STOP CHILD LABOUR

AFRICA TOUR 2008

FINAL INTEGRATED REPORT
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The Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008 is an initiative of the European campaign ‘Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work’ (SCL). The Stop Child Labour tour took place in five African countries; Morocco, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya from October 8th till November 6th 2008. During the Stop Child Labour tour a delegation of three representatives from Southern partner organizations – MVF (India), Asamaan (Nepal) and SNE (Morocco) – has engaged in field visits, exchange meetings and workshops with local NGOs and trade unions, government bodies and international organizations involved in children's rights programmes. By doing so, experiences and best practices have been shared, possible cooperation has been considered and input for further lobby and awareness raising activities has been provided. Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (Kinderpostzegels) has joined the campaign to support the programme in Ethiopia. Kinderpostzegels has a strong presence in the country and many partners that focus on (non formal) basic education projects for out-of-school children. The joined efforts of these European NGOs and the participating parties in the countries involved have resulted in an interesting and inspiring learning experience for all.

All reports, articles, reactions and other information on the Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008 can be found at [www.stopchildlabour.eu/africatour2008](http://www.stopchildlabour.eu/africatour2008).
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1. INTRODUCTION

There are 218 million child labourers aged 5-17 around the world today. That is one in seven children going to work instead of going to school. They work in fields and factories, they sew footballs and t-shirts, they pick coffee and cocoa, they mine, they dig, and they fight in wars. They are trapped in poverty with little hope of escape. Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest incidence of economically active children – 26.4 % of all 5-14 year-olds, compared to 18.8 % for Asia and the Pacific and 5.1 % for Latin America.

However, many studies show that children’s wages only contribute in a small way to a family’s income, while the fact that the child misses out on education and the opportunity to individual development will hamper it for the rest of its life. Child Labour breeds poverty as it not only leaves the child and future adult without any tools to escape from the poverty trap, it also impacts negatively on society as a whole as it creates a whole group of people condemned to poverty.

It should be clear that the issue of child labour is very pertinent. The impact of the world-wide financial crisis will be felt very strongly in Sub-Saharan Africa, while the present food crisis is already leaving families, particularly in rural areas, without any means to find food. Environmental changes force families to leave their land and migrate to the city in search of food and work. All these calamities work together to increase the rate of child labourers, particularly in Africa, as parents hope to increase their meager income with the slight contribution of their child’s labour. It is therefore crucial to convince these parents that child labour does not fight poverty, but is in fact a means to perpetuate and even increase poverty for them and their children. It is at least equally crucial that local organizations, governments and international organizations devise innovative ways to keep children in schools or get them there.

It is in this context that the European campaign “Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work” and Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland have organised the Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008.

“Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work” (SCL) is a joint lobby, education and awareness raising campaign that seeks to eliminate child labour through the provision of full-time, formal and quality education.

The campaign is being carried out by the Alliance2015 network of European development organisations: Cesvi (Italy), Concern (Ireland), Deutsche Welthunger Hilfe (Germany), IBIS (Denmark), Hivos (the Netherlands) and People in Need (the Czech Republic) in co-operation with three other Dutch organisations: the General Education Union (AOb), the Dutch Confederation of Trade Unions (FNV) and the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN).

SCL is based on the conviction that the Millennium Development Goals can only be achieved if all forms of child labour are eradicated and all children up to the age of 15 are given the opportunity of full-time education. The campaign calls on EU, national governments and international organizations to formulate coherent policies on the twin issues of child labour and education. The overall objective is to achieve that by 2015 every child receives formal, regular and uninterrupted education for at least 8 or 9 years.

www.stopchildlabour.eu
Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland (Kinderpostzegels) is a children's charity fund with the slogan: ‘for children, by children’. The annual School Campaign is a striking example of this. During this campaign, school children raise funds by the selling of special children's welfare stamps in order to help other children, in particular children in difficult circumstances. Kinderpostzegels uses these funds to support projects focusing primarily on children. The target groups of Kinderpostzegels are: children with disabilities, children who are victims of exploitation, children who are victims of violence and discrimination, children involved in child labour and street children. The projects that Kinderpostzegels support are grouped around four different programmes: 1. Right to education, 2. Right to protection and security, 3. Right to full citizenship and 4. Right to healthy development.

Kinderpostzegels believes that all children have the right to develop their individual talents and abilities. They are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and sometimes need extra help and protection. With the support of Kinderpostzegels children in difficult circumstances are given the opportunity to grow up into balanced adults. For children to participate fully in society, now and later, it is important for them to play an active role in the planning and implementation of projects. That is why Kinderpostzegels supports and encourages children’s participation.

Kinderpostzegels raises and allocates funds for the benefit of children in difficult circumstances in the Netherlands as well as outside this country. In Ethiopia Kinderpostzegels supports already for more than 15 years Kinderpostzegels children's projects of local NGO's. Since 2006 the support of Kinderpostzegels in Ethiopia is mainly focused on (non formal) basic education projects for out-of-school children.

www.kinderpostzegels.nl

2. BACKGROUND

SCL has quite a long history of cooperation with Southern partners and has facilitated conferences and exchange meetings around the world.

In 2004, SCL and the Indian MV Foundation organized a highly successful international conference on child labour and education in India. “Out of Work and Into School - Children’s Right to Education as a Non-negotiable” had a great impact in identifying a clear cause-effect relationship between the three interrelated issues of right to education, protection from child labour and poverty.

As a follow up of the international conference, SCL in cooperation with its partner Compartir organized a Stop Child Labour regional meeting in Honduras, in 2006. The objective was to discuss strategies for the eradication of child labour with a particular focus on building cooperation in Central America between trade unions and non-government organisations working in the area of child labour. The final outcome of the conference was the Honduras Declaration which was signed by over 80 organisations in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador.

SCL organized another Stop Child Labour regional conference in Kenya in January 2007 in collaboration with Legal Resources Foundation (LRF). The conference aimed at campaigning for the total eradication of child labour and the full provision and promotion of education for all the children in Africa. The conference took a participatory approach with different participants who presented their experiences and best practices for possible replication and networking purposes among the participating organisations in the fight against child labour. The conference resulted in the so-called Thika Declaration on Child Labour, adopted by NGOs representing Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Somalia. Recommendations made by the participants were presented during the World Social Forum which took place in January 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya.

In November 2007, as a follow-up to the Honduras conference, SCL organized a Stop Child Labour tour in Central America. A delegation consisting of two representatives from MVF and one representative
from the leading teacher’s union from Albania visited four countries in Central America; Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The main objective of the tour was to exchange knowledge and experience between the visiting delegation and the local organisations regarding important issues on the elimination of child labour. The tour also aimed at initiating concrete follow-up plans towards the elimination of child labour and the enrolment and retention of children in schools, in line with the 2006 Honduras Declaration.

Having learned from the positive response on the tour through Central America, SCL has decided to organise a similar Stop Child Labour tour in Africa in October – November 2008.

3. OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008 was to strengthen the world-wide movement against child labour and for education for all. The specific objective is to bring together important stakeholders working on the linked issues of child labour and education to share experiences and best practices, to consider possible coalitions and to provide input for further lobby and awareness raising in Europe. It is expected that lessons learned will encourage the participants to further design policies and projects that best answer the specific problems in the own context. This will contribute to the realization of children’s rights to protection from work and provision of full-time, formal and quality education.

The main outcomes and recommendations derived from the tour have been presented to key representatives of significant international agencies in Nairobi and during a roundtable meeting with the European Union in Brussels. Moreover, the tour’s results will be used for further lobby purposes at national level in the six participating EU member states. The aim is to bring back voices from the field to relevant politicians and policy makers; in order to mobilize political support and provide input for improved policies on the linked issues of child labour and education.

4. ORGANIZATION AND PROGRAMME

The Africa Tour delegation was represented by three Southern partners: Mr. Ragatte Venkat Reddy from the MV Foundation, India (Head of Delegation); Mrs. Radha Koirala from Asaaman, Nepal; Mr. Dris El Youbi from Syndicat Nationale de l’Enseignement (SNE), Morocco.

The Africa Tour delegation visited local NGOs, trade unions and teachers’ unions in five different African countries: Morocco, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya to share their experience with fighting against child labour. After the tour ended in Kenya, the delegation travelled to Europe to participate in a Round Table Meeting in Brussels organized by the Stop Child Labour campaign.

In each of the five African countries local organizations involved in the child labour issue organized a programme for the delegation, which included field visits and direct exchange meetings as well as a concluding workshop for all participants and other important stakeholders.
Programmes per country where organized by the following organizations:

- Morocco (October 8 – 11): Syndicat Nationale de l’Enseignement
- Ethiopia (October 12 – 18): People In Need (PIN) field office and Forum for Street Children Ethiopia (FSCE)
- Zimbabwe (October 18 – 25): Hivos field office and Coalition against Child Labour (CACLAZ)
- Uganda (October 25 – November 1): Cesvi field office and Kids in Need (KIN)
- Nairobi (November 1 – 6): Concern field office and Labour and Resource Centre (LARC)

**Kick-off in Morocco**
The Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008 started in Morocco with field visits and exchange meetings. Also a ‘kick-off’ workshop was organized to present the objectives and plans for the upcoming tour. During this event much media attention was attracted.

**Visit to Zimbabwe, Ethiopia and Uganda**
In each of these countries about one week was spent. Roughly, the weekly schedule per country was as follows:

- Day 1 and 2: arrival in country, acclimatisation, confirmation of schedule, first preparation meeting.
- Day 3 – 6: conducting field visits and meetings with local organisations working in the field of child labour and education, communities, local authorities, schools, teachers, communities, local authorities, families, children, etc.
- Day 7: concluding workshop: presentation of experiences, results and highlights, formulation of conclusions and recommendations, discussion on follow-up initiatives and consideration of national/regional coalitions, provision of relevant and concrete input for final presentations in Nairobi and further lobby in Europe. Broad range of stakeholders can be invited.

**Presentations in Nairobi**
Subsequently, the tour delegation travelled to Nairobi, Kenya to mark the end of the Africa tour. Here the outcome of the tour, best practices, lessons learned and input gained during the tour were presented to prominent international organisations and representatives of government bodies based in Nairobi. A press conference was organised to provide the (African) media with first-hand information on the situation of child labour and education in Africa.

**Roundtable meeting in Brussels (11 November 2008)**
A roundtable meeting with key EU officials in Brussels was organised to present and discuss the outcomes en recommendations derived from the tour. The Africa Tour delegates gave personal accounts of their experiences and reported on the results of the final presentations in Nairobi. Discussion focussed on what the European Commission and the EU member States, collectively or individually, should and could do to fight child labour and promote fulltime education for all worldwide, but particularly in Africa.

**National lobby (ongoing)**
Experiences gained from the tour will be further used for lobby purposes at national level in the six participating EU member states. SCL will continue the debate on how decision makers can help fight child labour and ensure the participation of all children in full-time formal quality education.
5. VISITING DELEGATION

The reason for involving the **MV Foundation** (MVF) in the tour is their valuable experience and successful intervention in the field of child labour and education in India. Over the past decade, MVF has proven that in reality it is not only desirable but also practically feasible – through an integrated education and child labour policy – to include children of poor families into formal education and to fight all forms of child labour that keep children from attending full-time education. The organization has an uncompromising position on abolition of child labour as it perceives every child out of school as a child labourer. MVF believes that a child not in school is a child labourer and that elimination of child labour is possible through children’s access to education. In its efforts to abolish child labour, the MVF developed a child labour free zone model, in which social mobilization and concerted action is the key strategy. The organisation has managed to mobilise not only parents, but also other stakeholders such as teachers, parents, village councils, local officials and the state government. As a result they have succeeded in mainstreaming a total of more than 500,000 working and other out-of-school children into full-time schools, including many girls.

**Asamaan** is active in the fight against child labour in Nepal. Similar to the MVF, Asamaan believes that a child not in school is a child labourer and that the elimination of child labour is possible only through children's access to education. Asamaan has adopted the MVF model of child labour free zones and demonstrated that this approach to abolish child labour and universalise child education can be successfully replicated in other countries. The strategy is primarily on two levels; the first is to mobilise communities and create demand for education at the grassroots and the second is to actively engage with the government and other prospective stakeholders at the district level on the issue of quality education for all children.

Likewise, the SCL campaign recognises the role of education as a solution for child labour. For that reason including a teacher’s union in the Africa Tour delegation was a logical step. The **SNE** Teacher’s Union in Morocco has been engaged in exchange programmes with MVF for many years. SNE has considerable experience in the fight against child labour and in the remediation and prevention of school drop-outs in Morocco. Their focus has been mainly on the role of teachers’ unions in programmes to prevent child labour and provision of full-time, formal education to children.

6. AFRICA TOUR IN ACTION

The overall conclusion of the Stop Child Labour Africa Tour 2008 is that all the objectives set were successfully achieved. As appreciated many times by the local organizations’ representatives during the tour, the personal contact with the “child rights defenders” from India, Nepal and Morocco cannot be compensated by anything else. No conference could ever balance the time spent on the ground and sharing experience face to face.

On the part of the delegation, gathering first-hand information from people operating in the field, community leaders, school teachers, parents and their children has become an invaluable experience. All the tour delegates valued highly the energy emanating from all the fieldwork and enthusiasm expressed by the local leaders.

**Diversity of cultures and hunger for education**
While the countries were marked by diversity in terms of culture, political regimes and economic stability, the delegation noted a number of common denominators on the issue of child labour that characterise all of the countries visited.

One of the Africa Tour delegation’s non-negotiable principles is that child labour breeds and increases poverty. The government officials and some of the organizations, including major stakeholders, seem to
be convinced that child labour is a direct consequence of poverty.

Furthermore, at the moment most of the organizations and governments focus on eradicating the worst forms of child labour, thus tolerating light work. In spite of having key legal instruments to protect children’s rights in most of the countries, light work is commonly put up with and largely visible in the public. That perpetuates the public’s perception of child labour as something inevitable and “normal” and as a consequence hinders the law enforcement. Nonetheless, it is important to note that all the government officials the Africa Tour delegation met were eager to hear about the child labour free zone practice and showed commitment to fighting the child labour.

Another important finding was the explosive demand among poor parents for education of their children that the delegation encountered in all of the five countries. Parents often struggle against all odds to support their children’s education. Cases of illiterate parents or slum dwellers sending their children to school in the hope that one day they would obtain a decent job and help their parents to break the vicious cycle of poverty were detected frequently in the course of the tour.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that without the commitment and dedication to the fight against child labour on the part of civil society, the Africa Tour would not have been as successful as it was and the intended objectives would have hardly been met.

Closing workshops
Most importantly, at all the closing workshops the Africa Tour delegation helped to bring about a momentum among NGOs representatives, humanitarian workers, academics and government officials. They all recognized the child’s right to education and agreed on complete eradication of child labour, creating coalitions, lobbying with local governments and social mobilization, in particular among local communities.

The NGOs workshop in Nairobi resulted in endorsing and expanding the Thika Declaration – the result of the Stop Child Labour regional meeting in Nairobi, 2007 - by the delegates from Morocco, Ethiopia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The original Thika Declaration was expanded by a provision calling for the need to involve teachers and trade unions in the fight against child labour. Other suggestions were made and accepted by those present that were deemed beneficial for future efforts in fighting child labour and increasing access to quality education, such as criminalizing child labour in penal codes or standardizing school uniforms, if not abolishing them altogether.

At the closing Leadership Forum in Nairobi, head of the EC delegation in Kenya, Mr. Eric van der Linden validated education’s superior value and its multiplicative benefits for the economy. He also floated the idea of introducing restrictions for import of products that have been made with the help of child labour. Mr. Venkat Reddy, head of the Africa Tour delegation, then rose to the occasion at the end of the half-day’s proceedings, and proving his worth as a renown social mobiliser, he steered the children from several of Nairobi’s non-formal schools who came to the event to declare their readiness to bring their out-of-school peers to classrooms by shouting “Yes, we can” and thus giving the entire tour a perfect, highly symbolic ending.
7. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

Below you will find a list of the main outcomes and recommendations of the Africa Tour 2008 delegation. First, there are general findings summarized in the lessons learned, followed by outlining best practices and teachers’ unions’ role in the fight against child labour in individual countries and recommendations by the delegation to all the governments of the countries visited as well as NGOs and civic societies.

I. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Being the poorest continent, Africa displays the highest percentage of child labourers in the world. That explains why discussions with government officials or NGOs largely revolved around economic difficulties, which is an alleged major factor underpinning child labour in Africa.

2. The governments seem to be aware of the problem and in cooperation with international and local NGOs try to enact adequate legislation. However, the right to education is not always appropriately guaranteed by the existing legislative and policy frameworks and a majority of children living in rural areas and in slums have limited, if any access to education.

3. Child labour is aggravated by the explosive phenomenon of the HIV & AIDS pandemic. Children with one or both parents dead are forced to drop out of school and become bread-winners for their family members. Without the support of the state and communities these children have no chance of getting back to school.

4. One of the major challenges encountered during the tour is to change people’s mindsets on the issue of child labour. As remarked by one of the Nairobi’s closing workshop attendees, child labour is enshrined in the African society because Africans largely believe that children have to work in order to become a responsible adult.

5. It was witnessed that there is a great demand for cheap labour and child labour. The social acceptance on child labour and other justifications are facilitating this demand.

6. At the same time it was witnessed that there is an enormous demand for education among the poor. The response for this demand is very weak from the governments and other agencies. On top of it the school government and bureaucratic rules for admission (school fee, birth certificates, medical certificates, etc.) pushes out many children into child labour.

7. Without the work of international and local NGOs some governments of the countries visited would hardly ever try to tackle the child labour issue on their own. The governments seem to appreciate the work of NGOs in the sector of social services, including education, which often takes the burden from the government in building schools, providing teachers and attracting children to classrooms.

8. It was also noticed that in all the countries the profile of children who are out of schools is very similar. In the rural areas many of them work on farms and also as cattle herders and shepherds, some of whom can be as young as three years of age. Many children leave their villages in rural areas to work as domestic servants in the cities, often ending up exploited and abused. In the urban slums the presence of street children who have been drawn into developing a drug habit and who are caught in illegal networks was quite apparent.

9. There were some disturbing trends too in the actions of some well informed citizens like civil servants, government officials and educated families who actually employ children as domestic help, denying them their right to education. They were even offering justifications for the same.
10. In all of the countries a wide gap exists between what is written in the laws and the reality on the ground with law enforcers largely ignorant about children’s rights and child labour inspectors missing in many districts despite the existing obligation.

11. Gender inequalities affirm the prevailing discriminatory attitude towards women, which results in poverty being feminized. That negatively affects the state of well-being of children. As highlighted by MVF and SNE, mothers form a key to their children’s education and should be targeted in awareness-raising campaigns.

II. HIGHLIGHTS AND BEST PRACTICES IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

- In Morocco, the delegation was struck by the positive role of school teachers in existing efforts to retain every child in school. Indeed, their self-esteem as teachers was very evident and undoubtedly, their endeavour to reach out to all out-of-school children and persuading child labourers to join schools has given them an extra credibility as pedagogues. The undertakings of these teachers deserve to be taken to scale in Morocco and also in all other countries.

- In Ethiopia, the delegation found the contributions made by parents and the community in some of the poorest areas for sustaining local schools very heartening. In the discussions that ensued with the community, it was evident that the local headmen were ready to take up the challenge of eliminating child labour in their community and ensuring that all children attend school. The community based organizations (CBOs) were also actively involved in a process of strengthening schools. It would be worthwhile mapping such initiatives of the local population and consolidating all their endeavours through active support of the government and the donors.

- In Zimbabwe, the coming together of the trade unions, teachers’ unions and the NGOs through the Coalition against Child Labour (CACLAZ) is a significant move. They have worked together to build awareness on the issue of eradication of child labour, linking it to the provision of increased access to quality education. Their activities certainly need greater presence in the field and given the support to this alliance it is possible to deepen their campaign with the communities they work with. It must be mentioned that the delegation was moved by the demand for education even in a country which is currently going through a deep economic and political crisis.

- In Uganda, the work of Kids in Need (KIN) showed dedication and commitment to rehabilitating urban street children through multiple interventions and reintegrating them into formal schools. The team felt that the programs aimed at addressing older children and giving them the opportunities to be prepared for formal school required further strengthening. It was also felt that an ‘area based approach’ of covering all children whether in school or outside the school net and protecting their rights would help sustain the efforts that have been put in.

The Ugandan Minister for Youth and Children Affairs in a discussion with the delegation fully agreed with the notion that a child out of school means perpetuation of child exploitation and child labour. In order to protect children’s rights he acknowledged the significance of enforcing the right to education. There is also a palpable need to have a greater empowerment of the National Council for Children (NCC), an agency operating within the governmental structure but without the real power to implement programs and policies.

- In Kenya, the delegation visited two different non-formal schools in Nairobi’s largest slum area, where up to a million people live and work in a ‘grey zone’, because in the eyes of the law their informal settlement does not exist. This has until very recently meant that the right to education of an overwhelming majority of the city’s child population has in effect been denied. There are now
hopes that the situation can be addressed through a cooperation of NGOs and government, as witnessed at a closing workshop in Nairobi.

III. TEACHERS’ UNIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

As evidenced in Morocco, where the National Teachers Union (SNE) was at the forefront in the fight against child labour through its program aimed at prevention of school dropouts, teachers’ unions can play a critical role in the elimination of child labour.

With a senior representative of SNE as a member of the Africa Tour delegation, it was imperative for the whole team to explore the possibilities of similarly engaging teachers’ unions in all of the countries that have been visited in the course of the tour.

With the benefit of direct experience, it has to be said the challenge is now deemed as nothing short of daunting as the local context often relegates the idea of replicating the Moroccan example into the sphere of improbability. The predicament of Ethiopian Teachers’ Association (ETA) is a case in point. Having fallen out of favour with the current regime in Addis Ababa, the union now struggles to preserve itself at least under a modified name. It cannot continue with the implementation of its programs and policies as an organization, but only in the personal capacity of its members, which is not very practical, to say the least.

Their Zimbabwean counterparts Progressive Teachers’ Union in Zimbabwe (PTUZ) face similar difficulties. They show admirable clarity of vision when it comes to taking a principled stand against all forms of child labour. However, most of their energies have of late been consumed by their nearly one-year long strike.

Besides, the regime of President Robert Mugabe has traditionally considered most trade unions as essentially antagonistic towards its rule and would not enter into any alliance with them even when it comes to issues such as the fight against child labour. A new window opportunity may open, however, once the anxiously awaited power-sharing government takes office, with the former trade union leader Morgan Tsvangirai expected to come in as Prime Minister.

The position of Ugandan Teachers’ Union seems to be largely compromised by the negative perceptions of pedagogues in that country in general. At least one minister blamed part of the problems in the educational sector on the teachers “bad attitude” and a humanitarian worker described at a concluding workshop in Kampala how a teacher’s social status in Uganda rapidly “declined over just one generation from once highly-esteemed position into a job considered only as a last resort”.

In a further sign of trouble, one NGO fighting the worst forms of children’s exploitation listed teachers among the common perpetrators of sexual violence against kids. Despite all of this, the delegation suggested during a meeting with the Secretary General of the National Council of Children to include teachers’ union into the existing formal network of stakeholders in the fight against child labour. The suggestion was accepted as a proposal.

And lastly, with regard to Teachers Unions in Kenya, the mere idea of involving teachers’ unions in the fight against child labour raised eyebrows of one NGO program manager who quickly explained that trade unions and non-governmental organizations never work together, each essentially occupying their own universe. Teachers’ unions have recently been busy planning strikes to demand higher salaries. This is their traditional line of work and the do not take an interest in the well-being of their students, it was alleged.

It can thus be inferred from the immediate experience that forming a workable alliance which includes the teachers’ union can be a truly difficult task, perhaps not attainable in the short run, regardless of the
existing consensus about the usefulness of such alliance among most people the delegation has come into contact with.

**IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Africa Tour delegation recommends that governments, international agencies and donors in all the countries:

1. **Introduce the perspective of having a ‘child labour free zone’** through intensive social mobilization and covering of all children in the school going age. In this, the international agencies such as the UNICEF and ILO as well as the donors have a major role to play. In the discussions with the international agencies a clear interest was shown on their part in the ‘area based approach’ of establishing child labour free zones. It is necessary that they give support to the governments in developing a policy on child labour and education and create pilot programs to demonstrate the efficacy of the model for a total abolition of child labour and ensuring that every child is in school;

2. **Introduce flexibility in the school governance system to accommodate school drop outs**, non-enrolled children and older children back into the school system and prepare them for an age-appropriate class; there is also a requirement of relaxation of procedures for admission, examinations and so on;

3. **Make education free without charging school fees or any other payments**; although in many countries education is nominally free, it was discovered that schools continue to collect fees through many methods leading to the exclusion of the poor in schools. A campaign against school fee has to be taken up by the NGOs in this regard;

4. **Listen to the demand for lunch meals in schools**, as it was found that many children discontinue due to hunger, a campaign in this regard is necessary;

5. **Convert zones of conflict freezing schools and other entitlements to children into child friendly zones** and in the process make efforts to ensure that education of children is not disrupted;

6. **Encourage involvement of private sector in democratizing schools**, improving access and retention of children in formal schools and highlight the initiatives of the private sector as in the case of a telephone company in Zimbabwe that provides over 25,000 scholarships to poor children who are attending schools;

7. **Produce a code of conduct for the staff of government officials, international agencies and NGOs** who should officially declare that they do not employ children in their own homes and offices.

8. **Protect all children whose parents have died of HIV & AIDS** and provide education through full time formal schools as non-negotiable;

9. **Organize training of civil servants, including police and make them adopt a child-friendly approach**;

10. **Integrate all of the existing non-formal and innovative education models into formal education systems** as it should be the responsibility of every government to provide free primary education to its citizens, not only on paper but in reality. It is important that the education provided is of sufficient quality to retain children in schools and to ensure sufficient learning outcomes.
NGOs and civil societies need to:

1. **Urge governments to integrate non-formal schools into formal system;**

2. **Get the media on board as media can play an active role in awareness-raising campaigns.** They can start with refusing to accept advertisements looking for domestic helpers under 18, as domestic work is rarely a subject to scrutiny and therefore hard to tackle or highlighting cases of employers that release and send child labourers to school;

3. **Concentrate all means and energy in one geographic zone,** address all children involved in labour and create a child labour free zone;

4. **Mobilize more civil society involvement with children’s right to education.** Communities ought to cooperate with teachers to make education more attractive to both adults and children;

5. **Foster parental involvement in school activities** and build interface between schools/teachers and parents to promote parents’ support to education;

6. **Include other players in the campaign** (university students, academics, trade unions, local level elected representatives);

7. **Build a national network dedicated to eradicating all forms of child labour;**

8. **Hold regular workshops and debates on non-negotiable principles at national, province and district levels.**
8. FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

At the Leadership Forum in Nairobi all representatives from the Africa Tour countries expressed their enthusiasm to follow the issue of child labour in close cooperation with each other. Each one of them marked the experience of meeting representatives from the other countries as energizing and inspiring to work hand in hand.

Pascal Masocha of Coalition against Child Labour (CACLAZ) from Zimbabwe said: “Much as the countries may be different, the child labour issue is the same and the major benefits come from cross-fertilization of ideas with colleagues from India, Nepal, Morocco, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya.”

Meseret Tadesse of Forum on Street Children (FSCE) from Ethiopia said that the tour inspired Ethiopia’s community-based organization leaders to commit themselves to work towards eliminating child labour in their own locality and make a child labour free zone in their kabele (community unit).

Stephen Asiimwe of Uganda’s Kids in Need (KIN) said that forming an alliance and networking at national, regional and African level would be the best way to push the issue of child labour.

The recommendations that result from the Leadership Forum for the local organizations in the concerned countries are the following:

- Establish Stop Child Labour core groups in each country;
- Build networks and alliances at regional and African level;
- Elaborate a regional action plan which will include common goals and local best practices;
- Develop a regional awareness-raising campaign which would be based on the “Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work” campaign;
- Organize workshops and regional meetings to follow up on the progress.

The recommendations that resulted from the Leadership Forum for the “Stop Child Labour – School is the best place to work” campaign are the following:

- Map out all like-minded organizations working in line with SCL guiding principles and have a global convention with them;
- Organize capacity building workshops to lead NGOs and teachers’ unions and facilitate exchange visits to MVF (India) and SNE Teachers’ Union in Morocco;
- Regular reviews to be conducted on the process;
- Establish global network with journalist for awareness raising purposes;
- Carry out EU lobbying on the right policies on child labour and education, in collaboration with respective countries NGOs;
- Engage with the concerned ministers in the countries;
- Organise an exchange visit with Members of European Parliament.
ANNEX 1:

COUNTRY REPORT MOROCCO

Venkat Reddy shows the students of Al Quds school in Fes his homeland India

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Political context
3. Field trips and meetings
4. Kick-off ceremony for Africa Tour in Fes
5. Conclusion – highlights and challenges/recommendations
1. INTRODUCTION

Given its reputation as one of the most successful and economically stable countries in North Africa with a long-history of self-government, it comes as a striking paradox that Morocco’s educational system fails on many levels and its 34 million strong population is half-illiterate (only 52.3 per cent people in the country can read and write).

According to a government-commissioned survey, some 600,000 children are reported to be child labourers and 800,000 are said to be “inactive”, which means they neither attend school nor are they engaged in work.

In addition, up to 320,000 children quit school early every year to work in domestic service, agriculture, handicraft industries and other, sometimes worse forms of child labour.

In Morocco’s urban areas children are engaged in various forms of work including selling cigarettes in the street, begging, shining shoes and washing cars. Many young girls coming from rural areas are hired in the cities as domestic servants. As the gap between the rich and gets wider, the more girls migrate to cities to work as domestic help.

What contributes to the child labour is the number of illiterate parents who do not see (or are unaware of) the benefits school can bring to their children and their families. As shown in practice, teaching illiterate parents how to read and write brings fruitful results including higher enrollment and attendance of children in schools.

Prevailing high unemployment rates, particularly in rural areas make people cling to old traditions and customs, including the perception of child labour as something positive, rather than harmful. It remains common in handicraft industries for small children as young as six to become apprentices and it remains a challenge for the Moroccan government to convince parents that their children would benefit more in the long run if properly educated.

The Moroccan part of the Stop Child Labour campaign’s Africa Tour 2008 was organized by SNE (Syndicat Nationale de l’Enseignement), the leading teachers union in Morocco. SNE is a founder of child labour prevention program, which has been successfully implemented in thirty schools by now.

Upon its arrival to Casablanca, the Africa Tour 2008’s delegation was briefed by Iouy Aziz, SNE Secretary General, on the union’s child labour prevention program. He explained their strategy of putting pressure upon the government to get involved more actively in this field. The briefing-complemented by additional input from member of SNE’s national committee and the Africa Tour delegation Driss El Youbi, -proved to be extremely useful during the meetings with the ministers of education and of employment and vocational training in Rabat.

Unlike many other African countries, Morocco on the whole does not seem to face the risk of low school enrollment at primary level as much as it does at second level where high rates of drop-out constitute a major problem.

According to the UNICEF survey conducted in 2006 the enrollment rate at primary level is approximately 98 percent for boys and 87 percent for girls, while second level enrollment is 38 percent of boys and 33 percent of girls.

Education is free in Morocco and compulsory through primary school (age 15).
2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

In general, it can be said that the political will to tackle the twin issue of child labour and poor educational standards (as evidenced by high drop-out rates as well as high levels of illiteracy) seems to be in place in Morocco. The delegation met with the Minister of Employment and Vocational Training, Mr. Jamal Aghmani and the Minister for Education Mr. Mohammed Akchichan. Both Ministers acknowledged the graveness of the existing problems as well as a readiness to tackle it.

I. Meeting with Minister of Employment and Vocational training, Mr. Jamal Aghmani

During a roundtable session, Minister Aghmani presented the delegation with an outline of the recently adopted National Action Plan. The plan includes the hiring of “labour inspectors” to ensure that the ban on child labour-already in existence-is respected. A total of 43 inspectors have already been trained on issues concerning child labour.

Minister Jamal Aghmani holding the National Action Plan booklet

Minister Aghmani also acknowledged the specific problem of a wide-spread use of under-age domestic workers. This form of child labour is more difficult to monitor and uproot than child labour in other industries such as the handicrafts industry.

He also stressed the importance of achieving a better functioning education system, this is key to keeping the children in schools and out of the labour market.

“What I would like to emphasize is that there is the political will in the government, the political parties and civil society. There is general consensus that everybody should contribute and work together in order to eradicate child labour. Morocco’s Ministry of Employment was one of the first Arab and African countries to conduct child labour research in 2000 and we were not ashamed to openly declare that there are 600,000 children who work in the country. We will conduct national research in 2009 and we really believe that the number has been reduced. But of course, it should be combined with quality education because education plays a very important role in reducing the child labour,” he said in an interview, recorded for the purposes of the SCL campaign’s Africa Tour.
II. Meeting with Minister of Education, Mr. Mohammed Akchichan

For his part, Minister Akchichan, did not try to hide the failures of the Moroccan education system, but seemed convinced the negative trend can be turned around, especially if the necessary funding comes through, as envisioned in the latest state budget draft and the National Action Plan.

Minister Mohammed Akhchichan engaged in a discussion with the delegation

“In the last 15 years schools did not have the necessary resources. But now there is a collective political will to work together to find the necessary resources to allow the schools to play the role they should,” Mr. Akchichan remarked.

The Minister also dismissed concerns that have been raised about the government’s attempts to promote private education. He made it clear that the state is not trying to delegate its responsibilities for providing the compulsory education to children of up to 15 years of age to a private sector. However, he believes that private institutions do have a role to play in assisting the government to build the capacity of the public school system.

Mr. Akchichan had words of praise for the work of SNE, calling the teacher’s union a reliable partner in the improvement of the Moroccan education system. He did acknowledge there had initially been skepticism about the union’s role in the reform program among people who perceive the union’s role in a rather traditional way, but he said this was eventually overcome by the positive results SNE had in Fes. He also expressed hope that the union will remain a “suggestive force, inventive in its ways of working and coming up with new ideas that will convince not only the government but the society as a whole to work with the union”.

He showed a keen interest in the SCL Campaign’s Africa Tour, hoping to hear about the experience and findings it will have generated by the time it comes to an end. He also proved to be very responsive to an offer of further cooperation with India’s MV Foundation, represented in the delegation by Venkat Reddy, and seemed to be generally interested in the concept of child labour free zones applied by the organisation in India.
3. FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

The Al Quds primary school in Fes, about 200 km southwest of Rabat, can be clearly taken as a success story. The headmaster of the school, program leader/treasurer and head of the parents’ association informed the delegation about the program which has been implemented in cooperation with AOB from Holland and the Ministry of Education in Morocco since 2003.

Thanks to this program the relatively high average drop-out of 53 children a year in Al Quds School has been reduced to only 3 pupils a year. The school has 1,056 students. The school also carried out research on the state of their pupils’ health. The findings showed that some students had stopped attending school simply because their vision was impaired (i.e. they could not read what was written on blackboards). Since then, the school has been providing about 50 pairs of glasses per year, which has widely contributed to the fall in the drop-out rate.

The school also runs a variety of extra-curricular activities such as arts & crafts with the help of local NGO volunteers. As a result, pupils’ mothers have also offered to run similar workshops on traditional knitting and weaving.

Upon the implementation of SNE’s child labour prevention program, the school management team had to start from scratch and first deal with the insufficient sanitary conditions and basic jobs such as painting the walls to make school a more hygienic and safe place for the pupils.

The delegation got a chance to experience the improvements to the school by attending a French lesson and some of the extra-curricular activity workshops mentioned above. The children were evidently enjoying their lessons. When asked about their future, many of them-like many young children- said their ambition was to become a teacher one day.

The school has also been trying to address the problem of illiteracy among parents, providing lessons of reading and writing in the evenings. The lessons-run by members of the Parents-Teachers Association-have taught 90 parents out of 300 so far.

The school takes pride in the fact that it faces a much higher demand than other schools in the region. In September 2008 the school registered 241 enrollments, while a school nearby of the same size reported only 42. Nonetheless, the Al Quds School realizes the limited capacity the trade union has in replicating
the model across the country. For this to be possible, the government would have to take the initiative. For the time being, the program has expanded from the initial five schools to a total of ten schools in the Fes region Fes and twenty other schools in four other regions of Morocco.

4. KICK-OFF CEREMONY FOR AFRICA TOUR IN FES

Last on the agenda of the tour’s stop in Fes was an official kick-off ceremony for the Africa Tour. This helped to spread the message of the SCL campaign to a wider audience through the local media outlets covering the event, and also provided a symbolic campaigning point for the local partners who have been involved in the successful program of school drop-out prevention schemes and are clearly ready to take their efforts to another level.

The event-held at one of the local schools-brought together regional heads of the department of education, school headmasters, teachers and inspectors as well parents’ association representatives, all the program coordinators from participating schools. A representative from the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training addressed a gathering of this kind for the first time, declaring the readiness of the ministry to work hand in hand on fighting the child labour.

The delegation and SNE Vice-President Abdelaziz

I. Handicrafts Industry

At the kick off ceremony, the Ministry of Handicraft Industries was represented. Their presence had a special meaning in the city known for its handicrafts as well as for the incidence of child labour in the industry. There is a strongly rooted popular belief in Morocco that children must start their craftsman apprenticeship before the age of 12 if they want to master the necessary skills.

Unfortunately, due to the last minute revisions of the tour’s program in Morocco it was impossible to visit one of the local handicrafts centers in Fes, as originally planned, to assess the situation and speak with the people who are directly involved.
II. SNE-MVF mutual inspiration as an example of South-South exchange

Sociologist and trade union activist Ahmed Bouziane, who serves as the advisor for the SNE-sponsored program of school drop-out prevention-in his speech to the gathering-reminisced about his personal experience with the MV Foundation’s work in India and the lessons he and his fellow activists learned at the Hyderabad conference in 2003.

He called for even greater dedication to the cause on the part of people in Morocco and urged them to call for absolute rejection of child labour and the right to education for all children. He claimed “there are few people who are really convinced that the child labour is a very bad thing; in the mind of a great part of the population – and also a great part of those responsible, on every level – it is not so clear that child labour is a real problem”.

Mr. Bouziane also called on the trade unions to maintain pressure on the government for – as he said - it is primarily the state’s role to cure the ills of its education systems and it would be unacceptable to let the government shift the responsibility to other stakeholders.

The Africa Tour delegation’s designated spokesman Venkat Reddy officially ended the kick-off ceremony. He declared himself proud of SNE and its achievements since 2003 when he last visited Morocco. He promised to bring the special contribution which came from the Moroccan teachers back to India, where the campaign against child labour still faces an uphill struggle despite all of the achievements attributable to MVF and its partners.

By ending his speech with a call (in Arabic) to make all of Fes a child labour free zone - which the increasingly enthusiastic audience then repeated aloud together with him - Venkat sowed the seeds of a new community-based approach for tackling the child labour problem, which some people have already shown interest in applying.
5. CONCLUSION – HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Challenges:

- Social problems, such as divorce, poverty, unemployment and illiteracy of the parents were perceived by the school management and the parents associations as the biggest obstacle

- Hygiene in schools – unsanitary conditions are seen as one of the reasons children, especially young girls may drop out

- Health problems such as visual impairment also contribute to the drop-out rate.

- Insufficient training of teachers – teachers often refuse to attend upgrade training session which are allegedly run by “old-fashioned” school inspectors or former teachers/trainees.

- Internalizing the principles of the prevention program among the teachers

- Narrowing the gap in the quality of education in public and private schools (it is a sad confirmation of the unacceptable reality that even a senior representative of SNE prefers sending his children to private schools)

- Changing traditional attitudes and social norms vis-à-vis child labour, involving the communities where the problem remains deeply rooted e.g. the handicraft industry.

II. Recommendations:

- The SNE must submit a proposal to urge the Ministry of Education to replicate their child labour prevention program.

- The government should take more responsibility for the child labour problem and replicate SNE’s successful child labour prevention program at a national level, particularly addressing school capacity building which the teachers’ union cannot provide. Funds should be allocated from the National Action Plan budget for the program (for example supporting the reinforcement lessons for slow learners).

- The government & civil society need to work together to make schools more child-friendly, improve sanitary conditions and provide more extra-curricular activities like sports etc.

- The government & civil society need to work together to increase efforts to improve literacy among parents.

- Considering application of the area-based, community-driven approach as championed by MV Foundation in India to complement the achievements of the teachers’ union and its partners

- There needs to be more involvement from the employers of child labourers in all processes by for example introducing the label “Child labour free product”, providing incentives for employers to hire adults instead of children or setting up a peer monitoring system.
ANNEX 2:

COUNTRY REPORT ETHIOPIA

A happy school girl from South Gondar rural area non-formal school

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Political context
3. Field trips and meetings
4. Final workshop
5. Conclusion – highlights and challenges/recommendations
1. INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in Africa with economy largely depending on agriculture. While the sector suffers from frequent droughts, non-existent infrastructure and primitive cultivation tools, it still accounts for almost 80 percent of the total employment.

Almost two thirds of the country’s population are illiterate, living mostly in heavily underdeveloped rural areas, with 50.3 percent of male and only 35.1 percent of female being literate (2003 est.).

Child labour is commonly seen in urban as well as in rural areas. The International Rescue Committee reported in 2006 that almost 60 percent of Ethiopian children are engaged in some kind of work.

Children in urban zones tend to be involved in paid work, such as shoe shining and street peddling, unlike children living in rural areas who are mostly unpaid for their work, as majority of them helps their parents. Cattle herding, water fetching and selling goods by the road represent their daily routine.

Child labour is banned by Ethiopia’s constitution but the definition and understanding itself is very much unclear among the public and even among the government officials, as proven in the final workshop in Addis Ababa.

According to the UNICEF survey conducted in 2006 the school enrollment rate at the primary level is around 55 percent for boys and 47 percent for girls, while the secondary education level reported enrollment of 23 percent of boys and only 13 percent of girls.

Non-availability of schools in remote rural areas is perceived as the major problem in Ethiopia’s failing education system. Thus non-formal education system came to existence, the objective of which is to fill the gap exhibited in the provision of basic primary education by Ethiopia’s government as well as private sector.

Non-formal schools are run solely by local NGOs with the help of international donors. It is a unique model applied in regions with no infrastructure and based on self-help community work and relying on social mobilization.

Non-formal schools are flexible and its curricula are tailored to the needs of local children and their parents who need their children’s assistance in tending to cattle, households or farms. Thus some subjects are shortened to the minimum and others, e.g. science, are focused on nature, plants, animals etc.

The final workshop held in Addis Ababa, was attended by a high number of local NGOs’ representatives as well as government officials, namely from the Ministry of Education and Ministry for Women Affairs.

The workshop sparked a lively discussion on the issue of child labour. While the stated goal to get all children to school seems to be shared by both local NGOs as well as government officials, the approach how to achieve this widely differs (more in 4th Chapter – Final Workshop).

The Ethiopian part of the Stop Child Labour campaign’s Africa Tour 2008 was organized by People In Need (PIN) that is involved in school construction projects as well as water well drilling and Forum on Street Children (FSCE), which helps the out-of-school socially disadvantaged children attain their basic needs including education.

The Bahir Dar trip was coordinated by Wabe Children’s Aid and Training (WCAT), which runs non-formal education (NFE) centers in two rural communities of Lay Gayint Woreda in South Gondar, about 600 km north of Addis Ababa.
2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Among African countries, Ethiopia stands unique as it has never been colonized with the exception of 1936-1941 Italian occupation. Nevertheless, the country has had its share of turmoil and crises.

In 1974 the military junta under a self-proclaimed Marxist Mengistu Haile Mariam deposed Emperor Haile Selassie and established a socialist regime with the help of Soviet Union and Cuba. Under Mengistu’s iron fist rule, thousands of people were persecuted and imprisoned, property confiscated and church activities banned.

Following the toppling of the junta in 1991 by the coalition rebel forces of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the political and economic conditions relatively stabilized with the government holding a firm grip on power.

In 1994 Ethiopia adopted a constitution followed by its first multiparty elections. Under the constitution the state is the sole owner of all land, providing leases to its tenants, but the lack of investment into mechanization of agriculture means it is labour-intensive and thus prone to exploitation of child workers, despite the constitutional ban of the practice.

At the moment the government is discussing a controversial law on civil society organizations. Local as well as international NGOs fear that the government wants to install full control over their work through this law.

3. FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

I. From Addis Ababa to Bahir Dar

After the arrival to Addis Ababa in the morning and introductory meeting/briefing with the representatives of the People in Need and Forum on Street Children-Ethiopia (FSCE) later in the day, the delegation set off for a field trip to Bahir Dar early morning the next day.

While delegates took a plane, reporters covered the distance of more than 560 kilometers in a car, which actually helped them appreciate the situation in the rural areas where child labour is rampant. The most typical forms of child labour, which can be easily detected, are herding the cattle and fetching the water.

Another highly visible feature of the life in the countryside is the engagement of women in the business of carrying apparently heavy loads on their backs and heads, complemented by a lack of available (or affordable) transportation. The picture of poverty, which burdens this nation of nearly 80 million people, is straightforward and comes across rather bluntly just by looking out the car window.

The delegation in the meantime got introduced to the system of non-formal education (NFE) through a visit of FSCE-run NFE center in Bahir Dar, where the children of underprivileged families get a chance to learn how to read and write. All of the children said they wanted to continue their education in a formal school once they finish the 3-year NFE cycle.

Instead of having parents of some of the students called to school for a meeting, the delegation opted to visit a dwelling place of an 8-year-old student Bemnet Haymanot who lived in a nearby slum area. It transpired she was the first literate person in the entire family, both of her parents being beggars who had relocated to the city from a rural area some years ago. Bemnet enjoyed a full support of her mother, who saw education for her daughter as the best way out of poverty for all of them. Bemnet said she had every intention to continue her schooling in a formal school.
The delegation then went to see one such formal school where some of the “graduates” of NFE centers have been transferring. When asked about how these students were coping, the teachers gave only a general answer, alleging there is a mechanism to deal with potential problems, which involves the children’s former guardians (i.e. FSCE). The delegation also visited the school’s library, which was rather basic.

More time and multiple visits in various schools would likely be needed to ascertain whether the NFE centers function as a worthy substitute of the formal education for those whose ambition in life goes beyond merely being literate.

The next day was spent visiting both non-formal and formal education centers/schools in the countryside about three hours’ drive from the city of Bahir Dar, in the mountainous area of South Gondar district.

The delegation was assisted and guided by Mr. Adane Melese, deputy director of WCAT, organization that runs several projects in the area including two NFE centers which were visited by the delegation along with a brief stop at the formal school in the area, where the students can later transfer.

Visiting the first NFE center in the village of Tirtnat, the delegation was received by the leaders of the local community who were involved in the project from the very beginning, providing labour for the construction of this very basic mud-brick walled, earthen-floored facility, consisting of just three rooms including one fully furnished and one partly furnished classroom.

After an informal Q&A with the elders in front of the school, the delegation proceeded to inspect the facility including a classroom where a class was being conducted. Children then interacted with the delegation through their teacher, Mr. Melese and local project coordinator and performed a traditional song and dance. A small session followed where the community leaders further engaged in a debate with the delegation, responding positively to the questions about the role of education for the children.

Prompted by Venkat to say whether they would send their offspring to a public school if transportation and food was provided, they all answered in a positive, suggesting the herding of the cattle could be taken care of on a collective base, pooling all the adults from the village.

After the lunch in a town a short visit at the local public school followed, where the delegation was met by the school’s young director and his deputy who briefly interrupted the class just for the occasion. The
modern facility had allegedly no problem with dropping-out of its students and the teachers’ union was nominally present but did not offer any extra-curricular activities or any other school-improving projects of the like the SNE in Morocco is known for.

The day’s program culminated with the visit of another non-formal education center run by WCAT, where the delegation met with the kebele (lowest administrative unit) chairman and his councilors including the one responsible for the education. It transpired that from the 3000 children living in the area only about half went to school, part of the problem being the non-availability of education service to the more distant dwellers. The chairman said he would welcome at least three more schools in his kebele and said he was ready to ask the administration to provide them.

The genuinely warm reception with the exchange of ideas about education’s role in the society plus children’s rights and obligations was followed by an offering of a communal meal of injara with potatoes and local home-made beer. The delegation also witnessed the ceremony of the lowering of the flag at the end of the day’s classes and dispatching the children home.

III. Meeting regional representatives in Bahir Dar

The next day’s program accommodated both a visit to the local tourist attraction – waterfalls at the Blue Nile river – during which the delegation could take their minds off their primary mission for a little while and later an audience with the regional education officials, taking place rather interestingly in the Ethiopian Teachers’ Association’s office (more about the unions issue later).

The officials were very defensive of the government’s record in the field of education, at moments making claims of arguable veracity (like the one about the density of school network reportedly reaching within 3-4 kilometers from every child in the country or about alleged 80-thousand membership of the newly created teachers’ union just in Amhara State).

IV. Visiting projects in Adama, Oromiya Region

Following day’s program took the delegation to the city of Adama, some two hour drive south of Addis Ababa and a major intersection for long distance truck drivers, which to an extent determines the character of the city as one where children are extremely vulnerable to trafficking and prostitution.
The program started in the local headquarters of FSCE, where the delegation was met by Mr. Belay Alamu, local head of the organization and Asmerom Mekonen, his deputy. They showed the delegation around the complex - the only real estate the organization actually owns in Ethiopia (all of their other offices are rented) - which alongside the offices houses non-formal education center complete with a high-standard computer lab and a sprawling playground outside.

The delegation had a look into one of the classrooms where minors were being educated and proceeded to a nearby office of a local ‘iddir’ (full name: Innireada Iddir Yeidiroch Mahber), a community association, which together with several others in the area transformed itself from its usual form of a social club into a full-fledged civic organization with a particular vision that tries to help the underprivileged members of the community, especially orphans.

The iddir, a legal entity registered by Ministry of Justice, collects a 1 birr monthly fee from its members to finance a program which supports education of the orphans in the area. From the total number of 719 orphaned children in 4 kabeles where Innireada Iddir is present, 130 enjoy support of the program. The selection process is needed due to obvious budgetary constraints, but according to the program assistant the delegation had a chance to sound out, the money (80 birr a month) goes to the ones who need it most.

**V. Child Protection Project**

There is another interesting FSCE-sponsored undertaking in Adama which the delegation got introduced to – the so-called child protection project consisting of several elements including the so-called child friendly court (CFC), where victims of child abuse get a special treatment - court proceedings are conducted with the help of a social worker/intermediary who sits with the child in a detached room connected with the court hall via a video-link.

The purpose of such arrangement is to prevent the child’s further victimization. Majority of the 47 cases the court has tried since the inception of the CFC in November 2007 consists of the sexual abuse. The child labour exploitation, as the delegation was told, gets hardly ever reported. This is partly because of its dubious status as illegal on paper, but largely tolerated in practice.

There are also the specially trained Child Protection Units at three police stations across the city, which are tasked with handling the cases of child abuse. To enable people to report these, a special hot-line has been established. The delegation went to see its operating centre at one of the police stations.

The project also involves the local hospital where the victims of child abuse, especially of the sexual kind, get a special treatment in cases where the medical examination is required by the police or court.

The project came thanks to the dedication of the FSCE and is maintained financially through grants from abroad. It seems to be working nicely but would likely be phased out if the one to cover its costs were the Ethiopian government rather than the foreign donors, the NGOs fear.
VI. The problems of the teachers’ union

The day’s program culminated with the specially arranged meeting with Mr. Tenna Sirabezu, one of the leaders of the original Ethiopian Teacher’s Association. The E.T.A. has recently fell out of favour with the incumbent government and is struggling to continue its work with mixed results.

This erstwhile active teacher’s union, which has been taking up taboo issues like HIV & AIDS and child labour, is in serious danger of being disbanded. It is still waiting to see whether its attempt to re-register as the National Teachers’ Union (after the government stripped it of its original name by giving it to another quickly formed and allegedly less independent teacher’s union) bears any fruit.

Mr. Sirabezu vividly described the difficulties the members of his union have been facing when trying to organize themselves. He insisted the majority of teachers in Ethiopia are still with the old union and stand behind its program, although it is currently impossible to implement it on a national level. The members can apparently play their part only in their individual capacity.

4. FINAL WORKSHOP

The last working day of the tour’s visit in Ethiopia was fully devoted to a workshop, organized in Addis Ababa’s Hotel Panorama. It provided the campaign with a platform to spread its message through sharing of experience between the delegation members (both from the work in their respective countries and from Africa Tour) and representatives of various NGOs active in child rights’ issues.

The debate was lively and as expected, it mostly revolved around the very question of tolerating the child labour in Ethiopia. The government’s representatives stressed their commitment to fight against “the worst forms of child labour”, but made it quite clear that light forms of work for children are still to be considered acceptable “at this stage of our country’s development”.

Some NGOs concurred, but the delegation stood its ground and even scored an unexpected victory when chairperson of the already-mentioned Innireda Idriss, Mr. Tamirat Asfain, took up the challenge and declared ‘child labour free zone’ in his area of responsibility.
In his concluding words, the head of FSCE, Mr. Meseret Tadese, summed up the day’s proceedings with words which received a clear nod from those present: There is no doubt all were in agreement on the objective of securing each child’s right to education, we may just differ on which is the best strategy to achieve this for each of our countries.

There was also a general consensus that all the Ethiopian organizations active in child rights’ issues work together to help streamline their efforts and that they should keep meeting and exchanging experiences and know-how. SCL Campaign’s Africa Tour was given credit for helping bring about this momentum.

5. CONCLUSION – HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlights:

- NGOs’ cooperation with state institutions and government officials, such as judges, police, hospitals
- Prolific and successful social mobilization of communities
- NGOs reaching out to deprived children who seem to be “forgotten” by the government
- Mainstreaming into formal education system
- Articulation of the need for education raised by the poor
- Parents are actively involved through school committees
- Parents showed pride of their children being educated
- Parents believe education is the only way to get out of the endless cycle of poverty.
- Parents are willing to make sacrifices for their children’s education by adjusting their work, schedule and free their children to attend school.

Challenges/recommendations:

In general, civil society and government need to:

- Address the issue of rural area child labour, such as cattle herding (adults to take shifts, build fences etc.)
- Revise the laws concerning child labour
- Deepen the overall understanding of child labour among the general public through awareness campaign
- Conduct more study and research on child labour

NGOs need to:

- Make efforts to promote best practices with the government
• address all children in labour
• mobilize communities more
• focus on awareness- raising in the issue of child labour among communities rather than with the government officials
• negotiate with the Ministry of Education over the school governance issues
• Recognize the demand for education from the poorest of the poor
• Demonstrate the feasibility of at least one child labour free zone with the help of kebele (local community) leaders, to demonstrate the concept is viable
• Build a network dedicated to eradicate all forms of child labour
• Review quarterly the progress of the campaign with the government, NGOs and trade unions
• Involve the private sector and media

Recommendations for the unions:

The divided teachers unions need to work together (national to local level) in the fight against child labour.
ANNEX 3:

COUNTRY REPORT ZIMBABWE

Venkat Reddy listening attentively in a non-formal school in the village of Uswaushava

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Political context
3. Field trips and meetings
4. Final workshop
5. Conclusion - highlights and challenges/recommendations
1. INTRODUCTION

The economic turmoil Zimbabwe has been lately experiencing seems to influence all aspects of life in the country, including the education system, which collapsed about a year ago when Zimbabwean teachers decided to go on strike.

It is important to note that any meeting the Africa Tour 2008 delegation attended was started by the local organizations pointing out the abnormal situation the country happens to be in. A major part of all discussions was dedicated to the hardship the local teachers are going through. It is rather impossible for them at the moment to focus on child rights when they have hardly anything to eat and cannot feed their families. Thus emergency food aid has been provided to the poorest teachers who have been literally starving.

Eighty percent of the population is unemployed and most of Zimbabweans are involved in non-formal economy with only 600,000 employed formally.

Among the estimated three million who have left the country in search of job, are teachers and young people between 18 – 30 years old.

Eighty percent of the population is unemployed and most of Zimbabweans are involved in non-formal economy with only 600,000 employed formally.

Education under normal circumstances has always been valued in Zimbabwe but the relatively high literacy rate – 90.7 percent – is soon likely to be affected by the drastic brain drain and economic collapse.

At the moment there is practically no school with 70 percent of teachers on strike. This has a grave impact on the existence of child labour. In a UNICEF survey conducted in 2004, it was found that 26 percent of children were involved in child labour. Child labour is now estimated to be much higher, with the economic hardship Zimbabweans are undergoing.

The Zimbabwean part of the Stop Child Labour campaign’s Africa Tour 2008 was organized by HIVOS and CACLAZ (Coalition Against Child Labour Zimbabwe) which unites three organizations: Progressive Teachers´ Union (PTUZ), General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe (GAPWUZ) and African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN).

Upon its arrival to Harare, the Africa Tour 2008 delegation was briefed by Overson Chiyaka from the HIVOS office and CACLAZ’s coordinator Pascal Masocha.

The closing workshop in Harare concluded the successful Africa Tour delegation’s visit, which culminated by CACLAZ announcement of adopting the “child labour free zone” scheme and declaring its commitment to create two such zones in Zimbabwe – urban and rural - in the following years.

At the same time CACLAZ representatives readily admitted know-how assistance and material support will have to be secured in order to be able to replicate the child labour free zone model.

The CACLAZ delegates also openly expressed their interest to stay in touch with the Africa Tour 2008 delegation in order to gain more experience from all the countries – Morocco’s SNE, India’s MVF and Nepal’s Asamaan.

The workshop was attended by local media representatives and Zimbabwe’s Congress of Trade Unions.
2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Zimbabwe has a long history of political turmoil and crises. UN sanctions and a guerrilla uprising led to free elections in 1979 and independence from Great Britain in 1980. Robert Mugabe has been the country's only ruler (as president since 1987) and has dominated the country's political system since independence.

Mugabe's chaotic Land Redistribution Campaign, which began in 2000, caused an exodus of white farmers, crippled the economy, and ushered in widespread shortages of basic commodities. His Operation Restore Order, which took place in April 2005 ostensibly as an urban rationalization program, resulted in the destruction of homes and businesses of 700,000 mostly poor supporters of the opposition. In June 2007, Mugabe instituted price controls on all basic commodities causing panic buying and leaving store shelves empty for months.

During the years Mugabe has continued to rig presidential elections and the ruling ZANU-PF party used fraud and intimidation to keep the majority of votes. General elections held in March 2008 contained irregularities but still amounted to a censure of the ZANU-PF-led government with significant gains in opposition seats in parliament.

MDC opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai won the presidential polls, and may have won an outright majority, but official results posted by the Zimbabwe Electoral Committee did not reflect this. In the lead up to a run-off election in late June 2008, considerable violence enacted against opposition party members led to the withdrawal of Tsvangirai from the ballot. Extensive evidence of vote tampering and ballot-box stuffing resulted in international condemnation of the process.

On September 15th, Morgan Tsvangirai and Robert Mugabe signed a power sharing agreement. However, the deal is on the brink of collapse. The situation in Zimbabwe remains uncertain and Zimbabwe continues to make headlines for all the wrong reasons. Political instability continues to trigger protests and violence. Moreover, the recent outbreak of cholera (December 2008) is causing many deaths while Mugabe remains unwilling to take the necessary measures to control the rising number of cases. The cholera outbreak and collapse of Zimbabwe's health care system, coupled with political crises and economic meltdown, has now prompted calls for international humanitarian assistance, as well as calls from western and some African leaders for Mugabe to resign.
3. FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

I. Uswaushava - Engaging with the community

Due to some problems with transportation (substantial delay caused by a tire puncture on the road), the program of the Africa Tour 2008 delegation - as prepared by local partners from CACLAZ - only started in real on the third day after the arrival in the country.

Despite delays, the visit of Uswaushava village school in the province of Masvingo in the southern part of the country, proved to be very fruitful as it gave the delegation a great opportunity to engage with the locals on the ground level.

The local community leader together with the headmaster of the school and several members of the community including a member of the local School Development Committee sat in for an extended session with the Africa Tour delegation plus representatives of CACLAZ during which all the important issues concerning the topics of child labour and education were thoroughly discussed.

Headmaster Mr. Mafuma briefed the delegation on the history of the school, which came to existence in 2002, just two years after the founding of the settlement, and has transformed itself from the humble beginnings when he himself was the only teacher for 200 pupils into a proud, if simple, institution of basic learning for 500 students, served by 13 teachers.

The ANPPCAN was instrumental in setting up the school together with the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare which had pre-selected the area, as there was a high incidence of child abuse.

All the structures (of semi-permanent nature) have been put in place with the help of the local community which has provided all the necessary labour. Today, 22 village headmen from the area are involved in maintaining the school.

It transpired over the course of the debate that the challenges the school has to put up with do not radically differ from those faced by the country in general, i.e. raising costs of living and basic services including the education, lack of financial support from the government (towards securing the necessary supply of textbooks and stationary) and the fleeing of youngsters, especially boys to neighboring South
Africa in search of jobs. The schoolmaster believes as many as 5 to 10 percent from the overall number of students have immigrated to South Africa.

The School Development Committee (SDC), parents and school representatives have reportedly agreed upon the level of school fees which reflect more the affordability of the education than the actual running costs of its provision. In this respect, the community-serviced schooling and its governance prove to be much more accommodating than the state-run system in general, which tends to be rigid and may arguably rob many children of their right to education simply due to the current economic pressures. On the issue of school admissions, however, there seems to be little flexibility even on the community level, as the schoolmaster for example ruled out a possibility of late registrations – a child simply has to wait for the next school year to be able to join, as this is allegedly dictated by the ministry of education’s policies.

Gender inequality can enter the picture too - it is safe to assume, the schoolmaster and a female teacher agreed, that if parents can only afford to send one child to school, it will be the boy.

As far as child labour is concerned, it has been alleged by those present that parents usually do not expect children to help in the field or around the house and would rather let them focus on their studies - with the notable exception of harvest time (Uswashava village lies in the cotton growing area) between May and August when children help pick up cotton etc. after the school.

Prompted by Mr. Venkat Reddy’s inquiry, the present SDC member admitted that children tend to overstay in school in the harvest time, as they clearly prefer school and play over the work.

Interestingly, the community seemed to be split over the issue of corporal punishments. It is currently allowed under the Zimbabwean school regulations but it can only be administered in grave cases by a headmaster which is allegedly a major step forward since previous generation’s times when disciplinary beatings in the class were common.

It became clear during the debate that some parents believe corporal punishment has a role to play in the process of bringing up children (it is said to be practiced rather freely at home) while some would not be adverse towards its abolishment.

There has also been notable interest shown among those present to test some of the concepts floated by Mr. Venkat Reddy, like the bridge school for the older illiterate children, and also the child labour free zone. Everybody also agreed on the necessity of holding more workshops in the future on the issue of child rights in general.
II. Tanganda Tea Estates – A dubious private sector initiative?

Next stop of the tour was the Tanganda Tea Company’s plantation near the city of Chipinge. The number one tea producer in Zimbabwe has been of special interest to CACLAZ because of its Earn-and-learn scheme, which has been for more than half a century offering education to the disadvantaged children provided they would pay the school fees back with their labour at the estate.

The delegation was briefed by the company’s representatives as well as by a local education officer on the benefits the scheme purports to provide for poor children. The human resources manager of the company Francis Chingono intimated that the costs of running the primary and secondary level school have been an extra burden lately as the estate struggles with the lack of labour force and other economic hardships, but categorically insisted that the company is not illegally exploiting child labour. He did admit there had been cases in the past of underage kids “trying to slip through the system” but the company, he said, was doing its utmost to prevent this from happening again.

Mr. Caiphas Chihlajo, the former ‘recipient’ of the company’s Earn-and-learn scheme and today’s administrator at the school, shared his own personal story with the delegation, admitting it was extremely hard at times to combine both the work and school load and that some children were unable to cope with this.

After touring the premises briefly and visiting the secondary school in Ratselshoek with the adjoining eating hall where young workers/students were just having their lunch, the delegation departed. The visit has by and large failed to dispel the doubts over the entire scheme which - the members of CACLAZ concluded - needs to be rectified to give children more time to play at the expense of the required workload. Strict screening is also desired to make sure no under-age children are working in the field as it seems to be fairly easy to trick the system with forged birth certificate or a declaration in lieu of the same.

III. Progressive Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe and its strike

Due to the time constraints it was not possible to thoroughly discuss the current ills of the education system in Zimbabwe with a selected focus group of teachers in Mutare, as originally planned by CACLAZ.

The meeting did take place after being postponed by a day and a half, but was very brief and thus could not achieve more than mutual expression of support and sympathy to the groups combating child labour in Zimbabwe.

However, due to the presence of senior members of PTUZ in the traveling group for the whole length of the road trip, the delegation had ample opportunities to discuss not only the prolonged teachers’ strike (pushing for pay increases) which has been a topical issue at the time of the Tour’s stop in Zimbabwe but also some other education- and child labour-related matters.

While the delegation found it unfortunate that the nearly year-long strike has allowed children to learn very little during this period, according to them only 23 days of uninterrupted schooling and thus further undermining the already waning attractiveness of school in the eyes of many pupils and their parents, the demands of the teachers have to be perceived as legitimate and the strike therefore justified.

Most importantly, the delegation has noted with great joy that PTUZ adopted the zero-tolerance policy towards child labour as stated in the Chapter Five of its membership manual.

IV. Meetings in Harare

After returning to Harare, the delegation visited several NGOs, agencies and institutions active in the field of child protection and noted their laudable work.

The work of The City Presbyterian Children’s Club, for example, is a case in point that the faith-based organizations can oftentimes fill the gap where others fail to intervene. The church-run club targets
orphans and other destitute children from the street and provides them with food, shelter and crucially basic education.

Attendees of the closing workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe

It is all the more surprising then, that one of the club’s most generous benefactors, Norway’s Save the Children organization, seems to be rather oblivious to the dangers of child labour, as attested to by its focus on meliorating the working conditions of children rather than fighting for elimination of the scourge as such.

Perhaps the most fruitful of the meetings was the date at ILO’s Harare office, which not only shared the extent of its activities concerning the fight against child labour with the Africa Tour’s delegation but also repeatedly invited CACLAZ to form “a strong bilateral relationship” for all future undertakings.

The ILO’s national professional officer responsible for programming, Ms. Chiratidzo Iris Mabuwa, also pleaded with the delegation to take the message to Brussels that “there are people in Zimbabwe ready to seriously tackle the issue of child labour”, who have so far been denied bigger successes, mostly due to the lack of funding.

Once the political deadlock is broken between Zimbabwe and the West, Ms. Mabuwa believes, the Time-Bound national action plan, which is to be developed in partnership with the Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare and which is to bring all stakeholders on board, should immediately roll out.

There has been a memorandum of understanding signed between the ministry and ILO to that effect a year ago. So far, the first stage – identifying the worst forms of child labour - is being implemented, with the action plan envisaged at stage two.

CACLAZ, for its part, welcomes the invitation to form a partnership with the ILO as it sees the UN agency as its natural ally.
4. FINAL WORKSHOP

The week’s proceedings and experiences were duly summarized and showcased at Africa Tour 2008 - Zimbabwe Chapter’s closing workshop in Harare, where all the relevant partners and local media were invited and where the commitment to work towards the total eradication of child labour in Zimbabwe (and elsewhere, for that matter) has been once again publicly announced by CACLAZ.

It also provided the coalition with a good platform for highlighting once again the findings of the baseline survey on child labour in Zimbabwe, which it commissioned a year ago. Its chief author Dr. Lazarus Zanamwe from the University of Zimbabwe was there to present it.

In the final discussion several points have been raised which shall become the focus of future efforts of the campaign against child labour in Zimbabwe. First of all, pressure will be increased on the (future) government and (present) legislature to revise the present laws which need more clarity insofar as pushing the child labour strictly out of legal bounds is concerned.

A call for greater engagement of media has also been made towards dispelling the popular myths of how beneficial the child labour can be for the poor. It can be noted with much satisfaction that the first step has already been made in this direction by the extended coverage of the Africa Tour 2008 and the issue of child labour in general in a respected weekly Zimbabwe Independent, which came out the very same day (fruits of the previous week’s hard campaigning by CACLAZ).
5. CONCLUSION – HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlights:

• The partnership that exists between NGOs and unions at the national level
• The clear mandate of CACLAZ of total abolition of child labour.
• CACLAZ’s work reaching out to other organizations and trade unions in the fight against child labour
• The social mobilization demonstrated in the Uswaushava village community school
• The inclusion of zero tolerance of child labour in the Progressive Teachers’ Union manual
• The ILO’s invitation to form a bilateral relationship with CACLAZ
• The established contact with a private sector, such as Tanganda Tea Estates and Econet (local telecommunications company)
• The in-depth survey commissioned by CACLAZ and conducted by researchers of the University of Zimbabwe

Challenges/recommendations:

CACLAZ and other groups working for an end to child labour should

• Raise awareness on child labour issue among public as well as policy-makers through greater media engagement
• Internalize the child labour ideology among all its members at all levels
• share the survey results with the National Steering Committee
• Prepare all stakeholders to adopt the concept of total child labour abolition issue, so the corresponding policies can be implemented once the national government is in place
• Lobby on the revision of existing child labour laws to achieve clarity on the issue
• replicate the child labour free zone model in urban and rural zones
• Hold regular workshops and debates at national, province and district levels.
ANNEX 4:

COUNTRY REPORT UGANDA

A 12-year old girl looking after her younger sibling, as her mother is HIV positive

Chapters:

1. Introduction
2. Political context
3. Field trips and meetings
4. Final workshop
5. Conclusion – highlights and challenges/recommendations
1. INTRODUCTION

Uganda has implemented a number of legal instruments that recognize the rights of children at national, regional as well as international level. However, there are wide disparities between the normative standards guaranteed by the enacted legislation for the protection of child rights and the situation on the ground. Deeply rooted cultural factors and lack of education among the inhabitants of the rural areas hamper awareness of one’s rights and enforcement of the law.

Children, along with women, thus continue to be vulnerable to exploitation, mistreatment and abuse. The social norm, as highlighted by many individuals the Africa Tour delegation met, is that a child is born to help parents secure their household; anything else comes as secondary.

And yet, working minors are not as commonly visible in Uganda as in the delegation’s previous destinations. The most frequently encountered scene in urban areas was begging Karamojong children.

Karamojong people are pastoralists living in an impoverished north-eastern Uganda where cattle rustling and other crimes are rampant. Largely malnourished Karamojong children are forced by their parents or traffickers to beg in towns for food and money.

According to the 2006 UNICEF survey, 34 percent of Ugandan children are engaged in work. HIV/AIDS pandemic has drastically contributed to the increasing numbers of children that not only have to tend to their younger siblings but also become breadwinners themselves.

Death of both parents almost automatically means that dropping out of school and engaging in child labour soon follows. Girls are more likely to be pulled out of school to assist their family members.

According to the Uganda’s 2002 Census Report, about 88 percent of Ugandans live in rural areas and only 12 percent in urban zones. As admitted by the government itself, “children represent a substantial part of the labour force in agriculture.” A family’s survival often relies on children’s contribution to their meager budget.

The very same census also reported total literacy of 66.8 percent with 76.8 percent of male population and 57.7 percent of female population being literate. Typical of a poor African country, cultural norms and gender inequalities determine preference of boys’ education over that of girls.

The Uganda program for the Africa Tour 2008 delegation was organized by CESVI, Italian partner of Alliance 2015, and Kids in Need organization—a local NGO that rehabilitates street children and child labourers, providing them with basic needs, education, skills training and reintegrates them into their communities if possible.

The closing workshop, which took place in Kampala, was attended by various international and local NGOs and humanitarian workers, including UNICEF representative Gary Ovington, Harriet Luyima, Commissioner for Labour and Industrial Relations from Uganda’s Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, academics, local media also attended including a private TV station which ran a story on the workshop in the evening news the same day.
2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

In the 1970s and 1980s Uganda became infamous for its protracted civil war, armed conflicts and human rights violations. First it was the military rule of idiosyncratic dictator Idi Amin that plagued the nation. Then it was Milton Obote’s government that also claimed thousands of lives. During this period around half a million Ugandans were murdered in state-sponsored violence.

Since 1986 when the erstwhile armed resistance’s headman Yoweri Museveni became president of Uganda, the country has experienced relative stability and economic growth. His rule has also been credited with improving the state of human rights in the country, although serious reservations remain.

The 1995 Constitution, adopted under Museveni, fully recognizes rights and freedoms of children. In 2004 the Ugandan government adopted Children’s Act that specifically protects children’s rights, stating that “basic education is a human right”.

However, not all is well in Uganda. Despite the fact that the violence and massacres committed by cult-like Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in the north of Uganda for two decades are over (ceasefire holds since 2006, although the peace deal has not yet been signed), the northern part of the country still remains stuck in a humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands internally displaced Ugandans living in camps that lack basic facilities.

The unsettled situation in the north has made international donors, including UNICEF and The World Food Program, redirect their aid there, resulting in the sudden lack of funds in social services, particularly in the education sphere which in turn has slowed down the development of the rest of the country.
3. FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

I. National Council for Children

At the beginning of the first working day of the tour’s stop in Uganda an orientation meeting was held at CESVI office where Mr. Stephen Asiimwe, coordinator and advocacy officer of the local NGO Kids in Need (KIN) and the delegation’s principal guide (together with CESVI’s information officer Ms. Lillian Mboijana) presented the program for the next five days.

The very first meeting was held the same morning at the National Council for Children’s (NCC) office at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Secretary General of NCC Ms. Joyce Otim-Nape first gave the delegation an overview of the council’s role and objectives before engaging in a discussion about the child labour situation and government policies in the respective delegates’ countries.

Speaking in very frank terms, she admitted the situation in Uganda was serious with up to a half of the pre-adult population (which in itself constitutes an overall majority in the country) engaged in child labour, according to the latest statistics. The number has been stagnating for quite some time now, which has prompted the government to start working on a national action plan, Ms. Nape further intimated.

“We need to do more,” the NCC head said. “The best response, of course, is to take them to school and keep them there, but the problem is if we send them there empty-handed, they will not stand.”

The economic difficulties were to be brought up repeatedly in later meetings as an alleged major factor underpinning the child labour in Uganda. The situation is further aggravated by a large number of orphans who have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS, often times having to take over the responsibility for their younger siblings.

Ms. Nape also admitted that a wide gap exists between what is written in the laws and the reality on the ground with law enforcers largely unknowledgeable about child rights and (child) labour inspectors non-existent in many districts despite the existing obligation.

The NCC has been pushing for strengthening of its powers which are very limited at the moment and mostly restrict the organ into a role of a communicating body without any actual implementation capabilities.

A suggestion was raised during the following discussion by the Africa Tour delegation member Mr. Driss El Youbi to forge closer links between the NCC and the teacher’s union in Uganda as the Moroccan example has showed that teachers are best placed to monitor (and prevent) child labour. Ms. Nape took this as a proposal, which she promised to act upon.
II. Kids in Need – safety net

The rest of the day has been spent visiting various facilities and projects run by the Kids in Need (KIN). This Kampala-based NGO has been helping street children since 1996; in the process becoming the biggest organization of its kind in the country where a large portion of its overall young population represents KIN’s potential clients.

The program for the day started symbolically where KIN itself traces its beginnings – in Mengo Kisenyi slum area, headquarters of the organization and also rehabilitation center for boys.

The delegation sat down for an introductory talk with Mr. Asiimwe and his colleague Mr. Godfrey Musisi, social worker at the center who also presented three members of a local music band recruited from among the center’s former and current clients. The boys are now part of the KIN’s outreach programme, giving concerts in schools and at various awareness-raising events.

Delegates then got an opportunity to interact with children of various age-groups who were present for educational activities at the center. These seemed to be run in the spirit of the bridge schools, which the MV Foundation and its allies has been successfully championing in India as a preferred adjustment program for the former child labourers returning (or going for the first time) to schools.

The picture was then completed by a visit at KIN’s rehabilitation and vocational skills training center for girls in Nansana, just outside Kampala. While naturally reserved, or even shy, quite understandably - given the circumstances of their stay, a few girls expressed determination to set up their own tailoring or weaving shops in the future with the newly acquired skills.
The last part of the day’s program was a meeting with the group of middle-aged ladies in one of Kampala’s poorer neighborhoods where KIN developed a small livelihood/income-generating scheme to help its clients, mostly widowed HIV-positive mothers of school-age children, support themselves and their offspring.

Interestingly, the leader of this small bead-making group, who herself did not finish primary education, intimated in a non-formal sit-and-talk session that she sends six of her seven children to school (the seventh being a toddler) to “make sure their lives will be better than mine”. She also had some critical things to say about the quality of education in public schools and expressed belief that the problems start with underpaid teachers.

Her colleague then shared with the delegation her life’s story which was a testimony of mistreatment and discrimination that women in Uganda (especially in the rural areas) face. She came to Kampala to make a living for herself and her children after the relatives of her late husband drove her off the land which belonged to him (and her, by default). Thanks to the project of KIN she now makes enough to sustain her small family.

This particular aspect of KIN's work – i.e. working with the most vulnerable sections of society – children and their mothers – who find themselves in precarious situations not of their own making, more than anything else fortifies its position as an indispensable engine for social justice for the most desperate who would otherwise be most likely left to themselves by the system.

**III. UYDEL – against worst forms of child exploitation**

The next day the delegation visited the office of Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), a local NGO with a similar tack as KIN and even longer history (in existence since 1993). The welcoming duo of programme/project coordinators Ms. Regina Kacwamu and Ms. Anna Nabulya gave the delegation a rundown of their organization’s activities with a special focus on the fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Nowadays, the problem concerns at least 12 thousand minors in Uganda according to the UYDEL. Often times, Ms. Kacwamu explained, domestic servants who quit their jobs, unable to cope with the work, end up in the street, exposing themselves to all the risks of sexual and other exploitation. There has lately been a case of a small boy trafficked outside of the country under the false pretense of adoption so that his kidney could be removed and sold. The boy died.
The UYDEL workers see the problem both in the lack of laws against child trafficking in Uganda and also in the weak enforcement of the existing legal norms.

Despite the challenges, the UYDEL takes pride in having served countless clients by withdrawing them from hazardous forms of child labour and helping them through rehabilitation, resettlement and psychosocial support.

IV. Field trip to Mbale, east Uganda

Leaving Kampala for a day and a half, the delegation then took a field trip to the city of Mbale in the eastern part of the country, which draws a large number of people from the rural areas in the north, affected by chronic poverty and violence.

The Mbale district labour officer Mr. Stephen Makai, with whom KIN coordinates their local projects-gave the delegation a view on the situation from the perspective of a local government official. He listed all the existing legal tools to fight the child labour and expressed belief in their potential and effectiveness. As proof that these are working, he said that a total of 103 cases of child labour have been dealt with in Mbale so far this year.

However, Mr. Makai’s estimate of child labour prevalence in his area of responsibility differed greatly from that offered by Mr. Asiimwe of KIN (two thousand vs. five thousand child labourers, admittedly very rough estimates).

In the end, Mr. Makai confessed that the “greatest challenge is sensitizing the communities so that all the concepts and tools for the fight against child labour do not only remain on paper”.

A good example of how one local community has been sensitized about the harmful effects of child labour followed next when the delegation visited nearby Doho rice scheme. The plantation used to employ many children in the past until a trade union had research done into the matter and a program was put in place to withdraw these children from work and provide them with education instead.

Serious challenges remain, however, as became apparent during a session with the school’s headmaster, teacher and a student as well as local labour officer. Retaining children in school can be tricky with the low teacher to student ratio, lack of space, stationery and – most crucially – food for the students. Only one tenth of parents can afford to pay for the full meals provided by the school.
The last of the places visited in Mbale was the Namatala slum, a place of considerable poverty where many newcomers from the north settle. The scope of problems became apparent just by walking through the settlement and talking to the local community leaders with whom KIN works on a long-term basis and the inhabitants themselves.

With rampant poverty, illnesses including HIV & AIDS, early pregnancies and other barriers to one’s progress, it is not so surprising that child traffickers descend upon this area, looking for (and often finding) an easy prey.

V. Minister for Youth and Children Affairs

After returning to Kampala, delegation had one more appointment scheduled at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. As Minister of State and Youth and Children Affairs, Mr. Jimmy Kinobe requested this meeting with the Africa Tour delegation.

During an informative round table discussion Mr. Kinobe presented the delegation with an overview of the government’s policies on child labour, repeatedly stressing “the strong commitment of Uganda to stamp out child labour”.

The Minister wholly subscribes to the view that the best response to child labour is education while he acknowledges the outstanding challenges of Ugandan educational system, which has been officially universalized on the primary level and is in the process of achieving the same on the secondary level.

The Minister is of the opinion that it is often times the bad attitude of teachers that hampers the progress of education. He made it clear that the government has played its part in his mind by substantially increasing the salaries of teachers.

Commissioner for Labour and Industrial Relations Ms. Harriet Luyima, who was also present at the meeting together with her colleague, Commissioner for Youth and Children Affairs Mr. Willie Otim, added that the ministry has a working relationship with the teachers’ union. She also highlighted the fact that the topic of child labour has been integrated into the curricula and training modules with the aim of increasing the level of awareness on child rights among the school-going public.
4. FINAL WORKSHOP

The closing workshop in Kampala’s Hotel African was very well attended and fully reflected the wide scope of stakeholders in the child labour issue. Hearing from academicians, humanitarian workers, NGO representatives, government officials, UN agency specialists, trade union leaders and media, the audience had a unique chance to get as full a picture as possible of the child labour situation in Uganda.

The proceedings were palpably influenced by the speech of Mr. Gary Ovington, child protection specialist from UNICEF bureau in Kampala, who – playing devil’s advocate- questioned the very assumption of the slogan “Stop child labour, school is the best place to work” in the Ugandan context.

“Are schools in Uganda really the best place for kids? I don’t think so, they are not safe and they are not relevant,” he said, listing all the problems including frequent rape occurrence and other exploitation and abuses together with the deplorable conditions many rural schools find themselves in.

As another speaker, a humanitarian worker based in Gulu district, pointed out, the social status and respectability of a teacher in Uganda took a steep dive within one generation from once highly-esteemed position into a job taken only as a last resort.

A teachers’ union representative gave his view on the matter too, explaining that classrooms are often too large. “Besides, hungry teachers teaching hungry children – that cannot be right,” he said.

Minister Kinobe, in a message read out by commissioner Luyima, did not reflect upon these issues and challenges, sticking to the line, that the government has been at the forefront of fighting child labour through education since 1997, when it instituted the universal primary education. The Minister also believes that the Ugandan experience can serve as a model for other African countries.

Unfortunately, Ms. Luyima came shortly before her speech and left right after, in which case she as a government representative could not reflect the experience of NGO and humanitarian workers, many of whom work on the ground and hold extensive knowledge of the child labour problem at the grassroots level.

With such variety of problems and their possible solutions raised during the course of the half-day session, it was virtually impossible to connect all the threads when the time finally came for the Africa Tour delegation to do its bidding.

While clearly catching imagination of many members of the audience, the delegates’ perspective on child labour and the most effective ways of tackling it, was just another one in a long line, thus appearing more like a contribution to a debate than a possible guideline to be followed. More networking and experience on the ground would more than likely be needed to make a desired impact.

To end on a positive note, there certainly is clear evidence that an interest in forging a wider alliance of the concerned stakeholders exists in Uganda and a call to this effect was actually sounded at the end of the workshop by a number of participants. It remains to be seen whether this semblance of an initiative will come to any fruit.
5. CONCLUSION - HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Highlights:

- Child rights are enshrined in the country’s constitution, in its laws and international conventions it is a party to
- The government recognizes the importance of eliminating child labour and is set to achieve this goal through determined promotion of universal education
- School books at secondary level contain a chapter on child rights, sexual abuse, child labour and domestic violence
- Kids in Need’s balanced approach towards their child clients which includes them in decision making about their rehabilitation/resettlement/education/training
- Community sensitization about harmful effects of child labour in Doho rice plantation has resulted in withdrawing children from work and providing them with education

II. Challenges/recommendations:

The government needs to:

- Sign a declaration by all government members and civil servants stating that they do not employ a child in their household to send a clear moral signal to the public
- Further sensitize public - especially in the rural areas - about child labour and child rights in general through awareness raising campaign and/or specially designed educational services
- Empower the National Council for Children, make it part of implementation of programs and policies
- Address the grievances of teachers, try to make them engaged in the fight against child labour
- Assign a more active role to local governments in promoting education and cooperating with NGOs
- Address communities’ attitude to education and highlight its positive value
- Address the issue of non-financial factors influencing high drop-out rates and/or low enrollment (uniforms, admission policies, safety and security etc.)
- Allocate subsidies to make education entirely free by eliminating the hidden costs of schooling
- Narrow the gap between the existing legislation on child rights and the prevailing practices

NGOs need to:

- Start mobilizing communities in cooperation with teachers to make education attractive to both adults and children
- Build a network of NGOs focused upon prevention and elimination of all forms of child labour
- Foster parental involvement in school activities and build interface between schools/teachers and parents to promote parents’ support to education
- Involve the private sector and media
ANNEX 5:

COUNTRY REPORT KENYA

Content:

1. Introduction
2. Political context
3. Field trips and meetings
4. NGO workshop and Leadership Forum
5. Conclusion – highlights and challenges/recommendations
1. INTRODUCTION

The introduction of free primary education in Kenya in 2003 was a milestone in the country’s efforts to make primary education available to all Kenyan children. It represented the clearest expression of commitment so far on the part of the Government when it comes to fulfilling the child’s right to education.

In Kenya, the delegation had only one day for field trips but the two non-formal education projects visited in the Kibera slum during this one day quite explicitly showed that inhabitants of slums represent the most marginalized and vulnerable, while at the same time proportionately largest, segment of Kenya’s society.

The Kibera slum is allegedly the second largest informal settlement in Africa with up to one million people living in it. Not officially recognizing the existence of slums in the legal sense, the Kenyan government fails to address the issue of social and public services, schools, infrastructure and amenities (not) available to the population that lives there. With the state owning the entire land area of the slum, the slum dwellers in effect become illegal occupants of their own homes.

It is noteworthy that in the more well-off urban zones of Nairobi there are a disproportionate amount of public schools along private schools. Basically, in non-slum areas formal schools seem to be abundant and well developed.

The situation in slums stands in stark contrast. Due to having only one public school available in the entire Kibera slum, non-formal education (NFE) schools have mushroomed in the area over the past years.

NFE schools take a multiplicity of forms, starting from faith-based to community based organizations. Not being registered with the Ministry of Education, unscrupulous educators escape inspection, which lowers the quality of education. Only 18.1 percent of slum schools are accredited as national examination centers. As a result, pupils from NFE slum schools often fail exams mandatory for enrolling in secondary schools. Almost all of NFE schools charge a school fee to cover their running costs and obviously, not all parents can afford to pay the fees, no matter how small. For some of the NFE school founders, the NFE schools have become a money-making enterprise rather than an educational mission.

However, NFE schools provide employment to unemployed teachers living in slums and they take school children off the streets of Nairobi and provide them a chance to reintegrate into the mainstream.

To qualify to be registered as a private or public school, a NFE school has to fulfill a number of benchmarks set by the state to ensure quality education. These are very stringent and due to being ill-equipped the benchmarks are unattainable in most cases of slum schools.

A combination of factors such as poverty, displacement, HIV & AIDS pandemic and lack of schools and professional teachers contribute to the existence of child labour in slums. According to a survey conducted by Daraja Civic Initiatives Forum in 2006, 48 percent children in Kibera and Korogocho slums are out of school. The Ministry of Education Monitoring Information System shows even a higher figure - almost 60 percent of school children in Nairobi are not enrolled in schools.

Typically, the laws that deal with child labour, in particular the Employment Act and the Children’s Act leave too much space for interpretation. The Employment Act bans child labour under 16 but allows work for survival. Furthermore, the Children’s Act does not recognize child trafficking, despite its ever growing presence.

According to the UNICEF survey conducted in 2006, the total literacy is 85.1 percent with 90.6 percent of male and 79.7 of female. The school enrollment rate at the primary level is 66 percent for both sexes, while the secondary school enrollment is 25 percent for boys and 24 percent for girls.
The Kenyan part of the Stop Child Labour campaign’s Africa Tour 2008 was organized by CONCERN with the assistance of the Legal Awareness and Resource Center (LARC) and Legal Resources Foundation (LRF). The NGO/CSO workshop in Nairobi was also co-organized by Coexist.

The Leadership Forum at Kenyatta International Conference Center was attended by numerous stakeholders; various NGOs, government officials from Kenya’s Ministry of Education, teachers and students from several of Nairobi’s NFE schools (who kicked off the conference by theatre, poetry and singing performances).

Students from the Kicoshep school are enjoying their snack that they receive for free

2. POLITICAL CONTEXT

This year has brought some serious ups and downs to Kenyans. While the country is now riding high on the wave of national euphoria thanks to the victory of the nation’s “greatest son” Barack Obama (who was born to Kenyan father and American mother) in the US presidential elections just when the Africa Tour was about to conclude in Kenya, the horrid memories of the country’s own post-election violence from the beginning of the year will linger in the minds of people for quite some time. The often brutal settling of the scores between members of rival tribes all but destroyed the façade of a stable democracy that Kenya has been enjoying up until now.

Slum areas, home of the majority of Kenyan population, were among the worst-affected during the clashes with schooling falling victim to the explosive situation for weeks on end. However, there had also been some positive developments earlier this year, chief among them being the beginning of the long over-due dialogue between the government and NGOs on the issue of NFE.

The government has finally heeded the call for recognizing the non-formal education centers as part of the legitimate schooling infrastructure and is currently undertaking a laudable effort to create a complete register of the NFE institutions in the country so that it can start providing funding where it is due. The Leadership Forum in Nairobi, which effectively closed the Africa Tour, provided a good platform for continuing the dialogue on this issue with the participation of public. It should be noted that the government used the opportunity for re-stating its commitment towards making free primary education truly universal since it is also of the opinion that school is the best counterweight to the problem of child labour.
3. FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS

In Kenya, the delegation visited two different non-formal schools in Nairobi’s largest slum area, Kibera, where up to a million people live and work so to speak in a grey zone, because in the eyes of the law their informal settlement does not exist. This has until very recently meant that the right to education of an overwhelming majority of the city’s child population has in effect been denied. There are now hopes that the situation can be addressed through a cooperation of NGOs and government.

The Kicoshep non-formal education school can be clearly marked as a success. This school qualifies for next year’s endorsement by the government to become a formal school. Apart from having visibly better equipment and furnishing than the St. Christine Community School on the other side of the slum, the school’s success can be proven by frequent visits by local NGOs and international media, BBC among them.

The delegation found St. Christine Community Center in a much more pitiful condition. There were small classrooms with only basic facilities and no free lunch for the children (like in the Kicoshep school). While the headmaster and four members of his teaching staff were extremely friendly and forthcoming, they did not try to hide the difficulties, the biggest among them being the lack of funding as many parents fail to pay the monthly fees for their kids.

The visit to Nairobi Children’s Remand House brought to delegation’s attention what could be justly considered best practice in the field of assistance provided to children who find themselves in conflict with the law. Providing these kids with a home away from home, it strives to intervene whenever the legal processes threaten to ruin a young life instead of helping to mend it.

The institution’s director sat down for an informative talk and exchange of ideas and experiences with the delegation and its local partners, which resulted in a useful discussion about matters concerning the children’s rights and child abuse in Kenya. It was noted, among other things, that Kenya is experiencing the problem with child trafficking with many children from rural areas ending up in domestic servitude in the cities with their right to education lost in the process.

Meseret Tadesse from Ethiopia’s FSCE talking to St. Christine Center boys

The participants of the impromptu round-table also touched upon the issue of Kenyan police’s apparent non-cooperativeness on these issues. New initiatives to address gender and children’s issues within the Police Department are on paper only and have not yet been staffed. It was suggested, among other
things, that one way of making the system more effective would be to tie it with budget as people tend to be more accountable when they have to literally account for all the money spent. Another suggestion was to clarify and streamline laws concerning child labour as there seems to be room for misinterpretation of these.

4. LEADERSHIP FORUM IN NAIROBI

The Leadership Forum held at Kenyatta International Conference Center in Nairobi brought together an impressive line of speakers both in the panel and in the audience. With announcements made in the local press, some people – mostly women activists - traveled up to 24 hours to be present at the event.

While beset with the malfunctioning supply of electricity, the forum heard interesting presentations on the issue of child labour and education. The ILO office’s country representative gave an overview of the situation which tended to emphasize the positive achievements, while not denying that “child labour is getting more complex, and also more hidden” in these times.

The undersecretary from the Ministry of Education then made an honest assessment of the department’s recent efforts to integrate the non-formal education within the state-controlled system, stressing that “government alone cannot attain all the goals and relies therefore on the cooperation of other stakeholders like NGOs and community-based organizations” for whose “concerted efforts” he appealed.

“Challenges notwithstanding, education will remain to be the principle instrument in fighting child labour,” the undersecretary said, thus adopting the campaign’s central standpoint.

The Ambassador of the European Commission in Nairobi then further validated this with observations about education’s superior value and its multiplicative benefits for the economy. He also floated the idea of introducing restrictions for import of products that have been made with the help of child labour.

The head of the Africa Tour delegation, Mr. Venkat Reddy of MV Foundation, then rose to the occasion at the end of the half-day’s proceedings, and proving his worth as a renown social mobiliser, he steered the children from several of Nairobi’s non-formal schools who came to the event to declare their readiness to
bring their out of school peers to classrooms by shouting “Yes, we can” and thus giving the entire tour a perfect, highly symbolic ending.

5. CONCLUSION – HIGHLIGHTS AND CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

Highlights:

- Kenya has cut down the number of child labourers to about a million since the free primary education has been introduced on a national level in 2003
- The government and NGOs have started a dialogue on the recognition of non-formal education centers as part of the legitimate schooling infrastructure.
- The Kicoshep non-formal education school in the Kibera slum will be listed among the “candidates” that will be inspected by the government next year for registration
- Training has started for head teachers in NFE schools on management of grants by the government

Challenges/recommendations:

In general, the government needs to:

- Recognize the existence of slums and address the issue of land in slums
- Include slums in urban development plans
- Increase public spending in slums´ infrastructure and social and educational services
- Prioritize slum education at all government levels – ministry, regional, local, community, etc.
- Provide full support to HIV & AIDS infected and affected children (orphans), so that they do not have to become the breadwinners for their family members
- Harmonize legislation, which would include guarantees for the right to education to all children and which would set a precise definition of child labour
- Train police and civil servants to adopt a child-friendly approach
- Criminalize child labour under the Penal Code

Civil society needs to:

- Lobby and inform decision makers and political leaders of the status of NFE schools in slums and in particular, the high demand for education among the slum dwellers
- Establish community based monitoring data and research systems, which would promote community engagement
- Use the information gathered for lobbying with political leaders to make them use Constituency
Development Fund resources in the slums’ development

- Engage teachers’ unions to promote an adequate primary education structure
- Put pressure on private companies not to employ children
- Involve the private sector and media
ANNEX 6:

THIKA DECLARATION

East Africa Regional Conference on Child Labour 2007

“Children out of Work into School”
“Watoto Shuleni wala sio Kazini”

THIKA DECLARATION ON CHILD LABOUR

Adopted and proclaimed by East African Conference on Child Labour of 16th and 17th January 2007
THIKA DECLARATION ON CHILD LABOUR
Adopted and proclaimed by East African Conference on Child Labour of 16th and 17th January 2007

We, Non-Governmental Organizations representing Kenya, Uganda, and Somalia at the Regional Conference “Children out of Work into School - Watoto Shuleni wala sio Kazini” held in Thika on January 16th and 17th, 2007, upon careful deliberations adopt the East Africa Regional Declaration on Abolition of all forms of Child Labour and upholding Children’s Right to Education

WHEREAS all human beings are born free and equal in rights, and as such should treat each other with respect and dignity,

WHEREAS recognition of the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all children in the world that they should enjoy their growth, freedom and development, free from exploitation,

WHEREAS it is essential, children rights should be protected by the rule of law,

WHEREAS the NGOs of this East African Conference have in this Declaration reaffirmed their faith in children’s right to education and abolition of all forms of child labour,

WHEREAS the NGOs have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the East African Community and the Stop Child Labour Campaign, the promotion of all children rights in respect to their education and abolition of all forms of child labour,

WHEREAS a common understanding of these children rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the realization of this pledge, as such, the East African Conference proclaims this Declaration of abolishing child labour as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, to end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive to promote respect for child rights and freedom from child labour by national and international agencies.
WE, the participants of the conference, concluded this conference with a rights based declaration as follows:

Article 1
All persons up to eighteen years of age in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and as ratified by States are to be regarded as children,

Article 2
All children out of school are either child labourers or potential child labourers,

Article 3
Every child shall be protected from all forms of child labour,

Article 4
All children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, and deprived of their rights should have access to schools and receive all government support to protect them,

Article 5
Every child has a right to education, and it shall be the legal and moral obligation of States to guarantee quality and accessibility,

Article 6
All States should incorporate abolition of all forms of child labour and rehabilitation of affected children in their policies and programs for ensuring universalization of school education,

Article 7
Non-formal education is to be regarded as a transitional arrangement to enable children to integrate with formal education system and not a substitute for formal schools,

Article 8
Child labour perpetuates poverty, depresses adult wages and undermines labour standards and productivity; liberation of children from labour paves way for socioeconomic development that includes the poor and marginalized,

Article 9
All forms of child labour are unacceptable, as such, every child must access full time formal education as a non-negotiable principle.
Adopted in Thika - Kenya this 17th day of January, 2007 with the participation of delegates from Zimbabwe and India.