, with no family to support him. The ORACLE project, however, paid his school fees and purchased a uniform, school books and materials for him. Now, after passing his primary school exams, Apollo is enrolled in a secondary biology, chemistry, and math program. For Apollo, the project meant a chance to build a new life.



**Aloyo Grace
From IDP to Entrepreneur**

Aloyo Grace, 19, lives in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Agago county, Pader district in northern Uganda. In 1999, Aloyo and her four siblings lost their parents, making it difficult for them to meet even their basic needs, let alone attend school. The ORACLE project provided Aloyo with a school bag, a uniform, exercise books, school supplies, and a pair of shoes to enable her to continue her studies.

The project later sponsored Aloyo through a three-month catering and hotel management class and business skills training. To enable her to put these skills into action, ORACLE provided her with start-up materials to open her own restaurant. A budding entrepreneur, Aloyo opened her own restaurant. She hopes to one day open another restaurant outside of the IDP camp. Aloyo says that the ORACLE project has helped her live a meaningful and happy life. "I can now help myself, my baby, my aunt, my sisters and other people."

In Colombia, a group of children describe themselves as not only “faces of change,” but “forces of change.” This statement takes on new meaning when understanding that previously these children had used weapons as their force of change in Colombia’s civil war. Once part of the estimated hundreds of thousands of children associated with armed groups involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide, these former child soldiers had just participated in a workshop to establish psychological assistance guidelines for a USDOL-funded project to prevent and reintegrate children involved in armed conflict around the world.

The Global Child Soldiers project, implemented by ILO-IPEC, gave these children and many others like them access to education and recreational activities as they transition into their new lives. In addition to Colombia, the project worked with children affected by armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, and Burundi.

The experiences of children in conflict vary greatly from continent to continent, from country to country, city to city and village to village. With this in mind, project activities were tailored to the unique and varied context of each locality and included vocational training, catch-up education, employment support services, management training, and psycho-social assistance. The Global Child Soldiers project worked not only to prevent children from joining armed groups but also supplemented the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process for children once associated with armed groups, providing them with this holistic approach to start rebuilding their lives.



Supporting the Local Community

The reintegration of former child soldiers is a sensitive issue in many communities, as these children may have committed crimes and are often considered perpetrators of violence as opposed to victims. In order to facilitate community acceptance, the Global Child Soldiers project provided services in a context that would benefit the entire community. For example, the project worked with communities to identify collective basic needs (such as construction of wells, roads, or schools) and geared vocational training and employment towards fulfilling these reconstruction needs. Through its focus on community involvement, the project not only helped rebuild individual communities but a peaceful Rwanda.

Working with Local Businesses

With its lush green rolling hills and mountain gorillas, tourism is one of Rwanda’s fastest growing industries. The Global Child Soldiers project in Rwanda provided practical training to former child soldiers in collaboration with some of the biggest hotels and restaurants in the country’s burgeoning tourism sector. Partnerships with the business community are essential in connecting the children’s new-found skills with real employment.

The Global Child Soldiers Program utilized a participatory approach, bringing together children receiving services and adult professionals. One adult participant commented on the approach, “I like it a lot because the children listened to our concerns as professionals and as adults in this program, and we listened to their concerns...and we saw each other as human beings. We all build this process together.” In countries divided by conflict, this inclusive process has been essential in getting the community to work together towards building better lives for children affected by the war.



Rwanda

KADOGO and NDABAGA

In Rwanda, former child soldiers who once fought against each other have now joined together to form two strong associations of their own, KADOGO (Child Ex-combatants Association) and NDABAGA (Association of Girl Ex-combatants). The Global Child Soldier project supported these associations by reinforcing their technical and organizational capacities. They gave members the tools they need to democratically govern their associations and mobilize resources for future activities. With support from the project, KADOGO and NDABAGA's young leaders are now contributing to rebuilding unity and creating tolerance in once war-torn Rwanda.



“Never again!!” was the candid answer of Bailyn, a 17-year old teenager who had witnessed armed conflict in her community, when asked if she would prefer to return to her life as a child soldier. Now a college student in her native Philippines, Bailyn’s life is far different from her childhood growing up in the midst of fighting between government troops and rebel combatants, four of whom were her own brothers. The thought of losing her brothers compelled Bailyn to volunteer as a courier, giving her the opportunity to visit and check on the conditions of her siblings. In that role, she would hike for hours along rough and muddy roads, bringing food and clothing to rebel camps. As a Global Child Soldiers project beneficiary, the muddy roads Bailyn once traveled are now far behind her. The project has given her a scholarship to pursue an education and a chance for a brighter future, a future where she hopes to encourage other youth to look for better options in life than participating in armed conflict.

Philippines

Democratic Republic of Congo

From the Battleground to the Bakery

Elois comes from a poor family in the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the country’s civil war, his village was invaded by rebels. Elois, 13 years old, decided to join the Mai Mai militia. He stayed with the armed group for five years, managing to earn some money which he sent home to support his family. When the ceasefire agreements were signed in 2003 and Elois returned to his home, he found that living conditions were worse than ever. A year later, Elois learned from some friends that there was an opportunity for him to get vocational training and support to start a business. Elois successfully applied for the USDOL-supported program, choosing to become a baker, and received free training for two-and-a-half months.

With equipment and advice from the ILO-IPEC Global Child Soldiers project, Elois and six other ex-child soldiers started their own bakery, which they called Bois Noir (Black Wood). Today, Elois and his colleagues sell 350 loaves of bread each day and plan to expand their business.

In May 2003, USDOL provided funds to UNICEF to demobilize and provide direct services to child soldiers and war-affected youth in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Many of these children had been forcibly conscripted into fighting forces, missed out on years of education, and risked being marginalized by society because of their wartime experiences. Using roving caravans, the project demobilized children by taking away their weaponry and providing them with demobilization certificates and health care services. The project also helped children return to their home provinces. Once home, children received psychosocial counseling, literacy and numeracy education, and vocational training to learn a practical skill. The project also provided services to siblings and other children who may not have been directly involved in the war but were also in dire need of services.

The project succeeded in getting the Afghan government actively involved in providing help to these children. The Ministry of Education issued certificates for children who completed the project's nine-month literacy course and passed a competency test. The Afghan government also certified the job training program. Additionally, the project created local committees to protect children from conflict and guide their education and job training process. By involving local NGOs in the direct provision of services, the project enhanced local ownership and support for its efforts.

While USDOL provided the bulk of support to the project, UNICEF also received funds from many other donors, including the governments of Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and Sweden. In addition, the project was able to coordinate with the United Nations' World Food Program to provide food aid to beneficiaries. This is the type of leveraging of resources and collaborative effort that USDOL aims to support. According to a UNICEF project officer, "The involvement of partners at every level—especially in the communities where these children are now participating in reintegration programs—has ensured that new opportunities are being provided to young people who have been denied a stable childhood in the past."

Raqib, 17 years old, was conscripted by an armed resistance group in his native village of Chaplyar, east of Kabul, and served on the frontlines at the age of 11. He worked as a bodyguard for his commander. During his time with the Mujahideen forces, Raqib suffered shrapnel wounds from mortar rounds during a battle between the resistance fighters and Taliban fighters.

Raqib's military duties finally came to an end in August 2004, when he was demobilized by one of the UNICEF mobile demobilization documentation teams supported by the USDOL project. He was then enrolled in a reintegration program implemented by a local non-governmental organization. After spending twelve months in mechanic skills training and receiving basic functional literacy training, Raqib received an occupational start-up kit and began a full-time job in the village's bazaar. He is periodically visited by a social worker who checks in to see how he is faring with his new job. According to reports received, Raqib has earned respect in his community, proudly provides adequate food for his family of four, and sees even better prospects for his future. When asked about his skills training experience and current job, Raqib states 'this is a new start in life.'

Political Stability:

Providing Children with Stability During Times of Unrest



Political instability can take many forms and has many causes, be it civil unrest, a coup d'état, the abolishment of a monarchy, or the struggles of a nascent democracy. At its worst, political unrest can impair a government's ability to perform its intrinsic functions and provide basic services, including the provision of education to children. The upheavals caused by political instability can create a crisis situation in which citizens, particularly the most marginalized, may have trouble meeting their most basic needs. In such situations, children are more susceptible to dropping out of school and working in exploitive child labor.

This section of *Faces of Change* highlights four USDOL-funded projects in Pakistan and Nepal that are working to strengthen the capacity of both civil society and the countries' governments to deliver educational services to children. These projects are providing direct interventions for children and their parents where gaps exist in educational opportunities. Working in partnership with governments, employers and an array of civil society organizations, these USDOL-funded projects promote political stability by providing child laborers and at-risk children, along with their families and communities, with options that may otherwise be unavailable to them. These include vocational training programs and access to basic education. The programs are also strengthening parent-teacher associations and helping to improve the quality and relevance of instruction for children. Continual access to education and other services during times of instability is at the crux of long-term political stability, as these children not only become better educated citizens but also their community's future leaders.

security



The instability in Afghanistan has put pressure on people living in the bordering regions of Pakistan, where access to an education has become a rarity. Thousands of Afghan refugees have crossed into Pakistan seeking livelihood opportunities, putting a strain on already impoverished regions of the country. Many families are finding it difficult to meet their basic needs, and children are increasingly susceptible to child labor.

Although there are government-sponsored schools in urban areas of the region, these schools tend to be overcrowded and ill-equipped. In rural areas, schools are frequently nonexistent. Even where there is access to education, many parents prefer to send their children to work at an early age due to their dire economic situations and the low quality of education provided at government schools.



The USDOL-funded project Mitigating Child Labor through Education in Pakistan (MCLEP), implemented by *Save the Children—UK*, offers direct education services in areas of great need: the districts of Quetta and Killa Abdullah in Balochistan, the Peshawar district in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and the Khyber Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Area. Given the socioeconomic and political challenges of the region, MCLEP employs a diverse range of educational offerings in these targeted communities as it works to prevent and withdraw children from exploitive labor. One of these methods is the provision of non-formal education to child laborers and other out-of-school children as a first step towards transitioning them into the formal education system. For children in government schools but at risk of dropping out, MCLEP provides incentives to stay in school by providing school supplies, after-school activities, and psychosocial support. The program also targets children at an early age through its early childhood education program, which is aimed at the younger siblings of child laborers in an effort to decrease their susceptibility to engaging in exploitive work. Finally, MCLEP works to withdraw older children from hazardous working conditions by providing literacy and skills training that will ultimately provide them access to better employment opportunities.

While MCLEP works to improve the lives of children, the situation in Quetta and NWFP illustrates the scope of child labor in the region and the challenges faced by the program, other NGO's, international donors, and the Government of Pakistan. Quetta is the provincial capital of Balochistan and the only major urban center in the province. Refugees from other parts of the province and from Afghanistan work in and around Quetta and live in refugee camps. The majority of refugees are unskilled day laborers who are dependent on their children's earnings. Some Afghan children in Pakistan work as rag pickers, carpet weavers, and as collectors of hazardous waste, which puts them at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS and hepatitis. Children in Pakistan also work as domestic servants or street vendors, and in hotels and shops. It is also common for children to perform hazardous work in leather tanning and brick-making operations.

Within this context, MCLEP serves as an advocate for education reform, a provider of technical assistance to government partners, and a much-needed provider of services for children. The project mobilizes key stakeholders in government, local NGO's, communities, and international organizations toward a collective response to address these challenges and creates lasting change through increased educational opportunities.

Bringing Hope to Chaman

Chaman is a city located less than a kilometer from the Afghan border in the Pakistani province of Balochistan. Because of its proximity to Afghanistan, the

town and its suburbs have received an influx of refugees, including children who have been dispatched across the border to earn money for their families. The Government of Pakistan has been unable to provide adequate health care and education services to support the population. In many villages, there are no schools within a 3 to 4-kilometer radius, which means nearly all of the children who live there engage in some form of work.

In 2006, the MCLEP project started interventions in Chaman with the intention of establishing a non-formal education center. Initial meetings with the community showed that community members were eager to have an educational facility in the village.

“I had no hope my children would ever read or write. There is no school or village. This center is a blessing. I want my children to have a life that is better than my own.”

— Parent of MCLEP Beneficiary



Today, the USDOL-funded NFE center has become an integral part of the community providing an education for Chaman’s future leaders. The center bustles with the laughter of children as they work to attain something their parents have only dreamed of: an education.



In the Kasur District of southwestern Pakistan, a young man is walking to work with a smile on his face. Earlier in his childhood, Shabbir had dreaded his walk to work, a walk that should have been a walk to school. As a young boy, Shabbir's family could not afford his education and instead depended on his daily wages as a brick kiln worker to help support the family. Unfortunately, the way his story begins is all too common for many children in Pakistan, but it is a story that transitions into one of hope and inspiration.

Shabbir's brothers worked in the brick kiln alongside him, forgoing an education to support their family. His oldest brother, having dreamed of an education for himself, would not allow his younger brother to suffer a similar fate. He decided to work extra hours in the kiln in order to pay for both his brother's education and to support his family.

Shabbir traded his difficult labor in the kilns for hard work at school. He soon excelled at his studies, won a scholarship, and finished near the top of his class, a result any brother would be proud of. Shabbir's enthusiasm for learning didn't stop at the completion of his studies; he became a passionate education advocate for other children in his village, in the hope that they too would be offered such opportunities. He took it upon himself to persuade parents in the village to start sending their sons and daughters to school.

Shabbir's energy and enthusiasm for children's education and for protecting and removing children from exploitive child labor have made him an excellent literacy teacher, the job he walks to now. His work with the Chanan Literacy Center is part of the USDOL-funded project implemented by *Save the Children—UK* called Addressing Child Labor through Quality Education for All (ACLQEFA). ACLQEFA, with the help of staff like Shabbir, provides literacy training for targeted children and their younger siblings.

Once these children complete an 8-month literacy program, they transition to a vocational training program. For those children who require a different intervention, ACLQEFA operates non-formal education (NFE) centers in targeted



districts with the objective of mainstreaming children into government schools to continue their education. Mainstreaming ensures that working children are completely withdrawn from work as they become full-time students. ACLQEFA not only provides an array of educational and vocational training opportunities to children, but it also works with teachers, school administrators, and education officials to improve the quality of education for children enrolled in government schools.

The opportunities for education and vocational training provided by the project are a novelty for working children, most of whom have never experienced an educational environment. ACLQEFA encourages them to develop an interest in education and gradually withdraws them from work. The fun recreational activities included in the program are new and rewarding experiences for children whose everyday lives are full of adult responsibilities. Their new knowledge, thanks to dedicated staff like Shabbir, will give them a chance at a better future and a childhood free of hazardous labor as they follow in Shabbir's footsteps.

Pakistan

ACLQEFA targets children working in a variety of hazardous sectors. Children like Shahbaz, who are too young and inexperienced to get a job on a carpet loom, may be put to work unweaving sweaters in order to reuse their wool. In some areas of Pakistan, this has become a popular family business. Children use large machines to unweave sweaters with the threat of an injury always present. Shahbaz, who once spent all of his days unweaving sweaters, is now beginning to weave a better future for himself as a student in an ACLQEFA NFE center.



“One fine morning I felt that my prayers were answered. An NFE center was set up close by and its teacher came over to my house to register me.” Despite Shakila (right) and other children’s enthusiasm, it is often difficult for them

to enroll in NFE centers because of their parents’ strong resistance. Their parents, often without an education themselves, fear their family would not survive with the loss of their children’s income. For Shakila, whose parents opposed her studies, a dedicated NFE teacher and social mobilizer made multiple visits to her house and successfully persuaded her mother to allow her to enroll. ACLQEFA’s ability to reach out to parents is essential in the success of its programming. Thanks to the NFE center, Shakila now dreams of becoming a teacher so that other girls in her village can realize their dreams of getting an education.



Instead of sitting in a row of school desks, Kaveeta has spent most of her childhood weaving rows of threads into carpets, like many other children in Tharparker district of Pakistan's Sindh province. After carpet weaving was introduced to the area in the 1950s, it became a growing source of income for families with limited economic opportunities. Kaveeta, along with her brother and sister, became part of the district's carpet weaving work force when her father, unable to provide for his family's basic needs, took out a loan from a village carpet contractor. In return, Kaveeta's father pledged one of his sole assets: the labor of his children. After the contractor installed a carpet loom in the family's home, it seemed as if Kaveeta, her brother, and her sisters would never experience life beyond the looms.



Like so many other child carpet weavers, Kaveeta and her siblings worked under difficult conditions. They were required to work long hours in uncomfortable positions in a room that lacked adequate ventilation and lighting. In addition, their work exposed them to the risk of a variety of health problems, including respiratory disease due to inhaling wool fibers, skin disorders, and skeletal deformities.

In order to combat exploitative child labor in Pakistan's carpet industry, USDOL funded a multi-faceted program, implemented by ILO-IPEC, to withdraw and prevent children like Kaveeta from the dangerous work of carpet weaving. The project took a comprehensive approach to addressing child labor, including non-formal education (NFE) in project-supported centers, recreational activities, and health care. The NFE centers offered education and support services to children who are behind in school and have yet to complete their primary education, in addition to pre-vocational education that provides children with employment alternatives when they reach the legal employment age.

The project had a profound impact on the lives of many children, especially girls like Kaveeta. Even if Kaveeta hadn't been put to work on the carpet loom, she would not have had access to an education, as there was no girl's school in her village. With the introduction of the non-formal education program for both boys and girls, Kaveeta was able to embark on her studies. The project's awareness raising has been so successful that it has increased parental and community demand for schools in other rural areas where government schools may not exist. In order to meet this increased demand, the project provided training and support to community groups to increase their ability to provide education opportunities and withdraw children like Kaveeta from exploitive child labor.

In addition to its direct services to children, the project worked to create income-generation alternatives for families highly dependent on the earnings of children involved in the carpet industry. For many families, the income that their children produce is vital, as evidenced in Kaveeta's story. The project recognized the economic realities of life in the region by providing families of working children, particularly mothers of children enrolled at the NFE centers, with services such as employment training.

The carpet manufacturers themselves have played an important role in the project and in eliminating child labor in general. The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) is investing in a skilled labor force for the future. The PCMEA has established a Skills Training Institute to cultivate "master trainers" in the carpet industry who train adults living in rural areas. Today, the PCMEA operates and funds NFE centers and has established hospitals for carpet industry workers.

In the Tharparker district, the establishment of an NFE center has brought hope and new opportunities for Kaveeta's community. The same father who had once contracted out Kaveeta's labor is now actively involved in the project's awareness raising campaign. Kaveeta is no longer working, and her father is hopeful that one day his daughter will transition from the NFE center to a government school, leaving the long, arduous days of carpet weaving nothing but a distant memory.



Ergonomic Looms Reduce the Need for Child Labor

While new technologies have modernized many industries, in rural Pakistan, many carpet weavers continue to use the traditional loom design that has been used by carpet weavers throughout the century. These looms are often located in dark and dirty facilities where weavers sit in uncomfortable positions to operate the machinery for hours on end. This has led to pervasive health problems amongst carpet weavers, the majority of whom are women and children.



To reduce the demand for child labor, an ergonomically sound loom was introduced to Pakistan by the Center for the Improvement of Working Conditions & Environment (CIWCE), with the support of USDOL and other partners. This loom allows adults to produce rugs quickly and efficiently, and reduces reliance on child labor. Unlike the traditional wood-plank loom, the portable steel loom allows workers to sit or stand while weaving, rather than being forced to crouch at ground level. It includes arm and foot rests, and lower back support. The winding mechanism is driven by gears, eliminating the risk of facial injuries from chains used on traditional looms that often break under strain.



The new loom has had a profound impact on carpet weaving in Pakistan. A CIWCE study of thirty looms in three districts found that after two years, the use of child labor significantly decreased. According to the PCMEA, more than half the weavers who use the ergonomic loom say it has increased their income by almost fifty percent.



As children hike up a mountain to begin their school day, they follow a trail symbolic of the path their country is taking. The small country of Nepal, resting amongst the Himalayas, has been on a winding path towards peace and democracy for decades. The children's journey is intertwined with that of their country as its turbulent political landscape and civil war, combined with chronic poverty, have often made the possibility of attaining an education a dream rather than reality.

USDOL is working to support child laborers and children at risk in Nepal so that they may walk on a path to school rather than exploitive work. The USDOL-funded Brighter Futures Program, implemented by World Education, uses education to help children develop the skills necessary to improve their lives. It also works to raise awareness about the worst forms of child labor amongst Nepalese citizens. In addition, the program provides critical information to government officials responsible for developing public policy on how they can improve educational opportunities for these children.

Brighter Futures provides three major types of educational services to children working in the worst forms of child labor and at-risk children. These are non-formal education classes, vocational education, and formal school support. Non-formal education is intended as an “entry point” intervention with the goal of ultimately mainstreaming children into formal schooling. Vocational training is offered to adolescents ages 14 and above who are either too old or unable to attend regular school. Formal school support is provided to children in the appropriate age range.

The Brighter Futures Program primarily caters to children working as: porters, recyclers/rag-pickers, domestic servants, carpet factory workers, mine/quarry workers, brick factory workers, transport workers, and restaurant/entertainment workers. In addition, the project supports both children affected by the civil war as well as former bonded laborers. The largest group of program beneficiaries has been child domestic servants, typically between the ages of 10 and 12, who work long hours in the homes of more affluent urban households. The second largest group has been primarily made up of child porters. These children carry huge loads in baskets, secured by a head strap, up and down steep mountain trails. They work day after day and for days on end. Some children benefiting from the project call the communities they live in home, but most are working far from family and support systems.

Brighter Futures also helps families improve their livelihoods by offering training in advanced agricultural methods. Through an inter-generational approach, the program brings together youths, their parents and other community members to learn and then apply new farming techniques.



Some of the targeted children transition from school into vocational training, significantly increasing their ability to contribute to family income over the long term. With these new skills, many youths of legal working age are able to create their own viable businesses in their communities.

In order to attract and retain students in government schools, the program has mobilized Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) to develop new ways to improve the quality of, and access to, education. This is essential since the poor quality of many schools discourages parents from sending children to school, increasing their susceptibility to recruiters looking for child laborers. Parents involved in the PTAs work with educators to raise money for scholarships for disadvantaged children, upgrade facilities, and support teachers.

World Education has been working for the last 4 years on building the capacity of close to 50 local NGO partners to implement these direct interventions. As a result, these partners will have the capacity to continue to identify, intervene, and provide relevant educational services to children involved in the worst forms of child labor and at-risk children, so that more children can go to school and have a chance for a brighter future.



Nepal



Brighter Futures interventions have made a tremendous difference in the lives of children through increased literacy, training in work and life skills, improved socialization, heightened awareness of rights, improved negotiation skills, and increased oversight by adults who are not employers. The program has facilitated the withdrawal of many children from exploitive labor. For those unable to leave the workplace immediately, participation in the program has resulted in greatly reduced working hours and improved working conditions in non-hazardous occupations.

Trade Development and Economic Participation:

Creating New Opportunities for Change

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of exploitive child labor. Around the world, parents unable to sustain their family's basic needs may resort to putting their children to work. Children from single-parent or unstable

homes may be at greater risk of being drawn into exploitive labor, as they may have more limited means to provide for both themselves and, in some cases, their siblings. In these situations, attending school may be perceived as an unaffordable luxury.

Without the benefits of education, children involved in exploitive labor often miss opportunities for future economic mobility. When they become parents themselves, they are more likely to continue this cycle of poverty and child labor.



Efforts to combat child labor must focus in part on improving the poor economic situation that entraps many families and children and is the cause of this vicious cycle. Expanding opportunities for broad-based economic growth in a country is one strategy. More focused efforts to increase the economic participation of families who subsist on the fringes of the economy may also be needed. USDOL collaborates with other U.S. Government agencies to foster an environment where all members of society around the world, including the most marginalized, can achieve greater economic security within the global economic system. Trade agreements can offer opportunities for expanding prosperity, and can also provide leverage for enhancing labor protections in trade-partner countries. For example, just days before the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement was signed, the Government of Morocco implemented a new law increasing the minimum age of employment from 12 to 15.

The projects featured in this section illustrate the types of activities USDOL supports to expand economic participation and help raise economic security. In Morocco, USDOL is offering educational opportunities to children, mostly girls, who previously had never seen the inside of a classroom. In Brazil, a USDOL-funded project opened new horizons and provided alternatives for children working in marijuana growing and commercial sexual exploitation. The project works to increase community participation and support, provides educational services, and links eligible families to government assistance programs. Finally, the USDOL-supported Timebound project in El Salvador is on the forefront of efforts to eliminate exploitive child labor in one of the signatory countries to the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement.

expand

MOROCCO

PROJECT ADROS: COMBATING CHILD LABOR THROUGH EDUCATION IN MOROCCO

Nawal, 15 years old, is one of tens of thousands of girls in Morocco working as a petite bonne, or “little maid.” She lives in Marrakesh and works as a domestic servant for a man she was told was her uncle. With no father and no identification papers, she was not eligible to attend a government school. Expected to be available day and night to clean, cook, and care for the children, Nawal rarely left the house.

The petites bonnes phenomenon is considered by many a form of adoptive servitude in which poverty-stricken parents send (or “sell”) their children to work in the homes of more affluent families in urban areas. Although their parents may believe that they are putting their children on a path towards better opportunities, in reality, petites bonnes are often on a road to exploitation behind the closed doors of their “adoptive” families’ homes. They often work excessive hours for little or no compensation and are seldom offered the chance to attend school. They are also vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse.

A project called Adros (“I Learn,” in Arabic), implemented by Management Systems International with funding from USDOL and other donors, is providing a window of opportunity to thousands of children like Nawal. The project provides educational services to children who work as petites bonnes or in other forms of child labor as well as to children who are at risk of doing so. Recognizing that due to widespread poverty, the petites bonnes phenomenon is considered acceptable by many, Adros is also raising awareness and supporting the government in developing new policies and programs to eliminate exploitive child labor.



Through non-formal education classes in reading, writing, and math, Adros offers participants the chance, many for the first time, to enter a classroom and learn. As noted by project staff, “Until now, these girls had often been denied the opportunity to leave their houses; now they can go to and from school. They can interact with other girls their own age. They have become more outgoing and more optimistic. They have hopes and dreams for the future.” The non-formal education programs, with their flexible schedules and learning materials tailored towards students’ specific needs, allow children to learn at their own pace and according to their personal strengths. A civic and health education class provides participants with an understanding of their rights and the values of tolerance and respect.



Hayat Sellam, 9 years old, lives with her parents in a shanty town outside the city of Rabat. Before joining the Adros non-formal education program, Hayat had never been to school and was at risk of becoming a *petite bonne*. Now, she can read and write, and her father has agreed to not look for an employer for her. Instead, he encourages her to continue her studies.

Many children enrolled in the non-formal education program have stopped working completely; others have been able to significantly reduce their working hours. Recognizing that the costs of attending school can be prohibitive, Adros provides families of children attending formal schools with school uniforms, textbooks, and supplies. For students attending vocational training centers, the project pays a small stipend to cover enrollment fees.

In areas of the country where parents struggle to afford school expenses and negative attitudes towards the public school systems pervade, Adros' tutoring program is preventing children from dropping out of school and being pushed into exploitive child labor. Children participating in the tutoring program are, for the first time in their lives, being monitored and supported in their studies. This has provided a powerful motivating factor for children to stay in school, and students receiving tutoring services have shown improved academic performance.

So that other children will be given opportunities to attend school, as did Nawal, Adros is working to establish a foundation for lasting change in Moroccan society and institutions. Through its public awareness campaigns, the project is educating families and communities on the negative consequences of child labor and the importance of an education. To promote sustainability, Adros is collaborating with the Moroccan Ministry of Education to institutionalize the management and monitoring of its non-formal education services. The project's tutoring component was so successful that the Ministry decided to adopt its model. Adros partner organizations implementing the non-formal classes are providing on-going teacher training.

The Adros advocacy campaign and its technical assistance have helped advance steps by the Government of Morocco (GOM) to address the issue of child labor and the *petites bonnes* phenomenon. In 2006, the government established a child labor unit within the Ministry of Labor. The project also helped the government develop a plan to implement Ingad, a special program to address the issue of child domestic servitude. The Ministry of Labor has also begun work on a new law that would prohibit the use of children under the age of 15 as domestic servants.

After two years in an Adros non-formal education program, Narwal, with the help of a local organization, enrolled in the formal school system. She works reduced hours and has done so well in school that she is skipping from the fourth to the sixth year. Thanks to the project, Nawal now has a chance to decide on her own future—whether to continue her studies towards college or enroll in a vocational training program. Through its public awareness and advocacy campaigns and partnership with the GOM, Adros is planting seeds for long-term change.

The U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement: Forging Partnerships for Expanded Prosperity

In 2004, the United States and Morocco signed the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement. The prospect of a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States helped forge a domestic consensus for labor reforms in Morocco, where a new labor law went into effect just days before the FTA was signed. Among other reforms, the new law increased the minimum age for employment from 12 to 15. By supporting efforts such as the Adros project, USDOL is taking concrete steps to protect some of the most vulnerable members of Moroccan society from exploitive labor. Adros and other USDOL-funded efforts to eliminate child labor in Morocco are spearheading efforts to uphold the country's commitments under ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which Morocco ratified in 2001.



It was 9 p.m. when a pair of social educators from the USDOL-funded Educuar project in Brazil dropped in at the Raul Lins Truck Stop. As they came closer, they saw an adolescent girl step down from the cab of a truck and walk into the truck stop's bar. The social educators, recognizing the girl's situation, made their way over to her table and struck up a conversation. Clara was 16 years old. She told them about her life, eventually providing them with her name, father's name, and address. When the social educators asked Clara if they could visit her at her house the following day, she agreed.

The next morning, the social educators, trained by the Educuar project to reach out to youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation, went to the house where she lived with her father and stepmother. The educators continued to build a relationship with Clara and soon learned that she had been through government protective services, including a counseling and legal aid program for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. They also learned that Clara was experiencing health problems and was on the verge of dropping out of that program. A turning point occurred when the social educators took her to a government center offering health-care services and counseling. There, Clara was diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease. Through their active support, the educators had created a foundation of trust that would be vital to their efforts to move Clara out of her exploitive situation and into an educational setting that would offer the promise of a better future. With their encouragement, Clara stopped frequenting the truck stop, went back to school, and began visiting an Educuar-supported Reference Center offering complementary educational and social services.

This girl, along with her two siblings, participated in educational programs supported by the project. She lives in a region of Pernambuco state where the project targeted child labor in illicit agriculture.



Brazil



These boys, who worked as street vendors, were identified as child laborers by Educar. With the project's help, the boys were referred to local collaborating partners, including the municipality, for withdrawal from their exploitive work situation and enrollment in school.

The Educar (“To Educate”) project, implemented by Partners of the Americas in collaboration with local Brazilian organizations, targeted youths like Clara working in the commercial sex industry and children engaged in illicit agricultural production in the poor, semi-arid Sertão region of Northeastern Brazil. Illicit agriculture flourishes in the vast region along the São Francisco River, one of two major marijuana growing areas in Brazil. Poverty, social acceptance of child labor, and a perception by some that work is natural for children of poor families and among certain ethnic groups, fuel the entry of children into exploitive child labor. These are the multiple challenges faced by the Educar project, which focused on withdrawing children from exploitive work in these sectors and providing them access to educational alternatives and social services not otherwise available to them.

By withdrawing children and adolescents from the worst forms of child labor and investing in their educational development, the project has set the foundation for establishing viable and sustainable livelihoods. Through its strategy of engaging municipalities and parents, Educar helped instill the notion that entire communities are negatively affected when children are in exploitive labor situations instead of school. Not only do the working children and their families remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, but improvements in the communities’ overall quality of life are stymied.

Because of the illegal nature of activities addressed by Educar, the project faced a challenge in identifying and monitoring beneficiaries. The project carried out a household census covering over 67,000 households in the region. To identify children in commercial sexual exploitation, the project developed the innovative social educator model for identifying and referring female and male victims to needed services. The project trained social educators (social workers, teachers, and even health professionals) to reach out to children like Clara and build a relationship of mutual trust. Once this relationship was established, the educators could begin the process of drawing the children into relevant educational, social, and economic activities. The structured process used by the educators was, in some cases, the most stable force in the children’s lives.

As a result of heightened community awareness, municipal governments have deepened their commitment to education and combating child labor. They have refurbished schools, refocused teacher's and education administrators' job descriptions, improved transportation to schools attended by project beneficiaries, and invested in new classroom materials and teacher training. For youth who might otherwise work after school, the project provided access to complementary educational services that pick up after the formal school day ends. The after-school programs involved art and recreational activities and classes on topics such as health and hygiene. The programs also trained beneficiaries in potential income-generating skills such as costume jewelry-making.

Besides providing access to educational and social services, Educar also helped families tap into government assistance programs. Through Educar's Educational Census, the project identified families eligible but not participating in government aid programs, such as Bolsa-Familia. The Bolsa-Familia is a cash stipend provided to poverty-stricken families on the condition that their children attend school and are vaccinated. Educar's census and project database generated lists of eligible families so that municipal managers could include them in the federally-sponsored program.

Through her involvement with Educar, Clara was accepted into a vocational training program implemented by a collaborating organization and the local municipality, with funds leveraged from the Brazilian government. The program provides training to youth who have been withdrawn from the worst forms of child labor—especially commercial sexual exploitation—to become Civic Community



Agents. At times, Clara would lose motivation and reach the brink of giving up. At those times, the educators would intensify their support and visit her home more frequently. Educar Project Director Stuart Beechler notes, "Patience and persistence are the essence of these education-based interventions. It means not giving up on these kids, finding ways to get close to them, supporting them, and developing a process of building mutual trust that will lead to the inclusion of exploited boys and girls into society, through opportunities to help them change and grow." Eventually, Clara became an enthusiastic participant in the program, looking forward to becoming a peer educator so she could help other girls who, like herself, believed that nobody cared about them. A modest scholarship provided her with a safe income as she continued with her training. As she went through the program, Clara began to see herself as an educator—a position of respect and authority, a complete reversal from her life as a victim of sexual exploitation. According to Clara, her life changed after meeting the social educators. She obtained her birth identification papers—a first step in the process of becoming a Brazilian citizen. Previously a pawn of the commercial sex industry, Clara now dreams of a career as a model, having a family of her own, and being happy.



These two students were hired by Educar to carry out a beneficiary tracking exercise, conducting interviews of beneficiaries tracked by the project in the largely rural municipality of Tacaratu in the state of Pernambuco.

It was still dark outside in the coastal area of Usulután, El Salvador, when Miguel's father would wake him up. Together, they would leave for the mangrove swamps and another long day of digging barehanded for curiles, small shellfish that live in the water around the dense mangrove trees. Miguel, at the age of 11, had already lived a life of sacrifice and hardship.

To extract the shellfish, Miguel would dig his hands deep into the mud, which often hid sharp mangrove thorns and needles from the mangrove trees. "You scrape your fingers" recalls Miguel as he reflects on the endless hours he spent in the swamps, helping his father eke out a meager living for his family.

The air was thick with mosquitoes and gnats. To repel the insects, Miguel would smoke cigars. Like the other children working in the swamps, he regularly took pills to stave off exhaustion from the arduous work. The scars on Miguel's hands hid deeper wounds from opportunities lost, childhood dreams crushed.



Today, with the support of the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC Timebound Program (TBP), Miguel and thousands of other Salvadoran children working or at risk of working in worst forms of child labor—in sugar plantations, garbage dump scavenging, fishing, and commercial sexual exploitation—are using their hands to hold pencils and textbooks in schools and after-school centers. The project has not only changed their lives, but it has helped transform the educational system and attitudes towards education in the communities where they live. Such efforts are critical to expanding opportunities for greater economic prosperity in El Salvador, a signatory country to the U.S.-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement.



The TBP has provided technical assistance to principals, teachers, and parents' associations, and produced new curriculum materials. It has helped more than 60 schools develop strategic plans, as required by the Ministry of Education, to articulate their vision, goals and unique challenges to be overcome in the upcoming years. In addition, the project developed innovative classroom workbooks that enhance teachers' abilities to instruct and enrich students' learning experiences. The workbooks have been so successful that the Ministry of Education asked the project to help revise the national Social Studies curricula through the third grade. Teachers have described them as the most valuable tool they have for teaching and inspiring students.

“Former working children now attending school regularly are probably the major and, hopefully, most enduring result attained by the project.”

— El Salvador Timebound Program staff

The TBP also established after-school education centers, called salas de nivelación, or “leveling classrooms”. The salas provide tutoring and other activities to former child laborers and at-risk children to improve their academic achievement and prevent them from spending after-school hours working or dropping out of school altogether. Use of these after-school centers is a recognized strategy in retaining children in school. The salas have met with such success that the Ministry of Education has assumed the operation of the 98 centers. Eventually, the model may be expanded country-wide.

Because of the learning opportunities provided by the project, many children like Miguel have developed life plans of their own. They are asking, “What will I be in the future?” They are identifying the challenges they may face, and strategies they can use to overcome them. Miguel is now in the fourth grade of elementary school and attends an after-school sala. His horizon has cleared, and he sees a future of promise for himself and his younger siblings.



Children benefiting from the project participated in a school art contest where they depicted the growing awareness of the importance of education amongst themselves and in their communities. Explains Raul Antonio, 13, whose drawing is pictured here, “This drawing shows that we, the children, need adults to support us in our education, since education dignifies people and we all expect to be somebody in life.”

Over the past 13 years, USDOL’s support of projects to eliminate exploitive child labor around the world has made a difference in the lives of over a million children, their families, and their communities. Many children have been afforded opportunities that seemed out of reach, and have acquired necessary tools to shape their futures. Societal perceptions regarding child labor are changing as awareness campaigns have increased public understanding of the hazards of exploitive child labor and its detriment to the lives of children and their communities. It is with great hope that the momentum for change created by the projects highlighted in this edition of Faces of Change, along with the many others supported by USDOL, will continue to reverberate through the families, communities, organizations, and governments with whom they worked.

USDOL would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to the many organizations and their committed staff who are working to eliminate exploitive child labor around the world. Thanks are also due to those individuals whose contributions of time, effort, and personal histories made *Faces of Change* possible. Most importantly, USDOL would like to honor the children who have shown such courage in overcoming exploitation and striving to develop their full potential through education. Their experiences, successes, leadership and hope continue to inspire us and spur others to join the struggle to combat exploitive child labor. For all of us, they represent the real faces of change.



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